

Finally, I would suggest that Alba basically neglects to discuss interest in genealogy as a possible source of strengthening ethnic consciousness, and does nothing at all with the reading of ethnic newspapers, magazines, and books.

Of considerable use, I would think, to anyone doing a similar investigation, is the list of "Ethnic experiences (during preceding five years)." Even those who feel ethnicity is very important to them only had ethnic experiences six times during the period.

— Phillips G. Davies
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Paula Gunn Allen. *Grandmothers of the Light: A Medicine Woman's Source Book*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991) 246 pp., \$19.95 paper.

As Allen points out in her preface, the stories in this collection were gleaned "from the vast oral tradition of North American tribes." Allen adds that they (the stories) have served as her spiritual guides. She feels that in these tales the "great Goddess" has many guises, such as Xmucane, Sky Woman, Thinking Woman, Scomalt, et al.

Her extended introduction presents the "Living Reality of the Medicine World." A sector of the book introduces us to an Allen neologism, for she provides the title "Cosmogyny: The Goddesses"; another deals with "Ritual Magic and Aspects of the Goddesses"; and the third deals with "Myth, Magic, and Medicine in the Modern World." The collection ends with a postscript on "Cultural Dimensions." Closing the work are two helpful sections to the reader and scholar: a glossary and a bibliography.

Leading into her "Cosmogyny" is her full length discussion of the reality of the medicine world. Stories connect us to the "universe" of medicine. Apprentices to medicine practices discover that there is a separate path for them. In oral traditions, some details are from the natural world, others from the supernatural. The "bedrock" of Indian spirituality is the interchange that is carried on with the supernaturals. She goes on to define the disciplines that constitute the medicine woman's way. Before she presents stories from the various Native American cultures, she stresses the *complexity* of the concept of medicine.

There are stories from the Keres people of the Southwest, the Mayans, the Cherokees, and the Navajos. She also retells stories from tribes located elsewhere in the different regions of the United States.

This work will serve as a fine introduction for readers to the spiritual beliefs of Native Americans. Allen's structuring of her work to first include definitions and analyses, and then to illustrate them with fine stories, provides readers with material that is easily understood and grasped—even at first reading.

— Cortland P. Auser
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