New York: Cradle of America’s Cultural Plurality

Edited by Michal Pepnůk and Matthew Sweney
“New York – that unnatural city where every one is an exile, none more so than the American.”

— Charlotte Perkins Gilman

*New York: America’s Cradle of Cultural Plurality* offers a variety of perspectives on New York City literature, art, and music by a team of European American Studies scholars. Beginning with the myths of New York, it continues to explore New York’s topos from the point of displaced southerners, ethnic minorities (Jewish, African American, Czech), gender (feminist, gay), avant-garde artists, and its indigenous music (jazz, vaudeville, the musical). New York’s hodgepodge of material and cultural wealth, the accumulation of peoples from all over the globe, has created fascinating patterns of democratic cooperation, exchange and tolerance — as well as friction and conflict. Its dramatic metropolitan structure and cosmopolitan diversity provoke a wide range of responses in newcomers (exiles and immigrants) and native New Yorkers alike, first challenging one’s provincialism and then marking one for life. New York City continues to enthrall, enchant and appall. It has always been a testing ground for architectural, cultural, financial, political and social experiments which have affected not only the city, but the nation and the whole wide world.
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