



2012. 323p bibl index afp ISBN 9780472118472, \$65.00; ISBN 9780472028665 e-book, contact publisher for price

This volume serves as a valuable point of departure for the study of a largely unexplored subject: fiction written in Spanish in Equatorial Guinea and the Philippines during and following Spain's colonization. Although Lifshy (Georgetown) analyzes two distinct periods, the 1880s-1940s in the Philippines and the 1950s-1980s in Equatorial Guinea, similar issues—globalization, identity, exile, the shifting relationship between the imperial center and its margins—permeate both sets of narratives and authors' lives. Ultimately, Lifshy contends, both colonial experiences demonstrate what he terms the "Magellan fallacy," the mistaken belief that the colonizer can manage transcultural interactions. The final chapter offers comparative frameworks for the study of Spanish-language Asian and African texts from other former colonies and argues for a new approach to Hispanic studies, one that incorporates this literary production. Apart from José Rizal, most of the writers studied are relatively unknown. Considering the limited availability of many of these texts, it is a pity that the book does not include appendixes with more information about the works and authors mentioned in passing to facilitate future research in the field. **Summing Up:** Recommended. ★★ Graduate students, researchers, faculty.—*P. W. Manning, University of Kansas*

Performing Arts

50-4886 E185 2011-27451 CIP
Batiste, Stephanie Leigh. **Darkening mirrors: imperial representation in Depression-era African American performance.** Duke, 2012 (c2011). 326p bibl index afp ISBN 9780822348986, \$94.95; ISBN 9780822349235 pbk, \$25.95

Batiste (English and black studies, University of California, Santa Barbara), a performing artist as well as a scholar, explores how "black stage and screen performances constitute expressions of local resistance yet global compromise, local compromise, and global aspiration in a calibration of usable national identities." Noting that "it seems impossible to imagine a material blackness as *in but not of* the imperial operations that brought it into being," she offers useful analytic prisms to consider African American cultural performance in the 1930s. Close readings of film and stage performances—including Federal Theater Project's *Swing Mikado*, the Hollywood film *Stormy Weather*, and the independent film *The Devil's Daughter*—define terms of an "inherent Americanness that was also black" that developed "a diasporic sensibility that reached beyond national boundaries." Stressing the "imperial tone of African American imaginings," Batiste considers national identity in terms of black Western films and exotic/primitive constructions. She cogently notes the layered representational limitations accorded black performing bodies, in which "the same dark body simultaneously referenced selfhood, masking, and otherness," and she offers a strong rendering of Katherine Dunham's research-to-stage achievement, which transformed "anthropological discourses into a conduit for African American and, more generally, black liberation against and through its appropriation of discourses of power." **Summing Up:** Highly recommended. ★★★ All readers.—*T. F. DeFrantz, Duke University*

Film

50-4887 PN2287 2012-34642 CIP
Ankerich, Michael G. **Mae Murray: the girl with the bee-stung lips.** University Press of Kentucky, 2012. 376p bibl filmography index afp ISBN 9780813136905, \$40.00; ISBN 9780813140384 e-book, contact publisher for price

If prizes were given for bad titles, this book might be a winner. It tells a familiar story of a gutsy "girl" who finds fame—first as a dancer with the Follies, then with movie roles as well—because she had talent, or something akin to it. She married her most understanding director, Robert Z. Leonard, but Erich Von Stroheim brought her starlit fame with *The Merry Widow* (1925), even though one bad day on the set she called Stroheim "the dirty Hun" (that insult lives on in a chapter title). She waltzed the "Merry Widow" with John Gilbert. Other on-screen partners included Valentino, Francis X. Bushman, Warner Oland, Conrad Nagel, and Lon Chaney. Though Kevin Brownlow did not interview Mae Murray for *The Parade's Gone By* (1968)—his gorgeous tribute to silent cinema—he wrote the foreword for the present book. This may prompt serious film buffs to take Ankerich's book seriously, despite infelicities of style, taste, and diction and a plethora of really banal silent film plot summaries. In her day, Murray danced for Ziegfeld, fought with Von Stroheim, and cuddled with Valentino. That could justify a book seasoned with an overload of *Sunset Boulevard* pathos. **Summing Up:** Optional. ★ General readers only.—*J. M. Welsh, emeritus, Salisbury University*

50-4888 PN1995 2011-37121 CIP
Ashkenazi, Ofer. **Weimar film and modern Jewish identity.** Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. 234p bibl filmography index ISBN 9780230341364, \$85.00

Ashkenazi (visiting assistant professor, history, Univ. of Minnesota) seeks to redefine the position and contribution of Jewish filmmakers within Weimar film. As is well known, the Weimar period gave birth to some of the greatest examples of German film, and it has also borne great ideological responsibility, as described in Siegfried Kracauer's seminal *From Caligari to Hitler* (1947). Following the revisionist trend taken by Anton Kaes (*Shell Shock Cinema*, CH, May '10, 47-4916) and others, Ashkenazi offers here less a universal code for Weimar film, adding a heretofore neglected layer. This is the idea that not only did Jewish filmmakers significantly impact the German film industry, but also in their work articulated and contested the meaning of Jewish identity in the modern world. Against the previously standard reading of Weimar film as obsessed with the German nation, Ashkenazi provides an alternative reading that emphasizes the bourgeois and liberal dreams of these Jewish cultural actors. He argues convincingly that even in popular genre films with no manifest discussion of Jewishness, filmmakers such as Ernst Lubitsch, Joe May, and Fritz Lang used visual and narrative strategies to engage with the question of the German-Jewish relationship and of Jewish acculturation and assimilation. **Summing Up:** Highly recommended. ★★★ Graduate students, researchers, faculty.—*J. O. Wipplinger, North Carolina State University*

50-4889 PN1995 2011-48992 CIP
Bronfen, Elisabeth. **Specters of war: Hollywood's engagement with military conflict.** Rutgers, 2012. 288p bibl index afp ISBN 9780813553986, \$75.00; ISBN 9780813553979 pbk, \$27.95; ISBN 9780813553993 e-book, contact publisher for price