

all beings in existence by acquiring the infinity stones and snapping his fingers. Nichols devotes an entire chapter to Thanos, comparing and contrasting his motives, representation, and actions to inclusive texts from world religions and mythologies—including Judaism, the Aztec god of death Mictlantecuhli, and the Mesopotamian epic *Gilgamesh*—rather than merely choosing the easiest comparison of all, Hades.

Next, Nichols spotlights the heroes in *Avengers: Endgame* (2019), including those who were erased from existence and the rest who were left behind with guilt, resentment, and an inability to accept the reality of their failure to defeat Thanos. With little hope, the remaining heroes travel back in time and face death. After reversing “the snap,” the heroes must face a climactic struggle, like Western ideals of the apocalypse, before Iron Man accepts his own self-sacrificing death.

As he builds his argument, Nichols relies primarily on mythological texts rather than religious texts, and rarely from Western traditions, which seems a minor shortcoming. Although Nichols cites mythic texts, alongside several non-Western religious texts throughout each phase, Christianity appears largely within Phase Three only. Nevertheless, because many of its characters are recognizable around the world, *Religion and Myth in the Marvel Cinematic Universe* deserves a place in classrooms to engage younger audiences studying folklore. While Marvel produces and will continue to produce blockbuster films filled with these iconic heroes, there are reasons why these films are mainstays in our theaters: they elevate themes and ideas already embedded in our cultures; they tell the lore of the people.

Different Drummers: Military Culture and Its Discontents. Ed. Tad Tuleja. (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2020. Pp. xii +202, preface, introduction, contributors.)

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Mandatory military service was a hallmark for most males during the twentieth century. In the United States, for example, various selec-

tive service acts registered some 73 million men in the two world wars and conscripted 13 million. Millions more were drafted into the armed forces between the Korean Conflict and the US withdrawal from Vietnam, which coincided with the end of conscription in 1973. For American males, especially those who came of age during and after World War II, military service was a rite of passage.

Many men—and increasingly women in the years since the 1970s—did not willingly accept their personal subordination in a male-dominated hierarchal military. In *Different Drummers: Military Culture and Its Discontents*, Tad Tuleja, a folklorist and coeditor with Eric A. Eliason of *Warrior Ways: Explorations in Modern Military Folklore*, examines the “disjunction between organizational solidarity and individual pushback” in the military by looking at “people who dissent from military culture, but do so as members of a loyal opposition” (pp. ix–x).

Resistance to military service—conscientious objection, absenteeism or desertion, and even active insubordination, which are all hallmarks of the American military experience throughout the centuries, especially during the Vietnam Conflict—is not the main theme of *Different Drummers*. Rather, this anthology uses a “variety of case studies to analyze creative dissent by individuals whose military identity is ambivalent or conflicted . . . who, for a variety of reasons, resist the myth of the robot soldier to embrace their humanity” (p. 12).

The book is divided into four main sections and, in turn, has 12 articles covering wartime experiences from the Great War to modern conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Tuleja pulls together the articles with an introduction and a conclusion.

In chapter 1, “On the Gripping of Grunts,” Angus Kress Gillespie, Professor of American Studies at Rutgers University, explores the age-old way of life in the Army—gripping in contrast to complaining or whining—as a means to make sense of the daily indignations of military service. Drawing upon Bill Mauldin’s foxhole buddies, Willie and Joe, Gillespie looks at how soldiers reacted to the wartime cartoons compared to the Army brass, namely, Gen. George S. Patton and his boss, Gen. Dwight D. Eisen-

hower. Unlike Patton's indignant response, Eisenhower "understood that in a military context griping can serve a real purpose—a military purpose. It can act as a social safety valve to ventilate frustrations, and it can create solidarity among those in harm's way more effectively than peeling potatoes or shining buttons" (pp. 29–30).

In chapter 2, "Back Chat: Subversion and Conformity in Dominion Cartoons of the World Wars," Christina M. Knopf, Professor of Cultural Sociology and Political Communications at SUNY Cortland, examines how British, Australian, Canadian, and other enlisted men employed humor during both world wars—often at the expense of their commanding officers—to resist conformity, maintain a sense of normalcy in an abnormal environment, and, interestingly, build *esprit de corps*. Knopf examines a number of cartoons (she provides a list of her primary sources) that "allowed the citizen-soldiers of England and the Dominions to maintain their humanity and to endure the horrors of war by embracing an identity that was simultaneously oppositional and respectful of order" (p. 44).

In chapter 3, "Warriors' Bodies as Sites of Microresistance in the American Military," John Paul Wallis, a lawyer and Marine Corps veteran, and Jay Mechling, Professor Emeritus at University of California, Davis, focus on how male Marines counter efforts of the Corps to suborn the individual body. Starting in basic training, the "military institution must socialize the individual's body severely to make it conform to the demands of the organization" (p. 52). The authors take the reader through the various levels of the military's conformity, including oral, anal, genital, skin, and attire. Acknowledging that women in the military face even greater bodily challenges than males, Wallis and Mechling conclude that "the memoirs and reportage on women in the military provide scant evidence of the sort of microresistance. . . . We have to wait for more evidence to flesh out how women warriors use their bodies to resist the control of the total institution" (p. 63).

In chapter 4, "Jumping the Chain: A Military Psychologist's Story," Mark C. Russell, a retired US Navy clinical psychologist, set up the neuropsychiatric department at Field Hospital 8 at

the US Naval Air Station in Rota, Spain, during Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm in 2003. Russell recounts that the Navy and the Marine Corps were poorly prepared to treat casualties suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. In fact, Russell's superior, not knowing what to do with his section, placed the mental health professionals under the hospital's urgent care department. With the expectation that as many as 60 percent of the hospital casualties would suffer from psychiatric symptoms, Russell prepared a study and approached his commanding officer to highlight his section's critical role. While successful in "jumping the chain" at Rota, Russell struggled for the remainder of his career to get the military to recognize the importance of mental health.

In chapter 5, "A Captain's First Duty: Managing Command Disconnect in a Combat Zone," Ronald Fry faced a life-or-death situation while commanding a Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha in Afghanistan in late 2003. One of Fry's two Humvees was destroyed by an Improvised Explosive Device during a supply run, injuring a crewmember. Fry requested helicopter support to destroy the damaged Humvee in order to prevent leaving it to be stripped by the enemy. At the same time, Fry wanted to withdraw his exposed force to the safety of the unit's main camp because of the threat of a night attack. Fry's commanding officer, however, denied these requests. On his own volition, Fry destroyed the vehicle and pulled back to safety. For his actions, Fry's commander considered charging him with disobedience of orders, a decision that the Army quietly dropped when it became the subject of a media inquiry. This wartime case reflects the age-old disconnect between soldiers in the field and the commanders and staff in the relative safety of the rear. Fry's actions in Afghanistan also highlight the tension between an officer's duty to safeguard the lives of their soldiers and the sworn oath to obey superior orders.

In chapter 6, "(De)composing the 'Machine of Decomposition': Creative Insubordination in E. E. Cummings' *The Enormous Room*," Matthew David Perry, the chair of the English Department at Del Mar College in Texas, looks at the impact of E. E. Cummings' service as a volunteer ambulance driver in France during

World War I and his subsequent imprisonment for sedition in his first major work. Following his release from the Depot de Triage, a French prison for various perceived wartime criminals, Cummings returned to the United States and was drafted in the US Army. Decrying the Federal Government's efforts to repress its citizens during the war, Cummings wrote *The Enormous Room* "by abandoning usual associations in language and replacing them with unusual referents . . . to offer covert as well as overt criticism of the suppressive government of his era" (p. 96).

In chapter 7, "Café Colonels and Whizz-Bangs," Tuleja, the editor of *Different Drummers*, examines the lesser-known music of World War I that reflected "a critical rather than positive attitude towards the war" (p. 104). In contrast to uplifting or sentimental songs such as "Over There" or "It's a Long Way to Tipperary," songs such as "If You Want to Know Where the Privates Are," "Mademoiselle from Armentieres," or "What Do the Colonels and Generals Do" were immensely popular in the ranks. These songs, with their many and various verses, highlight class distinctions that separated those who did the leading from those who did the killing. Yet, despite the sarcastic lyrics of these songs, Tuleja notes that the British Army fought the entire war with no mutinies and few disciplinary problems throughout the four years of mass death.

In chapter 8, "The Wild Deserters of No Man's Land: A Ghoulish Legend of the Great War," James I. Deutsch, a curator and editor at the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage and Adjunct Professor of American Studies at The George Washington University, explores the fantastic tales that hundreds of men from all armies—except the US Army—had deserted during the war and taken up shelter in a variety of refuges in no man's land. Deutsch looks at the origins of these stories and how the accounts blossomed in the decades after the war. The accounts "all portray a thoroughly dehumanized environment that serves as a horrific home for men who have been thoroughly dehumanized and marginalized themselves" (p. 131). At the same time, these isolated shelters could have served as a "type of wish fulfillment" for the men in the

trenches sick of death, dirt, and despair (p. 131). The recent news of the discovery of a massive German bunker in France destroyed in 1917, resulting in the entombment of nearly 300 German soldiers, certainly lends credence to the legends of men desperately seeking to escape the war by any means.

In chapter 9, "Breaking Ranks: Initiative and Heroism in a Vietnam Firefight," Richard Allen Burns, Professor of Folklore and Anthropology at Arkansas State University and a Vietnam era Marine Corps veteran, details a combat incident when unit discipline and individual courage diverge. Burns cites the case of 19-year-old Bruce Wayne Carter, a Marine private first class, killed in action in South Vietnam in 1969. Carter was subsequently awarded the Medal of Honor for "conspicuous gallantry" when he fired at North Vietnamese regular troops and threw himself on a grenade in order to save members of his unit. Burns' own research, interviews with Carter's comrades, and a battlefield journal, however, differ from the official account of Carter's heroism. Despite the divergent memories, the surviving veterans all agree that Carter deserved his commendation for his heroic actions.

In chapter 10, "Challenging the Male Hierarchy: Women Warriors in Iraq and Afghanistan," Catherine Calloway, Professor of English at Arkansas State University, focuses on the role of women in the US military, especially in combat. Calloway cites the service of two females, Kayla Williams, who served as an interpreter with the Army in Iraq, and Mary Jennings Hegar, a helicopter pilot with the Air National Guard who served three tours in Afghanistan and was wounded there. Both women joined the military for their own personal reasons, but they found themselves often isolated, objectified, and exposed to ridicule, humiliation, and even assault by male commanders, peers, and subordinates. Upon returning home, the two women found their military service denigrated by male veterans as well as the general public. Their military and post-military experiences have motivated both women—and many others—to tackle discrimination in the military and challenge a "military culture that has privileged male dominance—and excused sexual assault—for thousands of years" (p. 162).

In chapter 11, “A Good Coffin: The Iraq War Poetry of Gerardo Mena,” Ron Ben-Tovim, a lecturer at the Department of English and American Studies at Tel Aviv University, explores the poetry of Gerardo Mena, a Marine Corps veteran of Iraq War and the author of *The Shape of Our Faces No Longer Matters*. Ben-Tovim explains that “Mena uses poetry to resist the objectification of contemporary soldier-weapons and to create a new object, the poem itself, which performs the moral function of commemorating those lost in war” (p. 167). Ben-Tovim analyzes several of Mena’s poems, including “Rocket Man,” “Dream of Brass,” and “So I Was a Coffin,” to mourn his fallen comrades and to keep their memory alive.

In chapter 12, “Telling Stories in War,” Carol Burke, Professor of English at University of California, Irvine, draws upon her experiences as an observer embedded with American troops in Afghanistan and Iraq to analyze how military conflicts influence storytelling and personal narratives. She notes that “in the real world of today’s US deployments, some storytellers have little to say about their wartime experiences, while others, in a hunger for recognition, say far too much” (p. 178). Burke finds that civilian contractors—who often outnumber soldiers in both wars—are among the leading braggarts. But soldiers themselves are not above inflating their own personal backgrounds and supposed service. Likewise, as military service has been more recognized and honored since 9/11, the country has witnessed a wave of impostors claiming personal gallantry in wars dating to Korea and Vietnam. President George W. Bush’s own dramatic Mission Accomplished landing on an aircraft carrier in 2003 is a form of creative manipulation, Burke contends.

The strength of this interdisciplinary anthology of essays lies in the diversity and breadth of the topics explored by the individual authors. At the same time, it is a challenge for the editor to pull the various articles together and link them to the book’s central theme. While the 12 articles in *Different Drummers* cover different wars, different militaries, and different personal experiences, Tuleja has curated a fascinating book that delves into the “disjunction between organizational solidarity and individual push-back, seeking to examine the ways in which

members of the armed forces express ambivalent or conflicted attitudes about the organizations that they serve, for the most part, with enthusiasm and pride” (p. ix). *Different Drummers* casts a wide net and will attract a wide audience, including folklorists, sociologists, military historians, and general readers interested in the responses of men and women to military service.

Ocean Passages: Navigating Pacific Islander and Asian American Literatures. By Erin Suzuki. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2021. Pp. ix + 252, acknowledgments, introduction, notes, works cited, index.)

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The Pacific is dense, layered, vast. It is full, not just of creatures beautiful and sublime but also histories of war, nuclear testing, colonial settlement, ecological disruption, and capitalist extraction. Moreover, it is rich in stories, meaning, and life shared among humans and nonhumans. As the twenty-first century unfolds, will the Pacific offer devastation or life?

Erin Suzuki’s *Ocean Passages: Navigating Pacific Islander and Asian American Literatures* is a powerful advocate of the latter. Suzuki underscores the importance of engaging Native studies and Indigenous peoples—not as neglected areas and objects of study but as subjects of knowledge and invaluable kin. The book illuminates how literary expression vitalizes alternative forms of being, relation, and futurity. The task is not to establish what transpacific studies should be; Suzuki aspires to build community, not flash academic showmanship. *Ocean Passages* exemplifies how transpacific studies might foster a vibrant Pacific in the face of ruination.

The introduction provides a fine overview of key issues in Asian American, transpacific, and Pacific Islander studies. Each chapter likewise is a remarkable weave of information and interpretation. Chapters 1 (“ Militarized Passages”) and 4 (“Embodied Passages”) are clear examples, which provide detailed background and fresh insights into the militarized history