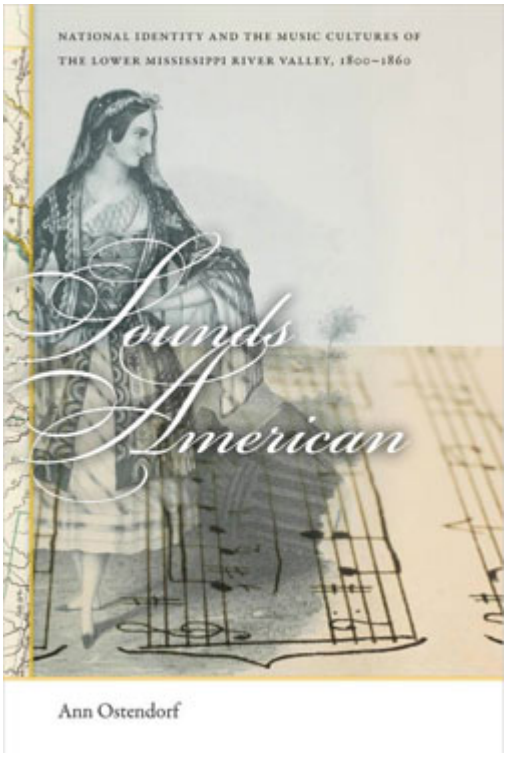
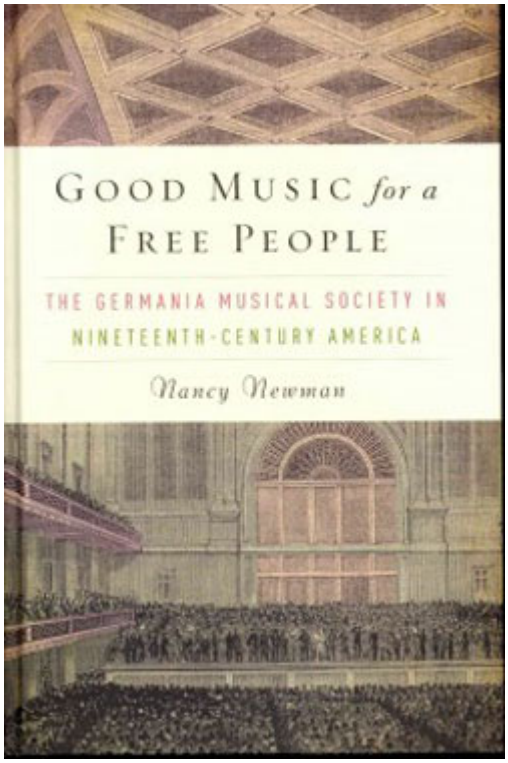
The Difference in Musical Nationalism



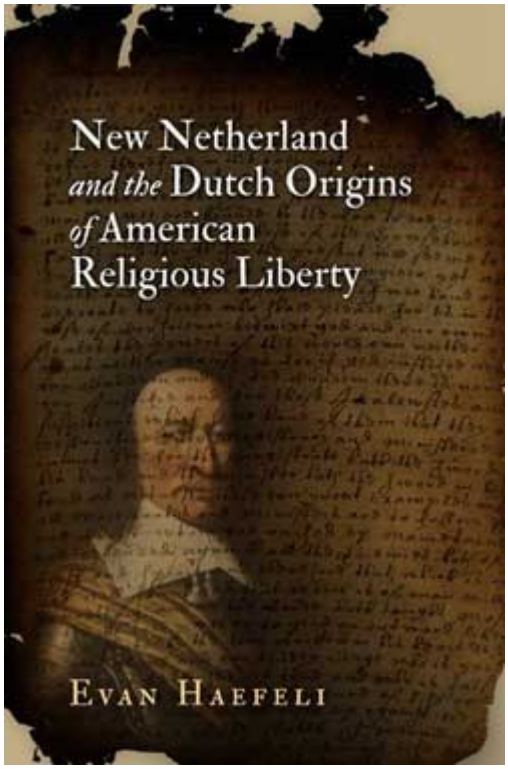
Though hard to fathom in a twenty-first century devoid of such an entrenched dance ethos, in 1804, the French and Americans continued to battle over the form and shape of public musical life.

The Orchestra as Social Utopia



What distinguished these musicians […] was their firm belief that music, particularly the large instrumental works of Beethoven and Mendelssohn, not only symbolized the ideals of social harmony and equality, but also instantiated these ideals in performance.

The Distinctive Nature of Dutch Tolerance



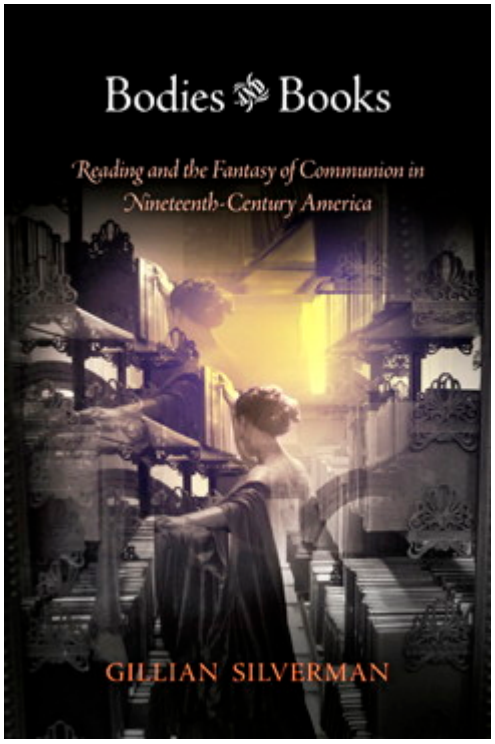
Dutch tolerance is best understood as an elastic system whose properties must be inferred from the historical record of the homeland as well as that of each colony.

Five Poems



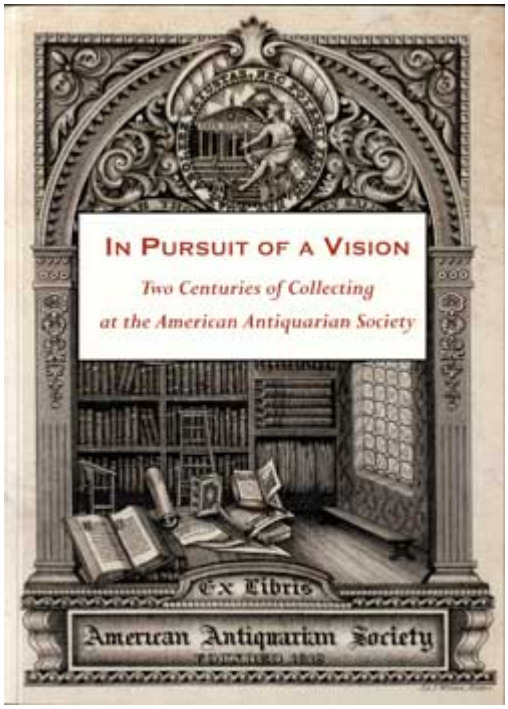
How did a nineteenth-century woman of means accomplish so much, unhampered and unassisted by a husband, and what sort of life did this strong-willed woman live?

Close Reading



Silverman is concerned with reading writ large: her analysis is not tied to particular genres, genders, races, localities, or ages, as is often the case in more deeply historical studies.

The Things They Collected



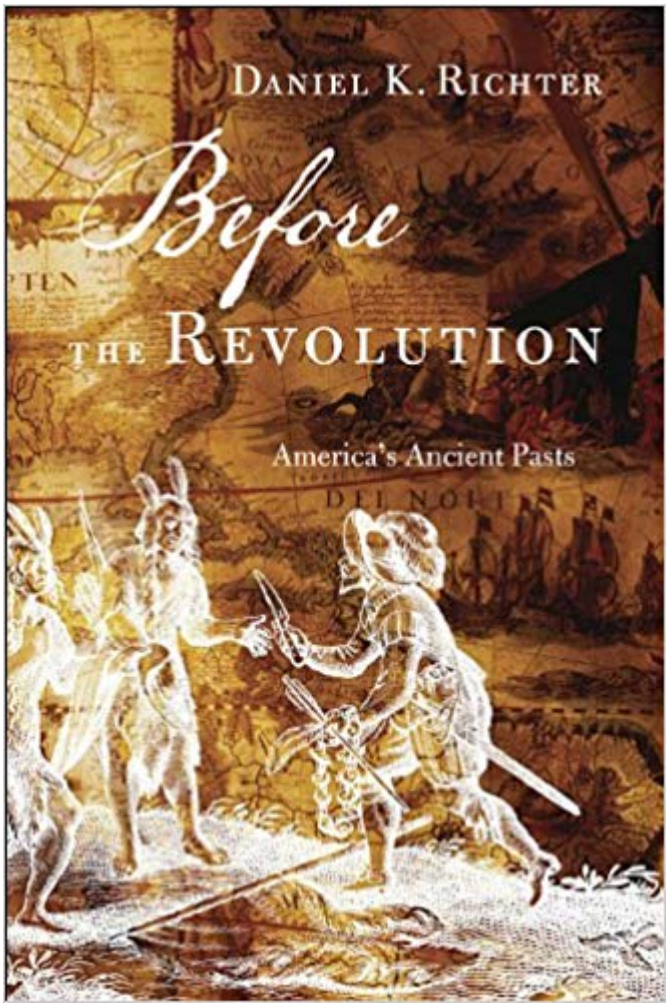
Beginning with Thomas’ initial gift of 2,650 titles, the research library currently boasts nearly 750,000 volumes, over 2 million newspaper issues, as well as large collections of periodicals, graphic arts, children’s literature, and manuscripts.

Sodomy and Settler Colonialism: Early American Original Sins



While the Puritans feared the encroachment of the wilderness on their borders, the greater, paradoxical fear was of the perversion of the natural order lurking within human nature itself.

Excavating the American Past



Historians have long used metaphors drawn from geology and archaeology to describe their work; they are always "digging into archives," "excavating the past," and "uncovering layers of evidence." In his new survey of the history of colonial North America, *Before the Revolution: America's Ancient Pasts*, Daniel K. Richter adopts this formula with great success, using the core lessons of geology to structure his argument. Two of the central obstacles in writing a synthetic history of early America are making each distinct phase relevant to the next and doing so without casting the sum as mere prelude to the American Revolution. Richter deals with these two structural difficulties by uniting them, arguing that early America can best be understood by analyzing how each of six cultural phases (those created by, in his terms, Progenitors, Conquistadors, Traders, Planters, Imperialists, Atlanteans) "rested on—and took its shape from—the remains of what came before" (3). Though the Revolution layer may have "spread over the older ones," Richter argues that "what came before never fully disappeared. Indeed, the new was always a product of the old, made from bits and pieces retained from deeper strata" (4).

By showing that the significant differences in social organization that

Europeans and Native Americans inherited in the sixteenth century were a result not of long-seated differences but rather recent transformations, Richter forces readers to see the categories “Native” and “European” as historically contingent and dynamic, not timeless and universal.

One of the hallmarks that we have come to expect from Richter’s scholarship is his ability to turn what we think of as normative on its head and exploit our momentary vertigo to great rhetorical success; this book is no exception. In the first section, “Progenitors,” Richter does not paint a picture of fundamental difference between Native and European societies on the eve of contact, as is common in similar synthetic histories. Rather, Richter delves further into the ancient past to find that North Americans and Europeans shared much. On both sides of the Atlantic, he argues, unmistakably similar societies grew out of a 400-year period of climate change called the Medieval Warm Period (900 to 1300 C.E.) that brought a lengthened growing season and a stable climate. In both North America and Europe, agricultural work was central to daily life and subsistence; in each, the ability of small groups of elites to mobilize a labor force to perform this work and to control its products created great disparities between rich and poor, and in each elites strengthened and consolidated their positions by controlling access to outside resources and to the spiritual world.

As much as these groups shared, however, “the bizarre European custom” of primogeniture, “according to which individual warriors were entitled to possess land in perpetuity, pass it on to their lineal descendants in the male line, and force others to do the work of making it productive,” ultimately meant that when each confronted the challenges that the Little Ice Age brought after 1300, each would respond differently (42). Whereas strong kingdoms, now verging on nation-states, supported by large armies and tax revenue and born of conquest, were the result of economic crisis in Europe, decentralized chiefdoms bound together by matrilineal kinship, diplomacy, and trade networks evolved in North America. By showing that the significant differences in social organization that Europeans and Native Americans inherited in the sixteenth century were a result not of long-seated differences but rather recent transformations, Richter forces readers to see the categories “Native” and “European” as historically contingent and dynamic, not timeless and universal. Such a maneuver allows Richter to offer a history of colonial America that is a product not of the inevitable contest of incompatible cultures, but rather of a series of human responses to changing circumstances.

A second important feature of Richter’s argument is his insistence that European political, religious, and economic development were central in the experience of all the inhabitants of North America. While not wholly a new premise, what is remarkable about Richter’s efforts is that he balances careful consideration of metropolitan affairs with close attention to how those policies were worked out on the ground. Here Richter’s cultural layers work exceedingly well, allowing him to illuminate how preexisting structures shaped new waves of colonization and to fully integrate colonial and imperial

histories.

For example, Richter's discussion of "Nieu Nederlandt," based on the recent flurry of work on that Dutch colony, pays close attention to the ways that Dutch trade was instrumental to the success both of Native Americans and Europeans in the mid-seventeenth-century northeast. Before the English arrived in significant numbers, it was Dutch traders working from trading posts on the South (Delaware), North (Hudson), and Fresh (Connecticut) Rivers, who knit together a regional economy based on the exchange of furs, wampum, and European goods in the 1620s and 1630s. As thousands of English planters arrived in subsequent decades to build agricultural communities in New England and the Chesapeake, Dutch commerce remained important, with these Englishmen and women "superimpose[ing] themselves on a trading network dominated by the Dutch West Indian Company and its various affiliated and disaffected merchants" (213).

In coming decades, New Netherland's traders continued to play an outsized role in supplying English colonies in New England and the Chesapeake with manufactured goods, European foodstuffs, African slaves, and markets for English settlers' tobacco. Though the prevalence of Anglo-Dutch exchange in early America is now well known, Richter's careful efforts to show that those networks predated and made possible English settlement is important in reorienting the way that Anglo-Dutch trade is often understood. Instead of seeing the cross-national relationships Dutch and English colonists built as aberrant, as British metropolitan officials did, Richter portrays them as organically arising out of the messiness of the colonial situation, with British monopolistic trade laws as artificially imposed from outside.

Representative of an imperial vision for the Americas that found its origins in European politics and culture as opposed to experience on the ground in the Americas, England's efforts to limit Dutch trade in North America in Richter's telling blends well with another of his chief arguments: that England's Restoration policies were key to colonial history and that they were central in producing the violence that swept English America in the 1670s.

Richter's understanding of the centrality of the Restoration in the history of early America comes through most clearly in his retelling of Bacon's Rebellion. Not so much refuting as side-stepping earlier work, Richter argues that the way to understand the rebellion and its place in Chesapeake history is to see it not through Nathaniel Bacon's eyes, but through those of Virginia governor William Berkeley. In Berkeley, Richter finds someone who held tensions between metropolitan and periphery within himself. On the one hand, the court-connected Berkeley and the coterie of great planters he surrounded himself with worked to make Virginia into the "neo-feudal utopia" Restoration officials imagined as they consolidated economic and political power during the 1660s (271). Even if their interests aligned with metropolitan imperialists on issues such as distrust of representational government, the embrace of African slavery, and the pursuit of peaceful relations with Native Americans, Berkeley and his planter allies deviated sharply with "Restoration imperialism['s]" assault on

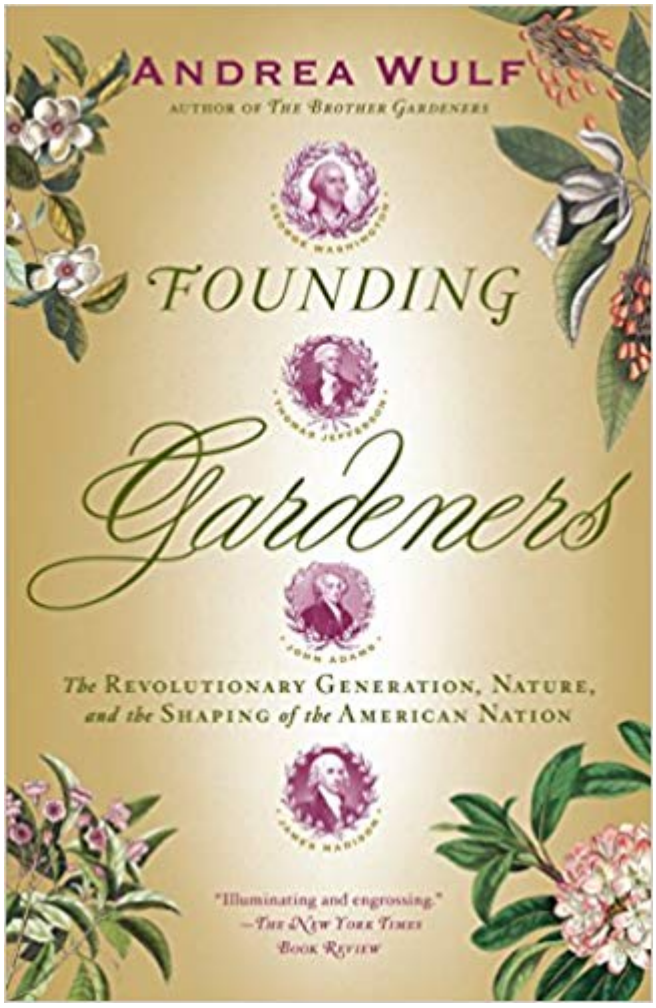
Dutch trade because of its deleterious effect, in their view, on tobacco prices (280). Though they did not support the violent consequences of Bacon's Rebellion, these great planters' opposition to the Navigation Acts sprang from the same conditions that prompted debt-ridden and desperate colonists to join Bacon in seizing Native American land. In Richter's account, therefore, metropolitan changes in policy were as responsible for producing Bacon's Rebellion as were colonial issues.

The downside to all this attention to the imperial reshuffling of the 1660s and 1670s and the Glorious Revolution (which Richter discusses alongside the Restoration) is that the rest of the book, in which he charts the movement of commodities, ideas, and peoples in the eighteenth century that bound the Atlantic more closely together and created its distinctive "polyglot social forms," seems more like a coda to the transformations of the half-century before than a determinative phase in and of itself (7). Though Richter recounts the European, African, and Native American migrations that marked this period, the violence of slavery, and the opulence of the transatlantic consumer culture that slavery fueled, the major action of the book is over. As he races towards the "cataclysm" of the Seven Years War, however, he again hits his stride, bringing conflict between Native American traditions, colonial interests, and imperial desires back together again. In that imperial scramble, he contends, "Native American traditions of property, land, trade and power smashed against those of Europeans, in turn setting land-grabbing creole planters against imperial officials" and destroying "the fragile unity of the Atlantean world" (389).

A successful synthetic history—one that is far-reaching in its vision and yet contains enough detail and nuance to make compelling claims—requires a talented writer, and Richter is that. One sentence tucked into his discussion of the origins of feudalism and its connection to Christianity captures his skill in distilling huge transformations into beautiful prose. "In that village church, meanwhile—as in the great Christian cathedrals that, throughout Europe, served the function of temple mounds—a creed originally preached by a wandering prophet of forgiveness who had been executed in the most ignoble way mutated into a religion focused on an authoritarian judge-king who, on the Last Day, would wield his sword, cast his enemies into the fires of Hell, and grant arbitrary pardon to the few who acknowledged his lordship over all and had paid the price for their sins in this world and in Purgatory" (43).

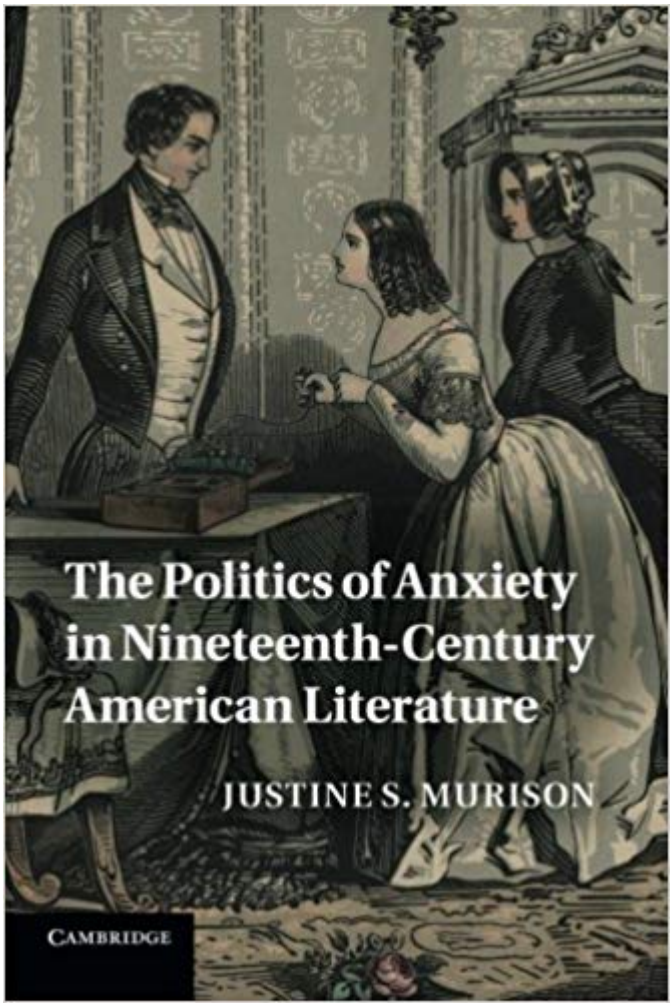
A sweeping narrative intended for general readers, students, and historians alike, Richter has offered a gripping and enjoyable book (it is burdened only by footnotes relating to quoted materials) that does what few comparable syntheses accomplish: advance a powerful argument about the ways that colonial cultures continued to shape early America long after they were buried.

Landscape with Figures



At a time when the wealth of the new nation derived from farming, importing exotic plants […] and establishing the systems of practice needed to make plants valuable were vitally important.

Nervous Americans



The nervous system, in the nineteenth-century imaginary, was the point of contact between the mind and the world.