UCLA

American Indian Culture and Research Journal

Title

Incarcerated Stories: Indigenous Women Migrants and Violence in the Settler-Capitalist State. By Shannon Speed.

Permalink

https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3bm15022

Journal

American Indian Culture and Research Journal, 44(2)

ISSN

0161-6463

Author

Martinez, Cinthya

Publication Date

2020-03-01

Copyright Information

This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial License, available at https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/

This book deserves a high canonical position in critical Indigenous studies. DeJong's exhaustive research provides solid data with a straightforward explication of the obstacles to tribal sovereignty and Indigenous visibility that drive the field. Together with works that thoughtfully read Marx in assessing the pitfalls of state recognition of Indian nations, such as Coulthard's *Red Skin*, *White Masks*, DeJong's work illuminates the deep history of colonial manipulations and the boundaries that tribal nations must work within, but ultimately transcend, in bolstering sovereignty.

Samuel R. Cook Virginia Polytechnic Institute

Incarcerated Stories: Indigenous Women Migrants and Violence in the Settler-Capitalist State. By Shannon Speed. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019. 163 pages. \$90.00 cloth; \$27.95 paper; \$21.99 electronic.

While studies of migrant detention have grown within the last twenty years, much of the literature on migrant detention has remained situated within Latinx studies and theories of neoliberal dispossession, with minimal engagement to the colonial processes that have caused global displacement. In Incarcerated Stories: Indigenous Women Migrants and Violence in the Settler-Capitalist State, Shannon Speed provides a critical analysis of the interconnected web of violence that Indigenous migrant women encounter in and across settler-colonial capitalist states. Through the stories of Indigenous women detained in T. Don Hutto ICE Detention Center in Texas, Speed argues that Indigenous women are made vulnerable to myriad forms of violence facilitated through the overlapping structures of gender violence, settler colonialism, and neoliberal regimes. She positions this study through a Native feminist analysis informed by a hemispheric approach to indigeneity and centers Indigenous women from Mexico, Guatemala, and Honduras. Speed presents the testimonies of Indigenous women in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention as being part of the larger structure of violence that Indigenous women face, such as those highlighted in the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW) movement in the United States and Canada. By mapping these testimonies onto their structural foundations, Speed takes a bold approach to drawing out the resonances between studies of migrant detention and Native American studies, opening the door for a plethora of new directions in both fields.

The oral histories and *testimonios* that make up the chapters of the book are grounded in a "critical engaged activism" that aims to produce critical scholarship on the structures of violence while simultaneously alleviating the material conditions that affect the communities we work with. Each of the book's five chapters begins with the *testimonio* of an Indigenous migrant woman to foreground the chapter's arguments in a real-life narration of those directly impacted by the structures discussed in the proceeding arguments. In place of "vulnerable," Speed applies the word *vuleneradas* to emphasize the status that Indigenous migrant women are forced into under settler-capitalist states. Acknowledging the debates around the spectacle of violence and the

Reviews 107

instrumentality of battered bodies for voyeuristic intentions, the author contemplates the strategic use of writing in trauma, but commits to Indigenous feminist epistemologies to assert that storytelling is both a tradition of transferring knowledge and a tool to speak back to power.

Chapter 2 begins at "home"—both in the sense of the women's country of origin and the interpersonal violence that drove them to migrate. It follows the stories of three Indigenous migrant women to establish a nuanced discussion on the "continuum of violence" and the intersection between domestic violence and state violence. Chapter 3 engages the stories of the three women previously discussed in chapter 1 and introduces two additional women. It examines their migratory journey and the layers of vulnerability they experience through various actors along the way. Speed argues that the violence the women encounter on their journey through various settler states mirrors the structures of power that they experience at home. Chapter 4 delves into the structures of violence that Indigenous migrant women are subjected to after crossing into the United States and its immigration system. The kafkaesque US immigration and asylum systems are a symptom of the overlap between mass incarceration and the homeland security state. The concluding chapter centers the stories of three women revealing how gendered violence continues to follow women into post-detention, whether they are released or deported. The condition of deportability—living in fear of deportation—renders Indigenous migrant women vuleneradas to gendered violence, including domestic violence, human trafficking, and death in their countries of origin.

The author's theory of neoliberal multicriminalism is central to her argument. For Speed, "multicriminalism," the latest phase of a capitalist social order, is a multi-scalar process produced at the junction of the neoliberal market and the "state of illegality" in which all state actors engage in extralegal activities with impunity (113). One prominent example of neoliberal multicriminalism lies in the transnational intricacies between narco gang violence in Mexico and Central America on the one hand, and the US opioid crisis and policies such as the war on drugs on the other. Throughout her chapters, Speed demonstrates how neoliberal multicriminal violence renders asylum seekers vulnerable as they transit from "one settler structure to another" (18). Multicriminalism is not exclusively produced by a singular colonial state (Mexico, Guatemala, or Honduras), but is a process that works in tandem with US imperialism. For Indigenous women, this manifests into a continuum of gendered violence—both interpersonal and state-sanctioned—at every level of their lives.

Taking a hemispheric approach to Native studies, the theoretical conceptualizations of settler colonialism that *Incarcerated Stories* advances are a monumental intervention. Speed, a Chickasaw Native, complicates and interjects into North-South divisions between Native American studies and Latin American Indigenous studies by drawing on her positionality as an Indigenous person with a long relationship of working with the Indigenous Zapatista communities of Southern Mexico. From this perspective, Speed questions the widely accepted truism that paints Latin America colonialism and US colonialism as intrinsically distinct. The author does acknowledge certain aspects of this truism that are particular to political geographies, such as the incommensurable US legal systems of tribal recognition and the Latin American

racial ideology of *mestizaje*. However, she interrogates claims that rigidly (and perhaps too reductively) position US colonialism as acting through the dispossession of land for the elimination of Native peoples, while framing Latin American colonialism as exclusively acting by extracting resources and labor. The realities are much less neatly defined: in Latin America, for example, the extraction of resources extends to the dispossession of land, which in turn facilitates the elimination of Indigenous People. Speed clarifies these complex realities through the experiences of the *vuleneradas*, whose narratives in *Incarcerated Stories* demonstrate that Indigenous Mexicans and Central Americans are exposed to heightened violence and targeted for death both in Latin America and in the United States.

When Indigenous Peoples cross colonial borders, Indigenous identities do not simply vanish, nor does settler violence end, Speed contends. Indigenous migrant women endure structures of violence and premature death that are part of a colonial thread interwoven throughout the hemisphere. This part of the book's conversation advances theories of racial triangulation proposed by scholars such Eve Tuck, K. Wayne Yang, and Jodi Byrd. Speed's analysis, alongside Byrd's concept of the arrivant, complicates monolithic approaches to the figure of the migrant by demonstrating precisely how the vulnerability of Indigenous migrants remains conditioned by violences that exceed the boundaries of any one settler-capitalist state.

Incarcerated Stories is a compelling book rooted in the raw testimonies of Indigenous women and the multitude of systems that have constructed their vulnerability. The contributions are vast and fruitful. Speed urgently reminds us to place analyses of Indigenous migrants within the interdisciplinary rubric of Indigenous studies, rather than relegating them solely to the narrow parameters of immigration and border studies. By extension, the stories of the vuleneradas push us to understand ICE detention as settler space, although it is often not theorized as such. Incarcerated Stories provides a nuanced approach that enriches existing conversations on Latinx migrant women and state violence, including those provided by Eithne Lubhéid, Martha Escobar, and Rosa-Linda Fregoso. Finally, Speed eloquently demonstrates that theories of settler colonialism and neoliberalism cannot be detached from one another; they must both be examined as mutually constitutive logics of state formation.

Cinthya Martinez University of California, Riverside

Monumental Mobility: The Memory Work of Massasoit. By Lisa Blee and Jean O'Brien. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2019. 288 pages. \$90.00 cloth; \$29.95 paper; \$22.99 electronic.

In Monumental Mobility: The Memory Work of Massasoit, Indigenous studies historians Jean O'Brien (White Earth Ojibwe) and Lisa Blee trace the memorialization, from early-twentieth-century Plymouth, Massachusetts to Salt Lake City, Utah, of the figure of Massasoit, the Wampanoag chief who supposedly welcomed the Pilgrims

Reviews 109