

history, critical analyses, and insider's perspective on often chilling realities will appeal to any reader interested in learning how global intelligence agencies function.—
William Grabowski, McMechen, WV

The Meaning of Michelle: 16 Writers on the Iconic First Lady and How Her Journey Inspires Our Own. St. Martin's.

Jan. 2017. 240p. ed. by Veronica Chambers. notes. ISBN 9781250114969. \$24.99; ebk. ISBN 9781250114976. POL SCI

Editor Chambers (*Mama's Girl*) has assembled an engaging and delightful collection to help readers recognize that Michelle Obama is a distinct American icon, welcomed for her fresh approach to the role of First Lady. The essayists in this collection include women's studies and African American scholars, musicians, film industry leaders, and best-selling authors. For example, *Hamilton* star Phillipa Soo describes Obama's visit to her dressing room at the Public Theater, saying "this is the best piece of art I've ever seen." Many essays are light-hearted tributes to the ability of the author to relate to the experience of the First Lady as a black female professional, a "mom-in-chief," or a devoted popular culture and pop music fan. Several express their admiration for Obama's ease and refusing to give in to pressures and expectations to be someone she is not. Most express a belief that she is an example for African American girls and women to refuse limitations to dreams and goals. **VERDICT** Readers who wish to know more about the First Lady's influence and who want to understand her impact will enjoy the perceptions expressed in this unusual collection. [See Prepub Alert, 7/18/16.]—
Jill Ortner, SUNY Buffalo Libs.

Pleshakov, Constantine. The Crimean Nexus: Putin's War and the Clash of Civilizations.

Yale Univ. Jan. 2017. 216p. notes. index. ISBN 9780300214888. \$28. POL SCI

Crimea, the peninsula hanging by a thread via the Isthmus of Perekop to Ukraine and jutting into the Black Sea, and now part of Russia, has a long history of invasion, displacement, and migration, both forced and voluntary. From the Ottomans and Huns through the Soviet era to today's dispute between Russia and "The West," Crimea has changed hands and demographics. Though at times subtly biased toward the West, Pleshakov (political science, Amherst Coll.; coauthor, *The Flight of the Romanovs*) presents a concise history of Crimea, its people, and cultural, economic, and military significance with academic thoroughness and a local's insight. The effects of the recent annexation are examined both in the context of larger regional relationships, in-

REVIEWER OF THE YEAR 2016



Josh Wallace, Tarleton State Univ. Lib., Stephenville, TX

It took far less than four years for Josh to become a valuable asset to our team. My colleague Amanda Mastrull and I always appreciate the wealth of knowledge he brings to each and every review in his speciality areas, including historical and modern-day China, Japan, Vietnam, and North and South Korea. You may also notice his byline in the professional media section every now

and then. Being a specialist in reference and instruction is a natural fit for Josh as his thoughtful and informative reviews always inspire me to learn more about a given subject, such as his review on p. 112. And thanks to his varied experience in everything from cataloging to collection development to management, Josh is always eager to learn about changes in the profession—while keeping me up-to-date as well. Thanks to four great years so far, Josh, and here's to many more!—**Stephanie Sendaula**

"Since 2012, I've had the honor of reviewing books for *LJ*, primarily in the fields of East Asian history and politics. I'm always excited when I get a new assignment. I enjoy the chance to learn new ideas, and the intellectual challenge of creating a succinct review of the book. This allows me the opportunity to keep up with trends in the subjects I'm most interested in and to provide a service to the library profession. If my reviews are of any value it is due to the influence of two professors at the University of Alabama: Ronald Robel, who first sparked my interest in Asian culture, and Howard Jones, who taught me how to write a concise book review."

cluding potential long-term challenges to Russian energy contracts with the European Union and global stability, and in local terms through the devastating reductions to the power and water supply, and substantial losses to the local economy. In the end, as with most geopolitical issues, the citizens are the ones most affected and left living with the consequences. **VERDICT** This informative history of Crimea will appeal to those interested in geopolitics, Ukraine, Russia, and the "New Cold War."—**Zebulun Evelhoch**, Central Washington Univ. Lib., Ellensburg, WA

PSYCHOLOGY

Aiken, Chris & James Phelps. Bipolar, Not So Much: Understanding Your Mood Swings and Depression. Norton. Jan. 2017. 368p. illus. bibliog. index. ISBN 9780393711745. \$22.95; ebk. ISBN 9780393711752. PSYCH

Aiken (director, Mood Treatment Ctr.) and Phelps (director, Samaritan Mental Health; *A Spectrum Approach to Mood Disorders*) present an easy-to-read analysis of bipolar spectrum disorder. The authors clarify the spectrum from unipolar (depression without mania) to bipolar (mania with or without depression). Their focus is on a form of depression that falls somewhere in between these two extremes, settling on the term *depression with bipolarity or bipolarity*. This work is filled with pragmatic, valuable information that helps readers figure out where they may be on the disorder spectrum, explains various symptoms of the disorder, provides handy self-diagnostic tests, and offers tips to assist readers in connecting with their physician. The treatment section

includes how to find good care, the latest information on medications, top choices for treatment, explanations of each of the primary groups of medications, natural healing agents, knowing when medications can be discontinued, information on therapy that can support long-term wellness, and an important discussion on the impact of the disorder on family, work, and school relationships. **VERDICT** A remarkable addition to the growing genre of mental health disorders and treatment that relates to the reality of how many patients with a mood disorder do not necessarily fit one end or another of the disorder spectrum.—
Dale Farris, Groves, TX

SOCIAL SCIENCE

Ahmed, Sara. Living a Feminist Life. Duke Univ. Feb. 2017. 312p. notes. bibliog. ISBN 9780822363194. pap. \$25.95. SOC SCI

Divided into three primary parts, Ahmed's (emeritus, race and cultural studies, Goldsmiths, Univ. of London.; *Willful Subjects*) book leads readers through the journey of first becoming a feminist, secondly addressing issues of diversity in the university setting, and thirdly of the challenges met in work and life as a feminist. Interspersed with fascinating anecdotes, Ahmed's discourse leans away from the memoir that might be suggested in her introductory outline to achieve an impressive look at her own experiences and the larger implications thereof. With a winding writing style that requires focus, Ahmed succeeds in her intent if readers are willing to do the work to unpack her layered prose. Fans of bell hooks and Audre