

which was facing forced assimilation. Rather, Bacavi was the result of an intentional upheaval—a radical revolution—in which the dominance of the *pavansinom* (ritually and politically “important people”) was smashed. As Whiteley emphasizes in his book title, he believes that the split was a deliberate attempt to restructure a portion of Hopi society.

Whiteley’s study is particularly interesting given the abundant data which have been assembled on the Hopi. The sources include discussions by native writers including Emory Sekaquaptewa, Helen Sekaquaptewa, and Polingaysi Qoyawayma (Elizabeth White) in addition to studies by outside observers such as Fred Eggan, Elsie Clews Parsons, Mischa Titiev, and H. R. Voth. It is often assumed that Hopi culture and history have been almost completely recorded, since that group of Native Americans is included in virtually every introductory anthropology textbook. And yet there is much that is not known about the Hopi given their general suspicion of those who come prying into their secrets. Indeed some writers have refrained from taking up matters which the Hopi might find delicate. Whiteley himself faces this dilemma. He reports, for example, that the split in the Oraibi community may have come about as a reaction to corruption and improprieties “which are still too sensitive to discuss in print.” Tantalizing indeed! The reader has the feeling that there are germane data which might or might not be needed to support a particular hypothesis. To his credit, however, Whiteley states his ethical position and is candid about the limitations of his research and, ultimately, his conclusions.

Deliberate Acts will be of particular interest to those whose disciplinary specialties are in anthropology, sociology, history, and political science. Of particular note to NAES members whose perspective is interdisciplinary, this case study illuminates *intra*-group dynamics which are important factors in analyzing ethnicity. Group identities are often the result of complex processes of fission as well as fusion. Whiteley’s scholarly and interestingly-written study is a fine contribution to the literature dealing with these issues.

— David M. Gradwohl
Iowa State University

Margaret B. Wilkerson, ed. *9 Plays by Black Women*. (New York: Mentor, 1986) 508 pp., \$4.95.

Black women writers, primarily novelists, have taken center stage for the last two decades, but black women playwrights have not been given similar coverage. The explanation, in part, is that plays are often only published after successful productions, and the plays by the majority of black women have only been produced in local, small theaters. Consequently, their works have not been given serious critical attention. Marg-

aret Wilkerson's *9 Plays by Black Women* showcases plays by established and well celebrated black female playwrights, like Alice Childress, Lorraine Hansberry, Ntozake Shange, and Beah Richards as well as less well-known playwrights whose works deserve to be produced more widely such as P. J. Gibson, Kathleen Collins, Aishah Rahman and Alexis De Veaux.

In the introduction Wilkerson provides an historical overview which traces the tradition of black women playwrights and situates their works within the socio-political movements that served as impetus and which informed their plays. Wilkerson sets the record straight that black women playwrights are not new to the theater scene. She cites Angelina Grimke's *Rachel* which "became the first drama of record to be written and performed by blacks in this century." First presented March 3, 1916, in Washington by the NAACP's Drama Committee, Grimke's play was labeled a "race play." Wilkerson notes that "*Rachel*, this first major play by a black woman, boldly depicted a woman who was the antithesis of the prevailing stereotypes, and who refused to pretend that she enjoyed the same privileges as other women in the society." This is an indication that women playwrights did not shy away from confronting the stereotypical images of black women as mammy or promiscuous figures.

The themes of the plays in this volume are as varied as are the writers' styles and senses of aesthetic. This wide range indicates that black women playwrights are not limited to any particular theme or style. The plays are arranged chronologically, rather than grouped according to commonality of theme or style. A thematic or stylistic approach might have served to direct readers to examine the plays within a specific framework, and serve to cue readers about Wilkerson's criterion for selecting these plays over the many others that she acknowledges. Wilkerson could have used the preface to each play to link them intrinsically to each other, as the content of the plays are not limited to the time period when they were written.

These nine plays demonstrate the innovative techniques of the different playwrights. P. J. Gibson's *Brown Silk and Magenta Sunsets* (1985) and Kathleen Collins' *The Brothers* (1982) are examples of fine writing, strong dramatic tension, and creative use of the stage. Aishah Rahman's *Unfinished Women Cry in No Man's Land While a Bird Dies in a Gilded Cage* (1977) provides an inside look, and identifies the need that led young girls to become pregnant, while Elaine Jackson's *Paper Dolls* (1983) portrays the folly as well as the tremendous assault to the spirit of those black women who attempt to mold themselves after the Euro-American beauty standard. All the plays in this volume are well crafted and evoke visual imagery that leaps from the page. Hence, the omission of Adrienne Kennedy, whose play *Funnyhouse of a Negro* won her an Obie Award in 1964, from this seminal volume is noticeable.

This collection is a must for anyone interested in African American drama, specifically plays by women. Margaret Wilkerson best sums up the importance of the volume:

The new generation of black women playwrights represented in this anthology is no longer bound by the restrictions of theatrical realism and cultural inhibitions. They stretch the arts of the theatre to fulfill the demands of their consciousness, their recognition of the self as an integral part of the world, both shaped by, and shaping the forces of society.

— Opal Palmer Adisa
University of California, Berkeley

Roland E. Wolsey. *The Black Press, U.S.A.* 2nd Edition. (Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press, 1990) 478 pp., \$39.95.

The Black Press, U.S.A. is an interesting book written about black publications in the United States from a historical perspective. The author, a white professor emeritus of Journalism at the Newhouse School of Public Communication at Syracuse University, is to be commended on his ability to organize the history of the black press in such an organized and interesting manner.

The Black Press, U.S.A. includes a three-page foreword by Robert E. Johnson and a five-page informative preface by the author, Roland E. Wolsey. The text is divided into sixteen chapters that cover a variety of issues relative to journalism in general and to black journalism in particular.

The first chapter discusses the definition of the “black press,” why it came into being and why the need for the black press continues. For example, the author states that the primary purpose of the black press, “160 years ago and for many years thereafter, was to campaign for freedom of slaves. After the Civil War it was for more fair treatment of black citizens in many areas of their lives, such as access to public eating places, attendance at white colleges, and use of public beaches.” He further states that the “black newspapers now exist primarily to report the news of the black population and the particular local community, to give space to their own and others’ opinion on many radically oriented matters, to promote the activities of the society in which they exist, to present advertisers with a billboard or a spoken message, and to be the advocate for the black population.” The black press also serves as a source of income for its owners.

The second chapter is very important because it deals with the history of the “beginnings” of the black press. The author gives a rather detailed history of the development of the black press. He compares the beginning of black press (1827) to that of the white press that had already existed 137 years. The author discusses the early publications and the founders of these publications. He is also careful to include the names of early black journalists, both male and female.

A variety of other important issues are covered in the remaining fourteen chapters: Black Journalism Enters the Twentieth Century; World War II and After; Today’s Major Newspapers; Local Newspaper Voices; The Black