

1-1-2001

## Book Marks

Furman University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarexchange.furman.edu/furman-magazine>

---

### Recommended Citation

University, Furman (2001) "Book Marks," *Furman Magazine*: Vol. 43 : Iss. 4 , Article 92.  
Available at: <https://scholarexchange.furman.edu/furman-magazine/vol43/iss4/92>

This Regular Feature is made available online by Journals, part of the Furman University Scholar Exchange (FUSE). It has been accepted for inclusion in Furman Magazine by an authorized FUSE administrator. For terms of use, please refer to the [FUSE Institutional Repository Guidelines](#). For more information, please contact [scholarexchange@furman.edu](mailto:scholarexchange@furman.edu).

# BOOK MARKS

Each issue of *Furman* magazine includes brief reviews of books written by Furman faculty and alumni, or reviews of books recommended by faculty as "good reads."

J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (Arthur A. Levine, 2000). OK, I confess. I've read 1,822 pages of Harry Potter and like them. I have never read anything like them. I can tell the author was a teacher. She has Percy Weasley, a brown-nosing rising star in the Ministry of Magic, trying to standardize cauldron thickness. The magical sorting hat at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry takes the place of our educational sorting methods (SAT, ACT, PACT) by "labeling" the freshmen when placed on their heads. Professor Binns, who teaches History of Magic, fails to notice his own death, and continues his dull readings of his notes on goblin rebellions.

Many of the great themes are here: good vs. evil, discrimination, injustice, and a protagonist who, as an abused and unwanted orphan, triumphs. All is done through mountains of imagination.

— Tom Cloer, *Education*

Peter Carey, *Jack Maggs* (Knopf, 1998). This historical novel is the latest by Australian Peter Carey. *Jack Maggs* is a reinterpretation of Charles Dickens' Australian convict, Magwitch, who in *Great Expectations* was Pip's secret benefactor. Carey's novel begins with Maggs' clandestine return to the London from which he was transported for life. The reader accompanies him on his quest to reclaim property and rediscover family, through which he becomes entangled with a writer much like a young Dickens. With its inheritance plot, eccentric characters and period language, the book pays homage both to Dickens and to a postmodern, postcolonial

revision of his oeuvre. It will lead you to reread *Great Expectations* and other Dickens novels, to read a recent Dickens biography, and to re-enter Dickens' London with new insight into the lives of the most desperate of its victims and the most shining of its luminaries.

— Robin Visel, *English*

Nathaniel Philbrick, *In the Heart of the Sea: The Tragedy of the Whaleship Essex* (Viking Press, 2000). This book is a retelling of the true story of the sinking of the Essex by a whale in the early 1820s. Melville later used the event as the basis for *Moby Dick*. The writing features a nice blend of maritime and New England history with some compelling storytelling. Although the reader knows what's going to happen, Philbrick's sense of detail and his timing of the narrative are what make the book so readable. The image of sailors alone in the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean in small whaling boats after the sinking of the Essex — and the extremes to which they go for survival — will stick with the reader for a long time. This book is flat-out impossible to put down.

— Ronald Friis, *Modern Languages and Literatures*

Russell Martin, *Beethoven's Hair: An Extraordinary Historical Odyssey and a Musical Mystery Solved* (Bantam Doubleday Dell, 2000). A young musician clips a lock of hair from Beethoven's corpse and preserves it inside a framed locket. The author tells the story of the lock of hair through three generations of the musician's family, its reappearance at a Sotheby's auction and its eventual

scientific testing. Martin vividly discusses Beethoven's medical history, social circumstances and personality. He also explores the quiet heroism of Danish resistance, as the locket changes hands under mysterious circumstances during the Nazi occupation. Lovers of Beethoven's music will enjoy this book and find the scientific results revealing, for the hair contains clues to Beethoven's illness and treatment. People who are interested in Holocaust history and forensics will also enjoy the book.

— Laurel Whisler, *Music Librarian*

## FROM ALUMNI

William J. Baker '60, *If Christ Came to the Olympics* (University of New South Wales, 2000). New College at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia, holds an annual series of lectures examining a contemporary issue from a religious perspective. Last year Baker, the Bird and Bird Professor of History at the University of Maine-Orono, delivered the lectures on which this book, his ninth, is based. While examining the history and impact of the Games, Baker discusses such topics as the religious aspects of the modern Olympics, affirmation of athletic pleasures of the flesh, the pursuit of gold and other false gods, and evangelicals at the Olympics.

David Delk '88, *Twists of Fate* (FSD Press, 2000). This thriller, the author's first novel, focuses on two men who are haunted by the desire to avenge family tragedies, and the FBI agent who is caught in the middle of their stories. Delk, who majored in mathematics at Furman, is a former software consultant who now heads Man in the Mirror, a non-profit organization based in Casselberry, Fla., that focuses its ministry on helping men find "success that matters."

Gary E. Parker '76, *Rumors of Peace* (Bethany House, 2000). The publisher describes this latest thriller from Parker as combining a spiritual message with "a political suspense story of international proportions" involving world religious leaders. The book "provides a thought-provoking thrill ride you'll enjoy from page one to the dramatic conclusion high in the Colorado Rockies." This is the seventh novel by Parker, who is the coordinator for theological education with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship in Atlanta, Ga.

## FROM FURMAN FACULTY

Christopher Douglas, *Reciting America: Culture and Cliché in Contemporary U.S. Fiction* (University of Illinois, 2000). The author, who joined the English department in 1999, explores how novels and other texts help shape the way Americans understand themselves. Douglas examines four post-World War II novels — Russell Bank's *Continental Drift*, Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, Maxine Hong Kingston's *Woman Warrior* and Coraghessan Boyle's *East is East* — and their efforts to confront national discourse and offer alternatives to the dominant ideology. Douglas also examines the pervasive use of clichés, which he says stimulates emotion while short-circuiting reflection. In its extreme clichéd form, he says, the American dream consists of nothing more than advertising slogans and popular culture images, yet still retains a powerful hold on the imagination of U.S. citizens.