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Kiowa Military Societies: Ethnohistory and Ritual. By William C. Meadows.

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Spanish out of New Mexico for a time. By the end of the seventeenth-century, European colonizers in New England, Virginia, and New Mexico weathered fierce Native resistance. But, in the words of James Merrell, North America had become a “new world for all”—Native and European—as the distribution of power shifted away from Indian peoples irrevocably.

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**Kiowa Military Societies: Ethnohistory and Ritual.** By William C. Meadows. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010. 472 pages. \$75.00 cloth.

Anthropologist William Meadows's *Kiowa Military Societies: Ethnohistory and Ritual* is an ethnography of contemporary martial clubs among the Kiowa of Oklahoma. The term *military societies* describes a unique social institution rooted in warrior traditions of the Plains. As did the warriors of former times, the soldiers of today gather for social, ceremonial, and ritual purposes. The first comprehensive account of military societies in this tribe since Robert Lowie's *Societies of the Kiowa* (1916), Meadows's book is rich in new records of current practices associated with individual and group participation in pre- and post-warfare activities, and it further contributes to the ongoing reevaluation of past ethnographic knowledge. In explicit dialogue with other anthropologists who conducted research in the southern plains (such as Eric Lassiter and Thomas Kavanagh), Meadows offers a well-balanced, clearly argued, and methodologically solid account of the history and internal dynamics of Kiowa military societies, and their role in tribal life. Two dozen black-and-white pictures by the author complete the narrative. This comprehensive work adds to the growing body of anthropological knowledge about the social and ceremonial institutions of Plains Indians and the cultural renaissance of indigenous peoples.

Using an approachable style, *Kiowa Military Societies* systematically examines the long history of a social institution that played a paramount role in the redefinition of the Kiowa as a nation with a common past and a shared identity. In a significant move that recognizes the function of Kiowa women in the cultural preservation of the tribe, the book combines an account of Kiowa's nine military societies for men with an ample treatment of women's clubs. Current literature on Plains Indian women's societies and social life is scanty, and this chapter largely fills some gaps left by scholarly neglect. Hopefully more research will be carried out on similar women's organizations among other nations.

With historical depth and attention to detail, Meadows illustrates the customs, regalia, choreographies, and symbolism that characterizes each individual society, from young people's dances to gatherings of accomplished soldiers. Despite years of cultural suppression and the almost total decline of warrior societies before the mid-twentieth century, the descriptions of rituals owned by societies shows the level of cultural retention the Kiowa experience as a whole. The author describes how after World War II military clubs such as the Black Legs, the Unafraid of Death, and Omaha society, among others, had a role in Kiowa cultural renaissance. After this major conflict, some Kiowa individuals drew attention to old warrior customs that for many years were believed to have died out with the end of the Indian wars in the nineteenth century, as did others from Native nations in both the US and Canada. In accurate descriptions of the retrieval of songs and dances that elucidate the motivations and reasons for this upsurge in interest at this particular historical moment for the Kiowa, Meadows clarifies the historical processes and factors that revitalized moribund societies and offers a rationale for their reemergence and success.

As an exercise in comparative ethnography, this book builds on the author's former treatment of similar military sodalities among other southern tribes such as the Apache and Comanche, deepening some of the data previously published. From the detail-rich narration it is evident that Meadows's knowledge of Kiowa customs benefits from a trusting and established relationship with his informants. The author's long-standing involvement with the Kiowa tribe here blooms in a vivid, lucid, and at times emotionally charged account of the cultural significance of these clubs for the research participants he interviewed. Their voices emerge poignantly from the treatment of the most disparate issues. A multiplicity of views about such topics as origins of societies and perceived degrees of spirituality in dances reveal agreements and contradictions at the core of a culturally dynamic community. With determined objectivity, the author presents these contrasting voices to encourage the reader to see incongruities and gaps in shared community knowledge. This is a deliberate methodological, ethical, and theoretical choice, one that democratically allows every opinion to come to the fore while simultaneously making more general points about the inherent and inevitable contradictions that fuel all social processes. While not elaborated into a theoretical discussion, this approach offers the reader opportunities to appreciate the vitality and exuberance of contemporary Kiowa culture.

Relying on previously published and current anthropological data, Meadows's use of sources is judicious and balanced, juxtaposing oral history, personal memory, winter counts, and oral traditions. This body of evidence cumulatively constructs a multilayered image of military societies that further

strengthens our appreciation of the complex, competing, and often clashing frames of cultural reference that are triggered as individuals engage with particular practices, or use particular terms. As a result, this evidence invites us to consider the ever-changing notions around which the discourse of military societies articulates. The notion of tradition, for example, emerges as contingently rearticulated at every new Kiowa generation. A discussion of this process of renegotiation carries implications for a comparative interpretation of every social group that structures its cultural renaissance around this concept or other cognate terms. The paradoxical nature of tradition, at once volatile and yet pivotal, is here treated in its complexity to show the necessity for the continuous readjustments crucial for maintaining intergenerational continuity in knowledge transmission.

The ethnography includes much material in the Kiowa language, but the author tactfully presents only those texts that can be shared with outsiders. Songs, invocations, prayers, and terms that are translated into English give the reader a rounded understanding of concepts and ideas at the core of Kiowa ideologies. Etymological explanations help us evaluate the richness of particular concepts that become more easily grasped as the author contextualizes their contingent uses in practice. This linguistic emphasis crucially shows the importance of rooting any anthropological data in people's own words. What is more, the publication of these texts follows the desire of Kiowa elders to transmit this body of knowledge to younger generations with lesser Kiowa language proficiency. Both the research participants and the author have gathered the texts as a contribution to language preservation and a commitment to the continuation of Kiowa practices and beliefs.

Meadows importantly highlights the intimate relationship between Kiowa ritual and secular life. The elusive notion of spirituality permeates research participants' accounts and experiences, and the intertwining of religious, semi-religious, and martial meanings in military societies becomes apparent in the description of ritual items such as the Crow belt, or performances of the Gourd Dance. Indeed, the description of the overlap between spiritual and martial content in objects, ceremonies, and texts shows that one cannot fully appreciate Kiowa military societies if we limit our understanding of them as simply associations of soldiers or veterans with common experiences of war. Military societies' cultural significance lies precisely in the interstitial zone of interaction between religious and martial life in which meanings mutually reinforce each other in a constant game of references. Kiowa military societies' multiple engagements with Native American church or old tribal bundles epitomize the deeply religious significance associated with military societies that determines their gravitas and subsequent growing cultural relevance even among younger generations.

Military societies' role in maintaining ethnic and national identity forcefully comes forth as the engine that propels Kiowa society into a future in which local practices are in direct dialogue with larger contexts such as the US Army. This role has strong implications for the ongoing delicate relationship between tribal nations and federal government, one that in this case is predicated upon the language of patriotism in celebrations honoring veterans. Overall, Meadows has documented the sustained effort of indigenous nations to retain control over the practices that define their rights as sovereign cultural and political entities, as well as their commitment to producing much needed cultural commentary and interpretation in collaboration with anthropologists and ethnographers. In the process, the book demonstrates that ethnography, far from being a simple collection of data, can contribute to an informed evaluation of community processes, social cohesion, issues of identity, and cultural revitalization.

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**Muscogee Daughter: My Sojourn to the Miss America Pageant.** By Susan Supernaw. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010. 264 pages. \$24.95 cloth.

Born in 1950, Susan Supernaw came of age in the same period as Mary Crow Dog, whose autobiographical *Lakota Woman* (1990) became a nationally recognized treatise on the conflicts between Indian womanhood and motherhood in the 1960s and 1970s. The temporal setting of Supernaw's life story matches that of Crow Dog, but it runs on a parallel track. Clearly, *Muscogee Daughter: My Sojourn to the Miss America Pageant* is not an academic treatise on Muscogee culture, nor is it a personal effort to save that culture from oblivion, or a recounting of the personal embedded in the politics of Indian nationalism and political imagination. Rather, it incorporates discussions of how a woman of accomplishment and historical importance navigates the borderlands and intersections of race, gender, class, and spirituality. Supernaw experiences racism as a Native woman, but integrates a Native and Christian perspective to sort out her responses. She acknowledges, contests, and incorporates several visions of Indian, womanhood, family, spirituality, and history—all at the same moment.

Supernaw can be compared to other Creek and Muscogee writers who work at the cutting edge of new Native American literary critical paradigms,