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rounding accusations of witchcraft can be attributed to the tension of Diné society and the gap between rich and poor will be of interest to those studying Navajo social relationships in any era. His analysis of the weave of relationships within Navajo and non-Indian societies and between those groups is skillfully done and will shed light on such relationships in other regions during the late nineteenth century. More importantly, he has succeeded in showing us that the early reservation period should be considered a very dynamic and even partially optimistic period of American Indian history, at least in the Navajo case. Instead of "vanishing," the Diné took advantage of military fears of conflict and the traders' sympathy to advance their own condition and lay the groundwork for the Navajo Nation of the next century.

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Dancing on Common Ground: Tribal Cultures and Alliances on the Southern Plains. By Howard Meredith. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995. 218 pages. \$29.95 cloth.

This brief work purports to address the response of Southern Plains tribes to events so dramatic that "intertribal and international systems [and] self-organizing patterns of existence no longer functioned within natural norms" (pp. 1–2). The solution to this state of affairs, says Meredith, rests with the tribes' ability to revivify traditional institutional values. "The vigor and resilience of native genius," he concludes, will produce the self-respect and confidence that tribes must have to face the future (p. 168).

The central metaphor for understanding this response is dance, which Meredith says is a window for observing the deep and fundamental differences between native and Anglo worlds. Chiefly this amounts to a dichotomy explaining Western cultural patterns as adversarial—based on the metaphor of war and of "winning at all costs" (p. 3). The other side of the dichotomy explains that Southern Plains tribes prefer "harmonious and aesthetically pleasing" patterns in which participants are perceived as "performers" for whom argument and force are less divisive, even unimportant (p. 3). By examining such topics as commerce, religion, peacemaking, reservations, and self-determination, Meredith proposes to

demonstrate that native people, by embracing the metaphorical qualities of dance as a basis for new cultural foundations, have defused the cataclysmic distortions that disrupted their lives.

This is all well and good, but little of what Meredith says supports his thesis, which is deeply flawed both by its oversimplified assumptions about Indian and white worldviews and by a simplistic analysis of the examples illustrating those worldviews. Let us agree that it is critically important to acknowledge the cultural differences between native and Anglo worlds; at the same time, however, we must not reduce such differences to the largely meaningless proposition that whites are generally bad, Indians are generally good, and native systems are, by definition, superior. By embracing the long worn-out position that Anglo culture is best typified by the metaphor of war and that Indian culture is based on harmony and respect for Mother Earth, and that the two cultures share no common ground, Meredith not only simplifies the issues, he distorts them, content to bash away at the idols that most ethnohistorians have long since put to bed.

Several examples illustrate the book's weaknesses. The narrative is cluttered with passages that obscure as much as they reveal. When Meredith writes that "the tribal peoples, each in their own manner, transfigured matter through wonder within self-organizing systems. This aesthetic perception enhanced the given beyond itself within a cosmic arrangement" (p. 7), I am not sure what he means. Meredith comments that "Apache association between direct achievement and economic growth should be understood in the context of sequential phases and in the distinction between values and norms" (p. 102) and that "[t]he higher degrees of freedom allowing the discernment in value orientation were no longer present because there were no implications of any utilitarian reward" (p. 106). What do these statements mean? Of the quest for self-determination, he writes, "The adversarial nature of U.S. governmental institutions and legal systems operated on the principle of contradiction and imposed a rigid falsity on perception in the search for a constructed certainty" (p. 126). What is "a rigid falsity on perception in the search for a constructed certainty"?

Unwieldy prose is joined by debatable descriptions and errors of fact. A reference to Sun Dance songs as "chants" (p. 91) is ethnographically trite, while the statement that "the secularization of a tribal society involves the devitalization of that society" (p. 156) dismisses the possibility that secularization does not

necessarily equal disintegration. Despite the fact that many contemporary powwows, for example, are secularized events, they retain a vitality that is impossible to miss. Careless errors also mar the book. The Aunko Calendar is incorrectly identified as the "Onuko Calendar." Kiowa painter James Auchiah is identified in both the text and the index as "James Auchian" (pp. 113, 213). And the Fort Marion prisoners were not "held for years" (p. 93) but were in fact released in 1878 after less than three years of confinement.

Most troubling is Meredith's handling of historical and metaphorical matters. To remind readers of just how vile whites are, the book goes to great lengths to juxtapose what Meredith considers utterly stupid Anglo policies against enlightened Indian norms. Readers should be immediately alarmed by a tendency to reduce monumentally complex cultural issues to very truncated treatments. Chapters are too brief, averaging only ten to fourteen pages. Discussion tends to rest largely on standard secondary sources, with numerous references to presentations from Meredith's courses at the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma. And the text refers only passingly to the metaphor of dance.

To take one notable example, Meredith's treatment of Southern Plains religion rests in part on a badly simplified description of the Kiowa Sun Dance. The discussion is taken from the usual secondary sources and fails to contribute anything that substantively improves our understanding of the Sun Dance's role amid changing Kiowa cultural mores. Meredith apparently did not consult either William Meadow's recent thesis and dissertation on Kiowa and Southern Plains military societies and dances, Jerrold Levy's work on Kiowa culture, or Benjamin Kracht's massive dissertation and several essays on Kiowa dance, which appeared prior to the publication of this book. Emphasizing the role of harmony and order in Kiowa society, Meredith downplays the often ribald and licentious behavior that occurred as a matter of course in the Sun Dance camps, and in Kiowa life generally. Focusing on the consensus that he says was at the heart of Kiowa culture, he also fails to discuss the tribe's hierarchical social ranks and warrior societies in which status and the accumulation of material wealth were normative aspects.

Meredith names five Kiowa dance societies yet does not discuss their role in the Sun Dance or their role historically among the Kiowa. This is especially curious given the book's emphasis on dance as a metaphor. The Gourd Dance and the Black Legs

societies, for example, have played central roles in contemporary tribal life and have also been at the center of tribal disputes, but, beyond the briefest description, in a later chapter, of the Gourd Dance's revival, there is no useful discussion of such matters.

It is also unfortunate that a chapter on religion in a book about change and adaptation makes virtually no mention of Christianity other than to denigrate missionaries. Like it or not, Christianity became a dominant religious force in most Indian communities by the twentieth century. Yet it did so because Indians found a middle ground between traditional practices and new demands, a fact made unmistakably clear by the Native American Church (or by a visit to any Kiowa burial ground).

Similar complaints can be made about other chapters. The essay on commerce would benefit from a comparison to Willard Rollings's recent work on Osage diplomacy and trade, which demonstrates with much greater clarity and precision the character of Indian-Anglo relationships. The chapter on reservations trots out the usual charges of gross negligence and oppression, thus neatly ignoring the much more complicated arrangements that prevailed in most places across the West. Frederick Hoxie, Catherine Price, Richard White, and James Merrell, among others, have produced important reinterpretations of power relationships in reservation communities, yet Meredith insists that "the Indian peoples were forced to accept the rules made for their sake by Anglo-American officials and were no longer allowed to influence the institutions that directly affected their lives" (p. 99). This is simply not true.

Using boarding schools as examples of such coercion, Meredith completely ignores a growing body of literature that directly contradicts his argument. Michael Coleman, Devon Mihesuah, David Adams, Sally McBeth, Tsianina Lomawaima, and I have written about reservation-era education, with conclusions that refute the monolithic, old-school view of Indian schools as prisons in which children had no control and from which there was no escape. Were reservations and schools oppressive? Certainly. Were Indians crushed and pilloried to the extent that they "were no longer allowed to influence the institutions that directly affected their lives"? No. A look at Quanah Parker, Delos Lone Wolf, or Mildred Cleghorn should be enough to convince us that Meredith's argument is too narrow.

The book's chapters on self-determination, self-sufficiency, and policy reform are similarly general and do not improve on the

more precise and reliable summaries of postwar policy in Francis Paul Prucha's *The Great Father*. In his discussion of self-sufficiency, for example, Meredith misses an opportunity to discuss gaming. It seems inconceivable that an account of economic and political autonomy could ignore this topic.

On the whole, this work purports to achieve something that it does not. Scholars and students of the Southern Plains tribes hoping for a synthesis of the complicated worlds that have clashed in this region will have to wait. As it is, this is very old wine poured into not very clean bottles.

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Enduring Traditions: The Native Peoples of New England. Edited by Laurie Weinstein. Westport, Connecticut: Bergin and Garvey, 1994. 199 pages. \$18.95 paper; \$65.00 cloth.

Enduring Traditions is to be the first in a series proposed by Bergin and Garvey publishers on Native Americans. As such, it sets a pattern for future studies. Laurie Weinstein will continue as general editor.

This study of the enduring traditions of New England Indians is not a comprehensive work but rather is intended to demonstrate to readers that native peoples of this region are not extinct, nor have their traditions vanished. Because of the relative invisibility of Native Americans in the context of a dense non-Indian population, many nonnatives hold the view that native peoples are extinct. Even scholars have been led to think that extinction of some groups was the inevitable consequence of the European invasion, which led to rapid depopulation from disease, warfare, and forced removal. For example, until recently some scholarly works reported that the Pequot disappeared within a short time after the ruinous wars of the seventeenth century. Pequot ventures into the gambling business in the late 1980s, however, soon dispelled that idea. Nevertheless, because New England's indigenous cultures have been drastically altered and some persons show phenotypic evidence of intermarriage with non Native Americans, there are those who would deny them their identity and, were it possible, even their legal rights. But, although their numbers have been thinned from perhaps as many as 160,000 at