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**American Indians and the American Imaginary: Cultural Representation across the Centuries.** By Pauline Turner Strong. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2012. 272 pages. \$112.00 cloth; \$25.46 paper.

From the earliest colonial encounters to the present, American culture has been profoundly shaped by representations of Indians that marginalize and essentialize Native Americans. For some non-Natives this legacy has produced feelings of attachment and ownership to particular representations of Indians, in particular those associated with youth scouting organizations, sports mascots, the film industry, and museums. In turn, Native Americans have had to deal with profound social, cultural, political, and economic fallout from this legacy. As Pauline Turner Strong argues in *American Indians and the American Imaginary*, issues of representation are connected not only to the construction of a national American identity, but also to contemporary issues of tribal sovereignty and the maintainance of Native cultures. Considering a broad range of issues prominent in the field of Native American studies, this book proves a valuable addition to other cultural and historical works concerning representations of Indians, including those by Philip Deloria, Shari Huhndorf, and Robert Berkhofer.

The “American imaginary” of the book’s title refers to a selective American tradition that constructs a national subjectivity that excludes indigenous peoples. This is effected by means of tropes that cluster around key terms such as *tribe*, *discovery*, and *Indian blood*, all of which reinforce the hierarchical national imaginary that is itself ordered by concepts such as “civilization” and “savagery.” Strong considers how these tropes function within various sites of representation—including court cases, school curricula, expositions, museum displays, and indigenous art and literature—and support Euro-American hegemony in the United States.

The book is divided into five overall thematic sections that offer a combination of textual analysis of popular culture and literature, historical analysis, intellectual history, and auto-ethnography. Strong’s “ethnography of representational practices” considers representations as “significant parts of power-laden social and cultural processes” to analyze the ways in which American culture usurps and deploys American Indian identities in constructing a settler society (1). At times, the mixture of topics seems loosely connected, and a more developed introduction with some further theoretical analysis connecting the issues would have strengthened the book.

Three chapters trace the politics of representation, starting from the beginnings of the complex legal relationship between the United States and Indian tribes in key Supreme Court decisions in the 1830s, and continuing through the literary works of Kiowa author N. Scott Momaday in the 1960s and Anishinaabe author Gerald Vizenor in the 1990s. In a brief review of American Indian political sovereignty, Strong underlines how it developed concurrently with the rise of the American republic and its ambiguous nature, touching on the development of complex and overlapping national identities among contemporary Native Americans. Her discussion of how the Columbian quincennial was observed in various sites of representation—expositions mounted in Seville, Spain, and Columbus, Ohio, as well as an exhibition at the United States National Museum of Natural History—looks at the ways in which the historical paradigms of discovery, encounter, and conquest were deployed to obscure violence and romanticize conquest.

In another section, Strong looks at the literary tradition of captivity narratives and historical development of an American “culture of captivity,” one that influences a contemporary genre of captivity narratives and speaks to the reasons behind the passage of the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978. Centering on Mary Rowlandson’s captivity narrative and Sherman Alexie’s *Indian Killer*, Strong effectively contrasts the typing of the Indian in Euro-American captivity narratives as a “captivating Other” with the keenly humanistic portrayal of loss and pain that was experienced by Native Americans who were estranged from their families by adoption and boarding school educations. An especially interesting chapter links historical American representations of captivity to more current representations appearing with the invasion of Iraq, focusing on the staged rescue of Private Jessica Lynch in 2003 and the release of the infamous Abu Ghraib torture photos in 2004.

Strong attends to specific cultural traditions of the early nineteenth through the twentieth centuries in which Euro-Americans “played Indian,” dressing up as Indian characters or identifying with them as a performance of collective national identity. Relying on auto-ethnography, she looks at the ways American youth organizations and summer camps have adapted the practices of “playing Indian” over the century. She also provides the dubious suggestion that there are possibilities for “unlearning” how to play Indian in the children’s films *The Indian in the Cupboard* and Disney’s *Pocahontas*. Discussing the well-trodden issue of Indian mascots, the author convincingly argues that analyzing the issue through the lens of cultural citizenship links it to broader representational practices that subordinate Native Americans, redefining what is at stake and changing the dynamics of the debate. Finally, although she focuses largely on how representational practices work to establish and maintain colonialist dominance, Strong devotes some space to what

she calls “oppositional representations,” mostly by Native agents, that seek to undermine colonialist power structures. This includes a succinct review of indigenous research methodologies and discussions of art, museum installations, literature, and mascot parodies by Natives. Her examination of the National Museum of the American Indian would be enriched by engagement with literature that presents more complex and nuanced views on these efforts, such as *The National Museum of the American Indian: Critical Conversations* by Amy Lonetree and Amanda Cobb-Greetham (2008).

For readers of the growing literature on race and representation of Native Americans, there are few conceptual surprises here. But Strong offers an engaging and readable synthesis and intriguing examples of the ways that racist representations of Indians underscore white American identity. The sections that are more historically driven would be useful for those readers with little or no knowledge of the history of Native political sovereignty, captivity narratives, and issues related to ethnography in Native communities. She opens with a concise survey of the scholarship on representations of Native Americans and each chapter includes an instructive “Bibliographic Note” at the end, which undoubtedly would be useful to undergraduate students or readers new to the topics. Overall, it is a useful and accessible addition to the literature on Native American representations. *American Indians and the American Imaginary* raises important and timely questions and readily lends itself to an undergraduate course in the interdisciplinary fields of cultural studies, visual studies, Native American studies, and ethnic studies.

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**Apache 8** (documentary film). By Sande Zeig. Lincoln: VisionMaker (Native American Public Telecommunications, Inc.), 2011. 56 minutes.

Imagine a large firefighting camp out West in the mid-1970s. The place is thronged with an avalanche of firefighters. They come from all over and every single one is a man. Suddenly, a line of women firefighters materializes out of nowhere, filing into their midst. All heads turn in shock.

This is just one of the stories told in Sandy Zeig’s documentary *Apache 8*, which celebrates the crack all-female firefighting unit from the Fort Apache Reservation. The unit, initially called Apache 6, was the brainstorm of a man (unidentified in the film) who notes that Apache women seemed more dependable than the men. Eventually the unit fell under the leadership of Cheryl Bones, who shaped them into a disciplined force that won national