Lynn's autobiographical film *Coal Miner's Daughter* and her hard-hitting lyrical style proved her rural authenticity in a similar fashion to andocentric honky-tonk lyrics. *Natural Acts* concludes with an analysis of alt. country in the 1990s and early twenty-first century, suggesting that the sub-genre draws on the music's past, elite orchestrated, gender and race constructions, and class practices to set it apart as the authentic alternative to top 40 country hits.

Fox uniquely contributes to the debate on authenticity and commendably challenges country music culture's official history. Detailed attention to feminist scholarship on women and gender in country music and blackface theory make *Natural Acts* an excellent resource for graduate students and academics in the fields of American popular culture, gender studies, critical race theory, and country music history. As the latest scholarly history on the topic, her argument reflects the state of country music historical criticism and offers insightful new ways to think about the implications of popular culture's relationship to its audience.

Natasha Lueras

Ann S. Blum. *Domestic Economies: Family, Work, and Welfare in Mexico City, 1884-1943*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009. Pp. 396. Paper $30.00.

Ann S. Blum, Assistant Professor of Latin American Studies at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, sheds light on class and state formation during Mexico's Porfirian and Revolutionary eras. Differing from other works on these well-known periods of Mexican history, Blum positions the family as the main site of "class and state formation" (xvi). She examines the encounter of Mexico City's urban poor families and the state's welfare system, which contributed to patterns of child abandonment and child labor. In addition, Blum illuminates the changing elite beliefs about childhood and motherhood, as well as the application of these ideologies on the urban poor, thus revealing a disjunction between ideology and practice.

Using legal documents, census data, juvenile court records, public welfare documents and newspaper articles, Blum uncovers the state's discourse on family relations and reconstructs social conditions of the urban poor, including the urban poor's familial relations. Her book evades a single historiographical classification, instead contributing to "histories of women, gender, law, labor, and medicine, and an emerging history of childhood" (xxvii).

Blum divides *Domestic Economies* into two parts, covering the *Porfiriato*, the period of President Porfirio Diaz's rule (1876-1911), and the revolutionary era (1911-1943). In Part I, Blum examines the welfare system through the city's two main orphanages, the Casa de Niños Expósitos (the Foundling Home) and the Hospicio de Niños (the Children's Hospice). By operating these orphanages, ideologically, the state claimed a paternalistic role toward orphaned children or children left by single mothers who could not feed them. In practice, these orphanages sustained a system of child circulation that placed children, especially girls, in elite homes as domestic servants. Blum notes that liberal adoption laws in the mid-nineteenth century reversed Spanish colonial tradition of formal adoption. The informal adoption system that the state left in place, operated under the elite discourse of feminine charity toward poor children. Although some upper-class families adopted "for love," Blum argues that in practice, informal adoptions also opened the door to child labor, and often-brutal abuse, disguised under elite promises of providing education and protection to adopted children. Thus, through child circulation, the state contributed to the reproduction of domestic servants' social class. In addition, in 1898, welfare system reformers waged a campaign against the long-established practice of wet nursing. Reformers castigated wet nurses as a health threat and moral danger to babies and were thus, forced to abandon their own families and children to submit to medical inspection and institutionalization. Blum reveals, however, that poor women exerted agency by circumventing the welfare system and retrieving their children from orphanages using community networks and refusing wet-nurse institutionalization.

In Part II, Blum argues that the revolutionary state, under its promise of social equality, adopted the family as the focus of social reform. The revolutionary state led by Venustiano Carranza's Constitutionalist faction formally codified family law in the 1917 Constitution and the Law of Family Relations, and positioned children as the future of the nation. The state, nevertheless, continued to employ European discourses of medicine and science to qualify the child rearing practices of urban poor mothers. In the 1920s the revolutionary state also sought to mediate parent-child relations through juvenile courts for adolescents, signaling the state's further shift toward defining its social responsibility toward children. Blum contends that urban poor family relations also constituted labor relations, as these families often depended on the labor of adolescents. And although juvenile courts condemned child labor, in their efforts to maintain family relations, courts sided with parents, which perpetuated child labor. Similar to the Porfirian era, adoption reform replicated elite notions of motherhood

and domesticity. These ideals denied adoption rights to poor couples or single women who could not fulfill these ideological prescriptions. By 1943, the state issued Mexico's first social security law, which marked a watershed moment in the state's recognition of childhood as a specific "life stage" with age-specific social roles and free of work (xxi). But, the law benefited the formal working class, leaving the countless families who worked in the informal sector and who still relied on the work of children, without legal protection.

Blum provides a complex analysis of two major historical periods in Mexican history, usually studied separately, and a novel approach, which positions the family as the center of state intervention in the lives of Mexico's urban poor. This study is guaranteed to find a welcomed reception, especially among those interested in Mexican history, gender history and the history of childhood.

José Magaña

Michael Bronski. *A Queer History of the United States (ReVisioning American History).* Boston: Beacon Press, 2012. Pp. 312. Paper $18.00.

Although historians commonly position the beginnings of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) history at the start of the modern Gay Liberation Movement in the 1970s, Dartmouth historian Michael Bronski argues that this approach is inaccurate and misrepresentative of the LGBT community. Following Marxian and Feminist revisionist theories, Bronski presents gay history as a complex study of individuals playing integral parts in the American experiment rather than a linear progression of repression and gradual acceptance, thus breaking new ground in his everyman approach to the queer history of America. Perhaps overly ambitious in attempting to cover 500 years of gay culture, it is important to note that this work intentionally lacks comprehensiveness. Rather than exhaustively chronicling queer contributions, this is a cultural study filled with anecdotes demonstrating the various ways in which participants in same-sex relationships influenced and in turn were affected by the American experience.

Beginning with the Puritans' renunciation of Elizabethan openness to sexual discourse and their self-imposed exile to the Americas, early settlers sought to homogenize society by rejecting carnal behavior that did not directly support the cornerstone of their community—the family. Relying heavily on Foucauldian ideas of power and discourse to justify continuing American refusals to accept non-conformist relationships, Bronski argues that "homosocial