

rights. Although many of these initiatives failed at the time, it still portrays the fight for equality. This highlights migrant populations actively resisted and would advocate for change through labor unions, community centers such as churches, and protests like the 1960s Chicano walkouts.

Sánchez relies on official city government archival records including city council meeting records, court case documents, Federal Housing Authority documents, newspapers, and photos. Interviews from various former Boyle Heights residents are also cited in the bibliography, which are used to document their experiences living through biased policy. Other interviews were conducted with the Japanese American National Museum, focusing specifically on displaced Japanese residents.

Boyle Heights is fascinating and was culturally illuminating to me as a Mexican American. As a native Angeleno, I was inspired to pursue graduate studies at Cal State LA after reading this title. It is an engaging and well-sourced account of how multiethnic communities formed in Los Angeles and how public policy constrained their lives. The book should be valuable to historians, undergraduate students, and Los Angeles natives seeking insight into the history of Boyle Heights and the city at large.

Kevin Avila

Joel Mokyr. *A Culture of Growth: The Origins of the Modern Economy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016. Pp. 403. Paperback \$12.80.

Economic historian Joel Mokyr received the 2025 Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences in part for his latest book, which furthered his award-winning research on the historical impact of technological and scientific innovations to include the role of culture. His work demonstrates how early modern European society evolved from 1500 to 1700 laid the foundations for the tremendous gains witnessed in the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution. The analysis is driven by the question of why sustained economic growth did not occur in the period before 1700 despite new technology, more effective mar-

kets, and improved resource allocation. For Mokyr, the answer lies in culture which he defines as a set of beliefs, values, and preferences, which affect behavior and are socially transmitted and shared within a society. Utilizing an innovative historical approach, *A Culture of Growth* explores how changes in culture altered how people thought about their natural world and their ability to change it for their benefit, leading to the accelerated economic growth associated with our modern economy.

The book is organized across five sections with the first two introducing compelling analytical approaches historians might find useful for their own research. Part one outlines the application of evolutionary theory to the spread of cultural traits across societies. This evolutionary approach provides historians with a way to think of how and why certain historical trajectories occurred while avoiding the idea that specific outcomes were inexorable or completely random. The second section introduces the concept of cultural entrepreneurs – individuals who contested existing authoritative laws or beliefs and created compelling new ways of thinking. Mokyr is careful to emphasize these individuals were not indispensable nor inevitable, rather they helped consolidate the new theories and ideas of their time into more far-reaching messages of change. For the period under analysis, Francis Bacon and Isaac Newton are highlighted for their influence. Bacon's contribution was in spreading the belief that knowledge gained through experimental methods should be accumulated, shared widely, and used to identify knowledge that improves mankind. Newton furthered Bacon's contribution by proving mathematics and analysis could make the natural world intelligible and thus able to be improved. Their ideas were spread widely by their colleagues and admirers, laying the groundwork for the institutional changes necessary for economic development.

The last three sections follow a more traditional historical analysis of how new ways of thinking were disseminated across Europe while comparing it with other regions, particularly China. The third section details how these new concepts were shared and debated with an extremely comprehensive and compelling discussion on the role of the *Republic of Letters*. In the fourth, he further discusses how these developments created the conditions necessary for the En-

lightenment and Industrial Revolution. Throughout his analysis, current historical thinking on multiple topics is thoughtfully addressed such as the role of Puritanism and the idea of British exceptionalism. Mokyr concludes with a comparison of the conditions found in Western Europe and China. Rejecting the Eurocentric “triumphalist” view of the economic divergence that occurred, the analysis demonstrates how similar economic and technological conditions could lead to widely different outcomes.

While reading *A Culture of Growth*, it quickly becomes apparent why the Nobel committee selected Mokyr for their 2025 Economic Sciences prize. The historical and economic analysis is detailed, comprehensive, and compelling. Few historical works are filled with as many references to the writings and impact of notable intellectuals, scientists, and writers of the period alongside modern scholarly work on evolutionary theory, the economics of culture, and the comparative history of Western Europe and China. Throughout, he thoughtfully advances his arguments while addressing and considering competing historical viewpoints – a process all scholars should emulate. Historians of the Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution should read this work while scholars of early modern Europe will particularly benefit from the discussion of the *Republic of Letters*. More broadly, Mokyr shows the benefits of applying evolutionary theory and the idea of cultural entrepreneurs to explore how cultural traits and beliefs spread amongst populations. *A Culture of Growth* is an important contribution to the fields of both economics and history.

Scott Beltz

Richard Bell. *The American Revolution and the Fate of the World*. New York: Riverhead Books, 2025. Pp 416. Hardcover \$35.00.

University of Maryland Professor Richard Bell argues that the Revolution was not an expression of American exceptionalism but instead addresses the interactions between the Thirteen Colonies and the international world beyond the British Empire by showing that the American Revolution was a global event with worldwide theaters and