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Oyate [documentary film]. By Dan Girmus. Watertown, MA: Documentary Educational Resources, 2016. 72 minutes.

In 2011, Diane Sawyer produced “A Hidden America: Children of the Plains,” a 20/20 documentary special featuring an impoverished Pine Ridge Reservation community in South Dakota. As someone raised on the Pine Ridge Reservation, I was full of dichotomous reactions. On the one hand, I was excited to see my home reservation shown on national television; on the other, I was disappointed by the overt presentation of poverty, abuse, and the centering of children in often hopeless situations. The exposé felt like salt in a wound because I had seen a dozen other documentaries with similar narratives.

Oyate, Dan Girmus’s first feature-length film, is a leap forward from the typical poverty exposé of the Pine Ridge Reservation. A non-Native filmmaker, Girmus’s formal experiment was filmed in the summer of 2015 and weaves together moving images of everyday life during a summer on Pine Ridge: local scenes, regional sounds, and community events. Instead of centering the typical deficit model often employed when narrating stories about the reservation—a hyperfocus on the Pine Ridge documentary tropes of poverty, substance abuse, and violence, or historical narratives of activism—this documentary film attempts a poetic presentation of the day-to-day activities of two young families who experience a wedding, a birth, and simple interactions with other side characters. The filmmaker does not lead viewers into each new scene, event, or change in landscape with introductions or captions. The documentary pieces together beautiful landscapes in juxtaposition to community events like a local rodeo and a powwow. I appreciated the simple presentation. Offering scenes of firework shows, the film engages with rural living while it highlights northern Plains living conditions, including multigenerational homes. Overall, breathtaking northern Plains landscapes shape the film as a diverse reservation summer experience.

Although avoiding direct dialogue or interview-style narrative building—the film’s narrative experiment focuses on casual conversations between reservation families as they go about their typical lives—Girmus is able to present and cover a variety of issues and events on the reservation. In one of my favorite scenes, we are placed in a tribal council meeting in the middle of a serious discussion of treaty rights, education, and Lakota language use, subtly introducing audience members to political conversations, cultural protocols, and tribal governance. Girmus achieves a nuanced description of the diverse experiences of the reservation by offering conversations among the film’s participants about sovereignty, treaty rights, tribal governance, and even local community organizing. As an insider, I was impressed with the dynamics the filmmaker was able to capture on film, while also capturing the types of conversations the tribal council scene could produce for an outsider.

Girmus’s editing style and content choices throughout *Oyate* present simple, yet nuanced stories. At times, the editing creates its own language as well. For example, Girmus’s opening scene begins with sound, the cacophonous buzz of insects and wind. We then cut to a shot pointed toward the sky. Billowing white clouds moving across a blue sky that shines just above tall leafy trees. From there, the film cuts to a black

screen and transitions the narrative using a subtle shift in the soundscape—the insects are less cacophonous and we hear a different wind. A new moving image appears, this time a young man attempting to catch a wild horse in an open field. The camera follows the young man and we quickly meet an intergenerational family, all concerned with roping the horses. We hear conversations between the family members, but no one speaks directly to the camera.

At first, I thought the filming felt voyeuristic. There were side looks at the camera by different individuals throughout the film and as an audience member, I often felt very apprehensive about being a spectator to the characters' lives. I often watch documentaries about Pine Ridge with extreme foreboding, but my initial unsettled feelings about watching these lives unfold on camera faded as *Oyate* presented a wide breadth of experiences that did not manipulate the audience into empathy. I became aware of how much I had feared repeating previous experiences. Instead, the film's presentation of everyday life of the families without direct interviews is a strength. The film does not overtly give an audience a way to consume the narrative. Rather, the audience has to sit with specific references points with either insider knowledge of the community, or not.

If the hyperawareness of the camera was not always comfortable, this is also in the nature of documentary and ethnographic filmmaking. The audience gets to make decisions about what is occurring on screen with gentle guidance from the filmmaker. Girmus appears to sidestep the problematic approaches non-Native filmmakers often utilize to exploit or spectacularize reservation life. Girmus was able to craft a deeply political narrative about Pine Ridge without demonstrating the impoverishment that is repeatedly employed to garner a non-Native audience to pay attention to the reservation. We get to see children playing, elders speaking the Lakota language, families laughing together, and young parents bringing a new baby home. The film provides an insight to a specific land and place and could supplement any curriculum discussing present-day experiences of northern Plains reservation life. As an appropriate alternative to the many poverty-stricken narratives of Pine Ridge currently existing across many platforms, I would recommend *Oyate* to both Native and non-Native audiences. In Lakota, *oyate* means “the people.” *Oyate* absolutely delivers a story of the people.

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Picturing Indians: Native Americans in Film, 1941–1960. By Liza Black. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2020. 354 pages. \$65.00 cloth; \$65.00 electronic.

Picturing Indians fills in a critical knowledge gap of Native American representations in film between 1941 and 1960. It demonstrates that although the vast majority of the films of this period reinforced the narrative that Indians were “gone” or “vanishing,” the films employed Native American actors and actresses to portray this seemingly vanishing people. Her work is in conversation with Kiara Vigil's *Indigenous Intellectuals*