

**Review of David Foster, *Glimpses of Phoenix:
The Desert Metropolis in Written and Visual Media*
(Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2013)**

In nuanced and beautiful *Glimpses of Phoenix*, Regents Professor David Foster offers us vivid reminders of the dominant narratives of our city, and the alternative voices struggling to be heard over the din of endless construction and the bustle of snowbird tourism. In this grand tour of the literary legends of our city he presents far more than a list of required reading for those who wish to venture into the dark and even dangerous places of Phoenix intellectual life. Foster carefully constructs from selected literary voices of this place important narratives about the meanings of place, dystopia, sexuality and racism previously whispered in the close quarters of hot summer nights.

As I read Foster's challenging prose I found myself sighing and laughing, reaching for my pen and wanting to validate and debate words that contradict many of the Phoenicians I have met in my work over the last 25 years. It has long been my impression that there are two kinds of people in Phoenix, those who insist that we genuflect before the pioneers of the wild west, or those who want others to build the gleaming 21st century city and forget about what it was like here before there was air conditioning. Nevertheless, since the 1950's Arizona Collection curators have dutifully represented 20th century Arizona through jejune cowboy novelists, records of the Luhrs Family businesses, Herb and Dorothy McLaughlin photographs, and papers of larger than life politicians such as Barry Goldwater and Carl Hayden. Thanks to David Foster we are reminded that there are other softer voices, fleeting glimpses of beauty and love and risks taken and lost that shine with barrio colors and wet tears.

The glimpses are fleeting given the accelerating pace of destruction and purported renewal. Foster shares our concern for the demise of "cultural repositories" such as the Wallace and Ladmo Show, whose obsolete quad video tapes slowly decay in a local archive, or the apparent lack of Phoenix literature here at the ASU Libraries (an illusion of shallow cataloging rather than the co-conspiracy of underacknowledgement Foster tentatively asserts in his conclusion).

I want to suggest that there is hope here at ASU for the fleeting voices of Phoenix authors and artists. Here raw materials and milled products of the counterculture can also be compiled, collected and cataloged under the valued shelter of academic freedom. Benson's depiction of ASU football coach Frank Kush's firing could be juxtaposed with the papers and radio interviews of the irascible socialist ASU philosophy professor Morris Starsky (also terminated in the 1970's), or 3,000 original Reg Manning cartoons. Whispers of dissent can be heard from Carolina Butler's Citizens Against Rio Salado collection, or in the eighty boxes of our B.J. Budd Memorial Library, likely the largest surviving collection documenting our gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community.

But Foster rightfully rejects complacency. There is so much more work to be done in collecting and preserving the work of Phoenix authors and artists. In Glimpses Foster shines his eloquent light upon ten of the most visible, most soulful voices of the alternative discourse, but only Cecilia Esquer has donated her papers to our archives. As we have seen with the recent departure of the Frank Lloyd Wright archives, or the demise of the Phoenix Museum of History and the Arizona Historical Foundation, keeping Phoenix history alive requires vigilance, advocacy and investment.

Dr. Foster helps us with the first two. His work is a profound gift that for a moment reaches out from under the suffocating tirades of the pioneers and the gleaming city, and offers us a wisp of dusty wind and deep azure from the Phoenix that was. Fleeting glimpses of Phoenix might even cause us to wander into the dark, desolate and dangerous night, to venture into a neglected Grand Avenue gallery, to gather frayed patches of our community into a soft quilt of warmth and brightness tied with faint hope and light thread.

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