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## **Reckoning: the epic battle against sexual abuse and harassment, Linda Hirshman (book review)**

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Drawing upon more than 100 interviews conducted in the anthracite coal region of Pennsylvania, Silva (sociology, Bucknell Univ.; *Coming Up Short*) explores how blue-collar workers connect their everyday lives, experiences, and struggles to their politics. The author supplies pseudonyms and amalgamates the towns into one, called Coal Brook, to protect the respondents. Many of the interviews were conducted in the run-up to the 2016 presidential election. Interviewees come from a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds and include new arrivals to the region as well as those whose roots stretch back several generations. Silva challenges the assumption that blue-collar workers uniformly turned out for Trump, having discovered that many of the people, regardless of race, age, gender, or background, deeply mistrusted government and other social institutions, with many believing their votes were inconsequential. Many of the stories are truly heartrending and thought provoking. **VERDICT** Anyone interested in the lives and motivations of blue-collar workers and their participation in the electoral process should read this insightful work.—**Chad E. Statler, Westlake Porter P.L., Westlake, OH**

## PSYCHOLOGY

★ **Sardy, Marin. *The Edge of Every Day: Sketches of Schizophrenia*. Pantheon. Jun. 2019. 304p. ISBN 9781524746933.**

**\$25.95; ebk. ISBN 9781524746940. PSYCH**

Pushcart Prize nominee and lauded essayist Sardy displays her superb skills for criticism and cultural journalism in this remarkable, beautifully written memoir of her family's lifetime struggle with schizophrenia. The illness has long absorbed her mother in a psychotic world of delusions and paranoia and so dominated her brother's life that it ultimately caused his death by suicide. Originally from Anchorage, AK, Sardy traveled around the country, eventually settling in New York. Here the author recalls her once uberwealthy grandfather who founded a successful oil exploration business but was overwhelmed by the illness's hold on the lives of his daughter and grandson. She also presents reflections on mental-health research into how the mind works and the state of current treatment. The narrative flows smoothly and cinematically evokes the author's coming to terms with the disorder and finding a way through the madness instead of trying to control or end it. **VERDICT** Some readers may need to adjust to the author's non-chronological approach that nevertheless succeeds brilliantly in conveying the realities of mental illness in a memorable manner. Should be required reading for mental health professionals; essential for all libraries

supporting the mental health curriculum.—**Dale Farris, Groves, TX**

## SOCIAL SCIENCE

**Blackstone, Amy. *Childfree by Choice: The Movement Redefining Family and Creating a New Age of Independence*. Dutton. Jun. 2019. 304p. notes. ISBN 9781524744090. \$26; ebk. ISBN 9781524744106. soc sci**

Sociologist and activist Blackstone draws on both personal experience and sociological research to explore the lives of those who have purposefully chosen not to parent. She traces the threads of modern child-free activism from the 1970s to the present, focusing primarily on the United States (though drawing on sociological data from around the globe). The work shares the motivations of those who forego parenthood in their own words, and takes up common concerns about the non-parenting life in a series of topical chapters: fears about demographic change, concerns about personal fulfillment and legacy, beliefs about maternal instinct, definitions of family, non-parenting relationships with children, and ageing. Throughout, Blackstone highlights the racism and sexism at work in who is pressured to reproduce, and who is punished for choosing not to. While queer people and families are mentioned in passing, the majority of examples are of fertile or presumed-fertile, cisgender male-female couples who have opted out of pregnancy. **VERDICT** Thoughtfully addressing harmful stereotypes with personal stories and sociological data, this will help those who choose a nonparenting path articulate their decision and push back against the criticisms leveled at them by family, friends, and strangers alike.—**Anna J. Clutterbuck-Cook, Massachusetts Historical Soc., Boston**

**Davis, Dána-Ain. *Reproductive Injustice: Racism, Pregnancy, and Premature Birth*. New York Univ. Jun. 2019. 272p. illus. notes. bibliog. index. ISBN 9781479853571. pap. \$30; ebk. ISBN 9781479816606. soc sci**

Davis (director, Ctr. for the Study of Women and Society, Graduate Ctr., City Univ. of New York; *Battered Women and Welfare Reform*) explores how medical racism impacts black women and their likelihood of having more premature births than other U.S. women. In order to include stories by women and families impacted by premature births, Davis observes neonatal intensive care units firsthand and conducted dozens of interviews with care providers such as nurses and midwives. The book is divided into two sections, with the first part uncovering the history of medical racism in the United States, rooted in slavery, while later chapters examine solutions to this deeply ingrained problem that still ex-

ists within the industry. The work is unique in that it is the first to focus on the subject as it relates to professional working women and provides evidence that black women across all classes still have a higher rate of premature births than other women. **VERDICT** An important addition for women's studies, social justice, and health science collections.—**Venessa Hughes, Denver**

**Espinoza, Alex. *Cruising: An Intimate History of a Radical Pastime*.**

**Unnamed Pr. Jun. 2019. 200p. illus. bibliog. ISBN 9781944700829. pap. \$21.99. soc sci**

In his first work of nonfiction, novelist Espinoza (*The Five Acts of Diego Leon; Still Water Saints*) integrates his own history into a survey of the various ways that gay men have found one another through informal means. This activity is colloquially known as “cruising” in our time, but it has a long history, which Espinoza demonstrates in his retelling of how ancient Greek and Romans connected with each other, and how Molly houses became meeting places for men in 18th- and 19th-century England. In a provocative section, Espinoza describes the various guides that existed in the mid-20th century and after that provided gay men with data on where to find assignments. He brings the story forward to today in his analysis of apps such as Grindr, without neglecting the dangers that cruising presents. What makes this book so appealing is the way Espinoza combines his own experiences of cruising from adolescence to the present, and as a Chicano, with a cogent analysis of the role of cruising; an antihegemonic activity against a patriarchal system—and he writes beautifully. **VERDICT** Recommended for LGBT and contemporary culture collections.—**David Azzolina, Univ. of Pennsylvania Libs., Philadelphia**

**Hirshman, Linda. *Reckoning: The Epic Battle Against Sexual Abuse and Harassment*. Houghton Harcourt. Jun. 2019. 336p. notes. index. ISBN 9781328566447. \$27; ebk. ISBN 9781328566751. soc sci**

Hirshman (*Sisters in Law*) chronicles key events during a 50-year time span, from the time the phrase “sexual harassment” was coined in the 1970s and the 1980s workplace harassment cases of Paulette Barnes and Mechelle Vinson to the downfall of Harvey Weinstein and the rise of #MeToo. The author has an acute understanding of the intersections of sexual harassment and abuse, legal and political influence, and feminism, with sharp observations and sharper words for the people and politics, including liberal politics, who failed victims of harassment while giving leeway to perpetrators. While not every aspect of the book is given the same

intersectional nuance—an early section lauds radical feminist Catharine MacKinnon's antipornography stance with no mention that the Canadian implementation of a MacKinnon-style ordinance resulted in years of difficulties for that country's LGBT communities—its critical eye and its highlighting of key roles played by women of color in the fight against abusers and harassers make it a valuable addition to the current literature on the topic. **VERDICT** An intense, harsh view of a long struggle; well worth a look for anyone curious about where #MeToo came from—and where it should go next. [See Prepub Alert, 12/3/18].—**Kathleen McCallister, William & Mary Libs., Williamsburg, VA**

**Kulick, Don. *A Death in the Rainforest: How a Language and a Way of Life Came to an End in Papua New Guinea*. Algonquin.**

Jun. 2019. 288p. ISBN 9781616209049.

\$26.95; ebk. ISBN 9781616209476. ANTHRO

How does a language die? Some anthropologists theorize that a language may fall out of style with a population or become forgotten over time. Kulick (anthropology, Uppsala Univ., Sweden) suggests that the reasons for language death are both much more complex and simpler to understand. Over the course of three decades, Kulick visited the Papua New Guinea village of Gapun and studied their fading Tayap language. Kulick strives to display his research by telling the villagers' story in a way that shows their humanity and explaining the impact foreign forces throughout history have had on Tayap. His stories of adjusting to daily life in the village are both humorous and compassionate. Throughout his time working in Gapun, he is distinctly aware of the field of anthropology's conflicting eras of practice, from its colonialist past up to the highly culturally sensitive present. Kulick allows his research to reveal his own cultural bias and acknowledge his privilege; in doing so, he details the reasons that support his theory as to why languages die in a manner that shows strong social responsibility and fairness. **VERDICT** Recommended for a readership of varying ages, from young adults with an interest in cultural anthropology to college students and academics.—**Monique Martinez, Univ. of North Georgia Lib., Dahlonega**

**Little, Amanda. *The Fate of Food: What We'll Eat in a Bigger, Hotter, Smarter World*.**

Harmony: Crown. Jun. 2019. 352p. illus.

notes. index. ISBN 9780804189033. \$27;

ebk. ISBN 9780804189057. soc sci

There is no question that by the middle of the century how we grow and process our food will be vastly different from how we do it at present. Earth's population will be

substantially larger, and our climate, given recent noticeable temperature changes, will be appreciably warmer. Seeking to examine how our world will react and deal with this oppressive reality is the focus of this timely work from Little (journalism, Vanderbilt Univ.), who researches what will have to be done to adapt in this new environment. The author's exploration of drought-tolerant super grains such as morgania and kernza seems to hold much promise, as do various efforts to desalinate water and the lengths taken by government entities and private companies to reduce food waste. While much of what Little discusses is cause for alarm, including the myopic use of water and the unbelievable amount of food wasted in affluent countries, she does give reasons for optimism. Humans, if nothing else, are able to overcome challenges by manipulating the world around us—especially in terms of our diets. **VERDICT** An informative, highly recommended read that touches on every relevant area of the subject and will have wide appeal.—**Brian Renvall, Mesalands Community Coll., Tucumcari, NM**

**Odets, Walt. *Out of the Shadows: Reimagining Gay Men's Lives*.**

Farrar. Jun. 2019. 368p. notes. index.

ISBN 9780374285852. \$30;

ebk. ISBN 9780374719326. soc sci

Odets, a clinical psychologist and AIDS activist, came to critical acclaim as the author of *In the Shadow of the Epidemic*. Subtle observations of contemporary gay life here confirm his status as one of its most honest, forthcoming, and insightful social commentators. One key component of the book is an analysis of what Odets calls the tripartite gay community: an older group who experienced AIDS firsthand; a middle group who heard caution about AIDS; and a younger group for whom AIDS was not a significant factor in their lives. Odets blends this construct into a psychological analysis of its consequences, including his experiences with patients, making for a humanistic narrative. The work is especially distinctive in its combination of solid social science and heartfelt compassion. **VERDICT** The stated primary audience is gay men, but Odets believes that all can profit from and recognize themselves in the emotional content—and he's right. Nearly anyone interested in how much people are alike, despite differences in sexual orientation, will find much to appreciate.—**David Azzolina, Univ. of Pennsylvania Libs., Philadelphia**

★ **Polchin, James. *Indecent Advances: A Hidden History of True Crime and Prejudice Before Stonewall*.** Counterpoint. Jun. 2019.

256p. notes. ISBN 9781640091894. \$26;

ebk. ISBN 9781640091900. HIST

Polchin (liberal studies, New York Univ.) presents a reflective, thoughtful first book that perfectly blends true crime and the history of discrimination against gay men in the 20th century. The author takes a deep dive into the specific crimes against gay men and how their deaths fed the competing cultural narratives of the time; that homosexuality was both a crime and a mental illness. Using these two narratives and the salacious nature of true crime, the public began to see homosexuality as a social and moral issue instead of a personal one. Polchin expertly uses men's stories between World War I and the Stonewall Riots to prove that the fight for equal treatment is not over, and that the history of the LGBTQ+ movement is not always one of activism and celebration. In fact, the LGBTQ+ community is fighting against the stereotypes built on the deaths of these men. **VERDICT** This insightful history of crimes perpetrated against gay men is essential for social history fans. Readers who enjoy well-researched, deliberate social commentary will appreciate Polchin's enlightening and descriptive style.—**Ahliah Bratzler, Indianapolis P.L.**

★ **Tolentino, Jia. *Trick Mirror: Reflections on Self-Delusion*.** Random. Aug. 2019.

304p. ISBN 9780525510543. \$27;

ebk. ISBN 9780525510550. soc sci

In her debut, *New Yorker* writer Tolentino turns a critical eye on herself and, in doing so, highlights the troubling images reflected in current American culture. These essays examine reality TV, physical optimization, rape culture, and more, and pieces about constructing identity on the Internet—from Geocities to Twitter trolling to the scam of the Fyre Festival—are especially timely and affecting. Tolentino's take on these topics is dark—the word *nightmare* is often used to describe the depressing effects of social media—and the author finds that an overriding theme is the desire to be seen, even if the image isn't always positive. Overall, she highlights how people must ignore the rot of the world in order to function day to day, which might be the most sinister thing of all. The book is thoroughly researched, and nearly every page contains a revelation about contemporary culture. Tolentino's writing is just personal enough to put a human aspect to her points, so that readers feel them intimately, and she admits her own unseemly qualities with the same attention by which she examines the rest of the world. The final essay on marriage lags behind what is otherwise a cutting, brilliant collection. **VERDICT** An incisive collection that cements Tolentino as one of her generation's greatest cultural critics.—**Katy Hershberger, School Library Journal**

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