

The essays in this ambitious volume point to the extreme difficulty of evolving and instituting policies for ethnic accommodation, especially when large segments of the general population are economically and politically disadvantaged. In those rare instances when these policies have succeeded they have been accompanied by economic development. In the end the reader is left with the conviction that policies of ethnic accommodation are inadequate on their own, unless they are linked with concrete economic measures and sincere efforts which guarantee representation in a truly democratic political arena.

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Magdalena J. Zaborowska, ed. *Other Americans, Other Americas: The Politics and Poetics of Multiculturalism*. The Dolphin Series 28, ed. Tim Caudery. (Aarhus C, Denmark, Oxford, and Oakville, CT: Aarhus University Press, 1998). 215 pp., \$19.95 paper.

The editor of this text, Magdalene J. Zaborowska of Aarhus University, is a respected feminist specialist in ethnic American studies. In her introduction she provides readers with an admirably concise overview of the history of the multicultural movement and the current state of the recent multicultural wars over curriculum, literature, and the canon in the United States. Zaborowska chose the essays in this anthology because they focus on the multicultural reality that always has existed in the United States rather than on monolithic “essentialist representations of history and national identity” characteristic of previous American literary history. Given this focus, it is unfortunate that the displacing word “Other” appears twice in the title, thus reinforcing the traditionalist positioning of canonical white male American writers as central in the “curriculum, literature, and the canon” and that of all “Others” as peripheral.

Nevertheless Zaborowska herself has contributed a fine revisionist essay on James Baldwin's multicultural perspective in "Mapping American Masculinities: James Baldwin's Innocents Abroad or *Giovanni's Room* Revisited." Also typical of the anthology's multicultural focus is David Cowart's essay on Michael Dorris, a Native American, who emphasized the common problems that all Americans share, rather than the "Otherness" of Native Americans and other "Others." Such diverse authors as Michael Wigglesworth, Herman Melville, Mary Antin, Anzia Yeziarska, Frank O'Hara, Wanda Coleman, Maya Angelou, and Ismael Reed are also analyzed from this multicultural perspective. Bibliographical and informational notes follow each essay, and at the back of the book readers can find contributors' biographies as well as abstracts of their essays.

A few quibbles: Ib Johansen in "Ismael Reed, Multiculturalism, and the Collapse of Paternal Laws" does not seem to be aware that the character Papa LeBas is also the Voodoo lwa. Nor does Russell Duncan in "Dancing Along the Edge of the Roof: Complexions of Indian Identity in the (Auto)Biographies of Wilma Mankiller and Russel Means" seem to be aware that Moses is Hebrew, not Christian, and that Genesis is a Hebrew text, not a Christian one. In *Scopic America: Casting a Colonial Eye* Prem Poddar casts a contemporary eye on early English colonial maps and descriptions. He brilliantly exposes them as containing "sedimented racist attitudes" and contends that so deeply inscribed in their psyches were the colonizers' "convictions of superiority that they "legitimated violence against the indigenous inhabitants." Unfortunately Poddar also exposes his own blind spots, his own sedimented sexist attitudes and convictions of superiority toward feminist critics. When he remarks that he "would like both to recognize the problematisation of the hymeneal model, and to leave it," Poddar trivializes and dismisses Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's and Teresa de Lauretis' protests against Derrida's "phallogocentric" appropriation of female metaphors in his (male) critique of humanism.

On the whole, however, this collection provides a rich and varied feast for any student in American literature,

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American history, American ethnic studies courses, as well as in women's studies courses.

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