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Author

Bomberry, Victoria

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missing link of underlying values of groups and societies and the role of these values in behavior. This deficiency belies an epistemologically materialist bias that emphasizes capital and goods. Yet the words *micco*, *communities*, *talwas*, and *clans* are abstract nouns, concepts, and realities. The meaning of these concepts lies in ideational elements and indigenous value systems. For tribes, these concepts are deeply embedded in the creation stories, which encapsulate the myths and legends regarding the formation of their societies and institutions. These deeply embedded universals do not change as easily as goods and trade items. The Creeks have deeply embedded creation, clan, and tribal formation stories that are often left out in studies of the tribe's history. Although Wesson does mention the Chekilli story from Swanton about people pouring out of the earth he does not weigh the relationship between this story and other major stories in oral history. Such stories have been passed on by elders fairly carefully. Household relationships historically were intimately entwined with clan relationships and distinctions. Creeks were not just matrilineal. They were far more complex, though the maternal side was strongly evident. The father's clan was also important in balancing relationships—in exclusions and inclusions and avoidance of incest and the tracing of kinship.

Creek life changed much with the onset of wars and disease, Indian removal, Christian missionary work, marriages outside of the tribe, Oklahoma statehood, the continuous shrinking of Creek lands, and the subversive elements in aspects of Indian education. But there are traditionals whose lives are centered on the Creek fires and the stomp grounds, and some of the traditional *miccos* and the medicine people do their best to keep the oral traditions reasonably accurate and alive and are good sources regarding the dynamics of Creek society.

Wesson's book has a nice dedication "to the Creek peoples, past, present, and future." Creeks and those interested in them might want to look at the tables assembled by the author that are derived from the Alabama excavations and draw their own conclusions. Regarding the inner evolution and dynamics of Creek society, the book is interesting but promises more than it delivers.

Joyotpaul Chaudhuri
Arizona State University

From the Iron House: Imprisonment in First Nations Writing. By Deena Rymhs. Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press. 192 pages. \$65.00 cloth.

This provocative book widens the discussion of Foucault's theoretical framework of the carceral to include the distinct ways that colonization and postcoloniality have affected Aboriginal life for generations. This excellent study of indigenous writing from prison and residential schools is a major contribution to Native American literary criticism. Rymhs's book and Tsianina Lomawaima's fine social historical study of Chillico Indian School, *They Called It Prairie Light*, could and should be read as a dialogue for researchers and students alike. Rymhs's detailed analysis of literary production from the

prison and the residential school experience wrestles with the problem of placing these works in any existing genre. The book is divided into two parts that show the interplay and often blurred distinction between incarceration and the experience of residential schools in Canada. It is careful in establishing the historical differences and commonalities between Canada and the United States to offer the reader a more nuanced reading of the works that are her focus.

The prison writings of Leonard Peltier are an important touchstone in understanding the emphasis on collectivity that appears throughout the work that Rymhs examines. She suggests that for Peltier there is an existing sense of a collectivity that extends from the historic past into the present that is informed by his coming to consciousness as an activist during the 1970s. From this vantage point, Peltier positions himself within the historical struggle for liberation of Native peoples from colonial oppression. For many of the writers, the reflective process of writing encourages the notion of a collectivity that they have been denied and in whose place the alienating effects of colonization has structured subjectivities based on "individual isolation as a collective condition" (41).

This devastating insight has, at least partially, become the common sense of the Canadian government, which is evident in the recent apology issued by Prime Minister Harper that was broadcast in Canada and immediately made the news throughout Indian country. One section of the apology reads: "We now recognize that, in separating children from their families, we undermined the ability for many to adequately parent their own children and sowed the seeds for generations follow." The telling part of this apology is the claim of innocence that is present. However, the recognition that generations have been damaged is important. What the work of Rymhs enables is a close look at the mechanisms that were not an innocent policy flaw, but rather a system of oppression that is effective and utterly destructive in its totality.

The work of dismantling these state apparatuses is far from over as Rymhs's reading of James Tyman's *Inside Out: An Autobiography by a Native Canadian* chillingly conveys. Foster care and adoption is identified as yet another means of controlling Native bodies within the carceral, by the erasure of biological, national, and cultural identity, and, as she points out early in her study, the creation of yet another iteration of the "barred subject." Even though Tyman's adoption into a white family carried with it class privilege, the ambiguity of his position and his racial phenotype left him unable to cope with the overt racism he experienced.

Rymhs points out that one of the most tragic things about his images of Indians are the stereotypes that dominated his imagination and ultimately his sense of belonging. He is drawn into the most destructive part of the Canadian habitus on whose fringes reside the most marginalized of Aboriginal peoples. Rymhs uses subculture and outcast to describe the inhabitants of skid row, but this is at odds with the overall thrust of her analysis, which argues that the carceral is constitutive of this sector of the population that is imprisoned by repeating the mechanisms that reproduce the same abject subject. Skid row contains just as the prison contains and controls. The Panopticon is, in effect,

the lens through which Tyman finds his “Aboriginal family” and his biological mother precisely because of his class privilege, which carries with it a sense of white supremacy in a brown body.

A crucial chapter examines the process of collaboration that is initiated by Yvonne Johnson. After reading a historical novel about the Plains Cree leader Big Bear, she contacted the author, Rudy Wiebe, to help her write her autobiography. There are two things that dramatically stand out in this chapter. The first is the assertion that the “law restricts her agency” (she is serving a life sentence); the second is her knowledge of her genealogy.

It may seem obvious that the “law restricts her agency”; however, the astute navigation of the prison system and the system of writing that Johnson employs subverts the abject subject position that is thrust on her. The relentless arm of the law constantly seeks to contain not only her body but also her thoughts and intelligence, as Rymhs points out. The language that Rymhs uses throughout the chapter is the language of law, which underscores the difficulty of placing the work in a particular genre. *Testimonio* is the genre that was deployed by subject peoples in Latin America during the era of dictatorships to present the abuses that were rendered invisible by the complex political networks that were complicit in maintaining fascist regimes. *Testimonio* extended beyond the individual to represent a collective experience. The state of immediate crisis out of which *testimonio* emerged is a keenly focused political action. Rymhs successfully draws the parallels between the distinct collective actions of *testimonio* to that of Johnson’s autobiography. Although Johnson’s autobiography is in some ways a more diffuse indictment of the historical juggernaut that inflicted untold trauma and destruction, Rymhs asserts that Johnson uses both “confession and an act of protestation” to denounce a system of law predicated on what Peltier identifies as the “original sin of being Indian.” The metonymically linked law and confession is particularly apt given the church-structured residential schools and a carcerel’s ability to shift at particular historical moments by redeploying its mechanisms of discipline.

The erasure of Tyman’s genealogy leaves him vulnerable, and even though he finds his biological mother on skid row he can never know his true genealogy. Ultimately he is a tragic figure. Rymhs’s cogent reading of Johnson’s text demonstrates that Johnson’s knowledge of her lineage, either real or constructed, is her way to reclaim her body or transform her abusive experiences into a believable utterance. She is able to reconstruct a collective past that she uses to escape the confines of prison. In reaching out to Wiebe, who has done extensive historiographic research on her genealogy, she inserts herself into a heroic story that, at the same time, reveals the genealogy of violence and violation to which she bears witness. Witness, as Rymhs describes, is an intimate act that has a spiritual dimension in which Johnson is not only able to speak, but also that her interlocutors are able to hear.

Rymhs details the ethical questions that emerge out of the collaboration with Johnson and Wiebe and her own work. Her reflection is admirable and answers the question that was a nagging presence in this reader’s mind. She writes, “Does this book’s emphasis on the prison as a central, structuring

presence in First Nations writing focus too exclusively on a negative aspect of Aboriginal history?" She concludes, after much reflection, that her work opens a window on the ways that indigenous peoples "maintain their sense of sovereignty . . . where these things have been eroded by law."

Victoria Bomberry

University of California, Riverside

Me Sexy: An Exploration of Native Sex and Sexuality. By Drew Hayden Taylor. Vancouver, BC: Douglas and McIntyre, 2008. 186 pages. \$21.95 paper.

"Think of [*Me Sexy*] as a 'How to Make love to a First Nations person without sexually appropriating them' type of book. It will inform you. It will shock you. It may make you laugh. It may even make you blush" (3). When I first read the press release for Drew Hayden Taylor's newest book, *Me Sexy*, I knew I wanted to read it. When I received the book and saw the cover, I knew I had to read it. The cover depicts the age-old stereotypical image of a strong, muscular, dark-brown Indian man with bulging arms and flowing black hair clutching a small, helpless-looking white woman whose bosom is heaving with desire for this forbidden creature. She is scared but excited anticipating the animal nature of this dark beast. The book does not disappoint and fully lives up to the expectations created by Taylor's past work in *Me Funny* (2006) and the titillating promise of the "erotic" image on the cover of *Me Sexy*.

Me Sexy is an anthology that explores myths and truths of Native sex and sexuality. Perhaps no issue in Native studies has been studied less, or is misunderstood more, than the sexuality of First Nations people. Taylor writes in the introduction: "When I told people I was thinking about putting together a book about the world of Native sexuality, the two comments I got back most often were: (1) 'That will be a short book' and (2) 'Isn't that a contradiction in terms?' Usually these comments were said with a knowing smile, but I knew there was a grain of social belief buried deep within" (1). Several of our best First Nations writers contributed to this anthology, including Joseph Boyden, Makka Kleist, Tomson Highway, Nancy Cooper, Marius P. Tungilik, Michelle McGeough, Daniel Heath Justice, Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm, Norman Vorano, Marissa Crazytrain, Gregory Scofield, and Lee Maracle. It is a glorious collection of works, some of which are laugh-out-loud funny while others are more serious and give us lots to ponder. All provide a window into the little-known world of Native sexuality.

The first selection, "Bush County" by Joseph Boyden, explores the question as to whether or not, as a drunken man noted, "Indian girls got barely any hair on their pussies. Just a little black fuzz" (7). As much as this "gross, icky non-sequitur" disturbed Boyden at the time it was said, in later years he began to wonder if "Dale" (the pig of a man who made the comment) knew something about First Nations women and their pubic hair that he didn't. Boyden set out to answer the question: "Do Aboriginal women (and men, for that matter) have sparser pubic hair than other races?" (10). His journey