

atrocities as karmic payback for previous sins." But he also takes readers on a harrowing tour of S-21, the infamous prison from which 17,000 people never returned.

Expect to be challenged. Expect to be grateful. — *Josephine Bridges*

THE GOOD PART

Stray Dogs & Lone Wolves: The Samurai Film Handbook by Patrick Galloway. Stone Bridge Press, 2005. Hardcover, \$19.95.

Most people associate the figure of the samurai with extreme devotion to his art, singleness of purpose and strict adherence to a particular code. It's a difficult standard for most of us to realize in our lives, one that is perhaps achieved only — albeit in slightly different form — by lovers of samurai films. Patrick Galloway, Eugene resident and author of *Stray Dogs & Lone Wolves*, is one such lover of the genre. Galloway provides readers with an extensive and passionate account of samurai films and those who have made them.

Galloway is quick to assert the artistic and aesthetic value of samurai films, which, he writes, have too often been ignored by "cinema snobs." But his book is not merely a defense of the genre. Galloway writes with the unrestrained excitement of a true fan rather than with the detachment of a critic, "funneling all of [his] monomaniacal obses-

siveness into the book."

Stray Dogs begins with a brief description of the historical period during which many samurai films are set, and provides biographical sketches of the most significant figures in the development of the genre as well as extensive reviews of 51 films. Ranging from the earliest masterpiece (*Rashomon*) to a twenty-first century effort (*Twilight Samurai*), Galloway's reviews focus primarily on "chambara" — sword films. He compensates for the occasional lack of depth in his writing by extensive knowledge of samurai films and his contextual placement of them within the

conversation between Japanese and Western filmmakers.

Ultimately, Galloway intends the book not as a comprehensive account of samurai films, but as an introduction to the genre and an impetus to those who have yet to experience (or are wary of) this wonderful slice of Japanese culture and filmmaking. At that, he succeeds admirably. — *Chris Ledford*

FINDING LIKE MINDS

A Mind Apart: Travels in a Neurodiverse World by Susanne Antonetta. Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin, 2005. Hardcover, \$24.95.

A *Mind Apart* is a series of connected essays that purports to explore the concept of neurodiversity, a term referring to individuals whose brains work differently enough from what is termed the "norm" that they often have trouble finding like minds with whom to relate.

Among those whom Antonetta considers neurodiverse are those who have a form of autism known as Asperger's syndrome and people with multiple personalities. Diagnosed as bi-polar, Antonetta also considers herself neuro-diverse.

In this literary collage of musings and memories, Antonetta builds on a variety of real-life experiences, such as the grey whale that detoured into Bellingham Bay one spring and starved to death, or the trial of a neighbor boy who murdered a young child. She also describes interactions with those in her close-knit, neurodiverse "tribe." These are people who understand what it means to react physically to the

sound of certain words, or to see colors when reading a number, or how it feels to live with a chorus of voices inside one's head.

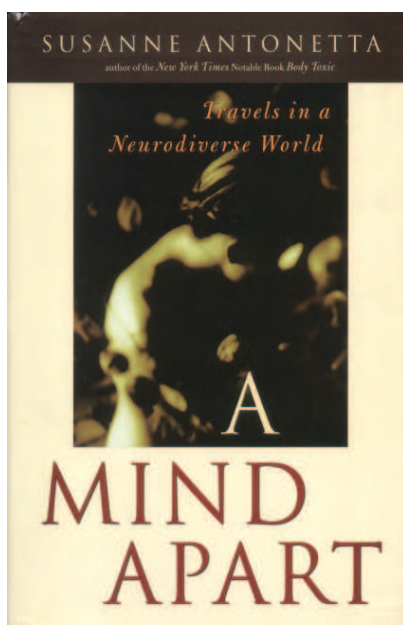
Antonetta writes that with science on the edge of making great strides in genetic engineering, the rest of the world needs to understand more about how neurodiverse brains work and how they contribute to the gene pool. Why? To forestall the possibility of artificially eliminating the very genes that give rise to neurodiversity.

Antonetta is also a poet, and her writing style is rich and textured. Of her husband she writes, "though he only gambles two or three times a year, playing craps, he does it with a bug-eyed, shiny-skinned thrill that shows dopamine high-beaming." Of herself, "so clear, my weaknesses, like the blemishes on the moon: curiosity and curiosity."

But even while appreciating her deft ability with words I was frustrated with her lengthy, self-referential musings. I wanted something more solid from this book. In the end, her group of neurodiverse friends was too small to be representational, and I wondered about so many others who haven't found peace with their mental "otherness."

In the prologue, Antonetta suggests using the term "hummingbird mind" to describe attention deficit disorder "because the mind hovers and darts among many, many things, never entirely planting itself." I would use the same comparison to sum up this book, not disregarding that the hummingbird, in its darting flight, can be quite lovely.

— *Alice Tallmadge*



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