Stranger in a Strange Land – Book List

Books that are insightful portrayals of cultures seen through the eyes of someone not from those cultures, or books that represent an interaction of contrasting cultures due to immigration, colonization, travel, and other experiences.

Compiled by Patti Digh, with input from members of the Intercultural Insights list serve and others…

"Small Island" by Andrea Levy. (set before and around 1948. It is written from different view points, Jamaican and British and is a very enjoyable and insightful read.)

"The Zulu and the Zeide," a short story by Don Jacobson, from a collection of the same name published in 1959. (An amazing piece about a young man arriving in Johannesburg from his village and becoming the servant of an elderly Lithuanian Jewish man in apartheid South Africa. Two strangers lost in the same strange land who can't even communicate with each other. Excellent and heartbreaking on many levels.

1984 by George Orwell

A Martyr's Crossing by Amy Wilentz (American Jew marries an Israeli Jew and finds herself crossing the border between Israel and Palestine with a desperately ill son while her husband is in prison for political activity.)

A Street in Marrakech by Elizabeth Fernea (an anthropologist who lived in the Arabic quarters of Marrakech for a year. Wonderful insights into women in an Arabic country.

A Year in Provence, Toujours Provence and French Lessons – all by Peter Mayle

All God's Children Need Traveling Shoes by Maya Angelou (About her pilgrimage to Ghana and her experience there as an African-American)
Peripheral Visions Learning Along the Way by Mary Catherine Bateson

The Best American Travel Writing edited by Pico Iyer

Almost French: Love and a New Life in Paris by Sarah Turnbull (a light-hearted and insightful look at the experiences of an Australian reporter who goes to Paris to live with a Frenchman she met on holiday.)

An American Brat by Bapsi Sidhwa. (An adolescent is sent from Pakistan to the US for an education & confronts US values, etc.)

Audrey Hepburn’s Neck by Alan Brown (unique perspective into modern Japan and its wartime past, also a shrewd study of cross-cultural obsessions, and of erotic, romantic and familial love.)

Flatland by Edwin A. Abbott (published in 1880, imagines a two-dimensional world inhabited by sentient geometric shapes who think their planar world is all there is.)

Becoming American: Personal Essays By First Generation Immigrant Women by Meri Nana-Ama Danquah

Blindness by Jose Saramago (A grim but incredible story about what happens when a man becomes blind and the blindness becomes contagious.... A different culture, living without sight -- but also fascinating in what people do when they fear they, too, may become blind).

Brave New World by Aldous Huxley

Ciao Pratola, Hello America by Elsa S. Cavallaro (A family of Italians in the U.S.)

Cousins by Patricia Grace. (Three Maori women negotiating in different ways the modern world and their Maori heritage).

Darkness at Noon by Arthur Koestler

Fear and Trembling by Amelie Nothomb (European Woman in Japan)

Giphantie by de la Roche (1720)

Global Soul by Pico Iyer

I’m a Stranger Here Myself by Bill Bryson (Describes his return to the U.S. after 20 yrs in the U.K.)

American Chica by Marie Arana

True North by Jill Ker Conway (Includes her move from Australia to the US to study and then to Canada. She observes particularly gender and academic cultural differences.)

The Shadow of the Sun, by Ryszard Kapuscinski (Polish journalist who spent his career in Africa)

A Poet's Bazaar by Hans Christian Andersen (His travels in Turkey and up the Danube in 1840.)

Edge of Daylight by Eddie Askew. (His memoirs of years he (a Brit) spent with his family working with a leprosy mission in India.)

The Devil that Danced on the Water by Aminatta Forna. This book is many things: a daughter's search for the truth, a family's memoirs, a history of Sierra Leone, a political science lesson on Africa, a story.

Gulliver's Travels by Dafoe

Heaven Lake by John Dalton (Young missionary in Taiwan and China)

House of Sand & Fog by Andre Dubus III (Each chapter told from culturally influenced perspectives on the same situation).

Interpreter of Maladies by Jhumpa Lahri (Indians living in the U.S.)

La Davina Comedia by Dante Alighieri

Land Below The Wind by Agnes Newton Keith (The story of American born Agnes and her British, Parks Department husband. It covers the first years, pre-WW2, of their life in Sabah, Borneo - her two subsequent novels: 'Three Came Home' and 'Return of the White Man' are also wonderfully compelling).

Lord of the Flies by William Golding

Metropolis by Fritz Lang

Mona in the Promised Land by Gish Jen (Chinese in America)

Nein by Walter Jens

Nervous Conditions by Tsitsi Dangarembga (Rhodesian girls caught between two cultures)

Not Without My Daughter by Betty Mahmoody, William Hoffer (An American woman marries an Islamic Iranian and her and her daughter fight to get out or Iran (illegally). Not
Where Growing Minds Go Global…

uplifting—and could reinforce stereotypes about fundamental Islam so would use it carefully.)

**Ourika** by Claire de Duras (Set in France during the French Revolution, published in 1923. Based on a true account of a Senegalese girl rescued from slavery and raised by an aristocratic French family.)

**Passage to India** by E.M. Forster

**Pnin** by Vladimir Nabokov (Russian immigrant to the U.S.)

**Poisonwood Bible** by Barbara Kingsolver (Southern Baptist missionary family in the Congo in 1959)

**Polite Lies: On Being a Woman Caught Between Cultures** by Kyoko Mori (Japanese woman in U.S. culture)

**Postville** by Stephen Bloom (a Kosher slaughterhouse run by ultra-religious Jews sets up shop in the middle of Iowa - true story)

**R.U.R.** by Karel Capek (a play - introduced the word "robot" into English and looks to a future in which all workers are automatons. They revolt when they acquire souls (i.e., when they gain the ability to hate) and the resulting catastrophe make for a powerful and deeply moving theatrical experience.)

**Second Class Citizen** by Erica Bauermeister (An autobiographical novel, Second Class Citizen follows its main character, Adah, through her years in Nigeria and England.)

**She’s Not There: A Life in Two Genders** by Jennifer Finney Boylan (Biographical story by a professor at Colby College about living life in a man’s body, but feeling that s/he is really a woman inside - a different angle of immersion in another culture)

**The Aleph** by Jorge Borges

**The Bend in the River** by V S Naipaul (Indians in Africa)

**The Chosen** by Chaim Potok (Orthodox Jews living in the U.S., where their religious ways clash with the ways of other American Jewish communities, e.g. the Reform and Conservative Jews).

**The Enigma of Arrival** by V. S. Naipaul (a journey across cultural borders, a journey from one of the more marginal outposts of a former empire to the once-imperial center)

**The Innocents Abroad, Roughing It** by Mark Twain. Also by Mark Twain: "Tom Sawyer Abroad: By Huck Finn", "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court (A Yankee at the Court of King Arthur)", "A Tramp Abroad", and "Following the Equator"

**The Inscrutable Americans** by Anurag Mathur (Indian student in the U.S.)

**The Life of Pi** by Yann Martel (thought provoking prose on a different cross cultural experience that can occur in our own minds)

**The Names** by Don De Lillo (The book that seemed to me the most realistically intercultural – at least with regard to US expatriates. Also a curiously rambling mystery in a mystery and, as the title indicates, a reflection on language, languages and identity. None of this is too explicit but it’s all there. The novel also contains a nice and suitably ambiguous mix of business and politics. Places concerned: Greece, Israel and India.)

**The Pickup** by Nadine Gordimer (White African woman/Black African man. She picks him up and their worlds collide…)

**The Stranger** by Alfred Schutz

**Time Machine** by Jules Verne

**Typical American** by Gish Jen (Chinese in America)

**Utopia** by Sir Thomas More
A list of 80 books that portray cultures in fiction from Marcella Simon

(www.peraltaassociates.com/resources)

USA

African American/Caribbean American
1. Terry McMillan, Mama
2. Marita Golden, A Long Distance Life
3. Nathan McCall, Makes Me Wanna Holler (memoirs)
4. Gloria Naylor, Mama Day
5. Breena Clarke, River Cross My Heart (family in DC)
6. Bebe Moore Campbell, Brothers and Sisters (interracial relationships)
7. Toni Cade Bambara, These Bones Are Not My Child (Atlanta child murders)
8. Eric Jerome Dickey, Milk in My Coffee (interracial romance)
9. Nelson George, Urban Romance (Buppies in NYC)
10. Jamaika Kincaid, Lucy (West Indian immigrant to US)

Latino-American
11. Sandra Cisneros, House on Mango Street
12. Cristina Garcia, Dreaming in Cuban (Cubans in NY, Miami)
14. Ana Castillo, So Far From God
15. Daniel Revelez, Salsa and Chips
16. Francisco Jimenez, The Circuit: Stories of a Migrant Child

Asian American
19. Gus Lee, China Boy
20. Gish Jen, Mona in the Promised Land
21. Maxine Hong Kingston, Warrior Woman
22. Amy Tan, The Hundred Secret Senses
23. John Okada, No-No Boy (Japanese WWII era)
25. Chang Rae Lee, Native Speaker

Native American
26. Emily Benedek, Beyond the 4 Corners of the World (Navajo)
27. Michael Dorris, Yellow Raft on Blue Water
28. Sherman Alexie, The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven
29. Frank Waters, The Man Who Shot The Deer
30. Susan Power, The Grass Dancer

European American
31. Catherine Temma Davidson, The Priest Fainted (Greek-American goes to Greece)
32. Frank McCourt, ’Tis (Irish immigrant in US)
33. Ursula Hegi, The Vision of Emma Blau (German immigrants in US)

Sub-Saharan Africa
34. Chinua Achebe, Things Fall Apart (Nigerian classic)
35. Buchi Emecheta, The Moonlight Bride
36. Ben Okri, The Famished Road (Nigeria)
37. Mark Mathabane, Kaffir Boy or Kaffir Boy in America (S. African student in US)
38. Maryse Conde, Segu (historical drama, pan-Africa)

Middle East/North Africa
40. Naguib Mafouz, Midaq Alley (Egypt)
41. Ahdaf Soueif, In the Eye of the Sun (Egyptian student in UK)
42. Yashar Kemal, Memed, My Hawk (Turkey)
43. Gina Barkhordar Nahai, Cry of the Peacock (Jews in Iran)
44. Hilary Mantel, Eight Months on Ghazzah Street (Saudi Arabia)
45. Abdelrahman Munif, Cities of Salt (Saudi Arabia)
46. Amos Oz, Don’t Call It Night (Israel)
47. Batya Goor, Murder on a Kibbutz (Israel)

Asia

Japan
48. Miyuke Miyabe, All She Was Worth (Japanese detective novel)
49. Haruki Murakami, The Windup Bird Chronicle
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<tr>
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<th>Author</th>
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<tr>
<td>50.</td>
<td>Banana Yoshimoto</td>
<td><em>Kitchen</em> (younger generation in Japan)</td>
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<td>51.</td>
<td>Kazuo Ishiguro</td>
<td><em>A Pale View of Hills</em> (Japanese in UK)</td>
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<td>52.</td>
<td>Jung Chang</td>
<td><em>Wild Swans</em> (4 generations of Chinese women)</td>
<td>Japan</td>
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<td>53.</td>
<td>Timothy Mo</td>
<td><em>Sour Sweet</em> (Chinese immigrants in UK)</td>
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<td>54.</td>
<td>Yang Gang</td>
<td><em>Daughter</em></td>
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<td>55.</td>
<td>Han Suyin</td>
<td><em>Till Morning Comes</em> (US-China Romamce)</td>
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<td>56.</td>
<td>Anthony Burgess</td>
<td><em>The Long Day Wanes: Malayan Trilogy</em> (last days of empire)</td>
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<td>57.</td>
<td>Pramoedya Ananta Toer</td>
<td><em>House of Glass</em> (Indonesia under Dutch rule)</td>
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<td>58.</td>
<td>Jessica Hagedorn</td>
<td><em>Dogeaters</em> (Philippines)</td>
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<td>59.</td>
<td>Hanif Kureishi</td>
<td><em>The Buddha of Suburbia</em> (Pakistani immigrants to UK)</td>
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<td>60.</td>
<td>Bapsi Sidwa</td>
<td><em>An American Brat</em> (Pakistani student in US)</td>
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<td>61.</td>
<td>Bharati Mukherjee</td>
<td><em>Jasmine</em> (Indian immigrant to US)</td>
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<td>62.</td>
<td>Bharti Kirchner</td>
<td><em>Sharmila’s Book</em> (Indian-American goes to India)</td>
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<td>63.</td>
<td>Bhargavi Mandava</td>
<td><em>Where the Oceans Meet</em></td>
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<td>64.</td>
<td>Keri Hulme</td>
<td><em>The Bone People</em> (Maoris in New Zealand)</td>
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<td>65.</td>
<td>Alan Duff</td>
<td><em>Once Were Warriors</em> (Maoris in New Zealand)</td>
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<td>Alice Nannup</td>
<td><em>When the Pelican Laughed</em> (Australian natives)</td>
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<td>67.</td>
<td>Jill Ker Conway</td>
<td><em>The Road From Coorain</em> (memories from the outback to the US)</td>
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<td>68.</td>
<td>Ariel Dorfman</td>
<td><em>Heading South, Looking North: A Bilingual Journey</em> (memoirs of a playwright)</td>
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<td>69.</td>
<td>Harriet Doerr</td>
<td><em>Consider This Senora</em> (US Americans in Mexico)</td>
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<td>Tony Cohan</td>
<td><em>On Mexican Time</em> (US Americans in Mexico)</td>
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<td>71.</td>
<td>Francisco Goldman</td>
<td><em>The Long Night of White Chickens</em></td>
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<td>72.</td>
<td>Laura Esquivel</td>
<td><em>Like Water for Chocolate</em></td>
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<td>73.</td>
<td>Manuel Puig</td>
<td><em>Kiss of the Spider Woman</em></td>
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<td>74.</td>
<td>Isabel Allende</td>
<td><em>House of the Spirits</em> (Chile)</td>
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<td>75.</td>
<td>Jorge Amado</td>
<td><em>Dona Flor and Her Two Husbands</em></td>
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<td>76.</td>
<td>Manlio Argueta</td>
<td><em>Little Red Riding Hood in the Red Light District</em></td>
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<td>Roberto Quesada</td>
<td><em>The Big Banana</em></td>
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<td>78.</td>
<td>Andrea Levy</td>
<td><em>Never Far From Nowhere</em> (West Indians in UK)</td>
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<td>Peter Hoeg</td>
<td><em>Smilia’s Sense of Snow</em> (Iceland immigrants in Denmark)</td>
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<td>80.</td>
<td>Eva Hoffman</td>
<td><em>Lost in Translation</em> (memoirs, Polish immigrant to Canada)</td>
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