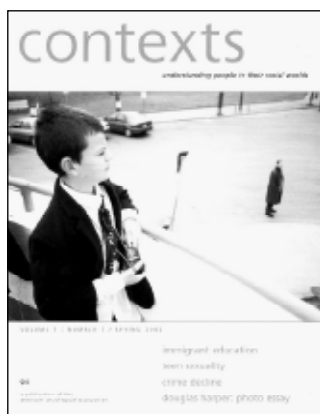


Continuing Diversity: A Column of Periodical Reviews

By Renee Rude

In this double installment of "Continuing Diversity," four serials are reviewed. The first is a brand-new journal that is available in print as well as having an online presence. A second is a magazine for general audiences, established in 1996. The final two are special issues of venerable, polished publications, one that has been in existence since 1965 and the other since 1915.



Contexts. ISSN 1536-5042. Volume 1, Number 1, Spring 2002. Editor: Department of Sociology, University of California, Berkeley. Executive editor: Claude S. Fisher. Published quarterly for the American Sociological Association (ASA) by the University of California Press, Berkeley, CA 94704-1223; e-mail: contexts@socrates.berkeley.edu; web site: www.contextsmagazine.org. Subscription and permission

requests: University of California Press Journals Division, c/o American Sociological Association, 1307 New York Avenue NW, Suite 700, Washington DC 20005-4701. Quarterly. Subscriptions: \$30/year (ASA members); \$20/year (student members); \$40/year (Non-ASA members); \$120/year (institutions); \$10 (single issues for individuals); \$25 (single issues for institutions).

Under the wide-ranging, varied schema of the discipline known as sociology, students and laypersons have long questioned the incongruity between general public/undergraduate reading materials and texts for the graduate/professional level. Indeed, the two disparate entities present an enigma and an aperture for further exploration. Executive Editor Claude S. Fischer introduces this premier issue by stating, "*Contexts* will be the bridge that makes the findings of social science accessible to the general public." Readers at all levels of comprehension are relieved that a go-between vocabulary is finally provided for the nonspecialist with an interest in sociology.

Of standard width and length (8 1/2" x 11") this brand-new, cutting-edge journal of 72 pages is replete with compelling "sociological research directed to the general public in a concise, accessible and engaging way." The subtitle, "Understanding People in their Social Worlds," aptly imparts the premier issue's contents. Featured articles, most under eight pages in length, include "English-Only Triumphs,

But the Costs Are High," "Did Welfare Reform Work? Implications for 2002 and Beyond," and "Life Without Father: What Happens to the Children?" Worth noting is the fact that these articles, authored by professors of sociology or related disciplines, each provide charts, graphs, and sporadic photographs as well as thorough references and a list of recommended resources for further information.

A thought-provoking seven-page photo essay contributed by Douglas Harper, "Changing Works: Eliciting Accounts of Past and Present Dairy Farming," reminds nostalgic readers of what life was like on dairy farms in the United States in 1945. It is not vital that one remembers much of that time; most have seen pictures or heard personal stories from this period of U.S. history. Five comprehensive book reviews of titles published from 2000 to 2002 round out the print copy of this premier issue.

Currently, National Public Radio has a program titled, "Wait, Wait, Don't Tell Me!" NPR's introductory line is appropriate to *Contexts'* online presence, which serves mainly as a teaser for the forthcoming print versions. While the print copy was released in March 2002, the home page of that issue is the only one touting "search abstracts" as a header. "English-Only Triumphs, But the Costs Are High" is offered as a press release, as are "After the Sexual Revolution," "Crime Decline in *Context*," "Life Without Father," and "Did Welfare Reform Work?" "Life Without Father" also offers a slide presentation of the complete series.

This reviewer was fortunate to have a complimentary print copy to investigate and reflect on; at the journal's online site viewers are simply tempted with snippets of forthcoming pieces. The online web page for Summer 2002 does not offer abstracts, and while the titles of five journal articles pique the reader's interest, only one, "Is Job Discrimination Dead?" by Cedric Herring, offers the press release. Fall 2002's online site shows marked improvement, with "Panic: Myth or Reality?" by Lee Clarke offered as a full-text journal article in .pdf format. Spring 2003 continues the improvement for those limited to the online site. "Bin Laden and Other Thoroughly Modern Muslims," by Charles Kurzman, is offered as a full-text article in .pdf format, and three of four other articles offer press releases.

Each issue of this new publication improves its offerings for those limited to the web site. For those who are able to access the print journal, this new publication earns four out of four stars. For those limited to the online presence, be prepared for a jaunt to your nearest institution of higher learning to get the full text of desired articles, or work with the Interlibrary Loan librarian in your area.

Black Parenting Today: Resources for Families and Communities. ISSN 1087-3899. Vol. 3, No. 1, Spring/Summer 2002. Editor and Publisher: Valerie Harris. Black Parenting Today, Inc., P.O. Box 28663, Philadelphia, PA 19151; phone: (215) 474-8183; e-mail: vharris@blackparentingtoday.org; web site: www.blackparentingtoday.org. Quarterly. Subscriptions: \$16 (individuals); \$25 (institutions).

Black Parenting is a 28-page magazine offering a hodgepodge of information in very short articles. Among the topics considered in the Spring/Summer issue are reunions, making peace with boys, fostering independence, and other fairly day-to-day family topics. The section "Parenting Basics" includes "Across the Board: Parenting 101," which highlights the care, safety, and healthy growth of our kids and another article, "Readers Are Achievers!" A sampler of "Departments" includes the following: Our Health Matters: Controlling Childhood Obesity; Books! Books! Books!; and Voice UP! Boys Learn Best by Example.

Pictures of story subjects or graphics that often consume half a page augment the brief writings. The only quasi-intellectual piece is an interview that Valerie Harris, publisher of *Black Parenting Today*, conducted with Brother Robb Carter, MSW. Carter is "known to many in the anti-violence and youth development arenas as the face and heart of Peaceful Posse, the program that promotes positive self-awareness and conflict resolution among boys." While acceptable that the editor/publisher composes the article, it should be noted that photographs of the article's subjects comprise at least half of the article's seven pages.

Four capsule book reviews make up the "Books! Books! Books!" piece, with content provided by a student at the University of Pennsylvania who is also an editorial intern at *Black Parenting Today*. The "Readers are Achievers!" section is actually reprinted with permission from "Read and Rise: Preparing our Children for a Lifetime of Success," a resource guide put out by the children's publisher Scholastic along with the National Urban League.

"College Bound from Day One" is written by K. Williams, also author of "Northwest Indiana Directory of Local Scholarships: 2001-2002." To the detriment of *Black Parenting Today*, this short piece neglects a basic rule of scholarship-to inform readers where they may locate this item or similar information, so that they may begin the interlibrary loan process from many public and college libraries. In her article, Williams mentions "The Occupational Handbook," and says that it can be found "in the library." It is probably the well-known *Occupational Outlook Handbook* that she means to cite, and it would have been helpful if she had included the name of its publisher (U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics) and/or its web site (www.bls.gov/oco). "Our Health Matters" by Dr. Jacqueline Douge, a pediatrician who is also a fellow in the American Academy of Pediatrics, informs readers of the dangers of childhood obesity. The previous article, "Across the Board: Parenting 101," has no author. No sources are cited either, and readers are given no indication of authority.

Black Parenting Today supplies a few informational tidbits but unfortunately lacks substantive content or authoritative writings, a major flaw that its many large photographs cannot remedy.



Salmagundi. ISSN 0036-3529. No. 133-134, Winter-Spring 2002. Editor-in-Chief: Robert Boyers. Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866. Quarterly. Subscriptions: \$20/one year, \$30/two years (individuals); \$28/one year, \$45/two years (institutions).

Defined as a salad, mixture, or potpourri, *Salmagundi* in this setting is a scholarly journal of 238 pages. The entire Winter-Spring 2002 issue is devoted to multicultural concerns, as shown in its subtitle: *Afro-America at the Start of a New Century*. While this publication has been a major presence in social and cultural criticism for some time, it is most apt that the race issue is addressed. This volume contains: "9/11, Islamic Fascism & the Secular Intellectual: An Evening with Christopher Hitchens"; columns by Tzvetan Todorov, Charles Molesworth, and Martin Jay; poems by Gail Mazur, Chase Twichell and five other well-known poets; and a lengthy transcript of the six spirited sessions among the 18 participants of the "Afro-America at the Start of a New Century" conference held in February 2000 at Skidmore College.

Hitchens contributes the lead essay, "Thinking about 9/11," and in a most compelling style informs readers about "the war that I think should have been fought against Islamic fascism some time ago." He proceeds to remind readers of the massive struggle for free expression in distant lands. Because he has been involved with the policies and practices of the U.S. government for many years, Hitchens is both authoritative and convincing in his explanation that "religious warfare was combined with ethno-fascism unleashed in Europe, and we saw the insane racist propaganda that defined a population as one fit only for extermination, and saw the actual evidence, day by day . . . as it was happening." Hitchens tells readers that "the real model for what a human society might become, that is to say a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, open democracy, not based on empire or exploitation is the big argument to be having." He asks readers to pay attention to and cultivate friendship, solidarity, and contact with "those in the Muslim and Arab and Persian and Turkish world who are our counterparts and our friends." Thought-provoking and inspiring, indeed.

Todorov shares his perspective on what is frequently labeled economic globalization and states: "the most important change in terms of its impact on concerned populations has to do with how such operations and operators escape the political control of the state." While describing how the prodigious progress of science has moved some areas of our world "forward," a reader might easily become disheartened by this somber analysis that is both apposite and opportune. Todorov postulates: "In the world as it exists, international

organizations are and can alas only be a reflection of the relationships of force among countries. To claim otherwise is hopelessly naïve, or just hypocritical.”

Eighteen women and men spent several days together to discuss, debate, and sometimes writhe with discomfort and anxiety over the current conditions of life in the United States for black people. Robert Boyers, editor of *Salmagundi*, began the conference quoting Ralph Ellison: “Things were not supposed to be this way.” He further elucidates that when Ellison spoke of things that so disappointed him he was thinking particularly of the relations between white people and black people, about equalities and inequalities, prospects and absence of prospects. While Boyers credits what he calls the best and the brightest for the reflections made about “what we think and ought to think about the thing that wasn’t supposed to be the way it mostly is,” he informs readers that the hope of these 18 intellectuals is to engage in real talk without fear of contradiction, and to “call the important things by their rightful names and to speak as truthfully as we can.”

Background reading for participants was Orlando Patterson’s recent book, *Rituals of Blood*. Kind words of warmth are expressed in the opening lines from Patterson: “I am pleased and honored to be among the cool heads and smart minds.” Patterson proposes a complex classification of what the problems are, because “There are really four kinds of problems which can be usefully differentiated. There are, first: external sources of external problems and these are the classic ones we’re all aware of: discrimination, racism, and so on leading to an outcome such as unemployment.” There are also external sources of internal problems, and “Now we come to the really tricky problems, the problems which are painful to explore, the problems that have been neglected.” These are the “internal sources of external outcomes, problems which are deeply rooted in attitudes, subcultural patterns, behavioral patterns which have outcomes that, unfortunately, are disastrous for the group.”

Patterson reminds the participants of some monumental achievements, such as extraordinary improvements in the educational attainment of Afro-Americans over the past 40 years, the growth of the middle class, and the success of blacks in the military. While these achievements are laudable, Patterson states that “we still have far to go, there are still a lot of problems remaining, largely because we are coming from so far back.”

First under consideration over the three days are the problems of poverty, isolation, and ghettoization. Whether or not the participants choose to address the issue, Patterson states: “We have a crisis because we have come to the end of our reliance on external explanations, and now once again confront the racist kind. There is a good reason why *The Bell Curve* became a best-seller in our day, because we’re in a situation where people have been able to say that we still cannot explain what’s going on.”

The Reverend Eugene Rivers says, “The considerations, concerns, class interests of the black elite sitting around this table are not necessarily the same as the interests of those

who live in the casbahs in the inner cities across America.” Benjamin Barber lists the questions he would like to see addressed, each with explanatory notes. First, “does the legacy of slavery in this country inflect the issue of race with bitterness, with a gravity that makes it peculiarly intractable? Second, what about the new multiculturalism, will it make the prospects for racial justice between whites and blacks better or worse? Third, will a society that has decided that incarceration is a better social policy than education address bigotry? Finally, can a country that uses disparities of wealth to reinforce racial antagonism ever really achieve justice?”

Darryl Pinckney and George Fredrickson offer thoughts for discussion, as do Kendall Thomas and Jill Nelson, the latter of whom emphasizes, “We’re just afraid of new things because change is so hard for all of us.” James Miller brings it all back to the past by stating: “At the last *Salmagundi* conference on Afro-America nine years ago we sort of agreed—I’m speaking of those who sat around this same table back then—that the whole question of what race and ethnicity meant in this country was in massive flux because of the vast changes in the demography of the country.” At the risk of sounding tendentious, this conference of 18 is similar to a very large family wrangling over the sole remaining parent’s estate. Deciding which problems are paramount and which are not as urgent is the first stumbling block; how the issues should be addressed is contested, as well as with what words and in what context. Each participant has valid and thought-provoking positions. *Afro-America at the Start of a New Century* is similar to a very large family with respectful disagreements; no quick or easy solutions exist. This special issue of *Salmagundi* provides social and cultural criticism, a must-have solid publication for all institutions of higher learning and elsewhere.


Southwest Review. ISSN 0038-4712. Volume 87, Number 2-3. Spring-Summer 2002. Guest editor: Marjorie Agosin. Southern Methodist University, 307 Fondren Library West, P. O. Box 750374, Dallas, TX 75275-0374; phone: (214) 768-1036; e-mail: swr@mail.smu.edu; web site: southwestreview.org. Quarterly. Subscriptions: \$24/year (individuals); \$60/year (institutions); \$6 (single issue).

Writers and scholars from Texas, surrounding states, and elsewhere are featured in this established and highly regarded academic journal. The Spring/Summer 2002 issue is guest edited by Marjorie Agosin, Professor of Spanish at Wellesley College, who explains, “The words and the voices of writers who tenaciously pursue justice through their writings has and continues to be a most important tradition and legacy that define our continent.” Indeed, Agosin knows this experience intimately through her own life experiences as a Jewish girl who grew up in Chile and came to the United States as a teenager. Besides negotiating multiple cultural and religious traditions, she became an outspoken opponent of the brutal Pinochet dictatorship in Chile and for decades has championed human rights and the rights of women throughout the world. She is an inspiration to untold millions who have read her writing in addition to those who have been fortunate

enough to meet or work with her personally.

The Note from the Guest Editor's page reads, "It is my pleasure to welcome the voices of these distinguished writers and artists who join us in celebration, remembrance, and freedom, and the spirit of justice." Ten superb short stories (available also on the web in full-page .pdf files) by writers such as Georgina Kleege ("Memory Works Both Ways"), Anita Mathias ("Aliens and Strangers"), and others appear next to 10 poems. These, too, represent the writings of new and or emerging writers. One article, "Odessa's Jews: the End of Assimilation," by Michael R. Katz, includes memo-

ries of a tenacious Jewish community life in Europe that has defied a history of persecution and forced assimilation. Katz's piece reminds the reader of Agosin's own "The Deep Breath of Exile," published in the Summer 1998 issue of *Southwest Review*.

Agosin has chosen splendid pieces for this issue. Readers who embark on any of the selections, be it short story, article, or poem, will be on the way to pleasure by way of reading, mere reading! A great product by a phenomenal guest editor, for a fine, long-standing journal. 

BRIDGES ON THE I-WAY: *Multicultural Resources Online*

Young Adult Multicultural Literature Web Sites

By Frank Alan Bruno

When I searched Google and Yahoo I expected to locate many high quality multicultural young adult (YA) literature web sites. In the publishing world, students aged 11-18 in middle/junior high and high school are considered young adults, though the term "teen readers" is often used for the younger end of the age range. To my dismay it was challenging to find even a few comprehensive young adult multicultural supersites. Though I found numerous sites that featured YA literature in general, the majority devoted to YA multicultural literature were for the most part little more than bibliographies or booklists. Since many were linked directly to Amazon.com or bn.com (Barnes and Noble's online bookstore), a possible motivation for their existence could be commissions from book sales generating money for the various organizations providing the bibliographies. The quality of the sites ranged from graphically poor with few or no illustrations to graphically intense with myriad book covers and other illustrations. A few better ones included lesson plans, activities, and critical reviews/essays as well as bibliographies. The purpose of my review is to help teachers, librarians, and students to avoid the frustration I experienced in locating useful information and to find good starting points quickly.

The best one-stop site is the Internet

School Library Media Center (<http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/index.html>). On this site under the heading "Young Adult Literature: Middle and Secondary English-Language Arts" there are six major sections: African American History & Literature, Asian American History & Literature, English as a Second Language, Hispanic Resources, Native Americans, and Southern Literature. The African American History & Literature section includes biographies of notable African Americans, history, literature, bibliographies, current events, "Million Man March," "Amistad," Black History Month, periodicals, and lesson plans. The Asian American History & Literature section includes general sites, notable Asian Americans, literature, media, history, arts & entertainment, associations, periodicals, social issues, ERIC resources, Japanese Americans, Chinese Americans, Korean Americans, Hmong Americans, East Indian Americans, Vietnamese Americans, Filipino Americans, and other (such as Malaysians). The English as a Second Language section includes listservs, periodicals, sites for students, professional sites, resources, and bibliographies. The Hispanic Resources section includes literature, biographies, periodicals, history, and Mexican Americans. The Native Americans section includes bibliographies, directories, historical documents & e-texts, author pages, study & teaching, history, general sites,

and periodicals. The Southern Literature section focuses on the literature of the South. Each of these major sections has 6 to 10 valuable ethnic-specific sites. A minor problem with the site is that despite updating on a regular basis, there are still a few broken links. Strong features for all six sections are the up-to-date bibliographies, which contain numerous well chosen titles.

A useful, though somewhat self-promoting, site is Cynthia Leitch Smith's Children's Literature Resources (<http://www.cynthialeitchsmith.com>). Smith is of Muscogee/Creek heritage and is an accomplished writer of books for children and teens. Beyond her own writing, she has an interest in multicultural studies and includes two extensive sections, *Multicultural* and *Ethno-Categories*, on her general children's literature site. The *Multicultural* section has 12 links, including one in which Smith offers a best multicultural reading list; an interview with Ginny Moore Kruse of the Cooperative Children's Book Center on the lack of multicultural titles for children and young adults; a study done at the University of Wisconsin—Madison, *Children's Books by and about People of Color Published in the United States*; the early childhood education e-newsletter on culturally responsive curriculum and materials; an article by Jean Mendoza and Debbie Reese, "Examining Multicultural