

difficult culture to study, let alone be conclusive about, so the author's candid acknowledgment of this limitation is encouraging. The author presents general descriptions of his findings and does not recklessly speculate about areas he is unsure about. This inconclusiveness, which was initially perceived as a weakness, seems to be a strength.

The book includes seventeen chapters that span a wide range of topics including the origin of Chinese society, Chinese names, celebrations, religious beliefs, philosophers, traditional Chinese medicine, family arrangements, afterlife, inventions, artifacts, food, education and influential subcultures. The discussion of Chinese origins provides a helpful chronological table charting Chinese society from 3,000 B.C. to the present. Over one-fourth of the book is dedicated to the origin of celebrations and festivals and religious beliefs associated with these events. A chapter dealing with Chinese philosophy describes Lao Tsu (founder of Taoism), Confucius (the foremost Chinese sage), and Mencius (the second great sage of China). The teachings of each philosopher are highlighted.

The ten-page analysis of traditional Chinese medicine is illuminating. Tom describes this complex phenomena in easily understandable terms. This analysis, a highlight of the book, is probably well written because Tom is a medical doctor. His expertise with western medicine no doubt enhances his ability to analyze the unique aspects of traditional Chinese medicine.

The book is successful as a means for conveying the ethnic experience. The archetype concept of afterlife, which is common in most ethnic group beliefs, is exemplified in the author's description of Chinese hells and their relationship with non-Chinese afterlife perspectives. As is found in many western religions, Tom says of Chinese hells, "Stories describing the frightful punishment administered in hell were often told to children to encourage them to lead virtuous lives."

The bibliography provides a diverse collection of sixty-three sources paralleling the diversity of subjects covered in the book. Similarly, the index contains 447 topical references ranging from "abacus" to the "yin and the yang" of traditional Chinese medicine. Inclusion of maps and tables is understandably limited because of the subjects covered. Tom's narratives are easy to understand even for the reader unfamiliar with China.

— Jim Schnell

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Thomas Vennum, Jr. *Wild Rice and the Ojibway People*. (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1988) ix, 358 pp., \$29.95; \$14.95 paper.

Everything you wanted to know and lots more you never thought to ask about North American wild rice are included in this extensive tome. The plant is labelled *Zizania aquatica* in the Linnaean nomenclature; the Ojibway

called it *manoomin*. The author discusses the scientific classification of wild rice, its germination, growth cycle, habitat, and enemies. He also takes up the varied uses of wild rice as food: its nutritional value, methods of preparing and cooking the grain, and the reactions of Euro-Americans to this native plant which is exceedingly rich in carbohydrates and converts efficiently to energy in the body. So much for botany and alimentation!

The bulk of Vennum's study deals with the historical and cultural relationships of wild rice to the Ojibway Indians (also known, in various transliterations, as the Chippewa and the Anishinaabeg) who live in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Manitoba, and Ontario. The immediate significance extends even further in terms of space and time. Historically, wild rice was collected by most of the Algonquian-speaking people (especially the Menominee, Sauk, Mesquakie, Kickapoo and Potawatomi) and some Siouan-speakers (in particular, the Winnebago and Santee Dakota) of the Western Great Lakes culture area. Based upon archaeological evidence, the prehistoric utilization of wild rice by Native Americans stretches back several millennia.

Vennum draws information from a wide range of historical and ethnographic studies in addition to his own personal interviews and observations, which extend back to his childhood. He considers the role of wild rice in oral traditions and contemporary ceremonies. Individual Ojibway families and groups come together each year in larger encampments to collect the rice. The author discusses the social and economic aspects of the harvest as well as the current laws governing the selling of wild rice. He describes in detail how the plant is harvested: binding the stalks, knocking seeds off their stems, drying the grain, and finally parching, hulling, and winnowing the crop in preparation for storage. Abundant photographs assist the reader in learning about this fascinating process. Each of the component steps has specific social and ritual connotations. For example, in one principal method of hulling the rice, the Ojibway tramp rhythmically on the grains which have been placed in a tub or a buckskin-lined pit dug into the earth. According to tradition, the movements of the human threshers are accompanied by the singing of songs. Hence, this operation is known as jigging or "dancing" the rice. As with any cultural phenomenon, there are transformations through time. The Ojibway still dance the rice, although youngsters may take their turn to the sounds of powwow or rock music blaring from cassette tape players. No doubt the elders shake their heads and, like older generations since time immemorial, think the kids are going to ruin. But the practice—one thread of ethnicity—persists in a recognizable form.

The reviewer's reactions to this book were personal as well as professional. He remembers back to his own childhood when he observed a wild rice festival while on a family fishing trip in Minnesota. The vivid impression made many years before lingered on and eventually was put into an anthropological framework of cultural continuity and change—a splendid example of ethnic persistence. Vennum has done a superb job of bringing all

these data together in an illuminating fashion. The resulting book can be read with great profit by those interested in the processes of ethnicity.

— David M. Gradwohl
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Alma Luz Villanueva. *The Ultraviolet Sky*. (Tempe, AZ: Bilingual Press/Editorial Bilingue, 1988) 379 pp., \$14.00 paper.

Villanueva's first novel portrays the difficulties of self-affirmation and the struggle to understand and come to terms with a multi-faceted identity despite the single-minded conventions of society. Rosa, an artist of Mexican and German heritage, struggles to create herself and find a home where all her fragmented selves can rest. Through dreams, her relationship with her husband Julio, and her struggle to paint an obscure ultraviolet sky, she begins to explore her identities and to trust where they will lead her. She chooses to follow her "wolf" who whines and claws at her consciousness and only awakens fully in her dreams. Yet to follow, she must leave everything known and go toward the frightening vastness of her unknown. Rosa moves to a cabin in a remote part of Northern California, leaving Julio and her seventeen year old son behind. The separation is painful, not only because of her unexpected pregnancy but because she is strongly tied to Julio even though he is often controlling and jealous. He is her nemesis and like her, has the blood of the Yaqui Indians, "Latino men—what she'd tried to avoid, until Julio. Both of them brought up by their grandmothers, both of them Mexican—her twin, her nemesis. Both of their families are from Sonora—both of them Yaqui Indian." As she begins to uncover and accept her many identities, Rosa wonders what her ties to her blood are.

Julio, who is Latino and often jealous, and her new lover, who is Caucasian, free spirited and much younger than she, symbolize the drama of light and dark and earth/spirit in this novel. Light and dark are both often used to allude to Rosa's dilemma. This duality comes out more as the novel progresses. Rosa feels both shadow and light, but must go, heliotropic, toward the light in order to understand her shadow. To integrate, perhaps, is not the answer, but simply to find an acceptance of all parts.

Villanueva's sensitivity to the guilt and the pain of Rosa's uncovering of self out of both old and new is the strength of the novel. Rosa struggles to "birth" herself out of the vagueness of dreams and paint, until finally she fully feels her power during the birth of her daughter. She gives birth naturally, squatting and moaning deep in her throat, defying the conventions of society. This begins her rebirth and her acceptance of the shadow she will never see, but begins to understand.

I was on the highest
mountain on earth