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Native American Religious Action: A Performance Approach to Religion.  
By Sam Gill.

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with various states. Nancy Lurie brings the book to a satisfying close with a brilliantly concise epilogue that combines ethno-historical and political analysis, and draws upon her own extensive contributions in scholarship and advocacy on behalf of many tribes.

The volume also provides several extremely useful appendices and a selected bibliography which should be the first stop for one interested in researching any aspect of Indian land claims. All in all *Irredeemable America* is an enormously important, definitive contribution to the literature, indispensable for students of modern American Indians. All involved in its planning and execution should be congratulated.

*Michael Dorris*  
Dartmouth College

**Native American Religious Action: A Performance Approach to Religion.** By Sam Gill. Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1987. 125 pp. \$21.95 Cloth.

Gill has collected several previously published essays and unpublished papers in *Native American Religious Action*, and the result is a book that contains interesting insights but suffers from a certain repetitiousness and lack of coherent focus.

The book is aimed in part at the historian of religion who has not had a way of approaching the study of American Indian religions because they do not have written texts. In part, it is accessible to the general reader who is looking for interesting descriptions and ideas about the nature of Indian ceremonies. In speaking to different audiences, the brief essays fail to be completely scholarly, and the book becomes somewhat superficial. This is not to say that the ideas presented are not intriguing, but they are not developed in sufficient depth to satisfy the reader who is looking for a systematic exploration of American Indian religions.

The first essay, on the concept of abduction, explores the work of the philosopher Charles Pierce and his theory of hypothesis formation in science as a process of noticing the unusual and attempting to fit it into known patterns. This essay is aimed at

historians of religion. Gill argues that the unusual as observed in Indian ceremonies and beliefs can lead historians to new interpretations because they force a reconsideration of traditional modes of categorizing and defining religion. Gill then applies the abduction concept in a later chapter entitled "Disenchantment: a Religious Abduction." He reworks material from the autobiography of Don Talayesva, *Sun Chief*, and from Dorothy Eggan's description of Hopi initiation ceremonies, to fit the disillusionment of discovering that kachinas are not real into his model of abduction. He brings in comparative material from Australia.

The argument fails to be entirely convincing. The model of intellectual inquiry does not rest comfortably with the emotional nature of initiation and the process of discovering new meaning. But the attempt is imaginative.

The most interesting and compelling theme in the book is that of performance. Gill makes the strong point that Native American religion is based in performance rather than text, and that the ceremonial context of any written transcription or spoken word is essential to an understanding of its meaning. Although Gill brings in his own categories of Navajo prayer, derived from the work presented in his earlier book *Sacred Words*, he emphasizes here the description of Navajo chant practice.

The strongest chapter of the book is the last, "One, Two, Three: The Interpretation of Religious Action." Gill discusses the nature of signs and symbols, and how they convey religious meaning. He acknowledges most clearly in this chapter that there are two different ways of understanding the world at work in the minds of historians of religion and Hopi kachina dancers. The actions and ritual paraphernalia of the dancers are religious reality, not simply symbols that have meaning in someone else's reality. Knowledge and understanding come in the active relationship of performer and perceiver, not in the abstract analysis of text or symbol.

Gill seems to be trying to establish a new paradigm within the history of religion for the study of Native American religion. The essays he presents contain tantalizing glimpses but don't add up to a systematic exploration of the paradigm. The examples are primarily from Hopi and Navajo materials, with passing reference to other tribes and some interesting comparative material from Australian and African sources. One can hope that Gill will

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provide us with a more scholarly and systematic treatment of his paradigm in the future.

*Clara Sue Kidwell*  
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**The Western Apache: Living with the Land Before 1950.** By Winfred Buskirk. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986. 273 pp. \$22.50 Cloth.

*The Western Apache* by Winfred Buskirk is a revision of his 1949 Ph.D. Dissertation at the University of New Mexico. It is based on a review of anthropological and historical writings, and on approximately five months of his own field work in 1946, 1947, and 1948 among the Cibecue and White Mountain Apache. He has added no post-1949 data or bibliographic references in this version. Morris E. Opler, who has contributed greatly to our knowledge of Apache peoples in his own work, offers a forward to the book.

Buskirk's stated purpose is to depict the Western Apache way of life or, more specifically, their subsistence, technology, and economy during the period from 1800 to 1950. To this purpose, *The Western Apache* is organized into six chapters: 1. "Introduction," 2. "Agriculture," 3. "Hunting," 4. "Gathering," 5. "Foods," and 6. "Conclusions." For each of the major subsistence activities Buskirk provides discussions of, among other topics: the relevant resources, the environmental and climatic context, the organization and accomplishment of subsistence tasks, the implements employed, the relationship of productive groups to other aspects of Western Apache social organization and structure, "ownership," and related ritual or ceremonial activities.

The strength of Buskirk's monograph is that it brings together (from a variety of sources) a great deal of information concerning Western Apache subsistence and economy—providing interesting facts about all of the topics listed in the preceding paragraph. Buskirk's monograph demonstrates that both before and after contact with non-Native peoples, Western Apache engaged in a wide variety of subsistence activities, all of which were