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well as an understanding of the soul. In *The Jailing of Cecelia Capture* Janet Campbell Hale allows her heroine to confront the difficulties of simple existence without Spider Woman, without Betonie, without a Coyote or Yellow Calf. While the result of this confrontation lacks the celebratory power of most of these previous novels by American Indian writers, at the end of this novel one is left with a feeling of grim determination that suggests, in its very simplicity, a new valuation of life, of going on.

In this work, more than a decade after her first novel, *The Owl's Song* (Doubleday, 1974), Janet Campbell Hale has added a new and valuable perspective to fiction by American Indian writers, one that, considered along with Allen's *The Woman Who Owned the Shadows* and Erdrich's *Love Medicine*, suggests a new direction in American fiction.

Louis Owens  
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**American Indian Novelists: An Annotated Critical Bibliography.** By Tom Colonnese and Louis Owens. New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1985. 178 pp. \$28.00 Cloth.

Compiling bibliographies of living authors is an absolutely necessary yet often thankless task. My own experience with primary and secondary bibliography has been with such eminently "safe" authors of the American literary establishment as Kurt Vonnegut and Donald Barthelme. Yet even here one can unintentionally step on some very tender toes, as I did when I closed my Barthelme coverage in December 1975, for an edition going to press in early 1976. When the book appeared in 1977 Barthelme's British editor wrote an outraged letter to The Shoe String Press complaining that his 1977 editions had been overlooked: "This strikes me as a substantial error and I hope you will take the appropriate punitive measures against the book's editor."

Thankfully, no punitive measures (one thinks of a typically British Public School!) will have to be taken against Tom Colonnese and Louis Owens, since even though their subjects were growing and writing and reacting to critical scholarship as this book was being prepared, its substance has survived the vicissitudes of current literary history—a history in which a year's

time-lapse can be like a generation's progress in more stable areas of scholarship. In the year it took this book to make it through the press it has been rumored that William Kittridge rewrote *Winter in the Blood* into publishable form and that Leslie Marmon Silko impressed Ishmael Reed as being more bourgeois than tribal—or was it Leslie Marmon Silko who tangled with Jerome Rothenberg about the "white-shaman" nonsense in his approach to Native American writing? In any event Colonnese and Owens have demonstrated that their understanding of fiction by contemporary Native American fiction writers is critically sound—which is, after all, the preliminary requirement for any useful bibliography.

As far as names and dates, places and plots, all of the essential information is here. The authors chosen for coverage are Paula Gunn Allen, Denton R. Bedford, Dallas Chief Eagle, Janet Campbell Hale, Jamake Highwater, Hum-Ishu-Ma (Mourning Dove), D'Arcy McNickle, Markoosie, John Joseph Mathews, N. Scott Momaday, Nasnaga (Roger Russell), John Milton Oskison, Chief George Pierre, Simon Pokagon, Leslie Marmon Silko, Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve, Hyemeyohsts Storm, John William Tebbel, James Tucker, Gerald Vizenor and James Welch. The method behind such a range of subjects is to trace the coming of age of the Native American novel, from turn-of-the-nineteenth-century work to the late-sixties renaissance in the United States and the Canadian publication of Esquimaux fiction in the seventies. That most of these authors are contemporary, or have only had a large readership in recent times, is a fact of life in American publishing and the evolution of multicultural consciousness. That all have contributed to the rebirth of American literature—*American*, and not neo-colonial—is evident from the impression brought away from reading Colonnese and Owens' plot summaries and critical abstracts. And that scholars and readers alike should be attending to these works is evident from the canon *American Indian Novelists* constructs. In this sense Colonnese and Owens' work will have an impact far beyond its conventional service to researchers.

Their book's form is compactly tailored to the needs of both students and advanced researchers. Rather than hector readers with an idiosyncratically thesis-bound approach, Colonnese and Owens have chosen to state their case in a concise Introduction, which in the space of five pages summarizes the history and



evaluates the cultural and literary politics which have made their subject what it is. This empirical approach carries over into the format of their entries: for each writer we are given a 150-word biography, an annotated checklist (with plot summaries) of novels, a list of other booklength works (such as poetry collections and text books which the author has edited), a listing of "selected shorter publications" (individual poems and stories with full citations for first appearance and reprintings, plus similar information for articles and essays by the subject), a run-down of bibliographical references, plus a survey (with abstracts) of pertinent literary criticism on the author in question. The thoroughness of this method is the volume's greatest strength and satisfies major needs in scholarship which other bibliographies often omit. #1: Even though these writers are known best for their fiction, it can be crucially important that they have written poems, plays and essays; if they've done text books as well, the researcher can find further clues to the fictive artist's working method. #2: If a writer, such as Leslie Marmon Silko, has also done film scripts, the researcher should know that and know where to find them. #3: If a critic, such as Peter Beidler, has written an essay covering several novels by many different authors, it is helpful to have that essay re-abstracted highlighting the work of the author at hand.

Because they have carefully attended to each of these concerns, Colonnese and Owens have produced not only the best work to date on this particular subject but have provided a definitive model for critical bibliographies of this sort, against which all subsequent efforts will have to be measured. Gone are the days when a professor can send his or her research assistant over to the library's reference table and scissors-and-paste together a Garland bibliography; *American Indian Novelists* proves that when intelligence and hard work are combined with a sophisticated critical understanding of the subjects' literary merit, a genuinely useful book will be the result—a book which will make subsequent interpretations of all these writers, from Pokoagon to Markoosie, that much easier to undertake.

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