

hosier—as Bygrave also states (47). “Jove” is not “the Roman name for Jupiter” (49); they are both versions of the Roman name for Zeus. “Amandus” and “Amanda” are not “both Latin for ‘loved’” (140); they are gerundives, and mean “to be loved.” There may be “no consensus on whether [‘Ozymandias’] is pronounced with the stress on the third or the fourth syllable” (52), but the metre of the sonnet’s tenth line clearly demands the third. The recipient of Walton’s letters, in *Frankenstein*, is not “Mrs Elizabeth Saville” (58), but Margaret Walton Saville, whose initials are significantly identical to her creator’s. The story of the birth of Sin does not occur in the first book of *Paradise Lost* (104), but in the second, and Milton does not describe light as “co-essential” with heaven (124), but as “co-eternal” (3.2). The discussion of “spots of time” does not occur in the last book of *The Prelude* (121), but in the eleventh, and Wordsworth does not stress the importance of having “among least things / An under-sense of greatness” (130), but an “under-sense of greatest” (7.711). The storming of the Tuileries on 10 August 1792 was not the same event as the September Massacres (133). The Dedication to *Don Juan* can hardly have been intended to replace the Preface (167), since Byron refers to the Dedication in the Preface; Byron does not call Castlereagh both “an ‘intellectual eunuch’ and a ‘dry bob’” in the Dedication (170); he directs the second sexual insult at the other Bob, Southey, and it is not “Regency slang for *coitus interruptus*,” but for sex without an ejaculation—the point being not that Southey practises birth control, but that he, like Castlereagh, is basically impotent. Julia’s letter (*Don Juan* 1.192-97) is not “the first time any of the characters in the poem are [sic] allowed to speak for themselves at any length” (175); it is preceded by her (longer) tirade against her husband (1.145-57). Coleridge’s 1817 revisions to “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner” were not his last (223), as Jack Stillinger has shown. The conditional is a mood, not a voice (232). Rousseau was not an “advocate of individual rights” (254), but the theorist of the general will. Individually, some of these mistakes are not very serious; collectively, they are not a very good example for students. They seem especially unfortunate in a book on which distance-education students have to rely.

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Gwendolyn Etter-Lewis and Michèle Foster, eds. *Unrelated Kin: Race and Gender in Women’s Personal Narratives*. New York: Routledge, 1996. Pp. xiii, 228. \$55.00, \$16.95 pb.

I think I can predict that this excellent anthology *Unrelated Kin: Race and Gender in Women’s Personal Narratives* or selected parts of it in course-work readings packages will spread widely throughout the disciplines not only of Sociology and Anthropology, but also of Women’s

Studies, Native Studies, History, and English. The various researchers' examinations of the theoretical aspects of interviewing are candid and clear, making them accessible to students of a range of disciplines. And the portraits and self-portraits of the women informants emerge vivid and memorable, whether expressed as oral histories or life writings.

Etter-Lewis's "Introduction" establishes the aims of the volume and its place in the recent history of similar publications. The book "focuses exclusively on women of color" (1). Also, it "challenges the 'status quo' in research and pedagogy [as] conceptual, theoretical, and applied research from multidisciplinary perspectives refine and clarify ideas" (1). Though oral history interviewing may create a myriad of techniques of elicitation, "matching interviewers and interviewees by gender and race is likely to create an empowering environment for the narrator and a more reliable finished product" (8). Only one interviewer in the anthology is male. Lance Rasbridge, an American, was able to converse in the Khmer language, and he was motivated to act as an advocate, to preserve Cambodian refugee women's "historical testimonial" of the Cambodian holocaust (202). There are twelve essays in *Unrelated Kin: Race and Gender in Women's Personal Narratives*; six deal with African-American women, one with Cambodian, and two with Chinese. The remaining three present Shoshone Indians, Puerto Ricans, and a Mayan Indian woman. All the writers and interviewees are currently living in the US.

For me, the more thought-provoking essays in the text show the researcher considering the shifts in her own self-consciousness as a means to understanding her informant, her informant's cultural perceptions, and the interviewing process itself. The result can be a double life-narrative. Linda Williamson Nelson, in "'Hands in the Chit'lins': Notes on Native Anthropological Research among African-American Women," explains her progress away from the "naive and all too simplistic concept of endogenous or native anthropology, [one] that predicted that [her] insider status would be taken for granted [by] informants" (183). She came to see that "linguistic behavior," especially early in each encounter, contributed significantly to the relative ease or difficulty of establishing and maintaining rapport with informants. Nelson develops a theory of "gradations of endogeny," which, she says, requires looking inward as well as outward at the subject of study (184). This strategy enables researchers "to see [themselves] as cultural actors and potential objects of study" (184). Her lively account, complete with dialogue in BEV (Black English Vernacular), provides a multifaceted portrait of rural and urban African-American attitudes to community, to linguistic code-shifting, and to the often ambiguous position of the "insider/outsider" researcher.

Only once in this text is the difficult issue of "truthvalue" in life narrative raised. Most contemporary feminist theorists of life writing/

autobiography/autography now accept the idea that any constructed narrative will necessarily have about it aspects of "the fictive," if only because selection of events must occur, and because individual perceptions of value must guide the process of selection. Most feminist theorists also now validate such fictiveness as the process of self-creation via writing/speaking. Much more problematic interpretive situations can arise, however, when the informant speaks out of a different cultural assessment of reality than that of the interviewer.

Janneli F. Miller confronts an impossible truth in "'I Have a Frog in My Stomach': Mythology and Truth in Life History." Lucia, a Mayan Indian woman from Guatemala, recounted her life story to Miller, including the information that as a young girl she had had a hostile spell placed upon her; subsequently with the assistance of a male witch she gave birth to a frog and so was released from the spell. This event marked a turning point in her life, she asserted, because she then became a kinder person, and one concerned with social justice for her people. Miller reviews several paradigms in her attempt to come to terms with Lucia's story: the psychological (adults structure their self-image in relation to their understanding of their childhoods), the cultural (a culture involves shared assumptions about the nature of reality), and the relativist anthropological (what she calls the "Cultural apartheid" (115) that followed prererelativist anthropological theory). Simply to say that "we live in separate worlds and that there can be no understanding of other belief systems is another imposition of the Western worldview," (115). Miller acknowledges that she, her students, and probably her readers rely on the Western scientific paradigm—"repeatable observable occurrences"—and so readily believe that the related facts of Lucia's story must be "coincidences" (113).

But Miller refuses to deny Lucia her voice, partly because she believes Lucia had been speaking honestly to her. She concludes that because "reality is a fluid phenomenon . . . constantly recreated and renegotiated by individuals around the world," we of the West "must not presume to have an edge on the picture of reality" (115, 116). She calls for the "subjunctive, as-if, open" (116) attitude that allows for "the idea that such a story could be true" and concludes that maintaining such an attitude "enriches [our] sense of the world" (117).

Whether mothers, workers, immigrants, revolutionaries, keepers of language and custom, teachers, interviewers, or any combination of those roles, the women of *Unrelated Kin: Race and Gender in Women's Personal Narratives*, whatever their ethnic origins, speak together. In so doing, they reveal as true a relatively new idea of history, that women's lives are not to be found merely on the periphery of historical events. These women, and countless others like them, constitute the core of the communities that experience historical change. In many cases, they have been responsible for the very survival of their communities and of their groups' historical memories. The researchers allow the in-

dividual to speak with the collective, the community to help define the individual. Life writings, as the theorists point out, invite readers to shape their own identities in response to their reading. The essays in this collection invite readers to learn—and particularly to learn to assess through cross-cultural comparison their own “insider/outsider” status in their own communities.

CAROL MORRELL



Diane Purkiss. *The Witch in History: Early Modern and Twentieth-Century Representations*. London: Routledge, 1996. Pp. viii, 296. \$24.95 pb.

Acknowledging how informed she is as a second generation, second wave feminist by stories of the misogyny associated with the “Burning Times,” Diane Purkiss begins very early in this book to debunk the narrative she has inherited from radical feminists like Mary Daly. Or rather, using her own narrative, premised on late twentieth century inheritances from British cultural studies, poststructuralism, post-modernism, and psychoanalysis, together with her wide-ranging interests and research, Purkiss adeptly redefines the first generation feminist narrative as a myth invested in a reductive reading of woman as victim.

Her thesis about the complexity of early modern women’s stake in witchcraft seeks its evidence in the often contradictory and tangled stories within women witnesses’ witch-trial depositions. British historians have been guilty, she says, of reading them, if at all, with the jaded eye of Enlightenment scepticism and certainly with gendered blinders. And despite three decades of feminist interest in witches, feminist scholars have paid no mind to actual women’s words, ignoring the rhetoric of anxiety and influence which Purkiss as a literary scholar and analyst of popular culture cannot escape. For Purkiss who can point to no major study of English witchcraft by a woman, “the discourse of academic histories of witchcraft is still a male one, composed for the male voice” (59-60) and maintained by the practice of reading in bulk rather than in detail (71).

The alternate history of early modern village women that Purkiss narrates reveals the stories told by women of their fears of contagion and pollution for which gendered household roles held them accountable. Central to those fears were the deaths of children at birth or later, often the results of poverty or infection. Sometimes the women’s words reveal their household angers or frustrations which could only be projected on a dark Other, the witch. Village women, says Purkiss, had a significant investment in perpetrating tropes of the witch as anti-mother and anti-housewife, and sometimes expressing those beliefs in deposition was a way for them to be heard by their betters.

Indeed, witchcraft as agency becomes the subject of an entire chapter entitled “Self-fashioning by Women: Choosing to be a Witch.”