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complexities of their subject. This complexity does not make for easy reading, but it does illustrate that the removal of Indians from Kansas involved many levels of white and Indian society. In sum, this book adds considerably to our understanding of Indian-white relations during an important period of history.

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Indian Life: Transforming An American Myth. William W. Savage, Jr., editor. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1977. 286 pp. \$9.95

In this companion volume to his *Cowboy Life: Reconstructing An American Myth* (1975), editor William W. Savage reproduces passages on the Indians of the Great Plains published from 1877 to 1914, along with many fine photographs of the period from the Western History Collections of the University of Oklahoma Library. The longer passages include sections from Richard Irving Dodge's *Our Wild Indians*, Jacob Piatt Dunn's *Massacres Of The Mountains*, Helen Hunt Jackson's *A Century Of Dishonor*, James Willard Schultz's *My Life As An Indian*, W. Fletcher Johnson's *Life Of Sitting Bull*, and The Commissioner of Indian Affairs' Annual Report of 1891 on the sioux, and Joseph Kossuth Dixon's *The Vanishing Race*.

Savage states his purpose in presenting still another anthology containing descriptions of Plains Indians in his introduction:

The selections that follow pertain to images of the Indian that emerged at a crucial point in the history of Indian-white relations. After the Civil War, the nation turned its attention to the West as an area of economic opportunity. . . The Indian was an obstacle to that ambition and thus became the army's responsibility. There followed a series of Indian wars, justified in popular media through the presentation of adverse images of the Indian, and after that, when the deed was done, a time of contrition and talk of the plight of the vanishing Indian, wherein old myths were transformed. The selections

define stereotypes and mark their transformation, and the photographs identify both the things that were and the things that were thought to be. They are neither pretty nor sentimental, nor are they offered as grist for the mills of moral judgment. They comprise an account of a meeting between technologically superior and technologically inferior peoples, a meeting that influenced the shaping of a nation, and they suggest something about what America is by examining what it has been. That they are ambiguous is surely inevitable (p. 13).

Savage's enterprise is itself ambiguous, though hardly inevitably so. The volume is not only puzzling in its conception, but disturbing and dangerously misleading in its execution. It is not clear whether Savage intends for his volume to itself act in "transforming an American myth," or merely to document a transformation. In either case, the introduction and commentary are inadequate, so that this anthology of poorly contextualized selections serves more to reinforce an American myth of "Indian life" than to transform or document it. Savage seems to rely upon the photographs to present a more true counter-image of "Indian life"—"the things that were"—but these beg for contextualization as well.

The 11-page introduction and the short paragraph of commentary preceding each section flatten out the long history of European and American images of Indians to the "ambiguity" of the familiar noble and bloodthirsty savages. For Savage this history reduces to white exploitation of images of Indians as either entertainment (travel literature, captivity narratives, Wild West Shows, medicine shows, motion pictures) or justification of dispossession. This latter use of images of the Indian is supposedly the main focus of the volume—the Preface states that "It has to do with the images of Indians developed by whites to justify white expansion into Indian domain, and thus it examines the political utility of myth" (p. vii)—but it is not examined as a historical or cultural problem. Though Savage cites some of the major contributions to our understanding of the process of imagining the Indian—Pearce's *The Savages Of America*, Slotkin's *Regeneration Through Violence*, Jacobs' *Dispossessing The American Indian*, Berkhofer's *Salvation And The Savage*, Fiedler's *Return Of The Vanishing American*, Friar and Friar's *The Only Good Indian*, Saum's *The Fur Trader And The Indian*, Sanford's *Quest For Paradise*, Hanke's *Aristotle And The American Indian*—this seems to be mainly to give the

book a semblance of scholarly sophistication, for the volume conveys little of the variety and complexity in the process that is evident in these works.

The material that Savage anthologizes calls for a much more fully-textured and extensive analysis that draws from the insights and research of historians and other scholars such as those listed above. Otherwise, it is meaningless, at best, to reprint most of the selections, which are fairly widely available in their original form. And even this generous assessment is unacceptable because of the stance Savage summarizes in the introduction:

These, then, were the uses to which whites put their images of Indians: First, after initial contact, the Indian was a curiosity, then an entertainment. Thereafter he was made noble by whites who required his cooperation and a beast by those secure enough to survive without his help and, beyond that, to take what he had. Then, when his numbers were diminished and he was far removed from the white population, he became again a curiosity and an entertainment. Today, his numbers replenished and his isolation ended, he is still to whites curious and entertaining, largely because, in the context afforded by the dominant society, he has no social utility—not as an Indian, not as a representative of another culture. That which is entertaining is otherwise useless, and so it was in the beginning (pp. 12-13).

Savage's unenlightening and ahistorical condensation of almost five centuries of history to a progression from entertaining to noble to bestial and back to entertaining might be passed over as meaningless. But for an historian of the 1970s to characterize Indians of the present as socially useless except as curiosities is appalling both in its ignorance and its gall.

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A Better Kind of Hatchet: Law, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Cherokee Nation During the Early Years of European Contact. By John Phillip Reid. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976. 249 pp. \$14.50.