

Approved for use in English I

Summary of the Work:

D'Arcy McNickle's novel *Runner in the Sun* is an engaging story written for younger adolescents. The author's foreword to the novel tells us that Salt and his people lived hundreds of years before Columbus came to the Americas.

The novel's setting is the southwest of what later would become the United States, hundreds of years ago. Salt and his people are cliff-dwellers; their village, which they call White Rock Place, is built into the wall of a canyon. Salt and his people have two problems: they need to dwell in peace, and they need to find a better strain of maize, since their own has become poor in quality through constant plantings. They were Native Americans we call the Anasazi, the ancient ones.

Rationale:

The novel *Runner in the Sun* brings to life an ancient world, one not familiar to most students. The world of the Anasazi, forerunners of today's Pueblo peoples, survives in the ruins of the cliff dwellings of the southwest United States. The problems that Salt and his people encounter, however, are much the same as people encounter today: struggles for power, obedience or challenges to tradition, problems with the environment such as drought, and the challenge of creating a peaceful life. Students acquire an appreciation of the lives and accomplishments of Native Americans of long ago, as well as a working vocabulary of terms associated with their lives, such as kiva, archaeoastronomy, and cliff-dwellers. Reading *Runner in the Sun* helps students become aware of the diversity of Native Americans, as well as their technological and social achievements.

Professional Reviews and/or Critical Essays:

The Internet Public Library states the following about *Runner in the Sun*: "A story of pre-Hispanic Indian life in the area which is now the American Southwest. Afterward by Alfonso Ortiz. Southwest, New--Juvenile fiction."

* Print resources are available from the library media center and libraries in the district. Contact any library media specialist to view the scholarly sources.

* Scholarly reviews are also available online through Books in Print and Gale. Contact the library media specialist to obtain username and password information to access the subscription database of full-text reviews.

Noted Distinction:

D'Arcy McNickle was born in 1904 in St. Ignatius, Montana, and died in 1977. He is regarded as one of the founders of Native American literature and ethnohistory. He was a recognized authority on government policy concerning Native Americans. He was an American Anthropologist Association fellow and was the first director of the Center for American Indian History at the Newberry Library in Chicago, which was later renamed in his honor.

Readability:

- Lexile Score:
- Readability Level:

Learning Resources Guidelines:

- The novel meets the Learning Resources Guidelines.

Standard Alignment: [\(link\)](#)

Approval:

Submitted to Committee: 2004

Approved for Adoption:

Notes on the Text:

Runner in the Sun provides English I students a chance to understand the world of the ancient Native Americans of the southwest. Salt's story challenges the reader with this question: What was it like to live in the world that Salt of *Runner in the Sun* knew?

Connection to the Curriculum:

Reading *Runner in the Sun* meets the Office of Public Instruction's Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians # 2, 3, and 6.

Additional Connections:

(AP, Honors, Essential/Applied, Dramas, Films, etc.)

A webquest providing vocabulary, poetry, art, multi-paragraph writing, and research paper for *Runner in the Sun* is available at <http://www.hhs.helena.k12.mt.us/Teacherlinks/OConnorj/runner/Runnerhome.htm>