

GUIDELINES FOR REVIEWS: Reviews are arranged under broad subject categories, with subcategories where appropriate (for example, age-group categories for children's books). The categories are arranged roughly by field in the following order: humanities, biography, history, religion, education, social sciences, reference, juvenile works, and nonprint materials. Within each subject category, reviews are arranged in alphabetical order by author surname. Each review is prefaced by a three-part numbering system: a two-digit volume number, with the first year of publication designated as 01; a one-digit issue number; and a four-digit review number that runs consecutively within each individual volume year. For example, 04-1-0024 refers to review number 24 in volume 4, issue 1. Individual review entries begin with a headnote, which indicates the review number and a full bibliographic citation. Audio materials, videocassettes, and computer software are reviewed in separate categories. The review section is followed by author, title, and subject indexes keyed to the review numbers described above. Thesaurus citations in the author index indicate relevant ethnic groups, races, religions, and, where appropriate, geographic regions. The review section concludes with a directory of the publishers cited in a particular issue. The cumulative index for each volume year appears in the December issue of that year.

Literature

General Anthologies

14-4-0495

Afzal-Khan, Fawzia. *Shattering the Stereotypes: Muslim Women Speak Out*. Northampton, Mass.: Interlink, 2005. 338 pp. ISBN 1-56656-569-3, \$20.00 (pb).

"Stereotype," applied to Muslim women, has become almost a cliché—yet the "oppressed and silent" image persists. This volume goes far to correct that view.

With a thought-provoking introduction by the editor, the book is organized into six sections: nonfiction, poetry, journalism, religious discourses, fiction, and plays. Most of the selections are intensely personal and U.S.-centered; all are timely. Many are inspired by the 9/11 attack, with its painful aftermath for American Muslims of Middle Eastern background. "Avoid as much as you can being You!" says Rabab Abdulhadi in her essay, "Where Is Home?"

Other writers analyze the life of an Afghan-American New Yorker after 9/11; the American obsession with "terrorism"; and the case for a properly managed interven-

tion in Iraq. Barbara Nimri Aziz describes her reactions on September 12, and Nadirah Sabir provides a sample of reader response to her columns in an Atlanta newspaper. A short story by Farah Qidwai describes the effect of 9/11 on a young American Muslim couple, as does Amani Elkassabani's story about a Muslim family who move to a presumably safer neighborhood.

Virtually all the pieces focus on political, moral, and human rights issues, including the "religious discourses." Mohja Kahf challenges misconceptions about Islam, while theologian Riffatt Hassan explains her progressive views. The language throughout is firm, lively, and well honed, even—in some of the fiction and plays—shocking. This important book belongs in all academic libraries, as well as government agencies and the hands of individual readers.

—Elsa Marston
Bloomington, Ind.

14-4-0496

Stavans, Ilan, ed. *The Schocken Book of Modern Sephardic Literature*. New York: Schocken, 2005. 440 pp. ISBN 0-8052-4228-7, \$27.50.

Stavans has successfully gathered poetry, short stories, essays, and memoirs from the Age of Enlightenment to the present that exemplify the far-ranging scope of Sephardic letters. Spanning more than 150 years, the work includes 28 creative voices whose native languages include Hebrew, Turkish, Spanish, and Ladino, among others. Well-known authors such as the poet Emma Lazarus, Primo Levi, and Hélène Cixous, are represented, as well as lesser-known but no less accomplished writers.

Many of the pieces deal with the question of who is a Sephardic Jew. Zionism, forced migration, the state of Israel, and personal experiences of the Holocaust figure in several selections. There is a diversity of styles, themes, and emotions, but all reflect the rich and varied cultures experienced by writers who come from lands as diverse as France, Egypt, Bulgaria, and Cuba. They are in turn sensitive, powerful, heartwarming, and moving, but all convey a vivid, strong sense of place.

Stavans includes a brief yet helpful biography of each author, along with a bibliography of his/her major works. In addition, there is a lengthy list of suggested readings for those who will surely wish to investigate these topics further. Particularly useful is the index by theme for those with a particular interest in areas such as the family, Jewish/Sephardic identity, exile, Israel and the Diaspora, and the Holocaust. Not only is this an interesting and enjoyable read, but it is also an especially

compelling and valuable contribution to this burgeoning area of multicultural literature.

—Roberta Gordenstein
Elms College, Chicopee, Mass.

Fiction

14-4-0497

Ali, Tariq. *A Sultan in Palermo*. New York: Verso, 2005. 246 pp. ISBN 1-84467-025-2, \$24.00.

Entering the fourth novel in Tariq Ali's Islam Quintet set in Palermo (1153–1154), the reader initially struggles to decode a narrative in which Arab words describe countries (Spain: Al-Andalus), people (granddad: Jiddu), and places (Seville: Ishbilia) in an unfamiliar language. The struggle, however, disappears as the author generates a gripping journey into a little-known past, charting the life and loves of a medieval cartographer, Muhammed al-Idrisi. Revealing a history of Sicily during Norman rule when a Christian, Sultan Rujari (King Roger), governs, but Arab culture and language dominate the island and the court, Ali sets Idrisi's personal stories amidst volatile political events: Muslim intellectuals, concubines, and gifted eunuchs at court vie for attention with angry bishops seeking power and control.

The Palermo about which Ali writes is the medieval epitome of multicultural tolerance. Muslims, Christians, and Jews were judged by the laws of their own faith. The Sultan protects all his subjects "regardless of creed" and governs with equity and impartiality. Unable to defeat Islam ideologically, Christians launch a military campaign against the Muslims. The "mad" monks charge Philip, Sultan Rujari's right-hand man, with treason for "refusing to torture and kill Believers or rape their women." Eventually, all Muslims are forced to leave Sicily in order for Christians to "purify the island." In the dynamic and subversive world of his novel, Ali educates people about Islamic history; he also warns readers about what happens when religion dictates political decisions, when men use the Bible or al-Quran to determine what people can or cannot say or do. Though set in the twelfth century, the novel offers an important lesson for our time.

—Elaine R. Ognibene
Siena College

14-4-0498

Anaya, Rudolfo. *Jemez Spring*. Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 2005. 298 pp. ISBN 0-8263-3684-1, \$22.95.

Acclaimed novelist Anaya ends his Sonny Baca mystery series with *Jemez Spring*. The previous novels, *Zia Summer*

(1995), *Rio Grande Fall* (1996), and *Shaman Winter* (1999), are extremely well written and highly recommended. Sonny Baca is a thirtyish Albuquerque private investigator, but the core of the novels is the development of Sonny's spiritual life as a shaman. The history of New Mexico and its mix of cultures (Spanish, Mexican, Indian, and Anglo) are integral to the novels. Unfortunately, *Jemez Spring* is the weakest novel in the series.

Sonny is asked to aid authorities as they investigate the murder of the governor and try to defuse a bomb left near the Los Alamos National Laboratories. It is believed that his nemesis (from the earlier books), Raven, is responsible. There are underdeveloped, perhaps unnecessary, characters. Too much content from the earlier novels, especially the supernatural aspects, is taken for granted. Readers who have not read the previous Sonny Baca novels will be lost. This novel is for fans of the series who will want to read it for closure.

—Catherine Crohan
Siena College Library

14-4-0499

Barnes, Yolanda. *When It Burned to the Ground*. Louisville, Ky.: Sarabande Books, 2005. 216 pp. ISBN 1-932511-18-0, \$14.95 (pb).

Barnes's first novel is inspired by the 1992 Los Angeles riots. Her story takes place on a fictional Piedmont Street, where people of all lifestyles strive to survive. Barnes's portrait of this community is meant to represent a microcosm that reflects the greater society. This tale symbolizes ruin and destruction of a lost paradise, the Garden of Eden.

Many characters symbolize Adam and Eve. Barnes compares them to before and after their consumption of the forbidden fruit. For example, she splits the Eve character into two selves—one good and one bad. The good Eve is Cecile, who is a down-on-her-luck teacher. She is innocent of worldly evils and ill-equipped to survive. Cecile's attempt to pawn her mother's brooch illustrates her naïveté. The bad Eve, Bernadette, is too ambitious and ruthless in business, and, as a result, is hated by her colleagues. Daniel is an Adam. Before he accepted his calling to become a street preacher, he was a drunk and endured great suffering. However, now his purpose in life is to help people repent.

Such characterizations make this novel worth reading beyond any interest in the plot; the story captures a type of modern-day altruism that urban areas like Los Angeles yearn for these days. Also, Barnes writes with a keen perception of the human persona. The characters have so much life to them that I wanted to read more about each of them.

—Dora Love
San Francisco, Calif.

14-4-0500

Benson, Angela. *The Amen Sisters*. New York: Warner Books, 2005. 352 pp. ISBN 0-446-53153-7, \$21.95.

Francine Amen blames herself after the death of her best friend, Toni, who comes to her with allegations of sexual abuse in their cultlike church. Toni is pregnant, and when Francine does not believe what is being said about the minister, Toni kills herself. Francine is devastated and spends time in a mental institution before returning home to make right all the harm she caused before leaving. She had hurt so many of her church members, and some were not willing to forgive and forget. She especially needs to obtain forgiveness from Toni's mother and brother. Her return home is not as welcoming as it could have been. She moves into the family home with her sister Dawn, who is now married to Francine's ex-boyfriend, Sly. But all is not well with Dawn and her husband—he has cheated on her! Dawn becomes mistrustful and jealous of Francine and Sly's friendly relationship.

The African-American church and its members are at the center of this Christian fiction. The reader comes up close and personal with the culture of the church and how some, if not all, of its members turn a blind eye to the conduct of its leaders. Mistrust, infidelity, and unforgiving spirits coexist with seemingly loving, upstanding members of the community. This unforgettable novel contains all the ingredients for a good movie or just a good read: greed, betrayal, sex in the church, and long-held secrets. It is sure to keep the reader turning pages.

—Hattie H. Vines
Duke Univ. Medical School Library

14-4-0501

Campbell, Bebe Moore. *72 Hour Hold*. New York: Knopf, 2005. 320 pp. ISBN 1-4000-4074-4, \$24.95.

Keri discovers that her smart, beautiful daughter, Trina, suffers from bipolar disorder. This unsettling revelation forces Trina to postpone attending Brown University and the future Keri wants for her. Keri's woes are complicated: struggling with Trina's violent behavior, managing her consignment shop and employees, maintaining her love life, and quarreling with her ex-husband's denial about Trina's illness. Keri can only rely on the mental health system to place Trina in a structured environment to monitor her behavior and medication after her episodes.

The 72-hour holds are the longest that health institutions keep mentally ill patients unless ordered by the court and sanctioned by a psychiatrist to extend the stay. As Trina's behavior becomes more unpredictable, Keri runs out of legal options. In desperation, she agrees to an illegal and risky intervention. Throughout the ordeal, the radicals who run the Program compare their mission to the Underground

Railroad. Advancing from location to location and surviving many days of intervention, Trina escapes and ends up in a hospital. When Keri's ex-husband and lover show up, she is weary from the travel and from not knowing her daughter's whereabouts. After the illegal episode, Keri is even more determined to fight for her daughter's future.

Campbell writes another compelling story that is sure to be a bestseller.

—Lillian Lewis
Atlanta, Ga.

14-4-0502

Dickey, Eric Jerome. *Genevieve*. New York: Dutton, 2005. 296 pp. ISBN 0-525-94878-3, \$24.95.

Singer, Gammy L. *A Landlord's Tale*. New York: Dafina Books, 2005. 234 pp. ISBN 0-7582-0893-6, \$15.00 (pb).

It's 1976, just before the Bicentennial celebrations kick in, and Amos Brown takes over as the new landlord of two decrepit brownstones deep in Harlem. Complications arise when a skeleton is found cemented behind the basement wall of one of these buildings, and first-time novelist Singer takes the reader on a fast and furious ride through a world of Trinidadian drug lords, voodoo, and dark secrets of Brown's past. For those readers familiar with Dafina Books, an imprint of Kensington Publishing (one of the leading publishers of popular African-American fiction), Singer's novel might come as a surprise, as it's closer in tone and attitude to Walter Mosley than Terry McMillan or any of the other popular "chick lit" writers. For a freshman effort, *A Landlord's Tale* is not bad at all—a real page-turner at times, particularly when Singer hits her groove. One might find fault with many of her characterizations, which are often stereotypical of the genre (bent cops, flamboyant gay who makes good) and need some fleshing out, but Singer's obvious talent can only blossom over time. Readers should also be forewarned that the author's language is often raw and the violence graphic, but that is in keeping with the tone of the novel. Recommended for fans of mystery fiction.

Dickey is one of the best known and best selling of today's crop of African-American male "chick lit" writers, including Omar Tyree and Michael Baisden. In this, his eleventh novel, the title character returns to her roots in small-town Alabama to confront the demons of her past, as her AIDS researcher husband plunges headlong into an extramarital affair. But Genevieve's past is deep—she's even changed her first and last names in an effort to reinvent herself, and no one is quite who he or she seems. Dickey's characters are often cartoonish stereotypes, with most unbelievable and none even remotely likeable. The plot meanders between family arguments and soft- (and occasionally hard-) core sex scenes, and readers will probably fast forward through chapters, depending on their preference

for detailed lovemaking episodes or dysfunctional family psychodrama. The writing is often overripe (“Gave her the kind of kiss that healed all wounds from lovers past”) and the plot moves swiftly to the brink of absurdity. The reader might also OD on pop culture references, which come fast and furious (and will also date the novel, for those who forget Kobe Bryant and Scott Peterson’s trials). If you’re looking for a beach or airplane book along the lines of Terry McMillan meets Zane, *Genevieve* fits the bill, but otherwise the reader should seek higher ground.

—Anthony Adam
Library, Prairie View A & M Univ.

14-4-0503

Dongala, Emmanuel. *Johnny Mad Dog*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2005. 321 pp. Trans. from French by Maria Louise Ascher. ISBN 0-374-17995-6, \$26.00.

Many writers are focusing—in fiction and nonfiction—on the lives of women during war. Others are documenting the phenomenon of child soldiers worldwide. Dongala’s fourth novel intertwines both elements in a country resembling the Republic of Congo, from which the author is in exile. Alternating first-person narrators, Dongala relates the stories of two 16-year-olds: a female with ambitions to be an architect or engineer, and a male who prizes his gun and his consequent power above all else.

The two characters contrast sharply in tone, consciousness, and conscience until, gradually, Laokole’s fearful courage and Johnny Mad Dog’s bravado intersect. The plot is secondary to the frequent depictions of chaos and carnage. Reading the book takes fortitude, especially in scenes of families fleeing their villages, burdened by infirm elders and bundles of possessions. Vignettes of children toddling alongside the refugees break one’s heart.

Laokole verbalizes the novel’s main concern: “Those girls and boys who had been robbed of their childhood.” A friend later insists that she tell her story to a journalist: “It’s essential that the rest of the world understand what’s happening.” Her statement rings hopelessly in light of the world’s inability or refusal to recognize atrocities, such as in Rwanda and Darfur. Dongala, though, closes the story with a survival motif, offering a modicum of hope.

—Anne Serafin
Newtonville, Mass.

14-4-0504

Dow, Candace. *Caught in the Mix*. New York: Dafina Books, 2005. 244 pp. ISBN 0-7582-1053-1, \$14.00 (pb).

Dow’s suspenseful novel leaves the reader guessing what will happen next. The two main characters are Clark,

a college student from inner-city Maryland, and Devin, who hails from a wealthy family in Arizona.

The roller coaster of problems begins when Devin graduates from Hampton University and is accepted into law school in New York. He puts pressure on Clark to leave her corporate job in Baltimore and relocate to New York. Clark, unable to land a job in New York, begins to chase after Devin. She has an abortion in order not to interfere with his law school. His parents reject her, but she continues to chase him. To add fuel to the fire, Devin develops a relationship with a law student, who gets pregnant by him; his parents approve of her because of her social status, and they sanction a marriage. Clark is now really caught in the mix and demeans herself by coming to the wedding with the hope that Devin will not go through with it. The marriage takes place as planned, and a tragic incident happens to Clark’s best friend. This tragedy leaves Clark “out of the mix” and allows her to move on with her life in a positive manner. With gripping situations and interesting characters, this novel is recommended for fans of popular fiction.

—Maxine M. Agazie
North Carolina Central Univ.

14-4-0505

Dubray, Leo. *Miracle*. Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 2005. 128 pp. ISBN 0-8061-3672-3, \$17.95.

This short novel is a series of chapters from the point of view of an urban policeman, Matthew. His experiences encompass his relationships with his ex-wife, his camaraderie with his brotherhood of policemen, and events on the beat. The prose is as terse as *Dragnet* commands and presents an inside view of a policeman on patrol.

While the novel is minimalist, so is its connection to American Indian matters. Early in the novel, Matthew acknowledges his mixed-blood Indian heritage, that his skin is dark, and that his father “passed” as white. A few perpetrators use racial epithets

RACE, RHETORIC, AND IDENTITY

The Architect of Soul
Wolefi Kete Asante
250 pp. • ISBN 1-59102-218-1 HC • \$28

A passionate call for a return to humanity, Wolefi Kete Asante offers a provocative and enlightening analysis of the rhetorical construction of race and identity in historical, intellectual, and institutional contexts as well as a solution to heal wounds and repair souls.

—JING LU, PhD, Professor
Department of Communications
DePaul University

ENSLAVING CONNECTIONS

Changing Cultures of Africa and Brazil
during the Era of Slavery

Edited by José C. Curto and
Paul E. Lovejoy
223 pp. • ISBN 1-59102-152-7 HC • \$32

TAn extraordinary important contribution to the growing literature on slavery and African cultures in the Atlantic world.

—TOYIN FALOLA
University of Texas at Austin

Humanity Books

An imprint of Praeger Publishers

Toll Free: 800-421-0251 • Fax: 714-691-0127

www.johnmatherbooks.com

against him. Later, when it is clear that he will always be a beat cop and not advance in the ranks, another policeman suggests, "They give you lots of points for being an Indian....Use your blood." Matthew declines.

The novel does not directly address issues of Indian identity. However, its inclusion in the University of Oklahoma Press's American Indian Literature and Critical Studies series does raise the question of what is an Indian novel. This character, Matthew, has no tribal identification or affiliation. There are no manifestations of material culture. The only ties he has are a few bits of dialogue.

The novel provides remarkable insights into the life of a cop, but few revelations about being an American Indian.

—P. Jane Hafen
Univ. of Nevada, Las Vegas

14-4-0506

Escandón, María Amparo. *González & Daughter Trucking Co.: A Road Novel with Literary License*. New York: Random House/Three Rivers Press, 2005. 236 pp. ISBN 1-4000-9735-5, \$12.95 (pb).

Libertad is doing time in a Mexicali women's prison. Her name stands for freedom, but she has lost her freedom. However, Libertad enjoys another type of freedom, and with that her spirit soars. Words are what make Libertad free. In the beginning of her prison sentence, Libertad takes to writing on toilet paper, for there is nothing else to write on. Unaware of how long her three squares of toilet paper will last, she tries to use as few words as possible, and quickly comes to the conclusion that she is in a place where constipation is a blessing.

How could such a sensitive soul, a Latina convict Scheherazade, have lost her freedom? This is the question that all of Libertad's fellow inmates want answered. Libertad promises to tell them, in time.

Libertad starts a book club in prison. For lack of books to go around, our protagonist takes it upon herself to read to her fellow inmates, or to pretend to read to them, for she is in fact telling her own story. This is how she goes about explaining why and how she ended up in prison. Perhaps it was not the author's intention to portray what it is like to be doing time in a Mexicali women's prison. Perhaps prison is just a symbol, like the protagonist's name, a symbol for a closed world with a possibility of freedom. This could very well be some sort of pastoral poem, and it would certainly explain a world peopled by nice women, Latina inmates enamored by the word.

—Beatriz Rivera-Barnes
Penn State Univ.

14-4-0507

Everett, Percival. *Wounded*. St. Paul, Minn.: Graywolf Press, 2005. 256 pp. ISBN 1-55597-427-9, \$23.00.

John Hunt and his uncle, Gus, raise and train horses in a small Wyoming town. A black horse trainer is a rarity, but John's patience and smarts have earned him respect from the locals. In spite of the peacefulness of whites, blacks, and Indians living together, the familiar stereotypical distrust and aloofness is apparent. When the sheriff finds a suspected gay man dead in a local canyon, the whole town is shocked. John's good friend and college classmate's son, David, and his partner, Robert, travel from the University of Illinois to participate in a gay pride rally to protest the killing. David and Robert experience the small-minded and small-town bigotry toward outsiders.

Meanwhile, a local Indian is concerned about his mysteriously killed cows and seeks John's support in confronting the sheriff about the hate crimes. After David and Robert end their relationship, David returns to the farm for peace of mind and escape. As the first blizzard of the season gains momentum, John's life is also turbulent. He must maintain his daily routine, intercede with David and his father about homosexuality, accept Gus's strange behavior, and consider his own chance for romance. Everett has written an engaging novel about stereotypes and intolerance.

—Lillian Lewis
Atlanta, Ga.

14-4-0508

Forster, Gwynne. *Whatever It Takes*. New York: Dafina Books, 2005. 278 pp. ISBN 0-7582-0654-2, \$14.00 (pb).

Get ready for a real tale spin. Lacette and Kelly are twins, and most times you expect twins to be close siblings, but not in this case. Lacette is the loving twin. She is very forgiving and accommodating to her sister and has high morals and standards. Kelly, on the other hand, is truly vindictive and will stop at nothing to get what she wants or thinks she deserves. Everything comes to a head when their grandmother dies and leaves each of them a different inheritance. True to form, Kelly wants her inheritance *and* Lacette's, and will do anything to get it, including sleeping around with unsavory company.

Kelly's antics bring shame to her father, a African-American minister in a very small town, and he is at his wits' end when he finds out that his best friend, someone whom he trusted without question, is accused of molesting Kelly when she was 14 years old. Their mother always protected Kelly from her father's wrath, and now she sees the error in not allowing him to discipline her when she was younger. The threat of her father disinheriting her doesn't stop Kelly, and she continues on a twisted path of destruction.

This is truly an enjoyable read—never a dull moment. The drama begins on page one and continues to the end.

—Corliss Tootle
Hampton, Va.

14-4-0509

Gaspar de Alba, Alicia. *Desert Blood: The Juarez Murders*. Houston, Tex.: Arte Público Press, 2005. 346 pp. ISBN 1-55885-446-0, \$23.95.

Scholar and author Gaspar de Alba uses the fictional mystery format to write about a horrific real-life situation. Since 1993, approximately 350 (2005 statistics) women and girls have been murdered in Ciudad Juárez, the Mexican border city located across the Rio Grande from El Paso, Texas. Most have been raped and tortured; for only a few of these crimes has anyone been arrested and convicted.

In 1998 college professor Ivon Villa visits her hometown of El Paso to adopt the child of a young maquiladora worker from Juárez. Ivon first learns of the Juárez murders from a *Ms.* magazine article she reads on the plane, but it becomes personal when the expectant mother is murdered. Ivon investigates the murder, partly out of personal loss, but also due to a sense of outrage that she had been unaware of the number of murders in her home area. Soon after, Ivon's younger sister is abducted. This novel does not solve the mystery of the Juárez murders, but it does offer several possible explanations of who is responsible.

Ivon Villa has a life partner in Los Angeles, a dissertation deadline fast approaching, and her share of family issues. She is in constant conflict with her mother, who cannot accept her "immoral" lesbian lifestyle.

Although recommended, this is a very difficult book to read on an emotional level: It is well researched, and details of the murders are explicit.

—Catherine Crohan
Siena College Library

14-4-0510

Grossman, David. *Her Body Knows: Two Novellas*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2005. 264 pp. Trans. from Hebrew by Jessica Cohen. ISBN 0-374-17557-8, \$25.00.

Prolific and versatile, Grossman again proves himself as a writer of serious fiction, as well as entertaining juvenile fiction and astute political commentary. In "Frenzy," the first of two novellas, Shaul, a middle-aged academic, persuades his sister-in-law, Esti, to drive him one night to a place where he is convinced he will find Elisheva, his wife who (he believes) is having an affair. During the drive, the hitherto emotionally distant Shaul confides to Esti his obsession with Elisheva and her younger lover, and his compulsive fantasies about her trysts with him. Esti, a loving and faithful wife to Shaul's brother, says little except to ask occasional questions, but among her teeming thoughts there is the suggestion of a physical attraction between herself and Shaul.

In "Her Body Knows," Rotem, an expatriate novelist, returns to Israel to visit her mother Nili, a former yoga teacher dying of cancer. Rotem reads Nili a story she is

writing about an imagined erotic relationship years before between Nili and one of her students, an abused teenage boy, during which time Nili had neglected Rotem and her sisters. While both stories explore the often-nebulous boundary between reality and fantasy, "Frenzy" is more compelling, and could also serve as a metaphor for a self-perpetuating distrust and hatred of Palestinians by Israelis, blinding them to options for coexistence and peace.

—Elka R. Frankel
Princeton, N.J.

14-4-0511

Irani, Anosh. *The Cripple and His Talismans*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2005. 256 pp. ISBN 1-56512-456-1, \$22.95.

Irani's debut novel is grim and disquieting, yet replete with an innovative sense of humor that can scratch a scab and provoke a smile. Malevolence pairs up with the absurd in a nightmarish way. A disorienting aura pervades the story, as imagination and reality blur, plunging the protagonist, a disturbed young man, into a spiral of feverish surrealism. He is crippled, having lost his arm under mysterious circumstances. The novel is formulated around his strange journey in search of the missing limb.

Set in Bombay—a metropolis of extremes—the tale has an appropriate backdrop because anything is possible there. It is a city of the sacred and the profane—creating the gods and goddesses of Bollywood, saints and freaks, the street-wise and the fancy-free.

The young man is recurrently haunted by an unhappy childhood. As a young boy, the protagonist cut his own arm. His violence was visited on a sickly schoolmate, resulting in his expulsion from school. His consequent isolation leads to worse: He beats to death the only person for whom he feels a semblance of affection—a prostitute.

His search for the missing limb results in strange happenings. He acquires a macabre talisman—a finger torn from a brawling leper, which he carries around in a brown paper bag.

This unusual novel may be cast in the light of crime and punishment, in which the protagonist is both victim and victimizer. Irani is a talented writer who can horrify and entertain using his marvelous imagination and lucid style.

—Jaswinder Gundara
Coral Gables, Fla.

14-4-0512

Joe, Yolanda. *Video Cowboys: A Georgia Barnett Mystery*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005. 256 pp. ISBN 0-7432-5038-9, \$23.00.

Action-packed and fast-paced, *Video Cowboys* showcases

news anchor Georgia Barnett and her sidekick cameraman, Zeke, as they become unwilling hostages when they stop by the bank. While there, a robbery begins to unfold and the robber, Brett Andronte, holds some hostages and sets others free. He tries to make deals with law enforcement, using Zeke as a pawn and Georgia as the go-between with the police and the news station, intent on telling his side of the story. What the robber is demanding is that his allegedly kidnapped daughter be brought to him at the bank before sundown. He wants his daughter taken away from her drug-dealing boyfriend and out of harm's way. However, everyone is in hiding, and Georgia has a deadline to meet the robber's demands. Thrown into the mix is a district police commander who sees some political gains down the road.

The entire book spans only one day as Georgia and her three washed-up cameramen, Choke, Gunner, and Paulie, try to find the missing girl. The story is suspenseful, adventuresome, and dangerous, filled with corrupt characters unafraid of the law. The author sprinkles in her signature dose of humor and good-natured fun for her camera crew. This latest installment is sure to please fans of Georgia Barnett.

—Hattie H. Vines
Duke Univ. Medical School Library

14-4-0513

Le Clézio, J. M. G. *Wandering Star*. Willimantic, Conn.: Curbstone Press, 2004. 316 pp. Trans. from French by C. Dickson. ISBN 1-931896-11-9, \$15.00 (pb).



Le Clézio, a best-selling French author of more than 20 novels, finally touches an American readership in *Wandering Star*. His poetic account of two girls' intertwined paths in the Middle East gently connects experiences of modern Israelis to those of Palestinians. C. Dickson's translation loses none of the quiet sense of shared pain expressed in the original language.

One wandering star, Esther, barely escapes Nazi-occupied Europe. She reaches Israel and takes part in the founding of the state, hoping for a peaceful existence in her newly created homeland. The second wandering star, Nejma, experiences the horrific reality of living in a Palestinian refugee camp, realizing that all hope for a Palestinian homeland will be denied. Despite the deep linkages of their experiences, they meet only briefly, almost passing each other without the clear recognition of their shared pain. Each of the girls' accounts represents a wandering star in search for a better, more peaceful place.

This novel brilliantly depicts the universality of human suffering, but it also affirms the existence of kindness and

understanding. Le Clézio rises above politics and religious and cultural differences to express the girls' humanity in the struggles they both face.

—Vera Eccarius-Kelly
Siena College

14-4-0514

Lee, Marie Myung-Ok. *Somebody's Daughter*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2005. 288 pp. ISBN 0-8070-8388-7, \$23.95.

This novel tells the story of a young woman's search for her biological mother. Adopted at an early age by a wholesome Midwestern family, Sarah flees to Korea in lieu of college and begins her journey. Unorthodox in many ways—including the unexpected experiences that Sarah has and the fact that she cannot stand her adoptive mother—*Somebody's Daughter* is riveting.

Accompanying this coming-of-age story is the tale of Kyung-Sook, Sarah's Korean mother, who was forced to give up her newborn daughter due to circumstances beyond her control. Kyung-Sook, too, is looking for something: her daughter, her life, forgiveness.

Lee alternates mother and daughter chapters, skillfully weaving the two together to create an unquestionably powerful whole. At the book's end, each of the characters is in a different and, arguably, better place, though probably not where the reader would surmise. This unpredictability, linked with entirely fresh perspectives, makes this book a winner to be enjoyed by adults and young adults alike.

—Pamela Ober
Siena College

14-4-0515

Limón, Martin. *The Door to Bitterness*. New York: Soho Press, 2005. 278 pp. ISBN 1-56947-404-4, \$23.00.

Set in 1974 Seoul, South Korea, this is the fourth novel featuring 8th United States Army Criminal Investigation Division agents George Sueño and Ernie Bascom. At a red light district bar, Sueño is drugged and assaulted, his badge and gun stolen. Unless he recovers his gun and badge, he will be court-martialed. The gun is immediately used in a series of shooting deaths, and the two GI cops try to make a connection between what initially seem to be unrelated events. The three suspects are an AWOL American GI, an Amerasian prostitute, and her brother.

Sueño is the more developed and complex of the two CID agents. Although facing court-martial, he is more concerned with the harm his gun may (and does) do. Unlike most American soldiers, he has learned Korean and is knowledgeable about Korean customs. Sueño's Chicano heritage is noted, but merely as part of his physical description. To the Korean characters in the novel, all American soldiers are alike.

Integral to the plot is the condition of Amerasian children of the Korean Conflict era. Mostly abandoned by their fathers, those not adopted abroad face ridicule and discrimination, and as adults they are only able to get low-paying, undesirable jobs.

The author's ten years of U.S. military service in Korea is evident in the details of plot and setting. The other novels in the series are *Jade Lady Burning* (1992), *Slicky Boys* (1997), and *Buddha's Money* (1998). Recommended.

—Catherine Crohan
Siena College Library

14-4-0516

Mamdouh, Alia. *Naphtalene: A Novel of Baghdad*. New York: Feminist Press of the City Univ. of New York, 2005. 214 pp. Trans. from Arabic by Peter Theroux. Foreword by Helene Cixous. Afterword by F. A. Haidar. ISBN 1-55861-492-3, \$23.95.

The relative peacefulness of Baghdad in the 1950s was the calm before the turmoil of revolution and dictatorship. The turbulent language of this novel, combining sharp detail, obscure metaphor, and nonlinear time (as in the vivid public bath scene), reflects a period of growing uneasiness. Particularly jarring, however, is the constant switching between first and second person, both recording the observations and reactions of the main character, a young girl.

Huda's story, set in a lower-middle-class quarter of the city, is basically a simple one. Her father, a policeman who works in another city, is vain and domineering, a terror to Huda and her younger brother Adil on his occasional visits. Abandoning their sick mother, he takes another wife. The children's later visit to their father finds him more accepting, but sliding toward alcoholism and despair. The only other marriage in this family also ends badly, in the wife's justifiably violent attack on her brutal husband. Only sweet, gentle Adil and a sensitive neighborhood boy who attracts Huda offer positive views of Iraqi manhood.

After her mother's death, Huda, always regarded as a handful, shows signs of a constructive independence. Yet for this reader, the fragmented viewpoint and literary style prevent either Huda or any other character from becoming a viable, compelling individual who inspires sympathy and interest.

An afterword by F. A. Haidar provides helpful commentary and analysis of the novel, plus a brief historical survey.

—Elsa Marston
Bloomington, Ind.

14-4-0517

Mayr, Suzette. *Venous Hum*. Vancouver, B.C.: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2005. 232 pp. ISBN 1-55152-170-9, \$16.95 (pb).

Sharing a cleverness and sarcasm reminiscent of the

film *Grosse Pointe Blank*, Mayr (*Moon Honey* [1995], *The Widows* [1998]), takes her readers on a journey of love, lust, and a high school reunion.

The title is a reference to a humming sound heard in the veins of the neck. Weaving together many twenty-first-century hot-button topics—gender issues, sexuality/sexual orientation, infidelity, vegetarianism, the corporate ladder—*Venous Hum* baits its readers, though it never solidly places the hook. The book is highly imaginative, at times a pointedly dark, disturbing story, yet it is off in many directions.

Primary characters Lai Fun Kugelheim and Stefanja Dumanowski are attempting to assemble a twentieth high school class reunion. Planning such a task is never without its unanticipated challenges, and this event is no exception. Hippie parents, a lesbian corporate climber and her widowed business partner, a switch-hitting affair—this book raises interesting, complex, real issues, but lacks a fabric that unites the threads.

The characters in *Venous Hum* are multifaceted and edgy, with a sense of humor as well. While reasonably entertaining, the work could be strengthened by a tighter intersection of its characters.

—Elsa Bruguier
Union College (N.J.) Library

14-4-0518

McGruder, Aaron; Hudlin, Reginald; and Baker, Kyle. *Birth of a Nation: A Comic Novel*. New York: Three Rivers Press/Crown, 2005. 138 pp. Illus. by Kyle Baker. ISBN 1-4000-8316-8, \$13.95 (pb).

In recent years, readers of mainstream media hunger incessantly for an alternative to the limitations of investigative journalism, particularly the reporting of current events such as the last presidential election, the war in the Middle East, and all other things political in the aftermath of 9/11. Such hunger demands more than sobering, progressive political assessments of what's going on. A need for an entertaining media surely exists, but what can fulfill this emerging need? The comic novel, of course.

Birth of a Nation parodies President George W. Bush and the electoral injustice that occurred in many states during the 2004 election, and describes a fictional revolution of a Midwest town that successfully secedes from the United States and becomes a sovereign country called Blackland after turning back a Bush-backed militia. Conveyed by colorful graphics that evoke themes as well as polemics of justice, fairness, and victory for the underdog, this comic novel brings the reader beyond contemporary journalism, which not too uncommonly parrots the lies of White House press releases. Co-authored by the creator of *The Boondocks* comic strip, the director of the film *House Party*, and the author of five other graphic novels, this tome makes for politically refreshing as well as humorously entertaining reading during

these hopelessly crazy, Republican-dominated times. *Birth of a Nation* is highly recommended for all ages.

—Sam Cacas
San Francisco, Calif.

14-4-0519

Murray, Albert. *The Magic Keys*. New York: Pantheon, 2005. 242 pp. ISBN 0-375-42353-2, \$24.00.

The Magic Keys could be retitled “Portrait of the Artist as a Southern Boy Who Loves Music and Books and Comes to the Big City.” The writing is mostly interior, as the African-American narrator learns to live in New York City as a graduate student together with his wife. This is the last book of a quartet featuring Scooter’s development, and he frequently recalls past persons and events; reading the first books is not essential but would undoubtedly enhance understanding and enjoyment.

The keynote of Murray’s writing is his recreation of Southern “down home” speech. He renders brilliantly the cadences and phrases of Alabama overlaid with musical patterns. Most of the characters have been part of a long-established jazz band, and they speak in an argot typical of musicians. To appreciate Murray’s language, one must give oneself to its rhythms and frequent catchphrases, such as “I said what I said...” Reading passages aloud is wonderful and recommended.

Paeans to New York enliven Scooter’s musings and capture specific locations familiar to Manhattanites. Later, he returns to Alabama to revisit beloved people and places. The novel has little plot but constitutes a vivid slice of life—blending past and present, South and North. Mostly, the novel explores what we know and how we learn. In the narrator’s wisdom, “You will know you are where you should be by the way you feel.”

—Anne Serafin
Newtonville, Mass.

14-4-0520

Murugan, Perumal. *Current Show*. Chennai, India: Tara Publishing, 2004. 157 pp. Trans. from Tamil by V. Geetha. ISBN 81-86211-81-0, \$9.95 (pb).

Murugan, Perumal. *Seasons of the Palm*. Chennai, India: Tara Publishing, 2004. 319 pp. Trans. from Tamil by V. Geetha. ISBN 81-86211-82-9, \$11.95 (pb).

Seasons of the Palm is a novel of remarkable warmth, intensity, and lyricism. Not surprisingly, it ranks as a classic in Tamil literature. The story draws us into the intimate world of Chakkili (untouchable) children as bonded labor in rural southern India. Despite the unmitigated rigors of their life and the violence of their Gounder (caste) masters, the children maintain a touching humanity and joyous

exuberance. Their innocence survives a brutal society that unashamedly conspires to rob them of their childhood.

The story is told through the tender eyes of Shortie, a young, good-natured Chakkili boy whose labor, according to tradition, is sold by his parents to a Gounder household. Shortie is conscientious and devoid of malice. He knows that his parents have little choice in the matter and is keenly aware of his place as an untouchable.

Shortie spends the day herding goats out in the pastureland. He loves the goats, calling each one by its name. He knows the ones that are obedient and the ones that can get feisty and need cajoling. He knows the complications of birthing and sickness. He also knows the paths in the hills and valleys, and each tree and bush where the goats graze. On the pastures, he has the precious companionship of other Chakkili children who similarly tend herds owned by their Gounder masters. In the face of the brutal whippings they receive if anything goes amiss with the animals, the children have an unspoken bond.

There is Belly, an imp of a girl who is his constant companion. Then there is Tallfellow or Tally, who joins in their daily escapades but can be capricious. Stump Leg, the eldest, is a bully, and they are in awe of his ability to use spells to heal all creatures. There is foreboding when Shortie has to put up with the uneasy company of his master’s son, the volatile Selvan. He must serve as a playmate to Selvan but never forget his untouchability. Little good can come of this unequal relationship. Selvan is capable of cruelty that can break Shortie’s restraint. Ultimately, we tremble for Shortie, that good-natured, poised child, and the dark fate that awaits him.

The novel is written with tenderness and poetry reminiscent of Alan Paton’s *Cry, the Beloved Country*, and Paton’s famous words may aptly be adapted to read, “Cry, the children,” for Shortie and his friends.

Current Show stands in marked contrast to *Seasons of the Palm* in both diction and setting. Written in a terse, staccato style in the tradition of cinematic dialogue, it is set in the main streets of the city, the heart of urban India. Around the fantasy world of Bollywood exists the impoverished world of dingy movie theaters, vendors, projectionists, parking attendants, pickpockets, drug pushers, and beggars.

Murugan is a writer of impressive versatility who effectively depicts urban decadence and exploitation. But the heartrending power that radiates through *Seasons of the Palm* is unforgettable.

—Jaswinder Gundara
Coral Gables, Fla.

14-4-0521

Poole, Daaimah S. *What’s Real*. New York: Dafina Books, 2005. 336 pp. ISBN 0-7582-0914-2, \$15.00 (pb).

Poole’s novel centers on events happening in the lives of three young African-American women from Philadelphia

who decide to spend a weekend vacationing in Miami. Janelle is an assistant manager of a clothing store and borrows money from her boyfriend to take the vacation. Tanya, a hustler who lives with her grandmother, gets money from an African student who is mesmerized by her beauty. Natalie is married and wants to go on this vacation to make her husband appreciate her more. She slips off without telling him where she is.

The novel describes the events each of these women experience while on their furtive trip. They try to seductively outdress each other. The women are constantly barsprinting and using flirtatious tactics to enter expensive clubs without paying required fees. Once they are in the club, the hunt is on to meet a celebrity, rapper, or wealthy man. Unfortunately, most of their escapades backfire and they are unable to snag “Mr. Wonderful.”

The novel takes a turn when Janelle meets an NFL player and decides to remain in Miami with him, and they eventually get engaged. Tanya returns home to a major drama. Natalie’s marriage dissolves, and when she enters a new relationship, her ex-husband goes on a shooting spree. The novel has some explicit sexual content and ribald language. The discussion questions at the end of the book enhance the entire project.

—Maxine M. Agazie
North Carolina Central Univ.

14-4-0522

Rhodes, Evie. *Expired*. New York: Dafina Books, 2005. 304 pp. ISBN 0-7582-0870-7, \$14.00 (pb).

For fans of Octavia Butler and Tananarive Due, Rhodes has written an engrossing tale. When Tracie Burlingame runs into Anita, Harlem’s street psychic, her neat and tidy world spirals out of control. Tracie has built a very successful business catering to the beauty and hair needs of Harlem women. Her shops allow her to live and provide a very comfortable lifestyle for her family. Her four sons, each with an exceptional gift, become the chosen tools used to bring her down. Her eldest, Rashod, is a sketch artist who has run away from his talent and hidden behind drugs. Andre, a gifted photographer, captures life in Harlem with an uncanny eye for the truth. Michael, the next Earl “The Goat” Manigault, is an exceptional basketball player who engages in sadomasochist sex. The youngest, Randi, is also a superior athlete who is brutally killed, drained of his blood, and thrown from a rooftop.

The anguish and fear that Tracie and her sons confront is overwhelming. They discover that their adversary is not someone but something. The characters are united in purpose. Tracie’s dreams, Anita’s awakening, Rashod’s courage, Michael’s epiphany, and Andre’s determination help them fight the battle of good versus evil. Tracie saves her boys and lives to tell of her victory.

—Lillian Lewis
Atlanta, Ga.

14-4-0523

Rytkheu, Yuri. *A Dream in Polar Fog*. Brooklyn, N.Y.: Archipelago Books, 2005. 337 pp. Trans. from Russian by Iлона Yazhbin Chavasse. ISBN 0-9749680-7-2, \$24.00.

The Chukchi, small in number, inhabit the inhospitable reaches of extreme northeastern Siberia. They are the butt of many Russian jokes, of a type similar to Polish and dumb blonde jokes in America. What comes through in Rytkheu’s novel is that this stereotypical depiction of the Chukchi is quite the opposite of the truth. We learn that the Chukchi are a brilliant and inventive people, as is witnessed by their ability to adapt and survive in such a harsh environment.

Rytkheu, himself a Chukchi, shows us not only how the Chukchi view themselves but also their view of “white men”—outsiders. As ethnography, it is an extremely illuminating book and highly recommended for that fact alone. It is also an adventure story set around 1910 to 1917. A Canadian sailor, John MacLennan, is seriously wounded in an explosion and is left behind by his fellow sailors in the care of the Chukchi. John’s ship never comes back for him and he, begrudgingly at first, learns to adapt to and appreciate the Chukchi lifestyle. While some outsiders seek to exploit the Chukchi and other indigenous people of the region, John becomes their defender and decides to reject his former existence in favor of becoming a member of the Chukchi community. The narrative holds up well almost to the very end of the novel, where the reader gets the impression that Rytkheu was not sure how to end the story. The translation is adequate but comes off as prosaic and transparent at times. However, the look inside the Chukchi world makes for some fascinating reading.

—Richard L. Reis
Siena College

14-4-0524

Sanders, Yolonda Tonette. *Soul Matters*. New York: Warner Books, 2005. 368 pp. ISBN 0-446-69441-X, \$13.95 (pb).

Wendy Phillips, newly married to successful businessman Kevin Phillips, is on top of the world when she finds out she is pregnant. When her doctor tells her that she also has a sexually transmitted disease, that world comes crashing down around her. A perfectionist and a holier-than-thou Christian, Wendy has no forgiveness in her heart for her cheating husband. Intent on keeping her separation hidden from her family, she struggles with putting on a front for family and friends. Wendy wants her husband to leave, but she still wants to maintain the lifestyle she has become accustomed to. That means keeping her large extravagant house in the suburbs and her luxury BMW, and being a stay-at-home mom while her estranged husband

foots all the bills.

Meanwhile, her sister Kim, who is unmarried with two children by two different men, finds it hard to live the Christian life when her perfect sister is having problems maintaining her own faith. The sisters' Grandma Frances, mean and unpleasant, has moved into their parents' home and has her own secrets that she must keep buried. A deceptive friendship wreaks havoc for Wendy and Kevin, while Grandma Frances does the same. Although the story starts out with a bang, then slows to a snail's pace, the author finally rescues it by revealing the great finish and surprises for the reader. An overall good read.

—Hattie H. Vines
Duke Univ. Medical School Library

14-4-0525

Soseki, Natsume. *Botchan: A Modern Classic*. New York: Kodansha, 2005. 172 pp. Trans. from Japanese by J. Cohen. ISBN 4-7700-2122-4, \$22.00.

Botchan, a classic Japanese bildungsroman of a century ago, is a spunky tale of youthful enthusiasm and enterprise. The title means "carefree" or even "careless" in the sense, perhaps, of adolescent irresponsibility. However, the novel's theme turns on Soseki's young protagonist coming to grips with unanticipated hypocrisy and double-dealing of two older teaching colleagues at a small rural middle school in remote Shikoku.

Coming from Tokyo, Botchan eventually recognizes that his accepting a minor teaching post "in a boondock like this was like pushing myself towards my own downfall." The novice's unsurprisingly mordant observations on the pettiness and backwardness of remote districts in Japan are both witty and credible. Sinclair Lewis certainly would have smiled knowingly.

Botchan and his math department colleague, Mr. Hotta (the Porcupine in Botchan's telling), decide to exact pugilistic revenge on their hypocritical tormentors, the censorious phony Redshirt (the vice principal) and his spineless art teacher/lackey, the Hanger-On. Soseki carefully builds up the central conflict, Botchan's and the Porcupine's growing moral indignation, that leads to the climactic finale in which the two corrupt villains of the piece receive their just deserts on a dark and lonely roadside. The heroic duo then returns happily to Tokyo, leaving the school without a math teacher. Cohn's introduction notes the untraditionally "irreverent, accept-no-nonsense spirit" of Botchan, whose rationalism is akin to Candide's. In a nod to Japanese tradition, however, there's no romantic interest at all. Cohn's translation is clear, economical, succinct English prose, making this an especially useful text for upper intermediate and advanced EFL/ESL classes.

—Leo J. Mahoney
Mohave Community College

14-4-0526

X, Sulayman. *Bilal's Bread*. Los Angeles: Alyson Books, 2005. 240 pp. ISBN 1-55583-861-8, \$13.95 (pb).

Bilal Abu is the pivotal character in a new novel by an international Muslim journalist who does not use his true name because of the risk of retribution. Sixteen years old, gay, and living in post-September 11 United States, Bilal endures the usual lumps associated with being a gay teen, but the boy is also a Kurdish-Iraqi refugee, a Muslim kid living in a class-marked, scrappy, racially edgy Midwestern neighborhood.

Bilal's family includes siblings. One is a brother (Salim) who, as eldest son, moved to the head of the family at the death of his father. Salim has assumed the role with the ferocity of a tyrant, and he is a man with a history. *Bilal's Bread* is remarkably frightening in its ability to capture how insidious the damage is that accompanies secrets and child sexual predation. It also charts new territory in conveying the struggles associated with trying to reconcile unwanted sexual contact, arousal, and consent.

As Bilal begins to recognize that he has an attraction to his best friend, Muhammad, his abusive experiences have clearly provided knowledge a boy of 16 need not have; at the same time, Bilal is a sexual innocent starting to understand his natural human sexuality. A refreshingly outspoken sister and the guiding insights of a progressive imam provide reality checks for Bilal. With all the laziness and enthusiasm that occupies an adolescent, Bilal musters up the wherewithal to carve out a structure that nurtures him as a young man in the world.

Recommended for all collections.

—Elsa A. Bruguier
Union County (N.J.) College

14-4-0527

Zedde, Fiona. *Bliss*. New York: Dafina Books, 2005. 297 pp. ISBN 0-7582-0919-3, \$14.00 (pb).

If you enjoy the drama—both joyful and traumatic—that goes with lesbian romance, you'll enjoy *Bliss*. Zedde's novel narrates the drama that Sinclair encounters when she falls in love with another woman and consequently experiences romance the way she could never imagine with her boyfriend. The romance falters when Sinclair temporarily backs away from the relationship with the woman, then is surprisingly thrown a curve by the person who has redefined her outlook on love.

Undaunted by her exploration of the same-sex lifestyle, Sinclair again falls in love with another woman while visiting her family in her native Jamaica. It is there that she learns the reality of how life-threatening it can be to live as a lesbian in an anti-gay/lesbian, hateful world. She, her sibling, and her new lover survive a hate-motivated assault, and she goes on to explore a deeper meaning of love

beyond the opposite-sex orientation that most of us are given socially and educationally.

This novel is highly recommended because it lends balance to the often one-sided portrayals of lesbians in everyday life. Zedde lets the reader know that there are many aspects to acceptance as well as rejection of the lesbian lifestyle. She also lets us in on the fact that lesbians—just as straight folks—are not too uncommonly inclined toward teetering back and forth on the line of sexual orientation.

—Sam Cacas
San Francisco, Calif.

Drama

14-4-0528

Chong, Ping. *The East/West Quartet*. New York: Theatre Communications Group, 2004. 194 pp. Preface by Jessica Hagedorn. ISBN 1-55936-229-4, \$16.95 (pb).

Chong, DFA (Kent State, 2004), is an ingenious, innovative “sort of Renaissance man—a theater director, choreographer, filmmaker, video and installation artist,” says Hagedorn’s exemplary preface. He also composes arresting dialogue.

These are four episodic docudramas with built-in alternative historical didacticism. Chong’s straightforward purpose is to present starkly powerful dialogic and symbolic historical vignettes that prompt, provoke, and prod American audiences toward re-visioning their sometimes simplistic, popular historical canon. There are one or two lapses into a kind of reverse orientalism, à la Edward Said; but on the whole, Ping’s spare and strong dramatic method works.

The clearest example of Chong’s stylized cinematographic/diegetic-nondiegetic/ choreographic theatricalist technique (whew!) is “Pojagi,” first performed at the Korean DMZ on New Year’s Eve, 1999. Local distances are measured by musket and cannon shots. Long monologues are lean, prose-poetic evocations of Korea’s bumpy history since the 1590s, including institutional slavery, aristocratic arrogance, Japanese invasion efforts and colonialism, moving testimony of a Korean wartime slave caught up in the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, and the imperial callousness of the Russian and American bifurcation of Korea in 1945.

Documentary accounts in the other three segments—“Deshima” (on Japan), “Chinoiserie” (China), and “After Sorrow” (Vietnam)—also build on the fragmented storytelling technique of American Plains Indians. A Korean national origins legend might have been lifted from any number of similar Native American cosmologies. No drama department should overlook this nifty little jewel.

—Leo J. Mahoney
Mohave Community College

14-4-0529

Glissant, Edouard. *Monsieur Toussaint*. Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005. 127 pp. Trans. from French by J. Michael Dash and Edouard Glissant. ISBN 0-89410-894-8, \$29.95 (cl); 0-89410-870-0, \$15.95 (pb).

Over 40 years ago, well-known Martinican essayist, novelist, and poet Glissant wrote a three-act play recounting the life and tragic death of Toussaint L’Ouverture. On the 200th anniversary of Toussaint’s death in June of 2004, the drama was staged in the courtyard of the French prison where the Haitian revolutionary hero spent his last days. J. Michael Dash, a distinguished critic in his own right, recently translated this theatrical work into English in collaboration with the author.

Monsieur Toussaint abounds with the magical realism so representative of Caribbean literature. The play is set simultaneously at the Fort de Joux prison cell in the Jura Mountains of eastern France and in Saint-Domingue, as the colony that was to become Haiti was then called. The title character interacts not only with the insulting and humiliating commanders and guard at the prison, but with the dead and living of his native land as well. Deceased characters, including Toussaint’s former master, a Vodou priestess, a nephew whom Toussaint had killed, and a maroon hero, Mackandal, offer advice to the imprisoned former governor. Toussaint also magically encounters the living in his home country, overhearing the racist comments of white planters and speaking with his wife and General Dessalines, who succeeded him as leader in the fight for independence.

Like many celebrated Caribbean writers, Glissant attempts to provide a history for those whose past has been eradicated. Despite moments of vitality, however, the author’s didactic purpose weighs heavily on this work.

—Jayne R. Boisvert
Russell Sage College

Poetry

14-4-0530

Aragón, Francisco. *Puerta del Sol*. Tempe, Ariz.: Bilingual Review Press, 2005. 136 pp. Bilingual (English-Spanish) ed. ISBN 1-931010-28-5, \$12.00 (pb).

Castro, Adrian. *Wise Fish: Tales in 6/8 Time*. Minneapolis: Coffee House Press, 2005. 96 pp. ISBN 1-56689-172-8, \$14.00 (pb).

Puerta del Sol is a volume of poetry that straddles two continents and one language. The speaker finds himself at odds with both his American Spanish-speaking friends who remark that he speaks “like a Spaniard,” and his peninsular Spanish acquaintances, to whom he admits his California roots by way of explaining his non-native Spanish. Aragón,

a Californian Nicaraguan-American, spent ten years in Spain studying and teaching. The book is a bilingual edition, having been translated by the poet himself from English into Spanish. Aragón prefers to call the expression of his English verse into Spanish “elaborations,” opportunities for him to rewrite and revise according to the Spanish he has learned from both his mother and his study.

Aragón’s volume is set in Spain, with occasional trips back home and a calm journey inward as, among other things, he remembers and mourns his mother, ponders the urban moon above Puerta del Sol, and reflects on a terrorist attack. The poems paint a picture of what it is like to be outside one’s own milieu, yet lulled by a language of the heart—as witnessed by his visually appealing “Mi Corazon is a Bilingual Mirror,” a deceptively simple yet lovely poem in which English and Spanish are mirrored side by side, the title itself bilingual. It is his love for this “hybrid” language that is most evident, especially in the final poem, “What Else Will I Recall”/“Que Mas Recordare” in which the poet leaves us with one of his many vivid images. He disembarks in Madrid, now telling himself to “remember well/the white haired man/descending ahead of me, turning/around, wiping the sweat from his brow” who then remarks in Spanish “que calor—Madrid en agosto/es algo insoportable!” at which the speaker tells us “something in me fluttered/hearing those vowels, as if I started/to understand, as if those rhythms/carried, even then the message/I’d take years to unravel.”

Like Aragón’s book, Castro’s *Wise Fish: Tales in 6/8 Time* is very much about the rhythms of language, the experience of straddling cultures, yet it is quite different in its approach. Castro, a Miami-born Cuban-Dominican poet, writes of the experience of the journey into exile, from Africa to the Caribbean to North America. His verse is multilingual, written mainly in English but interspersed with Spanish and African dialects. The poet includes a glossary of mainly Yoruban and Lukumi words and phrases, which helps also to initiate us into the mythos of the religions of those cultures. Castro’s recurrent image of the “wise fish” is apt, for these are poems about the migratory experience, over water, and the travails of Afro-Caribbean peoples as witnessed by these wise fish. It is also a volume that weaves memory, tradition, history, and hope for the future in an artful, dynamic way. Castro works within the oral tradition, and his weaving of languages contributes to the reader’s feeling for these rhythm-driven verses.

—Marguerite Maria Rivas
Borough of Manhattan Community College

14-4-0531
Castillo, Ana. *Watercolor Women/Opaque Men*.
Willimantic, Conn.: Curbstone Press, 2005. 269 pp. ISBN 1-931896-20-8, \$15.00 (pb).

This could very well be an analogy. Watercolor is to

opaque what women are to men. By definition, something with color far surpasses something with no color, something dull. The word watercolor contains both water and color, so the limpidity is rendered all the more intense. Opaque, on the contrary, suggests density, sometimes even mental density. Light does not shine through the opaque. Now, the question is whether the author is making a universal statement as far as men and women are concerned. Then again, this statement could apply only to the characters in this novel in verse.

Ella, the single working mother, the daughter of Chicano migrant workers, could be the watercolor woman who, in her search for identity, be it sexual, social, historical, or racial, encounters the opaque men.

In the 30 chapters or long poems, the Chicano past and present meet and affect each other. There is Ella’s past, there is Ella’s present situation, and there is also history, as suggested by the titles of some of the chapters. Chapter V is entitled “Cipactli: Woman as Monster”; Chapter XV is “Mictlan”; XVI is “Tonalli.”

It would be quite interesting to find out why the author chose to write this entire novel in verse, and also why she wishes for it to be reminiscent of the picaresque. In Golden Age Spain, picaresque novels were satirical portraits of society. The protagonist was a *pícaro* or *pícaro*, which means scoundrel. Is the watercolor woman a *pícaro*?

—Beatriz Rivera-Barnes
Penn State Univ.

14-4-0532
Davenport, Doris. *Madness Like Morning Glories*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 2005. 58 pp. ISBN 0-8071-2991-7, \$26.95 (cl); 0-8071-2992-5, \$16.95 (pb).

In the African-American community on Soque Street, tucked away in the Appalachian Mountains of northeast Georgia, dead and living “Affrilachians” intermingle. In this collection, a blend of poetic forms, the residents are connected by family, place, passion, and magic. The overlapping poems—some told by specific individuals, some told by unknown inhabitants, and some omniscient observations—form the story of this small town.

A feminist with a background in performance poetry, Davenport possesses a gift for voice. Unfortunately, too often the voices sound similar when read. To appreciate the richness of each voice, the poems should be spoken aloud. As readers and listeners take in this town’s force, foibles, humor, and perhaps touch of madness, they will also recognize Davenport’s gift for capturing humanity.

—Angela Leeper
Wake Forest, N.C.

14-4-0533
González, Ray. *The Religion of Hands: Prose Poems*

and *Flash Fictions*. Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press, 2005. 160 pp. ISBN 0-8165-2403-3, \$16.95 (pb).

Like “music on the plain of memory” and imagination, *The Religion of Hands* is a collection of poems, many of which contain cathartic or self-revelatory elements. The author’s selections are well thought out; they contrast González’s extraordinary (and at times seemingly traditional) storytelling technique with creative directions that challenged this reader to explore the distinctions between social and magic realism.

From a psychological perspective, I believe that in many of the pieces the author embeds Southwestern historical events into stories of social and human struggle in order to articulate his aesthetic and political sensibilities. In “Leave It Behind,” for example, González juxtaposes a poet’s unpleasant childhood memories (the parental rejection of his desire to write poetry, among many others) with references to the Mexican Revolution and the poet’s desire to reinvent his *Ars Poetica*. On another level, in “I Wrote That” (my personal favorite), González narrates the story of a young boy who keeps insisting that he is the author of the stories his teacher is assigning from his class’s reader. Southwestern Hispanic folklore, storytelling, and the teacher’s reaction once she learns the truth make this story one of the most touching. *The Religion of the Hands* is certainly a book I will recommend to anyone with an interest in the innovative ways in which magic realism is still being reinvented.

—Patrick L. O’Connell
Univ. of Central Arkansas

14-4-0534

Handal, Nathalie. *The Neverfield*. Northampton, Mass.: Interlink, 2005. 61 pp. ISBN 1-56656-595-2, \$12.00 (pb).

The Neverfield is a three-part poem by a Palestinian poet that conflates the exile’s search for identity/homeland with the search for a poet/poetry. The homeland is Palestine, and the poet is Palestinian writer Mahmoud Darwish. The work interweaves fragments of Handal’s childhood memories and worldwide wanderings with evocations of a devastated homeland and enduring ties to family and community. It is the tale of a mostly internal journey/sojourn, with a poetically constructed Palestine as the mythical Camelot, the poet as the knight in shining armor, and the “Neverfield” as the quest.

The Neverfield is reminiscent of some of the films of Michelangelo Antonioni, Luis Bunuel, and Jean-Luc Godard in its use of evocative imagery and its dreamlike, nonlinear narrative flow. It is, however, not so much about socio-political critique as it is about testimony and affirmation. Indeed, the work echoes themes also reflected in the poems of Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, Josey Foo, and Eileen Tabios in evoking ideas of poetry/language as home and claiming

one’s voice as an affirmation of self. And like some of Lee Young-Li’s longer poems, it is personal and intimate in its introspection and more subtle eroticism, yet global in scope and grounded in history.

—Lori Tsang
Washington, D.C.

14-4-0535

Jones, Dan C. *Blood of Our Earth: Poetic History of the American Indian*. Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 2005. 63 pp. Illus. by Rance Hood. ISBN 0-8263-3810-0, \$26.95 (pb).

Similar to Momaday’s *The Way to Rainy Mountain* (1969) and Tim Tingle’s *Walking the Choctaw Road* (2003), Dan Jones’s work contemplates individual identity within the context of a community of people struggling to survive. Like the emphases of Momaday and Tingle, survival is now dependent on the artist, who retraces and retells their stories. Jones relies on family history, as well as the discovery of myth and history of others, to construct his “poetic history.”

His poems (magnificently complemented by Hood’s drawings) instill a sense of awe for the human place within nature’s cycles, but tragically, this Native union has been tainted by blood: “this earth/is full of the blood/of our ancestors./From the blood of our earth/comes the spirit/that causes new seeds/to grow/the old way/strong again.” Jones’s understanding of the past is linked to present dilemmas: “For a young Indian seeking direction/or which path to follow—/the white man’s or the Indian’s,/the young man must think,/if he takes the white man’s road,/take only the paths that are/good for people and kind to nature.” The poems link postmodern anxiety with old world values.

The book has an effective introductory historical narrative and purpose statement, from which the poems arise. Hood’s fabulous color schemes accompany several black-and-white historical photographs as well.

—Kenneth Hada
East Central Univ., Ada, Okla.

14-4-0536

Medina, Pablo. *Points of Balance/Puntos de apoyo*. New York: Four Way Books; dist. by Univ. Press of New England, 2005. 130 pp. Bilingual (English-Spanish) ed. ISBN 1-884800-64-5, \$14.95 (pb).

Medina, author of many works of poetry and prose and a professor in the Writing Concentration at Eugene Lang College of New School University, finds the effective form to keep his self-poet alive in English and Spanish and “making it leap with excitement out of the water of its lethargy.” This form, later called by the poet the fulcrum, or *fulcro* in Spanish, is a six-line poem that “combines the dialectic of

the sonnet with the imagistic power of the haiku...shaping language and silence into a point of balance." These poems are not translations, but reflections of each other. His poetry offers an abstract world of beauty and exuberance, while keeping it intimate, funny, and close to his roots.

The unifying thread in Medina's book is the fulcrum. The author dives into a complex world of varying themes, yet with powerful lyrics and elegant language. One of Medina's many themes is the tension between nature and the Metropolis described in "Citiscapes." These poems are a glimpse of the cultural and spiritual life of New York and its surroundings. Another constant in his work is yearning for the sea, evoking his homeland, Cuba. More remarkable in this collection is Medina's own exciting experience with his creations in both languages. In "Mirage" he speaks of this: "I move from one language to another, I dive from a pool of water to a pool of dreams."

—Andrés Amador
Borough of Manhattan Community College

Folklore

14-4-0537
Al-Amily, Hussain Mohammed, comp. *The Book of Arabic Wisdom: Proverbs and Anecdotes*. Northampton, Mass.: Interlink, 2005. 212 pp. ISBN 1-56656-582-0, \$17.95 (pb).

Like a dancing horse, some people mark time but go nowhere. Arabic discourse abounds with such picturesque images.

Here's a new collection of some 3,000 proverbs and sayings, drawn from folklore, the Koran, and other Islamic sources; poets both medieval and modern; even ancient Egypt and Sumer. The entries are arranged alphabetically by topic—for instance, Lateness, Laughter, Lawyers, Laziness—and represent not just "Arabic wisdom" but the broader Islamic world, including Andalusia. Some are followed by similar proverbs with the same sense, and others by a few words to clarify meaning. Occasional brief items about Middle Eastern culture appear, and also some longer quotations.

The compiler, of Iraqi and Lebanese origin, started collecting folk sayings as a young boy. Translation was challenging because of the free, ambiguous nature of colloquial language, in which a few words can convey large meanings. Many sayings can be interpreted in contradictory ways—which could have been discussed at more length. Does *Do good and throw it into the sea* mean that your good acts will come back to benefit you someday—or that you should be modest? Like proverbs the world over, meaning can depend on circumstances.

A particularly attractive feature of this volume is the design. Each page includes one or two images from a wide range of Middle Eastern decorative arts: Islamic, Fatimid,

Ottoman, folkloric. Although not identified, these designs make the book appealing for both its artistic and social/linguistic content. *Arabic Wisdom* offers a useful reference resource—and enjoyable casual reading.

—Elsa Marston
Bloomington, Ind.

14-4-0538
Cabrera, Lydia. *Afro-Cuban Tales*. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 2004. 169 pp. Trans. from Spanish by Alberto Hernández-Chirolde and Lauren Yoder. ISBN 0-8032-1533-9, \$45.00 (c); 0-8032-6438-0, \$16.95 (pb).

Lydia Cabrera was a pioneer in the affirmation of Afro-Cuban pride and consciousness and in the dissemination of Afro-Cuban folk tales and legends. Writing at a time when white scholars, like Cabrera herself, favored European culture over anything from the Caribbean, Cabrera celebrated the creative imagination of Africans in Cuba. In the stories that Afro-Cubans told each other, Cabrera saw parallels with works written by the likes of Cervantes and La Fontaine.

As a child, Cabrera, who came from an aristocratic family, had heard the household's black servants tell stories that combined African, Cuban, and Iberian folklore. As a young ethnographer, Cabrera interviewed former slaves who introduced her to ancient rituals from Yoruba, the land of their birth. The result was an everlasting fascination that prompted Cabrera to write down the tales, sometimes verbatim, often reinventing the stories. In the early 1930s, she penned *Cuentos negros de Cuba*, which was first published in French in 1936 under the title of *Les Contes Nègres de Cuba*. The book proved a sensation, and it soon appeared in Cuba, where it provoked much discussion and helped to fuel the literary genre known as *literatura negrista*. Widely read in Cuba, the book has now been translated into English as *Afro-Cuban Tales*.

It is marvelous book, with emphasis on marvel as magical. No wonder Cabrera is seen as one of the writers who planted the seed for magical realism, the style or genre so endemic to Latin America. As for the stories in the volume...the best approach is to read them yourself.

—Danilo H. Figueredo
Bloomfield College Library

14-4-0539
Nagarajan, Nadia Grosser. *Pomegranate Seeds: Latin American Jewish Tales*. Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 2005. 256 pp. Introduction by Ilan Stavans. ISBN 0-8263-2391-X, \$23.95 (pb).

This collection of folk tales, legends, and true stories that have been handed down by generations of Jews of Latin America are not only of great interest and humor, but

also of great inspiration. In addition, through these tales the reader gains an insight into the lives and customs of Jews from Latin American countries.

At the end of each story, the author provides an explanation of the sources used and relevant historical facts. Where the characters are real, the author adds information on what the people are currently doing and where they are living.

In these stories, the reader can visualize scenes from the Holocaust, as well as other time periods where Jews had to practice their religion in secret and struggle to survive. The stories show not only strength of character; they also demonstrate creativity on the part of the characters to figure out ways to save themselves and their loved ones from destruction.

Rabbis and other community leaders play a pivotal role in helping their communities in times of danger. Then there are also the peddlers, the children, and the misfits who contribute to the adventure and excitement of these stories. The narratives are interesting and enlightening. The small print lessens the eye appeal and may intimidate those who don't want to undertake long, tedious reading. However, don't judge the stories by their outward appearances. Once you begin this book, it can be a fast and easy read.

—Hannah M. Heller
Baltimore, Md.

14-4-0540

Perez, Elvia, ret. and McDonald, Margaret Reid, ed.
From the Winds of Manguito/Desde los vientos de Manguito: Cuban Folktales in English and Spanish/Cuentos folklóricos de Cuba, en inglés y español.
Westport, Conn.: Greenwood/Libraries Unlimited, 2005.
160 pp. Illus. by Victor Francisco Hernández Mora. Trans. from Spanish by Paula Martin. Bilingual (English-Spanish) ed. Series: World Folklore Series. ISBN 1-59158-091-1, \$35.00.

While much is known about Cuban cinema and literature—such figures as novelist Reinaldo Arenas and film classics like *Memories of the Underdevelopment* are internationally recognized by literature lovers, film aficionados, and academicians—that is not the case with Cuban folklore. On the West Coast, stories from ancient Mexico are told and retold. On the East Coast, legends from Puerto Rico are often read to children in libraries and in schools. This interesting volume helps to fill in that gap.

The book itself, composed by a storyteller from Cuba, is a curious mix of Cuban geography, Cuban history, an explanation of the origin of Cuban folktales, and a collection of tales. The tales are classified into four categories: from the countryside; Afro-Cuban legends; animal stories; and fantastical tales. Often, the stories serve as teaching tools or explanations for certain historical, social, or natural events in Cuba. Several legends tell about the *guijes*, Cuban

versions of imps or goblins, who once a year come out of hiding at the bottom of the river to wreck havoc in towns and at people's homes.

The novelty of these legends makes them engaging and intriguing. However, this book will work better for teachers and librarians than for children. For the stories are told straightforwardly, avoiding literary techniques such as characterization, dialogue, and suspense that usually entertain young readers. The directness of the delivery suggests that for the stories to be successful, a skillful storyteller must tell them. But that's fine; most children's librarians and elementary school teachers are quite good at telling stories.

—Danilo H. Figueredo
Bloomfield College Library

14-4-0541

Scheub, Harold, comp. *African Tales*. Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 2005. 286 pp. ISBN 0-299-20944-X, \$22.95 (pb).

A new compilation of African folktales may seem extraneous, but a new collection by the eminent scholar Harold Scheub is noteworthy. Unlike many such texts, which focus on sub-Saharan Africa, this book includes tales from the entire continent—and from the past to the present. Scheub identifies the tales by language group, another positive departure from the typical categorization by European-designated countries of Africa. In all, 41 language groups are represented (many rarely heard of outside the African continent), across 33 countries or regions, demonstrating a sensitive recognition of the breadth of stories available. The language groups are arranged alphabetically—the collection could well be entitled *African Tales A-Z*—with the primary country of origin added.

The stories are serious, humorous, and wise, but they are also wisely chosen. With so many tales extant, selection is a daunting task. Scheub opens the book with a familiar Ananse spider tale and includes many other trickster stories. To quote Eileen Julien's testimony on the back cover, "These stories...tell of every circumstance of life." Then the book closes with a beautiful Zulu story ending "happily ever after!" Scheub has also included superb, expressive photos of numerous storytellers at work. Finally, he adds helpful notes and a rich, extensive bibliography. This is a very readable, entertaining, and valuable book accessible for many age levels.

—Anne Serafin
Newtonville, Mass.

Criticism

14-4-0542

Japtok, Martin. *Growing Up Ethnic: Nationalism and the Bildungsroman in African American and Jewish*

American Fiction. Iowa City: Univ. of Iowa Press, 2005. 214 pp. ISBN 0-87745-923-1, \$29.95.

This interesting book critically discusses six novels on coming of age to adolescence and young adulthood in the first half of the twentieth century. Three books are about African Americans and three books are about Jewish Americans. By looking at fiction within a specific area—coming of age—for two different ethnic groups, possible similarities and differences for the groups are made manifest. The major finding is that the books are very similar in describing the coming of age. Thus, both African Americans and Jews have similar paths of growth to adulthood as depicted by these six writers.

The paired titles are: James Weldon Johnson's *Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* and Samuel Ornitz's *Hanuch, Paunch and Jowl*; Jessie Fauset's *Plum Bun* and Edna Ferber's *Fanny Herself*; and Paule Marshall's *Brown Girl, Brownstones* and Anzia Yeziersak's *Bread Giver*. Twenty-six pages of notes at the end of the main text also contribute to understanding.

Bildungsroman refers to a focus on the self and how the self perceives things. The novels tend to emphasize how the protagonists perceive what is happening to them, which is influenced, in part, by their ethnic identity and also the identity imposed on them by others (African Americans receiving discrimination because of color, Jews because of their culture).

This book will be of value to those interested in literary interpretation, although it also makes a contribution toward understanding two groups, African Americans and Jews.

—Russell Eisenman
Univ. of Texas–Pan American

14-4-0543

King, Thomas. *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative*. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2005. 184 pp. ISBN 0-8166-4626-0, \$24.95.

“The truth about stories is that that’s all we are.” The repeated line in each section of the book reinforces King’s claims that stories are entertaining, redeeming, condemning, and dangerous. They are the essence of identity and existence. History, ethics, and public policy reflect this identity.

The book is one continuous story woven together by smaller stories coming from multiple sources, including King’s personal history, Native mythology, North American history, and contemporary politics. His style is penetrating. King gives his audience the refreshing, insightful blend of oration and inscription. He effectively uses repetition, cadence, and imagery—all elements of good storytelling.

I admire King’s crafty merging of selected autobiographical material with both his sense of history and

contemporary social concerns. He voices important and insightful anger with feelings of human dignity. As a storyteller, he is not above the concerns his stories address; he is a full participant in the story as well.

I recommend this book to any student of writing, mythology, or history. Particularly, it demonstrates how Native concerns are relevant to us all: “Take it [the story]. It’s yours. Do with it what you will....But don’t say in the years to come that you would have lived your life differently if only you had heard this story. You’ve heard it now.”

—Kenneth Hada
East Central Univ., Ada, Okla.

14-4-0544

Rubin, Derek, ed. *Who We Are: On Being (and Not Being) a Jewish American Writer*. New York: Schocken, 2005. 346 pp. ISBN 0-8052-4239-2, \$25.00.

Rubin presents essays by 29 leading Jewish-American writers addressing their Jewish identity and the fiction they write. The contribution of this anthology is that the writers themselves speak out—not just critics and scholars. The chronological order of the essayists, beginning with Saul Bellow (1915–2005) and ending with Yael Goldstein (1978–), allows the reader to trace a thematic development. The earlier writers tended to treat the Jews’ immigrant experience and assimilation; recent writers address religious and textual traditions.

While most of the artists depict the Jew as “other,” it is primarily the authors up to the 1970s that portray the Jew as the outsider and refer to anti-Semitism and the Holocaust as themes that influence their being and their writing. The striking shift in the authors’ preoccupations over the years reflects, among other things, the change in the position of the Jew in American society, the change in American society, and a change in the existential desires of the Jew. A common striving expressed in a prominent number of the pieces is toward an understanding of the human condition through the particular Jewish characters.

—Daniel Grossberg
State Univ. of New York, Univ. at Albany

Visual and Performing Arts

14-4-0545

Aleiss, Angela. *Making the White Man’s Indian: Native Americans in Hollywood Movies*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood/Praeger, 2005. 290 pp. ISBN 0-275-98396-X, \$44.95.

Anyone who frequents movie theaters has watched a scene like this: ranks of savage Indians, faces brightly

painted, lances, rifles, and bows at the ready, silently look down at a small circle of wagons defended by a handful of brave settlers. Or, grave-faced, a cavalry officer and an Indian chief share a pipe or sign a peace treaty or carefully cut their arms and mix their blood in a pact of friendship. Scenes such as these have defined our vision of an American West that never existed.

Film historian and journalist Aleiss explores the depiction of Native Americans, from early silent films such as *The Red Girl and the Child* (1910) to classic fifties-era films like *Broken Arrow* (1950), to recent films such as *Dances with Wolves* (1990) and *Smoke Signals* (1998). She studies the themes of many of these films and analyzes the social, cultural, and historical context that helped to shape them. Aleiss shows how individual studio owners and directors created films depicting Native American life that served their own ideologies, and how outside organizations influenced portrayals of Native Americans and sought to control the ideas expressed.

While Aleiss's book is a serious study, it is lively and very readable, full of little-known facts and anecdotes that add interest to its analysis. Black-and-white photos, copious notes, a list of films, and a bibliography are also included. While important films are emphasized in the text, a filmography of significant movies would have been helpful. Still, *Making the White Man's Indian* is a useful addition for most libraries.

—Andy J. Deering
Central Wyoming College

14-4-0546

Bordowitz, Hank. *Noise of the World: Non-Western Artists in Their Own Words*. Brooklyn, N.Y.: Soft Skull Press, 2004. 384 pp. ISBN 1-932360-60-3, \$16.95 (pb).

Bordowitz's interviews with some of the most eminent non-Western musicians resonate with the recent focus on biography as a reflection of culture in ethnomusicology and other cultural studies. Biographies that examine individuals give a fresh perspective in understanding aesthetics, artistic criticism, cultural behavior, and other aspects of culture. Similarly, personal statements by individual artists in Bordowitz's interviews provide insights about art, craftsmanship, context, and so on. Musicians such as Fela Kuti, King Sunny Ade, Gloria Estefan, and the Gypsy Kings are not only famous in their respective countries but also in the Western world. One of the strengths of the book is that the artists' statements are not filtered and processed in the traditional scientific sense; hence, the interviews may be valuable in themselves as raw material.

The organization of the cultural areas in the book reflects the common cultural and geographical canon of academia. The balance of the cultural regions covered is somewhat problematic, however. While the main portion of the book—63 interviews—is dedicated to North America,

Africa, and Europe, there are only nine interviews with artists from the rest of the world. For example, there are only four interviews dedicated to the entire continent of Asia, and two with Middle Eastern artists.

Bordowitz's book is a useful contribution to ethnomusicology and other cultural studies, such as anthropology, sociology, gender, and multicultural studies. It might be particularly valuable for survey courses on non-Western musical traditions.

—Munir Bekin
Siena College

14-4-0547

Polk, Patrick Arthur. *Botánica Los Angeles: Latino Popular Religious Art in the City of Angels*. Seattle: UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History; dist. by Univ. of Washington Press, 2005. 140 pp. Illus. ISBN 0-9748729-0-3, \$30.00 (pb).

Polk's book is an impressive exploration of the Botánica, which has been called "a place of mysteries." A blend of Afro-Cuban religious traditions, the Botánica has become a central religious location for contemporary Latino culture. A Botánica as a site is both a place of worship and a store, that is, a place for communal prayer and a place to purchase religious objects and herbal remedies for private devotions.

With a canny and sympathetic eye, Polk guides the reader through the historical and devotional characteristics of such religious movements as Santería, Palo, Folk Catholicism, Curanderismo (healing), and others. The contributing authors, Donald J. Cosentino, Miki Garcia, and others, invite the reader into the Botánica and its world, examining its altars, objects of faith, and rituals.

The text is beautifully illustrated, depicting the rich, colorful life of the Botánica culture. Highly recommended.

—Greg Zoltowski
Siena College

14-4-0548

Till, Barry. *The 47 Ronin: A Story of Samurai Loyalty and Courage*. Petaluma, Calif.: Pomegranate, 2005. 80 pp. Illus. ISBN 0-7649-3209-8, \$18.95.

Two sets of Japanese woodcut prints by Hiroshige (1797–1858), followed by sets of prints by four other woodcut artists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, are here reproduced to illustrate the three-century-old true story of the 47 *ronin* (masterless samurai warriors) who banded together to avenge the death of their master.

The story: Kira is a powerful lord, but mean-spirited and vicious. Lord Asano, infuriated at being publicly humiliated by Lord Kira, draws his sword and wounds Kira, a socially unacceptable gesture. Kira demands that Asano

commit *seppuku* (ritual suicide with honor). His lands are taken and his samurai are left masterless. Angered at the injustice of the demand, Asano's retainers gather and plot to take revenge.

In a secret scheme that takes two years to carry out, some of the ronin become common workers, entering Kira's castle and working for him to gain access to his habits and the layout of the castle. Carrying out their intricate plan, they enter the castle. A battle ensues. Kira is beheaded. The ronin place his head at the grave of their master and surrender. They are required to commit *seppuku*.

The loyalty of the ronin to their master, and their courage, knowing that in taking part in the plot their honor would require them to die, appealed to the Japanese people of the early 1700s, who feared that the old society was falling apart. Puppet plays and Kabuki plays were written, holding the ronin up as models of samurai honor. The magnificent woodcuts, each an entire page in full color, are the focus of this beautiful little book.

—Ginny Lee
Syracuse, N.Y.

Biography/Autobiography

14-4-0549

Abu-Jaber, Diana. *The Language of Baklava*. New York: Pantheon, 2005. 331 pp. ISBN 0-375-42304-4, \$23.00.

This is a fascinating memoir, spiced with culinary recipes at the end of each chapter. Born in upstate New York to a Jordanian father and an American mother, Abu-Jaber experienced the Arab-American culture to its fullest. Her beautifully descriptive language introduces the reader to many emotional layers of her volatile and passionate father, a restless immigrant who had a tremendous passion for his homeland. Through creating the food of his native land he relived his past. He tried to raise his daughters as "good Arab girls," which in turn created a huge conflict with growing up in America.

Diana's father's decision to relocate his family to Jordan when Diana was eight left a lasting impression on the young girl. Her experiences living there and visiting the Bedouin family is depicted from a child's point of view. The family's return to the United States is as dramatic as the move to Jordan was. Having lived in the two different cultures, Abu-Jaber has an understanding and appreciation for both ways of life. Years later, as a grown woman, Abu-Jaber moved to Jordan in order to write her memoir. The description of various humorous family events and feasts gives the reader a delectable taste of Jordanian culture. Throughout the book every event is tastefully laced with mouth-watering descriptions of various Middle Eastern foods. The author's poetic description of the land, the trees, the wind,

the birds, and above all the people and their food, leaves a wonderful taste in the reader's mind.

—Asieh Shayegani
Delmar, N.Y.

14-4-0550

Barkley, Charles. *Who's Afraid of a Large Black Man?* New York: The Penguin Press, 2005. 236 pp. Edited and with an introduction by Michael Wilbon. ISBN 1-59420-042-4, \$24.95.

The general public will more than likely refer to former NBA player and current TV analyst Charles Barkley as brash, bold, opinionated, and a personality who unapologetically says exactly what is on his mind. It is these traits that set the tone for this project. *Who's Afraid of a Large Black Man?* is a clever, provocative, and misleading title for a very important book.

Barkley is capitalizing on his brutal honesty and celebrity to interview a variety of personalities, who discuss racial issues in America and abroad. The interviewees also comment about class and income and reveal seldom-heard biographical facets of their early lives. Among the plethora of subjects are Senator Barack Obama, former president Bill Clinton, Tiger Woods, and social activist Marian Wright Edelman.

For example, Tiger Woods has been criticized by the African-American community for not speaking directly about his experiences as a "Black Man in America." However, he speaks openly about it with Barkley in this text, as do the other subjects in their interviews. Written with Barkley's comments in boldface, the dialogue is as diverse as the personages who have agreed to speak.

Recommended for public and community college library collections, general readers, and fans of the author.

—Anthony Todman
St. John's Univ. (N.Y.) Library

14-4-0551

Bell-Villada, Gene H. *Overseas American: Growing Up Gringo in the Tropics*. Jackson: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 2005. 260 pp. ISBN 1-57806-720-0, \$28.00.



Memory is an elusive thing. Whether providing delight or recreating deep pain, memory locates the extremes of emotion. For Bell-Villada, those memories are ones of pain. His introduction immediately situates his themes of isolation and rootlessness. His autobiography presents the many contexts of dislocation: Haiti, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, Florida, Paris, and

Cuba. None affords him security. His feelings of being an “overseas American” are reflected in the unrest of the countries in which he lives—military coups, dictatorships, rapid immigration. His sense of belonging is eventually crafted by anchoring himself in his writing. He tries to understand his loneliness in terms of frameworks larger than himself, like colonialism, literary traditions, and politics. He is a telescope, moving his lens inward on himself, but also outward into a broader world context. Always shifting and searching for focus, longing for the music of his life.

He is an expat, a TCK (Third Culture Kid), whose physical traits add to his displacement. Using Carolyn Smith’s work *The Absentee American* (1991) to find clues, definition, or meaning to his identity, he ironically discovers that he is occasionally the exception to her examples. He says, “I imagined, romanticized and yearned for vital links.... Continuity, connectedness—they were nil!” Even the security of a loving family are denied as Bell-Villada ponders and blames his overbearing father for exacerbating his loveless childhood and rendering Kalani and Valerie, his siblings, as pawns in power plays. Reminiscent of Eva Hoffman’s *Lost in Translation* (1989), this book uncovers the need for all children to experience acceptance and support, or they will spend the rest of their lives endlessly seeking.

—Patricia Goldblatt
Toronto, Ont.

14-4-0552

Castro, Joy. *The Truth Book: Secrets of a Jehovah’s Witness Family*. New York: Arcade Publishing, 2005. 240 pp. ISBN 1-55970-787-9, \$25.00.

Castro’s memoir is a testimony of strength and healing of an abused child and would be most inspirational to other victims of child abuse. Surprisingly, despite the book’s title, the religious practices of her abusive mother and stepfather do not come across in the pages as the most prominent “cause” for the abuse. The book leaves the impression that, in all likelihood, the abuse would have been meted out regardless of the religious practices of her mother and stepfather.

What is striking in the memoir, but, alas, too familiar in other stories of child abuse, is the failure of responsible adults outside of the family to take action to protect an abused child. In this instance, the religious community’s elders were informed of the abuse several times and failed to take action, citing the need to respect the privacy and authority of the family. The reader is not left well informed about the Jehovah’s Witness religion, because most of the information is couched in how the religion was used to justify the abuse of Castro and her brother. The first chapter is rather disjointed, but the remainder of the book engagingly flows in chronological memories from both the child and adult perspectives. Though the work lacks much information about the Jehovah’s Witness religion, it is important

for the reader to hear Castro’s message that, in her childhood, religion was used as an instrument to abuse her human spirit.

—Donna McIntosh
Siena College

14-4-0553

Cateura, Linda. *Voices of American Muslims*. New York: Hippocrene Books, 2005. 275 pp. ISBN 0-7818-1054-X, \$24.95.

In his introduction, Prof. Omid Safi (Colgate University) mentions that currently there are over 6 million American Muslims, the fastest growing religious group in the last three decades. The book encompasses a collection of 23 extensive interviews conducted by the author, herself a Catholic woman. The interviewees are both Sunni and Shia, 16 men and 7 women, some immigrants, some converts to Islam, religious leaders (including a U.S. army chaplain), medical doctors, educators, a transit policeman, a taxi driver, a jazz musician, a high school student. The interviewees express open, uninhibited opinions about their manner of practicing Islam in America, their lives, hopes, challenges, and aspirations, as well as their views on the September 11 tragedy, including the fact that Muslim Americans have suffered a backlash of suspicion and misinterpretation on the part of non-Muslim Americans.

Despite some ups and downs in personal experiences, all interviewees claim their devotion to the United States and their desire to live in peace and understanding with other religious groups. Dr. Elias Zerhouni, for instance, states: “I want my kids to interact with Christian friends, Jewish friends, and understand the complexity of life and society.” Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf believes that “American Muslims now are in a better position to communicate a newer American form of Islam to their relatives abroad, and thereby influence their thinking about Islam.” Moreover, Asma Gull Hassan, a young woman author, thinks that “If Muhammad were alive today, he would have a web site. He probably also would be an American. So many core values of Islam are embodied in American society.”

The book is suitable for social science, ethnic, and religious collections.

—Vladimir F. Wertsman
Rego Park, N.Y.

14-4-0554

Cole, George. *The Last Miles: The Music of Miles Davis, 1980–1991*. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 2005. 544 pp. ISBN 0-472-11501-4, \$35.00.

Harris, Janie, with Bob Evancho. *Elegant Soul: The Life and Music of Gene Harris*. Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Press, 2005. 280 pp. Illus. with photos. ISBN 0-87004-445-1, \$24.95 (pb).

Elegant Soul is a heartfelt embodiment of the music and life of jazz pianist Eugene Harris. Including a dizzying spread of over 200 color photographs, Harris elegantly narrates the life and times of her late husband. A jazz music enthusiast herself, Harris is able to capture the poignancies of the music loved and tendered by the “Blues Man From Boise.” In paying tribute to her late husband, Harris also seeks to celebrate his circle of family, personal friends, and fellow musicians who made his love affair with jazz music a worthwhile, lifelong engagement. Commencing with Gene Harris’s roots in small town Benton Harbor, Michigan, and culminating with his successful trek around the globe, Harris strikes chords of love and vibrancy for all jazz aficionados to enjoy.

The Last Miles is a highly technical exploration of the final musical phase of jazz great Miles Davis. Cole works to bring merit to the musical evolution of one of jazz’s most controversial figures. He devotes at least one chapter to each album recorded by Davis. Nearly 100 interviews with those closest to Miles Davis, a discography, details of unreleased material, and new photographs of Davis are included. Cole takes painstaking effort to shed new light on the final decade of Miles Davis’s musical career and to convince the reader of his musical genius even in his later years.

—Marsha Walker
Jackson State Univ.

14-4-0555

Coleman, Wanda. *The Riot Inside Me: More Trials & Tremors*. Boston: Black Sparrow Books/David R. Godine, 2005. 265 pp. ISBN 1-57423-200-2, \$18.95 (pb).

Coleman, a poet, journalist, writer, and sometime scriptwriter from Los Angeles, has written a collection of nonfiction prose in her latest book. Given that she was born and raised in Watts during the tumultuous social and political climate of southern California in the 1950s and '60s, she saw firsthand the effects of desegregation in schools, and the effects of the Watts and Rodney King riots. These influences created a rage she feels compelled to express throughout her book.

At first the softer side of Coleman is expressed through her childhood journal entry, a letter to her father, and memoirs of her love for music. Then her rage becomes a focal part of her writings. As expressed in one essay remembering Latasha Harlin, a 14-year-old girl killed in a Los Angeles Korean store, Coleman feels that Latasha was murdered, not killed because the Korean storekeeper was defending herself. She attacks Maya Angelou and Angelou’s 2002 tome, *A Song Flung Up to Heaven*, penning a scathing book review that depicts Angelou as a mediocre writer, namedropper, and “cannibalizer” of the reputations of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. It seems egocentric for Coleman to devote so much time to defending her views and criticizing the views of others. I would suggest reading other authors, such as bell

hooks, Toni Cade Bambara, and Toni Morrison, in order to experience a broader spectrum of African-American women’s perspectives.

—Dora Love
San Francisco, Calif.

14-4-0556

Conley, Robert J. *Cherokee Medicine Man: The Life and Work of a Modern-Day Healer*. Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 2005. 160 pp. ISBN 0-8061-3665-0, \$19.95.

Conley uses his superb skills as a storyteller to document the life of Little Bear, an Indian medicine man. Conley first provides the history of the Cherokee and the history of Indian medicine to serve as a context for understanding the story of Little Bear. The author has written this history so well that he captivates his reader by educating and entertaining with his storytelling skills. He further frames the story of Little Bear by introducing Cherokee mythology and its place within Native American medical practices. Next, he presents Little Bear’s own story in an interview and then further describes Little Bear in a life history. But Conley saves the best for last in documenting the work of Little Bear by painting portraits of the medicine man’s patients and how they have been helped. Conley concludes with an afterword explaining what this work meant to him. Readers of the biography will gain an understanding and respect for this amazing Indian healer and his medical practices.

Cherokee Medicine Man is an excellent first read to get one hooked into biography because of Conley’s storytelling ability. Although I’ve never been a huge fan of biography, this work has changed my mind because it reads more like a novel than a history. The book does not divulge the sacred learnings or recipes of Indian medicines. However, it does provide enough information about Cherokee history and culture to give the reader an understanding of the power of American Indian medicine. A glossary explains unfamiliar Cherokee terminology.

—Heather Kimberley Dial
North Carolina State Univ.

14-4-0557

Falola, Toyin. *A Mouth Sweeter Than Salt*. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 2004. 271 pp. ISBN 0-472-11401-8, \$35.00.

The opening acknowledgments of this book immediately state the author’s goal: to be “an observer”—of his early life and the culture into which he was born. He asserts that the political aspects of his life “that most interested the publishers” were deliberately left out. Falola focuses on his childhood years in the 1950s and 1960s. His memoir is a compendium of Yoruba culture, history, and family lore.

Despite a wry, humorous tone, the writing is dense and often repetitive, so that reading often proceeds slowly, and following the train of thought can be difficult. Chapter divisions and topics are clear regarding basic events, but Falola includes long meditations on each item. One noteworthy example is a long section on the train, which becomes a trigger for many related stories. Moreover, he often segues from one topic to another within a section.

Individual cultural details are fascinating, particularly Falola's child's-eye view of his polygamous family. For those with an interest in Nigerian history, the extended analysis of the city of Ibadan and its role in Yoruba life is brilliant.

Though frequently frustrating, the book is intriguing and enlightening. Falola weaves a web of images, stories, catchy phrases, proverbs, and songs that draw one in. More photos would be welcome in such a personal piece; perhaps he could include them in the future installments that he seems to promise.

—Anne Serafin
Newtonville, Mass.

14-4-0558

Fox, William Price. *Satchel Paige's America*. Tuscaloosa: Univ. of Alabama Press/Fire Ant Books, 2005. 152 pp. ISBN 0-8173-5189-2, \$16.95 (pb).

Satchel Paige was one of those American sports legends, like Babe Ruth, whose life superseded his accomplishments on the field. One of the best pitchers to ever hurl a baseball, Paige was relegated to the Negro Leagues until well past his prime, finally making his major league debut for the St. Louis Browns in 1948 at the (alleged) age of 41.

Fox was one of the lucky ones. He got to "touch the hem" of Paige, so to speak, in the form of a week's worth of interviews held in various locales that the then 54-year-old former Negro League, former major league ballplayer frequented in Kansas City.

Paige and Fox enjoyed some common interests: They were both experts in the manufacture and distribution of moonshine, for one thing. This bond led to a rapport in which Paige opened up not just about his baseball reminiscences, but about growing up poor and black in the South. Of course, the way Paige has been described in numerous accounts, he was not exactly a shrinking violet.

In the book's postscript, Fox, a professor and writer-in-residence at the University of South Carolina, discusses his rather unorthodox method in compiling *Satchel Paige's America*: "One of the best decisions I've ever made was not to tape Satch or take any notes.... Later I found out that if I taped him he went flat and ordinary and almost uninteresting. And if I took notes, he'd read what I was writing and start editing himself."

Readers are fortunate that Fox took this less-traveled path to record these fascinating conversations.

—Ron Kaplan
Montclair, N.J.

14-4-0559

Freedman, Samuel G. *Who She Was: My Search for My Mother's Life*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005. 340 pp. ISBN 0-7432-2735-2, \$24.00.

How many of us have wondered about our parents and what they were like before they were in their current roles? How did they become the people we think we know? The author did intensive research into the life of his mother, who had died many years before. He describes her life as the first generation of a Bronx Jewish family. First there are her school days and the drive that made her the major scholastic star she was. There is the drive to get out of her family's home and the mentality that came with it. Boys started to play a role in her life, as did the war. Friedman details her various loves—the most important with a non-Jewish man, which her narrow-minded mother put an end to. Then came the person that Friedman knew. As the author puts it, "After all her promise and all her yearning, she settled for escape. She settled for settling."

This is a very interesting book and would be more so if the mother were a bit more sympathetic—less selfish, vain, and self-pitying. She is ashamed of her parents, their "old world" ideas and of their poverty. It is always a question of what they "don't have." Her hatred of her own mother leads her to humiliate the woman without shame. She shows no understanding of her mother's ways, and the pain and sadness that the Holocaust caused her. There is such an abundance of detail in describing the way of life in the Bronx of the thirties and of the people involved that one often feels overwhelmed, and the flow of the story gets slowed to a crawl.

—Ruth Becker
Forest Hills, N.Y.

14-4-0560

Goodman, Hirsh. *Let Me Create a Paradise, God Said to Himself: A Journey of Conscience from Johannesburg to Jerusalem*. New York: PublicAffairs, 2005. 256 pp. ISBN 1-58648-243-2, \$26.00.

When Goodman immigrated to Israel from Johannesburg in 1965, he knew that despite his father's gift of a return ticket "home," he could never again live in South Africa. In this gripping memoir, Goodman, formerly a military reporter for the *Jerusalem Post* and later editor-in-chief of the *Jerusalem Report*, reminisces about people and events that influenced his political and moral "journey."

Many fond memories of his childhood center around Grace, the family's Xhosa live-in servant, who also functioned as Goodman's "executive mother." Although Grace was married and had a child of her own, under apartheid's pass laws she could not live with her husband and seldom saw her daughter.

In Johannesburg, Goodman had belonged to a Zionist-

Socialist youth group, where he learned about Israeli democracy, egalitarianism, and social justice, values that stood in sharp contrast to the cruelties and injustice of apartheid.

A few days after Israel's victory in June 1967, he heard David Ben-Gurion, the previous prime minister who resigned in 1963, speak on the radio and warn that Israel risked becoming an apartheid state if it did not quickly relinquish the territories it had conquered. Ben-Gurion's words resonated with him, especially after his own experiences fighting in that war. Goodman argues that South African-style apartheid does not exist in Israel, but anti-Arab racist elements that refuse to uproot any settlements or return any land pose a serious threat to Israeli democracy and could draw Israel "to the precipice of a moral black hole from which there is no simple return."

—Elka R. Frankel
Princeton, N.J.

14-4-0561

Johnson, Mildred and Delsoin, Theresa. *Malindy's Freedom: The Story of a Slave Family*. Columbia: Missouri Historical Society Press; dist. by Univ. of Missouri Press, 2005. 216 pp. Edited by Stuart Symington Jr. and Anne W. Symington. ISBN 1-883982-53-7, \$22.95.

She was Rose Dawn, a seven-year-old, full-blooded Cherokee whose clan resided in Kentucky. In 1827, lineages of that clan journeyed into Missouri to sell their products. At a stop on a Missouri farm, Rose Dawn wandered off to play with the white farmer's children and was overlooked by Cherokee elders once business was concluded. Left, and held as a slave unlawfully, Malindy (her slave name) remained enslaved until 1865. Though owned by another, she never forgot her family and her Native American heritage. It sustained her through her period of inhumanity, as she used it to shield herself against the evils and pains of slavery, and she then passed it on to her children and they on to theirs.

Now, in these early years of the twenty-first century, her engagingly human and warm story is told by two of her great-grandchildren. They are able to tell it because, as Malindy had planned and hoped, it was passed from one generation to the next, as vividly exciting as when she first told it to the authors' grandmother. Mildred Johnson and her sister narrate a fascinating, moving story of a woman of beauty and passion driven to maintain sanity, friendship, and family at all cost but without losing the dignity of her womanhood. Her "painful yet meaningful journey...now becomes part of our own story, an opportunity to discover our roots and the roots of our community." And what a fantastic, gripping journey! The book is suitable for students at the high school and college levels, and the general reading public.

—A. J. Williams-Myers
State Univ. of New York at New Paltz

14-4-0562

Joyner, Tom, with Mary Flowers Boyce. *I'm Just a DJ But...: It Makes Sense to Me*. New York: Warner Books, 2005. 204 pp. ISBN 0-446-57676-X, \$22.95.

Joyner has written a book that is funny yet real. He deals with issues that we as black Americans face every day, such as interviewing for jobs, dealing with financial management, and trying to get ahead in the job market. He discusses some of the pitfalls we will face and some of the ways we can overcome them.

A graduate of Tuskegee University, Joyner has a strong commitment to Historically Black Colleges and Universities. He discusses their importance and the role they play. He also tells us why we should be committed to them.

He emphasizes the importance of the family and tells how his mother and his aunt were such great influences in his life. Each chapter of the book has a little anecdote accompanied by a life lesson; there is some humor in the story, yet something to be learned.

This is one of the best books I have read all year. It has some life lessons that can help someone just starting out, and it has lessons that can help someone who is over the hill.

The humor will make you laugh out loud. Highly recommended for readers of all ages.

—Charlie Spencer Lackey
Duke Univ. Medical School Library

14-4-0563

Kipp, Woody. *Viet Cong at Wounded Knee: The Trail of a Blackfeet Activist*. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 2004. 166 pp. ISBN 0-8032-2760-4, \$24.95.

Kipp's memoir offers a firsthand view of bridging Blackfeet culture with Western culture, overcoming cross-cultural difficulties, and coming of age. Kipp's journey takes us from his childhood years of playing basketball to his early encounters with discrimination and alcoholism in his teens. His straightforward narrative tells of his experiences in Vietnam and the troubled years after his return from the war. The impact of the Vietnam War transformed a once quiet man into a violent, hell-raising individual. Kipp channels his anger into college, where he encounters a consciousness-raising as he involves himself in the 1972 American Indian College Movement siege of Wounded Knee. After all of Kipp's trials and tribulations, he ends up back on the Blackfeet Reservation as a college English teacher. Now older and wiser, he reflects on the sadness and depression that is so common on his reservation. As an older tribal member, he now struggles with how he can help the youth and preserve the dying "old ways."

Viet Cong at Wounded Knee offers a rich narrative of the life of a common Native man's experiences of moving beyond the reservation and between the indigenous world

and a white world that is entrenched in racism and cultural misunderstanding. The author's discussion of the contradictions of being a Marine and then returning to participate in the American Indian Movement shows the angst of being an enemy in different situations. This book is a fascinating reader for those interested in real-life narratives with a cross-cultural focus.

—Maggie George (Diné)
Diné College

14-4-0564

Kita, Atsushi. *Dr. Noguchi's Journey: A Life of Medical Search and Discovery*. New York: Kodansha, 2005. 254 pp. Trans. from Japanese by Peter Durfee. ISBN 4-7700-2355-3, \$25.00.

This is the first English-language book about Dr. Hideyo Noguchi, a renowned researcher at the Rockefeller Institute, who first identified the microorganism that causes syphilis and is still cited in medical research publications.

It is not a scholarly biography. There are references in the text to information from previous Japanese biographies, and undocumented quotations, but no footnotes and no list of sources. Dramatic scenes with dialogue and detail suggest fictionalized biography based heavily on historical materials and previous publications.

The book tells a fascinating story and provides absorbing reading, gripping enough to let the reader pass with a slight grimace occasional ponderous pronouncements and heavy philosophical statements. It is rich with information and insights about late-nineteenth-century Japanese class structures in society as well as in medicine, the life of poor farmers in deeply rural districts, and the state of both education and medicine.

The author promises to show us both the good and the bad in the life of this prodigiously talented and driven man, and he does. Noguchi started as a handicapped, dirt-poor child with a drunken, largely useless father but a devoted, hard-working mother with faith in her son. He succeeded by talent, drive, superhuman effort, and amazing gall. Kita shows us Noguchi's considerable self-absorption and selfish, even exploitative behavior, but his admiration makes him slide into excusing it all on the basis of Noguchi's considerable accomplishments, and the pride even the exploited took in being part of them.

—Carol B. Gartner
Purdue University—Calumet

14-4-0565

Lelyveld, Joseph. *Omaha Blues: A Memory Loop*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2005. 226 pp. ISBN 0-374-22590-7, \$22.00.

The subtitle of this book—*A Memory Loop*—is a fine

and subtle deviation from "A Memoir." In this case, letters belonging to the author's father become the trigger for buried memories. Known as "memory boy" as a child because of his exceptional recall of minor facts, the adult author finds that his own memories often differ from those of people he contacts to add or confirm for him their memories of the same events.

Many false steps by his parents during his childhood have led to a distancing from them and from his past. His mother suffered from depression; his father, a rabbi heavily involved in the civil rights and Zionist movements, was often unavailable for him. There is a comprehensive recall, however, of one person in his life—his older friend, Ben, to whom he felt very close. Ben is a fascinating and complex character. The picture of him leaves many questions unanswered for both the author and the reader. There are parallels between the life the author lives and that of his father, but always at a distance.

With his parents' deaths and a final discovery, the gap is not bridged, but a kinship remains. The book ends with a semi-humorous scene.

This book is well written and hard to stop reading. The distancing that the author cultivated makes him a good reporter—even of his own life.

—Ruth Becker
Forest Hills, N.Y.

14-4-0566

Olatunji, Babatunde. *The Beat of My Drum*. Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 2005. 272 pp. Introduction by Joan Baez. ISBN 1-59213-353-3, \$68.50 (cl); 1-59213-354-1, \$23.95 (pb).

In this remarkable book, master drummer Olatunji (1927–2003), a member of the Percussive Arts Society Hall of Fame, "tells his story, from his perspective, in his voice." An excellent photo gallery includes informative captions.

Olatunji was born to a Yoruba fishing family in Ajido, Nigeria. He came to the United States in 1950 to study political science at Morehouse College in Atlanta. He did graduate studies at New York University's School of Public Administration and performed at Radio City Music Hall when he was 30. This excellent autobiography, among other things, tells what it was like being black in America in his lifetime, a life that included numerous successes, gaining respect and admiration from his colleagues and friends.

—Geary H. Larrick
Stevens Point, Wis.

14-4-0567

Ridlon, Florence. *A Black Physician's Struggle for Civil Rights: Edward C. Mazique, M.D.* Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 2005. 391 pp. ISBN 0-8263-3339-7, \$29.95.

Edward Mazique experienced remarkable changes over the span of his 76 years. Born to a Mississippi African-American farming family in 1911, he grew up with a determination to improve his status in life. A scholarship drew him to Morehouse College in Atlanta. Then, after a brief stint as a teacher, he entered Howard University Medical School. He began practicing medicine in Washington, D.C., in 1941 and soon after started working for civil rights and health care reform. As president of the D.C. Medico-Chirurgical Society and the National Medical Association, he pressed for the desegregation of professional societies and health care facilities. He persuaded these organizations to support Medicare and Medicaid. He worked with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference to plan for the March on Washington and the Poor People's Campaign.

Ridlon has written a sympathetic chronicle of Mazique's life. She had the benefit of extensive conversations with her subject and quotes liberally from them. Unfortunately, these interviews did not cover Mazique's activism during the 1960s. For this critical period she relies on recollections of his friends, family, and associates.

—Paul T. Murray
Siena College

14-4-0568

Saleem, Hiner. *My Father's Rifle: A Childhood in Kurdistan*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2005. 102 pp. Trans. from French by Catherine Temerson. ISBN 0-374-21693-2, \$17.00.

My Father's Rifle is a sparsely worded but deeply emotional personal narrative by an Iraqi Kurdish filmmaker. Told from the perspective of Azad, a young Kurdish boy, the story examines his confusing childhood as he leaves his remote, almost idyllic village to escape into exile after seven family members are tortured and killed by Saddam Hussein's henchmen.

Despite the distracting brevity of the account, Saleem offers a fascinating coming-of-age narrative that touches on the family's connections with *peshmerga* resistance fighters. In disturbingly clear language, young Azad chronicles the Ba'athist Party's promise of peace and the subsequent repression of the Kurds. The boy and his family fight the government but are eventually forced into a refugee camp in neighboring Iran. They attempt to return to Iraq but are denied access to employment, education, and traditional land holdings. In a parallel development reinforcing the message of hopelessness and oppression, Azad comes to realize that his father lacks the skills and technical training to be a member of the resistance. The man had served as a Morse code operator for Mustafa Barzani, a Kurdish anti-Ba'athist general, but was dismissed by the volunteer army's leadership. Disillusioned and surrounded by decay, Azad searches for a different path to reclaim Kurdistan.

Azad acquires banned books and dreams of joining the Kurdish volunteer army, but ultimately decides that he must leave the country if he hopes to escape. Unfortunately, the narrative abruptly ends at that point, leaving the reader wondering what struggles lie ahead for the Iraqi Kurdish boy in exile.

—Vera Eccarius-Kelly
Siena College

14-4-0569

Sherman, Judith H. *Say the Name: A Survivor's Tale in Prose and Poetry*. Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 2005. 208 pp. Introduction by David Carrasco. ISBN 0-8263-3431-8, \$29.95 (cl); 0-8263-3432-6, \$18.95 (pb).

This is an engrossing memoir of a Slovakian-born Jewish woman whose intertwined prose and poetry narration appeals to young and adult readers alike. In short but moving entries, the author skillfully focuses on her happy childhood years in a small Slovak village (Kurima) before World War II, life under Nazi Germany occupation (deportations, executions, transit prisons, Ravensbrück special concentration camp for women of numerous ethnic backgrounds, portraits of women inmates, German SS officers, Kapos, fate of family members, some Jewish survivors hidden by local population), liberation by Russian troops, and subsequent relocation to England, where she studied social work at the London School of Economics.

In 1995, while visiting the Ravensbrück Museum (formerly SS headquarters) at the invitation of the German government, the author inscribes in the guest book: "We still live on two tracks—the past and the now," and then, referring to the SS and their supporters, asks: "Do they too have nightmares? Remorse? Our legacy is involuntarily passed on to our children. What of their children? What do their children do with their legacy?" The book is permeated with profound sentiments of compassion and love of fellow human beings, pride, joy of life despite enormous human tragedies; and it sometimes questions God's place in the context of the Holocaust years. Relevant facsimiles of drawings by Ravensbrück women inmates accompany the text. As a useful and timely addition to the literature of Holocaust survivors, the book will certainly be appreciated on the shelves of public, school, special, and academic libraries.

—Vladimir F. Wertsman
Rego Park, N.Y.

14-4-0570

Torres, Eliseo "Cheo," with Timothy L. Sawyer Jr. *Curandero: A Life in Mexican Folk Healing*. Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 2005. 184 pp. ISBN 0-8263-3640-X, \$14.95 (pb).

This is a very personal account of the author's conversion to the faith-healing properties of curandero. Much of the text shares why he believes in the process, with tales of miraculous healing. The important contribution that he makes about folk medicine is when he gets into the various remedies and cures. I wish he had done a little less proselytizing and a little more describing how medicinal plants aid in the therapeutic process. I was fascinated by the ceremonies leading up to cures; however, sometimes he should have not dragged them on.

Torres's straightforward narrative gives the reader a glimpse into how Mexican folk healing influences the lives of Mexicans and Mexican Americans. He almost made me a believer. I even looked up information about Mayan medicinal recipes. The book succeeds in revealing curanderismo as both a contemplative and a medical practice. Though far from being a scholarly tome, this descriptive commentary still has a place in informing cultural anthropologists and laypersons about an interesting practice. It is a fascinating read.

—Frank Alan Bruno
Uintah County (Utah) Public Library

14-4-0571

U Sam Oeur, with Ken McCullough. *Crossing Three Wildernesses*. Minneapolis: Coffee House Press, 2005. 366 pp. ISBN 1-56689-167-1, \$16.00 (pb).

Gods, goddesses, omens, elves, and nymphs are not the historical perpetrators usually found in autobiographies of poets, politicians, and protestants. Yet *Crossing Three Wildernesses* is rife with supernatural interventions, from pre-Freudian dreams to Zarathustra-like directional signals in Cambodia's rain forests.

Still, allusions to animist, Buddhist, Hindu, and one or two Christian apparitions may be the author's modest way of rejecting ego-warming claims to deserved literary, historical, and political prominence. "The gods made me do it," U Sam Oeur seems to say. In that case—the case of Cambodia's royal dictatorships; crony capitalists; French, American, and Vietnamese imperialists; and corrupt Khmer Rouge genocides—the gods have a lot of explaining to do, if they would ever regain credibility.

U Sam Oeur is eyewitness to a harrowing chapter in the modern history of his country, as well as a sensitive participant in and observer of a saucy slice of academic literary Americana since the 1960s. Although scenes of early bucolic life and provincial education are touching, they're historically significant because they demonstrate an old-fashioned Third World youth's dogged determination to build a modern life for himself and his family.

Their brutally inhumane enslavement by Pol Pot's totalitarian minions contrasts powerfully with U Sam Oeur's dulcet life in Paul Engle's University of Iowa writers' workshop—and this foil, too, is thematic. Cambodia's traditional

culture is imploding. It remains a question whether secular science, technology, democracy, capitalism can replace it. This memoir seems to say they can, but at what price?

—Leo J. Mahoney
Mohave Community College

14-4-0572

Umutesi, Marie Beatrice. *Surviving the Slaughter: The Ordeal of a Rwandan Refugee in Zaire*. Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 2004. 264 pp. Trans. from French by Julia Emerson. Foreword by Catherine Newbury. Series: Women in Africa and the Diaspora. ISBN 0-299-20494-4, \$19.95 (pb).

Personal testimony and eyewitness accounts are extremely persuasive. Of all the current books and films ten years after the Rwandan genocide, none is more effective than *Surviving the Slaughter*. In her prologue Umutesi states simply, "I want to testify."

Umutesi's viewpoint is unique among other texts because she is a Hutu, whereas most analyses of the genocide favor the Tutsis. Moreover, her position as a woman intellectual was rare in Rwandan society. Umutesi does not indulge in deep self-pity, either individually or collectively. She does, however, raise the question of why people will treat others cruelly. She queries: "What had...the thousands of...Rwandan children who were dying in the camp done?" and "Was Muhawae [a four-year-old child] guilty of genocide to deserve this fate?"

Umutesi offers no answers, but her book is a historically documented tale of seemingly random fear, flight, and physical challenge. Unlike many writers, she does not hold back in detailing the exigencies of daily life; she describes real needs and bodily functions, particularly of women and children.

This book carries one along, often as if running with the refugees. After Umutesi gains safety and the country achieves some peace, she closes with the vital question: "Is this the end of the nightmare?"—for herself and for Rwanda.

—Anne Serafin
Newtonville, Mass.

14-4-0573

Watzman, Haim. *Company C: An American's Life as a Citizen-Soldier in Israel*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2005. 388 pp. ISBN 0-374-22633-4, \$25.00.

"It was odd that I felt closer to these guys [his fellow soldiers] than I did to my friends in civilian life...there was something about sleeping in the same tent and sharing the same burdens that endowed these...friendships with greater intimacy." Thus speaks Haim Watzman, Israeli reservist,

émigré, religious yet liberal in his political leanings, an outsider in every group, yet deeply committed to Israel and Judaism.

This feeling of being an outsider in every group is common to émigrés, who uproot themselves and start a new life in a new country. In Watzman's case, it was compounded by strong misgivings about his military mission. Yet he performed hazardous, dangerous, and uncomfortable tasks because of the solidarity he felt with his fellow reservists.

Heroics are absent from this book. Watzman encounters dangers, yes, and is in the thick of fighting, but he remains unconvinced of the wisdom of his superiors and acutely aware of the hatred of the Palestinian population, whom he encounters daily.

He writes vividly about his experiences as a soldier, but the strength of the book lies in his portrayal of his comrades-in-arms and the strong bond he forms with them.

An honest, acute description of the ugliness of warfare, *Company C* will raise issues about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that should give both sides cause for alarm.

—Miriam Sawyer
Rutherford (N.J.) Public Library

14-4-0574

Wu, Judy Tzu-chun. *Doctor Mom Chung of the Fair-Haired Bastards: The Life of a Wartime Celebrity*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2005. 282 pp. ISBN 0-520-24143-6, \$55.00 (c); 0-520-24528-8, \$21.95 (pb).

Margaret Chung was born in California to immigrant parents from China. She wanted to make a significant and enriching contribution to America. Fighting prejudice against race and gender, she spent her life trying to assimilate. As a child she intended to become a medical missionary, having had an infusion of Christianity from her parents and also having had to deal with doctors and hospitals in the care of her mother, who finally succumbed to TB.

Medicine a century ago was considered the province of men. Experimenting with her personal image, Chung dressed in men's clothing. Later in her life, she would attract the attentions of several lesbians, and she carried on relationships with them. During the Depression she collected about her a "family" of young pilots, cooking dinner for them every night and winning their loyalty. It became an honor to belong to this family, which eventually consisted of 1,500 members. They had to "demonstrate a willingness to dedicate themselves to, and possibly sacrifice their lives for a higher purpose." She tried without success to enter the military herself in the First World War, but in the 1940s her popularity had grown enough for her to pursue the notion of women in the armed forces. She is credited with creating the WAVES, though she received little public recognition.

While the book is intended as both a scholarly work and a flowing narrative biography, it is the former that comes through. Although the subject matter is interesting,

the reader wades through a bog of scholarly research, parts of which are repetitive and circular rather than concise.

—Ginny Lee
Syracuse, N.Y.

History

14-4-0575

Agosin, Marjorie, ed. *Memory, Oblivion, and Jewish Culture in Latin America*. Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 2005. 272 pp. ISBN 0-292-70643-X, \$50.00 (c); 0-292-70667-7, \$19.95 (pb).

Jews have sought refuge in Latin America since their expulsion from Spain in 1492; in the 1930s they fled Nazi horrors. In her introduction to this fascinating and often moving anthology of essays, Agosin hopes that her book "will enable an engagement with this Jewish Latin Culture—that it will bring understanding of its roots, its shortcomings, and its accomplishments and occasion an examination of this dual sense of belonging to the People of the Book and to the society at large." By presenting "hard" history side by side with subjective memoir, Agosin succeeds in creating a mosaic-like image of Latin American Jews that fulfills her goals.

Because the volume includes 15 essays by literary scholars, historians, creative writers, anthropologists, and others, the reader is always surprised by both the content and style of each succeeding piece. One of the most moving essays is "Tuesday is a Good Day" by David Brailovsky, a surgeon who returns to his old community in Shanghai for a school reunion after spending much of his adult life in Chile. He decides to make an unscheduled visit to his old apartment, where he is met by a surprised elderly woman. She eventually presents him with a gift that brings forth a flood of childhood memories. Brailovsky's essay represents the finest aspects of this anthology because it weaves together history and personal memoir in a manner that is as elucidating as it is poignant.

—Daniel A. Olivas
West Hills, Calif.

14-4-0576

Bordewich, Fergus M. *Bound for Canaan: The Underground Railroad and the War for the Soul of America*. New York: HarperCollins, 2005. 540 pp. ISBN 0-06-052430-8, \$27.95.

Interest in the Underground Railroad has blossomed in recent years. Local historic sites and societies dedicated to preserving the memory of the brave conductors and freedom seekers are increasing in number.

Books about the Railroad are appearing at a rapid rate.

Bordewich's comprehensive history, beginning in the early 1800s and culminating with John Brown's raid on the eve of the Civil War, is the most recent and the best of these. He traces the evolution of the system for transporting runaways, from early uncoordinated efforts of dedicated Quakers and free people of color to a sophisticated network of dedicated agents.

Bordewich is a talented writer who knows the value of a good story. His volume is filled with colorful personalities, exciting escapes, and heroic rescues. Two individuals figure most prominently in this narrative: Josiah Henson, who fled with his family from slavery in Kentucky and founded a colony for fellow fugitives in Ontario, and Levi Coffin, the Quaker merchant who was known as "president" of the Underground Railroad for aiding hundreds of fugitives to find their way to freedom. Less well known, but equally fascinating, are the stories of the ill-fated Jonathan Walker, who tried to sail seven escapees from Pensacola to the Bahamas in his small whaleboat, and Harriet Jacobs, who hid in a North Carolina attic for seven years until she was able to flee to Philadelphia.

Bordewich has made excellent use of abundant historical sources, but it is his authorial skill that makes *Bound for Canaan* a book that will appeal to readers at all levels.

—Paul T. Murray
Siena College

14-4-0577

Brown, Tamara L.; Parks, Gregory S.; and Phillips, Clarendia M., eds. *African American Fraternities and Sororities: The Legacy and the Vision*. Lexington: Univ. Press of Kentucky, 2005. 512 pp. ISBN 0-8131-2344-5, \$39.95.

Situated on all predominantly African-American campuses, and at many predominantly white institutions, the shroud of black Greek-letter organizations is ingrained in the historical and social fabric of higher education. These timely essays—the year 2006 will mark the centennial anniversary of the intercollegiate black Greek-letter organization movement in the United States—shed light on the historical content, culture, and contemporary issues of black Greek letter organizations.

With instances of hazing (during the pledge period) resulting in injury and death, sweeping reforms have been put into place. In their essay, Parks and Brown argue for the formulation of a pledge process that does not put people's lives at risk but still fosters the development of brotherhood and sisterhood. The legacy and vision of these organizations are found in the eloquent words of Dr. Dorothy Height (a member of Delta Sigma Theta). She possesses an institutional memory and perspective that few others share. Her years of involvement afforded her the wisdom she would never otherwise possess; she communicates her thirst for knowledge and for new ventures to be of service to others. The legacy of coalition building among the organizations

is missing. As faculty adviser for the Kappa Iota Chapter of Phi Beta Sigma, I support Height's urging African-American sororities and fraternities to adhere to the vision of these organizations and forget about rivalries in order to work together as sisters and brothers. The legacy and vision of these organizations should be unveiled by uplifting humankind instead of being cloaked in rivalry, pain, and secrecy.

—Anthony Edwards
Univ. of South Carolina

14-4-0578

Dorronsoro, Gilles. *Revolution Unending: Afghanistan, 1979 to the Present*. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2005. 370 pp. Trans. from French by John King. ISBN 0-231-13626-9, \$29.50.

Klaits, Alex and Gulmamadova-Klaits, Gulchin. *Love and War in Afghanistan*. New York: Seven Stories Press, 2005. 310 pp. ISBN 1-58322-675-3, \$23.00.

Both of these books introduce modern Afghanistan to readers unfamiliar with the devastation that the past quarter of a century of war has wrought there. Dorronsoro's book gives a traditional political rendering of the past 25 years of Afghan history, with special attention paid to political theory versus reality. Klaits and Gulmamadova-Klaits tell the wrenching personal stories of Afghans (native and foreign born) during the same war years. Both books give readers a good sense of the time period, with Dorronsoro's book appealing to the analytical mind, and Klaits and Gulmamadova-Klaits's appealing to the empathetic mind.

Dorronsoro's book is a political science text that addresses the different models Westerners have used to try to explain the continuing conflicts in Afghanistan. Most importantly, he explains why none of them do an adequate job. Afghanistan's revolution and subsequent wars are a consequence of geopolitical struggles outside Afghanistan, political struggles inside Afghanistan, historic Afghan tribal and ethnic rivalries, and religious tensions, all inextricably mixed together. To claim that any one is the key, Dorronsoro argues, is to oversimplify, and shows a lack of clear understanding of what has really been going on in Afghanistan. He gives his readers a detailed analysis of all the major actors at different points throughout the ongoing violence, clearly showing the variety of often-contradictory motives behind the different groups. The book includes many helpful maps, but would benefit from more illustrations, especially since geography plays such a large role in Afghan affairs.

Klaits and Gulmamadova-Klaits's book takes a very different approach. While they give some background in the introduction and in explanatory footnotes, the main point of their book is to let the Afghans, particularly those in the northeast of the country, tell their story of the horrors of war in their own words. You will not find the theories and

policies of politicians and other institutional actors laid out in this book, but rather the effects those theories and policies have had on many otherwise anonymous Afghans. The book contains a range of photographs that, while limited in number, should prove very useful in giving readers unfamiliar with Afghanistan a better sense of the country.

Dorrnsoro's work is the more useful in an academic setting, since it really gives the nitty-gritty political details, but Klaitis and Gulmamadova-Klaitis's book could be used as a helpful supplement. The latter is more likely, however, to appeal to the nonacademic reader who doesn't have the desire to learn every detail of motivation behind the political and military actors, but wants to get a sense of how their Afghan counterparts are actually surviving under such trying circumstances.

—Elizabeth Redkey
Siena College

14-4-0579

Fiset, Louis and Nomura, Gail M., eds. *Nikkei in the Pacific Northwest: Japanese Americans and Japanese Canadians in the Twentieth Century*. Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 2005. 348 pp. ISBN 0-295-98461-9, \$25.00 (pb).

To begin with a quibble: This is a difficult anthology to figuratively wrap your arms around or to sum up. It could be its generic title and subtitle. Or is it its breadth or lack of focus? The title suggests a compendium about Nikkei (people of Japanese descent), either individuals or communities. In that regard, it is misleading. The essays surely are diverse and do touch on discrimination in different forms experienced by Nikkei in the United States and Canada.

But the many positives outweigh the quibbles. Several essays provide a concise history of discrimination against Nikkei in British Columbia, such as being denied voting rights even though they were British citizens, having their farms confiscated and sold by the government during the wartime internment, and being prevented from returning to coastal areas until 1949. This could be new information to many readers.

Other fascinating essays include the stories of the decisions of four cousins in response to the "loyalty questionnaire" of 1943 (some became war heroes, others went from internment camps to federal prison); convictions of draft resisters (the author points out that the mass incarceration of 1942 might not occur again, but there's no guarantee that courts even today would absolve those who refused military service because of their unfair incarceration); and the saga of a journalist's fall to infamy and slow ascent to acceptance because he challenged Nisei leaders for collaborating with the U.S. government.

Though all the pieces don't quite fit, this is a valuable resource on Nikkei history.

—Al Hikida
Seattle Central Community College

14-4-0580

Granberry, Julian. *The Americas That Might Have Been: Native American Social Systems Through Time*. Tuscaloosa: Univ. of Alabama Press, 2005. 204 pp. ISBN 0-8173-1457-1, \$55.00 (cl); 0-8173-5182-5, \$29.95 (pb).

What if Columbus had not arrived in the New World in 1492? Suppose no European settlement had taken place, and the indigenous societies and cultures survived intact? What is usually the stuff of counterfactual history is approached here from an anthropological perspective.

Granberry begins by describing the major polities that dominated the Americas in 1492. The "Big Six" were urban: the Pueblo towns and Mississippian cities; the Aztec, Maya, and Inca systems; and the Caribbean Taino Kingdoms. All were vibrant social systems, changing and shrinking through time. They incorporated widely divergent social philosophies, and the middle third of the work is devoted to brief depictions of the Big Six as they were in 1492 and the early 1500s, comparing their distinctive traits with those of their European counterparts.

Granberry's categories of unitary, similar to the dominant Asian pattern; dualistic, the "opposing pairs" common in Europe; and "trinary," an approach based on compromise between extremes and most familiar in the Near East, will appear excessively schematic to historians. They nevertheless establish a defensible matrix for comparisons that suggest all three forms would have survived in an un-Europeanized North America, while establishing alliances among themselves essentially based on the principle of like bonding with like. Granberry's hypothesis that, absent Columbus, America would have discovered the Old World is poorly supported. His vision of a twenty-first century dominated by commerce instead of conflict reflects a high level of wishful thinking. This provocative perspective on history as it might have been nevertheless repays reading and reflection.

—Dennis E. Showalter
Colorado College

14-4-0581

Greenbaum, Andrea, ed. *Jews of South Florida*. Lebanon, N.H.: Univ. Press of New England, 2005. 264 pp. Illus. with photos. ISBN 1-58465-309-4, \$34.95.

Anyone interested in Jews or Jewish religion and culture will find this to be an excellent book, even if one is not interested in South Florida. The articles cover such far-ranging topics as the Florida Jewish community, Cuban Jews in south Florida, life in South Beach, synagogues, Yiddish cultural revival in Miami, survivor narratives, the Miami Holocaust Memorial, and more.

Many of the authors are professors, often of Jewish studies, but not all fit this category. Regardless, they write well and insightfully about Jewish issues. The articles do

not always neglect negative aspects; there is a chapter on Jewish gangsters. And, in another chapter, it is mentioned that Jews hired blacks when others would not, but also sometimes exploited the black workers. Thus, the book is evenhanded and honest.

Over 130 photographs and drawings add to the value of this book. Along with the text, they help us see Jews as individuals finding their way in a new location. Many Jews came from the northern United States to Florida to retire and/or seek warm weather. Others in Florida immigrated from abroad. Jews have had an important part to play in life in Florida, and these essays cover many aspects of that influence. The collection makes us sensitive to the many ways in which Jews have adapted to and influenced their surroundings. This is one of the better books I have read about a racial or ethnic group and the culture they brought to a new place.

—Russell Eisenman
Univ. of Texas–Pan American

14-4-0582

May, Gary. *The Informant: The FBI, the Ku Klux Klan, and the Murder of Viola Liuzzo*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 2005. 431 pp. ISBN 0-300-10635-1, \$35.00.

Gary Thomas Rowe was an FBI informant inside the Ku Klux Klan. In the early 1960s he belonged to Eastview Klavern No. 13, in Birmingham, Alabama, the most violent chapter of the United Klans of America. While providing regular reports to his FBI handlers, Rowe took part in the 1961 attack on Freedom Riders, associated with the men who bombed the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, assaulted African Americans, and threatened whites who were insufficiently enthusiastic in their support of segregation.

Rowe's identity would have remained a secret had he not been a passenger in a car full of Klansmen who shot Viola Liuzzo on March 26, 1965. Liuzzo, a white Detroit homemaker, had come to the South to assist in the Selma to Montgomery March. Rowe was the key prosecution witness in the trials of Collie Leroy Wilkins, Eugene Thomas, and William Eaton. Although none was found guilty of murder, all were convicted of violating Liuzzo's civil rights.

What kind of man was Gary Thomas Rowe? May probes Rowe's troubled personal history and the relationship between the FBI and its informant. He shows that the Bureau often had advance knowledge of Klan violence but, in its desire to protect its key asset, took no action.

May has done extensive research in FBI records and the transcripts of several trials resulting from the Liuzzo murder. He points out many omissions, lies, and inconsistencies in Rowe's statements and documents the FBI's willingness to tolerate his erratic behavior and sometimes outrageous demands. It is unlikely that anyone will ever know the full truth of what happened that night in 1965, but May has

written the most detailed and complete account of this tragic event.

—Paul T. Murray
Siena College

14-4-0583

Moffett, Samuel Hugh. *A History of Christianity in Asia: Volume II, 1500-1900*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2005. 744 pp. ISBN 1-57075-450-0, \$65.00.

Moffett (Princeton Theological Seminary) continues the history of Christianity with another first-class scholarly work. The progression of missionary work in Asia over the 400 years that this volume covers is traced on a background of faith. The mixing of the "cross and sword" and the "cross and greed" is highlighted, but what is more interesting is how over the course of the years these ceased to be. It seems to me that as we approached 1900 the preaching of the Gospel gained a freedom from the political and economic factors that shadowed the beginning of the epoch covered.

In the light of recent events, the chapters on the Middle East are very relevant. The dialogue between Christianity and Islam is now more important than ever, and the historical contribution of this volume gives a good starting point. Kierkegaard's quote, "One must think backward in order to live forward," is very appropriate for the start of this dialogue.

As a Roman Catholic, I was fascinated to read of the missionary activity of other churches. Moffett does a great service in opening up these pages of missionary activity. There is a temptation on the part of all churches to define mission only in the light of their particular denomination. For this Catholic he has done a great deal to knock down a wall of religious provincialism.

The footnotes and bibliography are a gold mine for those who would like to do further study. Endo Shusaku, the Japanese author, thought of Japanese culture as a swamp in which Christianity is drowned. How true this analogy is I will pass over, but this can be said: In the swamp, Moffett has demonstrated that indeed a candle has been lit.

—William DiBiase
Siena College

14-4-0584

Mullen, Bill V. *Afro-Orientalism*. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2005. 256 pp. ISBN 0-8166-3748-2, \$56.95 (c); 0-8166-3749-0, \$18.95 (pb).

As a collector of Buddha figures and African art, I was captivated by the title of Mullen's book. This important and groundbreaking volume arose from Chinese students at Wuhan University theorizing their own Afro-Orientalism

from the writings of James Baldwin, Claude McKay, Richard Wright, and Toni Morrison. This intersection of the Atlantic and Pacific Diasporas—the black and yellow Negro—gives rise to the powerful voices of the African and Oriental lived history in America. Mullen states, “Their lived history is the history I seek to resurrect.” Answering the call from W. E. B. DuBois’s declaration that Asia is the fraternal twin of Africa in the struggle to decolonize the modern world, Mullen’s counter-discourse on race, nation, and global politics is a timely and powerful presence in the ongoing discussion of race in America.

“Afro-Orientalism” is grounded in the hybrid theory of the American-based indentured servitude and slavery of black and Asian Americans; parallelisms of Western imperialism through Asia and Africa; and charges to ethnic studies scholars of African and Asian diasporas to speak of integrated lived histories of Afro-Asian experiences rather than in a monocultural voice. Framed in a Marxist tradition and steeped in a hybrid paradigm, Mullen’s dialectic on Afro-Orientalism retells the evolution of the political and cultural thought of DuBois; examines Richard Wright’s exiled writings; utilizes Robert F. Williams’s exile to China; highlights the collaboration of James and Grace Lee Boggs; and synthesizes the jazz compositions of Fred Ho in an Afro-Asian multicultural nature. Mullen provides a solid foundation for ethnic scholars to re-imagine research on monocultures by embracing hybrid theorizing and polyculturalism.

—Anthony Edwards
Univ. of South Carolina

14-4-0585

Murphy, Brian. *The Root of Wild Madder: Chasing the History, Mystery, and Lore of the Persian Carpet*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005. 320 pp. ISBN 0-7432-6419-3, \$25.00.

Sheer interest in learning about the Persian carpet takes Murphy to far corners of the old Persian Empire—present-day Iran, Afghanistan, and Turkmenistan—in this seductive, skillfully told narrative.

In his quest to understand the centuries-old mysteries of the Persian carpet, Murphy has been told by a wise man that he needs to read and understand the Persian mystic poet, Hafez. By reading Hafez he finds himself intrigued by Persian poetry, mysticism, and Sufism.

In search of the truth about the mysterious natural dyes and the meaning beyond the designs of Persian carpets, he travels extensively in the region and speaks to many people. Through these encounters, Murphy gains an appreciation for the souls of the people that are involved in the process: from the harvesters of the madder root to extractors of the natural dyes, to weavers of the carpets, to the handlers and sellers of the carpets. He reveres their soulful approach to life and the meaning of their work.

Interwoven in the mystery of the Persian carpet and its brilliant, natural dye source are parts of Iran’s 2,500-year history. As Murphy travels, bits of Persian history reveal themselves, just like the design of the Persian carpet, skillfully tied and knotted here and there. The current political, social, and economic situation in Iran is another strand that captivates the reader. *The Root of Wild Madder* offers a glimpse into the past and present of Iran and its people, encouraging us to explore further.

—Asieh Shayegani
Delmar, N.Y.

14-4-0586

Ortiz, Paul. *Emancipation Betrayed: The Hidden History of Black Organizing and White Violence in Florida from Reconstruction to the Bloody Election of 1920*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2005. 382 pp. ISBN 0-520-23946-6, \$27.50.

Schultz, Mark. *The Rural Face of White Supremacy: Beyond Jim Crow*. Champaign: Univ. of Illinois Press, 2005. 306 pp. ISBN 0-252-02960-7, \$42.00.

Two interesting, well-researched, and well-written Southern histories tell the tragic American story—the satanic nature of white supremacy in the United States. Yet the two fail to shed light on the possibility of a psychic flaw in the makeup of white supremacists, which is especially needed in assessing the nature and extent of physical and mental trauma visited on the victims by the victimizers. This failure is particularly noticeable in *The Rural Face of White Supremacy*, which sets as its purpose an analysis of this phenomenon. Although written seemingly with kid gloves, Schultz’s book builds an intriguing thesis of the dichotomous nature of white supremacy as it existed in rural Georgia between 1900 and 1950 vis-à-vis that of urban areas. Schultz posits such an ideology of race in rural areas (in Hancock County) as a “culture of personals,” a variant of paternalism. He views urban white supremacy as symbolic of the “Solid South,” as opposed to its rural version, which he views as permissive. It is Schultz’s position that urban “aversive violence,” employed to drive away African Americans from any involvement in the social, economic, and political spheres, and the “exploitative violence” employed in rural areas to intimidate black labor, should not be viewed as working in tandem. His opinion is that “there was no ‘Solid South.’” I would argue to the contrary: Aversive or exploitative, it was violence nevertheless, and the very epitome of the “Solid South.”

Ortiz’s *Emancipation Betrayed* speaks to that “Solid South” where, from Reconstruction through post-Reconstruction, white supremacy, by any means necessary, and in tandem with the U.S. government, put in place mechanisms to bring down very democratic state governments across the region. They were replaced with the most

undemocratic, one-party racist state governments that could be characterized as precursors to the rise of genocidal states across the globe. The book, though, is much more than a litany of horrific acts of inhumanity committed against African Americans (and done with a satanic touch) between the fall of Reconstruction (1877) to the presidential election of 1920. It demonstrates quite explicitly and poignantly how black Floridians, in a tradition of continuous resistance to white supremacy, forged formidable socioeconomic, political, and religious vehicles to counter racist moves. Ortiz discounts the Progressive Era's "New Negro" as the mold and driving force behind the black Floridians' sense of oneness, determination, and perseverance in face of tremendous odds, and builds on the work of other authors whose writings also speak to a continuity of resistance to white supremacy as forged from the bottom up rather than the top down. If readers are to understand what happened in Florida in the 2000 presidential election, and in Ohio in 2004, *Emancipation Betrayed* tells the untold story of their antecedents. Ortiz sees striking similarities in the presidential race of 1920 (where African Americans were systematically murdered to keep them from the polls) and that of 2000.

The two books are suitable for required reading at the high school and college levels as well as for the general reading public.

—A. J. Williams-Myers
State Univ. of New York at New Paltz

14-4-0587

Patterson, Tiffany Ruby. *Zora Neale Hurston and a History of Southern Life*. Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 2005. 248 pp. ISBN 1-59213-289-8, \$64.50 (cl); 1-59213-290-1, \$22.95 (pb).

Patterson provides a thorough and profound history of the American South that is contextualized by the Harlem Renaissance movement of the 1920s and '30s, the rule of Jim Crow, and the writing of Zora Neale Hurston. In the introduction, Patterson asserts her goal as providing a reconsideration of Hurston, who is "a much-misunderstood historical figure." Hurston, Patterson argues, "faithfully chronicled black life—most notably the lives of working and lower class black women and men, especially in the rural South."

In order to support this claim, Patterson has provided substantial historical data to support the already extensive body of anthropological work done by Hurston, to demonstrate that Hurston was, indeed, faithfully portraying the inarguable majority of black life in America during a time in which black intellectuals were working diligently to envision and produce a black literati. The book not only chronicles the reality of black experience in the American South, but it also chronicles Hurston's responses to it. Patterson's efforts are significant for Hurston scholars, but this text is

also a valuable literary reference. The author also examines Hurston's relationship with fellow Harlem Renaissance writers and provides an insightful view of Harlem Renaissance politics. *Zora Neale Hurston and a History of Southern Life* is also a documented history of an important piece of American history, the Jim Crow era, which can serve as a valuable historical resource for teachers at all levels.

—Leslie Antonette
East Stroudsburg Univ. of Pennsylvania

14-4-0588

Rees, Laurence. *Auschwitz: A New History*. New York: PublicAffairs, 2005. 384 pp. ISBN 1-58648-303-X, \$30.00.

Rees's book, written as a companion to a six-hour BBC documentary on Auschwitz, describes in detail the trajectory from concentration camp for Polish prisoners to murderous machine dedicated to the extermination of Jews and other "undesirables" believed to be literally eating the resources of the Reich. His emphasis is on the incremental responses to events that led to this transformation. The Slovakian government, for instance, "sold" Jews to the Nazis so it would not have to provide for them once the family's breadwinners had been eliminated. In Poland a way had to be found to deal with the Jews in the overcrowded and unsanitary ghettos. The death camps of Belzec, Sobibor, and Chelmno, and later Auschwitz, solved that problem. Rees emphasizes that Hitler himself did not have to come up with such "solutions." Rather, he encouraged "innovations" in the ranks—people who, knowing his penchant for radical solutions, invented the idea of mass murder by gassing and designed the compounds in which they were to occur and the materials used. Throughout, Rees is intent on making visible what Hannah Arendt called "the banality of evil": how decisions that have horrific implications are made by ordinary folk trying to do their "jobs" better.

Rees's command of previously published material is impressive. He adds information from recently opened Soviet archives. Interviews of over 100 perpetrators (most of them unrepentant) and victims whose ordeal did not end with the liberation of the camps add weight and authenticity. Rees documents the complicity of governments and individuals in the creation and maintenance of Auschwitz and weighs the moral choices faced by people placed in impossible situations. Unfortunately, the book lacks a bibliography, its one major flaw.

—Eva Martin Sartori
Granby, Mass.

14-4-0589

Reimers, David M. *Other Immigrants: The Global Origins of the American People*. New York: New York Univ. Press, 2005. 389 pp. ISBN 0-8147-7534-9, \$70.00 (cl); 0-8147-7535-7, \$22.00 (pb).

This comprehensive survey of non-European immigration since 1965 provides the historical background of immigration from Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The first three chapters cover the period prior to 1940 with an emphasis on Mexican, Chinese, and Japanese immigrants. Reimers provides a nuanced analysis of the issues of non-white citizenship and American law in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In the remainder of the book he devotes separate chapters to immigrants from Mexico, Central-South America, East Asia, South Asia, Blacks from Africa and the Caribbean, and Cuban and Vietnamese refugees. One of his most important points is that immigrants from Mexico and Guatemala of Native American origin do not wish to be considered Hispanics. They view the term as evidence of being victims for a second time of the Spanish conquest. This immigration history is an excellent overview of current immigration policies and sources of recent immigration.

My criticisms are relatively minor. More could have been added about the problems and impact of refugee immigrants from Cuba and Vietnam. Reimers could have mentioned the role of recent immigrants in neighborhood revitalization and the questions of ethnic succession in immigrant neighborhoods. For example, Schenectady actively recruited Guyanese immigrants from New York City to revitalize that city, and Utica recruited Bosnians, Vietnamese, and Pentecostals from Belarus for the same purpose. These are issues that would have been appropriate to raise but are either not mentioned or glanced over. Again, this work is recommended for anyone interested in the changing nature of the American population brought about by immigration since 1965.

—Harvey J. Strum
Sage Colleges of Albany

14-4-0590

Staub, Michael E., ed. *The Jewish 1960s: An American Sourcebook*. Lebanon, N.H.: Univ. Press of New England, 2004. 372 pp. ISBN 1-58465-370-1, \$35.00 (c); 1-58465-417-1, \$24.95 (pb).

This anthology claims to be the first to focus on Jewish dimensions of the 1960s. It contains over 70 articles, essays, speeches, and journalistic accounts dating from 1960 through the early 1970s by Jews active in various areas of public life and across a broad range of ideological, religious, and/or political viewpoints. The collection is organized by subject. Some obviously relate to both Jews and the 1960s (the Six-Day War, the role of Jews in the American civil rights movement, growing support for Soviet Jewry). Other topics relate to the 1960s generally (the Vietnam War, the sexual revolution, the generation gap) and provide an opportunity to see how Jews, in particular, experienced these developments. Still other topics are relevant to Jews of the 1960s and today: the Holocaust, what it means to be

Jewish, and being a Jew in America. In addition, there are writings from the Jewish counterculture of the 1960s and the growth of Jewish radicalism in America.

Staub's introductions to the volume and to each chapter place the writings in context. They specifically aid in communicating the editor's view that Jewishness cannot be delimited precisely and that, as a dynamic thing, it went through dramatic changes in the 1960s. Staub is successful in demonstrating those points and also achieves what he calls the larger purpose of the collection: showing by example that, at least in the 1960s, Jews in America could speak out "as Jews and as Humankind." Recommended for all adult readers.

—Patricia Markley
Siena College Library

14-4-0591

Stockel, H. Henrietta. *Shame and Endurance: The Untold Story of the Chiricahua Apache Prisoners of War*. Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press, 2004. 200 pp. ISBN 0-8165-2414-9, \$35.00.

Stockel documents an important narrative of the Chiricahua Apaches' survival as prisoners of war through almost three decades. The Chiricahua Apaches were imprisoned for 27 years in Florida, Alabama, and Oklahoma after their surrender to the United States government in 1886.

This historical narrative provides yet another glimpse of government efforts to deal with the Indian problem in the 1800s. One band of Chiricahua Apaches surrendered to the army in March 1886. Chief Geronimo, along with several members of his tribe and family, escaped into Mexico for six months, then surrendered to the army in September 1886. After his surrender, Chief Geronimo and his people were shipped off by train to a prison camp in Florida. The surrender of the Apaches begins the long journey of removal from their tribal homelands, first to Florida, then to Mount Vernon, Alabama, and finally to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, where Chief Geronimo died.

The author uses documents that include army dispatches, government reports, and related news items to frame readable narratives that record the events of the Chiricahua Apaches' years of imprisonment. Stockel's narrative is heartfelt, straightforward, and unforgettable. This story of the removal of the Chiricahua Apaches from their original homelands in the Southwest to other parts of the United States traces why some descendants of the Apaches reside in the Midwest today and why others reside among the White Mountain Apaches in Arizona.

—Maggie George (Diné)
Diné College

14-4-0592

Zinn, Howard and Arnove, Anthony. *Voices of a People's*

History of the United States. New York: Seven Stories Press, 2005. 670 pp. ISBN 1-58322-647-8, \$45.00 (cl); 1-58322-638-1, \$18.95 (pb).

Zinn and Arnove have provided a deft supplement to their already popular *A People's History of the United States* (1980, 2003). Their technique has been to use the well-tried method of providing a *vox populi*. This is not a textbook history, not an official history, not even something akin to eyewitness news on paper. Nor is it propaganda or an expression of government policy. In short, it is not standard history, but it is tremendously real because it represents the opinions, ideas, and suggestions of normal—and sometimes very recognizable—people. They are shown commenting on a particular event or situation.

In some ways this is a return to the voices of the Populists, who played such an important role in affecting domestic policy at the end of the nineteenth century and who influenced the actions and legislation of at least two presidents, namely Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson.

It cannot be denied that the choices provided here are Zinn's and Arnove's, and, as such, reflect a bias. However, is this not necessary, if we consider how and why this country was founded? Zinn is really saying that these choices demonstrate the importance of "we the people." The United States came into being as a result of the need to acknowledge the desires and ideas of a diverse group of people. It was not created for a select group, one sect, and one type of person. For Zinn, in this book, there remains the salient position of the people, for this is the essence of America.

—Stuart Smyth
Siena College

Religion

14-4-0593

LaRue, Cleophus J., ed. *This Is My Story: Testimonies & Sermons of Black Women in Ministry*. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005. 202 pp. ISBN 0-664-22776-7, \$24.95 (pb).

For many the number 13 has always been associated with bad luck. That statement certainly does not apply here. *This Is My Story* is a wonderful journey of 13 African-American women ministers and their stories from childhood to being called to the ministry. Each chapter ends with a sermon by these inspirational women. Not only does each story of faith enhance the lives of readers, but they are also stories of encouragement for other women. The pain, the suffering, the misunderstandings, as well as problems such as marriage and divorce, are all shared. A common denominator for many of the women is the revealing of men as their mentors, more so than women.

Together these stories speak to women and men, and one will come away with a better understanding of not only the trials and tribulations of African-American women in the ministry, but also how the women have received them. Contributor Charlotte McSwine-Harris says it best in her description of when she was licensed to preach. Her pastor said to her that "many of the doors that I walk through will be closed to you." Let us hope that after pastors and laypeople have read these stories, women in the ministry will be seen and accepted in a new and most positive way. A must have for every denomination, every seminary, and all types of libraries.

—Ida D. McGhee
Univ. of Rhode Island Libraries

14-4-0594

Noel, James A. and Johnson, Matthew V., eds. *The Passion of the Lord: African American Reflections*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005. 190 pp. Series: Facets. ISBN 0-8006-3730-5, \$9.95 (pb).

This book should be required reading for any seminary student and/or religious educator, as well as on African-American history course reading lists. Inspired by Mel Gibson's hit movie, *The Passion of the Christ*, seven contributors have presented varied correlations and interpretations to the movie and to the history and sufferings of African Americans. Contributors' essays revisiting the historical sufferings of so many others for the betterment of black people will enlighten readers in a new way and perhaps inspire them to be willing to suffer today for the betterment of their brothers and sisters.

It is almost as if *The Passion of the Lord* suggests to readers that in this new millennium there are no Dr. Martin Luther Kings, no Harriet Tubmans or Fannie Lou Hamers. Are you willing to suffer as Jesus Christ did? As Dr. King did? African Americans, especially the young, will come away from this book with a new understanding of black history and Jesus Christ's crucifixion. If it takes a profound movie such as *The Passion of the Christ* to bring non-Christians to be affected by Christ's sufferings and become believers, readers of *The Passion of the Lord* will definitely be ignited. An excellent choice for a church book discussion group, a youth discussion, or a pastor's retreat, *The Passion of the Lord* should be in every church library and clergy office.

—Ida D. McGhee
Univ. of Rhode Island Libraries

Education

14-4-0595

Bolgatz, Jane. *Talking Race in the Classroom*. New

York: Teachers College Press, 2005. 160 pp. ISBN 0-8077-4548-0, \$52.00 (cl); 0-8077-4547-2, \$22.95 (pb).

Bolgatz reminds us of the important and controversial topic of race. She argues that it is nonetheless necessary for teachers and students to move beyond superficial dialogue and genuinely explore race and racism in order to collectively improve our civic society. Essentially, she calls for teachers and students to develop racial literacy—a set of competencies that will allow them to interact with others and to challenge undemocratic practices.

This book is lively and designed to help novice and veteran teachers acquire knowledge, skills, and confidence to successfully address racial controversies in their classrooms. It explores the meaning of race and racism and provides a thought-provoking example of the results when teachers and students discussed race and racism in a history and language arts classroom. As readers journey through this work, they are guided on how to open their classrooms for discussions on topics such as civil rights and institutional racism.

This work provides hope for teachers and students seeking to change school culture. Other features include an analysis of classroom dialogues, illustrating the often rough conversations that teachers and students engage in while learning to talk constructively about race and racism; useful questions; resources; activities to help teachers get started; and strategies that teachers can use to get students to address race and racism critically in the classroom. This lively, practical, and educative work is a must read for individuals who desire to become racially literate.

—Linda Rhone
Shepherd Univ.

14-4-0596

Fashola, Olatokunbo S., ed. *Educating African American Males: Voices from the Field*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Corwin Press, 2005. 298 pp. ISBN 1-4129-1433-7, \$74.95 (cl); 1-4129-1434-5, \$34.95 (pb).

Kunjufu, Jawanza. *Keeping Black Boys Out of Special Education*. Chicago: African American Images, 2005. 212 pp. ISBN 0-9749000-2-8, \$15.95 (pb).

These two compelling texts share a central focus on reversing the academic underachievement of African-American males. *Educating African American Males* is a compilation of articles written by some of the most influential and renowned powerhouses in the field of urban education. *Keeping Black Boys Out of Special Education* is often dogmatic and indoctrinating in its tone and is similar to many of the texts previously published by Kunjufu.

The most significant component of the books for educators is the recognition of the vitally important role that relationships between teachers and their students play in schooling processes. The writers emphasize that the charac-

ter of the person carrying out the instruction is as equally crucial as the content being communicated. Consequently, the authors agitate the mind of the reader by presenting numerous contestable questions for further research and dialogue: Who should be teaching African-American males? Should this population of students be taught exclusively by other African-American males? If so, why are African-American male students who are being taught by African-American male teachers continuing to fall short academically? A common theme that undergirds both texts is the acknowledgment that African-American males are not the culprits with regard to their academic underperformance. Rather, according to the texts, they are the victims of systemic and institutional flaws and insensitivity to their unique educational needs. Additionally, the authors contend that the widespread perception by some teachers of African-American males as immature, indolent, and indifferent human beings is detrimental to their potential for academic success.

Both books offer a plethora of viable strategies that could be implemented effectively to help narrow the wide academic achievement gap that exists between African-American males and their Caucasian counterparts. Reconceptualizing assessment procedures that result in the labeling of African-American males as ideal candidates for special education classes, mandating that educators engage in professional development opportunities that will enhance their abilities to execute culturally relevant pedagogical practices, and increasing the financial resources for the recruitment and sustainability of quality educators are among the metamorphoses that both texts assert are essential if the negative trends of African-American males' academic deficiencies are to be obliterated. Notwithstanding the centrality of African-American males as the prima facie of each book, the recommendations that are chronicled in these texts may very well benefit all students, irrespective of race, ethnicity, gender, and/or socioeconomic status. However, these books underscore the urgency of resolving African-American males' academic underachievement.

—Anthony Pittman
Sacred Heart Univ.

14-4-0597

Osler, Audrey and Starkey, Hugh, eds. *Citizenship and Language Learning*. Sterling, Va.: Stylus/Anthem Press, 2005. 148 pp. ISBN 1-85856-334-8, \$35.00 (pb).

The basic premise of this book is that foreign language teachers are in an especially good position to introduce ideas of citizenship, basic human rights, and globalization to their students. This is because in many cases they are teaching people of various cultures in one class, all with their own points of view on any given issue. Even if not, by teaching another language you are telling your students that another society exists aside from their own, and you

can instruct them as to the other's culture as well as language. These are both understandable claims, and obvious enough, but many of the contributors seem to think they will not be believed. Within the 11 chapters of the book they stress these points over and over, offering a great deal of unnecessary proof to back themselves up.

Some of the essays are theoretical, exploring the above concepts, while others are more practical, giving teachers advice on how to incorporate these ideas into their classrooms. Still others give detailed descriptions of language programs in their home countries, or how their cultures can be made more accessible to foreigners. The link between all of these essays is that they all have something to do with the British Council, which publishes the collection. So while a couple of the essays might appeal to teachers of English language learners, and others to educational theorists or language program developers, the collection as a whole would probably not interest anyone unless they are studying the workings of the British Council worldwide.

—Michelle Lookninan
London, England

Science, Technology and Medicine

14-4-0598

Turner, Nancy J. *The Earth's Blanket: Traditional Teachings for Sustainable Living*. Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 2005. 256 pp. ISBN 0-295-98474-0, \$29.95.

Focusing on the Northwestern region of North America, Turner explores ecology and resource management as practiced by the native peoples of the region. "The Earth's Blanket," like the concept of "Gaia," envisions the earth as a living thing. The loss of the outer covering of trees and other plants that serve as the "blanket" will result in devastation to the planet and catastrophe for the people.

Turner suggests that following the traditional ways of resource management and showing respect for all living things is the best path to a self-sustaining future for mankind. To illustrate these ideas, she details many examples of ecologically sound use of resources. These examples are made more effective by the inclusion of related folk tales and interviews with followers of these practices.

While these examples of an eco-friendly lifestyle are important, the book falls short of its goals of warning against the present reckless pace of resource use and encouraging wise use. The examples cited are, with few exceptions, from the Northwest coast region, an area particularly rich in resources. Little attention is paid to areas where resources are scarcer and population densities higher. In the book's last chapter, Turner offers a list of propositions, but these seem too general to be practical.

The Earth's Blanket is best considered as an exploration of regional practices in resource management and their attendant folk tales and ceremonials rather than a prescription for global ecological awareness. Though interesting, well documented, and scholarly, this is a marginal purchase for most libraries.

—Andy J. Deering
Central Wyoming College

Social and Political Sciences

14-4-0599

Bell, Derrick. *The Derrick Bell Reader*. New York: New York Univ. Press, 2005. 496 pp. Edited by Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic. ISBN 0-8147-1970-8, \$24.00 (pb).

Is resistance to racism a triumph regardless of its outcome? *The Derrick Bell Reader* addresses this question in a collection of his best writings in the areas of critical race theory, economic-determinist analysis of racial history, and narrative scholarship. The volume is intended as an overview of the views found in his over 100 articles, unpublished works, and ten books.

Bell focuses on themes found in his writings. These themes overlap, reinforcing Bell's conclusion that racism is a permanent, integral, and indestructible part of the United States. Bell bases his conclusion on the history of blacks serving as mere pawns between whites and elites, and the fact that blacks' interests are only advanced when necessary to advance whites' interests.

This book is an important addition to U.S. history that provides a compelling and provocative depiction of race and class relations. The hope that blacks' existence encompasses more than only suffering serves as the inspiration for resisting racism; this theme is evident throughout. Unfortunately, because the work focuses only on white and black race relations, it prevents a more in-depth analysis of the role of race in society and why the treatment of other racial and ethnic groups differs from these two. Still, readers interested in a better understanding of the United States will benefit from reading this book.

—Aaron Peron Ogletree
Detroit, Mich.

14-4-0600

Bleiker, Roland. *Divided Korea: Toward a Culture of Reconciliation*. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2005. 224 pp. Series: Borderlines. ISBN 0-8166-4556-6, \$27.95.

Bleiker perceives that Korean nuclear proliferation is not just a geopolitical and ideological confrontation involving the United States, Korea, China, and Japan. He represents its true character as a conflict of deeply rooted autar-

kip identity determinedly fostered since 1948 by a defensive ethnic tribalism in North Korea opposing a single-minded American perception of Pyongyang as a treacherous rogue state requiring a high degree of military preparedness.

Bleiker marshals an impressive catalogue of anthropological, historical, and literary evidence to support his case, which, in essence, counsels both sides to discard rigid stereotypes and consider the legitimacy of the other's perspectives. He's probably right, but he's also whistling "Dixie" in the face of a dangerous and knotty political conundrum.

As Thomas Friedman has shown, Chinese pressure on Pyongyang is the key to a diplomatic resolution of the crisis, because the United States will not alter its demand that North Korea give up its nuclear arsenal. Bleiker's position that American intransigence has always been the main obstacle to a general settlement hardly matters, since Washington doesn't trust the North Korean government any more than Pyongyang trusts Washington.

Long-range historical analysis was not Bleiker's aim, though attention to differences fostered between northern and southern Korea by Japan's colonial policies, 1905–1945, would throw welcome light on the main issues. But the chief defect of Bleiker's approach is his overlooking of certain political implications of Pyongyang's autarky within the context of broad American strategic policy in response to technological threats to the United States.

—Leo J. Mahoney
Mohave Community College

14-4-0601

Crotty, William, ed. *Democratic Development and Political Terrorism: The Global Perspective*. Lebanon, N.H.: Univ. Press of New England/Northeastern Univ. Press, 2005. 561 pp. ISBN 1-55553-625-5, \$35.00.

This book explores the problem of advancing democratic development while dealing with terrorism. Over 20 chapters cover a wide range of geographic areas and topics that will be most useful to academic political scientists and historians for use in upper-level courses that deal with modern issues regarding democracy and terrorism.

Much of the book is technical and highly specific and will be unfamiliar to the average reader not versed in the terminology. For those interested in investigating an adequate definition for terrorism or understanding the role of terrorism in countries from Colombia to China, perusing individual chapters can be rewarding. For those looking for remedies to political terrorism, this particular book will be disappointing; although it clearly defines the term and analyzes it in a variety of ways, the only conclusion reached is that political terrorism is a reality and it must be more effectively understood.

—Benjamin Croucher
George School, Newtown, Pa.

14-4-0602

De la Torre, Miguel A. *La Lucha for Cuba: Religion and Politics on the Streets of Miami*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2004. 181 pp. ISBN 0-520-23526-6, \$55.00 (cl); 0-520-23852-4, \$21.95 (pb).

There was a time when Santería was not considered a religion and was also not considered a topic for discussion in polite company. Santería was seen as a cult practiced by the members of the lower classes and the black community. But that is not so anymore. Because there are many misconceptions about Santería and studies accessible to the general public are but a handful, this title assumes an important role.

De la Torre was a practitioner who left the religion. A religion professor (Hope College), he combines personal knowledge of Santería with academic training in a language that flows and reveals a mastery beyond books. De la Torre understands Santería within Judeo-European traditions, historical developments, and social forces, and he demonstrates that Santería was and is a political statement made by people living on the margins of society.

Since much of Santería practices occurred in seclusion, rumors and misconceptions abounded. It is in this territory that the volume is particularly good. De la Torre explains in great detail the Yoruban gods and their functions, spiritual possession, food servings, evil spells, and the differences between good witchcraft, Santería, and bad witchcraft, Brujería. He does emphasize that Santería, like Christianity, aims to do good.

Several charts list the names of the Yoruban deities and their functions. A glossary—one of the few on the subject—defines Santería expressions and African words. The last chapter, "An Emerging Religion within a Christian Environment," comments on Santería's popularity today and the religion's ability to transform itself, evolving from a form of silent rebellion to a public affirmation of the Africanness of the Caribbean experience.

—Danilo H. Figueredo
Bloomfield College Library

14-4-0603

Doyle, Timothy. *Environmental Movements in Majority and Minority Worlds: A Global Perspective*. Piscataway, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 2005. 197 pp. ISBN 0-8135-3494-1, \$62.00 (cl); 0-8135-3495-X, \$23.95 (pb).

Fort, Meredith; Mercer, Mary Anne; and Gish, Oscar, eds. *Sickness and Wealth: The Corporate Assault on Global Health*. Cambridge, Mass.: South End Press, 2004. 240 pp. ISBN 0-89608-716-6, \$18.00 (pb).

These two books provide clear, insightful reviews of the unsettling legacy of two decades of corporate-dominated globalization, specifically the negative impact on environ-

mental conditions and healthcare in developing countries. Both contribute to the debate about the Group of Eight and the policies of transnational agencies, such as the World Bank (WB), World Trade Organization (WTO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), and Inter-American Development Bank (IADB).

Environmental Movements in Majority and Minority Worlds, written by an Australian activist and writer, provides profiles of the grassroots efforts on six major environmental issues: forests, mining, wilderness, anti-roads, rivers, and anti-nuclear. Each of the chapters focuses on a country (United States, Philippines, Australia, Britain, India, and Germany), and provides a brief history, a major issue, and one specific campaign that took place in that country. Doyle successfully contrasts the approaches taken in Northern and Southern hemispheres and developed versus developing countries. His viewpoint is sociological, taking the framework of new social movements (NSMs). Doyle clearly presents the history and dynamics of green movements infused with perspectives from his own involvement. He profiles efforts to combat corporate greed and its impact on local populations. Despite three decades of effort, he concludes that a shared identity and purpose have still not emerged among environmental groups. But he attributes the successes of NSMs to the strength these grassroots organizations have as diverse and inclusive groups, localized in experience and action. The policies of the World Trade Organization, World Bank, and International Monetary Fund are adversely affecting developing countries, while NSMs defend the poor and advocate for adequate sustenance from the earth's riches.

Sickness and Wealth includes writings by 21 contributors who are leaders and activists for healthcare justice. With one unified voice, they decry the impact of globalization on the world's poor and their health. In case after case, they detail the actions taken by the world's leading governments, agencies, and financial institutions that have resulted in increased global poverty and inequality. The disparity results in less available and lower quality healthcare for the working poor. The first section provides the historical context for today's problems. It tells how Third World countries became heavily indebted to commercial interests and were forced to implement structural adjustment programs to deal with the debt. This included joining free trade agreements and instituting a market-based healthcare system.

The WTO, IMF, and U.S. government have been driving the profit-driven model of healthcare in the developing world, and, in fact, have become managers of its design and enforcement. The writers portray the results as beneficial to the market, but detrimental to the working poor—creating such successes as making Coca-Cola widely available but potable water nonexistent. Separate chapters include discussions of healthcare in Guatemala and South Africa, HMOs in Latin America, military rule over healthcare providers, and cholera and AIDS epidemics. The last section of the book proposes alternative models to alleviating poverty and

providing affordable healthcare. The book also includes a resource guide that profiles groups working on healthcare and social justice issues.

—Mark S. Thompson
Union County (N.J.) College

14-4-0604

Enders, David. *Baghdad Bulletin: Dispatches on the American Occupation*. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 2005. 200 pp. ISBN 0-472-11469-7, \$24.95.

Riverbend. *Baghdad Burning: Girl Blog from Iraq*. New York: Feminist Press at the City Univ. of New York, 2005. 292 pp. Foreword by Ahdaf Soueif. Introduction by James Ridgeway. ISBN 1-55861-489-3, \$14.95 (pb).

Both of these books present alternative accounts to the reports from embedded journalists. Riverbend, a young Iraqi woman in her mid-twenties, created a blog to present a realistic picture from the civilian side of the war that we rarely hear about. Her account is an uncensored point of view and presents the first year of her blog entries, from August 2003 to September 2004. Do we know how Iraqis think, feel, and live in their occupied country? What does liberation really mean, especially for women in Iraq? What do Iraqis think about the political process started by the Americans? Who are the Iraqi politicians who exercise political power? What are the fears, problems, and challenges of everyday life in Iraq on top of "just staying alive"? *Baghdad Burning* offers interesting, witty, and sometimes sarcastic answers to these questions. It also offers insights into communication structures made possible by the Internet. Riverbend not only presents her own thoughts but answers responses she receives on her blog. Her command of the English language, and her knowledge of the Western world and of her own culture, make this book even more precious. Riverbend's aim is to raise understanding between Iraqis and Americans while she stands up against stereotypes on both sides. Therefore, the book is useful for students from high school to graduate school in all social studies courses.

Another alternative view of the war is provided by David Enders, who is close in age to Riverbend. Enders, an American who studied journalism at the University of Michigan, moved to Baghdad as an independent journalist to open an English newspaper there. The book describes his journey to Baghdad and his experiences from early 2003 until June 2004, covering almost the same period that Riverbend does. The difference between the two books is that Riverbend gives us a deeper insight into the war and its consequences for Iraqis than Enders. Even though Enders also sets out to give us an inside view from the perspective of the Iraqis, his knowledge of cultural and historical circumstances is just not as deep as Riverbend's. Whereas Riverbend is fluent in English and Arabic, Enders has to rely on interpreters while talking with Iraqis. Enders's book

shows how the media is influenced and directed by the American forces and government and, in turn, how that influences America's view of the war in Iraq. In addition, it shows what it means to be an independent journalist without the media credentials and, therefore, not having access to certain information.

I consider both books important contributions to our knowledge about the war in Iraq. If one has the time, both books should be read. If one has to choose between the two, I would recommend *Baghdad Burning*. For courses/classes focusing especially on the media, Enders's book is certainly an insightful read.

—Astrid Eich-Krohm
State Univ. of New York, Univ. at Albany

14-4-0605

Ferraro, Thomas J. *Feeling Italian: The Art of Ethnicity in America*. New York: New York Univ. Press, 2005. 256 pp. ISBN 0-8147-2747-6, \$21.95 (pb).

Associate professor of English at Duke and a fourth-generation Italian American, Ferraro, born in Manhattan, analyzes the evolution of Italian identity in the United States, from the "great migration" of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century to the present day.

Organized chronologically, the book examines ten case studies drawn from popular culture. Ferraro begins with the 1895 court case of Maria Barbella, the first woman in the world sentenced to die in the electric chair. The description in the press of Barbella's brutal murder of her lover, as well as her "simian features," confirmed American prejudice toward the dark-skinned southern Italians. In succeeding chapters, the author evokes the artistic accomplishments of Italians and their descendants, which transformed society's perceptions of the ethnic group. Among others, the author cites the art of Joseph ("Giuseppe") Stella, the literary works of Pietro di Donato and Mario Puzo, the singing styles of Frank Sinatra and Madonna, as well as the films *Moonstruck* and *Big Night*. His conclusion deals in part with the popularity of cable television's *The Sopranos*. Over the course of just one century, the culture of those once considered "colored labor" and "dirty, stupid primitives" had become part of American sensibility.

For the most part, Ferraro maintains a breezy, journalistic style that has produced an easy and entertaining read. His work may give hope to people of other ethnicities who presently suffer from isolation and alienation on the part of the general American public.

—Jayne R. Boisvert
Russell Sage College

14-4-0606

Gershick, Zsa Zsa. *Secret Service: Untold Stories of Lesbians in the Military*. Los Angeles: Alyson Books, 2005. 307 pp. ISBN 1-55583-748-4, \$14.95 (pb).

The military's homosexual ban known as "don't ask, don't tell" prohibits military personnel from asking service members their sexual orientation, but permits the discharge of any who acknowledge being lesbian or gay (male). Despite a mainstream press that regularly reports sagging military recruiting levels and increased demand for troops, the military has retained its tradition of federally sanctioned discrimination. For females, the impact of this "gay" policy is dramatic and expensive. Gershick, author (*Gay Old Girls*, 1998), teacher, and U.S. Army Reserve member (1978–1983), exposes the credible and atrocious view of what it is to be a lesbian of any rank in the armed forces.

Through her interviews with active duty, reserve, retired soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines, Gershick has unveiled an irrational, punitive, hostile U.S. military infrastructure. The damning assertions made in *Secret Service* are well supported through the work of groups such as the Center for the Study of Sexual Minorities in the Military and Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN). The SLDN reports that over three-quarters of Americans support allowing lesbian (and gay male) troops to serve openly, but that since the law went into effect, almost 10,000 service members have been discharged on the basis of sexual orientation, many with sorely needed specialty training (translators, linguists).

The women profiled in the book recount military experiences steeped in lesbian baiting, sexual harassment, discharge, and intimidation, all because of a real or perceived homosexual orientation. Recommended for all collections.

—Elsa A. Bruguier
Union County (N.J.) College

14-4-0607

Glover, Vic. *Keeping Heart on Pine Ridge: Family Ties, Warrior Culture, Commodity Foods, Rez Dogs, and the Sacred*. Summertown, Tenn.: Book Publishing Co./Native Voices, 2004. 157 pp. ISBN 1-57067-165-6, \$9.95 (pb).

Glover provides a heartwarming glimpse into the everyday lives of the people on the Pine Ridge reservation. The collection of essays offers a realistic account of life on one Indian reservation in modern times. Glover's writing style takes the reader into the heart of a variety of real-life situations and leaves the reader wanting more. The true-to-life vignettes of family ties, rez dogs, spirituality, and life events, laced with humorous and sad tales of contemporary American Indians, make Glover's stories so rich and visceral.

As a Native person living on a reservation, I could relate to the stories about rez dogs, Indian cars, extended families, rites of passages, and the value of being humble. *Keeping Heart on Pine Ridge* has stories that warm the heart and definitely move the reader closer to a people and their struggles with a compassionate perspective. For the non-native reader, the collection offers a glimpse of how Indians

live in contemporary times, with a perspective that is poignantly honest and real.

Glover has produced a wonderful narrative of how Native people rely on one another, continue to survive, and gather around the fire to tell stories and laugh. This is a must read for those who want to get a taste of American Indian humor while understanding the challenges, history, and rich traditions of the Lakota people.

—Maggie George (Diné)
Diné College

14-4-0608

Grish, Kristina. *Boy Vey! The Shiksa's Guide to Dating Jewish Men*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005. 176 pp. ISBN 0-689-87889-3, \$12.95 (pb).

A lighthearted, superficial, and raffish compendium of advice, jokes, and even recipes, *Boy Vey!* is not meant to be taken seriously. The book discusses meeting your boyfriend's relatives, including the dreaded Jewish mother. It tells you what to expect and what to do when you are invited to his home for Passover and Chanukah (hint—don't wear a Santa Claus suit). There is also a chart of the 50 states and how many Jews live in each of them and a list of common Jewish words and expressions.

Author Grish feels affection and respect for Jewish men. She appreciates their good qualities and is tolerant of their foibles. Libraries need not take notice; this is highly recreational reading. But it would make a nice stocking stuffer for your sister or cousin who is dating a Jewish man.

—Miriam Sawyer
Rutherford (N.J.) Public Library

14-4-0609

Mahbubani, Kishore. *Beyond the Age of Innocence: Rebuilding Trust Between America and the World*. New York: PublicAffairs, 2005. 256 pp. ISBN 1-56864-268-8, \$26.00.

Mahbubani, two-term Singapore ambassador to the United Nations, indicts the United States for abandoning its heritage as a beacon. America inspired the world, he argues, by creating a society where individuals could determine their own destiny. After World War II it established a global order, with the UN as its capstone, that allowed dozens of nations in Africa and Asia to gain their independence and pursue their own destinies. With the end of the Cold War, however, America made the mistake of behaving like any other nation, pursuing its narrow interests with no regard for their impact on others—specifically, the Chinese and the Muslims. The result has been a burgeoning anti-Americanism Mahbubani describes as manifesting disappointment rather than antagonism. His suggested solutions are predictable. The United States should abandon even fringe rhetoric of an American imperium. It should increase

the resources it devotes to creating shared mutual prosperity among people and nations.

Finally, America must continue building what Mahbubani calls “the best human society ever seen in history.” Meanwhile, apparently, the rest of the world will stand on the sidelines with stopwatches and judging sheets, making sure the naive bumbler under the Stars and Stripes do not overreact to such minor provocations as 9/11 while fulfilling their destiny as agents of universal benevolence. Mahbubani's obvious attraction to America is not matched by genuine knowledge of a culture and a people historically unreceptive to the brand of elitist condescension that informs *Beyond the Age of Innocence*.

—Dennis E. Showalter
Colorado College

14-4-0610

Modood, Tariq. *Multicultural Politics: Racism, Ethnicity, and Muslims in Britain*. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2005. 272 pp. ISBN 0-8166-4487-X, \$68.95 (cl); 0-8166-4488-8, \$22.95 (pb).

For DuBois, the problem of the twentieth century was the color line; for Modood, the problem of the twenty-first century is the religious line between Muslims and universalist secular humanists. Though the British are “less hostile than most Europeans to multiculturalism,” “Islam, with its claim to regulate public as well as private life,” is in conflict with separation of public-private spheres and individualistic concepts of human rights, and this conflict impedes equity. Socioeconomics and social policy receive detailed exposition, prove economic disadvantage, and show that British laws have not been evenhanded with Muslims. Muslims have responded with activism that has “thrown British multiculturalism into theoretical and practical disarray.” Modood's theoretical remedy is a multicultural plural state that respects not only individual rights, but also those of communities, particularly Muslim religious communities. His pragmatic remedy is the extension of antiracism to anti-Islamophobia, and he wants antiracist allies who will not conflate Muslims with blackness. Modood ignores historical reasons why (always public) blackness may or may not supersede public religious identities.

Albeit categorized as black/brown, South Asian British Muslims eschew blackness and prioritize religious identity. Thus, Modood claims, they suffer double oppression, color racism and cultural racism. Insisting that blackness doesn't evoke cultural racism, he proposes the Muslim situation as “worse” rather than “different.” Cultural racism against Africa(n religions) is so embedded that it's occluded. But don't be put off by rhetoric that constructs Muslim rights in unnecessary, inaccurate comparison to black rights; read through to learn about clearly crucial issues.

—Menoukha Case
State Univ. of New York, Univ. at Albany

14-4-0611

Neal, Mark Anthony. *New Black Man*. New York: Routledge, 2005. 182 pp. ISBN 0-415-97109-8, \$25.00.

Black men rarely have the public space necessary to address the issues affecting their lives. Neal examines the privileges associated with being a heterosexual black man in a black America that has failed to adequately address issues of sexism, homophobia, and misogyny. This book attempts to create additional definitions of what constitutes black masculinity that challenge both the stereotypes of it and the images created in response to it.

Neal's book presents ideals of black masculinity to aspire to, and to resist being defined by social forces. This thesis draws on his experiences as an intellectual, father, and husband that sometimes fail to live up to his own ideal. Neal points out that the traditional definitions of black masculinity are rigid and are used to prevent criticisms of these definitions. This rigidity counters the potential threats to these definitions that feminists and homosexuals pose, as well as damages caused by traditional black masculinity practices.

New Black Man breaks the silence on subject matter deemed taboo by the black community. In doing so, Neal shows that a black man is no less of a man when he does not fit black America's narrow definition of what a black man is. He acknowledges that black men are in crisis; however, he provides solutions only to sex and gender issues. Readers seeking to learn more about how and why some traditional ideas in the black culture should change will find this book valuable.

—Aaron Peron Ogletree
Detroit, Mich.

14-4-0612

Oppenheimer, Mark. *Thirteen and a Day: The Bar and Bat Mitzvah Across America*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2005. 257 pp. ISBN 0-374-10665-7, \$24.00.



I recently attended a bat mitzvah that was part Quaker meeting and part hootenanny (the parents of the bat mitzvah girl were aging hippies). I considered this quite an unusual event, until I read this book. Oppenheimer here considers, and discusses at length, every variety of the Jewish coming-of-age ceremony in every conceivable setting. There's even mention of the faux mitzvah, which non-Jewish thirteen-year-olds some-

times celebrate.

The bar or bat mitzvah ceremony is not an ancient one, according to Jewish standards of antiquity. It is not a

religious requirement. But as a custom, it has taken a firm hold on the imagination of American Jews, both pious and secular.

Oppenheimer has attended study sessions; talked with rabbis, parents, and young people; witnessed the ceremonies; and attended the parties. Some ceremonies are conducted completely in Hebrew and seriously intended to induct the young person into the responsibilities of faith. Others signal the youth's last appearance at a place of worship.

But the oddest bar and bat mitzvah celebrations take place in areas where there are few Jews, like the Ozarks. Many of these ceremonies are conducted by congregations without a formal rabbi. Usually a rabbi is flown in. It is the human element that is so interesting. Oppenheimer gets to know people who are members of tightly organized Orthodox congregations that resemble extended families. He talks to rabbis, parents, and kids who are grappling with faith and trying to design an ethical way of living. This book is an outstanding example of the sociology of religion and could be read with profit by members of any faith.

—Miriam Sawyer
Rutherford (N.J.) Public Library

14-4-0613

Winant, Howard. *The New Politics of Race: Globalism, Difference, Justice*. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2004. 312 pp. ISBN 0-8166-4279-6, \$59.95 (cl); 0-8166-4280-X, \$19.95 (pb).

Winant focuses on the continued use by political interests of body types as significant determinants of social-political, power-racial politics. His essays concentrate on the history and changing theories of historical and contemporary problems with race in the United States.

His first essay, which weaves modern United States domestic and foreign political events, makes it clear that government prohibitions on racist decisions are inadequate and that clear activism is necessary to make profound and lasting changes. Further, the tendency of analysts to isolate racism to domestic politics ignores the hegemonic influence of the United States on the world. Winant also writes about the contributions of DuBois in helping us understand the difficulty of formulating governmental policy. Such difficulty reflects the limited progress toward eliminating racism. Winant's study develops a set of criteria for directly addressing racism. Covered are topics such as past exploitations based on race, the links of domestic racism and international racism, the relationship of culture and ethnicity to race, and what it means to be designated a member of a particular race.

Through Winant's well-written and comprehensive essays on race, he illustrates that you find what you look for and overlook what you choose not to see. These essays challenge us to reject a modern tendency to focus on cul-

ture and ignore the work to be done yet on erasing racism.

—Carol Ann Traut
Univ. of Texas–Permian Basin

14-4-0614

Zirin, Dave. *What's My Name, Fool? Sports and Resistance in the United States*. Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2005. 296 pp. ISBN 1-931859-20-5, \$15.00 (pb).

Zirin, a sports commentator for various print, broadcast, and Internet venues, puts the industry in a box, shakes it up, reaches inside, and pulls out several issues in this collection. Covering multiple disciplines and philosophies, Zirin shows that sports is more than statistics on the field and marketing strategies.

Witness Jackie Robinson's travails as he becomes the first African American (in the modern game) to break professional baseball's color line. See Billie Jean King smash Bobby Riggs and become a beacon to female athletes, showing them what they can accomplish and teaching them to never back down in the face of (male) adversity. You can add homophobia to this mix of -isms, which keeps male athletes (more than their female counterparts) in the closet for fear of testosterone-laced retribution and ostracism.

The "resistance" factor is most prominent when discussing Muhammad Ali, and Tommy Smith and John Carlos, who raised their fists in defiance as they received their Olympic medals in 1968. Zirin includes interviews with the latter two athletes, as well as fellow Olympians Lee Evans and George Foreman, and continues his discussion of racism in later chapters.

A note of caution: Zirin is quite opinionated. For all his good intentions, readers may get the feeling that if they disagree with the author's sentiments, they might be branded as backward-thinking or worse.

—Ron Kaplan
Montclair, N.J.

Reference

14-4-0615

Candelaria, Cordelia Chavez; Aldama, Arturo J.; Garcia, Peter J.; and Alvarez-Smith, Alma, eds. *Encyclopedia of Latino Popular Culture*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2004. 2 vols., 780 pp. ISBN 0-313-32215-5, \$175.00.

This encyclopedia addresses the tremendous need for information on Latino culture. It is a good source, though the quality is uneven. From the preface, it seems that the editors were pressed to finish the work on time, one of the perils of publishing, and that might account for erroneous or incomplete information here and there. But let's look at what's good first.

There is a brief but valuable explanation on the com-

plex subject of popular culture: "what people unofficially do, say, value, and practice in everyday life." The editors then expound on what makes up popular culture and what it reveals about a particular group. There are many entries, informative and well written, on such general and somewhat vague concepts as "food and cookery," "cubanidad," and "globalization." There are summaries and brief explanations of popular novels and films, including the forgotten classic novel *Ramona* (1884) and the major Hollywood release *Mambo Kings* (1992). The entry on the western *High Noon* (1952) is particularly good, as it brings attention to the film's major contribution in breaking away from Mexican stereotypes and presenting a strong Mexican character who is also a woman.

The encyclopedia offers entries on established Latino figures—Rudolfo Anaya, Marc Anthony, Daisy Fuentes, Pancho González, Raquel Welch—whom you expect to appear in such a reference source. But there are also profiles on important figures not commonly featured in popular volumes of this type—the scholar Juan Flores, the actress Elizabeth Peña, and the boxer Kid Gavilán, for example.

But now the problems. The selection process is intriguing: Dominicans are absent, even such luminaries as Julia Alvarez and feminist scholar Daisy Cocco De Filippis. Some entries contain inaccurate information. Here are three examples, all connected with Cuban studies: The entry on the film *El Super* (1979) does not credit the original source written by Iván Acosta; the account of the Bay of Pigs invasion (1961) fails to note that part of the reason why Cuban dissidents did not rise to help the exile invaders was the fact that Castro arrested nearly 100,000 dissatisfied Cubans within two hours of the initial bombardment on Saturday, April 15; and the entry on Desi Arnaz does not mention that the Cuban performer first appeared on Broadway on the play *Too Many Girls* (1939) before appearing in the film version a year later. Other questions linger: Why are Puerto Rican novelists Esmeralda Santiago and Nicholasa Mohr missing? And why are Puerto Rican and Cuban legislators, pioneers on the national scene—Herman Badillo and Bob Menendez—not listed? And, why so much usage of web sites and encyclopedias as reference materials as opposed to more books and journals?

I'm certain that with time enough, and probably another edition, these questions will be answered.

—Danilo H. Figueredo
Bloomfield College Library

14-4-0616

Garry, Jane and El-Shamy, Hasan, eds. *Archetypes and Motifs in Folklore and Literature: A Handbook*. Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2005. 552 pp. ISBN 0-7656-1260-7, \$110.00.

Students of folklore who are initially intimidated by the multivolume bible of folklore studies, Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk Literature* (1955–1958), may turn to this

relatively slim volume to get their feet wet...or whet their appetites for Thompson's massive work. Yet at the same time, seasoned folklorists might read this book for some fresh ideas before poring over the Thompson. The editors begin with the broad umbrella motifs and break them down into selections of the more specific—from tests to identity tests or riddles or quests. "Individuation" is a new addition under "the wise and the foolish" motif, with an essay defending the inclusion of psychological aspects that Thompson did not think of practical help in his work.

The descriptive essays with references offer more explanatory material than Thompson's work and also offer an occasional modern example, such as mentions of J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter series and J. R. R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*. Libraries supporting folklore studies might consider this book to complement Thompson's work. Other motif indexes have focused on folklore of specific cultures, but this work tries for a broader, global perspective that would also be a more useful start for new students in the field.

—Suzanne D. Li
Queens College, City Univ. of New York

14-4-0617

Gulevich, Tanya. *Understanding Islam and Muslim Traditions*. Holmes, Pa.: Omnigraphics, 2005. 496 pp. ISBN 0-7808-0704-9, \$54.00.

This is an excellent reference work offering a wealth of multifaceted information. The book focuses on Islam's various branches and interpretations (Sunni, Shia, Ibadi, Wahhabi, Sufi), greetings and sayings, clothing and adornment, food (including recipes for Ramadan dishes), dance, music, poetry, the Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca, the way Ramadan is celebrated in dozens of countries (including America), relationship to Christianity and Judaism, achievements of Islamic civilization (philosophy, mathematics, medicine, visual arts, poetry, architecture, the influence of Arabic on the English language). Extensive bibliographies (including web sites and videos), over 200 photos and maps, a large glossary of foreign terms (mostly Arabic) and a useful general index accompany the well-edited text, aimed at a general readership.

Another important feature is its fair and balanced presentation of Islam (a religion of over one billion believers around the globe), dispelling negative stereotypes related to that religion and circulated especially in the post-September 11 years. It recognizes that some Moslem fundamentalists are extremists in their views, but they constitute only a small minority who want to impose their views through violence. According to the Islamic scholar Hamza Yusef, "There is nothing Islamic about terrorism. To use violence against civilians to create terror is one of the greatest crimes in Islam." The book is highly recommended for public, school, special, and academic libraries.

—Vladimir F. Wertsman
Rego Park, N.Y.

14-4-0618

Kelin, Daniel A., II. *To Feel As Our Ancestors Did: Collecting and Performing Oral Histories*. Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 2005. 185 pp. ISBN 0-325-00686-5, \$20.00 (pb).

If the arts are on the chopping block in your school, consider what might be called "drama-across-the-curriculum." Students collect oral histories from elders, seeking out stories of childhood, then develop and perform tableaux, pantomime, and scenes that bring these stories to life.

Kelin's guide breaks the process into simple steps, offering many activities any non-drama teacher can lead. Readers will find 10- and 15-week unit plans and enough other tools to make the undertaking quite down to earth. But it has its radical side: Kelin tells teachers to prepare carefully, then relinquish control, empowering students to conduct interviews, craft dramas, and choose roles. The payoff is motivation: "A lot of us are performing now instead of sitting back and relaxing," commented one sixth-grade student.

Rather than polishing a theatrical production, Kelin uses drama and primary-source history to engage students and challenge their thinking. When students from different backgrounds bring each other's histories to life, they see and feel what ancestors were up against, and the stereotypes fade.

Parts of Kelin's book can be adapted to other purposes. I intend to use his interview recommendations with college students as they conduct career interviews with area professionals.

—Gail Howard
Norwalk (Conn.) Community College

14-4-0619

Keoke, Emory Dean and Porterfield, Kay Marie. *American Indian Contributions to the World*. New York: Facts on File, 2005. 5 vols. 800 pp. ISBN 0-8160-5392-8, \$175.00 set; \$148.75 libraries. Individual volumes available at \$35.00: *Buildings, Clothing, and Art*, ISBN 0-8160-5394-4; *Food, Farming, and Hunting*, ISBN 0-8160-5393-6; *Medicine and Health*, ISBN 0-8160-5396-0; *Science and Technology*, ISBN 0-8160-5397-9; *Trade, Transportation, and Warfare*, ISBN 0-8160-5395-2.

Did you know that the Incas created a 140,000-mile highway system including culverts, tunnels, and causeways, and that the Olmecs invented the rubber balloon? These are just two of the little-known facts to be found in this set exploring Native American innovations aimed at grades three through six.

In 2002 an important new reference work, *Encyclopedia of Native American Contributions to the World*, by Emory Keoke and Kay Porterfield, was published to great acclaim

(see *MultiCultural Review*, Vol. 11, No. 3, September 2002, p. 106). Now the authors have collaborated again, creating a set of books based on the earlier encyclopedia, but targeting younger readers. In addition to the obvious difference of subject area volumes, the new set differs significantly from the original work in other ways, some positive and some negative.

As would be expected, the reading level of the new set is appropriate to upper elementary and middle school and is enhanced with many more illustrations than in the parent volume. Also, the set features numerous text boxes to provide amplification and additional information. The writing is lively and interesting, prompting readers to explore the subject further.

On the other hand, each individual volume is arranged in chapters rather than topically by key words, resulting in a more complex search process. This is compounded by the fact that there is no single controlling index for all volumes, so one must search the indexes of all five volumes in order to find all relevant information. Entries for corn, for example, are found in four of the five volumes. "See" and "see also" entries (such as those found in the parent volume) would be useful.

Another feature of the *Encyclopedia*, which is missing from this set, is sources for further reading. Each volume does include a bibliography, however, as well as a glossary, a listing of tribes by cultural affinities, and maps showing the geographical locations of the various tribes.

American Indian Contributions to the World is a useful addition to elementary and middle school libraries, though librarians may wish to consider the more comprehensive *Encyclopedia* as an alternative.

—Andy J. Deering
Central Wyoming College

Travel

14-4-0620

Larkin, Emma. *Finding George Orwell in Burma*. New York: The Penguin Press, 2005. 294 pp. ISBN 1-59420-052-1, \$22.95.

To read this book merely as a travel diary is to miss a complicated and multilayered essay that puzzles and probes Burma's past, present, and future. Larkin connects Orwell's reflections based on his real-life experiences in the British colonized country that eerily foreshadow the repressive police state Burma/Myanmar has become: banishing literacy, destroying schools, corrupting religion, bankrupting industry, vanquishing human rights and individual freedoms. Recalling Winston Smith from *1984*, officials in Myanmar censor and rewrite the news, editing for the purposes of control and projecting to the outside world an image that has little to do with reality.

Followed by spies and informers, Larkin still manages to turn up writers, publishers, students, and shopkeepers

who overcome their fear of punishment to whisper about the impact of the ruthless regime's domination. Although these trysts are furtive, Larkin's descriptions of daily life provide testimony. We peer through a tea shop window in Rangoon where young boys are heaped on tables at night, heads to haunches, legs dangling, cockroaches scuttling, so these prepubescent waiters can send home money to their poor parents. Like indentured servants or those who are forced to work for free building roads for the government, there is little hope, but much terror. Believing Orwell realized the suffering of the Burmese in his works, Larkin likewise tacitly pleads for her printed revelations to disturb, and hopes for the return of Aung San Sui Kyi as a figure of hope and transformation, ending the days of this *Animal Farm*.

—Patricia Goldblatt
Toronto, Ont.

14-4-0621

Macias, Patrick and Machiyama, Tomohiro. *Cruising the Anime City: An Otaku Guide to Neo Tokyo*. Berkeley, Calif.: Stone Bridge Press, 2005. 150 pp. ISBN 1-880656-88-4, \$16.95 (pb).

Hello Kitty, Transformers, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, Nintendo, Pac Man, Mario Brothers. There's no denying that Japanese popular culture is ubiquitous. But this book goes deeper than those icons that became popular on this side of the ocean.

The subjects being so arcane and specialized, the authors conveniently explain key terms, such as *otaku*; an essay by co-author Machiyama goes into depth on the origins and semantics, but it appears to be close to nerd or geek.

A travel guide, the book is clearly organized by chapters such as manga (like comic books), pla-mo (plastic models of everything from monsters from old movies such as Godzilla to high-quality planes, ships, and cars). Included are maps and shopping tips (with expected prices in U.S. dollars).

Clearly a labor of love (or fixation), *Cruising* is loaded with illustrations and sidebars by different contributors on various Tokyo districts, their attractions, which subway lines to take, and occasional safety tips. It's intended for young travelers to Japan (or those who haven't completely left their childhood) who are not into the usual tourist spots (Imperial Palace, Mount Fuji) and especially those who want to collect the real stuff (the comics, videos, DVDs, models) that isn't available in the United States. It will also be of interest to fans of Japan's pop culture who can't make the trip over: They will get an idea of what's currently hot (or was in 2004) and trickling into video stores and bookstores in Japanese towns across the country.

—Al Hikida
Seattle Central Community College

Juvenile

Primary (Gr. PreK–3)

14-4-0622

Alarcón, Francisco X. *Poems to Dream Together/Poemas para soñar juntos*. New York: Lee & Low, 2005. 32 pp. Illus. by Paula Barragán. Bilingual (English-Spanish) ed. ISBN 1-58430-233-X, \$16.95.

Alarcón's delightful bilingual collection of poetry is based on the Chicano poet and educator's memories and dreams from his childhood in Mexico and California. The charming and engaging book represents the author's collaboration with the acclaimed illustrator Paula Barragán. The free-verse poems, several of which contain as few as three lines, are written in English and Spanish. Each line may contain only one or two words, with no capitalized words and no punctuation. It is, however, the richly colored, vibrant illustrations that bring these short, staccato verses to life by creating a dreamlike tableau of colors, shapes, and silhouettes.

The author invites the reader to "hop on a dream" and share the experiences of a young boy as he travels through his childhood memories. There are poems about the boy's family and community and poems dealing with serious topics such as ecology and world peace. One poem, entitled "Dreamer of the Fields," was written about César Chávez to commemorate the rededication of the boy's school as the César Chávez Elementary School. Some of the poems are humorous, such as "The Happy Onion," about how it might feel to be an onion that makes people sing instead of cry. Dreams of many different forms can serve as inspirations and guides for the future.

—Michèle Pollard
Academy of the Holy Names, Albany, N.Y.

14-4-0623

Brown, Monica. *My Name Is Celia/Me llamo Celia: The Life of Celia Cruz/La vida de Celia Cruz*. Flagstaff, Ariz.: Rising Moon/Luna Rising, 2004. 32 pp. Illus. by Rafael López. Bilingual (English-Spanish) ed. Spanish translation by Alicia Fontán. ISBN 0-87358-872-X, \$15.95.

Celia Cruz was one of the creators of salsa, a musical pot-luck of diverse genres—Caribbean rhythm, Spanish dances, and jazz. Cruz became the icon, the symbol, the essence of salsa. In Cuba, she captured the heartbeat of Cubans. In the Caribbean, she captured the soul of all music and dance lovers. In the United States, she captured everyone's heart. Cruz was a loving and lovable performer who helped those in need and mentored younger talents. She did so with joy and an exuberant personality that could barely be contained.

This picture book manages to capture the nuances that made Celia Cruz so delightful. It covers only her younger years—when she sang her younger siblings to bed while the neighbors listened to her singing outside her home—and her time in the United States when she became an international star. Brown avoids the years of the Cuban revolution, difficult years for Celia due to her opposition to Castro. But that was a good choice, for this is a story about how a talented singer reached out to the world through her music: it was wise to avoid politics.

The picture book begins and ends with Cruz addressing the readers, describing how she sings: "My voice climbs and rocks and dips and flips with the sound of congas beating and trumpets blaring." A perfect passage that tells the reader all about Celia.

The illustrator has captured such her effervescent presence on a small canvas. The drawings of Celia's face clearly express her love of life, highlighting an unforgettable feature: her big, wide, life-giving smile.

—Danilo H. Figueredo
Bloomfield College Library

14-4-0624

Caraballo, Samuel. *Mis abuelos y yo/My Grandparents and I*. Houston, Tex.: Piñata Books, 2004. 32 pp. Illus. by D. Nina Cruz. Bilingual (Spanish-English) ed. English translation by Ethriam Cash Brammer. ISBN 1-55885-407-X, \$14.95.

Colato Lainez, René. *Waiting for Papa/Esperando a Papá*. Houston, Tex.: Piñata Books, 2004. 32 pp. Illus. by Anthony Accardo. Bilingual (English-Spanish) ed. ISBN 1-55885-403-7, \$14.95.

Two emotionally linked stories about family love and family values; one takes place in Puerto Rico, the other in the United States. *Waiting for Papa* is about a young boy from El Salvador who is separated from his father when he and his mother move to the United States. The boy spends the days longing for his father, while the mother works at a sewing factory, saving money to hire an attorney who handles immigration cases. But the immigration process is complex, and it seems to the boy that he and his father will never be reunited. However, the boy's love and creativity, coupled with his mother's support, bring about a series of events that helps to unite the family. How those events unfold is the crux of the story. It is a moving, emotional tale with realistically drawn characters. The drawings by Anthony Accardo are unique: They capture the racial richness of the Latino experience, thus avoiding stereotypes. This is one of the most joyful immigration stories recently published.

Mis abuelos y yo takes place in Puerto Rico. It is a simple story: A boy talks about the many activities he and his grandparents pursue together. The grandparents and the

boy go to the beach, visit museums, cook together, and garden together. The boy's love genuinely moves the story from scene to scene, creating a poem that celebrates grandparents. The artist's rendition of Puerto Rican locations are quite realistic and true to the setting, but it is his portrayal of the grandparents—holding hands, walking with the boy, listening to him pretending he is conducting an orchestra—that best reflects the message of love and respect underlining this beautiful story.

Combined, these two books enrich the lore and knowledge of the Latino experience in the United States, especially told from a young narrator's perspective.

—Danilo H. Figueredo
Bloomfield College Library

14-4-0625

Choi, Yangsook. *Peach Heaven*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2005. 32 pp. Illus. by the author. ISBN 0-374-35761-7, \$16.00.

In Iowa in the 1950s, a locale known for growing corn, there was a terrible windstorm just at the time of harvest. The dry, ripe ears of corn were blown off the stalks, and when it appeared the crop was lost, schools cancelled classes and the children went out to the fields to follow tractor-driven wagons up and down the fields, picking up the corn. Thus, the crop was saved.

But that is my story. The memory of it came to me when I read *Peach Heaven*. Not Iowa, but Puchon, South Korea, "famous for growing the best peaches in all Korea." The year was 1976 and the farmers were expecting an abundant harvest. At the time of harvest, there was a great rain and a hailstorm that ripped the ripe peaches from the trees. At first Yangsook and her family were content to feast on the sweet, juicy fruit. But then Yangsook's thoughts turned to the farmers, and she organized the children of the town to harvest the peaches. They first thought to surprise the farmers by tying the peaches to the trees, but they later joined in the more gainful activity of gathering them up to give to the farmers.

In the author's note, Choi tells of her memory of the day it rained peaches and relates the importance of peaches in Korean mythology and daily life. This beautiful picture book is a wonderful story depicting Korean life. The universal struggle of farmers with the unpredictable ways of Nature is an important theme as well. Here is a story, beautifully told and illustrated, where both Korean and farm culture are presented. It made me realize that Yangsook Choi's childhood in Puchon, South Korea, and my childhood in rural Algona, Iowa, although clothed in different cultures, have much in common.

—Mary J. Lickteig
Univ. of Nebraska—Omaha

14-4-0626

Colato Laínez, René. *Playing Lotería/El juego de la lotería*. Flagstaff, Ariz.: Luna Rising, 2005. 32 pp. Illus. by Jill Arena. Bilingual (English-Spanish) ed. ISBN 0-87358-881-9, \$15.95.

Although the idea of reconnecting with grandparents is not an uncommon one, Colato Laínez has managed to give it a new lime twist of flavor. He gives the worlds-apart grandmother and grandson a valid reason to be reunited and a fun way to begin to communicate.

Abuela does not speak English and he does not speak Spanish, but mother insists he spend time with her and learn the language and the culture of his family. Then he sees Abuela setting up the game *lotería*. This game has been shaped by the Latin American experience for 200 years. It is like a "Who's Who" or "What's What" encyclopedia of Mexican culture. The picture cards used to play are both colorful and enticing, like Arena's illustrations.

This game bridges their language gap and they learn each other's vocabulary. I found this insightful, as children learn best teaching others. They utilize the cards like flash cards: *venado*-deer, *palma*-palm tree, *pájaro*-bird.

Anyone who has studied another language knows that making silly mistakes is part of the process. In the market, Abuela remembers that *pollo* means "chicken," therefore, *repollo* (cabbage) must be "rechicken." I got a kick out of that.

I thank Colato Laínez for showing that language and culture are as inseparable as grandparents and grandchildren, and proving that in learning a new tongue, everyone comes out a winner.

—Kena Sosa
Dallas, Tex.

14-4-0627

Cumpiano, Ina. *Quinito's Neighborhood/El Vecindario de Quinito*. San Francisco: Children's Book Press, 2005. 32 pp. Illus. by Jose Ramirez. ISBN 0-89239-209-6, \$16.95.

This is an excellent book for ages four to seven to learn about the people in their neighborhoods and the roles the denizens play. In his neighborhood, Quinito is very comfortable. He knows everyone and their occupations, and he feels safe.

Cumpiano makes a conscious effort to enforce non-stereotypic gender roles in her characters. For example, Quinito's mother is a carpenter, and his father is a nurse. The matter-of-fact way that the information is presented makes it natural and lets children know that both sexes can do either job. Later in the book, Quinito's *tía* (aunt) paints a mural with the words "*Mujeres en movimiento*" (women in movement) at the top.

Illustrator Ramirez likes sneaking in details; for example, by not rubbing his oil pastels all the way in, he gives

texture to the town, bringing it to life.

For kicks, Quinito sneaks a *chisme* or a piece of gossip into his narration. He tells us of the wedding plans of Guillermo, his mailman, and Sonia Isabel, who works at the bank. Like a real neighborhood, this piece is full of characters who are each important to the daily functions of their streets.

This book is ideal for children in the beginning stages of reading in either English or Spanish. Just open it up, Quinito will welcome you in.

—Kena Sosa
Dallas, Tex.

14-4-0628

Elya, Susan Middleton. *Fairy Trails: A Story Told in English and Spanish*. New York: Bloomsbury Children's Books, 2005. unpaginated. Illustrations by Mercedes McDonald. ISBN 1-58234-927-4, \$16.95.

Fairy Trails is designed to teach new vocabulary in Spanish. The author has composed several other books in a similar style, largely written in English with a little bit of Spanish "sprinkled in." This particular text, however, presents the new words in Spanish embedded within the context of segments from a variety of popular fairy tales. The book begins with a glossary of words in Spanish along with a pronunciation guide. It then proceeds to tell the story of Maria and Miguel on their way to visit their *tía* (aunt) while they encounter fairy tale characters in the woods along their way.

The story line is presented on each page employing a rhyme scheme in Spanish or in English rhyme. Since the stories and rhymes are predictable, it makes it easier for the reader to anticipate the rhyme and/or decipher the new vocabulary words using the context of each familiar story segment.

The illustrations are lovely and complement the simple story lines. *Fairy Trails* is perhaps most useful for librarians and teachers who may know only a word or two of Spanish. The use of the familiar story lines aid in making this book a fun way to learn a few new words in Spanish.

—Melanie Pores
Albany (N.Y.) City School District

14-4-0629

Joose, Barbara M. *Papa, Do You Love Me?* San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2005. 32 pp. Illustrations by Barbara Lavallee. ISBN 0-8118-4265-7, \$15.95.

Papa, Do You Love Me? follows the author and illustrator's previous title, *Mama, Do You Love Me?* (1998). In this case, both author and illustrator have spent time in East Africa gaining a perspective for the book. In this story, Joosse focuses on the unconditional love of a Maasai father

for his son. The father answers each question with an example of his love: do you, how much, how long, if hot, if thirsty, if a tired herd boy, if a cow were killed, if afraid, and if a lion came. With every increasing degree of difficulty, the father provides for and protects his son, "Tender Heart." The son and readers are satisfied at the end of the story with a reassured feeling of security.

Although the Maasai are a small minority group in both Kenya and Tanzania, the theme of the story is universal. The author could have set the story in an urban location. However, the illustrations and the selection of the Maasai as opposed to other, larger ethnic groups reinforces the rural, exotic stereotypes that U.S. readers hold for these two East African countries. Despite the illustrations being accurate for a specific Maasai community, they may mislead. Therefore, readers must have some background about the Maasai in addition to that given in the glossary. As part of a unit on fathers around the world, this book adds a different perspective.

—Patricia S. Kuntz
Madison, Wis.

14-4-0630

Newman, Leslea. *The Eight Nights of Chanukah*. New York: Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2005. 32 pp. Illustrations by Elivia Savadier. 0-8109-5785-X, \$12.95.

This book is written in the form of a poem/song based on the "Twelve Days of Christmas." The author describes a family's celebration of the eight nights of Chanukah with something special happening each night. Jewish foods, ritual objects, and family celebrations are included each night along with a present. The words fit the Christmas song and the story demonstrates that each night of Chanukah is unique.

I had serious problems with this book. For one thing, Chanukah should not be compared to Christmas. The eight nights and days of Chanukah represent a great miracle that the oil for the Menorah in the Holy Temple lasted for eight days instead of one day. It has nothing to do with the twelve days of Christmas. There is no law about giving presents every night of Chanukah. Some people give one present for the holiday and others give "Chanukah gelt," in the form of money or gold chocolate coins.

Although Chanukah and Christmas arrive around the same time of the year, there is no connection between the two holidays. Jewish celebrations should not be compared to Christian holidays when the basic beliefs are in contradiction to one another. A Jewish child who reads this book may get the idea that Chanukah is a variant form of Christmas. This is not the impression that either religion should want to give to children.

The glossary at the end explains the Jewish terms listed, and there is a page about the story of Chanukah. However, its meaning is lost when the reader finds Chanukah com-

pared to a Christian holiday. I think this kind of literature is an insult to both Judaism and Christianity. Each religion should be respected for its own beliefs and rituals, and they should not be expected to become imitations of one another.

—Hannah M. Heller
Baltimore, Md.

14-4-0631

Olswanger, Anna. *Shlemiel Crooks*. Montgomery, Ala.: Junebug Books/New South Books, 2005. 32 pp. Illus. by Paula Goodman Koz. ISBN 1-58838-165-X, \$15.95.

This book, loosely based on a true story from the lives of the author's ancestors, is an interesting take on a Passover story. The story is told with Yiddish intonations, Yiddish curses, and Yiddish remarks. The readers will either find the book charming and endearing or offensive. If one enjoys Yiddish humor of the vaudeville variety, the book will be entertaining.

I don't know if the story is aimed for an adult readership with the Yiddish background or for children and young people as a Passover lesson. I suspect it is the latter. In that case, I feel it will badly miss its mark.

The story takes place in St. Louis at the beginning of the twentieth century. Just before Passover, Reb Elias has gotten a shipment of wine from Israel. Crooks appear to rob his stock. They are foiled by neighbors and a talking horse. Throw in a Pharaoh's ghost and you get the picture of this Passover tale. The illustrations are appropriate to the story.

This book might be a decent addition to a temple library, but it certainly is not of general interest.

—Ruth Becker
Forest Hills, N.Y.

14-4-0632

Rappaport, Doreen. *The Secret Seder*. New York: Hyperion, 2005. 32 pp. Illus. by Emily Arnold McCully. ISBN 0-7868-0777-6, \$16.99.

Russo, Mariasabina. *Always Remember Me: How One Family Survived World War II*. New York: Simon & Schuster/Atheneum, 2005. 32 pp. Illus. by the author. ISBN 0-689-86920-7, \$16.95.



These two inspirational stories demonstrate the great strength and courage of the Jews who survived the Holocaust. Based on family histories and testimonies from Resistance fighters and Jews in hiding, they provide great

insight into the ramifications of the Nazi reign of terror.

In *The Secret Seder*, a young boy travels with his father in the dark of night to a secret gathering for a Passover Seder. The Jewish families are practicing Judaism in secret at great risk. Although they have very little to eat, the people who come together for the Seder manage to improvise as they tell the story of the exodus of the Jewish slaves from Egypt. They note that they are not free and they are tasting the bitterness of enslavement to the Nazis. With great sadness, they hope and pray that next year they will be free to celebrate the Passover Seder in Jerusalem. The boy visualizes in his mind his great memories of previous Seder experiences at his grandparents' home. Now his grandparents are in hiding. The boy's father points out that although they are subjected to Nazi persecution, their freedom comes from within.

Readers can be motivated by the actions and words of these courageous Jews. At times when life is extremely difficult and painful, a person can find inner strength and freedom to make the best of a situation, work to survive, and hope for a better tomorrow. At the end of the book there is a short summary of what happened during the Holocaust to the Jews who went to concentration camps, as well as to the Jews who went into hiding. The author also provides a listing of the items on the Seder plate.

In *Always Remember Me*, a little girl learns of her grandmother's struggle to survive the Holocaust and her experiences in the ghetto and concentration camps. With great sadness, Oma, the grandmother, shows her granddaughter photographs of the many family members who died at the hands of the Nazis. She describes the difficulties they had in trying to escape from Europe and come to the United States. She notes that although they had been separated for many years, she and her three daughters (the narrator's mother and aunts) managed to survive and to find each other when the war ended. Oma even managed to save a gold heart necklace from her own grandmother.

She had given the necklace to one of her daughters to wear during their long separation. Now, Oma passes on the necklace to her granddaughter. Oma reassures her granddaughter that, although there is great sadness and pain in their family history, her memories as well as the necklace should give her courage to face the challenges that lie ahead.

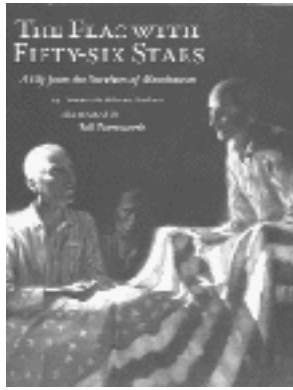
In the afterword the author describes her own family history of Holocaust survivors. I highly recommend both of these books as excellent educational tools and moving testimony of Holocaust victims. These stories make a great addition to any library collection of books on the Holocaust.

—Hannah M. Heller
Baltimore, Md.

14-4-0633

Rubin, Susan Goldman. *The Flag with Fifty-Six Stars: A Gift from the Survivors of Mauthausen*. New York:

Holiday House, 2005. 32 pp. Illus. by Bill Farnsworth. ISBN 0-8234-1653-4, \$16.95.



Mauthausen, a slave labor camp where inmates were brutally worked to death in granite quarries, subjected to medical experimentation, and gassed to death, was established at Heinrich Himmler's orders in 1938. In 1945 a group of inmates risked their lives to secretly sew an American flag for the U.S. troops who would ultimately liberate them.

This Rubin-Farnsworth collaboration contains interesting quotes and anecdotes, but the writing is often dull and wordy. In addition, it does a poor job of teaching history. Rubín states that the Spanish were the camp's first prisoners, but she never reveals why. She mentions that local residents of Mauthausen witnessed camp brutalities, but forgives them, explaining that they were too "afraid" to tell. At the book's conclusion Rubín says of Himmler, "Before he could be brought to trial, he swallowed poison and died. Thus Himmler was defeated." Here Rubín completely misses the point: Himmler avoided facing justice!

Farnsworth's oil paintings are detailed and well executed but do not capture the harsh reality of Mauthausen. In all but two, the prisoners look thin, not emaciated. Images of prisoners smiling around the American flag, casually hanging off bunks, and gathered around a radio make life at Mauthausen look far more pleasant than it was. Rubín and Farnsworth have an important story to share. It is unfortunate that mediocre writing, inaccuracies, and unanswered questions undermine the horrors of Mauthausen and thus the incredible heroism and sacrifices made by those who sewed the flag.

—Rebecca Schosha
New York Public Library

14-4-0634

Smith, Dana Kessimakis. *A Brave Spaceboy*. New York: Hyperion/Jump at the Sun, 2005. 32 pp. Illus. by Laura Freeman. ISBN 0-7868-0933-7, \$15.99.

In this charming, vividly illustrated story, two young brothers learn how to face the unknown through their imagination. The story starts with the brothers traveling by car with their parents to their new home. During the trip, the young narrator announces, "I am a boy, a brave spaceboy/I dream of exploring the stars/I'm fixin' up my rocket/so I can zoom to Mars."

Shortly after they arrive at their new home, the boys transform large moving boxes into a spaceship, use pasta strainers as their pilot's headgear, and orbit the Earth.

Poetic verse blended with illustrations moves the story and allows the children's mixed feelings to emerge. The boys are excited but sad, which shows that moving is traumatic for everyone. It may be even more so for children, since they have little control over the move. Children can feel uprooted when they leave old friends and familiar surroundings. Maybe a special toy has been sold at a garage sale.

Bold illustrations of ambers, reds, purples, and greens in combination with words shape the characters of the little brothers, their Asian mother and African-American father, and the shy little girl and her mother who bring a welcome pie.

Smith and Freeman, who previously collaborated on the award winning *A Wild Cowboy* (2004), have once again produced an engaging tale that successfully encourages young children to develop their imaginations.

—Kathryn Mora
Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

14-4-0635

Soto, Gary. *Chato Goes Cruisin'*. New York: Putnam, 2005. 32 pp. Illus. by Susan Guevara. ISBN 0-399-23974-X, \$16.99.

Chato and his friend "Novio Boy"—a couple of cats—go on a free cruise when Chato learns that he has won two free tickets. It turns out that the cruise is on a ship filled with dogs, and the story revolves around the cats' responses to experiencing their voyage on a ship catering to dogs' fantasies!

Woven throughout the story are subtle comments that remind me of an old Chicano comic strip. According to illustrator Susan Guevara, she chose to incorporate the comic strips with her illustrations as a way to provide "kids who pore over art—and words—more to discover, and hope they love getting to know Chato and Novio Boy in this new way as much as she did." I agree with her wholeheartedly—this format lends itself to connecting the reader with the characters in a fun and meaningful manner.

Although *Chato Goes Cruisin'* is written as a children's book, its tongue-in-cheek comments will be lost on children. So I would suggest that this book is not only a children's book, but is quite appropriate for young adults and adults as well.

—Melanie Pores
Albany (N.Y.) City School District

14-4-0636

Stoeke, Janet Morgan. *Waiting for May*. New York: Dutton, 2005. 32 pp. Illus. by the author. ISBN 0-525-47098-0, \$16.99.

This latest addition to the growing number of picture

books based on Caucasian parents' happy experiences of adopting an Asian baby tackles some of the more bothersome details of the process. The prospective adoptive parents fill out endless stacks of paperwork, describe and photograph their lives and homes, tussle with bureaucracy in two countries, and hunker down for the seemingly endless wait for a child. Stoeke has effectively captured the frustration and impatience that surface during the long wait.

Insightful statements such as, "I wonder if waiting is any easier if you don't know you are waiting," and "I think it must be hardest for the babies," express the natural honesty children usually exhibit. Unfortunately, the stilted, institutional-style illustrations emphasize the negative reaction May has to letting go of her Chinese caretakers and being placed in the arms of an alien stranger. The matted-down, straight, bowl hairdos of the Chinese characters lend themselves to stereotypes, and the almost Caucasian features of those with black hair create the Asian image through the eyes of whiteness. May is the Gerber baby with matted-down black hair.

This book perpetuates the genre of adoption stories that leave a huge gap—the voice of the adopted Asian child. The imposed thoughts from other characters, "I just wish she could see how hard we are trying to make her happy," and "We all laugh because we know she wants to stay with me," speak for that child. As seen with the first generation of adopted Korean voices, literature will eventually emerge to tell a very different story of adoption into Eurocentric families.

—Sharon Chur Lapensky
Minneapolis, Minn.

14-4-0637

Williams, Mary. *Brothers in Hope: The Story of the Lost Boys of Sudan*. New York: Lee & Low, 2005. 32 pp. Illus. by R. Gregory Christie. ISBN 1-58430-232-1, \$17.95.

Recently, several young adult novels and picture books have highlighted the atrocities of Sudan. Williams, an international rescue worker, has met several of the young men who fled Sudan as orphans of war and famine. In *Brothers in Hope*, she documents their route to freedom from the Sudan through Ethiopia and Kenya to the United States. The author's notes, afterword, and map help provide a context for the topic.

Eight-year-old Garang narrates his experience of becoming one of many leaders of the thousands of boys who walked through East Africa trying to find an asylum. Garang shares how he adopted a younger boy, organized crossing a swollen river, and encouraged his group to attend school. The text is sophisticated and may be difficult for grade-school students to read; however, the message is powerful since it challenges eight-year-olds to think about their own survival skills.

Christie portrays the text in the style of a young art-

ist. He uses earth tones in five colors: brown, green, black, orange, and white. His broad brushstrokes and flat caricatures represent the multitude of boys and the flurry of activities.

For students who have experienced homelessness, poverty, and hopelessness, this book provides a model for action and a lesson in leadership. It is also a potent reminder to young students who come from privilege that they are in the minority. Together, the text and the illustrations are very convincing.

—Patricia S. Kuntz
Madison, Wis.

14-4-0638

Winthrop, Elizabeth. *Squashed in the Middle*. New York: Henry Holt, 2005. 32 pp. Illus. by Pat Cummings. ISBN 0-8050-6497-4, \$16.95.

Poor Daisy! It's not easy being in the middle of a busy, boisterous family whose members never really listen to her. Her father is chopping carrots, her mother is talking on the phone, and her know-it-all big sister is chasing he little brother around the kitchen table. So, of course, nobody pays any attention when Daisy announces that she is spending the night with her best friend, Rosa. When the family finally concentrates on Daisy's plans, they say "she's never slept over before." And "she'll come home in the middle of the night."

But Daisy collects her nightgown, her pink and green toothbrush, and her stuffed duck. Her family later arrives at Rosa's to be told by Daisy, "No, I'm not going to get home-sick. No, I'm not going home." Her family is surprised by her courage. Acclaimed illustrator Pat Cummings's hallmark illustrations, with her signature expressive faces of African-American characters done in mixed media, are superbly rendered. A first choice, no matter where the reader fits into family birth order.

—Bettye Stroud
Univ. of Georgia

14-4-0639

Yoo, Paula. *Sixteen Years in Sixteen Seconds: The Sammy Lee Story*. New York: Lee & Low, 2005. 32 pp. Illus. by Dom Lee. ISBN -58430-247-X, \$16.95.

The Bronze Medal (Olympics in London, 1948). The Gold Medal (Olympics in London, 1948). The Gold Medal (Olympics in Helsinki, 1952). The James Sullivan Award (1953).

Amazing accomplishments, and even more amazing is that they are the accomplishments of Sammy Lee, the son of Korean immigrants. Sammy's father told him that he could accomplish anything in America. This was hard to believe in the face of much evidence. The neighbor-

hood public pool posted the sign “Members Only Except Wednesday.” Sammy knew that sign meant that people of color were not allowed to use the pool except on Wednesday. And even though his graduation class voted him the most likely to succeed, Sammy was not allowed to attend his own prom. And his determination to become an Olympic diver did not have the complete support of his father, who thought he should become a doctor.

Sammy Lee did both. He became a doctor, served in the Korean War, competed in two Olympics, and went on to coach other divers who won Olympic medals. One is tempted to say, “Only in America.” But the dark side of discrimination in the United States is also included in this well-written, nicely illustrated picture book. An author’s note at the end of the book completes the story, and a present-day photo of Dr. Sammy Lee with the author and illustrator is included on the dust jacket.

For sports fans, to read at the time of the Olympics, for immigrants, and for all proud Americans, this is surely one of our very best stories. A picture book format, but this is a story for all ages.

—Mary J. Lickteig
Univ. of Nebraska–Omaha

Intermediate (Gr. 4–6)

14-4-0640

Amollo, Regina. *When Mother Leaves Home*. Kampala, Uganda: Fountain Publishers; dist. by Michigan State Univ. Press, 2004. 35 pp. Illus. by the author. ISBN 9970-02-435-3, \$9.95 (pb).

Amollo portrays the village life of a widowed mother and her two school-aged children, Aguti and Okello. Their mother’s color-coded scarf signals that she is off to the market and that they will be on their own to complete their household chores. Since it is Saturday, the children have no school. A series of mishaps occurs while the children are away playing or distracted by their friends. When Okello goes to look for mangoes and Aguti searches for mushrooms, the goats and chickens wreak havoc at the homestead. The author depicts the need for children to follow adults’ directions and to take responsibility for their choices as the adults do concerning nutrition and health. All is forgiven when the children share their harvest.

This short story is written by a Ugandan for Ugandan students. The British colonial influence is evident. Consequently, many of the terms, expressions, and culturally specific activities require explanation for a U.S. readership. In addition, some of the events might appear different or even quaint to U.S. urban students. A song becomes a unifying feature of the story, as it often is in folktales. Finally, several of the captions are incorrect for the drawings. Nevertheless, this story could be used as a supplement

ary reader for a unit on Uganda. In fact, it could be the basis for creating stories.

—Patricia S. Kuntz
Madison, Wis.

14-4-0641

Canales, Viola. *The Tequila Worm*. New York: Random House Children’s Books, 2005. 176 pp. ISBN 0-385-74674-1, \$15.95 (cl); 0-385-90905-5, \$17.99 (rlb).

Sofia, a McAllen, Texas, girl who lives in the barrio, learns much of her Mexican-American culture and family traditions from women storytellers in her family. A great-aunt tells her that the talent passed on to her from her great-great-grandmother is to kick like a mule. Humorous incidents occur when her gift is fulfilled in strange ways through soccer and her kicking people intellectually. The teenage girl is awarded a private school scholarship and learns that family is more precious than social acceptance and status.

Although the stories teach us in humorous yet creative ways about various specific cultural traditions faced by young Mexican-American females, some young adult readers might retain stereotypical viewpoints of Mexican Americans, as the author pokes fun at “beaners” and “taco heads”; her self-deprecating humor doesn’t always break down misperceptions because we are laughing at Sofia, not with her. Despite these criticisms I find the book witty and enlightening, especially in daily things really encountered by Hispanic girls. I even found the philosophizing educational; for example, when Papa consents to Sofia going to private school: “And I know that you want to always follow your dreams. You’re a dreamer, like me. And I see from your Taco Head story that you have the kick it takes to learn from life, to keep on going, even when it gets hard.” This book covers so much cultural ground that I actually learned a thing or two as I laughed and eventually cried my way through Sofia’s life. The author succeeds in showing that one can retain one’s roots even when overcoming socioeconomic challenges.

—Frank Alan Bruno
Uintah County (Utah) Public Library

14-4-0642

Climo, Shirley. *Monkey Business: Stories from Around the World*. New York: Henry Holt, 2005. 118 pp. Illus. by Erik Brooks. ISBN 0-8050-6392-7, \$18.95.

Readers who first think of H. A. Rey’s *Curious George* when they imagine a monkey will be amazed at how very different monkeys can appear and behave. Even the names vary: baboons, lemurs, and macaques are among the monkeys featured. Not only did Climo collect and retell stories from around the world (arranged by major geographic areas: Africa with Madagascar, the Americas, and Asia), but

she also investigated the species of monkeys typical of the geographic regions where her stories originated.

Erik Brooks complements her research with paintings realistic and yet fanciful. Most of the retellings are brief, but a few are excerpts from longer works, such as the classic Indian poem the *Ramayana* and the classic Chinese novel *Journey to the West*. The abridged versions do not work as well, especially when the Chinese Monkey King ends as “an ordinary monkey,” which is nothing like the end of the novel or even the novel chapter, but the bibliography supplies information about the full-length works and the original versions that Climo adapted. Scientific information, trivia, and proverbs also pop up between the stories, offering interesting pauses for readers before jumping to the next story. This arrangement offers a fun way for a teacher to move from a story hour to a science lesson.

—Suzanne D. Li
Queens College, City Univ. of New York

14-4-0643

Dudley, David L. *The Bicycle Man*. New York: Clarion, 2005. 256 pp. ISBN 0-618-54233-7, \$16.00.

Rubright, Lynn. *Mama's Window*. New York: Lee & Low, 2005. 90 pp. Afterword by Patricia C. McKissack. ISBN 1-58430-160-0, \$16.95.

Rubright, a professional storyteller, and Dudley, a first-time novelist, have written heartwarming coming-of-age novels set in African-American communities in the South during the early 1900s.

In *Mama's Window*, James Earle, also called Sugar, is living with Uncle Free, a fisherman, in a one-room shack near a swamp in the Mississippi Delta. Sugar's Mama died six months earlier. She had worked very hard on the Sweet Kingdom Church's fund-raising effort to ensure that their new church building would have a colorful stained-glass window with black angels going up a staircase to heaven. Sugar, who is 11, fears the water, but his uncle persuades him to travel by boat alone in the bayou to attend groundbreaking day for the new church. Sugar has trouble with the boat initially and encounters a slight mishap during his solo outing, but with the help of his uncle he gains confidence and learns to handle the boat more efficiently. Free teaches Sugar how to face the fears that “fester” inside him. When tensions occur between the church building and window committees, Sugar's challenge is to ensure that Mama's dreams and hard work are realized.

In an author's note, Rubright says her work on a documentary about the Missouri sharecropper protest of 1939 was the inspiration for *Mama's Window*. In the afterword, Patricia McKissack writes about Owen Whitfield, a poor sharecropper in Mississippi who was featured in Rubright's documentary. Sugar's character was based on Whitfield's early life.

In *The Bicycle Man*, in 1927 an elderly stranger rides a shiny blue bicycle into Summit, Georgia, where he meets up with 12-year-old Carissa and her best friend, Poppy. Carissa and her mama had moved to Summit following the death of her father, who was killed in Philadelphia. Carissa, an avid reader, often reads from her favorite book to Poppy, and later to Mr. Bailey. Although Mama is initially suspicious of Bailey, she soon learns to welcome his company and friendship. Bailey tells Carissa and Mama stories about his early life and his later adventures on the bike.

Carissa confides her fears and dreams to Bailey, who becomes a friend, mentor, and handyman. Carissa observed that in a matter of weeks Bailey “fixed, patched, tightened, and propped up about everything that needed fixing around our place and Granma's.”

Carissa even tries to befriend a few of her classmates, who constantly taunt her and Poppy, by asking Bailey to teach all of them how to ride a bike. Bailey talks to her about the ocean, something Carissa dreams about experiencing herself one day. Carissa, faced with many challenges, also learns the truth about her father's tragic death. She finds strength and comfort from both Bailey and Mama. When Bailey tells her a story of a lost family member, it becomes Carissa's turn to offer him encouragement. The themes of friendship, courage, and the fulfillment of dreams are evident in these appealing stories.

—Valerie A. Canady
Johnston, R.I.

14-4-0644

Garza, Xavier. *Lucha Libre: The Man in the Silver Mask*. El Paso, Tex.: Cinco Puntos Press, 2005. 32 pp. Illus. by the author. Bilingual (English-Spanish) ed. Spanish translation by Luis Humberto Crosthwaite. ISBN 0-938317-92-X, \$17.95.

Carlitos's father, Papá Lupe, has taken him to Mexico City to see *la lucha libre*, the wrestling matches where *los técnicos* and *los rudos* (the good guys and bad guys) mix it up in a big arena. But these aren't any ordinary kind of wrestlers. They're known for their outrageous costumes and masks; each one has a story, a personality, and a following. They're better than superheroes!

Carlitos's excitement as he waits to go inside the arena is almost unbearable, and the souvenir vendors simply add to his anticipation. Papá Lupe treats his son to a memento. Carlitos chooses a shiny silver mask. The salesman declares to Carlitos's delight: “He has chosen The Man in the Silver Mask. He is the greatest luchador of all time!” But someone is missing: Carlitos's uncle, Vicente, lives in Mexico City and has promised to go to *la lucha libre* with them. Where is he? Tío Vicente eventually does show up, but only after *la lucha libre* is over. But for some reason, he knows everything that happened. Was he one of the masked men?

Garza's delightful text and vibrant, bold illustrations bring to life this remarkable and typically Mexican pas-

time, which he calls “a poor man’s theater.” This book will bring smiles to those who grew up following their favorite *luchadores*. For the others, it will make them want to learn more.

—Daniel A. Olivas
West Hills, Calif.

14-4-0645

Humphrey, Sandra McLeod. *Dare to Dream! 25 Extraordinary Lives*. Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 2005. 122 pp. ISBN 1-59102-280-0, \$14.00 (pb).

Designed more to inspire than inform, these 25 brief character sketches highlight prominent Americans who demonstrated courage and persistence in overcoming personal and social obstacles to achieve their dreams. Ten of these figures are still alive and active; 13 are women. Humphrey divides each life into youth and adulthood, first pointing up childhood illnesses, family struggles, and basic values inculcated by parents or other influential figures, then going on to cover the high spots of her subject’s career, and closing with an inspirational quote. This structure isn’t all that makes her portraits tend to sound alike, as not only do early encounters with racial or gender prejudice (properly) form a common thread, but likewise perceived mental deficiencies: young Thomas Edison was considered “addled,” for instance, while Einstein, Helen Keller, and Maya Angelou were similarly thought to be “retarded.”

Not everyone is presented as an unalloyed role model, though noting that Bill Cosby and Michael Jordan dropped out of school to turn pro doesn’t send the best message. There are some factual errors (no, Thomas Edison did not receive a Congressional Medal of Honor). Moreover, with a few exceptions such as neurosurgeon Ben Carson or physicist Chien-Shiung Wu (and former Miss America Heather Whitestone, perhaps), the names here will probably already be familiar to middle schoolers. Still, this will make a useful addition to collections supporting values or character education.

—John Peters
New York Public Library

14-4-0646

Mwangi, Meja. *The Mzungu Boy*. Toronto: Groundwood Books, 2005. 160 pp. ISBN 0-88899-653-5, \$15.95 (c); 0-88899-664-0, \$8.95 (pb).

This novel is the rich story of a friendship between a Kenyan boy, Kariuki, and his English friend, Nigel. Nigel is visiting his



grandfather, the ruthless farmer Bwana Ruin. The friendship is drawn in a straightforward manner, with none of the patronizing sentimentality that often informs colonial stories involving Africans and colonists. The reactions of Kariuki’s parents and Nigel’s grandfather to the boys’ friendship and their interactions reflect the tortured relations between Kenyans and colonial landowners.

The author shows the human cost of the turbulence of the Kenyan struggle for land and independence in the 1950s and the brutal British colonial response to it that terrorizes Kariuki’s family and community.

Kariuki knows the land very well and shares this knowledge with his new friend. They fish and hunt together. Hunting Old Moses, a big warthog, proves to be dangerous and challenging. The author describes the warthog: “Old Moses was big, almost as big as a buffalo, and he had thick black-brown skin that was bald with age. He had short, powerful legs, a massive head with warts as big as pumpkins.” The greater danger, though, comes in the boys’ encounter with the Kenyan fighters in the forest. The fighters, involved in the struggle for land and independence, are armed, and they view foreign landowners and colonial soldiers as their enemies. Kariuki saves his friend. The story is told with power, grace, and sensitivity. Young readers are sure to enjoy it.

—Lesego Malepe
Wheaton College

14-4-0647

Nislick, June Levitt. *Zayda Was a Cowboy*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2005. 74 pp. ISBN 0-8276-0817-9, \$9.95 (pb).

Nislick’s historical fiction provides multicultural experiences that are good lessons for all. Readers get the feel of Yiddish and are able to look up the words in the glossary. Zayda experiences interactions with people of different cultures, and the outcomes are not only funny, but also give us a glimpse of what people go through when they come to a new country. One example of the difficulties in understanding the idioms of the English language is when the ranch hand asks Zayda if he is the new hand. Zayda assumes the answer is yes, but in his head is thinking that although he has new clothes, hat, and boots, his hand is still the same old one that he had before. There are many such examples.

The beginning of the book introduces the concept of intergenerational families. The reader can feel the struggle of Bill, Zayda’s grandson, in getting used to his grandfather living in the house. Nislick introduces this concept well. The reader also takes away a basic understanding of the problems the Jews in Russia faced in the late 1800s, as well as the difficulties in crossing the ocean at that time. Boys would enjoy the adventures of Zayda as a cowboy, and there are parts of this book that are laugh-out-loud funny. *Zayda Was a Cowboy*

is an appropriate read for older elementary and middle school students.

—Miriam Guttman
Mount Mary College

14-4-0648

Park, Linda Sue. *Project Mulberry*. New York: Clarion, 2005. 225 pp. ISBN 0-618-47786-1, \$16.00.

How do Asian-American kids feel about being Asian American? Are they proud of their heritage, or is it embarrassing to be thought of as different? Are they intrigued with the language of their ancestors, or do they just want to be “Red-White-and-Blue-All-American”? Real kids probably land all the way up and down this scale, but this book addresses the possibility of discomfort at being “other.”

Julia and Patrick are best friends. Julia is Korean and Patrick has brown hair and freckles. When they need to collaborate on a science project, Patrick wants to raise silkworms. For Julia this sounds too Korean, and she spends several chapters trying to worm out of the project. After a lengthy search, they find a man who has a mulberry tree. (Silkworms eat mulberry leaves exclusively.) Uncertain of how her mother really feels, Julia assumes she feels dismay at discovering that the man is black. However, Julia and Patrick develop a friendly relationship with him. Issues of race are handled honestly but delicately as Julia airs her feelings about being Korean and worries about her mother’s feelings toward blacks.

The conversations between the author and Julia provide added interest and insight and help to move the story along. This device as chapter interims is as much fun as the story itself. An author’s note at the end also clarifies the background that led to the story and her own thoughts about racism and what might help address it. This book is as poignantly charming as Park’s previous novel, the Newbery prize winner *A Single Shard* (2001).

—Ginny Lee
Syracuse, N.Y.

14-4-0649

Rinaldi, Ann. *The Color of Fire*. New York: Hyperion/Jump at the Sun, 2005. 198 pp. ISBN 0-7868-0938-8, \$15.99.

Often in times of duress, anxiety and suspicion are heightened. This has reoccurred throughout American history; for example, in the times surrounding the Salem witch trials, the Civil War era, and the Joseph McCarthy hearings of the 1950s. Certainly, September 11 precipitated a period of emotional strain.

Rinaldi’s historical novel depicts such a segment of American history, albeit a relatively obscure event. Normally, when the suppression of a slave insurrection is mentioned,

we think of the antebellum South. However, Rinaldi relates her rather disturbing tale based on the “great Negro plot” that took place in New York City. The setting for this novel is the racism and religious bigotry resulting from a war waged between Britain and Spain.

Rinaldi, author of *A Break with Charity* (1992), a story set during the Salem witch trials, weaves an intriguing yet terrifying narrative centered on the events of 1741 in colonial New York City. *The Color of Fire* focuses on the fictional slave girl Phoebe, who unwittingly becomes involved in a plot that moves beyond her control. The story is riveting, and Phoebe as the main character is believable. As the plot gradually unfolds, the reader is pulled into it. The narrative effectively recounts how fear evolves into mob brutality and how betrayal can result.

The Color of Fire is highly recommended as a successful work of historical fiction that relates a narrative that is meaningful in today’s world of suspicion created by terrorism.

—Mike Russert
Cambridge, N.Y.

14-4-0650

Watson, Pete. *The Heart of the Lion*. Summit, N.J.: Shenanigan Books, 2005. 32 pp. Illus. by Mary Watson. ISBN 0-9726614-1-7, \$15.95.

The Heart of the Lion is a pleasant surprise. The title might imply an animal folktale; however, the Watsons (former Peace Corps volunteers in Benin) have created a diary from an American boy’s point of view of a small village in northwestern Benin. In this case, the boy is recording observations that he makes over a period of time. His friend Yampabou helps him understand the traditions. The boy documents his culture shock and subsequent appreciation of the Gourma culture. For instance, the stereotypic elephants are not real but images on his pencil. Do these people actually eat the “heart of the lion”? How have the Gourma adapted their traditions to contemporary society, such as the pilots’ magic following an airplane crash? What are the rules of punishment for a thief? How does an American learn from the allegorical stories of life?

Watson illustrates the book with West African designs and paintings. The length of the text entry determines the inclusion of an illustration. An explanation of the designs’ meanings would be helpful.

What the book gains in the diary format, it loses from not having a map and an afterword to explain the context. Additional information for the reader is critical for understanding why the poison seller, butterfly boy, scorpion man, and dog eaters are important in this society.

—Patricia S. Kuntz
Madison, Wis.

Young Adult (Gr. 7 and up)

14-4-0651

Davis, Sampson; Jenkins, George; and Hunt, Rameck, with Sharon M. Draper. *We Beat the Street: How a Friendship Pact Led to Success*. New York: Dutton, 2005. 200 pp. ISBN 0-525-47407-2, \$16.99.

Draper recasts her three co-authors' *The Pact: Three Young Men Make a Promise and Fulfill a Dream* (2002) as a third-person narrative, with some invented or reconstructed dialogue, aimed at slightly younger or less able readers. Developing the underlying theme that choosing friends who will provide "positive peer pressure" is key to escaping the temptations and mentality of urban poverty, she follows each member of the Newark, New Jersey, trio, all African Americans, from grade school to grad school (all three are now doctors, working near the neighborhood where they grew up), showing in episodic chapters how significant incidents or well-timed, often unexpected, support helped each to overcome doubts, control anger, survive arrests (justified or otherwise), and get past social, financial, and other obstacles. Each chapter closes with a personal comment from one of the "Three Doctors." This book has a fresh, direct, real-sounding air that makes it unusually convincing as motivational reading, but aside from smoother writing, there isn't much to choose between it and the original memoir.

—John Peters
New York Public Library

14-4-0652

Hill, Laban Carrick. *Casa Azul: An Encounter with Frida Kahlo*. New York: Watson-Guption, 2005. 160 pp. ISBN 0-8230-0411-2, \$15.95.

In this addition to the series Art Encounters, Hill brings to a reader an understanding of Kahlo's life and art, focusing in particular on her painting *Self Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird*. Using magic realism, Hill intertwines the realistic story of Maria and Victor—who, after the death of their grandmother, have come to Mexico City to search for their mother—with the story of Kahlo, who, just divorced by her husband, Diego Rivera, is depressed and working on her self-portrait in her amazing home, Casa Azul.

The parallel narratives intersect when Maria and Victor, who have been duped by a young thief, Oswald, eventually find themselves outside Kahlo's home. Invited inside, they experience the magic of Casa Azul, where animals and objects all talk. They also experience the loving-kindness of Kahlo, who contacts their mother and, with the help of Rivera, rescues Victor, who has been kidnapped by Oswald. The children, in turn, help Kahlo find her own balance so that she changes her bleak self-portrait to a more hopeful representation.

Hill successfully blends the realistic with elements of strangeness and magic to represent and interpret Kahlo's surrealist painting. Maria's stories, involving wrestling matches between El Corazón/Quetzalcoatl and El Diablo/Huitzilopochtli, add a mythic storytelling that reflects Mexican culture. The narrative plot of Maria and Victor's story, however, seems somewhat forced; the characters and situations seem to be more appropriate for a younger audience than for young adults, especially considering other content. A time line and bibliography are included.

—Hilary S. Crew
Kean Univ.

14-4-0653

Morgan, Anna. *Daughters of the Ark*. Toronto: Second Story Press, 2005. 230 pp. ISBN 1-896764-92-4, \$7.95 (pb).

Two young Jewish women, Aleesha, from 939 B.C.E., and Debitru, from 1984, live in difficult times, and both have to take arduous journeys with their people. The journeys are in reverse directions, but they carry the same mysterious emerald.

Aleesha, together with her family and community, travels from Jerusalem to join the court of the Queen of Sheba in Ethiopia. In an attempt to save the Holy Ark in the Temple from vandalism, she manages to obtain an emerald from the breastplate on top of the Ark and sews it into her cloak. Although she cannot return the jewel to the ark, she takes it on her journey to Ethiopia with the idea of returning it to Jerusalem one day. The jewel is safeguarded through the generations, and it is not until 1984, when Debitru, a Jewish woman who flees the famine and persecution in Ethiopia, is able to return the emerald to Jerusalem.

Debitru also must endure great hardships for basic survival. Separated from their parents, Debitru and her younger brothers join her uncle and the community on a mission from Ethiopia to Jerusalem. When her brothers become ill, Debitru is forced to stay behind to take care of them. The three siblings finally manage to find their mother, enter the city of Jerusalem, and establish a new life for themselves. As she holds Aleesha's emerald from 3,000 years ago, Debitru is encouraged that she, too, can succeed, despite the obstacles in her path.

The two parallel stories are inspirational to anyone who has had to undertake a life-threatening journey. I highly recommend this motivational book for people of all ages and backgrounds.

—Hannah M. Heller
Baltimore, Md.

14-4-0654

Mosley, Walter. *47*. New York: Little, Brown, 2005. 232 pp. ISBN 0-316-11035-3, \$16.99.

In his first novel for young adults, Mosley offers readers a new and exciting version of the mystical legend of High John the Conqueror. At the opening, a young slave, soon to be known as 47, moves from his warm place in the kitchen beside a doting house servant to a harsher life in the cotton fields of Corinthian Plantation. There he becomes aware of, and *part* of, the painful realities of slavery.

His lot changes dramatically when he encounters Tall John, who seems to be a runaway slave from a nearby estate. Readers are introduced to the magic realism inherent throughout this book when they witness the fateful meeting between the two main characters as the newcomer says, "There you are at last....I've been looking high and low for you." What follows is the amazing transformation of an obedient and unquestioning slave into a leader of his people, seeker of freedom, and possessor of free will.

This is an important work about African Americans born into slavery. 47 will spark many thoughtful discussions between teachers and students, and parents and children. Educators will be thankful that this book exists.

—Pamela Ober

14-4-0655

Steinhöfel, Andreas. *The Center of the World*. New York: Random House Children's Books/Delacorte, 2005. 468 pp. Trans. from German by Alisa Jaffa. ISBN 0-385-72943-X, \$16.95 (cl); 0-385-90266-2, \$18.99 (rlb).

Beginning with the day his mother, Glass, gives birth to him and his twin sister, Dianne, 17-year-old Phil tells his story of growing into young adulthood in the castle-like house, "Visible," located in a small European town whose inhabitants regard Glass and her children as outsiders, especially because of Glass's many affairs with different men. Phil's desire for a father figure is made clear. This role is partially filled by his seafaring uncle, Gable, who, along with Glass and Glass's lesbian friends, understands and empathizes with the sensitive gay teen. Phil tells about falling in love with Nicholas, a strikingly handsome but reserved young man who is not able to satisfy all of Phil's desires for love. Yet when Nicholas becomes friends with Phil's best friend, Kat, a young woman, Phil experiences a heartrending betrayal. The consequences of Phil's friendship with Kat and his love for Nicholas also results in another tragedy, as Kat's former boyfriend and Phil's former friend, Wolf, seek their own personal revenge.

Steinhöfel's novel, written in the form of a literary bildungsroman, is beautifully crafted. Emphasis is placed on Phil's emotional relationships with Nicholas, his mother, sister, Gable, Wolf, and the people who have been his friends. Phil's memories weave back and forth in a nonlinear narrative in which family secrets are constantly concealed and revealed in a plot that has surprising twists and turns. This is a novel that offers older teen readers an enriching reading experience.

—Hilary S. Crew
Kean Univ.

14-4-0656

Zenatti, Valérie. *When I Was a Soldier*. New York: Bloomsbury Children's Books, 2005. 235 pp. Trans. from French by Adriana Hunter. ISBN 1-58234-978-9, \$16.95.

This fast-paced memoir by Zenatti, who at 13 immigrated to Israel from France, chronicles her experiences in the Israeli army. With graduation ahead, Valérie and her girlfriends are absorbed with clothes, boys, preparing for the matriculation exams, and the army. Like all 18-year-old Israeli girls (those who are religious, married, or mothers are exempt) who must serve two years in the military, she is nervous and excited about becoming a soldier, an important Israeli rite of passage. Following a grueling month of basic training, she is assigned to military intelligence and an intensive training course in monitoring aircraft communications. An achiever, Valérie scores high in almost all her exams, but fails one of them. For this she is denied weekend leave and assigned additional guard duty. Humiliated, she redoubles her efforts, suffers a breakdown, but ultimately finishes at the top of her class.

Throughout all this, she doggedly pursues Jean-David, her ex-boyfriend, until she is forced to accept that her love is unrequited. Valérie's development from a rather immature, affected teenager to a reflective, waggishly amusing young woman will engage young adult readers despite national and cultural differences. Although Zenatti's French has been translated into technically accurate British English, the translator does not appear to be familiar with Hebrew and Israeli culture: There are instances where the English does not convey the Hebrew context.

—Elka R. Frankel
Princeton, N.J.

