essays that focus on the gender politics of death practices in the South, which could have added another analytical framework for the topic. Nevertheless, this is a very inventive volume that is useful to scholars and students of both American death studies and the history of the American South.

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In his acknowledgments, Ethan A. Schmidt writes that he became a social historian out of his commitment “to care about people who struggle outside the mainstream of society and to do [his] part to make this a more just, understanding, peaceful, and communal world” (xv). That commitment is apparent throughout The Divided Dominion: Social Conflict and Indian Hatred in Early Virginia. In particular, Schmidt seeks to narrate Anglo-Indian violence in seventeenth-century Virginia so that readers will empathize with the perspectives of both poor whites and Indians, without excusing the violence of the former toward the latter.

In an unapologetically class-based analysis (inspired by E. P. Thompson and Gary Nash), he employs a loose definition of class as based on “conflict over differing interests.” Schmidt places the ultimate blame for colonists’ violence against Indians squarely on the shoulders of the elite, blaming them for fostering “the notion that unrestrained violence against Indians for land acquisition purposes by any member of white Virginia society represented the normative state of Virginia-Indian relations” (45). He wavers on the question of how consciously elites promoted this attitude, several times arguing explicitly that they did so “unwittingly” (8, 55), but at other times suggesting that they understood that their “encouragement of violent retribution” would establish a long-lasting precedent (45).

Much of Schmidt’s material is not new, and his interpretations rest heavily on Edmund S. Morgan’s American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia (1975) and on multiple articles by J. Frederick Fausz; he acknowledges his debts to both. However, The Divided Dominion differs from earlier scholarship in both emphasis and chronological frame. Schmidt focuses resolutely on his argument that over the course of the seventeenth century, Virginia elites repeatedly sent the message that Englishmen were justified in killing Indians, not only as retribution, but in order to acquire land. The individual colonist doing so needed no sanction but his own. Schmidt traces this attitude from the Anglo-Powhatan Wars of 1609–1646 through Bacon’s Rebellion in 1676, insisting that in order to best put Bacon’s Rebellion into its chronological context, we should see it as a product of seventeenth-century violence, rather than as a precursor of eighteenth-century race relations.

Schmidt uses the failed attempt by members of the Lawne’s Creek Parish to incite an anti-tax riot in 1673 as the basis for his secondary thesis, that class tension was prevalent in Virginia for at least a generation before Bacon’s Rebellion, but could not rise to the level of violence by itself because ties of dependence linking poor whites to elites remained too important. However, for poor whites, the unrestricted “right” to kill Indians in order to take their land became so important by 1676 that it was the only thing that could spark a simmering class resentment (at least, according to the various complaints of Bacon’s supporters, against taxes and fur trade policies) into the violent confrontation against elites that became known as Bacon’s Rebellion.

Schmidt’s arguments are stark, in part because he does not embed them in a narrative as complicated as the ones provided by other historians. His decision to pull one thread from a much more complex story will not satisfy specialists aware of the distinctions colonists’ drew among the region’s indigenous populations. More thorough reexaminations of Virginia’s Anglo-Indian relations have appeared in much recent scholarship, including Camilla Townsend’s “Mutual Appraisals: The Shifting Paradigms of the English, Spanish, and Powhatans in Tsenacomoco, 1560–1622” and Edward DuBois Ragan’s “‘Scatter’d upon the English Seats’: Indian Identity and Land Occupancy in the Rappahannock River Valley,” both in Early Modern Virginia: Reconsidering the Old Dominion, edited by Douglas Bradburn and John C. Coombs (2011). Readers will find fuller analysis of social tensions (and new material) in Brent Tarter’s “Bacon’s Rebellion, the Grievances of the People, and the Political Culture of Seventeenth-Century Virginia” (Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 119 [2011]: 2–41).

However, I found myself repeatedly considering how I might incorporate Schmidt’s concerns into my undergraduate teaching, and here is where I believe this book has the most to teach us. Because Schmidt states his arguments forcefully and makes it clear why they should matter to us, and has done so in a narrative both engaging and brief, The Divided Dominion will be effective in the undergraduate classroom.

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It is fair to say that twenty-first-century scholars of the literary and cultural history of early New England Puritanism might think their book will be the last word on the subject. Why? It is mainly because the wise shifting of attention away from the tiny strand between Boston and Cambridge as a point of origin for American Studies has meant a ratcheting back on monographs covering the area. But then a pithy volume such as Matt Cohen’s The Networked Wilderness (2009) comes along or a provocative reconsideration such as Sarah Rivett’s The Science of the Soul in Colonial New England (2011) enters the field and you realize there is much more to say. Such is one