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Conversations with the Conroys: Interviews with Pat Conroy and His Family

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journal is superb due to the monumental research on Manhattan cocktails along with alluring recipes for such an outstanding variety of tempting cocktails.

Chapter Three: Recipes is divided into five sections: Historical Manhattan Cocktails includes twenty-four Manhattan cocktail recipes, The Dry Manhattan reveals four Manhattan cocktail recipes, The Perfect Manhattan displays two recipes, Modern Manhattan shares seventeen Manhattan cocktail recipes, and Woodford Reserve Manhattans discloses three Manhattan drink recipes. Short facts on the unique Manhattan cocktails are mentioned right above the recipes. The last page “Your Own Manhattan Cocktail” offers a list of blanks for the reader to write a Manhattan cocktail recipe comprising how many ounces of which spirit, how many ounces of which modifier, how many ounces of another modifier, the number of dashes of bitters, other ingredients, and the reader’s directions to create a reader’s unique Manhattan cocktail.

The ten page index is accurate. The bibliography is five pages unveiling fifty-eight great sources. The six page Notes is divided into three sections by the three chapter titles. This handbook includes three tables. Table 1 shows types and combinations of whiskeys and vermouths to make particular Manhattan mixes. An example from Table 1 is Vya sweet vermouth coupled with twelve-fifteen year old high proof bourbon. Table 2 titled “Drink Name and Preparation” brings to light twenty-two Manhattan cocktails telling the methods, bitters, vermouth, whiskey, and other ingredients. Case in point from Table 2, the method is highland (stir), bitters are dash orange, the vermouth is Italian (1/2 measure), the whiskey is Scotch (1/2 measure), and other ingredients are none. Table 3 uncovers six more Manhattan cocktails disclosing name, type of whiskey, kind of modifier, bitters if any, and selection of garnish. An illustration from Table 3 is the Apple Manhattan making use of Maker’s Mark Bourbon whiskey, Berentzen’s apple liqueur modifier, no bitters, and garnish with a slice of a Granny Smith apple.

The handbook divulges alluring details for example: Six illustrious individuals in connection with the Manhattan combination are discussed including J.P. Morgan, Henry Hudson, Samuel J. Tilden, Lady Randolph Churchill (Jennie Jerome), Lord Randolph Churchill, and Benjamin Helm Bristow. Other prior to supper drinks mentioned are Jack Rose, the Side Car, The Daiquiri, the Old Fashioned, and the Martini. The Manhattan is similar to the mint julip and the Old-Fashioned due to the whiskey content. The Martini and the Manhattan are equally popular. The Martini contains gin and vermouth. The Manhattan contains vermouth, whiskey, and bitters. Bitters are alcohol with roots, barks, fruit peels, seeds, flowers, and herbs. Whiskeys used in Manhattan cocktails are rye whiskey, Irish whiskey, American whiskey, Scotch whiskey, and Bourbon whiskey. Vermouth is wine mixed with brandy. Red grapes for sweet vermouth are Italian. White grapes for dry vermouth are French. Three legends surround the Manhattan cocktail’s invention. One is Lady Churchill at her son Winston Churchill’s party at the Manhattan Club celebrating his birth requested a drink be

invented which was the Manhattan Cocktail in reverence to New York’s twenty fifth Governor Samuel Jones Tilden’s new governorship. The recommended audience is individuals interested in cocktails especially the Manhattan cocktail.

Melinda F. Matthews

University of Louisiana at Monroe Library

Conversations with the Conroys: Interviews with Pat Conroy and His Family Edited with an Introduction by Walter Edgar, Afterword by Nikky Finney. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2015. ISBN 978-1-61117-630-8. 136 p. \$27.95.



This little book brought me much joy these days after Pat Conroy passed this life. May he rest in peace.

When this book came to me to review, I was thrilled as I have a very passionate interest in Pat’s life, his literary attachment to South Carolina and the coastal areas. I revisited the old movie, “The Great Santini” and remembered so vividly past readings of Pat’s recording of his family dynamics--its challenges and mental dysfunctions. Yet, throughout any readings or interviews or other exposures to him in person and in the media, shining through were Pat’s words, “I want to be a writer”. Also poignantly his comments, repeated often, concerned his belief that being born into a dysfunctional family with all its abuse, fears and angers, was fertile ground for the mind of a writer.

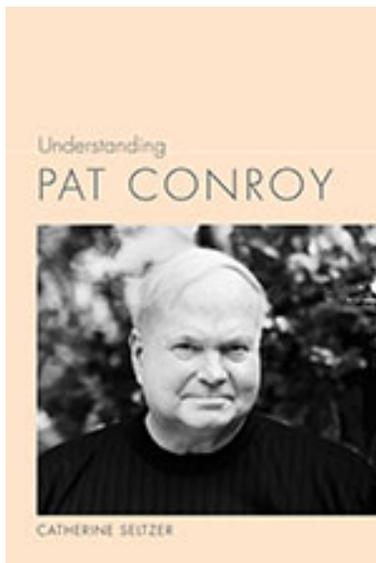
This particular book contains a collection of conversations to which Walter Edgar played the important role of host in February 14, 2014, in Columbia’s Township Auditorium, and an in depth interview, “Pat Conroy and Family”, with Pat and some family members (4) who wished to participate. Additionally included is a “Conroy Family Roundtable”, interview by Alda Rogers, “The Conroys Chat in Charleston”, an Interview by Catherine Seltzer and

“The Rememberer”, an interview by Katherine Clark. The conversational style is intriguing and deeply moving as family members interact with each other—one saying “It was worse than Pat says it was”. Nikky Finney closed the book with her synopsis, “Translating Love”.

A wonderful selection of black and white original photographs, featuring scenes across the years from Pat’s baby photos to full family depictions. They bring the conversations to life. A book well worth collecting for a personal library and having in a public and academic library collection.

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Understanding Pat Conroy. Catherine Seltzer. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2015. ISBN 978-1-61117-516-5. 160 p. \$39.95.



Catherine Seltzer introduces us to young Pat Conroy: As a high school student Conroy accompanies his teacher, Eugene Norris, to Thomas Wolfe’s home in Asheville, North Carolina. Seltzer recounts the story that Norris took an apple from one of the trees on the grounds and said, “Eat it boy.” (p.1) Reflecting on taking the first bite, Conroy said, “I was given the keys to go out and try to write.” Conroy’s explanation of Norris’ comment goes on to show how “from the very beginning I wrote to explain my own life to myself”. From uncovering Conroy’s tree of knowledge and his tree of life, Seltzer recounts the many ways in which Conroy has brought sensitive and intellectual inspirations to his writings.

Through five novels and five books, Seltzer says Conroy returns to his life experiences and says “Only rarely have I drifted far from the bed where I was conceived.” (p.2) His comments on his family life that appear in his writings includes this comment, “One of the greatest gifts you can

get as a writer is to be born into an unhappy family I could not have been born into a better one.” (p.2)

Reading Seltzer’s book, I am reminded of the one bit of advice any student hears from a mentor or teacher, “write what you know about, write what you have experienced.” I don’t think many English teachers are so clever as to give an apple to a talented student but I thank Catherine Seltzer for recounting the tale.

For students and faculty who might want to recommend Seltzer’s book for a reference or for supplemental reading, the author provides Chapters 2-8 as an individual commentary on “The Water is Wide”, “The Great Santini”, “The Lords of Discipline”, “The Prince of Tides”, “Beach Music”, “My Losing Season”, and “South of Broad”. Notes, Bibliography and Index cover pages 119 to 135.

Recommended for school and college libraries.

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Understanding Ron Rash. John Lang. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2014. ISBN 978-1-61117-411-3. 152 p. \$39.95



My search for understanding Ron Rash began a few months ago when someone said, “You know Ron’s first writings were funny, not so filled with “depressed and depressing characters living depressing lives and rarely inspiring laughter” (my colleague’s description). My colleague went on to say, “You should read those first stories, “The Night the New Jesus Fell to Earth” or “Badeye”.

Going from reading and having heard Ron read from “Saints at the River”, “Serena” and “The Cove”, I was eager to take the journey into those short stories that might provide laughter and clever twists in the characters—away from “evil Serena”(Serena) and into “hustler Larry (The