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impossible to offer universal characterizations of the indigenous languages of the Americas. However, since the national languages in question are small in number and closely related, it might be possible to offer illustrations of how American indigenous languages and this small group of European ones differ from one another phonologically, grammatically, and lexically. Examples of such differences and suggestions for dealing with them in classroom situations and materials would help non-linguist teachers grapple with extensive and multifaceted structural differences between unrelated languages.

The authors devote considerable attention to the ways in which communicative practice might differ between native speakers of the national languages and native speakers of the indigenous languages. For example, while cautioning the reader against overgeneralization and the characterization of Indian students as “exceptional,” the authors offer a helpful discussion of how a clash of communicative interaction patterns might interfere with question-answer patterns designed to elicit student knowledge in a specific cultural context. The authors do an excellent job of discussing complex patterns in the linguistic division of labor between indigenous and national languages, and they urge their readers to look beyond “diglossia” for models of these relationships. They also present a sensitive and enlightening account of *nepantla* (from Náhuatl), a stressful liminality in which communities and individuals in language contact situations may find themselves.

The book contains useful maps showing where indigenous languages have been and are spoken and helpful figures and tables illustrating key concepts in the book, such as the features of Language Learner Sensitive Discourse, a register the authors recommend to language teachers. Non-academics and students will also find the extensive glossary (well keyed to the text) useful. Francis and Reyhner provide clear and detailed explanations of essential terms for using the vast available literatures on indigenous language use, bilingualism, literacy, and the relationships of all of these to culture. For these reasons, the book will serve as a valuable shelf reference volume for readers with related interests. Although not extensive, the sample teaching materials and coyote narratives (in English) in the appendices help to illustrate some of the book’s recommendations. These texts, along with quotes from indigenous language works interspersed throughout the book, help to make this a reflection of indigenous perspectives on language and education, as well as a presentation of educational perspectives on the needs of indigenous communities.

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The Little Water Medicine Society of the Senecas. By William N. Fenton. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002. 209 pages. \$39.95 cloth.

In this volume, William Fenton has produced a masterful text that is at once both a primary and a secondary document detailing the origins, history, and

ritual performances of the Seneca's Little Water Medicine Society. The study is a valuable primary text because it provides a richly detailed story of the society's origin (carefully noting variants) that precisely outlines the structure of the society's ritual performances, and authoritatively presents the song texts that give the medicine's renewal and curing rites their efficacy. In these ways, the text is important for several fields of Native American studies, including religious studies, folklore, ethnomusicology, and comparative medicine. As a secondary source, the book will interest anthropologists for its nuanced presentation of Fenton's fieldwork with Seneca ritual experts during the 1930s and 1940s. Historians and ethnohistorians will benefit from the book's account of early twentieth-century religious change. In addition to his focus on the Society among the Seneca, Fenton also presents important comparative data from others of the Six Nations. However, although the book is especially valuable for Iroquoian scholars, it might have a more troubled reception among the Iroquois peoples, as I discuss below.

The volume presents Iroquoian medicine society culture with such care that it gives the reader access to the rich complexity of Iroquois religious life. Although Fenton himself refrains from placing interpretive constraints on his material, and even though alien tropes sometimes intrude (Fenton's concepts of belief, magic, and mysticism marginalize Seneca understandings, for example), the text documents in extraordinary detail the Seneca's religious ways of thinking and being. It also reveals the modalities of everyday religious practice, including discourses on the nature and meaning of the medicine and Seneca views of illness and curing. Because it is such a carefully crafted primary text, the book can be used to document the cosmic etiquette that binds human, "animal," and "plant" persons, and the health and well-being that derives from the reciprocal responsibility managed in the Little Water Medicine Society's "doings." The text also documents the ritual behavior and the musical language that is the lingua franca of cosmic communication, thanksgiving, and empowerment.

In other words, this book encapsulates a multivocal and polyvalent text that I read productively (as will general readers, specialists, and Seneca people as well) in relation to my own interests in ethnohistoriography and religious studies. Although Fenton does not locate the Little Water Medicine Society in its larger religious context (particularly the annual cycle of community rituals and the practices of the Longhouse religion), there is no mistaking the distinctive Seneca views about being, knowing, and valuing that infuse ritual practices, large and small. This sensibility emerges as rigorously relational in character.

Fenton's data shows that the Little Water Medicine Society derives from caring reciprocity between "animal" persons and a human hunter slain in war. A variant story documents similar reciprocities between "plant" persons and humans. Originally a war medicine, the Society came to exercise the shared powers and responsibilities of human and cosmic persons. The origin story, "The Good Hunter," declares as much. Here Wolf, Crow, Bear, Raven, Panther, and Eagle (among others) return the hunter's life-giving gift of his first kill. They resurrect him from death with a return gift of transformative

medicine, their own physical substance, and their energetics of being extended in song. Unlike the nature/culture/supernatural distinctions which so often distort both primary and secondary texts about Native American religious life, every detail Fenton presents articulates Seneca convictions that the cosmos is a system of interacting persons who, when acting in concert, ensure mutual health and happiness.

Although the book should be recognized as a precious archival source that benefits the Seneca people and scholars alike, it might also raise controversies. The issue is that the Little Water Medicine Society has for much of its history been a secret society. In brief, the knowledge revealed in this text was not (and probably still is not) commonly available to Seneca persons who were not members of the Society. Even though the author writes that, despite the Society's secrecy which Arthur C. Parker documented in 1901, "admission to the society's rites relaxed in later decades" (pp. xiv, 71–74), Fenton also states that the Society "remains an avowed (and, paradoxically, much talked about) secret among the Iroquois today" (p. 3). A related but not resolved and so potentially contradictory factor is that the Society seems to have fallen into disuse in the second half of the twentieth century.

Although Fenton discusses these issues, they appear disjointed because they emerge in various widely separated parts of the text. The dustcover of the volume says that most Little Water Medicine Society members have passed away "and their knowledge of ceremonial healing and spiritual renewal is fading." But Fenton also writes that readers might wonder why the Society's rituals "continue to be performed" (p. xiv). In an appendix, he notes that he shared Onondaga recordings of the ritual with people "who, having lost parts of the ritual, wanted to restore the ceremony for the people of Six Nations" (p. 188). Fenton also notes the "brouhaha" associated with Edmund Wilson's 1959 publication about the Society, and that he was himself blamed in this controversy (p. xvi). This brief and uninformative statement is unfortunate because Fenton has high-minded intentions: "And may the record of what I learned help the present generation of Senecas to revive any parts they have lost" (p. xix).

Indeed, the author says that he has shared his field notes with Native singers and declares that "no one ever told me that I might not understand the mysteries of the Little Water medicine, and I never pledged not to recall or write about them" (p. 4). But, in fact, Little Water Medicine Society lead singer Chauncey Johnny John told Fenton that he was willing to share the origin story "because I know that you will tell no one else around here" (p. 35). Although John seems to leave Fenton free to talk outside the community, Fenton inserts a footnote that is less than reassuring: "How to resolve the conflict between informant confidence and the ethnologist's obligation to science poses a question of ethics. I believe that Chauncey's heirs today need not be deprived of his wisdom" (p. 35, note 8). Nor is Fenton's more general disclaimer reassuring: "Such matters are sacred to believers, who may be disturbed to see them in print, but the materials in two boxes of my field notes cry out for release, explanation, and synthesis" (p. 4).

Although some might question the publication of this detailed account of the Little Water Medicine Society, there is no doubt about its authenticity and the fact that the text exists because legitimate owners of the Society's knowledge freely shared the material with Fenton. Seneca Little Water Medicine Society members went to great pains to communicate and record exhaustive accounts of the Society's origins, songs, and ritual practices. Even once-hostile Seneca accepted Fenton's recordings. John Jimerson, Fenton writes, "having first spoken against my research in the longhouse, ultimately accepted me as a pupil and proved himself an excellent teacher" (p. xiii). Other publications record some documentation about the Society, and Seneca-endorsed manuscript accounts of its rituals and songs exist in the Library of Congress and the Fenton papers at the American Philosophical Society. It's also true that, thorough as the text is, it cannot possibly empower non-Iroquoians to appropriate the ritual. Only the Seneca can have the relationships with those cosmic persons who are honored and renewed in the Society's work. And only the Seneca and other Iroquoian speakers have access to the musical language that empowers, translates, and applies the medicine. Nonetheless, many will wish that Fenton had more carefully and candidly engaged the ethical issues that he himself brings to light.

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"Mixed Blood" Indians: Racial Reconstruction in the Early South. By Theda Purdue. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2002. 160 pages. \$24.95 cloth.

So strong has the association of authenticity with color in Indian country become, that there has been a responsive movement of "mixed blood" scholars such as W. S. Penn, Craig Womack, Louise Erdrich, and that venerable elder of Native American literature, Gerald Vizenor. Mixed-blood writing embraces recognition of multiple ancestries in the construction of modern-day Indian identities, and challenges the tendency to essentialize the vast tapestry of contemporary Native American experience into an equation of white and Indian.

As a student of the Native nations of the Southeast, Theda Purdue explores this problem from the other end of the historical telescope. In her latest book, *"Mixed Blood" Indians*, she contends that color and "race" were largely irrelevant in the politics and social life of the Choctaws, Chickasaws, Cherokees, and other Native peoples of the Old South, even during the Removal era.

Purdue focuses on two points that should not surprise Native American scholars, although they seem to have eluded historians generally. Matrilineal Southeastern peoples tended to be more concerned with a person's social class (or lineage) and merit than with their color. Within this cultural framework, non-Native women were easily absorbed into tribal communities, and the descendants of mixed-"race" unions suffered no impediments to achieving rank and influence with the help of their matrilineal clans. Indeed, people of mixed "race" were usually found on both sides of major internal