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unpacks the historical background of the Seminole Nation's controversial effort to detach two African American Freedman communities from its political body. With part humorous sarcasm and part biting criticism, she chastises scholars and journalists who fail to acknowledge the intricacies of indigenous political history, calling for the recognition of true indigenous sovereignty in questions of membership. Andrew H. Fisher's *Shadow Tribe: The Making of Columbia River Indian Identity* (2010) describes a strikingly similar history of political struggle in the Northwest. These types of cases further bolster Miller's and Riding In's argument that an indigenous historiography provides a vital tool for illuminating contemporary settings.

Overall, this anthology convincingly achieves its goals. Though its voices are many and its topics diverse, the book as a whole resonates with a unified purpose. The use of indigenous perspectives and methodology in exploring the past serves to construct a new historiography. Throughout the text, the authors consistently contribute to that effort to reexamine the past while also drawing clear connecting lines to the present. The writing styles of the various contributors vary, but they all share in common a noticeable passion for their work and a fierce scrutiny of colonial pressures on indigenous people both past and present. The lack of a unifying conclusion represents the only disappointment—and a small one at that. In the end, the collection speaks for itself, and represents an essential text not only for students of American history and American Indian studies, but any reader interested in the greater discourse surrounding colonial and postcolonial literature.

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**Navajo Talking Picture: Cinema on Native Ground.** By Randolph Lewis. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012. 248 pages. \$30.00 paper.

From the opening moments it's clear that *Navajo Talking Picture* is no ordinary documentary film: less than two minutes from the start, director Arlene Bowman (Navajo) announces in her voiceover narration that when she set out to make a documentary about her grandmother, she mistakenly assumed that the older woman would want to be filmed. The director then admits, although Diné herself, she "didn't know enough about the Navajos" to make the film she planned. Thus begins the puzzling trajectory of Bowman's film: a trajectory within which the filmmaker appears to make one misstep after another as she violates her grandmother's privacy, exhibits little or no sensitivity for Navajo tradition or reservation life, and ignores the wishes of her film's unwilling

subject. From these efforts, Bowman delivers to the screen a work that *seems* to illustrate precisely what a documentary filmmaker should not do, ethically, behaviorally, or culturally, when making a film.

In his book *Navajo Talking Picture: Cinema on Native Ground*, film scholar Randolph Lewis examines Bowman's quixotic forty-minute documentary to reassess its merit, meaning, and significance within indigenous cinema and the field of documentary filmmaking. Over seven chapters, he surveys the film from a number of vantage points, ranging from a study of Bowman's intent in making her film, to a discussion of the ethical quandary the filmmaker entered while doing so. As Lewis explains, Bowman was awkwardly positioned with regard to the making of her film; as an urban Navajo enrolled in an MFA filmmaking program in Los Angeles she was removed from reservation life, did not speak Navajo, and belongs, the author contends, to a generation that does not have a strong sense of connection to their Native heritage (49). By filming the day-to-day life of her maternal grandmother Ann Ruth Biah, Bowman sought to reconnect with her roots, but her effort was not welcomed on the reservation. Lewis reports, Bowman's family "heard the word 'filmmaker' and assumed she was making a glitzy Hollywood feature, no matter how many times she explained the modest realities of nonfiction filmmaking" (52). In the finished film, the cultural, generational, and linguistic divide that separates Bowman from her grandmother is fully visible when, to the dismay of viewers, Bowman and her crew appear to accost Biah with their film equipment. By reading the English-language subtitles that were added to the film in the editing room, viewers can see that the old woman repeatedly protests against her granddaughter's filming activities as they are in process, but Bowman, unable to speak Navajo, does not understand what her grandmother is saying and continues filming undeterred.

Lewis describes Bowman's film as a "forty-minute wound of sorts," one that "invites us to wince in appreciation of its awkward honesty" (87). But he contends, *Navajo Talking Picture* cannot be dismissed as simply a failed work by an inexperienced director who, when making her first film, naively veered into questionable ethical territory. Instead, he argues that the film has enduring importance for rupturing our "expectations of what should happen when an Indian points the camera" as they go about creating their "own idiosyncratic vision of Native life" (121). He proposes that the discomfort a viewer may feel when watching the film reveals as much about that viewer's own preconception of documentary filmmaking and the kind of onscreen images they expect to see of Native subjects, as it reveals about any failings on the part of the filmmaker. Indeed, as any attentive viewer of the film can clearly see, by the end of her project Bowman is far more conscious of what she is doing than some critics of her film have been willing to recognize. In one of his most

incisive arguments, Lewis proposes that in making her film, Bowman, either consciously or intuitively, has rejected the notion of an essential indigenous film aesthetic (139), and has instead delivered a film that draws our attention to the invasive nature of documentary filmmaking as a practice. He argues the filmmaker deliberately depicted onscreen “how indigenous filmmakers might acquire the worst habits of the West—objectification, aggression, insensitivity—each one a common by-product of an insatiable desire to record and classify the world in ways that often rub against human decency” (122).

Taking this argument one step further, Lewis cautiously fields the proposition that through the actions of her onscreen persona, the filmmaker has set out to defy our expectations of what a Native artist should do, or how they should behave, when making a film. He argues the Bowman we see onscreen disrupts the primitivist notion that indigenous filmmakers are automatically equipped to deliver essential insights into their heritage or traditions, or that they must apply their creative artistry to this purpose at all. Onscreen, Bowman is purposefully “not calm, quiet, domestic, traditional; she is not interested in mystical experience or ecological reveries. Instead, she is pushy and persistent, urban and neurotic, stylish and technological” (101). Surveying *Navajo Talking Picture* from the varied vantage points he’s developed, Lewis provides the reader with plenty to contemplate in regard to Bowman’s film. While Lewis is ultimately unable to answer whether Bowman is “in control of the rich textual meanings her film produces,” or whether she simply stumbled “backwards into a provocative film” (97), he effectively maps out an array of interpretations for *Navajo Talking Picture*; in the process he clearly affirms that this film is worthy of serious critical attention.

Engagingly written overall and therefore generally accessible for both scholarly and non-scholarly readers, there are sections of Lewis’s book where its readability could have been improved by thorough editing and a more dynamic organization of the themes addressed. Lewis could also have done more to place the film he discusses in an historical context, regarding its circulation, reception, and the critical responses it garnered. When *Navajo Talking Picture* was released in the 1980s, discussions of the politics of representation and identity were dominant in cinema and media arts journals, and films addressing these themes were a staple on the art and film festival circuit. In light of this, it’s odd that in place of a decisive portrait of how the film was received at the time of its release, the author delivers only quite general comments about the circulation of images of indigenous peoples and an anecdotal report of how some of his own students have responded to the film when viewing it recently.

Also oddly absent from Lewis’s book is Bowman herself. This absence may have been unavoidable since, as Lewis informs readers in the chapter exploring the filmmaker’s intent in making her film, the author did not find Bowman

forthcoming in answering his questions. Lewis writes, “In keeping with the tricky persona she performs in the film, Bowman is often cagey in response to academic questions” (98). But Bowman’s silence aside, it is puzzling that the viewpoints and remembrances of Bowman’s peers and filmmaking collaborators, of the festival programmers and exhibit curators who screened *Navajo Talking Picture*, and of the scholars, activists, and community members who were present for post-screening discussions of the film, are not recorded in Lewis’s study.

*Navajo Talking Picture: Cinema on Native Ground* is the second in a planned series of titles edited by Lewis and David Delgado Shorter, under the banner of the Indigenous Films book series. Shorter proposes that a goal of the series is to challenge the “Eurocentricism that often afflicts the study of cinema, and to initiate conversations about the promises and challenges of indigenous media now emerging around the globe” (xv). This goal is well serviced by Lewis’s study of *Navajo Talking Picture*. Reflecting on why he is drawn to the film, Lewis writes, it “reminds me how the cinema can burn people, leaving them puzzled, dismayed, and productively confused. Maybe this is what draws me to it—at its core it is some kind of anti-cinema that gets the passions flowing” (87). Over the course of his study, Lewis ably illustrates that there is something very special about Bowman’s *Navajo Talking Picture*. Whether a failure on terms that Bowman herself did not appreciate, an accidental or calculated exposé of the fragile ethics of documentary filmmaking, or a performative critique of the expectations placed on indigenous artists and their creative work, *Navajo Talking Picture* is a compelling artifact, and one well deserving of the thoughtful analysis Lewis delivers.

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**Once Were Pacific: Maori Connections to Oceania.** By Alice Te Punga Somerville. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012. 288 pages. \$67.50 cloth; \$22.50 paper.

Accounts that decenter colonial originary narratives can be uncomfortable for those of us brought up on colonized lands, and there is a disquiet in *Once Were Pacific* that feels something like when a neglected cousin walks into a crowded party. How did we become so distant? What do we say when there have been such profound gaps in spite of many best intentions?

An unsettling feeling, on so many levels—and this, I think, may be one of the deepest contributions of Alice Te Punga Somerville’s book. It will challenge