animal families as equivalent to human families, pets as beloved children, and animals as our friends) that appear in the newspapers, magazines, books, and commercial images from the late nineteenth to the twentieth century.

The remaining chapters in Grier's book cover some lingering topics and issues, such as the paradoxes of working animals (e.g., horses) in the country and city and "urban livestock," such as chickens. She looks closely at the emergence of pet shops and the emergence of the "pet industry," an industry with sales of $34.4 billion in 2004 (316). In her epilogue she returns briefly to that pesky issue she nearly buried in the introduction: the issue of animal agency and dependence and the paradox that we simultaneously keep pets for their animality, their closeness to nature, and their easy fashioning into something wholly artificial and cultural. This last point nicely returns to the anthropological insight that animals create paradoxes—in this case, our desire both to have pets as wild as possible and as civilized as possible—reflecting felt tensions in other realms of culture and everyday lives.

I greatly admire Grier's accomplishment in this book. We needed a good social and cultural history of pet keeping in America, and Grier has provided it—a history that will last us a while, I believe. There are some topics I wish she had expanded a bit. She neglects the peculiar position of hunting dogs, as I suggested earlier, and while she is very good on the animal welfare movement she has little to say here about the animal rights movement and its implications for pet keeping.

The one issue I wish Grier had been more explicit about is the issue that challenges material culture studies altogether, and that is the question of what additional information and insight visual and material culture bring to our understanding beyond the written record. The presence of lots of documentary evidence about pets and pet keeping (just as about children) makes all the more important the question of the added value of material and visual cultural evidence. For this reason I would have liked to have seen Grier give us more "thick readings" of the snapshots, say, or of the portraits. It is possible that the visual and material evidence merely corroborates the diaries, letters, and other written evidence, but material culture studies work from the premise that the artifacts sometimes hold information not told in the fragmentary written record. Too often I felt that the wonderful photographs in Grier's book were merely illustrations of historical points established otherwise by the written and printed record, rather than unique texts offering insights of their own.

Grier proves that there is hardly a topic in the social and cultural history of the United States that is not connected, somehow, to the customs of keeping pets, so the book deserves as broad a readership as possible, including general readers. I hope that historians of childhood and youth will read this book carefully, as Grier has had to grapple with some of the same issues of evidence and agency as do they, working to give voice to the voiceless.

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Jan Jennings. ***Cheap and Tasteful Dwellings: Design Competitions and the Convenient Interior, 1879–1909***. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2005. 313 pp.; 135 illustrations, bibliography, appendices, index. $48.00.

Today the word "convenient" conjures up images of easy access and obvious advantage. Fast food is convenient because it is ready to eat and therefore easy; a marriage of convenience is arranged for political, economic, or social benefit rather than for love. A century ago "convenient" meant something quite different from microwaves or monetary gain, especially to American architects and homeowners. A convenient house in 1900 combined features of affordability and usefulness with efficiency and technological know-how. "How convenient arrangement came about, who ascribed to it, and how it became inculcated is a requisite for understanding American vernacular architecture," says Jan Jennings, a professor in the Department of Design and Environmental Analysis at Cornell University (121).

Jennings's *Cheap and Tasteful Dwellings: Design Competitions and the Convenient Interior, 1879–1909,* illuminates the significant and now obsolete architectural concept of convenience through a close study of the forty-two design competitions sponsored by *Carpentry and Building* magazine from 1879 to 1909. Jennings uses the journal as a window on the people, theories, and structures that comprised the late Victorian world of home in America. The book's first half focuses on the characters and the procedures behind the competitions, such as the wide range of professional activities and backgrounds of the competitors, and the second part looks at the houses, particularly their complex floor plans. Between these two sections lies what Jennings calls

"Gallery," a scrapbooklike centerfold of successful schemes, including a superb description of the ideal home based on Jennings's close reading of the competition winners. In this particularly masterful text, she points to a picturesque, nonclassical, and asymmetrical cottage "with diverse visual and tactile effects on the exterior and an integration between exterior form and inside spaces" (120). Contrast, she elaborates, emerges as a central organizing principle of the home, manifested through texture, irregularity, and abruptness. This assertion alone is a huge contribution to the literature on the Victorian home, as it moves readers beyond style and into the realm of architectural experience, without losing sight of the building as an object.

As a historical source, *Carpentry and Building* is fascinating because it appealed to and touched the lives of thousands of Americans: "[*Carpentry and Building*] worked the middle ground of house choices, and the middle-ground got built" (9), asserts Jennings. The magazine's editors enticed architects and builders to submit their designs as early as 1879 and also invited readers to comment on the proposals, thereby developing a real dialogue among designers and users. By publishing a complete set of working drawings, *Carpentry and Building* appealed to the do-it-yourself crowd, a demographic group that is hard to study. *Cheap and Tasteful Dwellings* thus contributes to our understanding of American vernacular architecture, in addition to the history of architectural periodicals, architectural competitions, and the architectural and allied professions. Chapter 3, for example, shows how the journal mirrored the increasing complexity of the architect's world, offering a telling snapshot of the conditions of practice.

"Body of Work," which follows "Gallery," is the most innovative section of the book and the most useful one for teaching. Here Jennings traces the divorce of the house interior and exterior as a way to frame what she calls the "theory of convenience" underlying the late Victorian house. She shows how convenient arrangements defied scale and included everyday considerations such as room adjacencies and their understudied counterparts: storage, lighting, ventilation, germ avoidance, and the purposeful distancing of rooms. She shows, too, how the concept of cheapness was aligned with convenience and how English and American concepts of comfort differed: "If the English thought of comfort as a passive trait, Americans viewed it as active" (145).

Jennings's book has only one serious flaw: little direct connection to the built world outside *Carpentry and Building*. What was the real impact of the journal's competitions? Although it would be impossible and perhaps fruitless to track every house inspired by the magazine, even one or two with direct links to the competition winners would enrich the study. Still, the book is the most thorough study of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century house plan and interior published to date, including comparative building footprints and amazing spatial flow diagrams underlining the connections between rooms. Its rich appendices, too, including detailed biographical information on the architects and builders associated with the competitions, will hopefully inspire even more research on the typical late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century home and its makers.

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Joni L. Kinsey. *Thomas Moran's West: Chromolithography, High Art, and Popular Taste*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006. 260 pp.; 167 illustrations, includes bibliographic references, appendix of Moran's paintings for Louis Prang, index. $45.00.

Joni L. Kinsey's lavishly illustrated book, *Thomas Moran's West*, explores the creation, publication, and reception of the 1876 chromolithographic publication *The Yellowstone National Park, and the Mountain Regions of Portions of Idaho, Nevada, Colorado, and Utah*, published by the Boston-based firm of Louis Prang and illustrated by Thomas Moran. The product of exhaustive research into the creative artistic process that led to the publication of what Kinsey calls the "finest example of chromolithography ever produced" (3), *Thomas Moran's West* examines how the Prang chromolithographs, based on original watercolor sketches by Thomas Moran, represented "the shaping, packaging, and presentation of the American West as a visual commodity" (9). This publication was originally intended to serve as a catalog for an exhibition at the Joslyn Art Museum in Omaha, celebrating that institution's recent acquisition of a set of chromolithographs designed by Thomas Moran for Louis Prang's publication, *The Yellowstone National Park*. While unfortunately the exhibition never occurred,[1] this superbly illustrated volume—filled with fifty-four exquisite

[1] In the acknowledgments Kinsey explains that the exhibition was "canceled in its final stages for budgetary reasons."