

Rafael Castillo. *Distant Journeys*. (Tempe, AZ: Bilingual Press/Editorial Bilingüe, 1991) 101 pp., \$9.00 paper.

Rafael Castillo's collection of short stories takes us to the borders, whether they be geographic or psychic, where ironic humor laced with existential angst always looms. His characters range from academic Chicanos negotiating identities, to gorilla freedom fighters in El Salvador. Their commonality lies in their struggles to find self-agency and identity within a rearranged world.

In the first section, "Distant Journeys with Strange People," nine Chicano Texans struggle with their cultural displacement while battling both internal and external betrayal. "The Boy from Aztlán" focuses on Roberto Guzmán-Levine, "A bronze mestizo with an upper-class Welsh accent...a Ph.D. in Literary Theory from Oxford" (3), who goes by the pseudonym Nahum Goldstein and is a currently successful academic due to the popularity of his book on the confessions of a Buchenwald concentration survivor who betrayed his fellow inmates. He is caught between Chicano protestors who are incensed that he would write a Jewish novel and not a novel of his people, Jewish radicals from the Zionist Brotherhood, and by the academics who treat him like an exotic specimen in a zoo. With ironic humor, Guzmán-Levine finds he is able to live strategically within contradictions and multiple cultures and also break free from the binary of choosing between his culture or his art.

The second section, "Distant Journeys to Faraway Places," somberly focuses on injustice in Central America and Spain during the Franco era; however, Castillo always maintains a sense of irony. The cryptic story, "Jesús is Dead," is set in Paris where Salvadorian novelists, Algerians, Gypsies, Junkies, and all mixture of night people are a part of the contemporary post national world of Paris where Grover Washington tunes provide background music. Castillo ends each tale in this section with a type of Kierkegaardian justice and existential view of life and death.

Finally, the last section of stories, "Distant Journeys to Other Cultures," begins with the story, "The Poetry Club." Every third Sunday poets gather to "read the latest postmodernist lyricism and chat about the dismal decline of American poetry over Chablis and hors d'oeuvres" (79). Ironic self-betrayal by these bourgeois poets is apparent when they at first refuse to allow Hugo, an old world poet, to mix with their modern "cutting edge" poetry. The very traditions that they want to throw out are represented in Hugo's poetry, and even though Hugo's poetry temporarily purges them of "that cataclysmic sin their fathers' had committed of anglicizing their Spanish

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names" (81), he is soon replaced by the newest modern poet, who is then rapidly replaced by an old world poet. Castillo shows the cyclical cycle of modernity and tradition inherent in the artist's creative process.

Rafael Castillo takes us on journeys that are neither so distant nor as strange as they may first appear. In these stories he shows us the commonality of peoples and their struggles for integrity and creative freedom. In the end, *Distant Journeys* is a rewarding read—one that pulls you from simple to complex, mixing the seemingly incongruent until patterns emerge that create new worlds to explore.

Julie Schrader Villegas
University of Washington

Stewart Culin. *Games of North American Indians*. 2 Vols. (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1992) 846 pp., \$13.95.

About a dozen years ago, I had the opportunity to buy Stewart Culin's classic work, *Games of the North American Indians*, published in the 1902-1903 annual report of the Bureau of American Ethnology (BAE), Smithsonian Institution. The original edition numbered 9,682 copies, of which almost half went to the United States Congress. Beautifully illustrated with more than one thousand figures (mainly drawings of recreative artifacts, plus 21 photographic plates), the heavy and gold-embossed volume was offered for \$175 by an antique dealer in Maine. Because I knew the fellow, he was willing to shave \$50 from the price. Although this was still a fortune for me at the time, I made the purchase, and the book continues to serve me as a reference. Today, this original edition is difficult to get and, no doubt, even more expensive. Because of its ongoing significance as a rich source of detailed information about traditional native entertainment, I welcome its republication by the University of Nebraska Press. The moderate price of this new edition puts Culin's treasure within financial reach of many.

The author was a curator of ethnology at the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, and wrote several other books on games in Europe and Asia. This particular project began in 1891, when Culin organized an exhibit showcasing games of the world for Chicago's Columbian Exposition. When BAE ethnologist Frank Hamilton Cushing visited this world's fair, he noticed "remarkable analogies" between the games of the Old World and those of the New. He and Culin decided to collaborate on a world-wide study, with Cushing focusing on American Indian games. After Cushing's untimely death, Culin completed the systematic collection of information about