

guidelines for teachers and parents to work together cooperatively for the benefit of the learner are provided.

Each of these topics is worthy of attention. Each chapter provides current information, includes a summary, suggests discussion questions and extending activities for further learning, and offers an extensive bibliography of references used in the preparation of the chapter. The appendix has a fairly extensive list of multicultural education resources organized by topics. This reference list would be a good starting point for readers to begin with as they examine any of these issues or topics in greater depth. It would be useful for schools to add several titles from this list to their professional libraries for teacher reference and professional development.

The book will be useful to future teachers as they prepare for careers in education and to experienced teachers as they seek to learn more about their students' culture, traditions, and learning styles. This volume is a beginning reference to study about multicultural education and addresses important issues facing our schools and society today.

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Harold Bascom. *Apata*. (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1986) 279 pp., \$7.00 paper.

Apata is subtitled: "The story of the reluctant criminal." This more or less sums up the plot, for after page sixty-three, the hero's fortunes plummet steadily, culminating in "the biggest manhunt ever seen" in the colony of British Guiana, with *Apata* both predator and prey, alternately. With the unflinching pessimism of naturalism, Bascom traces the life of Michael Rayburn *Apata*, a young Guianese with a brilliant academic career ahead of him. The forces of heredity and environment conspire to destroy his chance for admission to King's College, prevent him from marrying the woman he loves, and limit him to dead-end jobs in the interior. He is thrown out of school because he openly criticizes the colonial system. The brown-skinned mother of the woman he loves rejects him as a prospective son-in-law because, "Beverly ent going to marry a black skin, ugly thing like you! NEVER!" Sensing that his efforts to make something of himself are doomed, *Apata* reflects: "It seems as though 'us people' get quick recognition as criminals, especially if your skin is dark. . . . Is it only when we become criminals they're prepared to take us serious?"

Apparently in an effort to be taken seriously, *Apata* embarks on a crime spree that leaves several men dead (most the result of police incom-

petence, but some by his hand). In the process, he becomes a legend of sorts. People who have never met him brag that they were friends, and a police officer named Calder sees Apata as a man who “has done something that many Black men would do, given the guts, given the motivation, given the anger.” What is odd, however, is that Apata never seems particularly courageous, motivated, or angry.

Thomas De Quincey has argued that in order for the depiction of murder to be other than coarse and vulgar, our sympathy—in the sense of comprehension, not approbation—must be not with the murdered person but with the murderer, who affords readers a glimpse into the hell that his passions have created. But Apata is a half-hearted murderer: he shoots a man in the knee and leaves him in the woods to die (or maybe not) and feels badly when policemen are killed during the pursuit. The novel suggests that life’s unfairness must be blamed for Apata’s actions. Because of this, Apata remains elusive, while some of the secondary characters are more compelling.

Bascom has a knack for vignettes. In a few pages he communicates the anguish of Gerald Tross, Apata’s best friend, when his father forces him to abandon his dreams and return to the family farm. Even more striking is a four-page sketch of Constable Boston who is transformed from ineffectual cuckold to a local hero as a result of his part in the Apata drama. When Corporal Stephens is strangled by a boa constrictor during the manhunt, the episode has added significance because of the knowledge that Stephens was Boston’s rival in both the Hoop Village police force and the bedroom. These character sketches as well as Bascom’s vibrant imagery, the touches of magic realism, and the innovative treatment of narrative structure must ultimately carry the novel, for Apata himself is rather prosaic, neither angel nor demon, but merely “a young man who put good brains to bad use.”

—Lucy Wilson
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Beth Brant, ed. *A Gathering of Spirit: A Collection by North American Indian Women.* (Ithaca, NY: Firebrand Books, 1988) 238 pp., \$9.95 paper.

In *A Gathering of Spirit*, Beth Brant has collected poetry, short stories, letters, and essays written by Native American women, relating their experiences of life in Canada and in the United States. The participating women come from all walks of life. Included are such established authors and scholars as Paula Gunn Allen, Joy Harjo, and Bea Medicine as well as women in prisons, lesbians, and those who live their everyday life on