

newspapers flooding the American home included seed company advertisements. Finally, a consumer market had emerged—the suburban homeowner—who lived on a large enough lot for a garden.

With eager customers, a cheap and reliable supply network, and effective means of communication, seed companies may have advocated Dutch, French, or Italian gardens, but Mickey finds that they universally promoted English garden design. While garden magazines and how-to guides were being published—often written by nurserymen—nursery and seed catalogs also included essays on home garden design. Company offerings provided all the needed materials.

Not only did the catalogs exclusively recommend English gardens, but they also promoted plants that were popular with English gardeners. Mickey provides several examples of plants that became widely popular on the basis of company recommendations, including the Manchester strawberry and the Crimson Rambler rose. He also points out the number of plants native to the United States that had no popularity with American gardeners until English gardeners discovered them and American merchants touted them.

Mickey's book is valuable for examining the modification of the American landscape after 1870 by looking at the way that seed and nursery companies promoted the English garden as best for suburbanites. As a communications studies scholar, he is well suited to analysis of this sort. The reader is left to wonder, however, whether the desire for an English garden was not part of the larger cultural symbolism of Anglo-Saxon heritage that became important as concern over immigration from non-English-speaking countries arose. Was the English garden preferred solely because merchants endorsed it? Could home owners have embraced the style in the same way that they embraced the Tudor-style cottage and other building types popular in England because they evoked an Anglo-Saxon cultural heritage to which they clung in a period of status anxiety? In the same era, manufacturers of silver, furniture, and decorative prints were promoting English styles reflecting a larger Anglophilia. Readers may find it useful to read this book in conjunction with other titles on suburban development using a larger perspective, some of which Mickey helpfully references in his bibliography.

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American Allegory: Lindy Hop and the Racial Imagination

Black Hawk Hancock. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2013.

In *American Allegory: Lindy Hop and the Racial Imagination*, Black Hawk Hancock argues that the “Lindy Hop” originated in Harlem, New York in the late 1920s. The author claims that the Lindy Hop had several incarnations over the past eighty-five years and has been reborn into the popular phenomenon of the current moment, Chicago Steppin’. Hancock critically engages the racial imagination surrounding the expressive nature of dancing and how black and white bodies are coded differently. His argument is an important expansion of scholarship in American culture because Hancock posits the body as a site of cultural memory.

The text is an exercise of cultural memory and cultural appropriation. According to Hancock, there are two official versions of the creation of the Lindy Hop. The first is a narrative involving Shorty Snowden and a Harlem nightclub. The Lindy Hop was created by Shorty George Snowden. “On June 17th, 1928 in the Manhattan Casino, Snowden decided to do a break-away, that is, fling his partner out and improvise a few solo steps of his own” (11). The counter-narrative is connected to the sensationalism behind Charles Lindbergh’s successful trans-Atlantic flight. According to Dorthea Ohl, “One young man, overcome by the thrill, took off over the floor, shouting, Look! Look! Look! I’m flying just like Lindy” (12). The dance becomes a sensation from there. These accounts of the origin of the Lindy Hop are both well represented in a very balanced way without Hancock taking one side over the other.

Throughout the text Hancock posits the body as a sight of cultural memory and as an instrument for pleasure and racial imagination. This is accomplished through documenting the appropriation of the Lindy Hop by changing the name of the dance to the Jitterbug. “When the Lindy Hop crossed over into white society in the ‘30s and ‘40s both blacks and whites were doing the same dance...” (13). The erasure of the African American identity that is expressed in the Lindy Hop began as it was consumed and performed by whites. In this instance, Hancock recognizes the history of racial segregation as it pertains to the cultural appropriation of black expressive culture.

The revival of the Lindy Hop by whites in the 1990s is the focus of the text. Hancock uses urban ethnography, participant observation, and carnal sociology as his main theoretical frameworks to understand the racialized world of the Lindy Hop as the dance transitions from being an African American form of expressive culture to being a process of reconceptualization in the early 1990s. The current self-professed Lindy Hop aficionados were on a quest to reinterpret the Harlem version of the Lindy Hop which was accepted as being the authentic form of the dance. Hancock denotes the moments of how race based stereotypes which were evident in the revival process.

The question of authenticity is presented by using the lens of racial imagination through the expectation of competency for Hancock's African American friends who accompanied him to white Lindy Hop events on the North Side of Chicago. His competency was tested at the black Steppin' parties on the South Side of Chicago. The dance called Steppin' is a descendant of the Lindy Hop, which stayed in the African American community on Chicago's South Side. At the Lindy Hop, blackness is marked by being able to perform the Lindy Hop to the satisfaction of one's partner. "One night [the author] brought an African American female friend to one of the clubs. . ." (84). "[He] felt like a fly in the buttermilk. Just because [he's] black doesn't mean [he] actually know[s] how to dance" (84). At the Steppin' parties, the expectations of competency were revered by Hancock. He and his partner were not expected to be able to dance, let alone, Step. In order to enter into this community, Hancock validated his presence at Steppin' parties by demonstrating his ability to Step and by his willingness to breakthrough the lines of segregation by going to the South Side of Chicago.

The text *American Allegory: Lindy Hop and the Racial Imagination* by Black Hawk Hancock is an important piece of scholarship on racial displacement, expressive culture, and the residue of racial segregation in urban spaces and places. The author makes an original contribution to American culture by the honesty and bravado he displays by writing a genealogy of the Lindy Hop and the complications of race that influence the dance from the 1920s to the present day Steppin', which is performed today.

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American Dictators: Frank Hague, Nucky Johnson, and the Perfection of the Urban Political Machine

Steven Hart. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2013.

Americans have long been both appalled and fascinated by the political machines that dominated cities across the United States in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Some machine bosses, such as William Marcy Tweed and Richard Daley, have become legends. While excoriated by good government reformers, bosses have been romanticized in popular art, ranging from Dashiell Hammett's *The Glass Key* (1931) to HBO's popular television series *Boardwalk Empire* (2010). One reason for the ambivalence with which Americans regard the machines is the recognition that, while indisputably corrupt, they provided social services for the urban poor in an era before the advent of the welfare state. As George Washington Plunkitt, the Tammany Hall subboss immortalized in William Riordan's *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall: A Series of Very Plain Talks on Very Practical Politics* (1905), made very clear, the life of a machine leader was strenuous indeed. On any given day, in addition to plotting electoral strategy with his lieutenants, he would be attending weddings, funerals, and neighborhood fairs, assisting constituents displaced by fires, bailing some out of jail, and fixing others up with jobs. The classic machine politician was the human face of government.

Steven Hart, a journalist and freelance writer, provides a highly readable account of two famous New Jersey political bosses in his *American Dictators*. Enoch L. "Nucky" Johnson was the ruler of Atlantic City from 1911 to 1941. A bon vivant who enjoyed the nightlife of his city and who mixed socially with the celebrated gangsters of his day, Johnson was the original of the character played by Steve Buscemi in *Boardwalk Empire*. Frank Hague was a rough-hewn Irish politician, who served as mayor of Jersey City from 1917 to 1947. His machine was one of the most disciplined and authoritarian in the nation. Although Johnson was a Republican and Hague was a Democrat, they shared an instinct for power and, on at least one occasion, probably cooperated in electing a governor. Between them, they illustrate the often idiosyncratic nature of "bossism" in America.