

the United States, and also explores travelers' accounts, journalism, and literature, including drama and poetry. However, Van Hove focuses on African Americans, and includes the works of scholars such as W. E. B. Du Bois and John Hope Franklin. The author repeats what many other academics have said about how the Congo took on a negative valence. The dark meaning of the word suggested that Africa-as-Congo was far less civilized than the United States. America did not have a Congo, and instead—even in slavery—African Americans were advanced beyond their ancestors, or even beyond contemporary inhabitants of Africa. Van Hove's contribution is to note how African American writers, thinkers, and politicians participated in the stereotyped conceptualization of the dominant white culture; they displayed "their own anti-African racism" (p. 218). Few African Americans—or white Europeans and Americans—escape Van Horne's disparaging criticism, and for good reason. The most important finding of the book is the difficulty of escaping the conventions that surround whatever appraisals of the Congo are generated. The author exhibits this "Congo-ism" himself in his persistent use of "the Congolese," a designation invented by the Belgians. From Van Hove's perspective, this phrase should be characterized as imperial discourse, part of a postcolonial project.

Several things weaken the effort of the book. *Congoism* is a dissertation completed at the University of Giessen in Germany, and the standards for presentation in respect to technical matters such as footnotes and bibliographical references are less stringent than for a U.S. publication. The publisher's standards for copyediting are also less rigorous. Van Hove, moreover, has a limited grasp of American history. This volume, in his specialized concentration, is constructed on a slim research base, and the weighty theoretical apparatus does not compensate for the marginal evidence. Finally, Van Hove's English is shaky, especially in his attempts at articulating difficult philosophical notions.

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Democracy and Truth: A Short History. By Sophia Rosenfeld. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019. 213 pp. \$22.50.)

Since 2016, many books have tried to reckon with the crisis of truth that Donald J. Trump's election is said to have both exemplified and deepened. Fake news, alternative facts, truthful hyperbole, conspiracy theories, partisan silos, and Trump's own quotidian mendacity—all seem to herald a "post-truth" era bereft of the shared assumptions that underpinned the well-functioning democracies of the twentieth century. To this library of resistance can now be added Sophia Rosenfeld's erudite, lively, and compact *Democracy and Truth*—one of the most thoughtful, stimulating, and original reflections on our newfound epistemological predicament.

Rosenfeld places the relationship of democracy to truth within the broad historical context of the emergence of sovereign republics in the late eighteenth century. A historian of France who has come to write about Atlantic-world ideas more generally, she refers to Voltaire, Gabriel Bonnot Abbé de Mably, and Olympe de Gouges as frequently as to Thomas Jefferson, John Dewey, and Richard Rorty. But what distinguishes this book most markedly is Rosenfeld's avoidance of pat answers. Jeremiads against Trump or other propaganda peddlers often suppose that to stanch the tide of popular delusion requires little more than rebutting "lies" with "truth." Rosenfeld shows, however, that our crisis of truth stems from the way modern democracy has come to generate political truth in the first place.

Availing herself of philosophy as well as intellectual and political history, Rosenfeld explains that while certain brute facts clearly lie beyond legitimate contest, most political conflict turns on the selection, weighting, and interpretation of facts. Thus, although democratic theory has valorized truth, "truth has generally been understood not as dogma, but as the product of multiple constituencies" arguing it out (p. 2). Influenced by Hannah Arendt, among other thinkers, Rosenfeld maintains that democratic politics require a wide berth for disputes over what is true and what is false—an apt warning to liberals who, rightly worried about Trump's reckless dishonesty,

may seek to counter him with imperious or outraged edicts (rather than careful arguments) about what claims are fair game for dispute.

After surveying the contemporary political scene and parsing the slippery nature of political truth, Rosenfeld gives a brisk, detailed historical account, centered on a key dialectic between populism and expertise. Valuing truth and information, maturing democracies came to place growing trust in experts who possessed specialized, technical knowledge. But the rise of experts, who could become detached from or suspicious of the demos, sporadically provoked populist uprisings that sought to check technocrats' influence. If championed by democrats, these backlashes have been salutary egalitarian correctives; but when led by demagogues, they have trumpeted gut instinct, popular "common sense," or even ignorance as somehow more reliable than the rarefied knowledge of elites. Runaway populism, in turn, can prompt new appeals to a sober-minded educated class to set things straight.

In recent years—owing to the Internet, partisan media, and, Rosenfeld suggests, worsening income inequality—the pendulum has swung toward populisms of the Left and the Right, with their contempt for the knowledge produced by venerable institutions and credentialed experts. Restoring the balance will require reconstructing a political discourse that neither purports peremptorily to hand down Truth (with a capital *T*) to the benighted masses nor permits truth claims to be reduced to being just a function of political power.

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Reshaping Women's History: Voices of Nontraditional Women Historians. Ed. by Julie A. Gallagher and Barbara Winslow. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2018. xx, 268 pp. Cloth, \$99.00. Paper, \$30.00.)

The editors Julie A. Gallagher, an associate professor at Penn State Brandywine, and Barbara Winslow, professor emerita at Brooklyn College, encouraged the first eighteen

winners, 1998 to 2015, of the Coordinating Council for Women in History's Catherine Prelinger Award to write essays furthering "the effort of historical recovery" by "finding voices" (pp. xvi, xvii). Named for a Yale University lecturer, the Prelinger Award, increased from \$10,000 to \$20,000 in 2000, allowed nontraditional historians to finish a dissertation, publish a book, or undertake a public history project. These historians prove "that women from diverse backgrounds have *always* been historians, regardless of what the profession dictated" (p. xvi). Each winner was free to shape her own autobiography, to candidly discuss her personal life as well as the steps, challenges, and even detours taken before achieving scholarly goals made possible by the Prelinger Award: financial instability, family demands, experiences of abuse and violence, and the impact of mentorships and friendships.

Aware of the obstacles that so many women face, the writers were inclusive in discussing working-class and multicultural women. Fran Leeper Buss, the first recipient, who married twice, raised three children, and dealt with disability, interviewed working-class women from many racial groups and communities in the United States. Linda Williams Reese included multicultural women in her work on Oklahoma. Donna Sinclair interviewed women of color in the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service. Midori V. Green, who survived a serious illness, examined the lives of female clerical workers; and Waaseyaa'sin Christine Sy studied Anishinaabe womxn and their production of maple sugar. Becoming a historian at forty-four, Rickie Solinger wrote "a historically informed consideration of the context of my youth," which was white and Jewish during segregation in Cincinnati (p. 29); she published an award-winning book on abortion rights before *Roe v. Wade* (1973). Committed to "grassroots public history," Grey Osterud wrote on rural women's lives in New York (p. 153); La Shonda Mims and Julie R. Enszer authored books, respectively, on lesbians in the New South and lesbians' impact on print culture. Barbara Ransby wrote an award-winning book on Ella Baker, and Catherine Fosl transcended her "whiteness, southernness" to write on Anne Braden (p. 99). Researching the dark