Horizons of Enchantment

Lene M. Johannessen

Published by Dartmouth College Press

Johannessen, Lene M.
Horizons of Enchantment: Essays in the American Imaginary.
Project MUSE. muse.jhu.edu/book/10565.

For additional information about this book
https://muse.jhu.edu/book/10565

For content related to this chapter
https://muse.jhu.edu/related_content?type=book&id=263569
LITERARY CRITICISM

Horizons of Enchantment is about the peculiar power and exceptional pull of the imaginary in American culture. Johannessen’s subject here is the almost mystical American belief in the promise and potential of the individual, or the reliance on a kind of “modern magic” that can loosely be characterized as a fundamental and unwavering faith in the secular sanctity of the American project of modernity. Among the diverse topics and cultural artifacts she examines are the Norwegian American novel A Saloonkeeper’s Daughter by Drude Krog Janson, Walt Whitman’s Song of Myself, Rodolfo Gonzales’s I Am Joaquín, Richard Ford’s The Sportswriter, Ana Menéndez’s In Cuba I Was a German Shepherd, essays by Samuel Huntington and Richard Rodriquez, and the 2009 film Sugar, about a Dominican baseball player trying to make it in the big leagues. In both her subject matter and perspective, Johannessen reconfigures and enriches questions of the transnational and exceptional in American studies.

“This work makes an invaluable contribution to the philosophy and theory of American culture through its literature. The author has strategically chosen certain authors to pinpoint a nexus of interrelated concepts that help support the provocative, yet elusive, notion in terms of a master imaginary. Each chapter represents a cardinal point that connects the multiple dots of a literary imaginary, thus providing an incisive, smart discussion on a subject most critics can’t handle. Johannessen makes it seem relatively easy through her unique outsider view of American expression. There is no doubt we need more such readings to better appreciate what American literature accomplishes when it is not fully conscious of its aesthetic project.”

—Francisco A. Lomelí, University of California, Santa Barbara

Lene M. Johannessen is a professor of American literature and culture in the Department of Foreign Languages at the University of Bergen, Norway. She is the author of Threshold Time: Passage of Crisis in Chicano Literature and has edited several books on American Studies.

Re-Mapping the Transnational: A Dartmouth Series in American Studies

DARTMOUTH COLLEGE PRESS
Hanover, New Hampshire
Published by University Press of New England
Hanover and London
www.upne.com

COVER ILLUSTRATION: Edward Hopper, Cape Cod Morning, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of the Sara Roby Foundation
HORIZONS OF ENCHANTMENT