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Life Stages and Native Women: Memory, Teachings, and Story Medicine. By Kim Anderson. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2011. 223 pages. \$31.95 paper.

In *Life Stages and Native Women: Memory, Teachings, and Story Medicine* Kim Anderson (Cree, Métis) records indigenous epistemologies that were part of a vibrant, ingenious society that valued the interrelatedness and prosperity of the entire community, used to develop healthy individuals, and based in reciprocity. The author explores how the social development of Métis, Cree, and Anishinaabe women played a central role in the health and success of their communities by focusing on oral history interviews with fourteen Algonquian elders primarily dating from the 1930s to the 1960s. Adding depth and context to her discussion, Anderson also draws from ethnographic, anthropological, historical, and literary materials.

In addition to exploring indigenous concepts of women and gender, Anderson also conceptualizes the scientific and social theories of development in indigenous epistemologies by focusing on life stages as well as gender. For Anderson, the concept of life stages adds a significant layer to understanding how indigenous societies were organized. She makes a concerted effort to show that these concepts were advanced theories of social development, challenging previous depictions of indigenous peoples as primitives who lacked cohesion or complex ideas.

This book is an opportunity to “dig up medicines” through listening to the oral histories of elders. Perhaps in order to reach outside academia to a community level, Anderson writes in a familiar, conversational style using language accessible to multiple audiences. For Anderson, the listening, collecting, and publishing of these memories, stories, and interpretations is an act of “decolonization.” She writes that her intent “is to offer these medicines as a contribution to the healing process we call decolonization and, in particular, to encourage dialogue about the role that gender can play in that process” (3).

Anderson does not offer a lengthy discussion of her definition of “decolonization,” nor does she offer an extensive literature review of scholarly work, and much of Anderson’s discussion with other authors or articles takes place in the endnotes. While the main text references Cherokee scholar Andrea Smith as well as Choctaw scholar Devon Mihesuah, and the bibliography includes Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s seminal work *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, she does not include any significant discussion on this or the many other texts that speak to the ways in which indigenous societies around the globe are addressing decolonization. Nor does she speak at length to some of the other First Nation and Métis scholars who discuss the development

and use of indigenous methodologies, such as the work of Shawn Wilson and Margaret Kovach on indigenous-based research and decolonization.

For Anderson, the key to decolonization lies in understanding indigenous epistemologies. Anderson often places these epistemologies as being “in the past” but does not discuss why she has this perception. While this may reflect how those elders she interviewed spoke about their lives “in the past,” Anderson’s book does not provide this analysis. Notably, Anderson’s stated intention is to focus on the positive or “more idyllic” aspects of individuals’ stories. She believes that there are other works that tell stories of violence, residential schools, and “communities in crisis.” Anderson notes that the stories she collected were “focused on the positive elements of social organization in northern Algonquian communities at mid-century,” but does not explain what this might mean for the healing or decolonization processes that are the book’s stated goals, or discuss how telling and providing testimony to these more violent or “negative” stories might also be an important part of a healing and decolonizing process (28).

The key content of Anderson’s book lies in the middle four chapters, which focus on four life stages, titled “The Life Cycle Begins: From Conception to Walking”; “The ‘Good Life’ and the ‘Fast Life’: Childhood and Youth;” “Adult Years: The Women’s Circle”; and “Grandmothers and Elders.” In each she introduces a number of concepts that speak to the indigenous-based epistemologies that govern an “upright life.” For Anderson the Anishinaabe lifecycle teachings provide a cultural framework for decolonization that is based on “how well she or he fulfills his or her life stage roles and responsibilities” (4). For example, in regard to infants, Anderson shows that there was a deep belief that the health of the baby was connected to the health of the entire community, suggesting that in those cases where infants now sleep in separate rooms and are not provided the same comfort and security that was once valued by indigenous peoples, colonization can be introduced from the very earliest stages of life. The childhood years, referred to as “the good life,” introduced independence and responsibility.

Adolescence was a turning point from “the good life” to the “fast life,” which was a time of rapid change, introspection, vision, sacrifice, and transition (66). The key to this stage of life was teaching “self-discipline.” Children were taught a deep connection to their family and community responsibility and also the value of reciprocity in relationships. Anderson notes that these concepts were introduced in a formal way through coming-of-age ceremonies. Her section on these ceremonies is particularly well developed and highlights, in particular, the power and role of women in the featured indigenous societies. Anderson offers numerous examples of the continuation of women’s coming-of-age ceremonies; in many cases these ceremonies were forced to be practiced

in secret, and Anderson deftly writes about the strength and will of the people to continue these practices.

Anderson writes about the importance of “planning and planting life” in adulthood, and according to the author these years were much more defined by gender (97). She introduces here the adopted concept of “jurisdiction,” as suggested by one of the elders interviewed. According to this concept, males and females had certain “jurisdictions” or “limits in territory within which authority may be exercised.” Anderson further explains that these “jurisdictions” were much more balanced in nature and “worked together as part of a system aimed at ensuring balance and well-being in the community” (99). This sentiment is echoed in the work of Devon Mihesuah and Paula Gunn Allen, who have also written about the “balanced” and “egalitarian” roles of men and women in indigenous societies. Anderson explains that the last stage of life highlights the responsibility that elders have to pass on knowledge, life force, and spirit to the future generations. She also highlights how the “grandmothers” participated in leadership and governance, teaching, and managing the health of the community. Additionally, they were “the doorkeepers to the spirit world” because as midwives they assisted people with the beginning of life, as well as the end of life (127).

Though much of this portion of the book feels like a summary of information about these cultures and not a critical analysis of the presented material, Anderson’s conclusion provides a deep and meaningful analysis of her assembled information. She analyzes four layers of meaning, including (1) the power of women and girls; (2) connecting the stories to life stage theory; (3) contributing to the health and well-being of Native communities; and (4) applying story medicine, today and into the future. Anderson writes that she hopes to launch this book into Indian country and that “it will work like an arrow, piercing the injustices of our past and slicing open more avenues for change” (161).

Anderson further offers a discussion with Jane Middleton-Moz, a psychologist who practices community-based intervention with indigenous communities. This is where the strength of Anderson’s research is highlighted and the formal applications of her work are best understood. When applying her work to health and wellness, Anderson shows that she is particularly invested in the community-based applications of her research in a way that is practical and meaningful and strengthens the roles of women in the community. She writes, “I wonder how different our communities might look if we honored all young girls for their sacredness and their potential, and if we granted the wise ‘old ladies’ the role they once had in governing their families and communities (173). The book concludes with the powerful message that these stories can reconnect generations and provide the basis for the recreation

of ceremony, societal roles, and life stages that can help to heal from colonization and create healthier communities by imagining a stronger way of life that connects the past to the present.

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Queer Indigenous Studies: Critical Interventions in Theory, Politics, and Literature. Edited by Qwo-Li Driskill, Chris Finley, Scott Laurie Morgensen, and Brian Joseph Gilley. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2011. 258 pages. \$34.95 paper.

Queer Indigenous Studies is an ambitious edited collection that grew out of a special issue of *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* that focuses on the intersections of indigenous studies and queer theory. The collection's editors state that their goal is no less than to imagine a decolonized future for queer indigenous peoples; as a whole, the collection takes aim both at the heteronormative underpinnings of settler colonialism and the reified "traditions" of indigenous peoples that have sought to entrench normative sexual logics within Native communities. Although the size of the geographical and intellectual claims of this book make it less effective in its critique of settler colonialism than it could be, the boldness of its imaginative potential and the originality of its critical innovations will make it a necessary book for a variety of scholars.

Of particular interest is Andrea Smith's "The Heteronormativity of Colonialism," which initially appeared in the *GLQ* special issue. Smith argues for a methodological turn that echoes queer theory's move from a focus on gay and lesbian studies to a "subjectless critique" that examines normativities, resulting in a Native scholarship that critiques the logics of settler colonialism and the requisite claims to heteropatriarchy and domination of land. Smith argues that the two disciplines can do much to inform each other; a queer "subjectless critique" broadens the scope and political project of indigenous studies, while an indigenous challenge to settlerdom and white supremacy serves to keep queer analysis continuously self-aware of the colonial history of modern sexuality and its discourses. While provocative and productive, Smith's contribution is more effective for its imaginative potential rather than as an actual example of a Native "subjectless critique," given that her examples are relatively limited and offer little concrete instance of such praxis.

Chris Finley, Michelle Erai, and Dan Taulapapa McMullin round out the first section of the book and further Smith's methodological intervention by critically engaging with the ways in which indigenous sexualities posit a direct