

political realities. All this is well done. But I search in vain for useful generalisations about their music and music-making, for all the abundance of generic and stylistic descriptions. The subject-matter of Silverman's book could have afforded an ideal opportunity for scrutiny of, and reflection upon, music as a cultural practice, to take one example. I can imagine employing theory in potentially revelatory ways here: looking at Rom praxes from the contrasted perspectives of Pierre Bourdieu and Alasdair McIntyre, for instance, so that the spotlight swings from politics to ethics and back again; or allowing Rom music-making to raise broader questions about the relationship between determinate texts (notation is irrelevant here) and improvisation, or about the status of performance (and performers) as components of history. The singularity of this whole topic, positioned at an angle to both traditional music and popular music, positively begs for some such treatment, in my view. But I may be guilty here of the cardinal sin of functional judgments: criticising a book for failing to achieve what was never in its sights. In the end, Silverman's book is what it is; and it is immensely useful.

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**Victoria W. Wolcott, *Race, Riots, and Roller Coasters: The Struggle Over Segregated Recreation in America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).**

*Race, Riots and Roller Coasters* explores the efforts to desegregate American public recreation sites from the 1920s to the 1970s. Wolcott demonstrates how recreational sites in both the North and the South were important battlegrounds in the 20<sup>th</sup> century African American freedom struggle. She highlights how the desegregation of recreational sites fits into the more explored stories of housing, transportation, school, and service desegregation, as well as the histories of key civil rights organizations, but she also demonstrates why it is important to understand how a study of recreational desegregation subverts our traditional understanding of amusement in the United States and the civil rights movements. She states that “popular memories of mid-twentieth century urban amusements are replete with nostalgia and rarely contain references to segregation” and that full access to public and recreational sites was “central to the freedom struggle because it is itself a central freedom” (4, 232).

Beyond adeptly demonstrating the importance of recreational desegregation in the United States, Wolcott makes several other significant interventions in our understanding of the African American freedom struggle. Her study con-

tinues the deconstruction of a false de jure/de facto or South/North binary that has persisted in the study of the 20<sup>th</sup> century struggle for black freedom. She recounts, for instance, the legal barriers that kept African Americans from enjoying recreational sites in Northern cities. In the 1940s, for example, the Congress of Racial Equality fought a battle to desegregate the White City roller rink in Chicago, which used private membership cards to deny African Americans access to their facility, thereby using a legal exception to keep their facility segregated. Wolcott also recounts several instances where de facto segregation persisted at Southern recreational facilities even where de jure segregation was never written in law, such as in San Antonio where African Americans in swam segregated pools because of custom, not formal, written law. While this by no means diminished the force of the segregation in San Antonio, it does complicate our understanding of the role of law in maintaining Jim Crow.

Wolcott's study also draws attention to the role of youth and the construction of racialized bodies during the black freedom struggle, adding to growing subfields in American historiography. She proves how the power of segregation and the resistance to breaking it down was directly related to the perception of a recreational space as a potential opportunity for white and black bodies to come into direct contact. Several amusement parks, for example, desegregated entrance to their parks long before they were willing to desegregate their pools and dance halls. Fears of racialized bodies, as well as the violence perpetrated on black bodies, form a central part of this analysis.

Wolcott also establishes the key role that young people played in efforts to desegregate recreational facilities in the United States and how national ideas about youth and juvenile delinquency shaped the conversation about recreation in America. In perhaps one of the most revealing arguments of the book, Wolcott unravels the relationship between justifications for de jure and de facto segregation, white flight from urban recreation, the popular memory of urban decay, and fears of racialized juvenile delinquency. In so doing, Wolcott presents an important counter-narrative to the persistent view of the appeal of suburbanization. She argues that "there was no retreat into the private world of the suburban home, but rather a retreat from the urban leisure spaces many perceived as dangerous" because of the increased access to these newly desegregated spaces by young African Americans (224).

This book, which continues Wolcott's rigorous work in the history of the black freedom struggle, is an important addition to our understanding of the fight for desegregation in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It begins to meet Wolcott's call to increase our awareness of "the connection between freedom and fun" (233). It also presents historians with an opportunity to expand on the narrative of segregation in American history. Wolcott points to several instances where other racialized groups were drawn into the fight for spaces of amusement, such as Puerto Ricans and Mexican Americans, which offer the possibility of exploring racism, segregation, and the power of white supremacy beyond the black/white binary.

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