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Although some might question the publication of this detailed account of the Little Water Medicine Society, there is no doubt about its authenticity and the fact that the text exists because legitimate owners of the Society's knowledge freely shared the material with Fenton. Seneca Little Water Medicine Society members went to great pains to communicate and record exhaustive accounts of the Society's origins, songs, and ritual practices. Even once-hostile Seneca accepted Fenton's recordings. John Jimerson, Fenton writes, "having first spoken against my research in the longhouse, ultimately accepted me as a pupil and proved himself an excellent teacher" (p. xiii). Other publications record some documentation about the Society, and Seneca-endorsed manuscript accounts of its rituals and songs exist in the Library of Congress and the Fenton papers at the American Philosophical Society. It's also true that, thorough as the text is, it cannot possibly empower non-Iroquoians to appropriate the ritual. Only the Seneca can have the relationships with those cosmic persons who are honored and renewed in the Society's work. And only the Seneca and other Iroquoian speakers have access to the musical language that empowers, translates, and applies the medicine. Nonetheless, many will wish that Fenton had more carefully and candidly engaged the ethical issues that he himself brings to light.

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**"Mixed Blood" Indians: Racial Reconstruction in the Early South.** By Theda Purdue. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2002. 160 pages. \$24.95 cloth.

So strong has the association of authenticity with color in Indian country become, that there has been a responsive movement of "mixed blood" scholars such as W. S. Penn, Craig Womack, Louise Erdrich, and that venerable elder of Native American literature, Gerald Vizenor. Mixed-blood writing embraces recognition of multiple ancestries in the construction of modern-day Indian identities, and challenges the tendency to essentialize the vast tapestry of contemporary Native American experience into an equation of white and Indian.

As a student of the Native nations of the Southeast, Theda Purdue explores this problem from the other end of the historical telescope. In her latest book, *"Mixed Blood" Indians*, she contends that color and "race" were largely irrelevant in the politics and social life of the Choctaws, Chickasaws, Cherokees, and other Native peoples of the Old South, even during the Removal era.

Purdue focuses on two points that should not surprise Native American scholars, although they seem to have eluded historians generally. Matrilineal Southeastern peoples tended to be more concerned with a person's social class (or lineage) and merit than with their color. Within this cultural framework, non-Native women were easily absorbed into tribal communities, and the descendants of mixed-"race" unions suffered no impediments to achieving rank and influence with the help of their matrilineal clans. Indeed, people of mixed "race" were usually found on both sides of major internal

political struggles. To put it differently, color was not a predictor of cultural orientation, religious beliefs, or political allegiances. Mixed bloods could be found among cultural fundamentalists and revolutionaries, the most vehement critics of any truce with Europeans, and Europeans' staunchest friends. They died fighting Europeans, and fighting alongside Europeans.

At the same time, Purdue acknowledges that mixed bloods enjoyed a certain edge in their pursuit of leadership. They were more likely to speak European languages and to have some experience with European social conventions. However, this advantage did not necessarily dispose them fondly towards "whites"; on the contrary, it might have given them more negative opinions of European civilization. Hence, although mixed-"race" Indians might have suffered no social disadvantage because of their color, and found themselves divided by the same intellectual and moral issues as their full-blood relatives, they tended to gravitate to key positions in trade and diplomacy. This type of power, visibly associated with whiteness or lightness, presumably enhanced the salience of color within Native American societies as they grew more reliant on European trade and more embroiled in European wars. Mixed bloods gained power as a visible, *potential* racial category that was visibly associated with privilege—despite the fact that they were also bitterly divided among themselves in their opinions of "whites." Purdue presents evidence of the increasing value of lightness in Native societies, but avoids drawing the conclusion that it had already become an implicit racial category by the late eighteenth century.

She concedes that mixed bloods "usually were in the forefront of change" (p. 66) as Native nations became more agricultural and authoritarian through their increasing economic and intellectual engagement with Euro-Americans. However, Purdue argues that the use of the term "half-breed" by Indians was an observation about culture rather than color (p. 90). I suspect that as Native people were exposed more to Europeans prejudices, and felt increasingly threatened by change, there was a growing tendency to think of whiteness as a disease transmitted by white blood. This argument is often heard in Indian country today.

Nonetheless, Purdue tries to persuade us that the eventual racialization of Indian society resulted chiefly from the land struggle that ended in the Removal. U.S. leaders blamed mixed bloods for Native nations' resistance to assimilation because they could not bring themselves to believe that "pure" Indians were capable of such political will or intelligence. Purdue implies that this external accusation triggered Indian racism. She also argues that equating culture with blood, and becoming preoccupied with "blood quantum," was the work of Indian agents (p. 98), rather than being driven (at least to a large extent) by internal processes of social change.

To strengthen her case that the racialization of southeastern Indian societies was a function of Removal politics, Purdue commits the serious historiographic error of treating color racism as largely absent in European society until the nineteenth century. She even states that mixed-"race" marriages were socially accepted prior to the American Revolution (p. 80), failing to mention the stark evidence of colonial anti-miscegenation legislation, most of which applied equally to Africans and Indians.

It is also regrettable that Purdue devotes relatively little attention to the red-black dimension. After noting in her first essay that Southeastern Indians gradually reassigned Africans from the category of marriageable immigrants to chattels, she focuses strictly on red-white connections. This weakens the broad theoretical point she strives to make, that is, that aboriginal Southeastern cultures were largely colorblind. Rather, one might assert (based on Purdue's evidence) that Southeastern Native peoples were *very* conscious of color, if that color was *black*—at least by the eighteenth century.

Since there was a great increase in slaveholding among Southeastern Indians in the wake of agrarian development (p. 65), there almost certainly was also an increase in red-black children, as has been documented among white slaveowners. What became of them and their descendants? In New England, red-black families identified with both communities until the Civil War, but tended to assert an exclusively Indian identity after 1910, as Indians were romanticized and African Americans increasingly shunned in northern cities. In the Pacific Northwest, Indians mixed freely with Asians and Pacific Islanders during the nineteenth century, but strenuously denied their ties later as they became more sensitized to the prejudices of their Euro-American neighbors—especially after the virulent anti-Chinese riots of the late nineteenth century and Japanese internment in the twentieth century. It is a pity Purdue did not extend her study to the Jim Crow era in Oklahoma to address the construction of Indian racism within a broader historical context.

The author's tendency to overstate the case for colorblindness in Southeastern Native societies is evidently a response to what she perceives is a tendency of other historians to dwell on the racism of the aboriginal South. Unfortunately, she does not disclose her motive until the last few pages of the book, after the reader has been wondering why she has assiduously been avoiding references to any contrary evidence or opinions. It would have been better to review the scholarly literature critically at the outset and note where she thinks her colleagues are in error—and I agree with Purdue that they have erred on the side of too freely imputing European prejudices to Native peoples.

Nevertheless, this is a lucid, substantive, and sensible book. In a time when many critics and government bureaucrats protest that Indians "look like everyone else" (that is to say, "white"), Native scholars and tribal leaders need to consider how little color mattered to their ancestors, and how far tribal discourse has strayed from issues of the heart rather than the skin.

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**Native American Worldviews: An Introduction.** By Jerry H. Gill. Amherst, New York: Humanity Books, 2002. 293 pages. \$25.00 paper.

Jerry Gill is a professor emeritus of philosophy and religious studies at the College of Saint Rose in Albany, New York. Although he has written sixteen books and more than one hundred articles on philosophy and religion, this is