



SirReadaLot.org | 1289 Fordham Blvd, Suite 500 | Chapel Hill
NC 27514 | USA

ph 9199292249 | fx 9199321508 | www.sirreadalot.org

May 2022

We Review the
Best of the Latest
Books

ISSN 1934-6557

May 2022

Contents

May 2022	1
Arts & Photography / Music	4
Music, City and the Roma under Communism by Anna G. Piotrowska (Bloomsbury Academic)	4
Education / Sociology / Identity.....	7
Memory in the Mekong: Regional Identity, Schools, and Politics in Southeast Asia edited by Will Brehm & Yuto Kitamura, with series editor Gita Steiner-Khamsi (International Perspectives on Educational Reform Series: Teachers College Press)	7
Engineering / Security	8
Practical Doomsday: A User's Guide to the End of the World by Michal Zalewski (No Starch Press)	8
History / Military / World War II / Biographies & Memoirs	10
Old Breed General: How Marine Corps General William H. Rupertus Broke the Back of the Japanese in World War II from Guadalcanal to Peleliu by Amy Rupertus Peacock & Don Brown (Stackpole Books)	10
History / Religion & Spirituality	13
The Franciscans in Colonial Mexico edited by Thomas M. Cohen, Jay T. Harrison & David Rex Galindo (University of Oklahoma Press).....	13
Home & Garden / Arts & Crafts.....	14
The Nature of Creativity: A Mindful Approach to Making Art & Craft by Jane E. Hall, with a foreword by Brigit Strawbridge Howard (Merrell Publishers)	14
Law / Disability	15
Nolo's Guide to Social Security Disability: Getting & Keeping Your Benefits, 11th edition by David A. Morton III M.D. (Nolo)	15

Literature & Fiction / Adventure / Noir	17
Secret Identity: A Novel by Alex Segura (Flatiron Books)	17
Philosophy / Ethics / Global	19
For the Good of the World: Is Global Agreement on Global Challenges Possible? by A. C. Grayling (Oneworld Publications)	19
Philosophy / Religion	21
The Essential Supernatural: A Dialogical Study in Kierkegaard and Blondel by Maurice Ashley Agbaw-Ebai (St. Augustine's Press)	21
Relationships / Internet	22
The New Laws of Love: Online Dating and the Privatization of Intimacy, 1st edition by Marie Bergström (Polity Press)	22
Religion & Spirituality / Christianity / Biographies & Memoirs / Series	25
The Life of Jesus Christ: Part Two; Volume 2, Chapters 58-89 Ludolph of Saxony, Carthusian, translated by Milton T. Walsh (Cistercian Studies Series, Vol. 284 Cistercian Publications, Liturgical Press)	25
Religion & Spirituality / Christianity.....	26
Spiritual Formation as if the Church Mattered: Growing in Christ through Community, 2nd edition by James C. Wilhoit, with a foreword by Dallas Willard (Baker Academic)....	26
Religion & Spirituality / Occult	29
Pure Magic: A Complete Course in Spellcasting by Judika Illes, with a foreword by Mat Aurnyn (Weiser Classics Series: Weiser Books)	29
Bibliography	31
Arts & Photography / Music	31
Music, City and the Roma under Communism by Anna G. Piotrowska (Bloomsbury Academic)	31
Education / Sociology / Identity.....	31
Memory in the Mekong: Regional Identity, Schools, and Politics in Southeast Asia edited by Will Brehm & Yuto Kitamura, with series editor Gita Steiner-Khamsi (International Perspectives on Educational Reform Series: Teachers College Press)	31
Engineering / Security	31
Practical Doomsday: A User's Guide to the End of the World by Michal Zalewski (No Starch Press) History / Military / World War II / Biographies & Memoirs.....	31
Old Breed General: How Marine Corps General William H. Rupertus Broke the Back of the Japanese in World War II from Guadalcanal to Peleliu by Amy Rupertus Peacock & Don Brown (Stackpole Books)	31
History / Religion & Spirituality	31

The Franciscans in Colonial Mexico edited by Thomas M. Cohen, Jay T. Harrison & David Rex Galindo (University of Oklahoma Press).....	31
Home & Garden / Arts & Crafts.....	31
The Nature of Creativity: A Mindful Approach to Making Art & Craft by Jane E. Hall, with a foreword by Brigit Strawbridge Howard (Merrell Publishers)	32
Law / Disability	32
Nolo's Guide to Social Security Disability: Getting & Keeping Your Benefits, 11th edition by David A. Morton III M.D. (Nolo)	32
Literature & Fiction / Adventure / Noir	32
Secret Identity: A Novel by Alex Segura (Flatiron Books)	32
Philosophy / Ethics / Global	32
For the Good of the World: Is Global Agreement on Global Challenges Possible? by A. C. Grayling (Oneworld Publications)	32
Philosophy / Religion	32
The Essential Supernatural: A Dialogical Study in Kierkegaard and Blondel by Maurice Ashley Agbaw-Ebai (St. Augustine's Press)	32
Relationships / Internet.....	32
The New Laws of Love: Online Dating and the Privatization of Intimacy, 1st edition by Marie Bergström (Polity Press)	32
Religion & Spirituality / Christianity / Biographies & Memoirs / Series	32
The Life of Jesus Christ: Part Two; Volume 2, Chapters 58-89 Ludolph of Saxony, Carthusian, translated by Milton T. Walsh (Cistercian Studies Series, Vol. 284 Cistercian Publications, Liturgical Press)	33
Religion & Spirituality / Christianity.....	33
Spiritual Formation as if the Church Mattered: Growing in Christ through Community, 2nd edition by James C. Wilhoit, with a foreword by Dallas Willard (Baker Academic)....	33
Religion & Spirituality / Occult	33
Pure Magic: A Complete Course in Spellcasting by Judika Illes, with a foreword by Mat Aurnyn (Weiser Classics Series: Weiser Books)	33

Arts & Photography / Music

[Music, City and the Roma under Communism](#) by Anna G. Piotrowska (Bloomsbury Academic)

[Music, City and the Roma under Communism](#) highlights the role of Romani musical presence in Central and Eastern Europe, especially from Kraków in the Communist period, and argues that music can and should be treated as one of the main points of relation between Roma and non-Roma. It discusses Romani performers and the complexity of their situation as conditioned by the political situations starkly affected by the Communist regime, and then by its fall. Against this backdrop, [Music, City and the Roma under Communism](#) engages with musician Stefan Dymiter (known as Cororo) as the leader of his own street band: unwelcome in the public space by the authorities, merely tolerated by others, but admired by many passers-by and respected by his peer Romani musicians and international music stars. It emphasizes the role of Romani musicians in Kraków in shaping the soundscape of the city while also demonstrating their collective and individual strategies to adapt to the new circumstances in terms of the preferred performative techniques, repertoire, and overall lifestyle.

Author Anna G. Piotrowska is Professor of Musicology at Jagiellonian University, Poland.

[Music, City and the Roma under Communism](#) highlights the agency of Romani musicians as individuals actively participating and co-creating the musical identity of Kraków, which has been instrumental to the city's cultural development. Exposing their approaches towards music-making, Piotrowska demonstrates how they converted music-making into a security policy that enabled them to negotiate their own position anew, either by complying with the official code of behavior and speech imposed in communistic Poland or by remaining in the shadows. The regime constantly pressurized the Romani community in Poland. Piotrowska examines different tactics applied by the Romani musicians in communistic Kraków to underline their place within the structure of the city: on the one hand, these were small bands performing locally and merely tolerated but, on the other hand, a large folkloristic ensemble was established soon to be treated by the authorities as a token of the communistic protectiveness and the ultimate success of the assimilation policy endorsed by the state.

[Music, City and the Roma under Communism](#) looks back at the harsh times when Poland was under the communistic regime: the late 1940s to 1989. However, Piotrowska tries to avoid the hegemonic understanding of the period of Communism as 'dark ages' while acknowledging the fact that at that time public life developed predominantly under the dictates of the omnipotent ideology, which left its imprint on various public sectors, with the regime extending its reach to practically all spheres of life (under the guidance of the leading party). [Music, City and the Roma under](#)

Communism nevertheless demonstrates how the Romani musicians from Kraków functioned either within or alongside (sometimes against) the system. Their stories seem illustrative of the history of everyday life, while the microhistory of the Romani musicians from Kraków serves also as an example to illustrate how the political forces affected the fate of all Roma inhabiting communistic Poland. As a scholar documenting the communistic past of her own city, still vividly remembering these times, Piotrowska is mindful of her positionality and aware that the `events surrounding her' also have an impact on her understanding of late twentieth-century history. Hence, even the choice of case studies has been carefully considered to necessarily counterbalance more personal memories (of the Romani bands performing in the streets) and official documentation (consulted, for example, to reconstruct, basically from scratch, the story of ROMA). While reassessing the standing of the urban Romani musicians from communistic Poland, she not only confronted her own reminiscences but also kept asking the question: to what degree is the ideology so relentlessly endorsed by the communistic regime accommodated, preyed on and rejected by the Romani musicians in reference to the stereotype of Romani musicality?

Music, City and the Roma under Communism is divided into three parts. The first one familiarizes readers with the situation of the Romani musicians in Central Europe from the historical perspective. Some light is shed on the whereabouts of the Romani musicians in the prime cities of the region – Vienna, Budapest and Bucharest. Similar musical traditions were inherited and cultivated by the Roma living after the Second World War in Kraków, as the city used to belong to the Habsburg Empire and sustained several cultural characteristics shared with other cities remaining in the orbit of Vienna's influences.

Part two of **Music, City and the Roma under Communism** explicitly addresses the peculiarities of the re-budding Romani music-making under Communism as observed in Kraków already in the late 1940s. Since no unanimous way of endorsing the myth of `Gypsy musicality' was adapted, two dominant forms of collective efforts aimed at reestablishing the position of Romani musicians are discussed. On the one hand, the typical Romani bands of the region proliferated in Kraków, but, on the other hand, the most representative `Gypsy' folkloristic ensembles were also established in the same city. Part three, though, is dedicated to the situation of an individual Romani musician, as his life story illustrates the embeddedness of Romani musicians in the political and economic situation of the country, while proving their comparative independence from the constraints of the regime.

The ultimate heroes of **Music, City and the Roma under Communism** are the Romani musicians who chose Kraków as their home-base and magnanimously shared their music with other residents. While unfolding their stories to demonstrate the multitude of their adaptations to the restrictions imposed by the system, Piotrowska says she realized

that Kraków, far from being 'a singular identity locus', functioned as the only nexus linking Romani musicians who were literally living next to each other, yet pursuing completely different life choices and career paths. It served as a framework that offered them concrete opportunities, but also it posed real challenges for them. As a place endowed with its specific genius loci, Kraków never ceased to attract the Roma, who even in times saturated with the political ideology as a main drive of social and economic development, continued to be perceived as excellent musicians.

This is a highly significant contribution to the field of Romani music research. Its microhistorical focus on one European urban location at one particular time – Krakow during Communist rule – allows the author to reveal not just how complex (indeed, how polyphonic) but also how culturally strategic the daily activity of Romani musicians was in this context. Putting her personal familiarity with the city to good advantage, the author's extensive research overcomes the hitherto scarce source material on Romani music-making in this period to provide herself, and us, with a richly detailed body of original material for discussion and analysis, in which the case-study of the virtuoso Romani busker Cororo in particular stands out. – David Horn, joint editor of the *Bloomsbury Encyclopedia of Popular Music of the World*

Already a noted authority on the presence of Romani practices in European art music since the eighteenth century, Anna G. Piotrowska now offers a richly textured, nuanced, and largely unfamiliar portrait of the Romani music making in her native Kraków under the Communist regime, contrasting the activities of the state-sponsored folkloric ensemble with those of the proliferating unofficial street bands, each devising its individual strategy of survival and each carving some independent space for itself under politically coercive circumstances. – Karol Berger, Osgood Hooker Professor in Fine Arts, Emeritus, at the Department of Music, Stanford University, and author of *Beyond Reason: Wagner contra Nietzsche*

A fascinating read. Well-informed and enriched by participant observation, [Music, City and the Roma under Communism](#) is a milestone in an interdisciplinary field, where ethnomusicology, popular music studies, oral history, and urban anthropology converge. Piotrowska's book leads us in an investigation into the ideas of 'pure' and 'impure' music in Europe, where the latter is reappraised in light of the long struggle for visibility, recognition, and respect by the Romani. – Paolo Prato, Lecturer in Italian Studies, John Cabot University, Rome, Italy, co-editor of *Genres: Europe, Bloomsbury Encyclopedia of Popular Music of the World*

Anna G. Piotrowska succeeds, with a brilliantly written study, to unfold the history of the Romani musicians of Kraków in a larger historical context by interrelating the Central and Eastern European developments of Roma music of cities like Vienna, Budapest and Bucharest. The main focus is on Lovara and Carpathian Romani musicians in Kraków, the cultural capital of Poland. The insight analysis of various voices is underscored by theoretical reflections on minorities in the urban environment of the communist regime from the post-war period until the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. – Max Peter Baumann,

Emeritus Professor of Ethnomusicology at University of Würzburg, Germany, author of *Musik im interkulturellen Kontext*

[Music, City and the Roma under Communism](#) makes a significant contribution to the field, emphasizing the role of Romani musicians in Kraków in shaping the soundscape of the city while also demonstrating their collective and individual strategies to adapt to the new circumstances. Richly detailed, based on personal experience, this is a deeply personal and fascinating book. <>

Education / Sociology / Identity

[Memory in the Mekong: Regional Identity, Schools, and Politics in Southeast Asia](#) edited by Will Brehm & Yuto Kitamura, with series editor Gita Steiner-Khamsi (**International Perspectives on Educational Reform Series: Teachers College Press**)

As this book suggests, formal education and public culture are interconnected. A scholarly enterprise like this book, too, succeeds when it leaves readers with more questions than answers. I hope the book makes readers more curious to find more puzzles about school, history education, and Southeast Asia. – from the Foreword by Thongchai Winichakul, emeritus professor, University of Wisconsin–Madison

[Memory in the Mekong](#) is an edited collection exploring the possibilities, perils, and politics of constructing a regional identity. The editors are Will Brehm and Yuto Kitamura. Brehm is an associate professor at the UCL Institute of Education, University College London, and Kitamura is a professor at the Graduate School of Education, University of Tokyo.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), a multinational institution comprised of 10 member states, is dedicated to building a Southeast Asian regional identity that includes countries along Southeast Asia's Mekong River delta: Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, and Myanmar. After successfully establishing an economic community in 2015, where capital and people can freely move across national borders, ASEAN and its partners now aim to develop a sociocultural community that is fully functional in a wide range of sectors by 2025. As part of this vision, ASEAN wishes to construct a regional identity by uniting over 600 million people, which will be achieved partly through national school systems that teach shared histories.

In [Memory in the Mekong](#) the contributors critically examine the many questions that arise in the face of this significant change: What does an ASEAN identity look like? Is it even possible or desirable to create a common identity across the diverse peoples of

Southeast Asia? Given the divergent memories of history, how would a regional identity exist alongside national identity? [Memory in the Mekong](#) grapples with these questions by exploring issues of shared history, national identity, and schooling in a region that is frequently underexamined and underrepresented in Western scholarship.

Features of [Memory in the Mekong](#) include:

- First comparative study of regional identity and schools in the Mekong.
- In-depth analysis of UNESCO Bangkok's Shared Histories project.
- Use of historical memory theoretical tools to understand identity formation, extending the work on imagined communities.
- Chapters written by researchers from across the Mekong.

This is a pathbreaking work at the intersection of international relations, the politics of education, and the construction of historical memory. It shows how politics constructs and contests various forms of regional identity. Drawing on the countries in the Mekong, these empirically rich examinations will have a theoretical reach far beyond the case studies. Highly recommended. – Kanishka Jayasuriya, professor, Murdoch University, Australia

[Memory in the Mekong](#) is a masterfully and artfully crafted exploration of the contested cultural politics surrounding the making of an imagined regional identity and the role of education in its creation. More importantly, this must-read collection fills in an important silence on the literature of education and regionalism. – Susan L. Robertson, professor of sociology of education, University of Cambridge

The Mekong is the economic and cultural artery of mainland Southeast Asia and crucial to the region's interaction with China. By exploring memory and identity, this book offers a fascinating glimpse into Southeast Asia's past and future. – Amitav Acharya, Distinguished Professor of International Relations and The UNESCO Chair in Transnational Challenges and Governance, School of International Service, American University

[Memory in the Mekong](#), a well-crafted book, fills a gap in the literature, bringing together diverse perspectives. The case studies also provide a fascinating glimpse into the international relations in the region. <>

Engineering / Security

[Practical Doomsday: A User's Guide to the End of the World](#) by Michal Zalewski (No Starch Press)

As a leading security engineer, author Michal Zalewski has spent his career methodically anticipating and planning for cyberattacks. In [Practical Doomsday](#),

Zalewski applies the same thoughtful, rational approach to preparing for disasters of all kinds.

Zalewski, a security researcher, has been actively involved in disaster preparedness for more than a decade.

[Practical Doomsday](#) outlines a level-headed model for evaluating risks, one that weighs the probability of scenarios against the cost of preparing for them. Readers learn to apply that model to the whole spectrum of potential crises, from personal hardships like job loss or a kitchen fire, to large-scale natural disasters and industrial accidents, to recurring pop-culture fears like all-out nuclear war. Readers explore how basic lifestyle adjustments, such as maintaining a robust rainy-day fund, protecting themselves online, and fostering good relationships with their neighbors, can boost their readiness for a wide range of situations. The book also takes a no-nonsense look at the supplies and equipment essential to surviving sudden catastrophes, like prolonged power outages or devastating storms, and examine the merits and legal implications of different self-defense strategies.

In [Practical Doomsday](#) readers learn how to:

- Identify and meaningfully assess risks in their life, then develop strategies for managing them.
- Build up and diversify a robust financial safety net – a key component of nearly all effective preparedness strategies.
- Adapt their prep plans to a variety of situations, from shelter-in-place scenarios to evacuations by car or on foot.
- Stockpile food, water, and other essentials sensibly and decide what supplies are actually worth having.

As an experienced emergency responder, I found the book filled with practical advice that had me nodding my head in enthusiastic agreement throughout – and it was thorough and broad enough that there were still chapters that had me taking notes on topics I'd not considered, or am now seeing with another perspective. I've definitely adjusted my own preparations after reading it and highly recommend it to anyone – both those who consider themselves already prepared, and especially those who would like to be prepared without committing their life to an expensive hobby. – Matt Linton, @0xMatt

Definitely the best no-nonsense guide to adult life out there. – Martín Obiols, @olemoudi
For years, Michal has been thinking about mitigation of catastrophe. You should put his pragmatic book on your shopping list as a guide to exploring for yourself. Be Prepared. – Eric Grosse, former VP of Security & Privacy at Google

[Practical Doomsday](#) is very thoroughly researched. Mr. Zalewski does an excellent job of providing simple, practical advice to prepare for life's more common disruptions, such as job losses and day-long power outages. The best part? His advice, when applied

toward more humdrum but fairly likely events, will also help readers prepare for less common, more catastrophic events. – *The Organic Prepper*
Zalewski's book begins by examining risks in a very sane, voice-of-reason, manner. The end-of-the-world scenarios get downplayed immediately in favor of the actual things that kill or injure most people in first world countries – things like ladders and backyard swimming pools. He does consider larger scale risks but always in a thoughtful manner ... I plan on keeping this book around as a reference, all-be-it an unusual one. – Rik Farrow, USENIX

To some degree, I am student of risk. I ascribe to Elroy Dimson's bon mot: 'Risk means more things can happen than will.' In my own work, I define a state of security as the absence of unmitigable surprise, not no surprise but the absence of unmitigable surprise. If that makes you say, 'How exactly does that help?' then Michal's book is your answer. – Dan Geer, Computer Security Analyst and Risk Management Specialist
A great book. Everyone should buy it. – Dave Aitel, @daveaitel
If you are looking for something different, try this. – Haitham Alani, @Mroverflow

[Practical Domsday](#) helps readers plan ahead, so they can stop worrying about what tomorrow may bring and start enjoying life today. By sharing his research, advice, and a healthy dose of common sense, Zalewski helps readers rest easy knowing they have a plan for the worst – even if the worst never comes. <>

History / Military / World War II / Biographies & Memoirs

[Old Breed General](#): How Marine Corps General William H. Rupertus Broke the Back of the Japanese in World War II from Guadalcanal to Peleliu by Amy Rupertus Peacock & Don Brown (Stackpole Books)

Marine general William H. Rupertus is best known today for writing the Corps' Rifleman's Creed, which begins, "This is my rifle. There are many like it, but this one is mine" – which has been made famous by films such as *Full Metal Jacket* and *Jarhead*. Rupertus was one of the outstanding Marines of the twentieth century, standing alongside men such as Smedley Butler, Chesty Puller, and Arthur Vandegriff. He died in 1945 and his story has never been told.

According to [Old Breed General](#), Rupertus 'made his bones' in the USMC's 'savage wars of peace' before World War II: Haiti for three years after World War I, China in 1929 (where he lost his wife and children to the scarlet fever epidemic) and again in 1937 (where he witnessed the beginning of Japan's war against China that turned into the Pacific War of World War II).

Authors of [Old Breed General](#) are Amy Rupertus Peacock and Don Brown. Peacock, the granddaughter of General Rupertus and keeper of the family archives, is a graduate of the University of Georgia's journalism school and has written for various newspapers. Brown, a former U.S. Navy JAG officer and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney, has written fourteen books.

[Old Breed General](#) is the biography of Rupertus and the story of the Marines at war in the Pacific. This is an American story of love, loss, shock, horror, tragedy, and triumph that focuses on Rupertus and the 1st Marine Division in World War II, but which resonates through the 1st, to Chosin in Korea and James Mattis's command in Iraq.

In World War II, Rupertus commanded during four important battles: Tulagi and Henderson Field during the Guadalcanal campaign; the Battle of Cape Gloucester; and Peleliu. It was a series of blistering battles – and ultimately victories – that helped break the back of the Japanese and pave the way for American victory. In the course of these battles, Rupertus became the Patton of the Pacific – ruthless in war, always on the attack, merciless against the enemy, undefeated in battles – even as he proved himself very much like Eisenhower, suavely diplomatic and able to balance war with politics. These skills allowed Rupertus to crush the enemy in the malaria-infested jungles of the Pacific and personally escort Eleanor Roosevelt on her tour of the Pacific.

What a truly inspirational biography! This was truly one of America's great military leaders in the Pacific in WW2. The hardships that he and his troops experienced were heartbreaking. This is a must read for the history enthusiast! – Ron Baumer, NetGalley Reviewer

All present-day Marines should read this book. Gen. Rupertus was one of the most highly experienced leaders of WWII. Before the Peleliu nightmare, he had served in WWI, the Banana Wars, 1930's Peking, and alongside the Maoist-oriented Raiders on Guadalcanal. At Peleliu, his 1st Marine Division then faced the most difficult terrain of WWII.... Following Admiral Halsey's suggestion that the Peleliu landing may not have been necessary, Rupertus became widely rumored to have followed too high a tempo of operations. Only recently has the tactical sophistication of Peleliu's defenders been realized. But, Gen. Rupertus' reputation had still been tarnished, and he died of a broken heart three months later. With this book, the record should be set straight. The entire 1st Marine Division had performed exceptionally well at Peleliu and then went on to win the most important engagement of WWII in the Pacific. Rest in peace, fine general. The Corps was so sad about Peleliu's loss of life that it was slow to realize its degree of accomplishment. – H. John Poole, author of *Peleliu Progress*

Journalist Peacock and novelist Brown (The Last Fighter Pilot) deliver a comprehensive account of the career of Peacock's grandfather, Maj. Gen. William H. Rupertus, who wrote the Marine Corps' "Rifleman's Creed" and led the 1st Marine Division to key

victories at Tulagi, Guadalcanal, Cape Gloucester, and Peleliu.... Blow-by-blow accounts of the campaign to retake the Pacific focus on Rupertus's command decisions, including his direction of the landing force at Tulagi; his wrestling with dengue fever while defending Guadalcanal's airstrip against a major Japanese counteroffensive; and his successful campaign to take control of the airport and clear out entrenched Japanese forces on the island of Peleliu ... Peacock and Brown provide plenty of drama and action. This vivid biography gives its subject well-deserved recognition. – Publishers Weekly

The story is riveting because it is told in the style of a novel so we are privy to the thoughts and plans of both General Rupertus and the Japanese generals. We are caught up in whether the fake attack will draw the opposing side 'off sides' or whether the change in tactics and hidden tunnel fortress will doom the unsuspecting and overconfident Americans. Although we feel like we are reading dialogue, the book is carefully researched and full of pictures backing up the storyline.

It is also a story of separation from those back home that the Marines loved. I was particularly moved by Eleanor Roosevelt's offer to contact loved ones after touring the 1st Marine Division in Australia. – William G. Seymour, USMC retired

Amy Rupertus Peacock and Don Brown, in my view, did an amazing job of providing a very readable flow of the progression of our Marines advancing through some of the Japanese-held islands during World War II, facing many other factors as well like decisions made in Washington regarding command while focusing too on the very human aspects as revealed through elaboration of some of General Rupertus's more private family-focused thoughts and communications.... Combining the thinking of General Rupertus behind the inevitable cruelty of battle decisions in the presence of tenderness for family and others so closely involved increases the depth and insight of this book beyond being a well-researched historical account. – Kirk Hauser, USMC retired

This vivid, blow-by-blow account of the 1st Marine Division in World War II is an inspirational biography. [Old Breed General](#) sets the record straight, giving General Rupertus the recognition he deserves. <>

History / Religion & Spirituality

[The Franciscans in Colonial Mexico](#) edited by Thomas M. Cohen, Jay T. Harrison & David Rex Galindo (University of Oklahoma Press)

Generations of scholars have studied the multifaceted experiences of the Franciscans in Mexico and how the Franciscan order shaped New Spain and the early Mexican republic. Recent scholarship has given long-overdue attention to the evangelized natives. Most of these works focus on a specific region or period, or on a particular aspect of Franciscan ministries in New Spain. A comprehensive account of the Franciscans in Mexico over the long term has been missing, until now.

[The Franciscans in Colonial Mexico](#) analyzes the Franciscans' engagement with native peoples, Creole populations, the viceregal authorities, and the Spanish empire as a whole in order to offer a broad picture of Catholic evangelization in North America while keeping the Franciscans at the center of the story. Published in 2021, during commemoration of the quincentenary of the Spanish – and thus the Franciscan – presence in Mexico, [The Franciscans in Colonial Mexico](#) brings together the research of junior and senior scholars from Mexico, Spain, and the United States on the long-enduring and far-reaching Franciscan presence in Mexico.

The editors of [The Franciscans in Colonial Mexico](#) are Thomas M. Cohen, Jay T. Harrison and David Rex Galindo. Cohen is Associate Professor of History at the Catholic University of America. He worked with Fr. Francisco Morales as co-director of the Centro de Estudios Humanísticos Fray Bernardino de Sahagún and as curator of the Biblioteca Franciscana at the Universidad de las Américas Puebla. Harrison is Associate Professor of Latin American and Public History at Hood College in Maryland. Galindo is Assistant Professor of History at the Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez, Santiago, Chile. The book has 17 contributors.

*This important book is a richly deserved homage to Mexican historian Fray Francisco Morales, OFM, by some of the most distinguished students of the religious and cultural history of New Spain. With a clear vision and a multi-disciplinary approach, the authors offer an original analysis of the Franciscans, highlighting their religious, political, social, and cultural ties with Indigenous peoples, Spanish settlers, military officials, and crown administrators. The book provides a fresh interpretation of the Franciscans' lasting influence on New Spain and on Spanish America as a whole. – Antonio Rubial Garcia, Professor of History, Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico, author of *El cristianismo en Nueva Espana: Catequesis, fiesta, milagros y represion**

Honoring Francisco Morales, the leading historian of the Franciscan Order in Mexico, this volume paints both a broad and a delightfully detailed picture of the Franciscan

experience in North America. The contributors address topics ranging from Franciscan spirituality and the order's global aims to missions, martyrdom, education, and games. The book spans three centuries and encompasses regions as distant and diverse as Baja California, the Sierra Gorda, central Mexico, Yucatan, and the Gulf Coast of Texas, always paying close attention to the Franciscans' interactions with native peoples. These superb essays provide a novel approach to the history of colonial Mexico. – John Schwaller, Professor Emeritus of History, University at Albany, author of *The Fifteenth Month: Aztec History in the Rituals of Panquetzaliztli*

The collection of essays in [The Franciscans in Colonial Mexico](#), ranging across regions and time periods, brings together the voices of a wide assortment of well-regarded scholars to provide a comprehensive and fresh perspective on the contributions of Franciscans in colonial Mexico. <>

Home & Garden / Arts & Crafts

[The Nature of Creativity: A Mindful Approach to Making Art & Craft](#) by Jane E. Hall, with a foreword by Brigit Strawbridge Howard (Merrell Publishers)

My creative perception of the natural world balances me emotionally; it brightens my outlook and colors my mood. My artistic practice is meditative, or 'mindful', soothing me when I am troubled and raising my spirits when I feel low. Even when I am on good form – which I generally am, thanks to feeling 'nature-blessed' and creatively balanced – my practice brings me greater joy. In brief, one could say that nature, and 'making something of it', makes me happy. I hope you find this true for yourself. – from the book

As we become increasingly aware of the power of nature to lift our spirits, so, too, are we becoming more conscious of the role that mindfulness can play in sparking creativity. The renowned textile artist and embroiderer Jane E. Hall brings a number of ideas together in her new book [The Nature of Creativity](#).

Hall is an acclaimed fine and textile artist and embroiderer whose work has featured in numerous exhibitions and magazines. Foreword writer Brigit Strawbridge Howard is a wildlife gardener, naturalist, and bee advocate.

As a child, Hall says she loved playing outside and making things using natural materials, from daisy chains and petal-based perfumes to tiny tea sets of acorn cups and leaf saucers. Now, as a successful professional artist, Hall still finds great happiness and inspiration in connecting with nature, and in this book encourages readers to attune to the beauty of the natural world as a way of stimulating their creativity.

Hall begins [The Nature of Creativity](#) by explaining how spending time in nature helps people to engage the senses and rediscover playfulness, and outlines her belief that one should embrace the process of making art rather than focusing on its final form. She shares the special spaces, both indoors and out, that allow her imagination to have free rein, and then presents 10 creative ideas inspired by nature. These 'Creative Contemplations' first explore building one's own treasure collection of materials to use in artistic projects. She shows readers sources of ideas and materials through stories, make-believe, contemplation and reminiscence and then moves on to the creation of a range of designs: mandalas of petals, leaves, and shells; delicate dreamcatchers; a dainty purse of honesty seed pods; handmade birds' nests; embroidered butterflies; 'woodland fairies' composed of lichen-covered twigs and feathers. Then [The Nature of Creativity](#) explores some of Hall's artistic endeavors through step-by-step projects and diary entries, so that readers can both follow some of her projects and be inspired to create their own. Some 'Contemplations' include step-by-step instructions, while others feature the stories behind their making in order to inspire readers to push beyond their perceived creative limits.

Hall's writing style is engaging, and the text throughout is accompanied by specially commissioned photography.

[The Nature of Creativity](#) is a charming collection of art- and craft-based ideas and projects that encourage readers to explore their creativity through observing, cherishing and being inspired through a deeper connection to and awareness of the beauty of the natural world. No matter how skilled or unskilled readers believe themselves to be, [The Nature of Creativity](#) will nurture their artistic thoughts. <>

Law / Disability

[Nolo's Guide to Social Security Disability: Getting & Keeping Your Benefits, 11th edition](#) by David A. Morton III M.D. (Nolo)

[Nolo's Guide to Social Security Disability](#) is about Social Security disability benefits, which are provided through a U.S. government system run by the Social Security Administration (SSA). These disability programs provide cash support for individuals with mental or physical disorders (and their dependents, in some cases) who cannot work because of the severity of their condition. The book covers both Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Social Security Insurance (SSI), showing readers how to prove a disability and explaining how their age, education, and work experience affect their chances. Parents will find special information about benefits available to children with a disability.

Author David A. Morton was a disability determination consultant for the Social Security Administration for 14 years, serving as chief medical consultant for eight years. In his

capacity as chief medical consultant, Morton hired, trained, supervised and evaluated the work of medical doctors and clinical psychologists, and made thousands of disability determinations for both adults and children.

With [Nolo's Guide to Social Security Disability](#) readers learn how to:

- Find the disability criteria for their medical condition.
- Prove the severity of their disability.
- Appeal if they are denied benefits.
- Work part time while keeping their benefits.
- Prepare for a Continuing Disability Review.

This new edition of [Nolo's Guide to Social Security Disability](#) includes:

- A new discussion of getting disability for Post-Acute COVID Syndrome (PACS).
- Explanations of Social Security's updated medical listings for back pain, musculoskeletal disorders, rheumatoid arthritis, scleroderma, Raynaud's phenomenon, polymyositis, and dermatomyositis.

The book is useful for anyone who:

- Is injured or ill and wants to know if they are eligible for disability benefits.
- Wants to apply for disability benefits.
- Is already receiving disability benefits and wants to know how to protect the benefits during periodic government reviews of their condition.
- Wants to appeal a decision denying disability benefits.
- Is helping an adult or child apply for or keep current benefits.

With Downloadable Disability Listings readers find out if their medical condition qualifies under one of Social Security's 200 disability listings. And [Nolo's Guide to Social Security Disability](#) is packed with filled-in samples of all the forms readers need, including the SSDI and SSI disability applications.

A thorough analysis and discussion of the requirements to qualify for Social Security disability benefits. – The Wall Street Journal

Guides applicants and recipients through one of the world's largest bureaucracies. – Reference & Research Book News

Morton presents readers with the eighth edition of his step-by-step guide to navigating the world of long-term or permanent Social Security disability. The author covers the qualifying of medical conditions, the applications for Social Security Disability Insurance and Social Security Insurance benefits, the estimation of monthly expenses, requesting and winning appeals and hearings, and a wide variety of other related subjects over the course of the book. Morton was a consultant the Social Security Administration and

has authored many books on Social Security disability for use by legal professionals. – Eithne O’Leyne Editor, ProtoView

Now in a fully updated and expanded ninth edition, [Nolo's Guide to Social Security Disability: Getting & Keeping Your Benefits](#) is a comprehensive and compassionate instructional reference and guide that covers both SSDI and SSI, showing the non-specialist general reader how to prove a disability, and explains how age, education, and work experience affect an applicant's chances. Parents will find special information about benefits available to children with a disability. [Nolo's Guide to Social Security Disability: Getting & Keeping Your Benefits](#) shows how to: Find the disability criteria for a medical condition; Prove the severity of a disability; Appeal if denied benefits; Work part time while keeping benefits; Prepare for a Continuing Disability Review; and so much more. Plus, this new edition of [Nolo's Guide to Social Security Disability](#) is packed with filled-in samples of all the forms you'll need, including the SSDI and SSI disability applications. This edition also covers recent major changes, including: Updated disability listings for over 65 medical conditions; New rules concerning hearings and evidence; Changes in how Social Security considers evidence from treating doctors and other medical providers. Thoroughly and impressively 'user friendly' in organization and presentation, [Nolo's Guide to Social Security Disability](#) is unreservedly recommended for personal, community and academic library Social Security reference collections. – The Midwest Book Review

In many cases readers qualify for Social Security disability benefits quickly and easily using [Nolo's Guide to Social Security Disability](#), a comprehensive and compassionate book which is user friendly. <>

Literature & Fiction / Adventure / Noir

[Secret Identity: A Novel](#) by Alex Segura (Flatiron Books)

From Anthony Award-winning writer Alex Segura comes [Secret Identity](#), a rollicking literary mystery set in the world of comic books.

Segura is the SVP – Sales and Marketing at Oni Press and the author of *Star Wars Poe Dameron: Free Fall* and the acclaimed Pete Fernandez Mystery series. He has also written a number of comic books, most notably the superhero noir *The Black Ghost*, the YA music series *The Archies*, and the “Archie Meets” collection of crossovers.

It's 1975 in [Secret Identity](#) and the comic book industry is struggling, but Carmen Valdez doesn't care. She's an assistant at Triumph Comics, which doesn't have the creative zeal of Marvel nor the buttoned-up efficiency of DC, but it doesn't matter. Carmen is tantalizingly close to fulfilling her dream of writing a superhero book.

That dream is nearly a reality when one of the Triumph writers enlists her help to create a new character, which they call “The Lethal Lynx,” Triumph's first female hero. But her

colleague is acting strangely and asking to keep her involvement a secret. And then he is found dead, with all of their scripts turned in to the publisher without her name. Carmen is desperate to piece together what happened to him, to hang on to her piece of the Lynx, which turns out to be a runaway hit. But it's complicated by a surprise visitor from her home in Miami, a tenacious cop who is piecing everything together too quickly for Carmen, and the tangled web of secrets and resentments among the passionate eccentrics who write comics for a living.

And that's enough to give readers an idea of the drama at the heart of [Secret Identity](#).

Segura's book works on so many levels, it's almost hard to keep track – as a love letter to comic books, it's as powerful as anything since Michael Chabon's The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay (2000). And as a thriller, it's smart, perfectly paced, and wonderfully atmospheric – Segura captures the intense, grimy milieu of 1970s New York with aplomb. You don't have to be a comics fan to love this novel; it's a masterful book filled with real heart and soul. A triumph. – Kirkus Reviews, starred review
Darkest noir meets the vibrant world of comics in the hands of Segura... His reverence for the medium comes across vividly here.... A superlative one-of-a-kind novel. – Booklist

Outstanding... Segura's infectious passion for superheroes shines in this page-turning mix of murder mystery and coming-of-age story. – Publishers Weekly

Segura's fond affection for comic books comes through in this mashup of pulpy murder mysteries and 1970s dingy New York streets. – Silvia Moreno-Garcia, New York Times bestselling author of Mexican Gothic

Alex Segura is one of the great gentlemen of crime fiction. A calm and measured soul who happens to be a firecracker of a writer. [Secret Identity](#) is his best yet – a glowing love letter to Serpico-era NYC and the rock and roll frontier of the American comics industry. This is a writer at the top of his game. – S. A. Cosby, bestselling author of Razorblade Tears

Just as Chinatown forged the water wars of California into unforgettable noir, Alex Segura's [Secret Identity](#) excavates rarely mined material – the secret history of the comics industry exploiting underpaid, uncredited creators – and transduces it into a genuinely poignant thriller that pulsates with the lonely claustrophobia and third-rail delirium of city life. – Sean Howe, author of Marvel Comics: The Untold Story

[Secret Identity](#) is astonishingly entertaining. Electric prose, breathless pacing, and Sandy Jarrell's stunning art make for a roof-top leaping read you won't soon forget. As a comic vigilante fights for justice in a heartless city, her talented creator finds herself the target of men keen to cash in on her talent no matter the cost. The resulting dual narrative is beautifully spun and relentlessly gripping, reminding us that heroes and villains do exist – and we're all quite capable of being both. – P J Vernon, acclaimed author of Bath Haus

With [Secret Identity](#), Alex Segura perfectly recreates the 1970s comics industry, while at

the same time creating a unique new character in the center of that world, and giving her a murder to solve as she struggles with the sexism of her times. This book was a page-turner in the best ways, but the characters and their lives felt so real that I found myself wishing it would continue even past the mystery. A truly special noir book. – Ed Brubaker, Eisner-winning writer of *Criminal* and *Winter Soldier*

Taut, fast-paced and wildly entertaining, [Secret Identity](#) merges classic noir with the three-color world of superhero comics in a way that will delight fans of both. – G. Willow Wilson, author of *The Bird King* and *Alif the Unseen* and co-creator of Ms. Marvel
Comic books, murder, and that knife of noir that Alex Segura wields like a surgeon. [Secret Identity](#) is a new and beautiful exploration of genre, revealing the darkest depths of our true selves. This isn't a book, it's a full, daring experience. – Brad Meltzer, bestselling author of *The Lightning Rod*

A cleverly-plotted mystery meets the vibrant setting of the 1970s New York comics scene in [Secret Identity](#). Alex Segura's new novel explores the masks people wear in exquisite detail, and I loved everything about it. – Kristen Lepionka, Shamus and Goldie Award-winning author of the Roxane Weary mystery series

A well-paced page-turner. In [Secret Identity](#) Segura uses his expertise as a comics creator as well as his love of noir fiction to create a one-of-a-kind novel – hard-edged and bright-eyed, gritty and dangerous, and utterly absorbing. <>

Philosophy / Ethics / Global

[For the Good of the World: Is Global Agreement on Global Challenges Possible?](#) by A. C. Grayling (Oneworld Publications)

Can we humans agree on a set of values which will allow us to confront the numerous threats that we and our planet face? Or will we continue our disagreements, rivalries and antipathies, even as we collectively approach a series of potentially drastic threats?

[For the Good of the World](#) is a lucid consideration of the challenges the world faces, and a proposal for a way to avoid disaster.

The three biggest challenges facing the world today, in A. C. Grayling's view, are climate change, technology and justice.

Grayling is the Founder and Principal of the New College of the Humanities at Northeastern University, London, and its Professor of Philosophy.

The solution Grayling proposes in [For the Good of the World](#) is both pragmatic and inspiring.

The most serious problems facing the world are not such that they can be solved or even managed within the borders of a single state. They require international cooperation; and that means finding a unifying set of values on which all can agree.

- **Climate change.** Already the world is heading for more than 20 degrees C warming by the mid-century; sea rises, droughts, major weather events, floods, wildfires, the spread of diseases, hundreds of millions of refugees moving across the planet, are already inevitable given the failure to deal with climate change so far. To mitigate or cope with these and possibly worse effects, international cooperation is essential.
- **Technology.** AI and genetics technologies offer many positives, but many serious negatives: autonomous lethal weapons systems, runaway super-AI, surveillance and privacy violation, mood and mind control, genetic engineering of fetuses, genetic engineering of viruses that target only certain ethnicities or populations.
- **Justice.** Conflict and upheaval in parts of the world with low levels of social justice and human rights observance are destabilizing for the whole world because they undermine efforts to achieve the concerted action against technological and climate problems.

As every day brings new stories about the wider issues Grayling considers, from extreme weather events (floods in Germany and fires on the US west coast) through Pegasus spyware and lethal autonomous weapons systems, to the unequal distribution of the Covid vaccine, and LGBTQ protests in Hungary, the key question Grayling asks in [For the Good of the World](#) – Is a Universal Ethics Possible? – becomes ever more urgent.

A truly excellent book. Grayling invites us all into a vital discussion of our planet's future. – Sir David King, former Chief Scientific Adviser

A must read for anyone with questions, worries and fears about pollution, poverty, protectionism, populism, weapons proliferation, and where our world is headed. – Gordon Brown, former UK prime minister

Grayling writes with admirable clarity and great conviction. He is clearly one of the good guys, appalled by the universality of infamy: climate nationalism, religious bigotry, gender inequality. – Iain Macwhirter, *Herald* (Glasgow)

An enthusiastic thinker who embraces humour, common sense and lucidity. – *Independent*

Grayling is particularly good at illuminating the knottiness of moral discourse. – *Sunday Times*

A truly excellent book. Grayling invites us all into a vital discussion of our planet's future. The chapter on climate change, particularly, is an outstanding summary of the challenges we face. – Sir David King, former Chief Scientific Adviser to the UK Government

A timely book, [For the Good of the World](#) is a lucid and inspiring appraisal of the challenges humanity now faces and how to overcome them. <>

Philosophy / Religion

[The Essential Supernatural](#): A Dialogical Study in Kierkegaard and Blondel by Maurice Ashley Agbaw-Ebai (St. Augustine's Press)

In [The Essential Supernatural](#), Søren Kierkegaard and Maurice Blondel are positioned together in a dialogue regarding the vision of the supernatural. Author Maurice Ashley Agbaw-Ebai draws from this a sharper image of the preeminent place religious experience possesses in human life and thought. Kierkegaard's lament of Christian lack of fervor and Blondel's concern that religion and philosophy no longer interact are both examined in [The Essential Supernatural](#), and Agbaw-Ebai concludes that they both indicate the same outcome: a 'dominant leveling of society' that robs religion of its particularity. This devastates individuals because they is no longer challenged to seek a relationship with God and expose themselves to the supernatural.

Agbaw-Ebai is a priest of the Diocese of Mamfe, Cameroon. He currently teaches courses in Systematic Theology and Philosophy of Religion at Boston College, Newton MA, and St John's Seminary, Brighton MA.

According to Agbaw-Ebai in [The Essential Supernatural](#), the boundlessness of man must be acknowledged or else his actions will never be understood, and religious experience and philosophy must coexist with mutual reference or self-knowledge will never amount to the discovery of supernatural destiny. And this, asserts Agbaw-Ebai, is the shared urgency of both Kierkegaard and Blondel.

Like these philosophers who have preceded him, Agbaw-Ebai in [The Essential Supernatural](#) exhorts readers to never allow the sense of their relation to the supernatural as a settled matter. The philosophy of religion people have inherited does not protect them from having to confront their own subjectivity with autonomy: to be God without God and against God, or to be God with and through God.

Plato wrote that truth is best seen in dialog, when two minds meet and sparks of truth flame out as from the contact between flint and steel. This is especially true when there are both strong agreements and strong differences between those two minds. This scholarly comparison of Kierkegaard and Blondel fits that model well. The differences are at first stark: Kierkegaard was strongly Protestant, Blondel was strongly Catholic; Kierkegaard focused on choice, Blondel on action; Kierkegaard is usually classified as an 'existentialist,' Blondel as a 'personalist' or a 'phenomenologist.' What holds them together at their center? Not that both were philosophers, or that both were Christians,

or that both happened to be both philosophers and Christians, but that both were Christian philosophers, whose center was Christ, and therefore both God and man, His image.

Fr. Maurice helps us to see how these two very different personal temperaments and philosophical methods meet and see a similar light, not despite their divergence but in and because of it. I found this work surprising and enlightening, and I found Fr. Maurice to be a reliable, sympathetic, and trustable guide through both of these challenging thinkers.

To call a philosopher 'challenging' is often a negative euphemism for 'difficult to comprehend.' But in this case it is not negative but positive. Like Jesus and Socrates, both Kierkegaard and Blondel 'challenge' us to a duel – a duel not with them but with some of our easiest and laziest assumptions about the intrinsic dynamism and restlessness of our very selves. This book should come with gentle warning labels to those who dislike that kind of challenge. – Peter Kreeft, Professor of Philosophy, Boston College

[The Essential Supernatural](#) is a challenging and enlightening guide to human's discovery of its supernatural destiny as understood by Kierkegaard and Blondel. <>

Relationships / Internet

[The New Laws of Love: Online Dating and the Privatization of Intimacy](#), 1st edition by Marie Bergström (Polity Press)

In contrast to those who praise online dating as a democratization of love and those who condemn it as a commodification of intimacy, [The New Laws of Love](#) tells a different story about how and why online dating became big.

Author Marie Bergström is a researcher at the French Institute for Demographic Studies (INED), Paris.

The key to understanding the growing prevalence of digital dating lies in what Bergström in [The New Laws of Love](#) calls 'the privatization of intimacy.' Online dating takes courtship from the public to the private sphere and makes it a domestic and individual practice. Unlike courtship in traditional settings such as school, work, and gatherings of family and friends, online dating makes a clear distinction between social and sexual sociability and renders dating much more discrete. This privatizing feature is fundamental for understanding both the success and the nature of digital matchmaking. Bergström sheds light on the persisting inequalities of intimate life, showing that online dating is neither free nor fair: it has its winners and losers and it differs significantly according to gender, age and social class.

[The New Laws of Love](#) is divided into seven chapters, each focusing on a specific topic related to online dating and the transformation of heterosexual relationships. The first

part of the book looks at the process of privatization, which is approached from different vantage points: a historical perspective, an analysis of the dating economy, an explanation of the success of online dating, and an analysis of the changes that this form of dating brings about in terms of sex and love.

Chapter 1 opens up the archives, looking for the origins of online dating. It establishes a strong affiliation between earlier services and today's digital platforms. It also reveals a common criticism that targeted them from the start: as early as in the nineteenth century, matchmaking services were accused of corrupting intimate relationships by introducing economic standards. The commodification of intimacy appears as a long-running fear of commercial intermediaries rather than as a feature of late capitalism.

Chapter 2 pursues this historical analysis by looking at the emergence of today's online dating market. Drawing on interviews with the founders of a series of dating sites and apps, it shows the social and professional norms that inform these platforms and govern their creation.

Using national surveys from different countries, chapter 3 gives an overview of the number of users and the proportion of couples that meet online. It also provides a new explanation for the popularity of online dating – namely that online dating owes its success to the separation it operates between the sexual and the social sphere. Online dating is primarily casual dating. This common perception, largely conveyed by the media, is also a scientific fact.

Chapter 4 shows that relationships initiated online rapidly become sexual and are often short-term; but it also challenges the common interpretations of this trend. Where authors often see a radical shift in norms, [The New Laws of Love](#) insists on a change in context. The sexual nature of online dating must, once again, be understood in the light of privatization; individuals more easily engage with and disengage from partners with whom they do not share a social setting.

The second part of [The New Laws of Love](#) looks at the inequalities in dating; we are not all equal before the laws of love. Online dating has not changed this, but it lays bare the discriminations, prejudices, and injustices that characterize the intimate sphere.

Chapter 5 investigates the mechanisms of assortative matching in online dating. Users tend to interact with people from a social milieu similar to their own. This social selection is not due only to algorithms or predefined preference; it is rather the result of class dispositions and cultural prerequisites. Precisely because online dating takes away some of the most formal obstacles to social diversity, it reveals the strength and the modus operandi of today's social hierarchies.

Although specifically designed to match people as partners, dating platforms have their winners and losers. The inequalities are not only individual but follow strong

regularities of gender and age. Chapter 6 shows that young men are often rejected by their female peers who seek contact with more mature men. At older ages, this sexual disqualification turns against female users. Dating platforms reveal this machinery of matching and those excluded from the process.

Dating services are a site for sexual exploration both for women and for men, but internet interactions are also profoundly gendered. This is clear from surveys, big data, and interviews that disclose a dual norm of male initiative and female sexual reserve. The last chapter of [The New Laws of Love](#) looks at these traditional gender roles, which are reproduced online. It highlights the persistent double standard in sexual behavior and the different ways in which women and men are authorized to express desire. Sexual ambiguity remains the norm in heterosexual relations. The grey areas between consent and abuse are widening, especially online, where sexual desire is acted out but rarely pronounced.

The conclusion develops the main thesis of [The New Laws of Love](#) and puts it in a historical perspective. Online dating is both a cause and a consequence of a larger privatization of social life. Rather than installing a new public meeting venue – like the balls of the early twentieth century – online dating makes meeting partners more private than ever, turning it into a solitary and deeply personal matter.

A refreshing lack of hysteria about the impact the internet has had on our sex lives. – The Guardian

[The New Laws of Love](#) is an insightful deep dive into the world of digitally mediated dating. Bergström eloquently and convincingly navigates a nuanced path between moral decline theses on the one side and uncritical celebrations of online dating on the other, to reach evidence-based conclusions and analyses. – Brady Robards, Monash University

Drawing on a wide range of empirical material, [The New Laws of Love](#) challenges what we think we know about online dating and gives readers a new understanding of who, why, and how people go online to seek sex and love. <>

Religion & Spirituality / Christianity / Biographies & Memoirs / Series

[The Life of Jesus Christ: Part Two](#); Volume 2, Chapters 58-89 Ludolph of Saxony, Carthusian, translated by Milton T. Walsh (**Cistercian Studies Series, Vol. 284** Cistercian Publications, Liturgical Press)

[The Life of Jesus Christ: Part Two](#), the fourth and final volume of *The Life of Jesus Christ*, presents extensive meditations on the passion of Christ, a favorite theme for Ludolph's contemporaries. Ludolph then conducts readers through the events of Easter and Pentecost, concluding with meditations on the return of Christ at the end of time, bringing to a triumphant conclusion the sweep of salvation history begun in the first volume. Along with presenting the final part of the Carthusian's magisterial work, [The Life of Jesus Christ: Part Two](#) includes a detailed index to all four volumes.

Ludolph of Saxony (c. 1395-1378) was a German Roman Catholic theologian of the 14th century. The *Vita Cristi* is the principal work for which he is known.

Translator Milton T. Walsh holds a doctorate in sacred theology from the Gregorian University in Rome. For many years, he taught theology at St. Patrick's Seminary in Menlo Park, California. He is the author of several books, including *Second Friends: C. S. Lewis and Ronald Knox in Conversation*, *In Memory of Me: A Meditation on the Roman Canon*, and *Witness of the Saints: Patristic Readings in the Liturgy of the Hours*.

This translation – the first into English – of The Life of Jesus Christ by Ludolph of Saxony will be welcomed both by scholars in various fields and by practicing Christians. It draws on an astonishing number of sources and sheds light on many aspects of the doctrinal and institutional history of the church down to the fourteenth century. – Giles Constable, Princeton University

This translation of the Vita Christi is a colossal work making accessible to a new audience a monument of medieval spirituality that influenced such great saints as St. Teresa of Avila and St. Ignatius of Loyola. Ludolph of Saxony drew on patristic and medieval authors to weave a rich spiritual commentary breaking open the Word of God for his contemporaries. Believers will find wisdom. Students of history, theology, and spirituality will gain access to an influential worldview. A magnificent endeavor! – Andre Brouillette, SI, Assistant Professor of Systematic and Spiritual Theology Director, Licentiate in Sacred Theology Program (STL) Boston College School of Theology and Ministry

The manuscript tradition of The Life of Christ (Vita Christi) is extremely complex, and Walsh, while basing his translation on the edition, has gone beyond in providing critical

apparatus that will be of significant use to scholars, as well as making the text available for students and all interested in the theology, spirituality, and religious life of the later Middle Ages. His introduction expertly places Ludolph's work in the textual tradition and is itself a contribution to scholarship. Simply put, this is an amazing achievement! – Eric Leland Saak Professor of History Indiana University

Modern readers will find Ludolph's work fanciful. There is much here for meditation, and each section concludes with a prayer. The Life of Christ is not for the gullible, but it can be recommended for lectio and spiritual reading. – Sr. Sarah Schwartzberg, OSB, Spirit & Life

This translation will hopefully stimulate further work on the late medieval manuscript tradition of the text, its circulation, use and readership. It will prove an invaluable tool for scholars researching the late medieval engagement with the humanity of Christ, while simultaneously catering for general readers and religious practitioners interested in learning more about a traditional and influential imaginative meditational practice. – Christiania Whitehead, Professor of Middle English Literature University of Warwick

[The Life of Jesus Christ: Part Two](#) completes the series, making a rich tapestry available in English and therefore available to a new and wider audience. Among other things, it sheds new light on the history of the church. <>

Religion & Spirituality / Christianity

[Spiritual Formation as if the Church Mattered: Growing in Christ through Community, 2nd edition](#) by James C. Wilhoit, with a foreword by Dallas Willard (Baker Academic)

Most books on spiritual formation focus on the individual. But spiritual formation is at the heart of the church's whole purpose for existence. It must be a central task for the church to carry out Christ's mission in the world. [Spiritual Formation as if the Church Mattered](#) offers an introduction to spiritual formation set squarely in the local church. The *first edition* has been well received and widely used as a textbook. The **second edition** has been updated throughout, incorporates findings from positive psychology, and reflects an Augustinian formation perspective.

James C. Wilhoit is emeritus professor of Christian education at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois, where he taught for over thirty-five years. Wilhoit draws on historical ecumenical practices and the Bible to offer a spiritual formation primer that emphasizes the role of the Christian community.

According to Dallas Willard in the foreword, Wilhoit has written a book of special urgency for these times. In it he addresses the central problem facing the

contemporary church in the Western world and worldwide: the problem of how to routinely lead its members through a path of spiritual, moral, and personal transformation that brings them into authentic Christlikeness in every aspect of their lives, enabling them, in the language of the apostle Paul, "to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called".

Most of the current century has been a period of time when Christian churches have been distracted from the central task of teaching their people how to live the spiritual life in a way that would bring them progressively to enjoy the character of Christ as their own. But in the last few decades, a sense of spiritual shallowness and emptiness, in individual lives as well as in church groups and activities, has led to a renewed use of the ancient language of 'spiritual formation.' Spiritual formation (really, transformation) is the process, in Paul's language, of "putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, and not organizing our lives around the satisfaction of our natural desires". In that process, people "put off the old self, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts and are renewed in the spirit of mind; and people put on the new self, which after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness".

Becoming the kind of person who routinely and easily does what Jesus tells them to do has generally been considered out of reach and therefore not really necessary for what Christians are about. Paul, in conformity with the central teachings of the whole Bible, is referring to the type of life transformation from inside to outside – "first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may also become clean," as Jesus said; – that won the ancient world to Christ. The practical problem is this: How does one move back into the powerful form of life that won the worlds of the past and alone can meet the crying needs of the world today? Here is where [Spiritual Formation as if the Church Mattered](#) comes in.

The answer to the question is that the local congregations, the places where Christians gather on a regular basis, must resume the practice of making the spiritual formation of their members into Christlikeness their primary goal, the aim that every one of their activities serves. That is what it means to 'put on the Lord Jesus Christ'.

The church is the local group of apprentices whom God has chosen as his primary instrument in his redemptive work on earth. It is hard today for pastors and leaders to form this intention and begin to put it into practice. But there is a way forward, and it is the details that matter. That is where this book, [Spiritual Formation as if the Church Mattered](#), is uniquely helpful. Wilhoit, with a warm heart and a gentle and intelligent manner, helps readers see, in great detail, what they can do to relocate spiritual transformation to the center of what they do in gathering as disciples of Jesus. He helps any serious person engage the project from where they are, discover what really works for Christlikeness and what doesn't, and assess outcomes realistically to make needed

adjustments as they go. No special equipment or ability – not even a budget – is required.

Always a creative practitioner of spiritual formation, Wilhoit now gives us a nuanced reasoning for why and how it works and a practical approach to accomplish it in the church. – Jan Johnson, president, Dallas Willard Ministries

Wilhoit beckons the church to focus its attention on the grace-filled mission of forming disciples or apprentices of Jesus and letting other things flow out of this fundamental orientation. This insight is wise and prudent, and it directly addresses the spiritual consumerism that has infected so many churches. I see Dallas Willard nodding his head in agreement! Wilhoit's book will profit pastors as they seek to follow Jesus's great commission and every precious person who longs to be more deeply formed into the image of Jesus. – Chris Hall, president, Renovaré

Spiritual formation is the task of the church. Wilhoit clearly explains and develops this foundational principle in this book. I have used the first edition in different settings, and I'm thrilled for the excellent improvement in this second edition. I will definitely use this book in my teaching ministry and recommend it to others! – Octavio Esqueda, Talbot School of Theology

*Wilhoit reminds us afresh that God's strategic purpose for the church rides on a robust Christian Spiritual Formation (CSF) process predicated on Scripture. This process is hardly a solo endeavor but rather one anchored in the richness of community within an active and God-glorifying church context. Loaded with practical applications, this second edition highlights how the church is to take its rightful place as the incubator of CSF. – Diane J. Chandler, author of *Christian Spiritual Formation: An Integrated Approach to Personal and Relational Wholeness**

*Wilhoit's passion for individuals to live a life of authenticity is evident in this book. Because of his faithfulness to a spirit of excellence, he has written a resourceful book, and consequently, the world will be a much better place for all! – Barbara L. Peacock, founder, Barbara L. Peacock Ministries; author of *Soul Care in African American Practice**

Practical and insightful, [Spiritual Formation as if the Church Mattered](#) will be of special help to ministers. <>

Religion & Spirituality / Occult

Pure Magic: A Complete Course in Spellcasting by Judika Illes, with a foreword by Mat Aurnyn (**Weiser Classics Series**: Weiser Books)

Brim with magic that is accessible to everyone; magic that works regardless of one's level of experience or background. – Mat Aurnyn, author of *Psychic Witch*

There are books that one returns to over and over, partly for love and pleasure but often also because there always seems to be something new to discover at each reading.

Pure Magic is one of those rare works of modern-day witchcraft that has already become a classic. First published twenty-years ago, the book has become an essential resource for beginners and experienced devotees of the magical arts. Written by one of today's most trusted and beloved teachers and writers on magic and witchcraft, **Pure Magic** offers:

- An introduction to the essentials of magic.
- A complete glossary of psychic and magical terminology.
- A primer on the four elements.
- A survey of magical supplies (including minerals and botanicals).
- A compendium of spells for any situation.

Also included is guidance on how and where to practice magic; how to rightly use words of power; and how to cleanse, protect, and enhance one's magical self. The book was written by Judika Illes, an author, editor, card reader, educator, aromatherapist, and spiritual advisor. **Pure Magic** new *Weiser Classics edition* includes a new preface by the author. This book was previously published as *The Big Book of Practical Spells*.

Illes says that **Pure Magic** was written in 1999 and first published two years later, an era when folk magic was still a niche topic that was frequently considered to be unsavory. The books that were available were largely geared toward Pagan practice, witchcraft as religion, and ceremonial magic, but spellcasting was what she loved. Her goal was to share that love with readers, to treat both readers and material with the respect they deserve, and to provide an honest, realistic, guide to magical practice that would be accessible to anyone who wished to learn about it. Because, as she writes in **Pure Magic**, the ability to practice magic is humanity's common human heritage.

This new edition of [Pure Magic](#) has been only lightly updated. Illes says she has resisted the temptation to update pop culture references which were current and relevant when the book was first written, such as those to *Sabrina the Teenage Witch*. The crucial point is to comprehend the distinction between true magic – the magic that is real and one's birthright as a human being – and fantasy magic that is, at best, fun, entertaining, and inspiring but, at worst, can cause false expectations, despair, and may be detrimental to accessing and maximizing personal magical powers.

Illes says that some things have changed since she first wrote [Pure Magic](#). For example, "Botanical" – the magical shops that were once so common in and around New York City and where as a teenager, she learned so much from so many generous people – are now endangered. Meanwhile, human's beleaguered spiritual allies, the endangered plants, animals, and other living beings discussed in [Pure Magic](#) remain endangered, the only change in many cases being a worsened situation.

She has not resisted the impulse to modernize the text of [Pure Magic](#) a bit, in the desire to increase its inclusivity. All the spells and rituals in the original edition remain, however.

Ultimately, all magic is personal. [Pure Magic](#) was written with the intention of assisting in the discovery and enhancement of readers' magic. She advises readers to feel free to experiment and tweak the material as suits them best. To listen to their intuition. To exert their will. Whoever they are, whatever their needs, to find the magic that empowers them and improves their life. To take their magic into their own hands and claim their power.

[Pure Magic](#) explores the ins and outs of magic in a manner that is approachable for the beginner, but there's also a rare depth of practical wisdom for successful magic and spiritual partnership which may not be obvious on the first reading. This is a book that I've returned to periodically over the years and each time I'm struck by insight and perspective that continues to enhance and level-up my own magic and relationship with spirits. – from the foreword by Mat Aurn, author of *Psychic Witch*

Personal and empowering, [Pure Magic](#) has stood the test of time. As Aurn says, "the authentic appreciation, sincerity and enthusiastic passion for magical practices, folklore and mythology from all over the world and how Illes respectfully approaches it, shines throughout each page of this book awaiting to enchant your life with its pure magic."

<>

<>

Bibliography

Arts & Photography / Music

[Music, City and the Roma under Communism](#) by Anna G. Piotrowska (Bloomsbury Academic)

Education / Sociology / Identity

[Memory in the Mekong: Regional Identity, Schools, and Politics in Southeast Asia](#) edited by Will Brehm & Yuto Kitamura, with series editor Gita Steiner-Khamsi (**International Perspectives on Educational Reform Series**: Teachers College Press)

Engineering / Security

[Practical Doomsday: A User's Guide to the End of the World](#) by Michal Zalewski (No Starch Press)
History / Military / World War II / Biographies & Memoirs

[Old Breed General: How Marine Corps General William H. Rupertus Broke the Back of the Japanese in World War II from Guadalcanal to Peleliu](#) by Amy Rupertus Peacock & Don Brown (Stackpole Books)

History / Religion & Spirituality

[The Franciscans in Colonial Mexico](#) edited by Thomas M. Cohen, Jay T. Harrison & David Rex Galindo (University of Oklahoma Press)

Home & Garden / Arts & Crafts

The Nature of Creativity: A Mindful Approach to Making Art & Craft by Jane E. Hall, with a foreword by Brigit Strawbridge Howard (Merrell Publishers)

Law / Disability

Nolo's Guide to Social Security Disability: Getting & Keeping Your Benefits, 11th edition by David A. Morton III M.D. (Nolo)

Literature & Fiction / Adventure / Noir

Secret Identity: A Novel by Alex Segura (Flatiron Books)

Philosophy / Ethics / Global

For the Good of the World: Is Global Agreement on Global Challenges Possible? by A. C. Grayling (Oneworld Publications)

Philosophy / Religion

The Essential Supernatural: A Dialogical Study in Kierkegaard and Blondel by Maurice Ashley Agbaw-Ebai (St. Augustine's Press)

Relationships / Internet

The New Laws of Love: Online Dating and the Privatization of Intimacy, 1st edition by Marie Bergström (Polity Press)

Religion & Spirituality / Christianity / Biographies & Memoirs / Series

The Life of Jesus Christ: Part Two; Volume 2, Chapters 58-89 Ludolph of Saxony, Carthusian, translated by Milton T. Walsh (**Cistercian Studies Series, Vol. 284** Cistercian Publications, Liturgical Press)

Religion & Spirituality / Christianity

Spiritual Formation as if the Church Mattered: Growing in Christ through Community, 2nd edition by James C. Wilhoit, with a foreword by Dallas Willard (Baker Academic)

Religion & Spirituality / Occult

Pure Magic: A Complete Course in Spellcasting by Judika Illes, with a foreword by Mat Aurnyn (**Weiser Classics Series**: Weiser Books)