

**Halina Parañanowicz. *Great War. Good War. Historia i pamięć Amerykanów* [Great War. Good War. History and Memory of Americans]. Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku, 2020, 195 pages.**

The book titled *Great War. Good War. Historia i pamięć Amerykanów* [Great War. Good War. History and Memory of Americans] by Halina Parañanowicz, though most of all the work of a historian, represents a cross-disciplinary approach. It obviously belongs to the rapidly developing realm of memory studies, a field drawing upon history as well as sociology, literary studies, arts and psychology. *Great War. Good War. Historia i pamięć Amerykanów* refers to U.S. participation in world wars and the country's cultures of memory with regard to these two major world conflicts in the twentieth century. As a historian, Professor Parañanowicz uses research tools typical for her discipline, yet she looks also into what is less obvious from a historical perspective, but perhaps even more important for contemporary times: how historical events are remembered and commemorated by the national community. She discusses the significance of memorialisation, sites of commemoration and other material displays, ideological disputes over history and memory, and erasures of memory.

The title of her book neatly summarizes the contents and presents its organization. It begins by examining memorialisation of World War I, known as the "Great War," and then turns to what the journalist and writer Studs Terkel coined the "Good War," that is, World War II. The book's seven chapters each deal with what Parañanowicz sees as the key areas of history and memory of the American involvement in the world wars: the historiography of World War I, ways of commemorating the "Great War" in the US, the same in Great Britain and other European countries, World War II and Franklin Delano Roosevelt in recent historiography, Pearl Harbor in American memory of the "Good War," internments of Japanese Americans during World War II, and the Hiroshima atom bomb attack in American history and memory. The book is designed to be read in its entirety, but each chapter is valuable in and of itself and will be clear without the others.

In the first part of the volume, Parañanowicz presents an extensive survey of World War I objects of memory and commemoration, that is, monuments, museums, street naming and art works constructed in diverse places across the US and in Europe. In the analysis of commemorative practices after World War I in America she supplies a great number of detailed examples, such as the story of the Argonne Cross at the Arlington Cemetery and Pershing's Crusades on page 53, or popular art works of Ernest Moore Viquesney on pages 54-56. The author systematically notes underrepresentation in commemoration during the interwar era: at that time the politics of memory highlighted the role of white soldiers while diminishing or ignoring the contribution of Afro-Americans and other minority groups. From the gender perspective, the Great War memory practice in the interwar period stressed white male heroism and ignored women's contribution to the war effort, placing women only in the roles of mourning wives and mothers.

The turn to the memories and commemorative practices connected with the Great War in Great Britain, France and other European countries somewhat breaks the unity of the book. However, by doing this the author provides a useful comparative

perspective. *Great War. Good War. Historia i pamięć Amerykanów* contains also a detailed survey of major, and in particular more recent publications, on the subject of both world wars, hence as such can be helpful in further reading or research on those topics.

Professor Parafricanowicz devotes a separate chapter to the attack on Pearl Harbor. The attack became not only one of the most closely studied events in American history, but it also rose to the position of a key historical moment remembered by Americans, reverberating with special power in national memory and everyday usage. Parafricanowicz thoroughly discusses the meaning of Pearl Harbor to American people. Numerous examples of references to Pearl Harbor in American public life from Professor Parafricanowicz's book can be updated by an even more recent example from a statement by US Surgeon General Jerome Adams on April 5, 2020. He spoke of the approaching peak of coronavirus infections using the phrase "the next week is going to be the Pearl Harbor moment." Professor Parafricanowicz suggests that intensive commemoration and mythologizing of Pearl Harbor has diminished the ambiguous nature of the atom bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, to the point of nearly removing these events from public memory. She also notes the issue of racism as the factor contributing to the politics of remembrance of the US-Japanese conflict.

The chapter on the Japanese-American internment camps, sometimes called "relocation camps," provides thorough research into the subject. Parafricanowicz takes care to show the painful effects of internments on Japanese-Americans through historical and non-fictional accounts by various members of the Nikkei community. The reader will learn from this chapter of the history of the infamous "evacuation" of American citizens of Japanese descent, in reality a forced removal and imprisonment, and about the conditions of life in the camps and the post-war consequences of these actions, including redress activity of the American government. This chapter may serve as an excellent guide to anyone interested in further reading on the subject. Despite the redress movement it is not clear how much the story of the treatment of the Japanese Americans has found its way into American public memory.

Another tragedy of World War II, the Holocaust, has been integrated in American public memory of the war through the activity of the Jewish American community, including the Holocaust survivors who emigrated to the United States, but also due to its sheer atrocity and the number of Jewish victims of the Nazi. The Holocaust became a part of American World War II activity against the German Nazi, though the direct involvement of the American forces in liberating concentration camps was limited. Halina Parafricanowicz writes relatively little about the Holocaust in American historiography and memory (100-101), though she does mention the controversies around the attitude of American politicians, Franklin Delano Roosevelt and some leaders of the Jewish community to the on-going destruction of European Jews. Perhaps the Holocaust as such was not perceived by Halina Parafricanowicz as a strictly American War memory. Yet the presence of the Holocaust memorials in the U.S. is noticeable, starting with The Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. The important website Jewish Virtual Library lists fifty-nine Holocaust Museums and Memorials, while Wikipedia (regardless of its potential inaccuracy) mentions as many as eighty-seven. By comparison, the story of the American Japanese internment, when conducting

on-line search for commemoration sites, reveals a lot less. World War II Japanese American Internment Museum in McGehee, Arkansas, located in the area of one of the former incarceration sites, appears to be a rare exception. The commemoration of the fate of the Nikkei during World War II is a regional phenomenon, most of all visible in California, where Japanese Americans tended to live in mid-twentieth century.

Halina Parafricanowicz addresses many perspectives and controversies around the atomic bomb attacks upon Hiroshima and Nagasaki. She shows the gradual shift in the evaluation of the attacks. Her detailed descriptions of politicised preparation of the exhibition “The Last Act of the Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II” in National Air and Space Museum in 1994 might ring a bell of similarity to the readers about attempts at appropriation of the history of World War II in museums in the Polish context. The involvement of the American public, especially the veterans, the media (including major newspapers and weeklies), members of the Congress and other politicians was so intense that in the end the project had to be given up. Professor Parafricanowicz’s book demonstrates the continued discrepancy in the perception of the atom bomb attack, and lack of deeper reflection on both American and Japanese sides. Her conclusion—which is also the final word for the whole book—is that there is a nearly complete erasure of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (as much as My Lai of the Vietnam War) from Americans’ collective war memory. This statement, however, could also be a starting point of a debate on what constitutes American memory of wars in the twenty first century.

The book is carefully edited. The language used is natural, and certainly makes the reading of the scholarly text enjoyable. Typos or other errors are extremely rare, such as when the wrong use of words on page 119 results in the statement that Bill Clinton was one of the World War II veterans (which he obviously was not, having been born in 1946). The additional value for the reader is the excellent illustrative material for both parts of the book. These begin with seven pages of illustrations connected with World War I—war posters and photos of commemorative sites, and at the end there are nine pages of similar illustrative material related to World War II. Visuals in the book help in understanding the way war efforts affected American society, and how world wars entered public space and communal memory. *Great War. Good War. Historia i pamięć Amerykanów* contains one hundred sixteen pictures enriching the text. It is a book that should be valued by both the specialist and the general reader.

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**Michał Choiński. *Southern Hyperboles: Metafigurative Strategies of Narration*. Louisiana State UP, 2020, 220 pages.**

The United States South exists within the national and world imagination as a hyperbolic representation of the sins of a nation. It serves as the receptacle for the failings of the United States as a nation, and its artists have created under the specter of this image, working to exorcise the tension that exists within them because of this image or working to solidify it and make it harder to topple. In *Southern Hyperboles: Metafigurative Strategies of Narration*, Michał Choiński explores how a number of