

Book Reviews

New York when it was a profoundly more dangerous place. There is no doubt that virtually all of the interviewees who express that opinion genuinely believe this. Collectively, though, this chorus that glamorizes the social pathologies they witnessed reveal a contempt among the city's creative classes for those that live alongside them not because they chose to move to a certain part of New York but because New York is their home. Despite these minor quibbles, *Meet Me in the Bathroom* is an entertaining, informative book that makes major contributions in several historical subfields.

Clayton Trutor
Northeastern University
United States

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In his 1989 article for *Technology and Culture* entitled "Aviation History in the Wider View," James Hansen lamented that aviation history lacked scholarly credibility. It tended to attract "buffs" whose publications were rather simplistic accounts characterized by an unquestioning "enthusiasm" for technology and a disconnection from larger historical narratives. In sum, he saw a desperate need for more scholarly studies that took a wider view of the history.

Book Reviews

Hermione Giffard's *Making Jet Engines in World War II* is an outstanding example of a study that meets this need. Her subject certainly has attracted more than its share of enthusiasts, and has suffered accordingly. Giffard specifically addresses this and intentionally frames her study to challenge established narratives and connect with larger historical themes.

Her introduction provides both an excellent summary of her arguments and outline of the book. Studies of jet engine development during the war, she notes, have conceptualized the history using the "transition" narrative arc. In this, a technological "novelty" is the creation of a "hero-innovator," an individual inventor who operates outside the corporate system. For their part, corporations are either oblivious to the innovation, resist it, or eventually co-opt it, usually to the detriment of the individual inventor and the spirit of innovation as a whole. As applied to the development of jet engines during the war, this narrative arc has rendered a story in which the Germans quickly embrace the innovation and demonstrate remarkable technological prowess in deploying it. In contrast, the British are slow to appreciate Frank Whittle's innovative work, and thus lag behind, while the Americans, lacking identifiable innovators, make no progress at all in the field. However, according to Giffard, this application of the transition narrative has done "great violence" to the story of jet engine development (p. 2). Thus, there is a need to correct the story, as well as the way in which it and others are conceptualized.

Giffard posits that the story of jet engine development is much more complex than it appears in the transitional narrative. For one thing, it is a story involving innovation, but also expectation, development and production. The jet engine, like other innovative technologies, is significant not only due to its invention, but also its application. Thus, it is a creation of individual inventors, but also aeronautical firms, research institutes, and governments, all of which helped to bring the jet engine to full fruition. While the transition narrative often portrays aeronautical firms as recalcitrant characters in the story of jet engine development, their experience, notably with the earlier forms of propulsion, proved more an aid than a hindrance. Their decisions, and those of governments to entrust

them with these ventures, were generally indicative of clear priorities and necessities, not conspiracy nor incompetence. Of course, in retrospect, such decisions are subject to critique, yet such critiques cannot be simplistic. For example, one cannot treat the effort of a particular country to develop jet engines as either an unquestioned success or failure; all countries involved made both good and bad decisions in the endeavor. A more complex understanding of jet engine development allows for a more accurate assessment of the various actors than the transitional narrative. Careful consideration reveals that German jet development was not a manifestation of technical superiority, but military desperation. The Germans employed jet technology to a greater degree in an effort to stem the tide of war that had turned against them. While impressive in some regards (e.g. numerically), these engines were marginal in terms of safety and insufficient to affect the war. The British, far from laggards, pursued jet engine development in a manner that positioned them to make best use of the new form of propulsion in the postwar world. They had well-developed designs, and also a well-developed capacity to produce them. For their part, while depending on British designs during and after the war, the Americans had developed a tremendous capacity for producing jet engines, and thus were also well-positioned for the jet age.

Giffard divides her arguments into four chapters. As she informs the reader, she reverses the flow of the story, starting with production, then proceeding to development, and then innovation. Her intent is to disrupt the established narrative pattern to encourage new thinking on the subject. She notes that while the first three chapters focus on production, development, and innovation respectively, these are not mutually exclusive, and thus the narratives in each chapter overlap. Each chapter explores the British, German, and American efforts to develop jet engines, outlining the contributions of not only the likes of Whittle, but also Rolls-Royce. Her last chapter, entitled “The Construction of a Hero,” explores how the “hero-innovator” myth became entrenched in the story of the jet engine’s development.

This structuring of the account does pose challenges for the reader. The “reversal” of the narrative flow is innovative and disrupts established thinking about the subject. Yet in working against the usual chronological

Book Reviews

pattern of cause-and-effect, the new narrative has numerous instances of repetition and foreshadowing that impede its flow. While not an egregious problem, in an account this informative and complex, it does make the reading more complicated.

That said, it is an account well worth reading. It likely will not lead to the transition narrative disappearing from the histories of aviation and technological innovation; its appeal is too great. Yet Giffard has authored an invaluable, even groundbreaking study. She has crafted a compelling argument supported with extensive information and insight, evidence of both careful research and careful thinking on the subject. Going forward, any serious history of jet engine development must take her work into account. For aviation history as a whole, it necessitates a reconsideration of many of the histories of other enterprises. Finally, in situating this account in larger historical and historiographical contexts, Giffard provides a study that has implications far beyond the boundaries of aviation history. This is certainly the sort of “wider view” for which Hansen called thirty years ago.

Erik Benson
Cornerstone University
United States

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