

dreamed for her granddaughter. Jesse James is a threat to that dream, not only because of his strong sex appeal, but also because he represents the social class that Rosalie sees as markedly inferior to her own. In Rosalie's eyes, Jesse does not aspire to anything; he will settle for pumping gas during the day and drinking and gambling at his mother's house at night. Austin does not let Rosalie's class consciousness dominate the novel, however. The love that Truselle has for her children and grandchildren rivals Rosalie's love for Elzina. There is a vitality in Truselle's house that provides an alternative to the quiet, decorous life Rosalie and Elzina live.

Rosalie's values become embedded in Elzina's consciousness, however, despite the fact that Elzina goes against Rosalie in marrying Jesse. One can hear Rosalie's voice whispering in Elzina's ear even after Rosalie has died, undermining the faith Elzina has in her husband. Austin poignantly treats the failure of Elzina's belief in her husband, and it is in the doomed relationship between Elzina and Jesse that the novel reaches tragic dimensions. Jesse is the tragic victim who cannot see a way out of his life under Rosalie's critical eye; he unwittingly involves himself in a robbery and goes to prison. He, too, must leave "the garden," for he will never overcome the bitterness against his wife and her relatively affluent grandmother, who let him go to prison rather than act on his behalf. The tragedy escalates with the birth and rearing of their son Charles, resolving itself in patricide, madness, and despair. Austin, like so many other contemporary African American women writers, ends the novel not with fracture but with reconciliation. Austin adds her powerful voice and perspective to the already impressive body of African American literature.

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Mariano Azuela. *The Underdogs*. Translated by E. Munguia, Jr. (New York: New American Library, 1963) xi, 149 pp., \$3.95 paper.

The Underdogs (Los De Abajo) is a classic novel of the Mexican Revolution. The foreword briefly covers Mexican history, from Spanish Conquest to Independence to Revolution. Its purpose is to focus upon the main sociopolitical and economic problems of the Mexican Revolution.

The story line revolves around a Mexican Indian, Demetrio Macias, who joins the revolution, not because of idealism, but out of the need to protect his family from the rape and pillaging terror of the soldiers. Demetrio changes from a peace-loving, poor, illiterate peasant to a hard-core fighter. His courage in the heat of battle earns him a generalship in Pancho Villa's northern army.

Moreover, throughout the novel there is a strong underlying theme depicting a conflict between two different value systems. On the one hand,

we have that of the minority group (the poor peasants); on the other, we see either the oppressors or those who seek the power to rule; however, neither one of the latter two are concerned with the needs and interests of the underdogs, the common people. It is through the hopes and fears of Demetrio's men that we see, as in most revolutions, the anguish of the revolutionary spirit, one which produces energetic states of joy, anger, and madness. We are also exposed to the ideal goals of the revolution through the eyes, actions, and conversations of Cervantes and Solis, two educated men who are caught up in the heat of battle.

By the end of the novel, Villa suffers a great defeat by political and military forces who were once on his side. Demetrio Macias and his men flee back to their mountain village, only to be shot down like mongrel dogs. Demetrio, the Indian warrior, is the only survivor, killing as many *federales* as he can. This final act may very well be the author's way to symbolically represent the ensuing state of affairs in Mexican society. It appears to be a foreshadowing of the current feelings among several politically-minded groups in today's ever-changing Mexico. They believe that the Mexican revolution never accomplished its true goals: a successful land reform and an established governing force which has the needs of its people as primary. Many within these political minority groups believe that Mexico is due for a revolution. Whether this is true, only time will tell. Perhaps this was the author's prophetic message when he wrote *The Underdogs*.

The novel is cleverly divided into three, well-translated sections, each one signaling a significant change in the lives and times of its main characters, thus symbolic of the changes in the revolutionary process.

— Silvester J. Brito
University of Wyoming

Silvester J. Brito. *The Way of a Peyote Roadman*. American University Studies: Series 21, Regional Studies; Vol. 1. (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 1989) xvi, 183 pp., \$35.95.

The Way of a Peyote Roadman is a work which is certain to stir controversy in a number of academic circles. Silvester J. Brito holds a Ph.D. in folklore and anthropology from Indiana University. The book begins with a personal affirmation of the author's belief in the power of sorcery, based on his personal experiences culminating in a peyote ritual curing ceremony.

Following that experience, Brito writes of spending a year in intensive field study of peyote religion (1972-73). His last field data was gathered in July of 1973. The bibliography has 1976 publications as its most recent entries.

The author lays out five objectives for his study. This is done through seven short chapters followed by two appendices. The first of Brito's objectives was to establish a phenomenological record of the peyote ceremony. He does this