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Indian Country: Essays on Contemporary Native Culture. By Gail Guthrie Valaskakis. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2005. 293 pages. \$28.95 paper.

The author was raised near the Lac du Flambeau reserve in Wisconsin. However, we can only surmise that while the author has Indian heritage (insider) she has not lived on the reservation and remains an outsider. She has been a longtime advocate for Indian people and a volunteer for numerous Aboriginal organizations over the years. Government and communities across the country have recognized her involvement in Native political struggles, which are so evident in Canadian and American societies, in a number of different ways. Thus she enters the fray with a provocative new book that seeks to provide a broader historical justification for understanding the lack of congruence between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals in a number of dimensions. Many others have told this history, but Valaskakis approaches the topic by intermixing personal experiences with social science research.

The author presents eight disparate, independent essays, each focusing on a specific expression or experience of contemporary Indian culture. The first essay focuses on the history of the Lac du Flambeau reserve, and the author reminisces about her connection to it, two generations later. She recounts the treaties and other steps taken by the federal government to dispossess and reduce Indian rights on the Lac du Flambeau reserve. The second essay provides an analysis of the media when it comes to informing the public about Indians. Most of this essay addresses how the Canadian media dealt with and portrayed the Kahnawake uprising (Oka) in Quebec, Canada during the 1990s. In addition, she discusses how the media portrayed the American Indian Movement (AIM) and other Red Power organizations. Her goal is to demonstrate how institutions have promoted stereotypes, appropriated Indian symbols, and impacted Indian identity, ownership, and sense of community.

“Postcards of my Past” looks at how the media portrays Native Americans. Valaskakis attempts to illustrate how the media and other institutions, such as museums, transfer Indian reality into non-Indian social imagery. “Claiming Land in Native America” focuses on the acquisition of Indian lands through a complex process of coercion, settlement, conflict, disease, and the politics of treaties. Unfortunately, the reader is not presented with a systematic and orderly discussion of the impact of each of these factors. This essay deals with sacred places, journeys (migration of Indian people), names, politicizing stories, colonial texts, and photos of Indians by Euro-Americans. While there may well be a thread that could tie these seemingly disparate topics together, the author fails to weave the individual threads into a single fabric.

“Sacajawea and Her Sisters” is perhaps the most coherent and focused essay. Its theme is on the visual image of Indian women in North American culture (Pocahontas is the paragon of Indian princess) and confirms that the concept of “Indian Princess” has deep roots in American culture. Yet, there is tension in such depictions, and in the end the underlying racism toward Indians overrides the “princess” depiction of Indian people.

“Dance Me Inside” focuses on powwows. The author begins with an analysis of what a powwow is and the role it plays in Indian identity, sense of community, and linkage with the land. This essay links the personal narrative and the recent social science research on powwows. It weaves the two perspectives into a readable, coherent, and enlightening chapter. Drumming the past or researching Indian objects is the topic for the next essay. The author rejects the “objectification” of Indians and the commodification of their artifacts. She offers a scathing attack on Curtis’s depiction of Indian people through photographs, but then notes that she consults old photos to confirm personal aspects of her family and community. In short, she is able to find fragments of Indian past to reconstruct her past. While social scientists employ this craft as they carry out their research, the author wishes to supplement this strategy with narrative. The essay also focuses on a personal narrative about a Chippewa water drum owned by the author’s father and a more general discussion with regard to the role of drums in Indian culture. It reveals the conflict between the author and her family as to the meaning of a drum and the disposition of the “family” drum. Overall, the essay provides an excellent summary with regard to the role of drums, their powers, and their place in public institutions (for example, museums).

The last essay deals with the conflicts of identity and recognition, the negotiation of identities, and the social and political significance of membership. Defining who is an insider or outsider has taken many forms throughout history. However, today the issue of who is an Indian has taken on heightened significance in the legal, financial, and political spheres of Indian communities. The author contributes to this debate and discusses the criteria now being used for determining membership as well as the consequences for using criteria such as “blood quantum.” The author needs to comment on the Canadian and Australian strategy for determining membership as possible alternatives to the American model and thus add to the dialogue from a comparative perspective.

The concern I have with the book is that the author mixes narrative with “social science” and then sprinkles numerous quotes from other sources (for example, Indian leaders, elders, and scholars) to support her argument and/or conclusion. However, the introduction of social science and “facts” confuses the narrative and the author loses her voice. Rarely did I disagree with Valaskakis’s interpretations and conclusions, but at the same time I wondered what they were based on. Was this new data, her voice, new interpretations of old data, or some combination? Moreover, the topics in each of the essays are unfocused, unorganized, and overlapping. In addition, much of the material presented presumes that the reader is aware of events and people. She talks about Oka, Gustafsen Lake, Russell Means, Nelson Small Legs, and Sandra Lovelace as though the reader is familiar with the people and the issues underlying these places as well as the context in which they are used. Unfortunately, this may not be the case, and the nonspecialist reader probably has little understanding of the relevance of the issues or the people. There also is a plethora of work published on the issues she deals with, yet recent books such as R. Thatcher’s *Fighting Firewater Fictions*, G. Reid’s

Kahnawaike, and J. R. Miller's *Lethal Legacy* are absent from the bibliography and their ideas and data are conspicuously absent from the content of the book. In other cases where she talks about the role and function of treaties, she fails to show the evolution of Native–newcomer relations and the successive phases of that relationship. How is it that initial dealings were generally in the commercial realm and the interactions, more or less, were cooperative and mutually beneficial? How is it that these interactions evolved into an adversarial, conflict relationship?

The content of the book mirrors the content of several articles the author published over the past fifteen years, which may explain the lack of currency in some of the material. The volume succeeds as a source of information about inequality between Indians and non-Indians. However, repetitiveness, lack of organization, and disjuncture between personal narrative and social science confuses many of the issues she raises. The material allows the book to be read as a narrative and is a compelling if ultimately tragic tale. It is the narrative that captures and conveys the tensions between Indians and non-Indians and between continuity and change that are central to the development of any community and the identity of its residents. At the same time, some of the essays are excellent and would make fine additions to course packs for undergraduate courses. To sum up, I view the contribution of *Indian Country* with ambivalence. There are many strengths in the essays but the repetitiveness, disorganization, and lack of focus seriously detract from the author's goal.

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“Indian” Stereotypes in TV Science Fiction: First Nations’ Voices Speak Out.
By Sierra S. Adare. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005. 160 pages. \$45.00 cloth; \$19.95 paper.

Sierra S. Adare has focused on a unique genre of pop culture and creates an illuminating ethnography that both anthropologists and Hollywood professionals should read. Although the issue of stereotypes of Natives has been a common theme in recent publications, this book addresses the issue of First Nations in science fiction television. Her research points out how Hollywood has taken the creatively open world of the science fiction genre and manipulated it into the same old stereotypes that Natives have fought against for years.

In May and June of 2001, the author showed specific episodes from *My Favorite Martian* (1965), *Star Trek* (1968), *Star Trek: Voyager* (1995), *Quantum Leap* (1990), *The Adventures of Superman* (1954), and *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (1994) to an audience of Natives, and observed their physical and emotional reactions. Her ethnographic group was comprised of a group of Shoshone students ranging from age eighteen to forty-six with a gender difference of seven men and three women. Forty percent of the class considered themselves to be science fiction fans. Using a questionnaire, the author asked open-ended questions such as, “What did you like and/or dislike about this