Sovereign Selves: American Indian Autobiography and the Law. By David J. Carlson. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2005. 217 pages. $30.00 paper.

In *Sovereign Selves*, David J. Carlson makes the convincing case that early Native American autobiographies should be read in dialogue with contemporaneous developments in US Indian law. Recognizing the profound effects of law and policy on the day-to-day lives of indigenous peoples, Carlson shows how historical life writings by American Indians absorb, reflect, and grapple with models of Indian political subjectivity framed by legislation and policy. The fact that American Indian intellectuals such as William Apess and Charles Eastman were imbricated in colonial institutions and discourses profoundly affected the way they wrote about their own lives for the public. Understanding these colonial discursive contexts, according to Carlson, is crucial to making sense of early Native autobiography.

Carlson rightly sets aside the search for "authentic" or "essential" expressions of Indianness in Native autobiography as a "critical dead end" (14). The search for "authentic Indianness" often disqualifies some of the most compelling and important Native intellectual material of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, material that documents the sophistication and diversity of Native thought and the complex humanity of Native thinkers. After a compact and eminently useful review of the philosophical foundations of American Indian law and the legal foundations of American colonialism, Carlson turns in chapter one to Native American treaties as a model for the rhetorical work of Native American life writing. Early Native autobiography, he argues, is expressive of a "treaty model of colonial engagement" that emerges from indigenous traditions of diplomacy (35). Just as treaty making solidifies the political subjectivity and sovereignty of the tribe even as it acknowledges colonial pressures and encroachments, early Native autobiography constructs Native subjects who both admit and struggle with colonialist notions of Indian individualism, selfhood, and citizenship.

Sovereign Selves focuses mostly on the careers of William Apess (Pequot) and Charles Eastman (Santee Sioux). Apess, author of *A Son of the Forest* (1829, 1831) and *Indian Nullification* (1835), is the subject of two chapters that trace an evolution in his conceptualizations of Indian selfhood, from "negative" religious models to legalistic "Indian liberalism." After growing up without close ties to his family and tribal community, Apess first learned to articulate a sense of selfhood within the contexts of Methodism and its discourses of conversion. But when his preaching career brought him to the politically embattled Mashpee community, Apess shifted to "republican ideology and its liberal model of subjectivity, [which] enabled him to transform his religious consciousness from an inner-directed form of self-negation to an outer-directed form of self-assertion" (96). (Carlson is critical of previous Apess scholars who have read his Methodism as subversive or resistant. While he is certainly correct that missionary Christianity often served assimilationist political purposes, he seems unaware of a strong tradition of Christian Indian separatism in southern New England dating from the 1740s. Churches in this context served as crucial nodes for Indian political

organization and self-determination. After all, the tribe led by Apess held its constitutional convention in June 1833 at the Mashpee church.) In defense of the rights of the Mashpee community, Apess asserted an "Indian liberalism" that held that "to be an Indian was to be an individual American deprived of his natural rights of self-possession" (101). He developed what Carlson describes as a "new form of Indian rights talk" (70).

Charles Eastman also underwent a major shift in his conceptualization of Native political subjectivity, as Carlson demonstrates in readings of Eastman's autobiographies *Indian Boyhood* (1902) and *From the Deep Woods to Civilization* (1916). In his early autobiographical writings, Eastman adopted an "Indian-as-child" persona that portrayed "Native American identity [as] a stage in the progression from childhood to adulthood" (149). In so doing, he authorized paternalistic and assimilationist federal policies. But when Eastman became disenchanted with allotment policy and federal custodianship, he abandoned discourses of allotment, property rights, and wardship in favor of civil rights and citizenship. His later autobiographical writings render Indianness not as political immaturity but rather as an equivalent mode of political subjectivity essentially opposed to "pernicious aspects of modernity." This, explains Carlson, is "precisely the model embodied within the twentieth-century discourse of Indian civil rights" (164).

Other Native writers included in Carlson's analysis include Samson Occom (Mohegan), Ely S. Parker (Seneca), and Sarah Winnemucca (Paiute). Especially noteworthy is his conclusion, which offers brilliant if brief insights into the relationship between the Indian New Deal and landmark "ethnographic autobiographies" of the 1930s such as *Black Elk Speaks*.

By focusing almost entirely on male writers, *Sovereign Selves* does not address how gender determined Native political subjectivity in law and autobiography. Under customs of coverture transmitted from English common law to colonial and federal law, Native women were not recognized as legal agents or property owners, a fact with tremendous consequence especially in traditionally matrifocal communities. Nineteenth-century autobiographies by Mary Jemison (Seneca) and Sarah Winnemucca would indeed make more sense if they were understood as women's legal efforts to stake claims to disputed tracts of tribal territory. But inasmuch as he does not acknowledge the gender-specific contours of Native political subjectivity, Carlson's account of the relationship between law and Native autobiography is incomplete.

Still, this book makes a solid contribution to a growing body of scholarship focusing on Native American writing before 1900 and Native nonfiction in particular. Until ten years ago, most efforts in Native American literary studies focused on novels and poetry written after 1967. A conventional view of Native American literary history once held that contemporary Native literature emerged as a modernist/postmodernist rearticulation of oral tribal traditions. Centuries of individually and collectively authored Native nonfiction writings, such as autobiographies, ethnographies, histories, treaties, tribal constitutions, political pamphlets, and journalism were not often treated as literature. But a renewed focus on this long and powerful tradition of Native nonfiction has given us compelling advances in literary criticism such as

Maureen Konkle, *Writing Indian Nations: Native Intellectuals and the Politics of Historiography, 1827–1863* (2004) and Robert Warrior, *The People and the Word: Reading Native Nonfiction* (2005). Like Warrior and Konkle, Carlson proves early Native American literature to be a tradition profoundly bound up with the pressing questions affecting historic Native communities.

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To Intermix with Our White Brothers: Indian Mixed Bloods in the United States from Earliest Times to the Indian Removals. By Thomas N. Ingersoll. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005. 568 pages. $39.95 cloth.

Ingersoll's *To Intermix with Our White Brothers* is a thorough examination of the origins and early history of mixed bloods in the part of North America that became the United States. By carefully delineating the lives of individual mixed bloods, the author is able to argue persuasively two broad points: (1) the presence of a steadily growing mixed-blood population was an essential component in Euro-American thinking on "race" in the Early National Period; and (2) it was usually mixed-blood leaders—not full-blood leaders—who were the most aggressive in opposing the Indian Removal Act of 1830 (not to mention the most successful in securing the best possible treaties for their tribes, when they grudgingly came to accept that Andrew Jackson was serious about translating James Monroe's anti-Indian philosophy into military policy).

Although Ingersoll makes good use of primary sources (particularly records of the Office of Indian Affairs and the writings of notable mixed bloods), his book is not so much a monograph grounded in primary materials and research as it is a grand synthesis of secondary sources, including some interesting unpublished dissertations from the University of California, Davis and the University of California, Berkeley. But this should not turn off the potential reader. Indeed, his is not only a welcome overview of the historical literature on so-called mixed bloods, but also is a synthetic work deftly punctuated with piercing insights and long-overdue corrections. Especially welcome are his insights into how whites' fears of competent mixed-blood leadership helped spur on—and rationalize—racial formalism, and how racial formalism in turn informed Jackson's removal policy.

Ingersoll's book is divided into three main parts. The first half of part I is a basic overview of the relationship between metropolitan policy and colonial local policy, and he makes clear that the exclusionary rules emanating from the Old Régime (be it from Spain, France, England, or Russia) became colonial practice and law because the colonial elite—and those hoping to enter the colonial elite—did not want to lose Old World respectability. Hence, legal Christian marriages between whites and Indians could never become respectable because neither "good families" from the colonial core nor from the mother country could bring themselves to embrace mixed-blood families. The second half of part I examines the ways that individuals formed intimate