

Unfortunately, Hoffer intones in his concluding paragraph, in some of those churches “religious belief once again has turned to harsh judgments of those who are not among the saved” (131).

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David Schuyler. *Sanctified Landscape: Writers, Artists, and the Hudson River Valley, 1820–1909* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012). Pp. xii, 206. Illustrations, notes, index. Cloth, \$29.95.

Seen from a car passing over the Tappan Zee Bridge or an overlook in one of the towns that hug its shores, the Hudson River presents a deceptive sense of calm and timelessness. It is an essential part of the furniture of American history, providing a reliable scaffolding for episodes that are often recalled dutifully, if a bit dimly: the Revolutionary War, the invented Knickerbocker history of Washington Irving, and the group of nineteenth-century artists now known as the Hudson River School. David Schuyler's book, a study of the literary and visual culture created by an elite group of writers, artists, and other tastemakers in the Hudson Valley between 1820 and 1909, helps overturn that deathless and static image. His book bristles with odd and surprising details that make clear how intensely human activity shaped those landscapes. Irving's cottage in Tarrytown, New York, for instance, boasted a lake in the shape of the Mediterranean and a “vaguely Spanish” pagoda (53). Just as telling is Irving's indignant reaction as his “snuggery” was invaded by the “infernal alarum” of a railway line (56).

Schuyler argues that the Hudson River's landscapes were “sanctified” by writers, artists and tourists, and this material makes up much of the first half of his book. He begins with a chapter on tourism, focusing on its paradoxical “pattern of exploitation and development” (25), and follows with a chapter on “The Artist's River,” looking at Thomas Cole's prescient objections to the depredations of industry, particularly in and around his beloved Hudson River. Two more chapters (“The Writer's River” and “The River in a Garden”) examine the efforts of two writers, Irving and Nathaniel Parker Willis, and a landscape gardener, Andrew Jackson Downing, to domesticate the landscapes of the Hudson River with charming estates that took advantage of the area's natural beauty. These topics have been frequently addressed,

and, although Schuyler adds some fresh and engaging material, they will be familiar to readers acquainted with historiography of the Hudson River School, a scholarly trail that itself wends its way all the way back to the nineteenth century.

Schuyler's most original contribution, however, is to look at the ways in which these sanctified landscapes were profaned, particularly in the second half of the nineteenth century. Indeed, the last four chapters of the book form a slow chronicle of loss, as the beauty, natural resources, and historically significant sites of the Hudson River Valley were compromised or destroyed. In chapter 5, "Change and Continuity at Mid-Century," Schuyler considers three Hudson River towns (Newburgh, Kingston, and Poughkeepsie) as new factories and the largely Irish and German immigrants who worked in them changed the built and natural environments and their relationship to the waterfront. The chapter also contains an extended inquiry into the move to save George Washington's Revolutionary War headquarters at Newburgh. The material contained in the chapter can sometimes be unwieldy for the reader, however, and this is emblematic of the book's weaknesses. Wide-ranging in more ways than one, *Sanctified Landscape* covers a great amount of material geographically and methodologically. Chapter 5, for example, looks at social, economic, and environmental change in three towns, a tall order indeed, while also addressing the historic preservation of a revered monument in one of them. After that, the limited focus of the following chapter, "Elegy for the Hudson River School," is a tonic as the author addresses a different kind of relic, the painter Jervis McEntee. His journal and later life form a melancholy record of what the new cosmopolitanism looked like from the losing side, that of the second-generation Hudson River School painters who saw the value of their works tumble as a "perfect deluge" of foreign pictures, in McEntee's words, flooded the market (123). The chapter is deeply insightful and informative, and one emerges with a vivid sense not only of McEntee's decline, but of his brother-artists' as well.

The final two chapters end on a note of loss tempered with possibility. Chapter 7 details the local environmentalism of naturalist John Burroughs, whom Henry James called "a sort of reduced, but also more humorous, more available, and more sociable Thoreau" (137). The final chapter tells the story of the largely forgotten 1909 Hudson-Fulton celebration, an event that New York elites hoped would encourage a very specific kind of public memory that, as we know from Schuyler's account, had been slowly

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declining for some time. The celebration was a flop. Schuyler's account of the crash of the replica ship *Half Moon*, which was deeply embarrassing to the organizers, and of parade floats depicting Revolutionary War battles to crowds of potentially confused or unimpressed immigrants emphasizes that it is human activity that shapes the Hudson River's sublime landscapes, not the other way around. The river, it seems, keeps rolling.

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