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the highest legal authority of the society. Necessarily, therefore—as Wilkins well knows, and in fact stresses repeatedly throughout the text—*Talton v. Mayes*' reading of the tribal status by the Supreme Court is one among many contradictory rulings by the Court on tribal sovereignty. To choose to highlight this and only this ruling because it, among all the Supreme Court rulings, comes closest to the nationhood thesis is an act of advocacy. There is nothing wrong with advocacy at all, of course, but since the book never positions itself in this role, this lack of clarity about the advocacy within the book's covers is bothersome.

Thus, as someone who supports tribal sovereignty, but who does so, quite frankly, as an outsider, a non-Indian, I find myself torn between two loyalties. One is to the ideal—the claim—of tribal sovereignty. As a claim, it is deeply rooted in history and equally rooted in justice for the American Indians. On the grounds of history and justice, it is a claim with great and, to my mind, compelling power. Nevertheless, it *is* a claim. By positing this claim as fact, Wilkins must pay a price. He is forced to sidestep both the historical circumstances of that claim and the moral principles that underlie it. As posited in this book, tribal nationhood simply *is*. That both undercuts the claim's power, in my view, and misstates it. A rhetorical device is being wielded in a book that gives no hint of its rhetoric and ideology. "So what," one might say. "Texts are never neutral. Inserting a claim as fact is nothing different from what the colonizers have done for centuries." Even more, that person could argue, Wilkins has the force of justice on his side. When the Supreme Court chooses not to recognize and uphold the tribes' status as internal nations, it does so as part of the grossly inequitable power relationship that exists between the dominant society and the tribes. All those statements would be true. Nevertheless, the use of this device is a deviation from the purest norms of scholarship. While understandable given Wilkins's clear commitment to tribal sovereignty, it also, and unfortunately, exposes the book to an unneeded vulnerability.

Having said that, I cannot praise this book too highly. This is a work that I very much hope will enjoy widespread use across this nation as a way of educating Americans about the American Indian tribes as this nation's third sovereigns. This topic is sorely in need of the kind of light that this book sheds.

Christine Gray

American Indians and the Urban Experience. Edited by Susan Lobo and Kurt Peters. Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 2001. 320 pages. \$69.00 cloth; \$25.95 paper.

While on sabbatical this year, I spent one month on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, a home of the Lakota people. As a non-Indian, I came away from that rural reservation experience with the clear knowledge that I simply could not know. The intricacies and complexities of life at Pine Ridge were vast and intermingled, where adjective opposites (hopeful/hope-

less, dynamic/static, rich/poor, traditional/nontraditional) rode together on the head of a pin.

I reflected on my own “a-ha” at Pine Ridge as I read *American Indians and the Urban Experience*. In many ways, this text was a catalyst in my thinking about the urban experience for Indians and the concepts we academics sometimes use so gingerly to describe ethnic identity and what it means to be part of a community. Specifically, in reading through this volume, I came away with a richer understanding of the complexities of the urban experience for American Indians in modern America, while having a distinct sense that I would be ill advised to say that I fully understand. And that’s a good thing. I finished this reading knowing I need to read (and experience) more.

This book is a new addition to the AltaMira series, “Contemporary Native American Communities.” As such, it is a cutting-edge work that attempts to explore the urban experience for Native Americans by drawing on a multi-disciplinary perspective (American Indian studies, anthropology, economics, American studies, history, literature, and sociology) and by calling upon the voices of academic scholars, activists, poets, and artists. Susan Lobo does an excellent job of crafting a provocative preface to each of the book’s three sections, and she provides compelling arguments for why the urban Indian experience merits closer examination and why this particular book fills a vacuum in the literature.

Several key assertions are presented and defended in this text. Standing alone they seem obvious, but certainly they are not. Examples include: Indians have been part of the fabric of urban centers for centuries; the dichotomy between reservation and urban Indians is a simplistically false dichotomy; how one defines the terms *urban* or *Indian* or *community* shapes the ways in which these concepts are interrelated and how they influence the individual, the group, and the broader society. Connections to and disconnections from Indian heritage and identity frame the ways individuals and families cope with the realities of urban life.

In my opinion, many of the chapters are solidly crafted academic exposés of issues that further advance the central tenets of the book. For example, Gonzales’s chapter on urban (trans)formations, and Lobo’s chapter entitled, “Is Urban a Person or a Place?” are fine scholarly works that greatly advanced my comprehension of the issues. While other chapters read like retooled dissertations, they nonetheless contribute to the heart of the topic. Indian people experienced in social activism and tribal knowledge wrote some of the book’s chapters, and these perspectives lend credibility to this in-depth examination of the urban Indian experience. Art, prose, and poetry are thought-provoking complements to the fabric of this volume. There is a balance in framing and articulating positions in this book, so that both Indian and non-Indian audiences can find themselves in the story (or recreated story).

As a reader, I occasionally questioned the relevance of a particular chapter. Looking at the historical evolution of Yaqui culture over three-and-a-half centuries (chapter three by Octaviana V. Trujillo) seemed to be a fairly obscure argument to reveal what the urban experience is for American Indians today. On further examination, however, the illustration was easily

transposed across historical (or cultural) boundaries to show the interplay among social institutions in transforming society and culture. Similarly, the chapter by Alex Julca, "Weaving Andean Networks in Unstable Labor Markets," seemed to be more relevant to the study of immigrants than Indians; but again, the chapter challenged me to muse about the economic survival/networking strategies employed by future Indian populations as they arrive on the urban scene (like the Lakota from Pine Ridge who might venture into Denver, Rapid City, or Sioux Falls). While more closely related works of scholarship might better convey the essential points of this book, it may be there is a dearth of research on the urban Indian experience.

Furthermore, I pondered the question, What is missing? Elements of the urban experience (or non-Indian perceptions of the Native American urban experience that require refutation) deserve inclusion in future work. Some topics of consideration might be the role of urban Indians and religious life; health care and health promotion; education; casinos and other forms of tribal economics; social stratification within the urban Indian community; gentrification and housing opportunities; criminology (including gangs and incarceration rates); debate about attainment of the American Dream; in-depth analysis of the role of the arts in rekindling urban Indian pride; global comparisons of the urban Indian experience (the film *Once Were Warriors* is a potent statement on the fictional lives of urban Maori, the indigenous people of New Zealand); and the growing strength and infusion of Native peoples into positions of mainstream leadership (educators, politicians, business leaders, clergy, and the like) in all aspects of American culture.

I will be recommending this book to my colleagues for several reasons. First, I found the composite work insightful and challenging. It broadened my perspective and understanding of Native urban issues. Second, there are a variety of ways in which the content of this book could enhance students' understandings of different dimensions of ethnic identity or general sociology (which I teach). Third, the aggregation of authors unpacks the urban Indian experience from a variety of perspectives, and this lends vitality and rigor to the examination of this topic. Beyond an academic audience, there are portions of this book that would be well-suited to a general readership interested in Native American experiences, though other portions of the book may prove less palatable.

In her chapter, "And the drumbeat still goes on . . .," Weibel-Orlando states: ". . . this book demonstrates that the large and growing presence of Native Americans in urban settings does not constitute assimilation or a weakening of this cultural and political autonomy" (p. 98). I could not agree more. *American Indians and the Urban Experience* brings together a rich tapestry of illustrations, arguments, and scholarship to convey the ways Indian identity is maintained and perpetuated in urban settings. While I realize I can never fully know, this book is a great help to understanding.

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