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Book Reviews -- Monographic Musings

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Bernan Press has carved out a publishing niche by cleverly repackaging government statistics. Fortunately, by adding valuable editorial touches, they have also developed a list of useful reference titles. The *Who, What, and Where of America: Understanding the Census Results* (2003, 0890597634, $95) is a recent example. Edited by former Director of the US Census Bureau, Martha Farnsworth Riche and Deirdre A. Gauvin, this book serves to complement another Bernan publication, the annual *County and City Extra* (2002, 0890595976, $120). The *County and City Extra* "provides up-to-date statistical information for every state, county, metropolitan area, congressional district, and all U.S. cities with a population of 25,000 or more as of the year 2000."

In order to supplement this information, the *Who, What, and Where of America* takes data from the census long form, filled out by a sample population, and presents it in three parts. The first part covers information on "age, race, Hispanic origin, household structure, ancestry, and the languages spoken at home." Part 2 offers statistics on "education, labor force, status, work and family patterns, income and poverty," while part 3 provides figures on migration patterns, housing, and transportation to work." Each part is introduced by a section of colored maps, along with an explanation of the data that follows. Other useful features include a section of rankings on a number of "key demographic and housing characteristics," as well as five appendices. These appendices help clarify geographic concepts and codes, define metropolitan statistical areas and components, provide state maps locating metropolitan areas, counties and central cities and lists cities by state and county.

All of these features provide added value to the data in the tables. In particular, the editors' analysis of trends like our aging population, and its increasing diversity and changing distribution, is of value in understanding what all of the numbers are saying. However, there is one suggested improvement. For the vast majority of tables, a citation for the source is not listed within immediate view. There is a listing of sources and definitions "hidden" in appendix F, but that takes a while to locate and, in any case, does not provide much assistance in locating the tables on the Census Website. (Actually, that is an idea for another publication, a guide for using the Census Website.)

In any case, this minor concern is outweighed by the actual data being presented in a useful and handy single volume. In short, *The Who, What, and Where of America* provides the researcher with a wealth of information in an accessible format. Of course, making full use of this book requires spending a little time reading through the explanations and "getting the lay of the land." But, it is well worth the effort. Academic libraries and larger public libraries where statistical research is common will want to consider this title.

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**Book Reviews — Monographic Musings**

Column Editor: Debbie Vaughn (Reference Librarian, College of Charleston) <vaughnd@cofc.edu>

**Column Editor's Note:** December and January are saturated with holidays and festivals; Hanukkah, Christmas, Ramadan, and Kwanzaa are among the more universally observed. This year, why not celebrate lesser-known holidays such as the Rice Cake Festival, or Mochi No Matsuri. This Japanese tradition takes place on the eighth day of the twelfth month, and participants offer special rice cakes in prayer. While you are at it, mark Sylvester Day on your calendar as well. On this day, December 31, Pope Sylvester is heavenly honored. Another exciting celebration is Vasant Panchami. Kept on the fifth day of the waxing half of the month of Magha, Saraswathi, the Hindu goddess of learning, is honored with—none other than—books.

Whatever your flavor of festivities, this time of year provides us the opportunity to relax and catch up. Reviewers Steven Profit and Ellen Finnie Duranceau suggest a variety of books for your reading pleasure, as reading is undoubtedly a popular leisure activity among ATG family. Happy reading, everyone, and happy holidays to you and yours. — DV

*Our Book Friends*


Reviewed by Steven Profit (Reference Librarian, College of Charleston) <profits@cofc.edu>

In the preface of his book, Edwin Dover writes that his "...primary goal is to provide solid background information about the personalities, politics, laws, events, and meaning of the disputed presidential election of 2000." To that, this reviewer responds, "Mission accomplished!" *The Disputed Presidential Election of 2000* is a focused and robust history of that controversial balloting.

The book's introductory material works well as ready-reference information. There are one-sentence biographical sketches of 20 key figures in the campaign and post-election events and a 122-entry chronology that covers the entire campaign season from results of a May 11, 1998, Gallup poll to December 13, 2000, when Gore conceded the election after the Supreme Court's ruling that ended the legal battles over the Florida vote recounting process.

The six chapters present detailed histories of campaign, election, and post-election events as well as examinations of relevant background issues. Chapter one provides an overview of the election in a manner that elaborates on certain events and processes noted in the chronology. Dover focuses on the party primaries both in general and regarding the 2000 contests in particular; the general election campaign including the four debates involving the presidential and vice-presidential candidates; election day including demographic and geographic breakdowns for the vote tally; and a brief overview of the situation in Florida before, during, and after election day.

Chapter two concerns the electoral college. Dover explores its creation, its history, and how changes in the law and the political environment in the United States over time have affected its role in the national electoral process. He presents the popular arguments for and against the continued use of the electoral college. The author is of the opinion that the status quo will likely hold for the foreseeable future due to a lack of consensus on the need for reform.

The third chapter is a detailed narrative of the legal challenges and the counterchallenges of the post-election struggles over the vote tallying process in Florida. Dover examines the avenues of redress open to the Gore side and explains why the Democrats chose the goals and strategies they did. The Bush response is given similar analysis. The decisions and reactions of various other actors —county election officers, state government officials, judges in the state and federal courts— at turns furthered and frustrated the intentions of both the Bush and Gore camps. The text gives a play-by-play account of the series of court battles in the context of this greater environment where other parties exercised their duties and influence. Definitions and illustrations of butterfly ballots and hanging, dimpled, and pregnant chads are provided, and the disputes surrounding the use of such ballots and the counting of chads are well explained. Dover handles his complex interplay of thrusts, parries, continued on page 66
Books That Matter

Column Editor: Ellen Finnie Duranceau (MIT Libraries) <efinnie@mit.edu>

Shortly after my new irregular column of mini-reviews first appeared (in the February 2003 issue), I tore through Matthew Scully’s book *Dominion: The Power of Man, the Suffering of Animals, and the Call to Mercy.* (New York: St. Martin’s, 2002. 0312261470. 464 pages. $27.95.) In the months that followed, I was like the victim of one of J.K. Rowling’s horrific demenors, whose cold kiss sucks out your soul, leaving you howling in despair for eternity. I’ve been unable to write a second column, feeling both that I must write about this book, and at the same time that I can’t write about this book. I feel I must—because the book does matter, so very very much; yet I feel I can’t, because I am not sure how to write successfully about a book that is painful, overwhelming, scary, deeply disturbing, and depressing.

Taking my “books that matter” theme as my guide, I will try to explain why I wish every person in the United States would read *Dominion.* It is a book on animal rights by a Republican presidential speech writer and confirmed political conservative, Matthew Scully. He offers a heavily researched, angry, often bitter and darkly ironic account of how nonhuman animals are being treated in the United States and around the world today. He makes the case that animals do have feelings, experience pain, and suffer—and that mankind has a sacred responsibility to care for other creatures. He carefully dissects every argument against nonhuman animals’ lack of emotions, consciousness, or ability to communicate. He conscientiously raises and rejects argument after argument that tries to hold human beings apart and above all other animals; he successfully takes the philosophers and the professors on.

He places his argument in a Christian context, arguing that while man was given “dominion” over the animals, man is abusing this power. While this may bring animal rights issues into a frame of reference important for some people, I can assure you it is not necessary to need or be convinced by his religious argument in order to believe that the appalling mistreatment of animals he describes must be stopped. He admits that his topic is not easy, that animal rights advocates are dismissed as part of the fringe, or as ridiculous.