

in the postmodern ideological critique"). Travis notes the emergence of the "resistant" reader, who engages with texts rather than immersing herself in them. Reading in the postmodern age has become an ironic act. "*Beloved* and *Middle Passage: Race, Narrative, and the Critic's Essentialism*" contrasts novels by Toni Morrison and Charles Johnson. Most interesting here is the explanation of how Morrison builds on and overturns the conventions of the traditional slave narrative, creating a genuine sense of the "other" that readers can neither wholly identify with nor wholly reject. Johnson, on the other hand, attempts to transcend race and in doing so negates the existence of the "other." Both chapters are marred, in my view, by an undercurrent of anxious moralizing not uncharacteristic of academic writing today.

The chapter "Reading (in) Cyberspace: Cybernetic Aesthetics, Hypertext, and the Virtual Public Space" will be more accessible to most librarians. There is less theory and more straightforward description of the experience of reading hypertext narratives. How many of us have actually read any of these? Travis gamely traversed William Gibson's *Neuromancer*, Michael Joyce's *Afternoon*, Carolyn Guyer's *Quibbling*, and Stuart Moulthrop's *Victory Garden*. Despite her predisposition in favor of interactivity and agency in a hypertext environment, she found these books somewhat disappointing. There was not enough surprise or adventure. They created a dreamy world without resolution and were in danger of "fetishizing" form. Some of these early hypertext fictions, curiously enough, originated as commentaries or recreations of postmodernist novels by writers such as Thomas Pynchon.

The final chapter, "Cultural Production and the Teaching of Reading," is very tentative. Here Travis espouses the "pedagogic turn evident in recent literary theory and criticism." She is seeking ways to reform the traditional classroom hierarchy, in which the teacher is the "author" and students are passive "readers."

She also wants to create a truly multicultural educational experience. Although she admits, with characteristic candor, that computers in the classroom have mostly proved a failure, she projects a vision of a pedagogy of multicultural "performance" through computer networks. Even this chapter, thankfully, has patches of interesting material, such as the comparison of college campuses to shopping malls and theme parks.

Clearly, this is not an essential book for librarians to read. However, there is a recurring theme that I found relevant. Every profound change in publishing or readership has given rise to a reaction of fear. Too many readers with too much freedom, it is feared, will lead to excess, promiscuity, and anarchy in reading. Worse, people will spend too much time in an imaginary world. They will lose touch with reality and be unable to distinguish truth from falsehood. These same fears arose with each expansion of printing, literacy, mass media, film, television, and now the Internet. Perhaps we should step back and reflect historically on our present concerns about readers (especially students) surfing on the Web, our worry about information overload, superficiality, and loss of standards. I suspect we would be less afraid.—*Jean Alexander, Carnegie Mellon University.*

Untold Stories: Civil Liberties, Libraries, and Black Librarianship. Ed. John Mark Tucker. Champaign, Ill.: University of Illinois Graduate School of Library and Information Science, 1998. 210p. \$27 (ISBN 0-87845-104-8). LC 98-196951.

Untold Stories is a major contribution to the study of African-American librarianship and the struggle to provide library and information services to African-American communities. The book is the result of a Library History Round Table program presented at the 1994 ALA Conference in Miami Beach, Florida. The essays—by fifteen different writers, some black and some white—describe nearly two hundred years of effort; chronicling the struggle for liberty and literacy for

African Americans, from the Sunday school reading societies for black females in New York City in 1799 to current efforts to provide adequate library services to minority communities in urban centers and rural areas. The book reminds us that the days of segregated state library associations and segregated "black branches" of public library systems are not as far back in our history as we would like to believe.

Several essays document the heroic efforts of individuals such as E.J. Josey, Virginia Lacy Jones, Thomas F. Blue, Clara Stanton Jones, Edward Christopher Williams, and many others to address inequities within the profession, to break down the artificial barriers erected by some of our colleagues, and to pave the way for future generations. They also remind us of the sorry record the ALA and its leadership have sometimes left in the drive for racial equality in the library world. We are reminded that as late as 1956, African-Americans attending ALA conferences could not stay in the same hotels as other conferees or eat in the same dining facilities, even when they were ALA-sponsored events. It is incomprehensible today to think that equal access to public facilities at ALA conferences

could have been an issue some librarians opposed.

On the other hand, another essay documents efforts of some members of the ALA to improve access to library resources and services for African-Americans. In 1921, the New York Public Library's Ernestine Rose was appointed chair of a Work with Negroes Round Table for which she conducted surveys to document the adequacy of library services for African-Americans and through which she proposed recommendations for improving the conditions she had found. In 1930, Louis Shores published a survey assessing public library services for African-Americans in eighty cities with large numbers of African-American residents. His findings further documented the existence of unequal and inadequate resources and services, as well as an absence of, or rank discrimination in, hiring and promotion of African-American librarians.

Two highly regarded academic librarians, Edward Holley (white) and Charles Churchwell (black) recall their respective perceptions of the integration of the library staff at the University of Houston in 1967. Another essay by Casper L. Jordan and Beverly P. Lynch addresses ACRL's efforts in the 1970s to improve the administrative and managerial skills of African-American library administrators by establishing an internship program that enabled them to spend up to a year working with administrators at leading mainstream academic libraries.

Several case studies are presented to illustrate local efforts to improve services to African-American and, in the case of North York, Canada, Afro-Canadian and Caribbean communities. In one instance, in Wichita Falls, Texas, we learn that when integration involved the absorption of an historically black library, the results were not exactly what had been anticipated. In his essay, Donald Franklin Joyce describes how several black librarians have expanded their approach to meeting the information needs of African-Americans by moving into the field of publishing.

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The book ends with a bibliographic essay entitled "Civil Rights, Libraries, and African American Librarianship, 1954–1994." It highlights the fact that there is still a great deal of progress to be made and that there are ample research opportunities for those who wish to document it.

This is an extraordinary publication that should be required reading for everyone interested in librarianship and in libraries as a positive influence in society. *Untold Stories* is a vivid reminder of how far we have come, but also from how low a position we began. Segregation is not as distant in history as many of us would like to think; and discrimination, with its deleterious effects, has not disappeared from our midst.—*Stanton F. Biddle, Baruch College, CUNY.*