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Book Marks

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Each issue of *Furman* magazine includes brief reviews of books recommended as good reads by Furman faculty.

Gitta Sereny, *Cries Unheard: Why Children Kill: The Story of Mary Bell* (Henry Holt & Company, 1999). This book won't tell you why children kill but it will at least make you understand why 11-year-old Mary Bell killed two toddlers in Newcastle, England, in 1968. The author produced a book about Mary in the early 1970s; *Cries Unheard* is the result of Sereny's continuing interest in Mary, who was released from prison in the early 1980s and now, under an assumed name, is raising a teenage daughter. Take with a grain of salt Sereny's rather naive insistence that we are "born good," and remember (as Sereny does) that Mary is a strong, highly intelligent and manipulative person. You'll be appalled at the criminal and judicial proceeding leading to the guilty verdict — and Mary's guilt and the good intentions of all concerned are not in doubt — and amazed at her ability to come through different kinds of punitive incarceration and still hold on to the notion of a "normal" human life as something worth trying to achieve.

— Stanley Crowe, *English*

Robin Karr-Morse and Meredith S. Wiley, *Ghosts from the Nursery: Tracing the Roots of Violence* (Atlantic Monthly Press, 1997). Easy to read, beautifully written and well documented, *Ghosts from the Nursery* shows the frightening price society pays for neglecting the healthy development of children from prenatal to 3 years of age. The title suggests that murderers

and other violent criminals, who were once babies themselves, are accompanied by the spirits of the innocent infants they once were together with — the forces that killed their promise. Each chapter begins with pieces from the life story of Jeffrey, a young murderer on death row. As we come to understand Jeffrey better, we also understand how the roots of violence become anchored in our children. The authors offer insight on how parents and policymakers can help to restore the fabric of society by taking steps to provide developmental protective factors for all children.

— Lorraine DeJong, *Education*

James Kugel, *The Bible as It Was* (Harvard University Press, 1997). Much academic biblical criticism concerns questions of the text's origins — when was this written, by whom, under what historical conditions, etc. This delightful work, written for a general audience, focuses instead on the question of how the Hebrew Bible was received and interpreted in the period of early Judaism and Christianity. What may surprise the reader is how much influence these early interpreters still hold over Western readings of the Bible. It is they, and not the biblical text itself, for instance, who first construed the serpent in the Garden of Eden as Satan. One might also be surprised to discover how imaginatively playful these early interpreters (including St. Paul himself) could be.

— Shelly Matthews, *Religion*

Charles Hudson, *Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun: Hernando de Soto and the South's Ancient Chiefdoms* (University of Georgia Press, 1997). In June 1539, Hernando de Soto led a small army (and its horses, pigs and war dogs) out of Tampa Bay in a disastrous, four-year search for an Inca-sized state to conquer and loot. His actual route, though, remained a puzzle until Hudson and his 1980 students discovered that later 16th-century Spanish expeditions from Santa Elena (Parris Island, S.C.) had visited many of the same Indian towns. Hudson's reconstruction of de Soto's travels incorporates the latest environmental, archaeological and ethnohistorical data into a full social history of his portentous encounters with the late mound-building chiefdoms of the Southeast, including that of the fabled Cofitachequi (near Camden, S.C.). A well-written, ripping yarn.

— Brian Siegel, *Sociology and Anthropology*

Amanda Foreman, *Georgiana; Duchess of Devonshire* (Random House, 1998). The British aristocracy has produced many colorful personalities, including Lady Georgiana Spencer (1757-1806), the great-great-great-great-aunt of Princess Diana. Georgiana, who married the Duke of Devonshire at the tender age of 17, was for decades the leader of British society. She also had a major influence on the politics

of her era. A confidante of Marie Antoinette and the Prince of Wales, Georgiana was a friend to the rich and powerful of her day. Foreman's lively narrative casts new light on the behind-the-scenes influence of upper-class women in a male-dominated culture; often they were arbiters of society and had substantial appeal even to common citizens. Foreman also puts into context the remarkable activities of the British aristocracy. In the process, she makes understandable their lives and loves, as well as those of the 20th-century British monarchy.

— Marian Strobel, *History*

FROM THE FURMAN FAMILY

Ashley Warlick, *The Summer After June* (Houghton Mifflin, 2000). Wife of Ronald Friis, who joined the Furman faculty in 1999 as an assistant professor of Spanish, Warlick was, at age 23, the youngest recipient of Houghton Mifflin's Literary Fellowship, which led to the publication of her first novel, *The Distance from the Heart of Things*. *The Summer After June*, her second book, is the story of a long, hot summer in which a woman struggles to reconnect with her past and cope with the present after the murder of her sister. It has been described as a moving tale of love and family and praised by critics as fulfilling the promise Warlick displayed in her first novel.