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The key to Stockel's argument is that she subscribes to John L. Kessell's (*Mission of Sorrows*, 1970, 50) statement that in the records, "Godfather" is the term used to indicate purchaser," although she also notes that others may not agree (114). Thus Stockel argues that for these baptisms the godfather purchased the child from the missionary conducting the baptism. However, she does not explain to the reader why she believes this to be the case. The reader is left with no information on which to evaluate her claim or understand the basis of it. Stockel then gives the results of her analysis of the mission records, which are available on the Mission 2000 online database (available through the National Park Service Web site for Tumacácori National Historical Park: <http://www.nps.gov/tuma>). This consists of a series of paragraphs, each devoted to a child baptized by a missionary, with as much information about the child, missionary, and godparents as is available, but there is often little information to be found, especially regarding the child and godfather. There are approximately thirty cases. This is Stockel's "proof of the terrible event that occurred all across the frontier in the eighteenth century" (126). Yet Stockel admits that we do not know how, or whether, the missionaries benefited from the alleged sales, and that "there is no unassailable proof of this activity, nothing that can be corroborated" (127).

Unfortunately, Stockel's misuse of the term *identity theft* and her lack of a convincing argument for the enslavement of the Chiricahua Apaches by the missionaries undermine what is, in other respects, a useful summary of the ethnography and Spanish colonial period history of the Chiricahua Apaches. They also undermine her statement that "it is undeniable that the Jesuits and Franciscans were guilty of genocide insofar as the Chiricahua Apaches are concerned. Identity theft and enslavement are unmistakable proof of the priests' intent to destroy and prevent the Apache's continuation as a people" (137). Stockel presents convincing evidence that the Spanish authorities were guilty of genocide of the Chiricahua Apaches, while the Catholic Church and its agents did nothing to prevent it. This is the important conclusion that should have been drawn in this intriguing and thought-provoking volume.

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Taxidermic Signs: Reconstructing Aboriginality. By Pauline Wakeham. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008. 255 pages. \$67.50 cloth; \$22.50 paper.

Taxidermic Signs: Reconstructing Aboriginality makes a powerful argument to expand the tools of critical race theory in order to achieve more nuanced and context-specific readings of cultural texts. In doing so, this book's ultimate goal is to destabilize the continued exercise of colonial authority over Native North American peoples. Analyzing various case studies from museum displays to photography, documentary film, and the discourse surrounding the DNA analysis of indigenous remains across the US-Canada border, Pauline Wakeham

employs the “semiotics of taxidermy” to shed light upon the materially violent, hegemonic, and racist ideologies hidden under the guise of postcolonial representation and often framed in terms of conciliatory institutional engagements with Native subjects. She argues that the stereotypical tropes used to justify narratives of colonial conquest over North America’s indigenous populations have not disappeared along with nineteenth-century forms of taxidermic display. Rather, these narratives that Native peoples are disappearing in their “pure” racial forms, that their memory should be preserved as their disappearance is mourned, and that they can only exist outside of the Western march of time are transmogrified onto new technologies of preservation.

Taxidermic Signs offers brilliant theoretical applications and should be read with this in mind. Drawing from poststructural applications of semiotics, cultural materialism, postcolonialism, and race theory, this book examines cultural production through semiotics of taxidermy, which conceptualizes taxidermy as a sign system, “inclusive of but not restricted to the literal stuffing of skins that reproduces a continually rearticulating network of signs that manipulate the categories of humans and animals, culture and nature, and life and death in the service of white supremacy” (6). When applied to representations of Native peoples through museum display, photography, film, and the media, these signs, reconfigured across time and space, reproduce stereotypes rooted in colonialist ideologies. The key properties of taxidermic semiosis are (Western) mastery over nature, the manipulation of time, the dichotomy of life and death (or preservation and extinction), the manufacturing of bodies in the service of colonial aims, and its ability to evoke somatic, emotional responses. The author asserts the superiority of this approach to some thirty years of postcolonial theory for its ability to demonstrate the complications that can arise during the processes of archival reconstructions of colonial texts within our supposedly postcolonial era. Taxidermic semiosis provides the framework for more nuanced readings of processes of racialization that go beyond conventional theories of race as “skin deep” or its converse, the subdermal level of nanopolitics that cannot be explained in older colonial codes.

The strength of this book resides in its convincing argument that colonial and racist attitudes are alive and well, circulating beyond the echelons of academia and professional culture makers to the common ground of state-manufactured tourist destinations and popular media. In highlighting the underlying structures of discourse influencing the contemporary representation of Native peoples, Wakeman makes a powerful argument against assuming premature closure on issues relating to injustice against Native peoples. Her introductory discussion of the refusal of colonial frameworks across the US-Canada border is particularly compelling, and it is a must-read for American Indian studies students and scholars. Against this backdrop, the author makes an excellent critique of “meta-museums,” the passive acceptance of staged photographs and films, and the supposed neutrality of the reconstruction technologies of film, DNA analysis, and craniomorphology. Ultimately, this book proves that the reproduction of colonial ideologies hidden through taxidermic processes permits the dominant society to justify the dismissal of indigenous rights to land, resources, and existence on their

own terms. If we develop the ability to recognize the nuances of the continued manufacture of such discourse, we will no longer simply accept that the racism of the past is gone, replaced with politically correct, culturally sensitive treatment of Native North American peoples. In developing the tools to recognize these unfamiliar new forms in which colonialism and racism persist, we may be better equipped to challenge them.

The success of this book's main argument is also its downfall. Wordsmithing dense sentences chock full of jargon, Wakeman is so adept at cultural analysis that this book tends to read as if she is trying too hard. It seems that no one is safe from the perils of colonialist reproduction, not even the well-meaning postmodern anthropologist working to rewrite the text of an early-twentieth-century documentary film. In chapter 3, Wakeman critiques Marius Barbeau's 1927 documentary *Nass River Indians* for justifying colonial mistreatment through a depiction of Native lifeways as doomed for extinction. The original film marks its Native subjects for death by portraying them as cannery workers, converted to automatons in the naturalized development of industrial culture and civilization as it swept across the West. The original film justifies colonial mistreatment through this depiction. The 2001 reconstruction, according to Wakeman's analysis, is no better. In an attempt to create awareness of Canada's colonial past, this film effectively reinforces the narrative of Western progress and forces "premature closure" on the issue of colonialism. In contrast to such a melancholic analysis, can we also consider the potentially positive outcomes of the survival of these images on celluloid? Though perhaps flawed in execution, may we laud this film as a teaching tool against colonialist attitudes? What about acknowledging the descendants of the film's Native subjects who may feel pride when they see their relatives captured on film and preserved through reconstruction?

In another otherwise excellent analysis of the political consequences of the scientific treatment of prehistoric North American human remains, Wakeman determines that the reconstruction of Kennewick Man's face reproduces stereotypes of Native Americans as stoic, thus illuminating the genomic racism embedded in nanopolitics. Certainly, there are many racist assumptions surrounding the Kennewick Man controversy, but Wakeman's interpretation of it fails to convince. After reading this overdetermined analysis, I researched the facial reconstruction of other ancient remains from Egyptian mummies to Danish "bog bodies." All of them were shaped with similar serious expressions to Kennewick Man's surrogate. Are we to assume specific racial stereotypes were inscribed upon Kennewick Man but not the Northern European bog people? From this counterexample, Wakeman could consider the taxidermic processes that peoples of all backgrounds put upon themselves. She should address the ways that Native North American tribes come to terms with modeling the technologies of taxidermic preservation and its associated semiotic codes through the establishment of tribal museums, cultural centers, and tourist sites.

Likewise, if Wakeman were to turn the teleology of taxidermic semiosis upon herself, she might find that, like the social texts she critiques, there are practically no Native voices present in *Taxidermic Signs* despite the call for multivocality at the outset of the book (she includes a few written sources by Native

academics and organizational units, mostly in the final chapter). This absence of a connection to the real people affected by these processes renders them as dead as the taxidermied Native representations and bodies discussed in the book's case studies. In the same objectifying manner, the author implies that non-Native audiences uncritically accept the taxidermic sign systems directed at them and even makes an excuse for lumping all people of European extraction together while directing specificity to the distinctions among tribal nations. I recommend that the author explore James Clifford's "Looking Several Ways: Anthropology and Native Heritage in Alaska" (*Current Anthropology* 45, no. 1 [2004]: 5–30), Amy Lonetree's "Missed Opportunities: Reflections on the NMAI" (*American Indian Quarterly* 30, no. 3/4 [2006]: 632–45), and my work, "Sharing Culture or Selling Out? A Case Study of Self-Commodification in the Native-Owned Cultural Tourism Industry along the Northwest Coast of North America" (*American Ethnologist* 35, no. 3 [2008]: 380–95). These articles problematize the discourse surrounding indigenous representation in a multivocal fashion and attempt to offer some resolution to the cultural traumas of the past through the dialogic and multivocal construction of cultural texts.

My main problem with this book lies in the fact that it claims an activist stance in regard to Native politics, and yet the author writes off Native agency as something that cannot be grasped within the analysis of archival materials collected and preserved in the service of hegemonic institutions and ideals. This may be true from a poststructuralist perspective, but it would serve the author to speak with the living descendants and relatives of the subjects of the social texts she critiques. After all, she embroils herself in their politics. Indigenous peoples have long collaborated with non-Native academics and activists to combat colonialism and racism. This phenomenon is generally undertheorized, and this review is not the place to discuss it. After reading *Taxidermic Signs* I believe that the author would agree with me that academics writing about indigenous issues have a moral obligation to give back to the communities upon which we base our academic careers. Advocating change through complex theory is no simple task. Wakeman could borrow from the strategy put forth in Laura Peers's *Playing Ourselves: Interpreting Native Histories at Historic Reconstructions* (2007). This work offers important theoretical contributions to the practices surrounding colonial narratives and display across the US-Canada border, as well as concrete suggestions for addressing these issues at sites of historic reconstruction. Unfortunately, the political activism Wakeman voices as this book's *raison d'être* strikes a paternalistic chord in which the "poor Natives" need help in their plight from an academic who can break down processes of taxidermic semiosis in language that the average activist, Native or non-Native, would find difficult to comprehend much less put into practice. In the end, this book delivers a solid theoretical punch, but it is unclear as to whether it offers the intellectual pressure necessary to shift the "hollow or compromised tokens of redress" for colonial-minded attitudes and practices toward Native peoples that persist today.

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