

**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, sciences social sciences, reference, travel, 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.

## Literature

### General Anthologies

#### 18-2-0122

Turnbull, John; Satterlee, Thom; and Raab, Alon, eds. *The Global Game: Writers on Soccer*. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 2008. 316 pp. ISBN 978-0-8032-1078-3, \$19.95 (pb).

This is a great book for anyone who loves soccer. And even those who do not will find it educational. An edited collection, it has poems, fiction, and nonfiction from around the world about soccer, the world's number one sport. In many parts of the world the game is known as football. However, according to this book, the game is mostly known as soccer in North America, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and the Republic of Ireland. The fact that there are writings from all over the world gives this book a strong multiethnic quality, which makes it even better than if it only involved soccer stories from one country.

Some of the writings have to do with the sport *per se*, such as how one feels after injuring an opponent, while others look at soccer from a political or sociological standpoint, such as how an au-

thoritarian nation uses soccer to control its people. There are other viewpoints, too, such as a young woman writing about how her brother is expected to play soccer while she has to stay home and clean. Yet, when he returns from his match, it is quite all right with her family if he muddies up the rugs and floors that she has just cleaned. He is the hero with some degree of freedom, while her role is limited and less valued.

This book will be especially useful for those who want to see the many dimensions of a sport, including the psychological and sociological, that make it more than just fun. Those who like or study soccer, and would like to read different perspectives about it, will find much to savor.

Russell Eisenman  
Univ. of Texas–Pan American

### Fiction

#### 18-2-0123

Abidi, Azhar. *House of Bilqis*. New York: Viking, 2009. 210 pp. ISBN 978-0-670-01941-0, \$24.95.

Set in Karachi, Pakistan, circa 1985, *The House of Bilqis* chronicles events centered around the home of its matriarch, Bilqis, and those associated with it—family, neighbors, servants, and nearby workers. The novel begins with the return of Bilqis's son to house and homeland with his new Australian bride. Through this key event and other past and contemporaneous ones, Abidi explores the meaning of personal, familial, and cultural duty. The extent of these responsibilities is not easy for any of us to determine, but is especially difficult for members of this society in transition. As militant Islam grows, a traditional way of life is fading away, in twilight, which was the novel's original title. With the most to lose, Bilqis proves the most adaptable, yet she remains true to herself and her house.

The characters remain interesting sketches, not fully realized as individuals, but rather representative examples of different changes. Despite this shortcoming, Abidi achieves some very moving and lyrical writing in passages that evoke "something of the old world that was disappearing" (91), whether it is the Edwardian colonial society or the Pakistani landscape, which serves as prey to the continued tensions resulting from the Partition of India.

Ellen F. Higgins  
[www.higginsmysteries.com](http://www.higginsmysteries.com)

**18-2-0124**

Ferreras, Alberto. *B as in Beauty*. New York: Grand Central Publishing, 2009. 338 pp. ISBN 978-0-446-69789-7, \$13.99 (pb).

Call this a “chick” novel with a twist and more gumption than the cover lets on. It does share a certain fundamental simpatico with *Real Women Have Curves*, as well as with hundreds of “learn to love yourself first, girl!” segments on *Oprah*, *Dr. Phil*, and other popular TV shows. But let no one be deceived into thinking that this is what feminism looks like.

Author Ferreras postulates the familiar “where does true beauty lie” and then proceeds to spin a yarn about a young Latina woman’s journey from being down on herself on account of her looks and weight, to emerging as a person who likes and appreciates herself. The transformation is thanks to the tax accountant-cum-godmother who comes into her life to teach her a thing or two about the difference between looking good and being good, about being inner directed and self-empowered.

Beauty Maria Zavalas, the protagonist, is an engaging-enough, plausible character. Yes, her first name is Beauty. The story’s fast, first-person narrative style has the immediacy of pop “real.” The author is an independent filmmaker with both a television and advertising background. And the novel is a natural for TV. I can already think of several working actors that would probably love a crack at it.

Himilce Novas  
<http://supernovas.org>

**18-2-0125**

Hemon, Aleksandar. *Love and Obstacles: Stories*. New York: Putnam/Riverhead, 2009. 224 pp. ISBN 978-1-59448-864-1, \$25.95.

This volume is a set of interrelated stories that trace the life of an aspiring writer, who narrates his experiences and those of friends and acquaintances he observes. We read of the narrator’s trip as a teenager to visit his diplomat father in Zaire, his childhood in Sarajevo, and his life in exile in the United States while war rages in Bosnia. We meet an array of characters: the narrator’s childhood friends who join him in attacking and tormenting workers who are erecting a building on the empty lot where they played, an exiled Bosnian poet, the narrator’s customers when he worked selling magazine subscriptions in suburban Chicago, and a Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist visiting Sarajevo after the war.

Most of the characters are braggarts and buffoons, and the author presents them as the butts of jokes. Unlike in Hemon’s acclaimed novel, *The Lazarus Project*, the subjects of these stories rarely emerge as sympathetic or full characters. The arbitrariness and violence of life is a theme that runs through the stories, but because the characters are so flat and poorly developed, readers care little when one suffers or is murdered. Hemon is a lively writer, and some of the descriptive language is rich and evocative, but even so, readers will come away from this collection with little feeling for Sarajevo or the other settings.

Richard Lachmann  
SUNY, University at Albany

**18-2-0126**

James, Marlon. *The Book of Night Women*. New York: Putnam/Riverhead, 2009. 432 pp. ISBN 978-1-59448-857-3, \$26.95.

An impressive and memorable literary work, *The Book of Night Women*, chronicles the tumultuous life of a passionate, young slave named Lilith, born and raised on the Montpelier Estate in Jamaica at the turn of the nineteenth century. This epic-like story reads like a historic novel. Written in the Jamaican dialect of the time, it relates a gripping narrative of slave revolt, of the Maroons, of the Black Arts of Obeah, and of the secret slave sisterhood known as the Night Women, while at its center stands the beautiful mulatto slave girl, Lilith, as both victim and heroine.

Just as one thinks the stories of slavery have all been told, James delivers a new and powerful rendition of the horror of Caribbean slavery, exotic and violent, torturous and heart-wrenching, with momentary glimpses of tenderness. This brilliantly written story, full of intrigue, murder, revenge, jealousy, betrayal, and rebellion drives the reader onward towards the conclusion, leaving only the desire for more.

This is a major contribution to Jamaican literature and, even more broadly, to Caribbean literature and is an invaluable addition to the classroom. It reflects the people and the culture of the time with remnants still visible today.

Diana Budhai  
Excelsior College, Albany, N.Y.

**18-2-0127**

Lalami, Laila. *Secret Son*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2009. 304 pp. ISBN 978-1-56512-594-3, \$23.95.

Lalami has followed her critically acclaimed collection of short stories with a debut novel that belongs in every public and school library. From the garbage-strewn slums of contemporary Morocco to its posh city apartments fronted by doormen, protagonist Youssef El Mekki travels a physical and emotional journey in search of his true identity. Is he the poverty-stricken illegitimate son of his mother or the heir of a rich businessman? As his life alternates between the ghetto and the Grand Hotel, Youssef discovers deep divisions between rich and poor, the oppressive government and the “party” that fights to bring the government down, and, on a more personal level, between his mother who, despite extreme poverty, adheres to her moral values, and his father whose life is so filled with moral compromises, he eventually loses everything.

Lalami deftly allows us access to the points of view of Youssef’s mother, father, and sister during pivotal points in the plot. At the end, their views converge with Youssef’s final discovery—that, for him, the meaning of home is his mother, the only constant in his life. Still, he suffers a great injustice when his father, his govern-

ment, and his party all betray him.

Robyn Ringler  
East Line Books, Clifton Park, N.Y.

**18-2-0128**

Maistros, Louis. *The Sound of Building Coffins*. New Milford, Conn.: The Toby Press, 2009. 358 pp. ISBN 978-1-59264-255-7, \$24.95.

Maistros's debut novel resounds with a curious tone that is 1891 New Orleans. The novel's style is lyrically gothic and dark. The story opens, flooded in moonlight and evoking the rushing sound of the Mississippi, as Typhus Morningstar, the lead character, is easing a burlap bag full of fresh fetuses into the waters and releasing the souls of the dead. From there we enter a world of black magic realism, Voodoo and curses, redemption, and rebirth in New Orleans. Maistros depicts the multiethnic heritages of the city's residents—African Americans, the old White Southern aristocracy, biracial Creoles, and immigrants from southern Europe.

Set around a tightly woven plot to release a Voodoo curse, cast over 40 years ago on a Sicilian immigrant family, add a little jazz, and you have a fascinating brew of intrigue and violence. Maistros's prose is beautiful and sublime, strange and complex. He is a masterful storyteller. Read with caution.

Rosemary Aud Franklin  
Univ. of Cincinnati

**18-2-0129**

Meissner, Bill. *Spirits in the Grass*. Notre Dame, Ind.: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 2008. 296 pp. ISBN 978-0-268-03513-6, \$25.00.

All across America, small towns are situated adjacent to Indian reservations, and often such juxtapositions are a source of uneasiness, division, and even violence. Such a town is Clearwater, Wisconsin, setting of Meissner's novel.

Luke Tanner works for a sod-laying company, but his life revolves around two things—the baseball field he believes is part of his inheritance and his lover, Louise Stiller. Luke spends all his spare time on the baseball field, which he plans to improve. The city of Clearwater has a different plan—the field is to become a highway interchange for improved access to the city and the nearby Indian casino. Luke's finding, on the baseball field, of the bone fragment of a thirteenth century Indian becomes the catalyst for a chain of events that brings him to a startling revelation about his own heritage, and exposes dark secrets about Clearwater's past—and present. *Spirits in the Grass* is part mystery and part romance, but mostly, it is the story of life's ebb and flow in a small Midwestern town and of one man's place in it.

Meissner's evocative description and strong characterization bring the story to life for the reader. *Spirits in the Grass* is a pleasur-

able and satisfying novel. Recommended for public libraries.

Andy J. Deering  
Central Wyoming College

**18-2-0130**

Muñoz, Braulio. *Alejandro and the Fishermen of Tancay*. Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press, 2008. 144 pp. Trans. from Spanish by Nancy K. Muñoz. ISBN 978-0-8165-2679-6, \$16.95 (pb).

Set in Chimbote, a port on Peru's northern coast, the novel narrates the transformation of Villa María, a once lively town, into a shadow of its former self. Don Morales, a wise old man, passionately tells the stories of the old fishing town, which now has lost its past harmony. His memoirs are addressed to Alejandro, an impetuous young man, who came to Chimbote in 1966, but leaves to participate in political struggles. Don Morales evokes many heroic people who served their neighbors. He also writes of those without wisdom and of unclean hearts, who died victims of their own tragic flaws, lyrically contrasting those who have kept faith with those who lost hope. Although he recalls with joy many happy times, he sees the decline of Villa María over time. Globalization, greed, the arrival of foreigners, and the abuse of power brought elements of hell into this paradise. There remain the natives, who, like their ancestors, revere with utmost respect the gifts of nature, in contrast to those who destroy life. The horror of Peru's contemporary upheaval is reflected in the short life of Alejandro, killed by the government as a terrorist and thrown into the sea, like one of the poisoned fish found dead at the shore. Fortunately, the fishermen find him, bury him, and remember him forever, symbolizing their own commitment to their way of life.

This is a well-crafted narration filled with sorrow and nostalgia; yet, hope and courage pervade as well. The skilled translator's preface and the glossary enrich the novel by informing the reader of the historical background and the regional language of Tancay.

Rosita Chazarreta-Rourke  
Duquesne Univ.

**18-2-0131**

Mussa, Alberto. *The Riddle of Qaf*. Laverstock, Wiltshire, UK: Aflame Books, 2008. 211 pp. Trans. from Portuguese by Lennie Larkin. ISBN 978-0-906300-03-6, \$15.95 (pb).

*The Riddle of Qaf* is a twofold narrative set alternately in the Ancient Orient and contemporary Brazil. Mussa, the Brazilian novelist and protagonist, searches for the written version of al-Ghatash's poem, the *Qafiya*, that his Lebanese grandfather used to recite for him as a boy. Fascinated by its legend, he studies Arabic, Hebrew, poetry, and the science of the stars to reconstruct the original poem and to solve its riddle. He is also determined to prove the *Qafiya*'s authenticity, to dispute with scholars of Arabic literature who doubt or minimize its value.

The novel's second theme concerns the pre-Islamic poet al-

Ghatash, the hero, who, traveling through the deserts of Arabia, narrates his quest to find Layla, the woman he loves, but has never seen. He also seeks to decipher the riddle of Qaf and of Jadah, a crossed-eye genie who travels through time. In this significant literary endeavor, Mussa weaves a novel rich in the culture and traditions of the Arab people and the Bedouins—masters of poetry, mathematics, and fantastic tales set in the deserts, replete with descriptions of their winds and fauna. In a style recalling Jorge Luis Borges, the author explores such themes as the riddle alluding to the image of the mirror, the inversion of reality and appearance, the circularity of time, and mythical genies. The novel is written in 20 chapters, which correspond to the letters of the Arabic alphabet, interspersed with legends such as those of Ali Baba, Sinbad, and Dhu Suyuf, which deepen the sense of setting and capture the reader's imagination. It is a profoundly engaging and well-crafted narrative. The translation is excellent.

Rosita Chazarreta-Rourke  
Duquesne Univ.

#### 18-2-0132

Obejas, Achy. *Ruins*. New York: Akashic Books, 2009. 205 pp. ISBN 978-1-933354-69-9, \$15.95 (pb).

A revolutionary spirit sitting on the stoop amidst dependency and decadence while friends nearby band together to make money, Usnavy has virtually no possessions other than a coveted lamp, which he polishes daily. The degradation and misery of life in Cuba today will alarm even the most seasoned reader. Cubans wait daily for essential commodities to be dispensed while they grumble about the lack of flour, bread, and many other necessities for cooking. Both men and women in a household are limited to a single blanket, which they must share. They joke about how soup can be made from a blanket. Bartering is common.

Usnavy constantly speaks fondly of the 1959 revolution—how it supposedly improved the lives of the peasants living in Cuba. But half a century later, three members of his family live in a single room in a crumbling tenement with no plumbing. Food is scarce, nothing is wasted, and families rely on neighbors. Nobody has been to the palace where those with money and power reside.

Obejas's noir fiction portrays with compassion and irony the fate of a man torn between his devotion to the revolution and his devotion to the friends and family who help him survive in the wake of the revolution's failure.

Renee Rude  
St. Cloud State Univ.

#### 18-2-0133

Pastoriza Iyodo, Benito. *A Matter of Men*. [n.l.]: Xlibris, 2008. 168 pp. Trans. from Spanish by Bradley Warren Davis. Bilingual (Spanish-English) ed. ISBN 978-1-4363-6030-2, \$19.99 (pb).

*A Matter of Men* is a bilingual volume of nine short stories heralded by translator Davis as a collection wherein man “searches

for his soul in his culture and rituals, in the violence of its cities and institutions, in the stereotypes imposed upon him, [and] in the misguided interpretations of mass media and the judgment of others.” This description of Pastoriza Iyodo's stories and male lead characters is apt, as all suffer identity crises directly affected by one or more of the aforementioned factors. Still, these stories seem to be less about the search for masculine identity and far more about racial identity, both

in relation to other cultures and to carving an identity out of one's own culture. Even more apparent, however, is a discussion of poverty. Indeed, while men seek identity in these stories, the issue of masculinity regularly gets trumped by the misery and cruelty of poverty—the children living in a housing project literally overflowing with refuse (one of the collection's most powerful images) or the homeless underage tunnel dwellers surviving on leftovers looted from those better off. Davis's translation and introduction serve as a good segue from his scholarly dissection and introduction of these stories to the simultaneously disturbing, heartbreaking, unrelenting, magical, and brutal approach Pastoriza Iyodo takes in presenting his characters and their troubled lives.

While Davis goes out of his way to paint Pastoriza Iyodo's stories as sympathetic toward Puerto Rican culture at large, it's hard not to read the first seven short stories as scathing critiques of misogyny, gluttony, homophobia, masculinity, and mankind's particular aversion to kindness. Yet, every single story, regardless of length, does have a sense of compassion for its protagonists. It is no matter, then, whether the readers see these stories as critiques or compassionate portraits of the downtrodden. All will come away from this finely translated collection seeing humanity in an entirely new light. Humanity through Pastoriza Iyodo's lens is a view rarely seen, and one that deserves our attention.

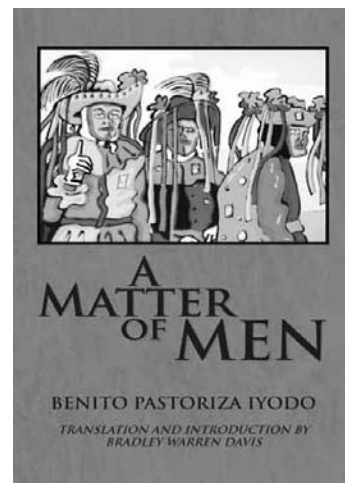
Aaron Michael Morales  
Indiana State Univ.

#### 18-2-0134

Reed, Ishmael, ed. *Pow-Wow: Charting the Fault Lines in the American Experience—Two Centuries of Short Fiction*. Cambridge, Mass.: Da Capo Press, 2009. 544 pp. ISBN 978-1-56858-340-2, \$28.00 (cl); 978-1-56858-342-6, \$21.95 (pb).

While a few stories are a tad stiff about making a point, the overlooked gems in this jumbo anthology are for the most part hauntingly supple, with emotions finely drawn. Their characters share a loose hold on the circumstances of their lives. Buffeted by poverty or exclusion, they bob and weave as best they can. Americans with roots in Pakistan, the Eyak Nation, Korea, Africa, Puerto Rico, Japan, China, Sweden, and more hold intense debates with themselves, or, like Zora Neal Hurston's bullied wife, twist oppression into a weapon.

Grumpy introduction aside, Reed's eye is fine and wide-ranging. Russell Banks's trailer park loner can't get in the way of her



guinea pigs' rapid reproduction because they are, well, alive. Anna Dunbar-Nelson's early twentieth-century New Orleans judge, embittered against dark skin by his choice to pass for White, wields a heavy gavel until another lawyer, unmistakably Black, neatly checkmates him. Divorced women who've lived in two racial worlds redefine selfhood, friendship, and parenthood. Frank Yerby's decorated Black soldier returns to a small Southern town, and, refusing to shuffle and grin, is declared insane. Yerby is not Reed's only example of edgy humor. A satirist himself, he includes Langston Hughes's perfectly toned turnabout of racial identity politics; Mark Twain's satire on war fever; and Ben Franklin's three-page insult to the slave trade. Bringing us into the twenty-first century, Vivian Demuth mocks FEMA's vast post-Katrina ineptitude. Short fiction is at its shortest in Robert Hass's simple, rich poem about the tricks of memory.

Gail Hall Howard  
Norwalk (Conn.) Community College

#### 18-2-0135

Stockett, Kathryn. *The Help*. New York: Putnam, 2009. 464 pp. ISBN 978-0-399-15534-5, \$24.95.

*The Help* is a compelling and engrossing novel about three women who negotiate the minefields of race, class, and gender in Jackson, Mississippi, in 1962—the era of both King's "I Have a Dream" speech and the murder of Medgar Evers. Three voices share the narration: Aibileen, a 50-something maid, raising her seventeenth White child while suffering the death of her own son; Minny, her best friend, a terrific cook who loses jobs because of her outspokenness; and Eugenia, nicknamed Skeeter, a 22-year-old college graduate and daughter of cotton plantation owners. Despite differences, the three become involved in Skeeter's writing project to record the truth of the lives of these maids and other "help."

In an afterword, Stockett says that she imagined what a Black maid would say about "what it was like to be black in Mississippi, working for our white family." She achieves this admirably, while reminding us that those who do domestic labor are still considered disposable, their contributions ignored as are the very real bonds hired caretakers develop with the children they mind. Some of Stockett's narrative emphases falter and some victories are a little too easily won, but the voices ring authentic.

Ellen F. Higgins  
www.higginsmysteries.com

#### 18-2-0136

Tanpinar, Ahmet Hamdi. *A Mind at Peace*. Brooklyn, N.Y.: Archipelago Books, 2008. 456 pp. Trans. from Turkish by Erdag Goknar. ISBN 978-0-9793330-5-7, \$25.00.

Rare is the book in which the exterior reflects the beauty of its interior. *A Mind at Peace* is that kind of book. If not for the pub-

lishing house of Archipelago Books, one of the finest publishers of international literature in translation today, many outstanding works of modern and contemporary international literature would not get recognition. Archipelago Books is a not-for-profit literary press dedicated to promoting cross-cultural exchange through international literature in translations. The publishing house, located in Brooklyn, New York, just received the 2008 Miriam Bass Award for Creativity in Independent Publishing from the Association of American Publishers. And the books are beautiful examples of fine press printing to grace any library, private or public.

In its lyrical translation by Erdag Goknar, the prose ripples out, beautifully ornate and literary. The story is thickly textured with a sub-current of Kemal Ataturk's post-Ottoman Turkey. In short, this is a country's search for national identity in the wake of Westernization. The work's sensibility is one of loss and doubt for an Eastern mentality stuck in a Western façade. The work originally published in 1949 is epic and follows a family's struggle to define lives in transition. Comparison can be made with Orhan Pamuk and other writers concerned with what Edward Said termed "the other." The descriptions of Istanbul are striking.

For readers who relish old world style and literary passages to distant lands this is a romantic and historical blockbuster. What a beautiful book to own.

Rosemary Aud Franklin  
Univ. of Cincinnati

## Poetry

#### 18-2-0137

Agosin, Marjorie, ed. *A Sea of Voices: Women Poets in Israel*. Santa Fe, N.M.: Western Edge/Sherman Asher, 2008. 216 pp. ISBN 978-1-890932-36-7, \$16.95 (pb).

In this lyrical and intimate anthology, Agosin gathers works by contemporary women poets who live in Israel and write in a multitude of languages, including Hebrew, Arabic, Ladino, French, and Yiddish, among others. Their literary styles reflect the melting pot of Israel and the confluence and coexistence of cultures, identities, and histories. Although the writers represent varied lands and languages, they share common themes, such as the war between Arabs and Jews; the needless death of Arab children hurling rocks and being used as pawns by their elders; the pain of exile; and the image of the wandering Jew, cast out and searching for a homeland. Recalling the nightmare of the Spanish Inquisition and the subsequent Diaspora, Sephardic poets delight in the Promised Land with its *kaminos de leche i miel*, paths of milk and honey.

Several of the poems comprise a paean to Jerusalem, its beauty, its timelessness, and its role in Jewish history. Other poems recall the still-vivid horrors of the Holocaust—"I see barbed wire rusting in your eyes"—and the madness of the suicide bomber—"Under your skirt you are pregnant with dynamite and metal shavings." From another continent, we read the loving tribute to

Diana Aron, one of the thousands who disappeared and were tortured and murdered during the cruel regime of Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet.

In the face of constant conflict and terrorism, poetry becomes a way of surviving, of expressing hope for the future in a land that, true to its biblical heritage, accepts and welcomes strangers.

Roberta Gordenstein  
Elms College, Chicopee, Mass.

#### 18-2-0138

Aguado, Jesús. *The Poems of Vikram Babu*. New York: Host Publications, 2009. 95 pp. Trans. from Spanish by Electa Arenal and Beatrix Gates. ISBN 978-0-924047-59-6, \$12.00 (pb).

*The Poems of Vikram Babu* is a work by a contemporary Spanish poet who for this project has invented the persona and adopted the voice of a seventeenth-century Indian basket weaver. The collection of poems takes the form of a series of similes that employ images from daily life in a seventeenth-century Indian village on the banks of the Ganges, each of which ends in a question that challenges twenty-first-century readers to confront the contradictions and paradoxes of humanity in their own lives, choices, and actions.

The book includes an introduction by the translators that provides biographical information about the poet and explanations of the poems, as well as detailed notes on the translation. The work itself begins with the invented biography of the invented persona—a pious but humble man who lived in a village near Benares and became known as an iconoclastic, non-denominational mystic—and ends with a glossary of Indian terms for various culinary, musical, and religious items referenced in the poems. The 50 poems are contemplations on divinity disguised as whimsical allegories that address human foolishness, compulsions, arrogance, hypocrisy, fears, jealousies, ignorance, cruelty, impotence, vanity, and deception.

Lori Tsang  
Washington, D.C.

#### 18-2-0139

Algarín, Miguel. *Survival/Supervivencia*. Houston: Arte Público Press, 2009. 240 pp. ISBN 978-1-55885-541-0, \$16.95 (pb).

*Survival/Supervivencia* is a collection of some of the best-known poetry and prose from the past 35 years by the Nuyorican [Puerto Rican living in New York] writer. The book opens with an introduction by novelist Ernesto Quiñones; at the beginning, it includes Algarín's introduction to his 1975 anthology of Nuyorican poetry explaining the invention of the Nuyorican language as a survival strategy. It also includes, toward the end, the introduction to his 1994 anthology of poetry from the famed Nuyorican Poets Café.

Written in Nuyorican “Spanglish,” or presented in parallel English and Spanish language versions, the poems are sharply executed, finely honed neighborhood portraits, snapshots and vignettes, personal reminiscences, social observations, and political com-

mentaries. They are suffused with the music, rhythms, and flavors of Nuyorican experience and history; they are stories of family, love, friendship, violence, struggle, and resistance that give voice to the poor and disenfranchised. A group of love poems and elegies near the end are spiritual, philosophical, passionate, and transcendent. Arranged in chronological order, the poems begin with chronicles of Puerto Rican experience in New York's Loisaida [predominantly Puerto Rican neighborhood formerly Alphabet City], move on to incisive indictments of international conflicts in Latin America and the Middle East, and close with intimate reflections on life and mortality.

Lori Tsang  
Washington, D.C.

#### 18-2-0140

Bolaño, Roberto. *The Romantic Dogs*. New York: New Directions, 2008. 142 pp. Trans. from Spanish by Laura Healy. Bilingual (Spanish-English) ed. ISBN 978-0-8112-1801-6, \$15.95 (pb).

Bolaño (1953–2003) was born in Chile and lived in Mexico, France, and Spain. He was a writer and poet whose works in fiction were translated into English after his death, among them *Nazi Literature in the Americas* (first published in Spanish in 1996), *The Savage Detectives* (1998), *Amulet* (1999), *Distant Star* (1996), *By Night in Chile* (2000), and *2666* (2004), but *The Romantic Dogs* (2008), first published in Barcelona, Spain, in 2006, is the first collection of Bolaño's poetry in translation. This translation consists of 43 poems in Spanish, with English translation on facing pages.

These poems—short, long, and free verse—comment on Bolaño's life passages and experiences as he explores social and political events that raised his consciousness during his younger years. Those memories are embedded in his poetry from 1980 to 1998, along with historical and literary names of the time. These include “Self Portrait at Twenty Years,” “Ernesto Cardenal and I,” “The Detectives,” “Godzilla in Mexico,” “Twilight in Barcelona,” “Parra's Footsteps,” and “Muse,” to name just a few. This last one echoes his creative spirit. His poems are filled with powerful imagery of loneliness, love, and the contemplative moments of life and death in his cosmopolitan world. The translation by Laura Healy remains faithful to the original voice and spirit of Bolaño's writing. It is a skillful and readable translation that preserves the tone, style, images, and metaphors of Bolaño's poetry.

This collection would have been enhanced even more with a short biography and an introduction about Bolaño's life and works, for readers unfamiliar with him.

*The Romantic Dogs* has a place in all library collections and is valuable as a text for world literature and Latin American literature courses. In addition, all readers of poetry will find much of interest in Bolaño's poems.

Alva V. Cellini  
St. Bonaventure Univ.

#### 18-2-0141

Cardenal, Ernesto. *Pluriverse: New and Selected Poems*. New York: New Directions, 2009. 272 pp. Edited by Jonathan Cohen. Preface by Lawrence Ferlinghetti. Trans. from Spanish by the editor, Mierya Jaimes-Freyre, John Lyons, Thomas Merton, Robert Pring-Mill, Kenneth Rexroth, and Donald D. Walsh. ISBN 978-0-8112-1809-2, \$17.95 (pb).

Cardenal (1925– ) is a Roman Catholic priest and a major contemporary poet from Nicaragua who has been also a voice for social justice, advocating liberation theology through his writings, art, and poetry. This internationally known poet has written numerous poems and inspiring prose that freely express his thoughts on love, humanity, history, social justice, and science by contemplating the planet and its life from all perspectives. As a novice at a Trappist monastery in the United States, he studied under Thomas Merton, who inspired him in creating his own style. Cardenal connects revolutionary political ideology with Roman Catholic theology, hoping to change society. In his poetry, he puts an emphasis on the relationship that exists between socioeconomic factors and spirituality.

*Pluriverse* (2009), in translation, has a foreword introducing briefly Cardenal's revolutionary spirit and his influence in Nicaragua's political arena, relating his efforts to change society in his role as a poet-priest. This book contains an introduction, "Songs of Heaven and Earth," by Cohen, highlighting Cardenal's life and works in relation to history and his contributions to his country's historical revolution, humanity, and his vocation as a priest. There are remarks about his worldviews, world recognition, and prizes for his literary works. The translation (by several translators) offers the lively spirit and poetic voice of Cardenal's masterpieces.

The volume is divided chronologically into "Zero Hour, 1949–1959," "Apocalypse, 1960–1969," "Lights, 1970–1985," and "Pluriverse, 1986–2005." *Pluriverse* is highly recommended for all libraries and could be used as a text for courses in multicultural and ethnic studies, Latin American literature, cultural and religious studies, and poetry in general.

Alva V. Cellini  
St. Bonaventure Univ.

#### 18-2-0142

Everett, Percival. *Abstraktion und Einfühlung*. New York: Akashic/Black Goat, 2008. 64 pp. ISBN 978-1-933354-70-5, \$15.95 (pb).

*Abstraktion und Einfühlung* (Abstraction and Empathy) borrows its title from German art historian Wilhelm Worringer's thesis distinguishing realist art's ability to arouse empathy in the viewer from the spiritualism of abstract art, in which form is freed from the constraints of relating to one's experience of the material world. The three-part form of the poems in this volume reinforces the content of that eponymous work, which influenced the modernist evolution from the representative to cubism to abstraction.

The first may contemplate Picasso, Cocteau, Satie, and Diaghilev's collaboration on *Parade*, Leger's take on the enigmatic *Mona Lisa*, Picasso's *Guernica*, Matisse's *Bathers with Turtle*, Manet's also

enigmatic barmaid, or Gauguin's portrait of Van Gogh. The second part reconstructs the first as a more ambiguous proposition. The third part takes a phrase from the second and decontextualizes its formal aspects from their narrative meaning by replacing the words with other words and letters.

These poems comment on neoclassicism, the breaking of boundaries between "high" and "low" art, and the dialectical relationship between "political art" and "commercial art." They challenge perceptions of subject/object positioning and viewer perspectives. They muse on the pure abstraction of music, the arbitrariness of language, and the essence of existence.

Lori Tsang  
Washington, D.C.

#### 18-2-0143

Neruda, Pablo. *The Hands of Day*. Port Townsend, Wash.: Copper Canyon Press, 2009. 190 pp. Trans. from Spanish by William O'Daly. Bilingual (Spanish-English) ed. ISBN 978-1-55659-272-0, \$17.00 (pb).

Nobel Prize-winning Chilean poet Neruda (1904–1973) thoughtfully explores the work of everyday people, those who create with their hands the items necessary for all our lives. In a new bilingual translation of a work originally published in 1968, Neruda simply and concisely pays tribute to the concrete gifts of others, lamenting that his own contributions to life are intangible and perhaps not of service to anyone.

Like his *Odes*, which limn the material objects of life, *The Hands of Day* praises the work done by ordinary people. In "Negative Hands" he cries out, "Who am I if I created nothing?" feeling guilty for not contributing tangibly to the well-being of his fellow human being. In "Forgetting," he praises people like blacksmiths, "sturdy people who hand after hand fashioned/ anchors, hammers, nails/ spoons and tongs,/ screws, rails, lances," items that are essential to our existence. In "The Sovereigns" he admits, "Yes, I am guilty/ of what I did not do/ of what I did not sow, did not cut, did not measure."

But when he finally contemplates the certainty of death, he realizes he has made some contribution: "There in the custom-house they will ask me/ how many things I cultivated, carved, composed/ . . . / and I will answer:/ this is what I made, it is this which we made." His poetry is his toil, his unique talent, and in this eloquent collection, he generously shares that gift with the world.

Roberta Gordenstein  
Elms College, Chicopee, Mass.

#### 18-2-0144

Wilson, Ronaldo V. *Narrative of the Life of the Brown Boy and the White Man*. Pittsburgh: Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 2008. 88 pp. ISBN 978-0-8229-6013-3, \$14.00 (pb).

An exquisite series of meditations about love's undertow, Wil-

## Visual And Performing Arts

18-2-0146

Street, Richard Steven. *Everyone Had Cameras: Photography and Farmworkers in California, 1850–2000*. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2008. 736 pp. ISBN 978-0-8166-4967-9, \$34.95 (pb).

A well-researched and comprehensive book, this is the story of the past 150 years of photographers and the photographs they have taken of the California farmworker. No one is better suited for writing this book than Street, the founder, owner, and manager of Streetshots agricultural photography, author of several books on photography and the history of the California farmworker, and one who has been photographing farmworkers since 1975. But Street actually starts his book before photography in 1767, when the missionaries, explorers, and artists painted the first farmworkers. Street then proceeds through time, covering photographers and the farmworker during the 1850s Gold Rush, the 1930s with Dorothea Lange and Otto Hagel during the Great Depression, activism and Cesar Chavez's United Farm Workers of the 1960s, through the 1980s to the new millennium with undocumented farmworkers, their living conditions, and the effects of pesticides on farmworkers, their children, and the environment.

Street writes, and we come to understand, that “so deeply imbedded in the farmworker story are photographers that it cannot be told, studied or understood without paying attention to their still-evolving vision” (11). Over 100 black-and-white photographs are included, as well as notes and an index. Highly recommended.

Melissa Aho  
Univ. of Minnesota

## Biography/Autobiography

18-2-0147

Al-Baz, Rania. *Disfigured: A Saudi Woman's Story of Triumph Over Violence*. Northampton, Mass.: Interlink, 2009. 168 pp. Trans. from Arabic by Catherine Spencer. ISBN 978-2-56656-735-0, \$15.00 (pb).

*Disfigured* reminded me of the biographical film *Erin Brockovich*. In both memoirs, the women endure great struggles and push through tough obstacles to arrive at and live in their truths. They do so by focusing on their strengths rather than pointing fingers, dwelling in resentment, or pursuing revenge.

Rania Al-Baz was a beautiful young Saudi TV news anchor—the first woman to have such a job—when her abusive husband beat her into a coma and left her for dead. She later underwent

son's prose poems speak in the voice of a “murderer and a torturer, a baby and a jerk that would like to/kill insects, fart, and take naps forever.” A “tincture” of humor softens otherwise merciless self-examination. In a dream poem, the “jerk” is the adult caring for a talking baby at the beach. When the baby gets sick, he tries to wash it in the water. When the tide rises too quickly, he can't get to safety. Why is he so inadequate? Perhaps because he failed to be straight: “What would have happened to his small, dreaming/ brown frame of a body if it had not pudged out into the/ impossible desire to be white, small and a girl like Tracy/ Austin?” Or perhaps it's that he fears how much “his mother's love made her willing to absorb what his father/ could not control”? He has a White lover; is that like wearing the “Wilke-Rodriguez black wax cloth peacoat” that his family could never have afforded? Or is his secret rage against his lover's “milk-fed” skin really a life raft against all the ways you can drown when you love unconditionally?

This book is about family, sex (graphically portrayed!), race, and, most importantly, self-hood, asking if “his being whole has to do with his being/ able to exist at the end of pleasure, free, his whole body/ reeling at the tip of his lips.”

Gail Hall Howard  
Norwalk (Conn.) Community College

## Criticism

18-2-0145

Currey, James. *Africa Writes Back: The African Writers Series & the Launch of African Literature*. Athens: Ohio Univ. Press, 2008. 320 pp. Illus. with photos by George Hallett. ISBN 978-0-8214-1842-0, \$55.00 (c); 978-0-8214-1843-7, \$26.95 (pb).

June 2008 denotes the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of Chinua Achebe's seminal work, *Things Fall Apart*. The novel was published by the London imprint, Heinemann Educational Books. This effort laid the foundation, and provided the impetus, for the creation of the African Writers Series, which began in 1962. This series produced over 300 literary works in less than 20 years. *Africa Writes Back* details the struggles and triumphs associated with this publishing endeavor.

The author of this work served as the editorial director at Heinemann from 1967 until 1984. This text provides a narrative detailing the creative conflicts and political obstacles that affected the publisher and numerous writers, such as James Ngugi, Dambudzo Marechera, Dennis Brutus, and Bessie Head. Correspondence from writers and novelists from all regions of Africa are included.

*Africa Strikes Back* is supplemented by an essay that speculates about the future of the imprint and a list of published works of the African Writers Series from 1962 until 2003. Recommended only for graduate students and scholars of African literature.

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

13 operations to reconstruct her face. A month after she agreed to make the pictures of her ravaged face public, the first Saudi research into domestic violence began at King Saud University Riyadh. Rania eventually liberated herself from the traumatic experience as she campaigned against domestic violence.

Readers of *Disfigured* are left with the sense that regardless of whether she is from the western or eastern world, the woman who maintains her faith and focus in the midst of tragedy is the one who not only attains a sense of freedom, but also becomes an inspiration and role model to other women.

Weam Namou  
President, Iraqi Artists Association

#### 18-2-0148

Alvarez, A. A. *Chronicles of a Nomad: Memoirs of an Immigrant*. Athens, Greece: Alvarez Publishing, 2009. 279 pp. ISBN 978-960-930918-9, \$15.00 (pb).

This self-published title represents an auspicious start for a young Venezuelan debutant in fiction. Written in the first person in short diary-style chapters, this interesting novel is based mostly on the author's and other immigrants' experiences during his peregrinations from Caracas, Venezuela, to Denver, Colorado, and Athens, Greece. It is also a three-decade journey of self-discovery focusing on love and marriage, family life, religion, politics, culture, immigration, education, job finding issues, and an unanswered *quo vadis* at the end.

The book's captivating narration, interwoven with numerous quotations from famous people, reflects honesty; keen observations; warm feelings for the underprivileged; dedication to the fight for justice; an awareness of the positive and negative aspects of Venezuela, the United States, and Greece; and the author's fine sense of humor. Even though, in his words, "it is obvious that Hispanics are not exactly the icing of the cake" in America, the author nevertheless confesses his love for "my dear United States" after he left it. This is probably why this book was first published in English, to be followed by a Spanish language text much later. The volume is recommended for teenagers and adults alike, and, of course, as a suitable item for ethnic studies programs.

Vladimir F. Wertsman  
New York Public Library

#### 18-2-0149

Bellil, Samira. *To Hell and Back: The Life of Samira Bellil*. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 2008. 168 pp. Trans. from French by Lucy R. McNair. Introduction by Alec G. Hargreaves. ISBN 978-0-8032-1356-2, \$19.95 (pb).

It is not easy for any woman to report rape, yet for a woman of Arabic origin, it takes even more courage. In reporting this crime, she is publicly announcing her loss of virginity and thus dishonoring herself and her family. In *To Hell and Back*, Bellil's honest

account of the gang rape she endured is both disturbing and admirable.

Bellil was born in Algiers and raised in France by her immigrant parents. She was first beaten and gang-raped when she was 14, and was later raped again. She did not report her rapes until two friends told her that the same gang had sexually assaulted them too. Against the threat of reprisals, Bellil decided to pursue her attackers through the French legal system, earning the rejection of her family and the indifference of her lawyers and the media. In the end, the gang members were sentenced to eight years in prison. As for Bellil, she went through years of therapy, leading her to write this memoir, partly for her own salvation and partly to show other young female gang-rape victims that there is a way out. While her tale inspired national debate, she unfortunately died at age 31 of stomach cancer.

Weam Namou  
President, Iraqi Artists Association

#### 18-2-0150

Gjelten, Tom. *Bacardi and the Long Fight for Cuba: The Biography of a Cause*. New York: Viking, 2008. 414 pp. ISBN 978-0-670-01978-6, \$27.95.

*Bacardi and the Long Fight for Cuba* reminds me of the novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel García Márquez, but with a difference, actually, a lot of differences. The setting is not Colombia, but Cuba. The characters are not inspired by real people but are in fact real people: José Martí, Fidel Castro, Ernest Hemingway, and "Che" Guevara, among others. And the family that is the subject of the book is a very real family: the legendary Bacardis of Cuba.

The Bacardis are the owners of one of the most popular rum in the world, Bacardi Rum. But beyond creating an empire that today is worth over \$5 billion, the Bacardis were and are devoted to Cuba. What this brilliant author realizes is that in order to write about one hundred years of the Bacardi family, he had to write about Cuba—for the Bacardis see themselves as Cubans, even though they are spread all over the Americas and Europe, and as Cuban patriots.

The first Bacardi was Facundo, who in 1862 created the rum and the company. A Spaniard, he hoped that the island and Spain could work through their conflicts peacefully. It was only after his death that his son, Emilio Bacardi, the first president of the company, openly opposed Spain, coordinating the shipment of food and army supplies to the rebels in the mountains and editing a pro-independence newspaper. In the 1890s, Emilio was arrested and sent to a prison island off the Iberian Peninsula. In the meantime, his son Emilito Bacardi fought alongside Cuban general Antonio Maceo and was wounded several times.

At the end of the Spanish-American-Cuban War in 1898, Emilio Bacardi served as mayor of his hometown, Santiago, where, aside from running the company, he wrote several volumes of Cuban history and created the first municipal museum on the island. He worked with the American army that occupied the island. Though distrustful of American interest in Cuba, Emilio be-

came friends with the likes Teddy Roosevelt and General Leonard Wood. His son-in-law, Enrique Schueg, took over the business in 1922 and promoted fair labor practices and benefits for all Bacardi workers. It was Enrique's son-in-law, Pepín Bosch, who became the best-known Bacardi associate in the twentieth century. He not only made Bacardi an international firm but served as the island's minister of finance in the late 1940s, without a salary, and provided funds to a young Fidel Castro in the early 1950s to overthrow dictator Fulgencio Batista. It was Bosch who paid for the burial of most of the young men murdered during Castro's famous attack on the Moncada Garrison in July 1953, the incident that gave birth to Castro's revolutionary movement. It was also Bosch who in 1959 paid the revolutionary government a year of taxes in advance to bring about social and educational reforms on the island and convinced other colleagues to do the same. His loyalty to Castro was crushed when Castro nationalized Bacardi, not because the company was doing anything wrong but because Castro believed there should be no private companies in Cuba. In exile, during the 1960s, Bosch, who felt personally betrayed by Castro, funded numerous anti-Castro activities.

The revolutionary narrative is only one of several narratives that include an extensive history of the firm, how the Bacardis developed their secret method for making light rum (it is still a secret), the mechanizations of Cuba's corrupt political system prior to 1959, and an analysis of the revolutionary government's economic failures, not so much because of the U.S. embargo but because of a leadership that opposed criticism and curtailed creativity. All of this is told in a graceful, poetic language seldom used by historians. Most historians focus on statistics, analysis, and facts. So too does Gjelten, but that information is only part of what makes this history volume a pleasure to read: the people who struggled to build the Cuban republic and the dreamers who made of Bacardi the best known Cuban rum.

Danilo H. Figueredo  
Bloomfield College (N.J.) Library

#### 18-2-0151

Jackson, Troy. *Becoming King: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Making of a National Leader*. Lexington: Univ. Press of Kentucky, 2008. 248 pp. Introduction by Clayborne Carson. ISBN 978-0-8131-2520-6, \$35.00.

Although his birth certificate listed Atlanta as Martin Luther King, Jr.'s place of birth, Jackson insists that the civil rights leader "was born in Montgomery." By this he means that King's identity was forged in the crucible of that city's year-long bus boycott. The lessons King learned in Montgomery refined his ideas and "prepared him for the many battles that awaited him."

*Becoming King* begins by tracing the early influences that molded King's Christian activism. More important is the analysis of Montgomery's African-American community on King's arrival as pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in 1954. Jackson describes a population divided along class lines, with multiple grass-roots leaders and organizations fighting among themselves as well as against segregation. Key among these were the Women's

Political Council headed by Jo Ann Robinson and the NAACP chapter led by E.D. Nixon. Jackson correctly notes that King was not the instigator of the bus boycott; he was drafted as spokesman for a protest already under way. The boycott's eventual success, however, was due in large part to King's ability to articulate its objectives and unify feuding community factions.

Jackson's account of developments in Montgomery following the desegregation of the city bus line in 1956 is a unique contribution. Although King remained president of the Montgomery Improvement Association, his energies were largely directed toward national issues. The ministers who assumed control of the movement lost sight of working class demands. Reprisals by racist Whites took their toll. Rosa Parks could not find work; Jo Ann Robinson was forced to resign her teaching position; E.D. Nixon was embittered by perceived slights.

This short, well-written, and thoroughly researched account of the forces that made King a national leader should be studied by every student of the modern civil rights movement.

Paul T. Murray  
Siena College, Loudonville, N.Y.

#### 18-2-0152

McGrath, Michael O'Neill. *This Little Light: Lessons in Living from Sister Thea Bowman*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2008. 95 pp. Illus. by the author. ISBN 978-1-57075-791-4, \$20.00.

Renowned illustrator and artist McGrath continues his popular Catholic biography series with a profile of Sister Thea Bowman, the granddaughter of slaves and the daughter of educated Methodist parents—her mother, a teacher, her father, a doctor. Born Berthea Bowman in 1937 in Yazoo City, Mississippi, she joined the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration at the age of sixteen. After converting to Catholicism, Sister Thea was the only Black among the nuns, and there was much concern for her safety during their travels in the Deep South. She received her master's degree and Ph.D. in English from Catholic University and proceeded to teach school, lecture, and sing throughout the world, from the small town where she grew up to Europe and Africa. The author states that, "singing and listening to beautiful songs was her primary connection to God and God's children."

McGrath's lavish compilation of art chronicling the life experiences and career of Sr. Thea, which means "of God," vividly describes each vibrant bold image in every chapter. Diagnosed with breast cancer the same year that both of her parents died, Sr. Thea learned to welcome the suffering as a way to minister, and her credo became "I'm gonna live 'til I die." *This Little Light* is an inspiring tribute to a courageous woman with a contagious smile who overcame formidable obstacles. Recommended for religious libraries and/or African-American history collections, including school libraries.

Ida D. McGhee  
Univ. of Rhode Island

**18-2-0153**

Mora, Pat. *House of Houses*. Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press, 2008. 320 pp. ISBN 978-0-8165-2786-0, \$17.95 (pb).

The acclaimed author has revisited her family history, originally published in 1997, and brought back the characters of the Mora and Delgado families.

The book is divided into chapters, each featuring a month from January through December. I found it a nice feature. And, to tug at the heartstrings and to preserve them for future generations, Mora includes several family photographs, a genealogical chart, and an addendum of "Sayings" to keep the memory of these Mexican-American ancestors alive.

Mora employs the technique of magical realism; chapters may begin with a conversation among the living and then slip into a recalled conversation with a family member long deceased. At other times, Mora herself imagines conversations with parents and other family members. The characters laugh and cry, and the reader may also be moved to do so. Filled with family superstitions, observances, and remedies, this memoir packs a lot of history into a small volume about family. It helps fill in the blanks that tell the story of our nation. America is the sum of all of those tired, weary, fearful, and brave souls who came here for a better life. Though the Mora and Delgado families moved back and forth across the border between the United States and Mexico, it is clear that they remembered the best of Mexico as they flourished in their new homeland.

*House of Houses* would be good for a college Latin American literature or American history class; it makes the experience so much more real and personal.

Francine M. Apollo  
Library, SUNY Cobleskill

**18-2-0154**

Randall, Margaret. *To Change the World: My Years in Cuba*. Piscataway, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 2009. 256 pp. ISBN 978-0-8135-4432-8, \$24.95.

The title of this latest book by Randall will resonate with many who came of age in the 1960s. Many young people in that era felt the need to contribute their skills and compassion to the world. Randall, unlike most, actually committed herself and her family (eventually four children) to her ideals by moving first to Mexico and later to Cuba in order to live and work among those with whom she identified.

Throughout *To Change the World*—which is part memoir, part reflection on those early, turbulent years of the Cuban Revolution—the reader will gain an inside view of the social and political lives of the ordinary people. Randall reveals Cuba through the retelling of family experiences with the workplace, education, healthcare, and daily life.

Randall has achieved both popular and critical acclaim for her literary work. Her writings always expose oppression in every form—political, class, gender, and sexual orientation. This book will join Randall's others about Cuba to give the reader a window

into that time period and its issues. *To Change the World* would be a good addition to any high school or college curriculum that covers relations between the United States and Cuba from 1960 to 1980.

Francine M. Apollo  
Library, SUNY Cobleskill

**18-2-0155**

Red Hat, William Wayne, Jr.; Schlesier, Sibylle M., ed. *William Wayne Red Hat, Jr.: Cheyenne Keeper of the Arrows*. Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 2008. 176 pp. ISBN 978-0-8061-3959-3, \$21.95.

In Cheyenne tradition, the position of Arrow Keeper is an important office. Not only is he responsible for the care and security of the sacred Mahoz (Arrow Bundle), but he also plays an important role in tribal ceremonies. In addition, he is a source of traditional wisdom and advice to tribal members. William Wayne Red Hat, Jr. has been the Cheyenne Arrow Keeper since 1993.

Schlesier has brought together a wide-ranging collection of interviews with Red Hat. In these transcriptions, Red Hat recounts his upbringing in a family of important Cheyenne leaders, the traditions passed on to him by his father and grandfather, and his duties as Arrow Keeper. He also tells of his experiences in the Vietnam War where he served two terms and earned a Purple Heart. He includes narratives of Cheyenne history and traditional stories as well as observations about contemporary Cheyenne life and commentary on society at large.

Schlesier contributes a lengthy introduction, outlining Cheyenne history, explaining her own relationship with the Red Hat family, and adding useful commentary on the role of the anthropologist in interaction with native communities. She also adds explanatory notes throughout the narratives.

This title is an engaging conversation with an eminent Native American leader, providing illumination of Cheyenne ways and nuggets of wisdom for all readers, regardless of background. Includes black-and-white photos and a bibliography of works consulted. Recommended.

Andy J. Deering  
Central Wyoming College

**18-2-0156**

Wade-Lewis, Margaret. *Lorenzo Dow Turner: Father of Gullah Studies*. Columbia: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 2007. 368 pp. Introductory note by Lois Turner Williams. Foreword by Irma Aloyce Cunningham. ISBN 978-1-57003-628-6, \$44.95.

There are African language and cultural retentions in the African diaspora culture. Wade-Lewis describes how Lorenzo Dow Turner worked diligently as a scholar, teacher, activist, and researcher to promote the cultures of the African diaspora. She also provides background information about his private life, fam-

ily history, scholarship, and pursuit of funds to support African diaspora scholarship. This biography is presented in 24 chapters with an appendix.

According to Wade-Lewis, Turner meticulously documented similarities between several West African languages and Gullah in order to demonstrate that the Gullah language has African renditions. Turner understood that it was necessary to study African languages in order to construct an adequate analysis of his Gullah data. Turner's research legitimized the study of a nonstandard English spoken by the African diaspora, challenging the assumption that some languages were not worthy of study. Turner's cultural nationalist scholarship shows that he saw himself as having a social responsibility that transcended his academic position.

Unfortunately, Wade-Lewis devotes the first two chapters to describing Turner's ancestors, some of which is based on what she herself admits is speculation.

Aaron P. Ogletree  
Anthropology Review Database

#### 18-2-0157

Yokota, Sakie. *North Korea Kidnapped My Daughter*. New York: Vertical, 2009. 224 pp. Trans. from Japanese by Emi Maruyama and Naomi Otani. ISBN 978-1-934287-44-6, \$16.95 (pb).

If it's true that the worst experience for a parent is to bury a child, then having a child missing might be almost as tragic. This is the story of a mother, author Yokota, whose 13-year-old daughter Megumi disappeared without a trace just blocks from home in 1977.

Understandably, much of the book deals with memories of Megumi, as a baby, with her parents and younger brothers, and when she was beginning to blossom in middle school as an athlete and ballet dancer.

A big section deals with her disappearance. She had left badminton practice after school and walked part of the way home with friends. Then, less than two blocks from her home near the shore of Japan's Inland Sea, police dogs later confirmed that her trail vanished.

The mother's grief leads her to Christianity which offers both hope and solace while she continues to search, checking even the vaguest of hints. Then 20 years later, she hears rumors that Megumi's disappearance could be linked to those of young Japanese couples that occurred at about the same time—and that North Korean agents might be responsible.

Up to this point, it is a gripping tale, but confirmation that Megumi is in North Korea is vague. Some former North Korean agents who defected to South Korea acknowledge the North's program to kidnap Japanese as language instructors and that Megumi was indeed a victim, but there is no official word. More confusing still are the book's photos, presumably released by North Korea, that purport to be Megumi, her husband, and young daughter. The text never mentions these photos or how they came to be released. Also confusing is that the book mentions that some Japanese kidnap victims have been able to contact their families in Japan, but again, no explanations.

While frustrating for readers, we can only imagine how frus-

trating the situation has been for the Yokota family.

Allan Hikida  
Seattle Central Community College

#### 18-2-0158

Zellner, Bob, with Constance Curry. *The Wrong Side of Murder Creek: A White Southerner in the Freedom Movement*. Montgomery, Ala.: New South Books, 2008. 352 pp. Foreword by Julian Bond. ISBN 978-1-58838-222-1, \$27.95.

Zellner grew up in the Klan country of south Alabama. His grandfather was a Klansman; his father belonged to the Klan for a short time; in high school Bob was invited to join a junior version of the Klan. Coming from this background, it seems highly unlikely that Bob would become a prominent civil rights activist, but that's exactly what happened. His minister father rejected his racist upbringing and raised his six children to believe in human brotherhood. In 1961, as a student at Huntingdon College in Montgomery, Bob attended a meeting organized by Martin Luther King, Jr. There he met young activists of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). Within the year he was on the SNCC staff, spreading news of the freedom movement on White college campuses. But Zellner did not limit his activities to the college traveler role. Soon he was on the front lines of the civil rights movement, being arrested and beaten in McComb, Mississippi; Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Albany, Georgia; and Danville, Virginia. Often he was the only White participant in demonstrations where he was singled out and attacked with special venom for being "a traitor to his race."

The most compelling chapters of this autobiography focus on the years between 1961 and 1963 when Zellner and the other young revolutionaries in the SNCC boldly confronted the forces of southern segregation and racism. Reading his personal account of the suffering, joys, victories, and defeats experienced in the southern freedom movement opens a window on this tumultuous era of our recent history.

Paul T. Murray  
Siena College, Loudonville, N.Y.

## History

#### 18-2-0159

Bick, Barbara. *Walking the Precipice: Witness to the Rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan*. New York: Feminist Press, 2009. 152 pp. ISBN 978-1-55861-592-2, \$55.00 (cl); 978-1-55861-586-1, \$14.95 (pb).

Bick, an "older"—to use her own word—researcher and activist,

tells of three visits to Afghanistan in 1990, 2001, and 2003. In doing so, she vividly shows the changes the nation as a whole has gone through, but particularly the dramatic changes the lives of Afghan women have undergone in the last two decades.

Her first visit, for a women's peace conference, was during the chaotic aftermath of Afghanistan's victory over the Soviets for control of the country. Unfortunately, as she describes so well, even though it was able to evict the Soviets, the government was not able to rein in the Mujahidin. During her second trip Al-Qaida assassinated the leader of the Northern Alliance while she was in his compound (and then proceeded to attack New York and Washington, D.C.). And then finally, on her last trip, in 2003, she tells of women working through the traditional Afghan political system to get women's rights worked into the new Afghan constitution.

Her book will be valuable reading for most Westerners who only hear about Afghanistan through the mainstream Western media. Her eyewitness accounts are highly valuable for understanding the Afghan views of this period as well as gaining basic knowledge that was available in other parts of the world, but not in the West.

Elizabeth Redkey  
Siena College, Loudonville, N.Y.

#### 18-2-0160

Díaz del Castillo, Bernal; Carrasco, David, ed. *The History of the Conquest of New Spain by Bernal Díaz del Castillo*. Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 2008. 504 pp. Trans. from Spanish with an introduction by the editor. ISBN 978-0-8263-4287-4, \$27.95 (pb).

How reliable is an eyewitness? Díaz del Castillo was a member of the band of conquistadors with whom Hernán Cortés subdued the Aztec empire. In 1568 Díaz del Castillo recounted those exploits, publishing *The True History of the Conquest of New Spain*. Detailed and triumphal, the work was reissued over the centuries, appearing in several abridged English translations. All versions resonated with the manifest achievement of Spanish, Christian civilization. Unmentioned by Díaz del Castillo, however, was the unbridled greed and rampant plague that decimated 90 percent of the native population in the immediate aftermath of the conquest.

Carrasco, a Mexican historian at Harvard Divinity School, has compiled a more complete, updated English version of the *Conquest*. It is accompanied by eight interpretive essays that focus on economic, political, social, and religious issues, with subjects as varied as the cosmological significance of the ceiba tree, colonial sexuality, and Aztec human sacrifice. Carrasco critiques in detail Díaz del Castillo's manipulation of events and doctrine. He provides both an admirable example of historical revisionism and of historiographic method. How reliable is an eyewitness? How many observers are there to testify to false witness? This book includes maps, black-and-white illustrations, and extensive notes but no bibliography.

Edward A. Riedinger  
Ohio State Univ. Libraries

#### 18-2-0161

Dwyer, Owen, and Alderman, Derek. *Civil Rights Memorials and the Geography of Memory*. Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 2008. 144 pp. Illus. with photos. ISBN 978-1-930066-83-0, \$27.95 (pb).

Spaces around government buildings and in public parks are commonly decorated with statues and other memorials to individuals and past events deemed worthy of commemoration. Most of the time these monuments are taken for granted, but when new names are proposed for addition to the pantheon of American heroes or recent events are offered for public remembrance, we are reminded that the way in which the past is publicly evoked is the outcome of a political process.

Beginning in the 1980s, many American communities have been embroiled in debate over whether to honor the civil rights movement with public memorials and how it should be represented. Geographers Dwyer and Alderman focus on the construction of the "cultural landscape." Their study examines two related issues—naming streets in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr., and creating memorials and museums about the movement. They find that in many communities the assumption "that King's historical legacy is limited to the black community" has resulted in renaming thoroughfares that are confined to African-American neighborhoods. Their analysis of civil rights memorials in Birmingham, Atlanta, Selma, and Memphis reveals the tension between two competing interpretations of history. The "Won Cause" approach represents the movement as "a story of sweeping cultural and political triumph," with an emphasis on heroic individuals and elite-led organizations. The contrasting version "places the struggle for civil rights within a broader and more critical historical context" and emphasizes the contributions of local organizations and everyday people in bringing about social change.

In addition to the authors' informative and provocative essay, this work includes 78 photographs of the places discussed. Anyone interested in how the civil rights movement is remembered will find food for thought in this valuable study.

Paul T. Murray  
Siena College, Loudonville, N.Y.

#### 18-2-0162

English, T.J. *Havana Nocturne: How the Mob Owned Cuba ... and Then Lost It to the Revolution*. New York: HarperCollins, 2008. 396 pp. ISBN 978-0-06-114771-5, \$27.95.

In *Havana Nocturne*, the worlds of *The Ugly American* and *Our Man in Havana* converge. Unlike those novels, however, *Nocturne* chronicles a vanquished Cuban reality of gringo gang brutality compounded, yet chastened, by goon blundering. English, a crime writer, can tell a thrilling tale. Here he has a chilling one.

With the fiftieth anniversary of the Cuban revolution, this work reminds us that the political uprising was also a moral one. U.S. prohibitions against numerous activities and substances increased mob business offshore. In the decades before and after World War II, Lucky Luciano and Meyer Lansky expanded into Cuba, allying with its military boss, Fulgencio Batista. Steamy and laid back, Cuba flourished as a tropical idyll for gambling, drugs, and prostitution. Mob investments and tax-free profits soared during the fifties, and Havana became a worldly venue, luring Ernest Hemingway and Frank Sinatra. This atmosphere of luxury and indulgence was countered by a proletariat revolutionary movement as austere as it was adamant. Against formidable financial and military clout, the guerilla movement led by Fidel Castro vanquished the nightmare of Havana, and unfurled a taunting red banner. Some years earlier, Lansky demurred to police that he didn't "sail under no false colors"—candor hardly compensating for integrity. Black-and-white photographs enhance the tale and the moral of this work.

Edward A. Riedinger  
Ohio State Univ. Libraries

#### 18-2-0163

Gershman, Norman H. *Besa: Muslims Who Saved Jews in World War II*. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse Univ. Press, 2009. 160 pp. Illus. with photos. ISBN 978-0-8156-0934-6, \$39.95.

This volume encompasses a collection of 60 large black-and-white photos with brief narratives focusing on several dozen Albanian Muslims—Sunni and Sh'ia (Bektashi) alike—and their family members who, at the risk of their own lives, saved hundreds of Albanian Jews as well as numerous other European Jews residing in Albania during the Holocaust years, and were recognized as The Righteous Among the Nations by the Yad Vashem Authority in Israel. These Muslims were guided by Besa, an old, traditional code of honor and moral imperative based on the Koran to shelter and protect those who are in need. Consequently, the Jews shared rooms with Muslim families, were fed and dressed in traditional Albanian clothing, were provided with papers as extended family, and were cared for with respect.

The author, who is also a professional photographer, is an American Jew who spent over four years to get in touch and learn the biographies of the persons portrayed in this volume, with the cooperation of leaders of the Israeli-Albanian Friendship Association and the Kosovo-Israeli Friendship Society. In January 2008, the author organized an exhibit of his photos and narratives at the United Nations in New York to serve as an excellent example of Muslims' profound compassion and humanity towards Jews. The book is highly recommended for public, special, and academic libraries.

Vladimir F. Wertsman  
New York Public Library

#### 18-2-0164

Pimpare, Stephen. *A People's History of Poverty in America*. New York: The New Press, 2008. 336 pp. Series: New Press People's History. ISBN 978-1-56584-934-1, \$27.95.

If people are poor, is it their own fault? In a land of such opportunity, after all, how else can we explain it? Pimpare does explain this dilemma by giving voice to poor Americans of the past and present. In doing so, he allows these Americans to be seen as more than statistics or mere snapshots of their lives at a certain point in time, snapshots that have served to isolate and marginalize impoverished persons from other Americans.

According to Pimpare, poor Americans have historically been and still are treated by public and private institutions with contempt. These institutions, as well as many ordinary Americans, erroneously believed that most poor Americans are poor due to their own failings. Therefore, they need to be rehabilitated so they can be made respectable and independent.

Poor Americans see things differently. Many do not see the need to be rehabilitated, but instead see the need to be treated with dignity and given access to jobs with a living wage. This would enable them and their families to become socially and economically independent. Pimpare traces the efforts of poor people to organize in order to improve their living and working conditions. These organizing efforts gave the country labor unions, child labor laws, and the minimum wage, among other reforms.

Pimpare undermines the lie that poor Americans are happy to settle for a handout. These Americans desire and deserve more than the combination of societal contempt and welfare that provides mere subsistence.

Aaron P. Ogletree  
Anthropology Review Database

#### 18-2-0165

Scarpaci, Vincenza. *The Journey of the Italians in America*. Gretna, La.: Pelican Publishing, 2008. 320 pp. Illus. with photos. ISBN 978-1-58980-245-2, \$40.00.

Although the author, an Italian-American immigration history professor, has previously published several other books and scholarly articles on Italian Americans, this title is a welcome illustrative and interpretative addition of about 500 color and black/white photos from private and public collections. In essence, it is a unique cultural photo album focusing on new facets of Italian-American presence (over 15 million recorded in the 2000 U.S. Census) as a substantial part of American history from the late nineteenth century to the present. Topics include the voyage from the land of origin, daily life and work, religion, struggle for citizenship, anti-Italian prejudice, World War II, Columbus Day parades, preservation of popular culture and traditions, cuisine, and new generations versus immigrant ancestors.

A meritorious feature is the author's balanced presentation of historical events. Along with credit given to the millions of "undervalued" Italian Americans and their ordinary lives, "their strength of character and courage to face adversity and uncertainty in a

strange environment,” we find that some of the Italian experience is not heroic or triumphant,” such as “the shadow side of betrayals, domestic abuse, and indecent behaviour which characterized lives of many immigrants.” The author concludes that only “acceptance of the full array of failings as well as successes” enables the group to understand past insights in order to positively “influence the present and plan for the future.” These words could certainly serve as a motto for many other immigrant groups.

Vladimir F. Wertsman  
New York Public Library

#### 18-2-0166

Selig, Diana. *Americans All: The Cultural Gifts Movement*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 2008. 384 pp. ISBN 978-0-674-02829-6, \$49.95.

“Cultural gifts” refers to a movement from the 1920s to 1945 to promote tolerance and respect for ethnic and religious differences, in contrast to the nativism and religious hatred that marked the same time period. Rather than promoting the assimilation of immigrants, the cultural gifts movement accepted a multicultural America, where immigrants contributed their languages and customs to the American identity. Selig provides us with a well-written and sound analysis of a forgotten and little studied aspect of American culture in this era. This is a balanced and perceptive critique of the strengths and weaknesses of cultural gifts in promoting an appreciation and understanding for ethnic and religious diversity in society while recognizing its limitations in dealing with segregation and the inferior status of African Americans.

Selig argues that this liberal vision of ethnic relations grew out of the Progressivism of the pre-war period and the New Deal liberalism of the 1930s and 1940s. Behaviorism, romantic racialism, and the cultural pluralism of Bruno Lasker and Horace Kallen became the intellectual origins of the cultural gifts movement. This led to an emphasis on enlightened parent education popularized by *Parents' Magazine* to persuade parents, primarily mothers, to foster cultural pluralism in their children. Clara Savage Littledale, the long-term editor, became a leading advocate, just as Rachel Davis DuBois, who started the Woodbury plan, emerged as the leader of anti-prejudice education in schools. DuBois also promoted teacher training in anti-prejudice education and cultural pluralism. The creation of the National Conference of Christians and Jews (NCJC) in 1927 fostered sensitivity to religious differences and argued for respect for the three American religions—Protestantism, Catholicism, and Judaism, later advocated by Will Herberg as the triple melting pot in the 1950s. Everett Ross Clincy, long-term secretary of the NCJC, became the chief spokesman for respect for religious differences and opposition to anti-Catholic and anti-Semitic prejudices. Similarly, in the South, the Commission on Interracial Cooperation promoted respect for African-American contributions to arts and science in schools and teacher education in order to lessen racism and increase racial cooperation. While the cultural gifts movement stressed persuasion and education of students, teachers, and parents to counter prejudice and increase respect for diversity, leaders avoided controversy by not advocating legal, economic, and political pressure to end discrimination. Selig views this as the major limitation of the movement.

Harvey J. Strum  
Sage Colleges of Albany

#### 18-2-0167

Smith, Robert Samuel. *Race, Labor, and Civil Rights: Griggs versus Duke Power and the Struggle for Equal Employment Opportunity*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 2008. 240 pp. ISBN 978-0-8071-3363-7, \$37.50.

The landmark legislation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 sought to change the landscape of social, political, and educational constructs in the United States. One of the most important facets of this decision was Title 7, focusing on equal employment law and discrimination that was prevalent at that time. *Griggs v. Duke Power* (1971) was a Supreme Court decision that impacted and changed labor and employment law in the same way that *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) sought to change segregation in public schools. Smith offers a historical and highly detailed account of this struggle, which took place during the second half of the 1960s.

In 1966 a group of 13 Black employees at Duke Power in North Carolina brought a suit against the company to protest and challenge the established rules requiring a high school diploma or the passing of an IQ test in order to earn a transfer or promotion. The groundwork for the case came from the sustained and coordinated efforts of local organizations, in addition to civil rights activists and attorneys. The NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund worked tirelessly, as they did in *Brown*, to gather data and find just the right case in order to mount a challenge to the existing inequalities. Once laws were in place, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) heard Title 7 grievances not only in the South, but nationwide. Prior to this, employment and wage disparities against Black Americans were not part of civil rights movements.

Extensive notes from each chapter and a detailed bibliography supplement the text. Recommended for advanced undergraduates, legal students and scholars, and anyone interested in the relationship between civil rights and labor law during the 1960s.

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

#### 18-2-0168

Stewart, Todd. *Placing Memory: A Photographic Exploration of Japanese American Internment*. Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 2008. 132 pp. Illus. with photos by the author. Essays by Natasha Egan and Karen J. Leong. Afterword by John Tateishi. ISBN 978-0-8061-3951-7, \$34.95.

In his introduction to this coffee-table book, Stewart explains that his landscape photos, absent of people, attempt to convey the internment experience. Taken at each of the 10 relocation centers/concentration camps, the photos document the desolation of the deserts of western states and isolated flat fields of the two Arkan-

sas camps.

Complementing Stewart's large color photos is a selection of black-and-white photos by photographers (including Ansel Adams and Dorothea Lange who also documented the plight of migrant families during the 1930s) hired by the War Relocation Authority (WRA). Including those old photos was a wise decision since the often-posed photos of smiling inmates (they were propaganda photos after all, and many were censored by WRA officials) contrast with the starkness of the modern photos. In addition, essays on documentary photography and the wartime internment add another perspective.

On a personal note, I've visited the Minidoka camp in southern Idaho where my family spent the war years and also the Heart Mountain camp in Wyoming. Stewart's photos capture the feeling—barrenness and isolation—of those places.

This book will be of special interest to former inmates or those curious about the wartime incarceration as well as those interested in the power of documentary photography.

Allan Hikida  
Seattle Central Community College

## Religion

### 18-2-0169

Ateek, Naim Stifan. *A Palestinian Christian Cry for Reconciliation*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2008. 224 pp. ISBN 978-1-57075-784-6, \$24.00 (pb).

*A Palestinian Christian Cry for Reconciliation* is a strongly held and well-argued Palestinian view of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. The author makes no attempt at balance or objectivity in bringing his theological perspective to bear on the contemporary problem of the Holy Land. In fact his style is reminiscent of the English Protestant and Catholic polemical tracts of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Nonetheless, Ateek offers many observations which should make both Americans and Israelis pause and ponder. Among these are descriptions of the influence of the Israeli lobby in Washington, D.C., and the American media; the Christian Zionists' misreading of Old and New Testament texts; and a portrait of the Prophet Jonah as the first Palestinian Liberation theologian. Later chapters in the book trace the development of Christian Zionism, and contrast the political and religious groups that existed in Christ's time with contemporary factions in Palestine.

Ateek also draws parallels between Palestinian suicide bombers and the Old Testament figure of Samson, and he contrasts the militancy of Judah Maccabeus with Daniel's pacifism and his trust in God. His real theme throughout the book is a call for *Sabeel*, a theological and nonviolent approach to the settlement of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. The book's appendix includes several black-and-white maps of Palestinian and Israeli lands. The work includes extensive notes and an index. Recommended for

academic libraries.

William J. Kanalley  
Siena College Library, Loudonville, N.Y.

### 18-2-0170

Nothwehr, Dawn M. *That They May Be One: Catholic Social Teaching on Racism, Tribalism, and Xenophobia*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2008. 250 pp. ISBN 978-1-57075-793-8, \$35.00 (pb).

Nothwehr has written an impressive text which brings together the history of the Roman Catholic Church's teachings on slavery, racism, tribalism, and the ethical treatment of the "other." The author is professor of ethics at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago and chair of this major seminary's historical and doctrinal studies department.

Part one of the book presents Nothwehr's research on the nature of racism and slavery as it has existed in Christian history and today. She offers insights from the great philosophers and ethicists on these matters, including Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Bonaventure, Duns Scotus, de las Casas, Voltaire, and Montesquieu. She traces the checkered history of papal teaching on slavery from the first century through the Middle Ages and into the age of discovery, colonialism, and modern times. The reader is reminded of the development of slavery in Greek society and Roman law and the influence of this ancient world practice on the early and medieval Christian periods. Part two of the book consists of a collection of papal and conciliar documents (full and partial texts) from around the world. These Church documents on racism, tribalism and xenophobia are from the modern and contemporary eras (1937–2007). Each source is introduced, and most include information about obtaining the whole document. The book includes extensive notes, a selected bibliography and is well indexed. Highly recommended for academic libraries and religious studies courses on racism and related issues.

William J. Kanalley  
Siena College Library, Loudonville, N.Y.

### 18-2-0171

Rosen, Steven J., ed. *Ultimate Journey: Death and Dying in the World's Major Religions*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood/Praeger, 2008. 200 pp. ISBN 978-0-313-35608-7, \$44.95.

*Ultimate Journey* presents perspectives on death and dying in the world's five major religious traditions—Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism. The book includes a substantial chapter on each tradition's theology and practices related to death, dying, and the afterlife. The essays are written by experts on death and dying in each religion. The authors provide traditional points of view, religious dogma, and insights from mystics on death and the afterlife. The trend in Western culture toward aversion to anything dealing with death is very apparent in the editor's brief introduction and in the essays on Judaism by Rabbi Seltzer and Christian teachings by Fr. Tiso. The latter essay even

describes alarming trends in the United States and Europe which seem to trivialize funeral rights and unintentionally disrespect the deceased person. Later essays indicate that Eastern religious traditions and Islam have maintained into the modern era an honest acknowledgement of the role of dying, death, and afterlife in the human person and the community.

Unfortunately the book's length and organization does not allow for a more detailed accounting and description of teachings and practices on death and afterlife in the important subtraditions of these major religions. A concluding essay by David Carter, a hospice chaplain, describes his work with the dying and their families. He provides several stories from his experience which show that the right spiritual interventions can help a patient achieve a death with peace, dignity, and grace. Highly recommended for public and academic libraries and as a resource for the comparative study of religions.

William J. Kanalley  
Siena College Library, Loudonville, N.Y.

## Education

### 18-2-0172

Leader, Gerald C., with Amy F. Stern. *Real Leaders, Real Schools: Stories of Success Against Enormous Odds*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Education Press, 2008. 256 pp. ISBN 978-1-891792-97-7, \$54.95 (cl); 978-1-891792-96-0, \$26.95 (pb).

This book portrays five educational leaders with a burning commitment to their students. Assigned to academically underperforming schools in Boston, they worked with their staffs to turn these schools into places where children were put on the path to educational success.

One reads of the usual line of hurdles: low test scores; poor attitude on the part of many staff members; abysmal socioeconomic conditions; racial and cultural differences; and an attitude, on the part of the many, that not all students are capable of learning. All five principals looked at the data and recognized that pockets of their student populations were not receiving educational attention. In the days before No Child Left Behind (NCLB), these five school leaders believed that if they could get their staffs to buy into the important work of educating all of the children in their buildings on an equal basis; get these students' families involved in their school lives; and get their staffs to act as a team, success was possible. They believed in "closing the achievement gap" long before these became the buzzwords of educational reform.

These stories are rich with the ups, downs, and growing pains of how these five highly successful school leaders were able to achieve various levels of success at very different schools. It is also interesting to note that after some of the principals departed their schools and moved on to other assignments, the gains did not hold. Even though there aren't uniformly happy endings, these stories should inspire all to say, "If these guys can do it, so can I!" This book is

recommended for superintendents, principals, teachers, and professors in schools of education.

Henry C. Griffith, Sr.  
Powell, Ohio

## Health And Medicine

### 18-2-0173

Chabram-Dernersesian, Angie, and de la Torre, Adela, eds. *Speaking from the Body: Latinas on Health and Culture*. Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press, 2008. 264 pp. ISBN 978-0-8165-2664-2, \$24.95 (pb).

This unusual title is an enlightening and interesting collection of stories about Latinas with various illnesses and the ways in which their culture influences how they handle their illnesses. This work also points out many of the difficulties that Latinas face with the health care system. For example, when a pregnant Latina woman discovers she has gestational diabetes, her health care workers are not concerned, because diabetes "is common among Latinas." Had this woman not persisted in seeing a doctor for her diabetes, she could have endangered her own life and the life of her unborn child.

Family plays a critical role in the care and well-being of Latinas. When someone is ill, the entire family takes an active role in helping that person to heal and to cope with whatever the illness might be. Elders are also highly respected when it comes to health in the Latino community.

This is an easy book to read and would be a good choice for anyone—not just health care providers—who would like to know about Latina health care issues and Latino culture.

Charlie Spencer Lackey  
Duke Univ. Medical Center Library

### 18-2-0174

Schwarz, Maureen Trudelle. *"I Choose Life": Contemporary Medical and Religious Practices in the Navajo World*. Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 2009. 384 pp. ISBN 978-0-8061-3941-8, \$50.00 (cl); 978-0-8061-3961-6, \$24.95 (pb).

The purpose of this book and its intended audience are unclear to me. The strongest hint comes in the last sentence of the text: "Because they offer insight into the nuanced negotiations of religious and medical pluralism within families and between spouses, these findings offer insight for others conducting research on religious and medical pluralism, as well as for allopathic providers working with indigenous populations across the globe." The latter group: unlikely; the material is too undigested and the approach too chaotic. The first group, other researchers, coincides with my

own guess, but this seems a small possible audience.

The book is a summary and partial transcript of the author's research, including long segments from many interviews with Navajo who have had medical treatment, especially surgery involving "substances" from non-Navajo. Like other parts of the book, these are difficult reading, because they are made up of disconnected partial sentences in the interviewees' words. In areas where the author sought background material from experts to further her own understanding of Navajo history or beliefs, she provides long passages passing all this on to her readers.

Some of the history and many of the individual stories are interesting in themselves, but the unrelenting flow creates tortuous reading. There is one curious omission: references to the growing and extensive literature on relationships between Native American and Western medicine in tribal areas.

Carol B. Gartner  
Purdue Univ.—Calumet

## Social And Political Sciences

18-2-0175

Bergmann, Luke. *Getting Ghost: Two Young Lives and the Struggle for the Soul of an American City*. New York: The New Press, 2009. 304 pp. ISBN 978-1-59558-139-6, \$27.95.

Drug dealing, social inequality, and incarceration have become part of the everyday reality for some African-American youths in Detroit. Bergmann argues that the drug trade determines the meaning of their lives, deaths, and environments. This argument is presented in eleven chapters divided into four parts.

Bergmann uses the lives of Dude, Rodney, and others involved in Detroit's drug trade to describe how they seek control over their economic and cultural destinies as they attempt to forge their identities. The drug trade is a venue in which these dealers attempt to overcome racial hostilities, cultural differences, and economic exclusion. The dealers employ violence and prey on the weaknesses of addicts in an attempt to overcome these barriers to their social advancement. In most cases, their pursuit of better lives is ended or undermined by death or incarceration.

Bergmann writes that these drug dealers live on the margins of society, which is true, but his statement that they are invisible is not true. His belief that these drug dealers are invisible says something about the audience for this book, because these drug dealers are not invisible to their families, their neighbors, the prison industrial complex, other dealers, and drug addicts as well as the addicts' families and friends.

Aaron P. Ogletree  
Anthropology Review Database

18-2-0176

Bynoe, Yvonne, ed. *Who's Your Mama? The Unsung Voices of*

*Women and Mothers*. Berkeley, Calif.: Counterpoint/Soft Skull, 2009. 256 pp. ISBN 978-1-59376-239-1, \$15.95 (pb).

Bynoe offers a wonderful collection of stories of real women from diverse backgrounds discussing their feelings toward motherhood. Women with different concerns regarding motherhood share their most intimate thoughts on topics that many women face every day. Some of the stories shared include: not having children by choice and dealing with the way people treat you, making a personal decision to terminate an unwanted pregnancy, learning to love someone else's child when you are unable to have children of your own, and race and children. These are but a few of the topics covered.

Motherhood is an important issue, critical to the individual's life and to the perpetuation of society. It is not something that most women take lightly. As detailed in this book, motherhood has a profound impact on all aspects of a woman's life, and the book covers a myriad of these dimensions. The book is recommended for both female and male readers. Young women from the early teens onward will want to read the stories, as they provide food for thought on questions they might have now and in the future.

Charlie Spencer Lackey  
Duke Univ. Medical Center Library

18-2-0177

Cervantes-Rodríguez, Margarita; Grosfoguel, Ramón; and Mielants, Eric, eds. *Caribbean Migration to Western Europe and the United States: Essays on Incorporation, Identity, and Citizenship*. Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 2009. 280 pp. ISBN 978-1-59213-954-5, \$59.50.

*Caribbean Migration to Western Europe and the United States* consists of a series of essays featuring a diverse group of scholars who examine the experiences of migrants from the Caribbean to the Netherlands, Spain, France, the United Kingdom, and the United States and explore the transnational paths of such migrations. Through case studies, the authors show the impact that migrants can have on the country of their choice, as it pertains to the demography, politics, and culture of the host country. The concept of long-distance nationalism is also introduced.

The authors show how contrasting discourses on democracy, racism, xenophobia, and globalization shape citizenship and ethnic identity in the transnational processes and are careful to note that these concepts are not always manifested in the same forms throughout the contemporary world economy. Some essays address the linkages between country of origin and the metropolises as they relate to economic, cultural, and political processes.

This volume is thorough and comprehensive in its treatise of the French, Dutch, and Latino Caribbean migrants; however, migrants from the English-speaking Caribbean Islands such as Jamaica, Barbados, and Trinidad are not as thoroughly presented. Nevertheless, it is a valuable resource for students in the social sciences, sociology, and Caribbean studies.

Diana Budhai  
Excelsior College, Albany, N.Y.

**18-2-0178**

Gibler, John. *Mexico Unconquered: Chronicles of Power and Revolt*. San Francisco: City Lights, 2009. 338 pp. ISBN 978-0-87286-493-1, \$16.95 (pb).

Gibler is a social activist and journalist based in Mexico. In this his first book-length work of reportage, he concentrates on the violence of the country's stratospherically powerful against its centrifugally marginalized. The chapters comprise a portfolio of observations and encounters made in travels from the Rio Grande to the Yucatan. The reader confronts the terrorism of the law and the outlaw, and the myths and misery that reverberate through gaping canyons of income.

The essays read with the immediacy of dispatches from a war zone. Their message, however, is not that war is brutal but that brutality itself is the war—and it is without truce or treaty. The oppressors may be narcotrafficking military officials or manipulating NAFTA economists. The oppressed are anonymous and in the millions. The author has taken on the role of telling their tales, expressing their voices. He recalls the narratives of indigenous resistance leaders, of survivors of crossfire in drug wars, of violence against women, and of traffickers in migrant workers.

Preservation of these narratives is crucial to sustaining the *leit-motif* of Mexican history: resistance to conquest. As an imprisoned guerilla leader states, it is not that we must “take power” but that we must “build power from below, and starting now.”

Edward A. Riedinger  
Ohio State Univ. Libraries

**18-2-0179**

Gracia, Jorge. *Latinos in America*. New York: Wiley/Blackwell, 2008. 272 pp. ISBN 978-0-405-17659-0, \$79.95 (cl); 978-0-405-17658-3, \$29.95 (pb).

One of the most challenging books written on the usage of the nomenclature Latino/Hispanic, this fascinating volume offers no answers but rather a philosophical discussion that will encourage further probes into the topic. Gracia is a philosopher; his approach therefore is within a philosophical framework. His questions are legion.

Gracia reminds the readers that an individual must have an identity—that much is easy to grasp. But then he explores how identities emerge: a psychological process, social development, historical circumstances, and cultural phenomena. When all of these factors are combined in shaping an identity, questions evolve: Is a Latino/Latina a Latino/Latina because of a designation that has been applied to him/her or because of cultural and historic events that have made him/her so? Does a Hispanic assign him/herself a different view of life from a person who self-identifies as a Latino?

Gracia offers no answers. He does elaborate on the linguistic origin of the terms: Hispanic with Hispania, España, Spain; Latino with the Latin language and Latin America. The suggestion is that a Hispanic identifies with Spain and Europe and a Latino with Latin America. But then Gracia throws a wrench into the

process: he comments on Spaniards' definition of the terms, on Latin Americans'—those who live in Latin America—views of Latinos/Hispanics in the United States, and Anglos' perceptions of the physical appearances of persons from Latin America versus persons from Spain. Then, Gracia wants to know: Is an Ecuadorian who lives in the United States an Ecuadorian first and then a Latino or vice versa? Can he/she be both? Does it really matter? It does matter and Gracia affirms so. How he tells the reader is a challenging journey undertaken by this scholar-philosopher.

Latinos in America is not an easy exercise. But it is compelling.

Danilo H. Figueredo  
Bloomfield College (N.J.) Library

**18-2-0180**

Hazbun, Waleed. *Beaches, Ruins, Resorts: The Politics of Tourism in the Arab World*. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2008. 368 pp. ISBN 978-0-8166-5492-5, \$25.00 (pb).

Hazbun writes an eye-opening book about the growing strength and importance of the tourism industry in the Middle East today. Instead of contracting post 9/11, the industry has instead expanded dramatically in both size and significance.

Hazbun argues that tourism is one route that Middle Eastern governments have taken not only to boost domestic economies, but also to become established members of the global economy. These governments have also used tourism as a tool of state building, and, he argues, tourism has played a tremendous role in international relations, particularly in the peace negotiations between Israel and Jordan and in building close ties between Europe and both Tunisia and Dubai. Tourism is a critical, but virtually unexamined, element of the Middle Eastern picture.

This book will prove useful for courses in political science, Middle East studies, and many other fields, as well as for the general reader wanting to know more about the region than they will likely find in the mainstream media. Hazbun's writing is articulate and detailed, but still accessible for non-specialists.

Elizabeth Redkey  
Siena College, Loudonville, N.Y.

**18-2-0181**

Kingstone, Peter R., and Power, Timothy J., eds. *Democratic Brazil Revisited*. Pittsburgh: Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 2008. 360 pp. ISBN 978-0-8229-4354-9, \$65.00 (cl); 978-0-8229-6004-1, \$26.95 (pb).

Since 1994, a democratically elected civilian president has peacefully passed his office to a successor in accord with constitutional norms. Such normalcy is unprecedented in Brazilian history. This book examines the causes and prospects for this anomaly and follows up the editors' 2000 assessment, *Democratic Brazil: Actors, Institutions, and Processes*.

The contributors are veteran Brazilianists, focusing in 12 articles on party, institutional, and policy changes. The transition has been two-phased. A center-right Social Democratic government in the 1990s stabilized the currency with cautious fiscal policy, finessing neo-liberal globalization. A center-left Workers government during this decade has sustained fiscal restraints, enabled in this regard by Brazil becoming a commodities cornucopia for globalized markets. The ultimate assessment of Brazilian democracy will be made only as a centuries-old slavocracy achieves stakeholder status for a majority of its population. The sustaining cycle of Brazilian history, of change and no change, perseveres. Although there is greater income distribution, a wide income gap continues. More participants have entered the franchise, yet elite cores still control the many. Nevertheless, overall material improvements and constitutional guarantees are so markedly improved over previous decades that perennial Brazilian optimism is heartily buoyed to the future. Moreover, a generation of political stability now nurtures historical prospects. A detailed bibliography, extensive tables, and list of acronyms support the text.

Edward A. Riedinger  
Ohio State Univ. Libraries

#### 18-2-0182

Leech, Garry. *Beyond Bogotá: Diary of a Drug War Journalist in Colombia*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2009. 272 pp. ISBN 978-0-8070-6145-9, \$25.95.

International drug dealers, revolutionary guerrillas, kidnapped journalists—all sound familiar but are presented here in a first-hand account by an American writer not unsympathetic to the leftist rebels of South America. Leech, an ex-U.S. Marine, went into the dangerous jungles of Colombia to report on a continuing saga unknown to most Americans.

His account includes a lot of personal narrative but is hardly a diary. The framework is his dramatic ordeal as a captive of FARC guerrillas, yet much of the book actually recounts his wider experience in Latin America and his increasing skepticism towards U.S. involvement. Many readers would have appreciated photographs and more maps to situate the terrain and major players. The lack of an index or bibliography tempers the book's possible use for classrooms and research projects, but the text provides a useful balance to most news reports available in English.

Patrick M. Valentine  
East Carolina Univ.

#### 18-2-0183

Lucero, Jose Antonio. *Struggles of Voice: The Politics of Indigenous Representation in the Andes*. Pittsburgh: Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 2008. 360 pp. ISBN 978-0-8229-4352-5, \$65.00 (cl); 978-0-8229-5998-4, \$23.95 (pb).

The author of this work is an international studies scholar at the University of Washington, Seattle. In this book, he examines the determinants for political effectiveness in organizational projects by indigenous groups in Ecuador and Bolivia. Indigenous actors achieve political representation by establishing identities that justify a participatory voice in democratic debate. In recent decades, indigenous movements in Ecuador have achieved successful organization but not obtained political power. On the other hand, Bolivia has witnessed fragmented indigenous organization; nonetheless, an Aymara-Quechua alliance there has succeeded in achieving the presidency for its leader, Evo Morales. Numerous factors must be considered in assessing the relative effectiveness of these movements. Among them are the size of the indigenous population relative to the national whole and the extent to which the debate about indigenous organizational identity dominates national and/or regional political dialogues.

The focus of this book is contemporary indigenous political developments; however, it views these through an historical prism, tracing Native community organization and representation back to the mid-nineteenth century. It frames these developments relative to issues of neo-liberal, multicultural globalization. A work of academic scholarship, it employs a social science prose style of layered theory and hypotheses. The book includes maps, a list of acronyms, charts and statistical tables, and a bibliography.

Edward A. Riedinger  
Ohio State Univ. Libraries

#### 18-2-0184

Perry, Barbara. *Silent Victims: Hate Crimes Against Native Americans*. Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press, 2008. 176 pp. ISBN 978-0-8165-2596-6, \$29.95 (pb).

Perry, Professor of Criminology, Justice, and Polity Studies at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, explores the history of hate crimes against Native Americans in this groundbreaking work. Moving beyond a simple definition of hate crime, Perry examines the cumulative effect of the history of violence toward Native Americans.

Research for this work includes numerous texts and interviews with close to 300 Native Americans. Drawing from these sources Perry constructs an engaging narrative. Critical to Perry's message throughout the book is the impact that historical relations between Native Americans and government officials had. Throughout the book several types of hate crimes are examined in depth. For example, Perry examines the unique impact of sexual violence directed toward Native Americans.

The book concludes with suggested strategies for Native Americans to empower themselves. Overall, this thoroughly researched work, including a bibliography and index, reveals the history of hate crimes towards Native Americans in a new light. Recom-

mended for public and research libraries.

Kristin Whitehair  
Univ. of Kansas Medical Center Library

## Reference

18-2-0185

Anderson, Jeffrey E. *Hoodoo, Voodoo, and Conjure: A Handbook*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2008. 200 pp. Series: Greenwood Folklore Handbooks. ISBN 978-0-313-34221-9, \$55.00.

This is a good reference book for learning about the practice of these three nontraditional healing, helping, and harming techniques. The author also provides some background on the herbs that are used for medicinal purposes in these practices, many of which can be traced back to Africa.

The work provides an in-depth look at the practices. It can serve as somewhat of a how-to guide for anyone interested in becoming involved with them. The pros and cons—assets and dangers—of the practices are also covered.

Anderson describes how and when to use the practices and where to find the materials needed for hoodoo, voodoo, and conjure. The book serves as a teaching tool that explains which herbs or portions to use for various needs. The index is helpful in locating information on a particular topic, while the glossary provides readers with the correct terminology. This volume is recommended for religious or medical collections focusing on nontraditional spiritual practices. Its accessible style makes it a good source for interested general adult readers as well.

Charlie Spencer Lackey  
Duke Univ. Medical Center Library

18-2-0186

Boyd, Todd, ed. *African Americans in Popular Culture*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2008. 3 vols., 836 pp. ISBN 978-0-275-98922-4, \$300.00.

The 32 scholarly essays in this new collection range widely over the terrain of African-American popular culture to include theatre, film, television, music, popular art, and sports. The individual topics are well-chosen and occasionally pleasantly surprising, featuring considerations of superheroes, hip-hop moguls, and sports television, and each topic is covered by either an academic specialist in the field or (as in the case of some of the sports essays) a non-academic expert.

Some topics could have received more attention, considering the price of the set; there is far too little on the development of Black Entertainment Television (BET) or the CW Network, for example, and nothing at all on African Americans in classical music. The set is divided into three subject volumes, separating

sports from music and film/TV. However, potential purchasers must understand that rather than a reference work, *AAPC* is instead an excellent collection of general writings on popular culture that might nonetheless be too advanced for high school and public library audiences. Highly recommended for all academic library collections.

Anthony J. Adam  
Prairie View A & M Univ.

18-2-0187

Calarco, Tom. *People of the Underground Railroad: A Biographical Dictionary*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2008. 408 pp. ISBN 978-1-313-33924-0, \$75.00.

Yellin, Jean Fagan, ed. *The Harriet Jacobs Family Papers*. Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2008. 2 vols., 1,056 pp. ISBN 978-0-8078-3131-1, \$125.00.

Yellin and Calarco have brought to the general reading public, researchers, and students and teachers at both the high school and college levels a trove of primary and annotated sources on southern slavery and the clandestine means used by the enslaved to escape their bondage, the Underground Railroad. Both books are reader-friendly, in that they are so well designed in terms of layout, and written in such an engaging fashion that professional and lay reader are equally at ease in their use. So what accounts for that equanimity?

*The Harriet Jacobs Family Papers* allows the reader, through the documentation compiled by the editor, access to some of the more personal eyewitness accounts of slavery, the freedmen, and military and missionary efforts to uplift the lives of those recently freed from slavery during the Civil War. One could argue that this trove of documents, reinforced with an elaborate web of annotation, is the larger picture out of which Harriet Jacobs's revealing book, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, grew. It is not only Harriet Jacobs's voice the reader encounters in the documents but that of her brother John, her daughter Louisa, other abolitionists/missionaries—as she, John, and Louisa were in the service of various benevolent societies like the Friends—plus the voices of the recently liberated enslaved.

In the words of the editor, three points can be made with respect to the historical importance of the papers. For one, “the *Papers* provides a singular guide to Jacobs's life as a free woman” (xxx). Secondly, the papers compiled in the two volumes “offer new perspectives on nineteenth-century struggles against slavery, racism, and sexism” (xxix). Finally, and similar to earlier compilations like the *Black Abolitionist Papers*, *The Harriet Jacobs Family Papers* “intends not simply to present documents but also to help excavate the larger social matrix within which [Harriet, John, Louisa] and others acted on their reform struggles” (xxxiii).

Calarco's source book is an added variable to that “excavat[ion of] the larger social matrix.” As a biographical dictionary, *People of the Underground Railroad* dissipates much of the Railroad's secret nature by identifying not only the Freedom Seekers but those who sought to assist them, like the conductor, stationmaster, rescuer

of slaves, abolitionist, and more. The book's layout enhances its reader-friendly touch as well as its importance as a resource guide. Entries are alphabetized, listed by state or country as well as by profession. There are interesting sidebars, an Underground Railroad timeline, and a well-drawn map depicting the extent/existence of the routes of the Freedom Train. The biographical entries, many accompanied with sharp images of the individual listed, are captivatingly well written.

Given the enormity of the work, the author does include, at the back of the book, short captions of others who contributed to the book's successful completion. Yet one is left wondering, given that the author sought to ensure equitable presentation by race and gender (61 White and 39 Black individuals), why, there among the entries, one for Harriet Jacobs was not included.

Both source guides are suitable for students at the high school and college levels as well as the general reading public.

A.J. Williams-Myers  
SUNY, College at New Paltz

#### 18-2-0188

Cisneros, Henry, ed. *Latinos and the Nation's Future*. Houston: Arte Público Press, 2009. 272 pp. ISBN 978-1-55885-542-7, \$29.95.

Overmyer-Velázquez, Mark. *Latino America: A State-by-State Encyclopedia*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2008. 2 vols., 1,000 pp. ISBN 978-0-313-34116-8, \$175.00.

*Latino America* provides readers with an introduction to the history, accomplishments, and problems of Hispanic Americans in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The encyclopedia utilizes an interdisciplinary approach, which makes it a good source for a wide audience. Each entry is standardized with a historical chronology of the Latino experience, followed by a brief historical and analytical narrative, a list of notable Latinos for that state, and a separate section on cultural contributions. Each state entry is accompanied by notes and a bibliography. These volumes will serve as an indispensable resource for scholars determining where and when to begin their studies, and for those seeking to study Latinos at the state or local level.

Cisneros's work is a collection of 16 articles assessing the future of Latinos in the United States. For the most part the authors are optimistic about the future despite the intense ethnic cleansing program initiated by right-wing political groups. Sergio Bata urges Hispanic Americans to adopt strategies successfully employed by other ethnic groups to achieve their goals. He examines these efforts and notes the animus other groups have endured, including charges of disloyalty. He observes that the only group whose loyalty has not been questioned is the Anglo-Saxon. Bata recognizes that Latinos face many powerful enemies and urges them to proceed with caution. In contrast is Lionel Sosa's work, which is excessively optimistic and anecdotal. He predicts a Latino president by 2016, to be followed by a Latina chief executive. Sosa unconvincingly argues that despite the GOP-inspired attacks, Hispanics will eventually endorse the Republican Party, in which

he claims membership. A more realistic assessment of the future comes from Leobardo Estrada who argues that though the population growth of Latinos will promote their influence, many serious social problems will continue to affect their community. All of the writers recognize obstacles in the path of Latinos, but they all agree that failure is not an option.

Salvador Rivera  
SUNY Cobleskill

#### 18-2-0189

Warner, Judith Ann, ed. *Battleground Immigration*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2009. 2 vols., 1,032 pp. ISBN 978-0-313-34413-8, \$175.00.

This is a well-researched and timely reference work by a group of 40 mostly university professors and other specialists, encompassing 100 essays on controversial topics in our society today. Subjects range from asylum and human rights, bilingualism, border patrol, crime and youth gangs, hate crimes, diversity, detention centers, and ethnic identity to human trafficking, legalization programs, media representation, public health, rights of undocumented refugees, and taxation, as well as temporary workers, the USA Patriot Act, vigilante groups, and welfare costs, to list just a few. Each essay presents background information, pro and con arguments, conclusions, and an ample bibliography.

According to the introduction, the selection of topics "reflects the topical controversies, issues, problems and proposed solutions that the press is talking about in the media and on the Internet" with hopes that by comparing and contrasting viewpoints and options, researchers will find "ideas about solutions that are better than ideas proposed in the past." A useful general bibliography for the entire set, a general index, and short bio-sketches of the contributors are included in the second volume. The editor, a professor of sociology and criminal justice at Texas A & M University, has the merit of writing the introduction and also being a contributor (as the author or coauthor) to 40 essays included in the set. The book is recommended for academic, public, and special libraries with social science and law collections, providing their budgets can accommodate the price.

Vladimir F. Wertsman  
New York Public Library

## Juvenile

### Primary (Gr. P-3)

#### 18-2-0190

Alarcón, Francisco X. *Animal Poems of the Iguazú/Animalario del*

**Iguazú.** San Francisco: Children's Book Press, 2008. 32 pp. Illus. by Maya Christina Gonzalez. Bilingual (English-Spanish) ed. ISBN 978-0-89239-225-4, \$16.95.

Alarcón, author of the acclaimed series of bilingual seasonal poems, uses his visit to the Iguazú Waterfalls as inspiration for this collection. Poems depict the variety of animals that inhabit the rainforest in this region at the junction of Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay. We read of Toucan ("for a beak / I have two / papaya slices"), Parrot, Hummingbird, Martin Pescador (also known as the kingfisher), Lizard, Jaguar, Monkey, Turtle, and others. Poems also describe the earth, the sky, and the falls, and honor the indigenous Guaraní of the region. A final poem, "Same Green Fate," urges the preservation of the rainforest: "let's listen to / the green voice / of the rainforest ... *protect all of us / for the Earth's fate / for your own sake...*"

Gonzalez's mixed-media illustrations give life and personality to the creatures of the Iguazú. A few of the poems seem hastily written, superficial, or, in the case of those taking the point of view of animals observing humans, preachy. However, because Alarcón has created the poems in both Spanish and English, readers fluent in both languages will notice that these aren't literal translations but rather take advantage of the unique sounds and rhythms of each language. In all, this is a lively and colorful book that will hold the interest of young children and also makes a good choice for second language learners at the elementary and middle school level.

Lyn Miller-Lachmann

#### 18-2-0191

Argueta, Jorge. *Sopa de frijoles/Bean Soup: Un poema para cocinar/A Cooking Poem.* Toronto: Groundwood, 2009. 32 pp. Illus. by Rafael Yockteng. Bilingual (Spanish-English) ed. ISBN 978-0-88899-881-1, \$18.95.

*Sopa de frijoles/Bean Soup* is a skillfully written and creatively constructed poem about the beauty of cooking. The story centers on an important family ritual that often goes forgotten amidst modern society's hectic pace—a home-cooked family meal. In Argueta's story, what would normally be the ordinary menial task of cooking bean soup is turned into a magical adventure of carefully selecting and admiring the flavorful beauty of each and every ingredient and step to the recipe.

The intertwining of the Spanish original with fluid English translation and modern illustration makes the story into a truly pleasurable adventure for young readers and adults alike. The two languages elegantly weave together all parts of the cooking process, demonstrating to readers the simple beauty of cooking as a way to appreciate and reap nature's nutritional abundance. Argueta and Yockteng have skillfully and successfully transformed the process of cooking bean soup into a unique and exciting experience.

Hannah Kuhar  
The Albany Academies

#### 18-2-0192

Hughes, Langston. *My People.* New York: Simon & Schuster/Atheneum, 2009. 32 pp. Illus. with photos by Charles R. Smith, Jr. ISBN 978-1-4169-3540-7, \$17.95.

Hughes, Langston. *The Negro Speaks of Rivers.* New York: Disney/Jump at the Sun, 2009. 32 pp. Illus. by E.B. Lewis. ISBN 978-0-7868-1867-9, \$16.99.

Illustrator Lewis and photographer Smith breathe new life into two of Langston Hughes's timeless poems, *The Negro Speaks of Rivers* and *My People*, respectively. Their artistry introduces a new generation of Americans, African Americans in particular, to his eloquence and historic significance as a part of the Harlem Renaissance and the African-American community of the mid-twentieth century. *The Negro Speaks of Rivers*, published in 1926, uses rivers as a metaphor to trace the history of African Americans from their lands of origin along the Euphrates, the Congo, and the Nile, and then across the ocean to the Mississippi River within the United States, while bringing to light the struggles and triumphs of generations of his people. Lewis's illustrations are stunningly creative, using vivid watercolors like iridescent blues for the waters of the Nile and the Euphrates, deep earth tones to contrast strong brown hands working the red clay earth, and an explosion of reds and gold to create the expanse of a sunset across the Mississippi sky while a grandfather and grandson enjoy a fishing outing during better times. He creates unforgettable visuals interpreting the words to this classic poem. Langston Hughes loved his people, and he used the eloquence of his poetry to create positive images at a time in American history when very few such images existed.

In *My People*, Smith uses sepia-toned black-and-white photographs to recreate the nostalgia of the 1920s, the decade of the birth of the Harlem Renaissance in New York City, where Hughes made his home. One or two words in café-au-lait colored text, on a double page, large font, against a black satin finish introduce each photograph. An elder's folded hands, as if in prayer, opens the visual story, followed by joyous, playful, smiling children as "the eyes," a pensive dark-skinned face etched in light against a black background is "the night," and a mother's smile enjoying her daughter's giggle is one of "the faces." Smith's photographic images are as eloquent in their simplicity as the sparse (merely 33) words used by Hughes to describe "My People," for he has visually captured the warmth, light, love, and pride expressed within their meaning.

Both of these poetry picture books would certainly be great for a cultural pride or multicultural program. However, the fluency of language in combination with the perceptive illustrations and photographs also make them an excellent resource for the language arts/creative writing curriculum.

Wanda Meyers-Hines  
Meyershines Consulting, Sterling, Va.

#### 18-2-0193

Iyengar, Malathi Michelle. *Tan to Tamarind: Poems About the Color Brown.* San Francisco: Children's Book Press, 2009. 32 pp. Illus. by Jamel Akib. ISBN 978-0-89239-227-8, \$16.95.

Johnston, Tony. *Voice from Afar: Poems of Peace*. New York: Holiday House, 2008. 32 pp. Illus. by Susan Guevara. ISBN 978-0-8234-2012-4, \$16.95.

*Tan to Tamarind* and *Voice from Afar* are both visually stunning and sensitively moving poetry books for children.

*Tan to Tamarind* contains a poetry tribute to each of 15 different words that represent the color brown. Each poem begins with the word brown and then transports the reader to a location or culture represented by that particular hue. The poem entitled "Ocher"—"Brown. Ocher brown. Vivid orange-brown. Like mehendi designs on a bride's hands"—is accompanied by an illustration of beautiful, colorful Indian dancers, one of whom has a clear mehendi image on her foot. The poem, coupled with the image, transports the reader to another culture's joy. The poem "Nutmeg,"—"Brown. Nutmeg brown. Sharp, redolent nutmeg brown. Nutmeg for gingerbread, allspice for cider: Grandma's treats for my cousins and me"—brings us into a warm and loving place filled with the smell of spice. This group of poems helps us to enjoy and celebrate the variety of browns in objects and people around the world.

*Voice from Afar* is a collection of poetry that highlights the ravages of war, while giving the reader glimpses of hope for peace. This collection moved me to tears when I first read it because of the images of suffering that came to mind. One example is "Gone": "Even though the house has been shelled, the stunned old woman keeps staring at the rubble, as though it might suddenly reassemble itself." My 10-year-old daughter found the poem "When a Bus Exploded" highly upsetting, and in terms of shocking people into understanding the daily realities of war, the end of this poem says it all: "They are lost. So many. Let none of them go unsung." The last poem, "Let Us Weave," leaves readers with the possibility of a peaceful world, "A world with peaks of kindness, orchards branched with good, rivers swollen with peace."

While *Tan to Tamarind* is suitable for young children, *Voice from Afar* is recommended for middle grades and above.

Kathleen Saso  
SUNY, Univ. at Albany

#### 18-2-0194

Kennedy, Robert F., Jr. *Robert Smalls: The Boat Thief*. New York: Hyperion, 2008. 32 pp. Illus. by Patrick Faircy. Series: Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s American Heroes. ISBN 978-1-4231-0802-3, \$16.99.

Robert Smalls was a slave who was catapulted into the public arena after he led a crew to commandeer a ship that they used to transport his family and twelve others to the North and freedom during the Civil War. After turning over the ship and valuable information about the Confederate Navy, fortifications, and secrets, Smalls served in the Union Army. Because of his brave service and invaluable information, Smalls became the first African-American captain of a vessel in the United States. Other accolades include an audience with President Abraham Lincoln in which he spoke of the condition of enslaved African Americans and their need for Union intervention.

Smalls continued to work as an abolitionist and eventually

became a statesman whose credits in South Carolina include building the first public school and helping found the local Republican Party. More importantly, he served in the South Carolina House of Representatives and Senate as well as the United States House of Representatives. No matter the role, author Kennedy presents Smalls as an American patriot who loved "our country" and justice even though he was treated unjustly. Further, Kennedy aligns Smalls with another American hero by stating, "Smalls's spirit rose again fifty years later" in the work of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Faircy's illustrations include black-and-white drawings that mimic images of Smalls from primary source documents or historical snapshots. Other illustrations are color images that use lighting to emphasize emotions and impending danger.

The book includes a table of contents, a map of the East Coast with markers of important places in Smalls's life, an afterword, and a bibliography of resources for adults and youth. Recommended.

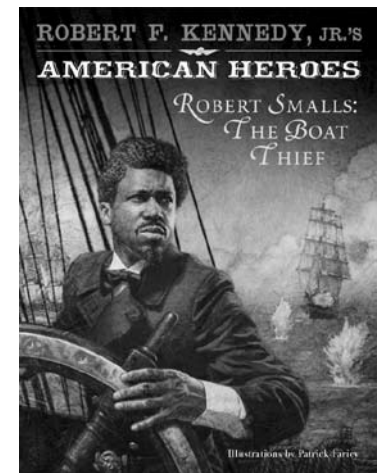
Laretta Henderson  
Univ. of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

#### 18-2-0195

Rumford, James. *Silent Music: A Story of Baghdad*. New York: Macmillan/Roaring Brook Press, 2008. 32 pp. Illus. by the author. ISBN 978-1-59613-276-5, \$17.95.

In this strikingly beautiful book, the author's illustrations combine simple but expressive sketches of everyday life with a mélange of rich patterns and color like a spread of exotic fabrics, with Arabic writing as the thread linking one image, page, or idea to the next. The viewer, of virtually any age, will be rewarded by repeated visits to these exquisite pages.

Although the narrative is in the voice of a Baghdadi boy named Ali who loves soccer and loud music, there is no real story. Yet Ali's discovery of how calligraphy can be much more than mere writing is a sort of paean to the power of creation. Absorption in the creative act—calligraphy, painting, composing music or poetry, whatever fully occupies the mind and aesthetic sense—shuts out the discordant world around. Ali recalls the story of a famous medieval calligrapher who fled to a tower while invading armies were destroying the city. Taking up his pen and applying himself to his writing, he "shut out the horror and created beauty." In the same way, Ali finds he can protect himself from the noise and fear of exploding bombs while he practices his calligraphy letters. Now, if only he could succeed in turning the Arabic word for "war" into "peace"!



Elsa Marston  
Bloomington, Ind.

a wonderful book.

René Saldaña, Jr.  
Texas Tech Univ.

**18-2-0196**

Sáenz, Benjamin Alire. *A Perfect Season for Dreaming/Un tiempo perfecto para soñar*. El Paso, Tex.: Cinco Puntos Press, 2008. 40 pp. Illus. by Esau Andrade Valencia. Bilingual (English-Spanish) ed. ISBN 978-1-933693-01-9, \$17.95.

In *A Perfect Season for Dreaming*, you do not need to beat the piñata to see its magic. While grandfather sleeps, a huge piñata fills the sky and births a counting adventure. Grandfather Octavio Rivera's whimsical dreams are just aching to be told, but he fears no one would believe him. Few would, except for someone just as imaginative and creative as he is, like his young granddaughter, Regina. One needs to be young in mind and spirit to find the amusement in grandfather's dreams.

Readers of this book will have all their senses enthralled through the textures of Valencia's illustrations. The fibers of canvas are visible in his paintings as well as the woven pattern of the piñata and the whiskery beard of Octavio. Each illustration seems to have its own special story to tell. This is where the harmony of Sáenz and Valencia's work is apparent. In Octavio's sixth dream, the piñata releases six armadillos, each with books, leaving to read their poems in literary festivals. I would love to read that story as well.

Sáenz and Valencia are true dream-weavers for true dreamers.

Kena Sosa  
Dallas, Tex.

**18-2-0197**

Shahan, Sherry. *¡Fiesta! A Celebration of Latino Festivals*. Atlanta: August House, 2009. 32 pp. Illus. by Paula Barragán. ISBN 978-0-87483-861-9, \$16.95.

Shahan and Barragán (*Spicy Hot Colors* and *Cool Cats Counting*) join forces once again to provide readers with a delightful collection of poems and accompanying illustrations, this time in celebration of celebrations. But don't be fooled into thinking this is a simple look at fiestas from around the Americas. The book also serves as a bilingual lesson on the names of the months. On opposing pages, readers find "June" and "junio," and matched with them is the poem and a description of the festival associated with this time of year. With June, for example, readers will learn about Inti Raymi, a festival honoring the Incan sun god, in the hopes of "lur[ing] the sun back and warm[ing] the earth" after a long winter.

While a few of the festivals are more common (Cinco de Mayo and Day of the Dead, for instance), the majority are more obscure, and so the book lends itself to the teaching of the many Latino cultures' fiestas. The author includes two glossaries. The first is jam-packed with extra information on the history of the regions whose celebrations are highlighted in the poetry, the people linked with the festivals, and the beliefs surrounding the celebrations. Barragán's illustrations both complement and expand on the text. The art should be carefully studied to get its full effect. All in all,

**18-2-0198**

Sheth, Kashmira. *Monsoon Afternoon*. Atlanta: Peachtree Publishers, 2008. 32 pp. Illus. by Yoshiko Jaeggi. ISBN 978-1-56145-455-6, \$16.95.

Sheth's picture book and Jaeggi's watercolor pictures set in India take readers on a journey to India that shows the extended family bond and its value. In this book a young boy wants to play outside during the monsoon season after a shower. The boy fails to persuade his mother, father, grandma, or brother and finally finds his grandpa (dadaji) willing to share some fun-filled time with him. They spend time making paper boats and floating them in an old washtub filled with rain water. After the shower, they stroll through the streets, and Dadaji retells his memories about the monsoons of his youth while they watch the ants, the banyan trees, the colorful peacock, and beautiful scenes.

The story offers fairy tale-like glimpses, including rare and beautiful peacocks to capture the readers. Dadaji even remembers swinging on the same village banyan tree. The boy asks him many questions: "Will monsoon come when I become a dadaji?" "Did monsoon come when you were little?" Dadaji responds to the boy's questions affectionately. On a practical note, one wonders whether a young boy can articulate such a question about the future.

Jaeggi's pastel-colored, detailed watercolors provide a sensory background to the emotion-laden story. The book can be used for a storytelling hour paired with Uma Krishnaswami's *Monsoon*. In a nice author note, Sheth shares her sweet childhood memories of monsoons. Excellent resource for read alouds on Indian culture and family bonds by librarians, teachers, and teacher educators.

Parsa Choudhury  
Evanston, Ill.

**18-2-0199**

Taylor-Butler, Christine. *Sacred Mountain: Everest*. New York: Lee & Low, 2009. 48 pp. Illus. with photos by the author. ISBN 978-1-60060-255-9, \$19.95.

A victim of its uniqueness, Mount Everest has drawn crowds of both new residents and tourists in the past half-century—resulting not only in over 200 deaths on the slopes, but also damage to its forests and wildlife, and even a litter problem. In formal prose accompanying big, sharply reproduced color photos, Taylor-Butler introduces the area and the Sherpa who dwell there. She also chronicles twentieth-century efforts, successful or otherwise, to climb Everest, how the mountain has been used to draw attention to social issues, and current efforts to counteract the damage so much traffic has caused to its ecosystem. Of particular interest is a time line of Everest "Firsts," from the first climbers up the peak's

western approaches in 1963 to a 2005 wedding at the summit.

Readers may come away with a simplistic picture of the Sherpa as a happy people living in close harmony with nature and practicing quaint rituals, but the author also describes how arrogant British climbers mistreated them and highlights their skill and toughness on the mountain. Among the plethora of books on the subject, this stands out for its wide-ranging exposition and the quality and clarity of its illustrations. A multimedia resource list provides a strong finish.

John Peters  
New York Public Library

### 18-2-0200

Weston, Mark. *Honda: The Boy Who Dreamed of Cars*. New York: Lee & Low, 2008. 32 pp. Illus. by Katie Yamasaki. ISBN 978-1-60060-246-7, \$17.95.

From a humble background in a small Japanese town, Soichiro Honda's interest in all things mechanical, his determination, and his commitment to hard work set the stage for great accomplishments. All children probably know the Honda car, but many may not know the story of the man named Honda who is responsible for developing the car and founding the company.

This story is valuable because it is both interesting and inspiring. But it is much more. It has an encouraging message for those who find school difficult. "Soichiro was not a good student. Book learning did not make sense to him." Also, information about engines, spark plugs, water pumps, and piston rings will interest the mechanically talented. The effects of world events, specifically World War II, are reflected in Honda's life. Experiences with Japanese culture and language are woven into his life story. And, there are lessons in economics as well, as the story progresses from ideas to the establishment and growth of a factory.

This is a book to read aloud to children ages seven to nine. Be sure to make it available as many will want to reread it on their own.

Mary J. Lickteig  
Univ. of Nebraska—Omaha

### 18-2-0201

Whitehead, Kathy. *Art From Her Heart: Folk Artist Clementine Hunter*. New York: Putnam, 2008. 32 pp. Illus. by Shane W. Evans. ISBN 978-0-399-24219-9, \$16.99.

Clementine Hunter (1886 or 1887–1988) was a self-taught artist who used found paint and objects such as window shades as her canvas to paint scenes of her surroundings—picking cotton, foliage, and church-based rituals. Initially, she sold her works for twenty five cents—if she charged at all. But with the help of a friend of her employer, Hunter had an exhibit of her work in a museum. Because of Jim Crow segregation, she could not visit the exhibition until after hours. Whitehead uses Hunter as an exam-

ple of one who persevered, and she encourages readers not to "wait for the perfect moment" to pursue their interests. The impressive illustrations use bold images and incorporate some of Hunter's work.

The back of the book includes an author's note with a more detailed account of her life, a bibliography, and reproductions of some of Hunter's work. This book would be well suited to introduce Hunter to a primary grade audience.

Laretta Henderson  
Univ. of Wisconsin—Milwaukee

### 18-2-0202

Winter, Jonah. *You Never Heard of Sandy Koufax?* New York: Random House Children's Books/Schwartz & Wade, 2009. 32 pp. Illus. by Andre Carrilho. ISBN 978-0-375-83738-8, \$16.99.

Although this is sold as a children's book, it will be of interest to adult baseball fans, especially those who remember the Dodger's pitcher Sandy Koufax. Koufax was famous for two reasons: For a brief time, he was one of the all-time great pitchers, though his career was cut short by injury. And he was Jewish, in a sport that tends not to have many Jews.

This book contains not only 32 pages of fun text about Koufax, but also terrific art. Carrilho's illustrations are not exactly realistic, but not abstract, either. According to the book, "The illustrations are rendered in graphite on paper, with color and texture added by Adobe Photoshop." And, the cover has three different drawings of Koufax which, when moved, look like he is in motion, pitching. The text gives a down-to-earth, "these are the facts, and I will tell you what really went on," feeling. Both the art and the text are very enjoyable, and the book shows why Koufax was one of the all-time great pitchers.

The book will be very useful to anyone interested in baseball, Jewish Americans, or just a good story with good art. And anyone who hasn't heard of Sandy Koufax will get a quick education about why he was such a great pitcher, including statistics to back up the argument.

Russell Eisenman  
Univ. of Texas—Pan American

### Intermediate (Gr. 4–6)

### 18-2-0203

Alvarez, Julia. *Return to Sender*. New York: Random House Children's Books/Knopf, 2009, 240 pp. ISBN 978-0-375-85838-3, \$16.99 (cl); 978-0-375-95838-0, \$19.99 (rlb).

Though a bit heavy-handed on message, Alvarez's latest novel for young readers is nevertheless a fine example of how a character-driven story is one worth reading. The story follows the lives of

two kids—Tyler Paquette, a Vermont farm boy intent on helping his injured father run the farm; and Mari Cruz, a Mexican girl charged with the responsibility of raising her younger American-born sisters in the unexplained absence of their mother. These two youngsters' paths cross when the Paquettes illegally hire Mari's family to work their dairy farm while Mr. Paquette heals. According to Mrs. Paquette, the Cruzes are angels come to save them in this dire time. Tyler, though, is conflicted because a true patriot would not hire people who are in the country illegally, no matter what the circumstances. Mari, too, is conflicted because she is becoming more and more American as the days pass.

Beyond the seemingly clearly defined right and wrong of illegal immigration, Alvarez relates the greater story of humanity, the tale of two families dealing with a mother gone missing at the hands of some bad men who take advantage of people already at odds with the law. It is a story of friendship that surpasses the letter of the law.

René Saldaña, Jr.  
Texas Tech Univ.

#### 18-2-0204

Barnes, Derrick. *Brand New School, Brave New Ruby*. New York: Scholastic, 2008. 130 pp. Illus. by Vanessa Brantley Newton. Series: Ruby and the Booker Boys. ISBN 978-0-545-01760-2, \$4.99 (pb).

Barnes, Derrick. *Trivia Queen, 3rd Grade Supreme*. New York: Scholastic, 2008. 140 pp. Illus. by Vanessa Brantley Newton. Series: Ruby and the Booker Boys. ISBN 978-0-545-01761-9, \$4.99 (pb).

At first, eight-year-old Ruby Booker has all the confidence she needs to start the first day of third grade in her new school, Hope Road Academy. She wakes up to her favorite song, "Cotton Candy Clouds," and loudly sings along as she dons her purple and orange clothes and her one orange and one purple sneaker. She wants to "shine" on her first day; however, the new school scares her and standing out may be difficult due to her three popular brothers. Tyner, nearly a genius, skipped a grade to Roosevelt's sixth grade class. Ro is admired for his pranks, and Marcellus, a seventh grader, is gifted in music and sports and earns excellent grades. Ruby, herself, sings beautifully and informs her new class, "When I grow up, I want to be a rock star."

Barnes, the first African American to write for Hallmark Cards, writes about the amiable and bright Booker family. Ruby comes from a loving and competitive family. Her parents admonish, praise, and encourage their children. Ruby's brothers tease her but also help her out at times. Ruby is not presented as perfect, especially when she vehemently criticizes her classmate in front of the whole class. She appears strong when she stands up to Ro and intelligent when she comes up with a satisfactory solution to Ro's dilemma. Ruby also figures out a way to sing her favorite song to the entire school. Hope Road Academy has one more Booker star.

In *Trivia Queen*, second in the series, Ruby evinces her talent for answering trivia questions. Ruby explains: "I'm a trivia expert. When it comes to little facts, strange facts, and funny facts ... there's a good chance I know it." Alas, third graders are not allowed to enter the televised annual animal trivia contest. However, Ruby wants to win the enormous prize: year-round passes to the city zoo for the entire grade. Ruby and her teacher, Miss Fuqua, eventually convince the principal to allow Ruby to participate. At the family dinner table, smart Tyner proudly announces he will represent the sixth grade. Marcellus has the last word: he will represent the seventh grade. The brothers shake hands, "May the best Booker win." Ro is jealous and tries to sabotage Tyner's chances, but Ruby stops him.

Illustrator Newton draws Ruby as a pretty African-American girl wearing her mismatched orange and purple sneakers. The *Brand New School* cover includes her brothers and her guitar-shaped book bag, which was sewn by her mother. Inside, the illustrator's simple line drawings provide glimpses into Ruby's world, including her laptop computer journal entries and her pet iguana, Lady Love, who loves to sit on her one-of-kind book bag. On the cover of *Trivia Queen*, Ruby appears "in the spotlight." On the inside, the drawings aptly depict her multicultural school and the Booker family. Readers ages seven to ten will be delighted to know more about the escapades of this unique hero.

Carolyn Thompson  
Skokie (ill.) Public Library

#### 18-2-0205

Bryan, Ashley. *Words to My Life's Song*. New York: Simon & Schuster/Atheneum, 2009. 60 pp. Illus. with photos by Bill McGuinness. ISBN 978-1-4169-0541-7, \$18.99.

In his inspiring autobiography, Bryan says he cannot recall a time when he wasn't drawing or painting. In an early family photograph of him sitting on his mother's lap, he notes that the only thing missing is a paintbrush in his hand. The multiple award winner takes readers on a journey of the Maine island where he lives and of his life growing up in a Bronx "railroad apartment" in New York City.

Along with text, Bryan's story is told through a montage of photographs, poetry, and his visually stunning drawings and paintings. Seeing his love for art, his parents purchased a small desk for him from which he created a makeshift studio. Bryan published his very first book in kindergarten by sewing colored pages together to make a cover for his alphabet book.

As a child he rescued stray objects from the streets. As an adult he gathered seashells, rocks, and sea glass to use in his work. "When you can see the promise in discarded things, you can make more of whatever you touch," said Bryan, who has collected objects his entire life. The book includes covers from the many books he has written and illustrated. This visually appealing memoir is a must-read for all ages.

Valerie A. Canady  
*Mental Health Weekly*

**18-2-0206**

Draper, Sharon M. *Sassy: Little Sister Is NOT My Name*. New York: Scholastic, 2009. 102 pp. ISBN 978-0-545-07151-2, \$16.99.  
Paratore, Colleen Murtagh. *Sunny Holiday*. New York: Scholastic, 2009. 161 pp. ISBN 978-0-545-07579-4, \$15.99.

In Draper's novel, the first of a series, Sassy is tired of being called Little Sister and longs to be called by her given name. As the youngest and smallest in her family she feels invisible. But, with the use of her Sassy Sack, a sparkly purse her grandmother tailor-made for her, she is able to produce articles that meet the needs of those around her. Sassy does not let the boring blue and white school uniforms or anything else stand in the way of her expressing her identity. When her grandmother, a professional storyteller and Sassy's muse, visits, Sassy is reminded of the internal qualities she possesses that make her special—not her small stature or her name. Eventually, she is the only one small enough to rescue her family from an emergency. This supports and helps define her sense of self.

Where Sassy's signature color is pink, Sunny's is yellow. In addition to both girls having a signature color, they share an optimistic outlook, a sense of empowerment, and supportive extended families. It is these aspects of her life that are manifested in Sunny's desire to create monthly child-focused holidays, the parties she and her mother share with their circle of friends, and the way in which she copes with a bully. They also help Sunny cope with her father's incarceration and a mayor who has not fulfilled his promises to invest in her neighborhood and school. Like Sassy, Sunny learns that she too can make an important contribution.

Laretta Henderson  
Univ. of Wisconsin–Milwaukee

**18-2-0207**

French, S. Terrell. *Operation Redwood*. New York: Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2009. 368 pp. ISBN 978-0-8109-8354-0, \$16.95.

While waiting in his uncle's office, sixth grader Julian Carter-Li opens a mysterious e-mail and discovers that greedy Uncle Sibley, a corporate CEO in San Francisco and Julian's temporary guardian, plans to cut down an old-growth redwood forest. Along with his best friend Danny Lopez, Julian befriends the e-mail's sender, a girl his age named Robin Elder, whose large home-schooled family lives next door to the threatened forest. Julian and Danny hatch a plot for Julian to visit Robin, and when he is found out, they take bold measures to save the forest, eventually ending up with Robin, her younger sister, and some friends in a tree house 30 feet from the ground, with protestors, private goons hired by Uncle Sibley's firm, and reporters swarming around them.

This charming novel features a multiethnic cast, including half-Chinese Julian, his popo (Chinese grandmother), and Danny, a proud bilingual Latino. The book focuses mainly on family and environmental concerns, however. The humor and the Cinderella plot—reminiscent of other preteen favorites Matilda and the Harry Potter series—keep the political message from becoming

heavy-handed. Uncle Sibley and his wife are stock villains who get their comeuppance in the form of a handful of spunky kids and a mystery relative. French departs from the classic formula by depicting Julian's kindness to his eight-year-old cousin, the favored child who ultimately returns the favor in a big way. And Robin, too, learns that being nicer to her younger sister brings its rewards.

Lyn Miller-Lachmann

**18-2-0208**

Laird, Elizabeth. *Oranges in No Man's Land*. Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2008. 100 pp. ISBN 978-1-931859-56-1, \$9.95 (pb).

What does war mean to a child of ten—a war like the madness that nearly destroyed Lebanon (1975–1991), in which the only way to tell the players was by their accents and maybe a flag? Ayesha knows only that she has lost her mother to a bomb blast and is about to lose her grandmother to illness, and that a “Green Line” through the heart of Beirut separates “ours,” the militia men who sometimes smile, from “them,” the wicked men who inflict death and destruction. But on the far side of the Line is a kind doctor for whom Grandma formerly cleaned house and who may have medicine to save her life. Somehow, Ayesha must reach her.

Another of Laird's remarkable books about the courage of children under dreadful threat, *Oranges* is inspired by the author's own experience of living in downtown Beirut during the Lebanese war. This may help explain a subtle shifting of narrative voice. Ayesha tells the story some years later, with an older person's perspective; yet the actions and emotions of the moment are conveyed vividly in a child's words. Readers will be touched by Ayesha's friendship with a deaf-mute girl, while the description of a city being ripped apart for no readily discernible reason will provide grist for group discussion.

Elsa Marston  
Bloomington, Ind.

**18-2-0209**

Hayes, Joe, ret. *Baila, Nana, Baila/Dance, Nana, Dance: Cuban Folktales in English and Spanish*. El Paso, Tex.: Cinco Puntos Press, 2008. 128 pp. Illus. by Mauricio Trenard Sayago. Bilingual (English-Spanish) ed. ISBN 978-1-933693-17-0, \$20.95.

Lamadrid, Enrique R., and Arellano, Juan Estevan. *Juan the Bear and the Water of Life/La Acequia de Juan del Oso*. Albuquerque: Univ. of Mexico Press, 2008. unpp. Illus. by Amy Córdova. Bilingual (English-Spanish) ed. ISBN 978-0-8263-4543-1, \$17.95.

Folktales are instructive tools that teach or remind a particular group of people about the greatness of their traditions and heritage. As such, sometimes folktales can be a bit dull unless the story is told by a gifted storyteller who is more interested in the dramatic delivery of the story than on the lesson. In these two volumes of

Latino folktales, one from New Mexico and one from Cuba, the voice of gifted narrators propel the reader from one page to another.

*Juan the Bear and the Water of Life* is a New Mexican folktale that chronicles how the Hispanos, the Spanish and Spanish Mexicans who settled the region in the eighteenth century, and Native Americans devised a complex system of irrigating the valleys by bringing water from a river across the mountain range. In the tale, a young Hispano who is half-human and half-bear joins forces with two Native Americans: one has the strength to move mountains and the other the strength to move rivers. Their combined physical gifts allow the people of the valley to water their crops. The author tells the story with genuine appreciation of the Hispanos. Artist Córdova draws bold images of the region and its inhabitants, using muted brown colors for the landscape and drawing impressionist renderings of the characters, sometimes reminiscent of figures encountered in murals in Mexico. In the drawings and in the narrative there is a tremendous sense of love and respect. The love theme is also a subplot that tells how a beautiful girl falls in love with a gentle bear and protects him from family and friends who are ready to kill him when they think he will hurt her. All in all, *Juan the Bear and the Water of Life* is a suspenseful narrative with a satisfying happy ending.

*Dance, Nana, Dance* is an anthology of predominantly African folk tales transplanted to the Cuban countryside by slaves in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. One tale tells why turtles live near water (so they can escape from anyone trying to capture them). Another is about a scheme conjured up by animals in the forest to get rid of the family of devils tormenting them at night. A third story is about a young girl who is mistreated by her selfish stepmother; but unlike similar European tales with a tragic ending, this Afro-Cuban version ends up with family reunited. The stories vary in length, but the characters are well crafted: they are human and likeable, even in the story of the devils tormenting animals in the woods. Mauricio Trenard Sayago is a Cuban artist who seems familiar with the Afro-Cuban renderings of Wilfredo Lam; he draws expressive subjects delineated sharply against the background to stand vividly on the page.

These two books are bilingual editions. The Spanish translation accompanying both texts is adequate though I felt the English narrative moved at a faster pace.

While *Juan the Bear and the Water of Life* is recommended for readers who are ten and older, the story might be a little too long. As for *Dance, Nana, Dance*, some of the stories might be described as a little violent. However, both books make engaging reading to be shared by parents and children.

Danilo H. Figueredo  
Bloomfield College (N.J.) Library

#### 18-2-0210

Medina, Meg. *Milagros, Girl from Away*. New York: Henry Holt, 2008. 270 pp. ISBN 978-0-8050-8230-2, \$17.95.

Milagros is from the fictional Caribbean island of Las Brisas, where life is magical and the only thing people are worried about is

the mischief Milagros may be causing. Her family is known on the island for being a little strange. Her father, a man many considered weak, ran off to be a pirate to prove the islanders' opinions wrong. Rosa, Milagros's mother is a *curandera* who seems more interested in her avocado plants and roses than what time her daughter is coming home and if she has taken a bath.

One evening, Milagros finds a red bottle by the water containing a message that reads "Happiness and jealousy are bad cousins, Beware." She thinks it might be a warning but acts too late and the neighboring islanders raid Las Brisas, killing people and ransacking the island. Milagros and her mother hide, but Rosa is captured and Milagros thinks that she is the only survivor. She magically floats away from the island in a small boat her mother set out for them in order to escape. At the end of her journey through the ocean she comes to a place called Holly Pointe where she is taken in by a couple and their daughter, who is not exactly friendly to Milagros. Although Holly Pointe is an island and she is also an islander, Milagros has never felt more alone. The people there call her the "girl from away," and they believe nothing she says about her homeland. It seems as if Milagros is going to need a few miracles to ease the discomfort she feels there and the hatred she has for her parents she feels abandoned her.

I would classify the text as magical realism for young people. The story has many elements of magic that make it a wonderful read, but still something the reader could see happening. Medina's use of metaphors is incredible and never forced, and she also provides the reader with imagery that brings Milagros's experiences to life. This is a wonderful book for middle school age students and would be a great book to read aloud in a classroom, stopping to point out the beautiful prose the author uses. Aside from the teaching aspect, it is simply a very entertaining book to read, and really, couldn't we all use a few miracles?

Heather Jones  
Texas Tech Univ.

#### 18-2-0211

Turnbull, Stephen. *Real Ninja: Over 20 Stories of Japan's Secret Assassins*. Brooklyn, N.Y.: Enchanted Lion Books, 2008. 48 pp. Illus. by James Field. ISBN 978-1-59270-081-3, \$15.95.

The ninja are the cat burglars and stealthy assassins of Japan. Commonly called the invisible men, the characters for the term *ninja* actually refer to patience, the quality of being able to endure (pain, loss, exacting training, discomfort).

Not exactly stories, in the sense of "Once upon a time," this large format picture book is instead a collection of descriptions of the ninja, their development from Samurai families, their tools, their tricks, their training, each on a separate page with elegant, realistic, and sometimes graphic illustrations.

Possibly the greatest value of this book is the series of historical anecdotes, each one featuring a ninja, about real historical personages of medieval Japan, each well known among Japanese school children and the subjects of many poems, plays, and other works of literature. These chronicles begin as early as the mid 1100s with the great war between the Minamoto and the Taira clans and the

roles of ninja in entering castles unseen or in disguise, and they proceed through the next 800 years of Shogun rule.

Descriptions of the ninja's common all-black costume, their clever disguises, their specialized weapons, their knowledge of foods and medicines, and the secrets built into a ninja house are presented with clear, precise drawings in black and white. The histories are depicted in colorful and rousing illustrations. The book will certainly appeal to young boys enchanted by the idea of the ninja and will at the same time give them a bit of Japanese history and culture.

A brief glossary on the last page helps with understanding, and a short index is most helpful in keeping track of the historic characters, the warriors, the kings, the generals, and the anonymous ninja who are hired to bring about their downfall.

Ginny Lee  
Syracuse, N.Y.

## Young Adult (Gr. 7 and up)

### 18-2-0212

Abdel-Fattah, Randa. *Ten Things I Hate About Me*. New York: Scholastic/Orchard, 2009. 300 pp. ISBN 978-0-545-05055-5, \$16.99.

In her first novel, *Does My Head Look Big in This?*, Abdel-Fattah's young heroine openly declares her Palestinian-Australian identity by wearing the *hijab* (Islamic headcover). In this story, Jamilah—a.k.a."Jamie," a dyed-blond Aussie—recoils from revealing her background as a Lebanese Muslim, fearing racist taunts at school. Meanwhile the men in her life complicate her attempts at maintaining a double identity. Bilal, her older brother, has all the freedoms that Jamilah longs for; Peter, class hunk but racist cad, surprisingly honors "Jamie" with his attentions. Timothy, her lab partner, although popularly judged a nerd, takes on other dimensions, and "John," mysterious e-mail correspondent, encourages Jamilah to express her feelings. Most important, her father, a widower, imposes intolerably old-fashioned, restrictive control over her.

Will Jamilah go to her school prom, like everyone else? Dad puts his foot down—No!—until finally Bilal offers to take Jamilah and guard her well. But there's another problem. Jamilah plays in a small Middle Eastern band hired to perform at the prom; if she appears before her classmates, everyone will know the truth about her! While the outcome is predictable, the underlying tensions run deep, and the perennial message—Be Yourself—will reverberate with many a reader. With its flip and funny voice, this book is an enjoyable yet revealing look at the immigrant experience in another "melting pot" society.

Elsa Marston  
Bloomington, Ind.

### 18-2-0213

Anaya, Rudolfo. *ChupaCabra and the Roswell UFO*. Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 2008. 137 pp. ISBN 978-0-8263-4469-4, \$19.95.

ChupaCabra, the animal-like creature known for sucking the blood of goats, is the most important beast of this science fiction novel. Not only is the ChupaCabra becoming more aggressive towards humans, but the government is conspiring to combine the DNA of the alien who landed at Roswell in 1947 with that of the ChupaCabra. The mission is for C-Force, a government group, to clone the ChupaCabra found from the lost colony and create a new life-form. Rosa Medina, a young professor, was attacked by a ChupaCabra and has some of the creature's DNA on her skin, making her the government's target. Rosa becomes tangled in a web of trying to figure out why a high school acquaintance, Ed, was killed after he called to warn her of being in danger. Eventually, Ed's partner, Nadine, teams up with Rosa as they try to solve the mystery of keeping the creature's DNA from the evil conspirators. They journey into some life-changing experiences and confrontations while trying to stop the government's mission.

The book is clever in its premise of an academic becoming caught up in a government conspiracy, and the action is well done. Readers are able to stay with the author through events that could have easily lost them. There are a couple of instances where repetition of the storyline is unnecessary, and the author takes moments throughout the story to make political statements that might be better handled with smoother transitions between the political messages and the action.

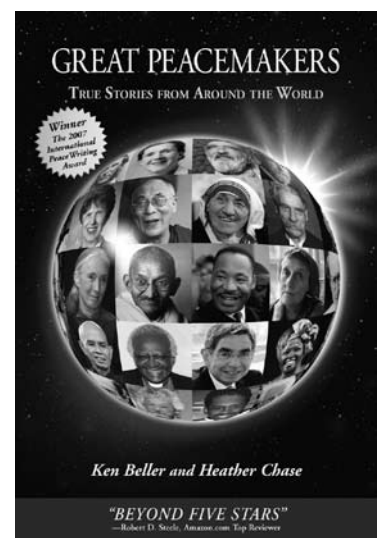
Brenda Yates Habich  
Ball State Univ.

### 18-2-0214

Beller, Ken, and Chase, Heather. *Great Peacemakers: True Stories from Around the World*. Sedona, Ariz.: LTS Press, 2008. 194 pp. ISBN 978-1-4243-2355-5, \$21.95 (pb).

This unique collective biography focuses on famous people from across the globe who practice, live, and promote peace in their communities and throughout the world. The inspiring men and women featured are diverse in race, age, economic backgrounds, language, and national origin. Many are Noble Peace Prize winners or nominees, while others are not so well known. Their mutual commitment to peace is the common bond that unifies them.

The book is divided into four aspects of peace: non-violence, honoring diversity, valuing all life, and caring for



the planet. The themes are presented clearly while managing to be educational and enlightening simultaneously. Each chapter begins with a striking photograph of the person featured and an opening summary of the person's beliefs and life's work. Each person's story unfolds in a way that captures the overall theme of the person's life as opposed to telling every detail, illuminating the vitality and timelessness of his or her philosophy. The writing is simple, though not unsophisticated. The authors' words effortlessly draw the reader in. This would be a great book to read on one's own or in perhaps a parent-student book club because of its appeal to teenagers and adults alike who can understand, benefit from, and appreciate its message.

Margaret Auguste  
Franklin Middle School, Somerset, N.J.

### 18-2-0215

Carrillo, P. S. *Desert Passage*. Houston: Piñata Books, 2008. 136 pp. ISBN 978-1-55885-517-5, \$10.95 (pb).

Miguel and Ramón are technically cousins, but they have been raised as brothers after the untimely death of Ramón's dad. At the novel's opening, Rodrigo, the dad/uncle, is on a rampage. He has decided that the two boys will have to spend a month of their summer vacation in an out-of-the-way town in Arizona with their *abuela* (grandmother) Rosa, instead of making the trip to Santa Fe, New Mexico, for a family reunion—a summer made worse by Rodrigo's insistence that the boys also relinquish every bit of technology. The man, who is constantly challenging the boys to become real men, leaves a list of chores the two must get done by month's end, including cleaning out the shed. There, they find an old Vespa scooter and fix it up. When Abuela Rosa is taken to the hospital in a coma, and with no other way to reach Rodrigo, the boys set out on the scooter to find their family in New Mexico.

At times harrowing, their journey serves as more than a road trip; it becomes a spiritual journey in search of self. As the miles pass, the boys are well on their way to manhood, but perhaps one very different from what Rodrigo expects. Carrillo's book is a good and smooth read. The boys' story is moving, though a bit heavy-handed on the supernatural.

René Saldaña, Jr.  
Texas Tech Univ.

### 18-2-0216

Elkeles, Simone. *Perfect Chemistry*. New York: Bloomsbury/Walker, 2009. 360 pp. ISBN 978-0-8027-9823-7, \$16.99 (cl); 978-0-8027-9822-0, \$9.99 (pb).

Bestselling romance author Elkeles takes on teen romance in this chick lit meets *West Side Story*. Brittany Ellis seems to have the perfect life—beauty, charm, popularity, money, a mansion on Chicago's North Shore, and parents who indulge her. Alex Fuentes seems finished from the start. His father died in a gang

shooting in front of his eyes, leaving Alex's mother to struggle to support three boys; Alex, the oldest, must join his father's gang or risk the elimination of his entire family.

But things aren't as clear-cut as they seem in this novel told in alternating first person narratives. Brittany's perfect façade hides a darker truth—a severely disabled sister whom she loves but whom her parents, at the end of their rope, want to institutionalize. And Alex is a brilliant math and science student who dreams of college and more than once saves the distracted Brittany from failing chemistry. When Brittany, fresh from a confrontation with an old flame, wanders to the gangbangers' side of the beach, Alex rescues her, and she gets to know him and the other previously invisible (to her) Latino students at her school. Sparks of romance fly, but Alex's gang ties threaten to engulf them both. The ending is predictably happily-ever-after.

Perfect pacing and execution of the genre's conventions make this an exciting yet comforting read for romance lovers. Elkeles's upending of ethnic and class stereotypes is surface level, and her depiction of gang life is filled with inaccuracies and sensationalistic exaggeration. Even so, the novel might serve as a starting point for teenage girls to examine their insular lives and to look for more complex and less formulaic portrayals of young people who don't look like them.

Lyn Miller-Lachmann

### 18-2-0217

Ellis, Deborah. *Children of War: Voices of Iraqi Refugees*. Toronto: Groundwood, 2009. 128 pp. ISBN 978-0-88899-907-8, \$15.95.

Having brought to our attention the lives of children in other conflict-stressed parts of the Middle East, Ellis now turns to children uprooted by the American-led war against Saddam Hussein and its dreadful aftermath. The children and teens she interviewed were mostly living in Amman, Jordan. (Hundreds of thousands of Iraqi refugees have fled to Jordan and Syria, countries ill equipped to provide shelter, let alone livelihood, for this influx.) The interviewees range from some relatively fortunate middle-class families, to mentally and physically impaired individuals barely surviving. Many live in wretchedly poor housing and are dependent on sparse aid. The host countries do not allow employment; if a man is found working, he'll be sent back to Iraq.

Each interview is preceded by the author's explanation of a particular aspect of the refugee problem: kidnapping, loss of identity papers, religious differences, effects of depleted uranium, lack of medical treatment, no place to play. The writing is elementary-school simple, the substance heartbreakingly adult.

The plight of Iraqi refugees who helped the U.S. forces as translators, drivers, and more is of particular concern for Americans because those Iraqis have been targeted by the insurrection militias; to date, only a shamefully small number have been allowed into this country. Thank you, Deborah Ellis, for helping our children see more of the truth.

Elsa Marston  
Bloomington, Ind.

18-2-0218

Engle, Margarita. *The Surrender Tree: Poems of Cuba's Struggle for Freedom*. New York: Henry Holt, 2008. 168 pp. ISBN 978-0-8050-8674-4, \$16.95.

Though not the story of Engle's great-grandparents, she mentions in an opening note that *The Surrender Tree* does document the suffering incurred by Cuban slaves and peasants in the span of 30 years in the form of The Ten Years' War (1868–1878), The Little War (1878–1880), and The War of Independence (1895–1898). When the story opens, we meet Rosa, a fabled “child-witch,” a curandera-in-training, “learning the names of the cures” by studying “the plant / petal or stem, root, leaf, pollen, nectar” used by the older women healers. Those in need of her healing hand are innumerable as she grows older. First, there are the runaway slaves caught and returned by the hunters who get “seventeen silver pesos” for a live one or four for an ear, lifeless proof of a hunter's job well-done. Later there are freed slaves fighting to keep their freedom. All the while, Lieutenant Death, who works for the Spanish Crown, searches non-stop for her, through “Swamps, mountains, jungles, caves.” Joined by her husband, José, and a child named Silvia (who eventually apprentices herself to the healer), they build hospitals in the jungles, hidden from those who would destroy the rebellion. But they must look over their shoulders always.

In spite of the hardships described, the story is one of victory, the poetry lyrical, and the characters unforgettable. It is no wonder why Engle has been awarded the Pura Belpré for a second year in a row by the American Library Association.

René Saldaña, Jr.  
Texas Tech Univ.

18-2-0219

González, Genaro. *A So-Called Vacation*. Houston: Piñata Books, 2009. 192 pp. ISBN 978-1-55885-545-8, \$10.95 (pb).

González describes the journey of a family from Texas to California, from a life the two teenage protagonists, Gus and Gabriel, consider normal, to one of a migrant farmer, as their father claimed to be as a child, spending hot summer days picking strawberries in a field for little money.

Life on the farm is one of minimal means, yet this doesn't seem to bother the Borrado brothers, migrant laborers and the star strawberry pickers. The rivalry our protagonists develop with the Borrado brothers seems to be symbolic of what is really an inner struggle between Gus and Gabriel's father's generation—old fashioned like accordion music—and the youngsters' priorities—school, girlfriends, and fun. The boys feel trapped in a world where they are looked at with suspicious eyes, a feeling they never experienced back home. At the same time, they are discovering their own prejudices about migrant workers and their fellow Latinos.

Although not a struggle to read, the numerous internal battles are ongoing. The result of González's portrayal of this family is without closure, as is the struggle of many families today. This is a social ailment that we as a society have yet to resolve.

18-2-0220

Hyde, Margaret O., and Hyde, Emily G. *World Religions 101: An Overview for Teens*. Minneapolis: Lerner/Twenty-First Century Books, 2008. 128 pp. ISBN 978-0-8225-7518-4, \$27.93 (list); \$21.95 (school/library).

The Hydes provide a concise overview of the world's major as well as some minor religions. Teens with an interest in learning about religion, but who may not enjoy reading lengthy books will appreciate this short and informative text.

*World Religions 101* contains a couple of inaccuracies, however. The authors claim that the split between the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches occurred in 320 C.E. Their official schism actually occurred in 1054. Another inaccuracy is in the glossary where Passover is described as an 8-day holiday. Passover is actually a 7-day holiday, although some Jews outside of Israel add an eighth day in order to align with the time in Jerusalem. This should be explained by the authors.

One note of interest is the two-page section entitled “Native American Religions” within Chapter 3, “Abrahamic Religions.” Is this to encourage the next generation to question and consider the origins of Native Americans, perhaps as the Book of Mormon would describe? Or is this because, as the authors describe, many Native Americans now “combine traditional and Christian spiritualities”?

Overall, *World Religions 101* is a pleasant and easy read which will give the reader an excellent introduction to the world's major religions and some lesser-known ones as well.

Richard Levik  
Los Angeles Unified School District  
Founder, [www.theleviteline.com](http://www.theleviteline.com)

18-2-0221

Landman, Tanya. *I Am Apache*. Somerville, Mass.: Candlewick Press, 2008. 320 pp. ISBN 978-0-7636-3664-7, \$17.99.

This atrocious historical novel is the product of Landman's (stated) lifelong fascination with Indians, combined with an outrageous sense of White entitlement, sloppy research habits, a Euro-feminist approach to history, and a penchant for otherworldly imaginative exercises. She comments on the inside back cover of the UK version, *Apache Girl Warrior* (2007), “The image of a girl carrying a spear formed behind my eyes, but I didn't know if a Native American woman would have been allowed to become a warrior.... The more I read, the more I found that what I'd imagined was entirely plausible.”

In Landman's imagination, the Ndee refer to themselves as Apache (an enemy name) in the late 1800s, all Apache men are warriors (whether or not they are engaged in battle), all Apache women (“maidens”) are ineffectual (except for the girl who be-

comes a warrior), all “Apaches” have those ubiquitous “black eyes” that distinguish them as Indians, and hatred and vengeance are the sole motivating factors in Apache life. Besides one stereotype after another, much, much cultural confusion (e.g., wikipus are not interchangeable with “teepees” [sic]), and awful writing, including relentlessly garbled metaphors (“[Y]et hope tiptoed on softly moccasined feet, setting my heart beating with excitement”) and relentless ethnographic expositions (“It is the custom of our people to burn the possessions of the dead. And thus I burned our teepee.”), there’s the complete absence of family members: grandparents, aunts and uncles, husbands, mothers, children who play, joke, sing, and enjoy each other’s company. Real families. Just like anyone else’s.

And the “Apaches,” of course, are doomed: “[I] will die proud. I will die free. And first I will live, and I will fight. I am Apache.”

Landman’s “historical note” is her not-so-veiled attempt to justify what she has done: “[E]ach of the tribes, all of the characters and every place name are fictional. I’ve made no attempt to produce an accurate historical novel: this is an imagined evocation of how it may have felt to have lived through events like these. I’ve tried to be authentic as far as period detail goes, but at times I have had to stretch things in order to make the story work.”

This is one of those novels, along with Lynne Reid Banks’s *Indian in the Cupboard* series and Ann Rinaldi’s *My Heart Is on the Ground*, that, through the author’s willful ignorance, mangle the histories and lifeways of the peoples written about, whose descendants live today, in order to come up with books that sell well and win awards. These people really ought not to be writing about cultures other than their own.

Teachers and librarians who already have this title can teach middle readers critical reading skills by having them compare it with Joe Bruchac’s excellent book, *Geronimo* (Scholastic, 2006).

Beverly Slapin  
Oyate, [www.oyate.org](http://www.oyate.org)

#### 18-2-0222

Lane, Dakota. *Gothic Lolita*. New York: Simon & Schuster/Athenaeum, 2008. 200 pp. ISBN 978-1-4169-1396-2, \$17.99.

Don’t even think Western Goth. The current Japanese Gothic Lolita fashion is primarily a female craze. Girls dress up in very fine, very expensive old lace and taffeta dresses, often dark or black, with a touch of white (a flower or an apron), lace stockings, heavy shoes, a hat, a purse, an umbrella, looking very much like delicate dolls, somewhere between childhood and sexual allurements. (Check out Gothic Lolita via Google.)

Miya lives in Japan; Chelsea lives in Los Angeles. Miya’s father died, and her mother is gone, but she has a little brother. They live in an orphanage. Chelsea has a mother, no father, and has recently lost her little brother.

Miya and Chelsea have found each other via web blog sites for Gothic Lolita, both being fascinated with that latest female fad across cultures. The chapters alternate with the two girls writing to each other, wanting understanding, support, and help.

It is a little difficult to keep the two voices separate. They sound

the same. Both write in teen blog style in trite phrases with no capital letters, both desperate for contact.

Somehow we know, even from the beginning, that there is something connecting these two girls. They are similar in their aloneness, in their need to express themselves, in their desire for connection, for family. Perhaps they ARE family. Perhaps they are sisters. Perhaps they are twins, separated at birth, born to different parents on opposite sides of the earth, but twins, nonetheless.

i couldn’t reveal the deepest truth in a blog, when i first did my blog, i could barely get two or three words out—never a real feeling—without hearing that random savage bitch: say it faster, funnier, sharper ... the random savage internet bitch, the one who exists inside everyone’s head—she’s the one who made me hide.

The problems in writing that the girls struggle with are indeed the problems that have always plagued writers. How best to convey one’s deepest feelings—of love, of betrayal, of loss, of shame, of frustration. “What to write? Dad’s dead? how about ‘no way out’ or just ‘please help.’”

Teens will not have a problem with the writing style, and they might well identify with the feelings of estrangement and desire for attention.

Ginny Lee  
Syracuse, N.Y.

#### 18-2-0223

Magoon, Kekla. *The Rock and the River*. New York: Simon & Schuster/Aladdin, 2009. 300 pp. ISBN 978-1-4169-7582-3, \$15.99.

Wenberg, Michael. *Seattle Blues*. Lodi, N.J.: WestSide Books, 2009. 236 pp. ISBN 978-1-934813-04-1, \$16.95.

Two new novels from up-and-coming writers provide similarities as well as contrasts on the themes of racism and growing up in difficult times.

In Magoon’s novel the setting is Chicago in 1968 at the height of the civil rights movement. Her protagonist Sam’s father is Roland Childs, a civil rights activist who believes change can happen without resorting to violence. Sam’s older brother (and also his best friend), Stick, is drawn to membership in the Black Panthers and the belief that racism will never be fully eradicated without resistance and violence. The title, *The Rock and the River*, is a metaphor for what Sam must choose for himself—the way of his father or the way of his brother.

The author, Kekla (morning star in the West African language Bassa) Magoon, is biracial, Her mother is White and grew up in the United States; her father is Black and grew up in the West African country of Cameroon. Her debut novel explores the dynamics of living in a family with a famous activist father; although Stick rebels against his father, he has the same absolutist way of viewing the world. Trying to grow up amid conflict, violence, and disillusionment, Sam—and through his first-person narrative, the

young teen reader—comes to see the civil rights struggle—and life itself—in all its complexity.

*Seattle Blues* is also set in the late 1960s. Protagonist Maya Thompson, 13 years old as well, seems to be in rough waters without an anchor, with her daddy fighting in South Vietnam and her momma preoccupied with finishing her college degree. For reasons of last resort, Maya is forced to spend the summer in Seattle with her Grandma Ruby, someone Maya knows only through birthday and Christmas cards. Maya has better plans. She figures she can convince grandma that she should go back to Chicago. She even has enough money stashed away to buy a bus ticket to Chicago, where her best friend Elizabeth just happens to be spending the summer.

Of course, you know what they say about the best-laid plans. Maya ends up spending the summer with Grandma Ruby in Seattle as planned, but she also discovers the strength of family ties she never dreamed existed. In the process of this long overdue family reunion, Maya is introduced to the world of jazz, which will give her life new meaning. Wenberg, like Maya's grandpa, is a trombone player. The CEO of the Walla Walla (WA) Symphony, he is highly sought-after as a speaker in elementary schools, where he uses his trombone to introduce children to stories, reading, writing, and music.

Sam and Maya are similar in that they are beginning to think things through on their own and finding that answers aren't as clear as grownups make them out to be. An ironical twist is that while Magoon is female, her protagonist Sam is male; and while Wenberg is male, his protagonist Maya is female.

Plummer Alston "Al" Jones  
East Carolina Univ.

#### 18-2-0224

Miller-Lachmann, Lyn. *Gringolandia*. Willimantic, Conn.: Curbstone Press, 2009. 280 pp. ISBN 978-1-931896-49-8, \$16.95.

You have to look hard to recognize the discolored green tiles on the cover of *Gringolandia* as those of an empty swimming pool. It's the dove—rising out of the pool—that catches the eye. Nor do pools or swimming have anything to do with Miller-Lachmann's novel. However, hers is no ordinary novel, and the cover image is no ordinary pool. It's the only thing left today of the Chilean villa that Augusto Pinochet converted into one of the secret prisons where thousands were tortured or executed during the 1970s and '80s. Sometime during the waning days of the Pinochet dictatorship, the regime razed the villa in an attempt to erase from memory what had happened there. But is that possible? *Gringolandia* answers that question through the life of an apparently "normal" immigrant teenager living in Madison, Wisconsin. When the story begins in 1986, Daniel Aguilar has driven to the airport to pick up his dad, not from a business trip, but from six years of incarceration as a political prisoner in Chile. The man he meets is not the father he remembers. This is a brain-damaged alcoholic who can't stand to be touched, who lashes out physically and verbally at family members. Yet he's also a man of courage, compassion, and conviction.

In Miller-Lachmann's book, the effects of political repression and violence are played out within the walls of one family's home. The novel is a disturbing and meaningful exploration of deep but damaged relationships. It's also a thought-provoking journey for teenagers who wonder if their decisions and actions can make a difference in the world.

Lisa Rubilar  
Niskayuna, N.Y.

#### 18-2-0225

Moses, Sheila P. *Joseph*. New York: Simon & Schuster/McElderry Books, 2008. 176 pp. ISBN 978-1-4169-1752-6, \$16.99.

This quick teen read draws young people into Joseph's world. It is a contemporary urban drama covering a multitude of family issues. There is "baby mama drama." The main character, Joseph, is a homeless teenager.

Witness the downward spiral of Joseph's mother as well as the bitter divorce battles and custody fights. Root for Joseph's success. He is an A student, track star, and unfortunately a codependent for his "emotional vampire" of a mother. Furthermore, she's an alcoholic, a drug addict, and an untrustworthy human being. His former authority figures and points of stability are gone. His maternal grandfather has died, and due to unpaid debts Joseph and his mother, Betty, are evicted. While his divorced father is in Iraq, there is still the parental squabbling and struggling to gain custody. In addition, his mother's sister, Aunt Shirley, continually tries to rescue him from this depressing and stressful situation.

How can any teenager survive under such circumstances? How will Joseph survive at the homeless shelter? Will he be able to disassociate himself from his former high school thugs? Or will he be another sad statistic?

Madelene Rathbun Barnard  
Manatee County (Fla.) Library System

#### 18-2-0226

Osborne, Linda Barrett. *Traveling the Freedom Road: From Slavery & the Civil War Through Reconstruction*. New York: Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2009. 128 pp. Illus. ISBN 978-0-8109-8338-0, \$24.95.

*Traveling the Freedom Road* offers a unique, authoritative account of slavery, the Civil War, and Reconstruction, told through the stories of actual children, teenagers, and their families who lived during these times. Osborne uses slave narratives, diaries, schoolwork, anti-slavery publications, interviews with former slaves, and other nineteenth-century materials. The result is a close-up, real-life view of the people and their lives. The story of Mary and Emily Edmonson, sisters and teenagers who tried to escape slavery aboard a boat headed to the North and were captured but later freed by Northern abolitionists, is one example of people with extraordinary stories of courage and determination to be free.

Primary source materials, such as photographs of newly freed slaves attending school for the first time, give readers a true historical view of the lives of young people during this period. Archival photographs, maps, and documents from the Library of Congress archives combine to produce a book of unique quality that makes history exciting and real. A broad span of history is presented in one volume, through accounts of actual people who lived as slaves, fought in the Civil War, sought freedom, and worked to create a new life during Reconstruction through education, with aid from the Freedman's Bureau. This beautifully crafted book will excite readers of all ages, particularly middle and high schoolers by making history accessible. Highly recommended for public and school libraries.

Linda C. Jolivet  
Oakland (Calif.) Public Library

#### 18-2-0227

Saldaña, Theresa. *The Almost Murder and Other Stories*. Houston: Piñata Books, 2009. 144 pp. ISBN 978-1-55885-507-6, \$10.95 (pb).

Actress, victim advocate, and author Saldaña has written her first collection of stories for young adults, all of which are narrated by young Latinas. The stories have in common a need for the characters to survive their financial or emotional circumstances.

The first story, "Reel Red," is by far the best. It is a fast-paced urgent message from Red to her cousin Leti in which she seeks advice about participating in a reality-TV show. It is a real page-turner. The second story "Scars" suffers from wanting to deal with too many issues. Starting with a rant against racism, it turns into a psychological introspection of the self-image of a young girl after an accident leaves her face scarred. The story addresses how she is able to overcome her angst by helping others. The title story is a very honest portrayal of domestic violence and the emotional repercussions for a family living under fear of bodily harm due to the father's abuse and drunkenness. Young women, regardless of ethnicity, will be able to identify with the many issues Saldaña presents in this collection.

Bessy Reyna  
Latin Arte News, Bolton, Conn.

#### 18-2-0228

Sitomer, Alan Lawrence. *The Secret Story of Sonia Rodriguez*. New York: Hyperion/Jump at the Sun, 2008. 312 pp. ISBN 978-1-4231-1072-9, \$17.99.

It is unfortunate that in Sitomer's (*Hip-Hop High School, Homeboyz*) latest novel readers will find a story filled with stereotypes and linguistic inaccuracies. The story begins innocently enough: Sonia Rodríguez introduces herself as U.S.-born, therefore legal, documented, and English-speaking. Her parents, though, have been living and working in the States for quite a few years illegally,

with limited English skills, and her father is thrice-documented ("mi papi," she says, "does have a social security number. Three of them. You can buy them for fifteen dollars apiece down at the *taqueria*"). Sonia's life is hard: a young woman looking to education as her way out of this nightmare of a life, which includes a mom who is pregnant with yet another baby and who leans on Sonia for every little thing she needs. A constant refrain in Sonia's life is "*Sonia ... ayúdame*," at which point the daughter must drop everything and help her mother with one menial task or another, including cleaning up after her alcoholic, itinerant uncle, who is also a pervert. He—"the drunkle"—ogles Sonia every chance he gets, makes suggestive remarks, and gets too close for her comfort. And worse for our heroine, her mother hates her, seemingly out of woman-on-woman jealousy.

With all this drama, one would think the story would be awesome, and it may well be, except for the constant distraction of the aforementioned stereotypes and cultural and linguistic missteps, more often the latter. Though the language is technically correct in terms of spelling and usage, it rings as flawed to a native speaker of both languages: a Chicano/a would not say, for example, "In *mi casa*" (8) or "the love machine from *un hombre*" (57). It may seem petty to some, but these slips make for a very difficult read. The story is one of struggle and victories great and small, of great sadness mixed with joy. Sonia manages to survive it all.

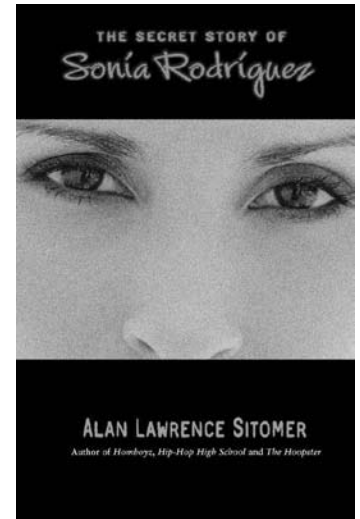
René Saldaña, Jr.  
Texas Tech Univ.

#### 18-2-0229

Stork, Francisco X. *Marcelo in the Real World*. New York: Scholastic, 2009. 312 pp. ISBN 978-0-545-05474-4, \$17.99.

Seventeen-year-old Marcelo Sandoval has attended an exclusive private school for children with disabilities for most of his life. Yet his father, a high-powered attorney whom Marcelo calls by his first name, Arturo, wants this sensitive teen with Asperger Syndrome (AS) to experience "the real world." Arturo arranges for Marcelo to work in the mailroom of his law firm. Taunted and exploited by the son of a colleague, Marcelo comes across a big secret the law firm is hiding. His dogged pursuit of the truth brings him into direct conflict with his own self-interest and the values and goals of his father.

In many ways, this novel begs comparison with Mark Had-don's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time*—with the protagonist's autism spectrum disorder, his uncovering of a family secret, and his pursuit of truth and goodness in a confusing and often hostile and corrupt world. Stork, an attorney as well as an



author of two other novels for young people, overlays a philosophical dimension onto the character-driven story. Marcelo's "special interest"—world religions—is atypical of persons with AS (the most common is trains and other modes of transportation, but interests can vary widely). The discussions Marcelo has with a female rabbi—even though he is not Jewish—prompt him to follow his conscience.

Another unusual aspect of this book is its depiction of an affluent Mexican-American family. Arturo's practice relies on corporate clients in Mexico. This is a reality rarely touched on in books for young people, which tend to focus on poverty, migrant labor, and gang life when portraying Mexican Americans. Despite occasional philosophical and other digressions that slow the pace (such as a trip to Vermont with a female friend that is filled with raunchy barnyard language), Stork's novel will challenge readers' assumptions while offering a memorable protagonist and a great story, too.

Lyn Miller-Lachmann

#### 18-2-0230

van de Ruit, John. *Spud—The Madness Continues...* New York: Penguin/Razorbill, 2008. 338 pp. ISBN 978-1-59514-190-3, \$16.99.

*Spud—The Madness Continues...*, the sequel to John van de Ruit's *Spud* (Penguin/Razorbill, 2008), is the second installment of his humorous coming-of-age novel featuring now 15-year-old choir-boy John "Spud" Milton, written in the form of a running diary of his second year (1991) at a posh boys-only boarding school in Durban, South Africa.

Paralleling the cataclysmic political climate in South Africa, Spud continues his struggle to maintain a precarious balance in his own unstable inner world. He copes with dysfunctional parents, a grandmother suffering from dementia, taunting upper classmates, intimidating boarding school prefects and teachers, and last, but certainly not least, mysterious girls who really begin to stir his sexual drive. The adventures and misadventures of Spud and his seven housemates, together comprising the Crazy Eight, continue with the addition of a new member, Roger the cat.

As a second-year student, Spud now gets his chance to mentor a fresh new batch of first-year students. One of many highlights, or rather low points, in his second year is playing the role of the Dove of Peace in a disastrous production of *Noah's Ark*. *Spud—The Madness Continues...* offers young adult readers the solace of knowing that they are not alone in living through the fearsome passage of adolescence. Don't be surprised if the chronicles of Spud end up as a hit teen movie!

Plummer Alston "Al" Jones  
East Carolina Univ.

#### 18-2-0231

Villareal, Ray. *Alamo Wars*. Houston: Piñata Books, 2008. 188 pp. ISBN 978-1-55885-513-7, \$10.95 (pb).

*Alamo Wars* dramatizes the very delicate and current hot topic of immigration. Villareal uses the situation of a seventh grade play to depict characters at opposite ends of the immigration issue, drawing attention to historical injustices and today's problems. Raquel is a Mexican immigrant, adamantly defending her family, stating that they have returned to the land taken from them. Marco is a U.S.-born Mexican-American student, torn between his two cultures. Borders and heritage cause these best friends to clash and split apart.

Their well-written struggle is almost parallel to the one carried out at the Alamo so many years before. I was concerned for a minute that Villareal was writing a one-sided book, but he managed to write each character into the story with his or her own bias and find a way for them to get along without taking sides himself. *Alamo Wars* is not really so much about the Alamo but the aftermath of the Alamo and who Texans are today. "Remember the Alamo!" is a phrase meant to remind us to fight for a new beginning, something to which those of us on all sides of the immigration fence, as ever-changing Americans, can relate.

Kena Sosa  
Dallas, Tex.

#### 18-2-0232

Wiseman, Eva. *Puppet*. Toronto: Tundra Books, 2009. 243 pp. ISBN 978-0-88776-828-6, \$17.95.

Many books have been written about the "blood libel" incidents that occurred in Europe over the centuries. What is "blood libel"? It is the myth used by anti-Semites throughout the ages that Jews kill Christian children to get their blood in order to bake matzos (Passover unleavened bread). This book is very different, because the story is told through the sensibilities of a Christian servant girl in Hungary toward the end of the nineteenth century. Based on one of the last such cases, it is written as fiction. The story totally holds the reader's attention.

The first two chapters are a bit confusing, but much of the rest of the story and its ultimate resolution depend on reading these chapters carefully. The story starts when Julie loses her mother, is separated from her sister, and becomes a maid. A childhood friend, in a similar position, disappears, and a majority of the townspeople turn on the Jews of the village claiming this as a "blood libel" murder. The son of one of the Jewish families becomes a "puppet" for the corrupt village officials and betrays his people, including his father.

Julie was a friend of the disappeared girl, but she withholds her opinion, to the disgust of most of the others, especially her brutal father. Her fairness and keen sense of decency save the village from a shameful injustice and assure her own future.

This story is a very good read. I think both Jews and non-Jews would find it so.

Ruth Becker  
Forest Hills, N.Y.