

# Book Reviews



*Counterpoise: For Social Responsibilities, Liberty and Dissent.* Quarterly, v. 1, no. 1 (Jan. 1997). Gainesville, Florida: Alternatives in Print Task Force, Social Responsibilities Round Table, ALA, 1997. 66 p. \$35 (institutions), \$25 (individuals), \$15 (students/retired). (ISSN 1092-0714).

This is the inaugural issue of *Counterpoise*, an alternative review journal published by the Alternatives in Print Task Force of the ALA's Social Responsibilities Round Table. The AIP Task Force "advocates the selection of materials from small and alternative press publishers and independent producers for library collections by compiling directories, sponsoring programs, and providing reviews, articles and exhibits." There are those who would raise the critical question: Why do we need another review journal? Editor Charles Willett provides a cogent and definitive response. He reminds us that: "The alternative press is an enormous body of books [and other formats] often ignored, misrepresented or suppressed by corporate and government media and . . . overlooked by schools, universities and libraries worldwide. *Counterpoise* describes, criticizes, defends and promotes these publications and products against this bias."

Willett has assembled a distinguished array of activist librarians and scholars, including Chris Atton, Sanford Berman, Kathy Cone, Fred J. Hay, Loriene Roy, Daniel Tsang, and others as associate editors. This magazine is divided into five parts: Features & Essays, Print Resources, Non-Print Resources, Bibliographic Tools, and Indexes.

Elaine LaMattinas essay, "Literature: Cultures Most Valuable Resource," sets the tone for this issue. She gives an his-

torical overview of the founding of the independent small press publishing houses, which nurtured and provided publishing opportunities for many great writers. "Yet today," she writes, "most small publishers stand at the brink of bankruptcy." She warns that "libraries too will inevitably feel the pinch, as our literature and our culture narrow." Review essays by Carl Vogel, Bill Harvey, Charles Willett, Jennifer Cram, and Richard Bryon Anderson Jr. are equally challenging and stimulating. They successfully demonstrate the importance of alternative literature and the critical need for *Counterpoise*.

"Reference Reviews" constitutes the first section of "Print Resources." Because most librarians still believe that reference is the backbone of library work, these thirteen reviews of alternative reference resources are essential. They include two reviews of each of the following: *Alternative Literature: A Practical Guide for Librarians*; *Annotations: A Directory of Periodicals Listed in Alternative Press Index*; *Censored: The News That Didn't Make the News and Why: The 1996 Project Censored Yearbook*. All the reference reviews were written by well-known librarians such as Bryon Anderson, Al Kagan, Pam Keeseey, Steven R. Harris, and others.

The evaluation of books, pamphlets, and magazines were written by professionals who not only care about the importance of alternative literature and resources but also adhere to good book reviewing principles, providing authoritative treatment and judicious comparisons. The forty-three reviews in "Book Reviews" include reviews of books on racism (e.g., Kofi Buenor Hadjors South End Press book *Another America: The Poli-*

*tics of Race and Blame*) and multiculturalism (e.g., Bergin and Garveys *Multiculturalism from the Margins: Nondominant Voices on Differences and Diversity*), as well as several excellent and challenging reviews of feminist and lesbian titles that are not available in most mainstream journals. And where else would you find a review of Beverly Guy-Sheftalls *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought* (New Press, 1995)? A "must-read" is Sanford Bermans review of Paul Kivels *Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice* (New Society Publishers, 1996).

"Pamphlet Reviews" contains reviews of fifteen pamphlets with compact authoritative information vital to the users of all kinds of libraries. Of special interest is the inclusion of several pamphlets from foreign governments and organizations.

Of the twenty-nine magazine reviews, it is quite apparent that all of these publications should be accessible and made available to patrons and that librarians should ensure their wider dissemination to a general public who are, for the most part, unaware of them.

There are four video reviews including one for *Frantz Fanon: Black Skin, White Mask*, which makes evident its great potential for Black Studies Departments as well as in public and academic library collections. This issue also contains three reviews of CD-ROMs, including *Earth Summit: The NGO Archives*. Inclusion of the listing, "Bibliographic Tools for the Alternative Press," and the publishers and author/title indices, makes *Counterpoise* an excellent reference tool. This is a publication that should be in all academic and public libraries.—*E. J. Josey, University of Pittsburgh.*

**Dosa, Marta.** *Across All Borders: International Information Flows and Applications: Collected Papers.* Lanham: Scarecrow Pr., 1997. 420 p. \$69.50, alk. paper. (ISBN 0-8108-3198-8). LC96-21269.

Publication of a book that is no more than a collection of previously printed articles is a gamble. Two of the most obvious dangers are the lack of a sustaining theme and the reproduction of material that is so old as to be obsolete. This volume contains twenty-one papers originally published between 1974 and 1994 in sources that are admittedly often obscure and, no doubt, now hard to acquire. The articles are grouped into six main themes: the role of information in economically developing societies; information-sharing through human resource networks; information and problem-solving; information policies; information education and training; and transnational corporations and Third World information flows.

Dosa is based at Syracuse University and has had experience of an impressive range of international projects. The undoubted strength of this collection of papers lies in the interdisciplinary, global, and humanistic approach that informs all of her writing about international information flows. It is refreshing to read work that declines to use the clichéd assumptions and religious fervor typical of so much writing on information technology. Dosa is clearly concerned about people and their environment, and all her questions stem from this: For example, how can the South benefit from First World technology; can the technology be made mutually acceptable; and what is the exact nature of information diffusion? People occupy a central position in her work as the agency that turns data into knowledge, and she has a recurrent concern about building bridges between North and South when considering the role of information in economic, social, and cultural development. Another important thread running through the book is that of communication as a basis of trust and mutuality, and this is where Dosa's own experience and personality emerge most clearly.