

## *Explorations in Sights and Sounds*

also contains a chronology of the Latin American historical novel, 1949-1992, including the country of origin as well as extensive notes, a bibliography, and an index.

The section which deals directly with ethnic issues is Chapter Seven, "Over Two Thousand Years of Exile and Marginality—The Jewish Latin American Historical Novel." In it, Menton discusses the novels by Orgambide and Scliar as two versions of the "wandering Jew" myth. Because of the picaresque nature of *Aventuras de Edmund Ziller* and because of its emphasis on the historical conflicts between the hegemonic forces and an array of marginalized, exploited people—Blacks, mulattoes, Indians, anarchists, communists, and others—the protagonist's Jewishness is relatively minimized. By contrast, in *A estranha nação de Rafael Mendes*, the main theme of the novel is not the denunciation of the enemies of democracy or socialism; rather, the principal themes are the strange survival of the Jews, with emphasis on their almost 500-year history in Brazil, and the dual nature of the archetypal Jew. (152) Menton discusses the novels of Aridjis and Muñiz as contrasting presentations of the effect of the inquisition, especially praising the Muñiz novel for its lyric quality.

Chapter Eight examines Fuentes's *La campaña* as a Neo-criollista novel which captures "Spanish America's ethnic panorama: the whites and blacks of Buenos Aires, the Indians of Alto Peru, the blacks of Maracaibo, and a variety of mestizos."

The book would be of interest to someone planning a comparative ethnic literature or ethnic studies course looking at the new historical novel in the Americas. It would also be of use to those who seek an overview or bibliography of Latin American historical novels. It would be of little interest for someone who is looking for an in-depth analysis of ethnicity in Latin American historical fiction.

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**C. Hart Merriam. *The Dawn of the World: Myths and Tales of the Miwok Indians of California*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993) 273 pp., \$30.00 cloth, \$9.95 paper.**

Naturalist C. Hart Merriam devoted the last years of his life to research on Indians of California, meticulously recording and documenting his observations and the knowledge he gained from the various tribes. In 1910, he published a collection of myths and tales told to him by the elders of the California Mewan Indians under the

title, *The Dawn of the World: Myths and Weird Tales Told by the Mewan Indians of California*. Eighty-three years later the University of Nebraska Press has published a Bison Book Edition of Merriam's collection. Except for the change in title, the Bison Book Edition is a faithful reproduction of the earlier publication, including the original error in pagination (page numbers 85 and 86 are omitted, although no text is missing). The Bison Book Edition of Merriam's collection includes a brief but informative introductory essay by anthropologist Lowell J. Bean that provides biographical data on Merriam and historical information on the Miwok Indians (referred to in Merriam's text as Mewan and/or Mewuk).

By providing access to this heretofore hard-to-find collection, the University of Nebraska Press has not only added a valuable resource for use by scholars, but an enjoyable reading experience for anyone interested in vanishing cultures. Merriam's collection includes over thirty ancient myths, or First People stories, which relate the history of the world according to Miwok oral tradition. A section referred to as "Present Day Myths," composed mostly of fragments and incomplete tales, is also included and is grouped as follows: Beliefs Concerning Animals; Beliefs Concerning Ghosts and the Sign of Death; Beliefs Concerning Natural Phenomena; and Beliefs Concerning Witches, Pigmies, Giants, and Other Fabulous Beings. However, the section on ancient myths is the strength of this collection, with the attention to detail that makes Merriam so admired by scholars. Each tale is attributed to a particular Miwok tribe, with different versions of similar tales grouped together. Merriam footnotes the tales, explaining differences to other stories or to the general statements he has made in the "Introduction."

Merriam's "Introduction" is useful to scholars of Miwok cultural history. He summarizes the fundamental elements of the general mythology, minor beliefs and local or tribal beliefs, and explains the characteristics of the First People. In addition, he provides a brief distribution, with map, of the Miwok tribes in California. The detail of the "Index" to the collection is impressive. As a naturalist, Merriam also provides a list of the scientific names of animals and plants found in the tales which he has recorded. Accompanying the text are illustrations by Edwin W. Deming and Charles J. Hittell. These illustrations were made specifically for the original edition and relate a pictorial version of the tales.

If there is a weakness to this collection, it is Merriam's emphasis on the naturalist aspects of the tales. However, this is a minor weakness, for Merriam was also profoundly interested in the vanishing cultural history of the Miwok Indians. Lowell Bean claims this collection is a "magical and practical introduction to the understanding of the California Indian world." This is an appropriate

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assessment of this collection, for Merriam has provided valuable information regarding the Miwok Indians and how they regard their place in the world.

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**Allen G. Noble, ed. *To Build in a New Land: Ethnic Landscapes in North America*. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992) x, 445pp., \$29.95 paper, \$56.00 cloth.**

Like so many works with sections on various subdivisions of a general topic overseen by a general editor, this volume has its ups and downs. The thesis—that various ethnic groups have provided America with various sorts of architectural styles and modifications of native structures—is new and fascinating.

Sandwiched between an introduction and a conclusion by the editor are twenty chapters about particular ethnic groups including people of color such as Native Americans, African Americans, and Spanish Americans as well as European groups such as the Germans, the Scotch-Irish, Danes, Czechs, and Basques. The pattern is that a particular area—large or small (Finns in the Lake Superior Region or Basques in the American West, for example)—is focused on and the ethnic architecture of the place is described in words and with large numbers of pictures. Notes are arranged by chapter, and there is a very extensive bibliography.

As the editor admits, “No one would pretend that one book could present every ethnic community in every part of Canada and the United States. For example, more than forty different ethnic groups settled in the state of Wisconsin alone! But the ethnic groups in this volume do represent a comprehensive cross-section of the immigrant groups who chose to make North America their home.” (p Nevertheless, there is a broad spectrum of groups, each restricted to a single chapter except for the Germans, who are discussed in both Texas and Ohio.

As to the characteristic structures, some readers probably will be familiar with the hogan (in many varied forms) associated with the Navajo and the shotgun house of African Americans in the American South. Others are much more esoteric, for instance the ty house, a small motel unit-like structure meant to house an itinerant minister for a night, which is found only in southern Ohio Welsh settlements.

Some of the chapters adhere to the thesis more than others. Some writers have provided almost exclusively architectural mate-