

view by Margaretha, an integrated Mennonite immigrant, with newcomer Susanna, who has known life in both Bolivia and Mexico. Gingrich invites the readers “to move alongside Susanna, even if this may not be your inclination . . . to accompany her for a time,” but then also “to move alongside the social workers” and other government agencies “who work to make a positive difference” in the lives of the newcomers (xii). Still, Gingrich is highly sympathetic to the immigrants and seems impatient with service workers who are unable to see it any other way than that these newcomers are “at odds with, if not offensive, to Canadian society” (48). Indeed, Gingrich draws deeply throughout the book from Bourdieu’s critique of modern society. She is overtly critical of a system, for example, which presumes middle-class values as the acid test of good parenting, with the state—and both its “right hand” and “left hand”—foisting its sense of “suitable cultural engagement” on parents who have their own meaning of good parenting (96).

In a sense this volume contains two books. Much of it is not particularly accessible to the nonspecialist. On the other hand, it contains a rich ethnography, with long quotations from both immigrants and social service workers, telling their stories of social exclusion, desired by one party, denounced by the other, and reinforced by an incipient misunderstanding between both. The book is also very well researched, contextualized and referenced. Readers of *Great Plains Research* will welcome the author’s many insights into the multivariate objectives of the newcomers. As Gingrich argues, the Mexican Mennonites are both “unique and typical” (25), holding to values “common to rural, agrarian communities and cultures” everywhere (143); most reject the typical “common sense” attitude that masquerades as liberal, individualistic middle-class culture. But in the end she gives the Mennonites a shout-out, because they are, for all their imperfections, a folk that “holds to an enduring belief in non-violent resistance and peaceful relations with others” (222).

In this sense the book is three in one: a theoretical exposé based on a complex Bourdieuesque sociology, a book on agrarian newcomers to North America, and an account of a uniquely traditionalist, nonviolent people.

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*The Language of Plants: Science, Philosophy, Literature.* Edited by Monica Gagliano, John R. Ryan, and Patricia Vieira. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017. vii + 302 pp. Figures, contributors, index. \$30.00 paper.

If we’re going to revive a passion, love, and stewardship for this world, we’re going to need new ways of speaking with that world—and in understanding how it speaks with itself. This anthology of thoughtful essays ultimately asks us to listen as a first step—to rethink what sentience and respect and compassion look like when we open ourselves to plant life separate from us.

While it uses a lot of scientific terminology and academesque—this is not a collection for beginners—this reader is enthralled by the conversation being had. The editors put together a wonderfully concise introduction that outlines the scientific, philosophical, and literary exploration into the language of plants, tracing watershed moments in the history of all three fields and of leading thinkers. The book is divided into three parts, and the final section, on literature, explores how certain authors have used plants to convey social meaning in human-only contexts.

The first section, on science, delves into the nuts and bolts of mostly contemporary research on how plants “speak”—from volatile organic compounds to light to nectar to electrostatic charges. Any reader will find a lot to chew on, as we’re asked to expand our views on how plants communicate in ways similar and dissimilar to us, yet in ways still too little understood.

The last essay of the first section—“Breaking the Silence,” by Monica Gagliano—serves as a wonderful bridge between the scientific discoveries of that initial section and the philosophical explorations of the second section. Gagliano’s aim is to “breathe life into a new narrative, where language is unbridled from human incarceration and its power refocused toward a more integrated perception of the world.” This thought is perhaps one of the anthology’s core themes, and Gagliano continues by saying that “meaning emerges during interactions among organisms; hence language is not a fixed property of that organism [ . . . ] but rather a truly ecological, dynamic process of relationships.” How can we de-objectify nature, and plants, and restore their dignity?

Luce Irigaray's piece in the same section also stands out, particularly by championing a silence that the vegetal world teaches us, and how silence allows us the choice to hear or not hear the teaching of plants. Ultimately, this can lead to a new ethics where plants are not just objects to be used by humans. Continuing on that theme is Karen Houle's extrapolation of the term "justice" as it relates to plant life, reflecting on the idea that how we speak of life is how we treat it or act on its behalf. Ultimately, human language may be a judgment, Houle argues, one that erases a neutrality of perception that won't allow us to see other lives as beautiful or wonderful, worthy of their own existence. Such a line of reason seems particularly relevant among the Great Plains grasslands, where both plant and animal cultures are eroded by one species's dominant language.

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***Beautifully Grotesque Fish of the American West.*** By Mark Spitzer. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2017. vii + 222 pp. Photographs, illustrations, notes. \$24.95 cloth.

We highly recommend *Beautifully Grotesque Fish of the American West* to scientists, conservation biologists, and all who consider themselves fish enthusiasts. From the perspective of researchers who dedicate much of our lives to enjoying, researching, and conserving freshwater fish diversity, this book is a pleasure to read from cover to cover. It is clear that Spitzer is a fish enthusiast to the bone. Not only does he enjoy the sport of angling, but he is deeply curious about the ecology of fishes and their ecosystems. His enthusiasm is inspiring enough to be able to convey an appreciation of the Earth's amazing fish diversity to a broad readership. This book provides accounts of 11 expeditions to catch unique species of western fish. Each chapter includes interesting information ranging from the ecology of the species to capture methods. Spitzer has aligned himself with scientists and conservation biologist researching those species, resulting in a broad perspective on why

these fish are interesting and important. He does a great job acknowledging the challenges facing freshwater fish conservation while also conveying the important fact that there is a broad interest in preserving these species and their ecosystems.

Spitzer's acknowledgment of how complex conservation of these species can be is particularly relevant in the face of changing cultural values of both anglers and society. For example, invasive species such as Asian Carp, Burbot, and Northern Pike minnow are all thought to be problematic, having been implicated in the declines of other native species. Spitzer reviews a number of creative management programs that have been implemented to control or eradicate these problem species. He also identifies key management challenges and opportunities that arise when cultural values shift to include nontraditional fisheries such as trophy Alligator Gar or massively popular catfish noodling tournaments. He also acknowledges successful management efforts such as the harvest limits on Alligator Gar in Texas or the bounty program for Northern Pike minnow. Chapters on Razorback Sucker and Colorado Pike minnow present a good case for species preservation that traditionally has been limited to fish with some commercial value. Although we are a long way from a perfect solution, conveying the challenges and opportunities to conserve species to a broad audience of researchers, anglers, and outdoor enthusiasts will go a long way toward facilitating effective fisheries management.

The concluding chapter outlines an environmental ethic that concerns all aspects of diversity, not only highly charismatic species. Spitzer argues that although many freshwater fishes might be considered "grotesque" by some, they are considered "beautiful" by others. Those who believe there is beauty in the interesting and unique ecology of all fish species will find a strong connection with the theme of this book. Importantly, this general theme provides a solid framework and conservation ethic toward a group of animals that do not get as much attention as other species that have been marketed as more popular fisheries.

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