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ification. Clifford Duncan's chapter on the Northern Utes is vintage Clifford Duncan. Quite simply he is a storehouse of information on his people.

Perhaps the most important chapter is on the White Mesa Utes because they have been the subject of much confusion and because relatively little has been written about them. McPherson and Yazzie have done a superb job researching and providing the best history of that group to date. Also important is McPherson's chapter on contemporary issues because it makes clear that the old issues of land, economic survival, and cultural and tribal preservation continue to be central to Utah's tribes.

The goal of this project was to give a tribal perspective to the history of Utah's Indian people and to educate Utah's non-Indian population. It has succeeded, and, of course, this volume is equally valuable to people outside the state of Utah. One hopes that it reaches a large audience and that the related projects on Utah's Indians are as successful.

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I Hear the Train: Reflections, Inventions, Refractions. By Louis Owens. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001. 265 pages. \$29.95 cloth.

In the landscape and mindscape of Indian Country, "identity politics" are inescapable. No one, perhaps, knows this better than Louis Owens. Because he positions himself as a novelist "of Choctaw-Cherokee-Irish" descent, probably more than his positioning of himself as a critic of that heritage, he, like most other Native American writers of note, has come under consistent and persistent attacks based more on who he "is" than what he produces. And his nonfiction/critical work has increasingly come to include a careful "strategic locat[ing]," in Said's terms, of himself. But Owens, in *I Hear the Train: Reflections, Inventions, Refractions*, suggests that all writing is a reflection of the self. Of this particular work, he says: "At the center . . . is the hybrid monster of self, the ultimate cannibal to which all stories lead" (p. xiv).

Owens makes it clear that he speaks for no one but himself. He writes from what he calls a "frontier zone," producing what postcolonialists have termed *migrant* or *diasporic* writing (p. 208). He claims disagreement with Gloria Anzaldúa, however, about the nature of this space, suggesting she "celebrates" a "tragic victimage" (p. 100). As such as writer, he eschews any form of essentialism and maintains that his position is inherently unstable, in flux. If then, as Emerson noted, "a foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds," Owens has an explanation for his own particular genius, searching the borderlands, the liminal zones of both culture, and his individual consciousness for possibilities, for the empowerment of "what if" when "what is" has been muddied by a colonialist control of history and story, in public and in private spheres.

The book, as the subtitle suggests, is divided into three sections. The middle section, "Inventions," though made up of largely reprinted material with

an occasional new title, presents some of Owen's fiction at its best: "Coyote Story, or the Birth of a Critic," "Blessed Sunshine," "Yazoo Dusk," "The Dancing Poodle of Arles," "Winter Rain," "Shelter," and "Soul Catcher." However, the first and longest section, "Reflections," gives, in many ways, the purest reading pleasure. Though Owens warns us in the preface that the volume will include "stories I've told myself in an attempt to fill in the empty places in memory and received history," "inventions," and "stories about other's stories [or] criticism" (p. xi), he doesn't mix his genres in this mixed-genre book—we are well aware of the difference between traditional autobiography and revisionist family history. And the stories here of his life are candid and well-written. "My Criminal Youth" traces Owens' brief brushes with the law and long brushes with extended family at the tender age of eight. "Bracero Summer" and "Mushroom Nights" share not only the small-town teenage experience—one *to* be missed for those of you who didn't experience this growing up, though one to be held as an irreplaceable part of who we are for those of us who did—but also some incredible stories of dealing with poverty and hardship head on. "In the Service of Forests" and "Ringtail Moon" relate Owens's memory of his work in the Forest Service and his experience of Grand Canyon—though he admits no one has ever done it justice—and are reminiscent of Norman Maclean's work, not merely in content, but in the impressiveness of their style and detail. "In a Sense Abroad: Clowns and Indians, Poodles and Drums—Discoveries in France" and "Roman Fervor, or Travels in *Hypercarnevale*" recount Owens's trips to Europe as an instructor and a writer, the absurdity of which simply astounds. Trips to Europe seem to be largely unchanged for educated Indians since the days of Samson Occom—but teaching in Italy on a Fulbright does present itself as somewhat of a fair trade-off.

"Finding Gene," the only previously published material from this section, details Owens's reunion with his brother, who disappeared from the family after three tours of duty in Vietnam and the brother who convinced Owens himself not to go because of what he had experienced. Despite the very different lives the two of them led prior to and after their coming back into contact with one another, they still find commonality in family history, shared memory, dogs, fishing, a hatred of smoking, and guns.

Admittedly, this is a very masculine sort of a bond, and many of the stories are very masculine in both style and content, if such a thing can be said, but this *is* autobiography. Like Hemingway, Owens has a way of relating the masculine that appeals to readers of whatever gender. And, unlike Hemingway, Owens has grown in that regard in terms of his novels. Certainly, a progression in presenting a balanced gender perspective can be seen from *The Sharpest Sight to Dark River*. And in terms of American Indian worldviews, though there is a broad swathe cut in terms of personal gender identification traditionally and historically speaking, there are definite "masculine" and "feminine" roles. My "rez brothers"—and my own father, son, and husband—would, I believe, have a lot to relate to here, despite differences in background. Another story, "The Hunter's Dance," I *will* share with them, and for that very reason. The story is very likely the best articulation of a balanced, sus-

tainable philosophy of life, death, our animal relatives, and our relationship with them as carnivores *and* as the hunted in print—it provides a much-needed counterpart to the metaphors of hunting in Native women’s poetry, particularly Joy Harjo’s “Deer Dancer,” Deborah Miranda’s “Deer,” Marilou Awiakta’s “The Hunter and His Beloved,” as well as some of Karenne Wood’s poems and my own.

Possibly the most touching aspect of “Finding Gene,” however, is genderless. After discovering that his brother has been reading his novels, Owens wonders to himself about his reactions: “I wrote about Indian things, and Gene didn’t identify as Indian. His father had been German, not Choctaw, and our mother’s Cherokee world was remote from him” (p. 14). Moreover, Owens admits having gotten the inspiration for *The Sharpest Sight* from his separation from his brother, and he worries about his brother’s reaction to this as well. As readers, and more importantly perhaps, as writers, we are relieved by the exchange of gifts at the end of this story, a sign that all is well, or at least all is forgiven. We find hope that as writers, whatever familial sins we have committed, we may perhaps someday be embraced despite the ludicrousness and insularity of our chosen profession.

Only one story in the first section seems a bit out of place: “The Syllogistic Mixedblood: How Roland Barthes Saved Me from the *indians*.” Though it is autobiographical, it is also theory, however much Owens disclaims the role of the theorist. Perhaps it would be better and more honestly placed along with “As If an Indian Were Really an Indian: Native American Voices and Postcolonial Theory”—a well-stated and long-overdue indictment of postcolonial theorists for their erasure of a colonized American Indian presence—“Staging *indians*: Native Sovereignty and Survivance in Gerald Vizenor’s ‘Ishi and the Wood Ducks,’” and “A Story of a Talk: My Own Private India, or Dorris and Erdrich Remap Columbus.” Though the last three pieces, in the final section entitled “Refractions,” are critical, if criticism is as Owens claims “wistful readings of [other’s] stories . . . the kind of fictions a Nabokovian annotator might contrive in order to find his own beloved image in an otherwise alien text, with footnotes” (p. xi), then theorizing is an inescapable exercise in holding one’s story about another’s story as valid or even possible, if not probable. And here is where the inconsistency largely comes into the text. Owens makes much of Vizenor’s and Philip Deloria’s theories of identity—and, admittedly, there is an aspect of “playing Indian” that is very much part of the reality of Indian existence in America today. However, Owen’s Barthesian longing as he stares into family photos is a longing that the black and white of the photographs were metaphorically that as well, a longing for the kind of essentialism from which he attempts to divorce himself. Moreover, at least in my experience, “crossblood” is a notion that would be laughed right out of most of the very essentialist American Indian communities across this land—“off the reservation,” so to speak. I, too, wish with Owens that the syllogism held true: “Indians have Indian ancestors. I have Indian ancestors. Therefore, I am an Indian,” but he is right, “In Indian Territory, nothing is so simple” (p. 92). When we “strategically locate” ourselves, however truthfully, as critics or writers of any tribal descent whatsoever, it is an essentialist maneu-

ver. It does affect our position in regard to the text. And I believe that we ought to hold our heads high with Craig Womack and Dan Littlefield in defending our reasons in doing so.

We ought equally to admit an important truth that Owens points out: "I think it is perhaps time to recognize that what we are calling Native American literature is represented largely, if not exclusively, by . . . privileged texts . . . and is created by those migrant or diasporic Natives who live lives of relatively privileged mobility and surplus pleasure" (p. 224). And Owens concedes that the lives of most American Indians are far, far removed from this privilege. Though I am just as guilty as anyone of writing to discover who I am, to discover what it means to be an American of mixed indigenous and foreign descent, perhaps we should all spend less time worrying about locating ourselves in order to find our Indianness. In the absence of the essentialist, US-government-dictated Certificate Degree of Indian Blood, I have found that who I "be"—to paraphrase Annette Arkekta—is as much if not more defined in traditional communities by what I do than from whom I am descended. "Being" Indian, in terms of action, means "giving." Maybe, just maybe, what we should focus on, if we dare to define ourselves in regard to these texts, to Native American literature, both creatively and critically, is what we *give* to communities on which the privilege of our careers and lives are based. Only when the words we use with power do that, only when they empower the communities in some way, can we say "Native American Literature" with any honesty at all. Owens's acknowledgement of the gap between the communities and the production and study of American Indian literatures is the gift that he comes bearing. But even though the gift is offered to us, it is one we must not keep to ourselves. It is one that by its very nature must be passed along.

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Indian Women and French Men: Rethinking Cultural Encounter in the Western Great Lakes. By Susan Sleeper-Smith. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001. 234 pages. \$45.00 cloth; \$18.95 paper.

Susan Sleeper-Smith's study of cross-cultural interaction in the western Great Lakes offers a fresh and intriguing perspective on how our understanding of Native American history continues to be obscured by stereotypes. Rejecting the myth that the only "genuine" Indian is a "primitive" Indian, she presents a well-documented and cogently argued case for Great Lakes Native persistence through creative accommodation and adaptation over a "continuous process of encounter with foreigners" (p. 3). Contending that women, kinship, and Catholicism shaped the dynamics of cross-cultural interaction in the Great Lakes region through the era of the American Civil War, the author offers a new and provocative interpretation that challenges not only the groundbreaking thesis of Richard White's *Middle Ground* (1991), but also much of the extant scholarship on Native women and Christian missions.