

After stating the problem, Russell provides a good survey of the geographical worldview of the Middle Ages and what Columbus and his contemporaries really believed. It is pointed out correctly that the true shape of the world as well as its size were relatively well established by the third century B.C. by Hellenistic scientists and certainly known to the learned of the Middle Ages. For several reasons of error, Columbus's measurement of the earth's circumference was actually less accurate than that of many of his contemporaries. In the context of this discussion, Russell underscores that intellectually and otherwise the Middle Ages certainly were not "Dark" and that there is a blurring between the medieval and the modern in history.

Where then did the misperception originate? Russell answers this question with the opening line of Chapter Three: "Nineteenth- and twentieth-century writers flattened the medieval globe." He traces the error back to the 1820s and especially the very popular writings of Renaissance-influenced authors like Washington Irving and Antoine-Jean Letronne. He goes on to state that its acceptance "snowballed" with the Darwinian reaction of the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. And the methodologies and integrity of the fabricators and perpetrators of the historical myth are of necessity brought under close scrutiny.

While the flat-earth error is no longer as widely perceived by the public as Russell would have us believe, he has nevertheless written a scholarly, yet very readable investigation into its background, origins, and consequences. This book also is well-documented and contains a good bibliography and numerous helpful illustrations. It can be of interest to scholars and other serious readers as well as to students in the classroom dealing with problems of medieval-modern intellectual history, the history of European discovery, and historiography.

The University of Texas at Arlington

Dennis Reinhartz

Randall M. Miller, ed. *Dear Master: Letters of a Slave Family*. 1978. Reprint. Athens: University of Georgia Press, Brown Thrasher Books, 1990. Pp. 297. Paper, \$15.95.

Two main teaching tools reach out from *Dear Master*. One is technical, the other substantive. The technical tool forms a prod, urging students to use standard English. Several unvarnished copies of the actual slave and ex-slave handwriting accompany the printed renditions. The grammar appears with all of the original folksiness, in stark contrast to what is today acceptable even in non-standard-English environments.

The other prod is patriotic. *Dear Master* demonstrates that United States slaves did not automatically choose freedom in Africa over slavery in the United States. No fear of reenslavement in the United States was expressed in letters from either Africa or Alabama. Once they returned to Africa, ex-slaves were both called and regarded as white by the natives. There was a major difference, however, in that repatriated Africans were unalterably opposed to the slave trade.

The American Africans, on both sides of the Atlantic, were demonstrably Christian. For example, the *Dear Master* letters express considerable anguish over proper marriage relationships within a Christian context. Moral restraints could be and were cultivated.

Dear Master implicitly sets forth the notion that white men did have to deal with sexual restraints against abusing black women. The value of passive resistance, which is carefully drawn out, tempered indiscriminate punishment. For the system of slavery to work, both masters and slaves had to work together. The letters and the commentaries document the cooperative relationship.

Randall M. Miller has edited the letters well, with copious footnotes and explanatory introductions explaining the variety of anomalies expected in any set of letters. The first letter was written in 1834, the last in 1865. There is a sound bibliography, updated from the first edition in 1978. An updated preface and eight letters and an introduction are added to the new edition. The text is so well compiled that I had no need to try out the eleven-page index, which looks superb.

Enhancing the value of standard English and United States patriotism is appropriate at both undergraduate and graduate levels. Where the need exists, *Dear Master* serves especially well to enhance those values.

Thomas Nelson Community College

Raymond J. Jirran

James P. Duffy. *Hitler Slept Late and Other Blunders that Cost Him the War*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1991. Pp. ix, 176. Cloth, \$19.95.

In a succinct book, James P. Duffy relates the commonly accepted and not-so-commonly accepted errors Adolf Hitler made that could have and possibly did cause Nazi Germany to lose the Second World War. With the plethora of monographs covering the causes of World War II, the Nazi era in Germany, and the numerous other topics surrounding the conflict, Duffy's work is refreshing. Duffy prepared this work to rebuff the many popular novels of the 1970s and 1980s that preyed upon the "what if" syndrome relating to Hitler's errors. He attempts to academically answer the question, "How close did Hitler really come to victory?"

Hitler's errors are divided into two basic areas: Hitler's failure to develop a long-range plan and his ideas as to the importance of his personal will as a tool for victory. With these two basic "faults" in military leadership, Duffy chronologically traces Hitler's blunders from underestimating the resolve of France and Britain to support Poland in 1939 to the lack of financial and scientific support for the development of the atomic bomb and jet aircraft in 1944. Throughout, Duffy relates the widely accepted views of Göring's failures to crush the enemy at Dunkirk and to rid Britain of its airfields early during the conflict. The advance into Russia and Hitler's stubbornness not to retreat from the Soviets led to the destruction of the Eastern army. Because "Hitler slept late" and would not receive "news" until after he breakfasted, the Allies gained a strong foothold at Normandy that the reserve Panzer units could not shake loose. The not-so-accepted "blunders" focus on the development of "miracle weapons," or better yet, the non-development of the proper miracle weapons. This chapter was most interesting, even if argumentative.

The bibliography is adequate but support relies heavily upon secondary sources, especially Ronald Lewin's *Hitler's Mistakes* to discern the ill-fated blunders. I would like to have Duffy discuss Hitler's timing for the invasion of Poland, not from the standpoint of Anglo-French resolve but more from the preparedness of Germany to fight an extended conflict. This is briefly mentioned, but would be better served if covered more thoroughly with primary sources for support. I also wanted more on Hitler's psychological maladjustments, which led to his megalomania, stubbornness, and many of his irrational decisions. This idea underlies much of Duffy's implications as to why Hitler acted as he did, but is never fully treated.

How close was Hitler to winning the war? I would like to think Hitler was never very close. But James Duffy provides convincing argument to support his belief that Hitler was close, extremely close to victory, especially if he had not slept late.

L. V. Berkner High School

William Scott Igo