

Guillermo Rijas of the University of California, Davis, provides a keen analysis of representative poems complete with translation.

Another contribution of the authors of the various articles is their discussion of the Chicano writers' positions within the context of the movement and the literature whether the writers are nineteenth century predecessors, political militants, or the newer Chicano writers who herald a wider vista within the cultural context.

Especially valuable if read individually or together are the articles which are in fact comprehensive overviews of Chicano literature: The Chicana in Chicano Literature; Chicano Children's Literature; Chicano Literature from 1942 to the Present; Chicano Philosophy; Chicano Poetry; Chicano Theater; the Contemporary Chicano Novel, 1959-1979.

Supplementing the entries are useful appendices: one on writers Ernesto Galarzo, "Amado Muro," and Anthony Quinn, another on the Chronology of Chicano Literature, and last, a valuable glossary.

No one after reading the various entries will ever stereotype Chicanos. Moreover, by such a reading one will be reminded of the contributions to American literature.

Scholars, teachers, and students of Chicano and American literature will welcome the publication of this reference work.

—Cortland P. Auser
Bronx Community College (CUNY)

Mark Mathabane. *Kaffir Boy*. (New York: New American Library, 1986) 354 pp., \$8.95 paper.

Few middle and upper class Americans, whether they are black or white, can fathom the extent of humiliation, suffering, and brutality that black people are currently enduring as a result of the South African apartheid policy. Mark Mathabane's autobiographical book *Kaffir Boy* documents the inhumane treatment of blacks in that society and relates the "meaning of this policy in human terms." The book gives the reader insight into the daily life of a black family struggling to survive in the midst of hatred and bigotry.

The book is disturbing and wrenching. The truth about the horrors of life in South Africa is difficult for us to perceive. Mr. Mathabane compels us to smell the decay in the ghettos of Alexandria, to hear the sounds of the violence in the townships, to see the brutality in the cities, and to feel the desperation and despair of a people under oppression.

The author shows us through real life illustrations how the insidious laws and public policies find and imprison the underclass in South

Africa. He demonstrates how these oppressive, confusing, and contradictory laws have systematically subjugated the black population and have even succeeded in “pitting black man against black man” in order to divide and conquer.

At the same time, the book is a tale of hope, courage, and escape. It is the story of a young man hoping to fulfill his dream of coming to America to attend college and play tennis. Mark succeeds in fulfilling this dream but not without sustaining physical hardships and psychological pain.

As an autobiography the book lacks the objectivity to dissect the issues of apartheid and to separate the levels of responsibility for it. However, as an autobiography it does demonstrate the personal and family responses to these oppressive laws.

This book would be an appropriate supplemental text for courses on discrimination, human deprivation, South African apartheid policy, race, ethnicity, and minority studies.

The use of personal photographs supports and enhances the body of the text. This very readable book is a vehicle by which our youth can become aware of the issues of apartheid through the eyes of a young student with whom they can relate.

The negative outcome of reading the book may be that it would have a boomerang effect. It may encourage the false belief that if he (Mark Mathabane) can rise above the rubble—so can everyone else. The result of this type of thinking would be a tragedy and would perpetuate a “victim blaming” mentality. It may lull one into an attitude of complacency and absolve the reader from any responsibility to act on the injustice.

Another possible reaction may be the feeling that the problem is so immense and pervasive that there is no way that it can be solved or no way that one can participate in a solution. The educator would have to be aware of the possibilities of such responses and be prepared to deal with them in the classroom.

—Mary Anne Busch
High Point College

Ruthanne Lum McCunn. *Chinese American Portraits: Personal Histories, 1828-1988*. (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1988) 175 pp., \$16.95 paper.

With her latest book, *Chinese American Portraits*, Ruthanne Lum McCunn adds to her growing list of publications about the painful struggle and heroic survival of the Chinese in America. In an engaging novelistic style, accompanied by equally eloquent photographs, she tells