Movie Crazy: Fans, Stars, and the Cult of Celebrity. By Samantha Barbas. (New York: Palgrave, 2001. vi, 218 pp. $27.95, ISBN 0-312-23962-9.)

In recent decades, social and cultural historians have developed sophisticated understandings of the ways in which movie audiences used theater space to shape class, gender, and ethnic identities. Samantha Barbas's study of movie fans and fan clubs from 1910 to 1940 represents another avenue of research along a well-trodden path.

Barbas challenges conceptions of movie fans as passive, giddy, teenage girls deluded by Hollywood fantasy. Her fans were active participants in the creation of the star system, star on- and off-screen personae, and cultural products. Responding to fan pressure, Carl Laemmle revealed the names of the personalities in his IMP (Independent Moving Picture Company) films, which led to the star system. Fans, not studios, created fan clubs in the 1930s. Through aggressive letter-writing campaigns, club members shaped the careers and screen images of Clark Gable, Joan Crawford, and Greta Garbo. Refusing to be duped by fictitious studio publicity, fans actively sought true stories about the stars they admired, and they used their knowledge to challenge studio contrivances.

Through stars, Barbas argues, fans learned how to cope with the social changes of the early twentieth century. Star emphases on "personality," the cultivation and promotion of a unique set of personal qualities, mitigated the alienating effects of mass society. Anxieties caused by rapid social and moral changes, not accurate demographic information, provoked attacks that stigmatized fans as passive young females.

Barbas does a nice job explaining the fans' attempts to influence movie company policies, but she falls short in her analysis of the effectiveness of fan power. Fan pressure led IMP to create the star system, but she notes that the star system was based on more than simply fan pressure. Vivien Leigh won the part of Scarlett O'Hara in *Gone with the Wind* (1939) over other actresses whose fan clubs lobbied David O. Selznick, even though Leigh had no such fan intervention. Readers may be somewhat perplexed: "fans had more control over Hollywood than they realized," Barbas notes, but "studios often ignored their suggestions." Is it important, as she argues, that fans *tried* to shape mass culture, or is it more significant that they rarely succeeded?

A bigger concern surrounds some of the sources Barbas cites. Though she drew from archival collections, some arguments rest upon questionable sources. To document stars whose careers were shaped by fan pressure, she draws from star autobiographies and biographies. Moreover, few sources directly link fan activity to studio policies.

It is important to document instances where consumers attempted to direct cultural production. It is also important to note when such behavior is oppositional and when it is accommodational. Shelley Stamp, in her study of female audiences, sees fan culture as nonoppositional, whereas Kathryn Fuller notes an oppositional tone in fan rejections of consumerism. Barbas does not situate fan activity in that context, so readers have little sense of why the behaviors she documents are important. She does a nice job contextualizing movie star popularity in the midst of early-twentieth-century social and cultural changes but neglects other important questions. Thus, film historians may have a mixed reaction to Barbas's celebration of fan activism and her challenges to the stereotype of the young, deluded fan.

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Sideshow U.S.A.: Freaks and the American Cultural Imagination. By Rachel Adams. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001. xii, 289 pp. Cloth, $60.00, ISBN 0-226-00538-0. Paper, $19.00, ISBN 0-226-00539-9.)

Over the past decade a growing number of scholarly studies of "freak shows," exhibitions of "human oddities," and sideshows of all kinds have enriched our understanding of cultural history. At the same time, it is also clear that no consensus has developed about how those shows should be understood. Interpretations range from studies that emphasize the

exploitative dimensions of the exhibits to investigations that emphasize their functions as performances that, to some degree, empowered people with physical and mental disabilities. Rachel Adams wants us to consider freak shows along a new axis and suggests that the freak show be examined as a mode of cultural production swirling with meanings for performers and audiences alike. Part history, part ethnography, and mostly literary analysis, *Sideshow U.S.A.* advances our knowledge of sideshow spectacles.

Adams organizes her study into chapters that examine ethnological shows at museums and zoos, Tod Browning's 1932 film *Freaks,* Carson McCullers's "queer fiction," photographic representations of freaks, freaks as countercultural icons in post–World War II America, Toni Morrison's deployment of freaks in *Beloved* (1987), and Katherine Dunn's cult novel *Geek Love* (1989). Adams concludes her analysis with an assessment of sideshow entertainment in contemporary America, reminding us that freak shows remain a mainstay of America's cultural margins that help frame the rest.

Adams deserves considerable praise for her efforts to make sense of the freak show phenomenon. Her opening chapter on Ota Benga, the African pygmy put on display in the monkey cage at the Bronx Zoo, and Ishi, the Yahi Indian exhibited at the Hearst Museum of Anthropology at the University of California, emphasizes the struggle between science and entertainment for mapping the boundaries of the freak show. With the development of cultural relativism and the medicalization of human disabilities, displays of "human oddities" in museum and other scientific settings became increasingly unacceptable. "Abandoned by anthropologists, doctors, and proprietors of respectable theatrical establishments," Adams argues, so-called freaks came to "populate the imaginative productions of authors and visual artists in the United States." Most of her book is dedicated to developing that last insight.

Make no mistake about it, this is a good book. But it would have been even better had more attention been given to the economic aspects of the sideshows and to putting them into a broader comparative context. Who profited? What were performers paid? What was the cost of admission? How did audiences respond on the basis of their race, class, and/or gender? Were American sideshows unique? Does the "freakishness" of American culture contribute to the debate about American exceptionalism? To be sure, these questions, at least some of them, move beyond the scope of this book. But situating popular entertainments in the broader political economy is surely vital for understanding how cultural meanings circulate. That said, *Sideshow U.S.A.* is a notable addition to existing scholarship and represents an important excavation of the American cultural landscape—then and now.

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Seeing and Being Seen: Tourism in the American West. Ed. by David M. Wrobel and Patrick T. Long. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001. xvi, 336 pp. Cloth, $45.00, ISBN 0-7006-1082-0. Paper, $19.95, ISBN 0-7006-1083-9.)

When I began planning my first graduate seminar in the history of American tourism a little over seven years ago, I ran immediately into trouble. John Jakle's *The Tourist* (1985) was already out of print, and Earl Pomeroy's *In Search of the Golden West* (1957) was, well, nearly forty years old. One book that I liked—John Sears's *Sacred Places* (1989)—was available only in hardcover, while another—Dean MacCannell's *The Tourist* (1976, 1989)—seemed dated, if somehow seminal. In the end, I did what most of us do in such a situation: cobbled together articles and book chapters in the hopes that together they would add up to something coherent. These days, my problem is exactly the opposite, as so much rich literature on the historical development of tourism in the United States makes keeping reading lists to a manageable length a challenge.

Among the regions benefiting most from a veritable explosion of tourism studies, the West stands out, and in this literature we are fortunate to have *Seeing and Being Seen.* Ed-