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Native Historians Write Back: Decolonizing American Indian History. Edited by Susan A. Miller and James Riding In. Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2011. 384 pages. \$65.00 cloth; \$45.00 paper.

This anthology gathers sixteen previously published essays from twelve different Native writers, collectively forming an indigenous “challenge to the hegemony of the United States and Canada, and of nation-states generally” (6). In tackling this ambitious task, Susan A. Miller and James Riding In form a remarkably cohesive and consistently compelling body of work. Structured in four parts, the book begins by introducing an “Indigenous historiography” as a challenge to the dominant narrative of American history, and the role of Indians within that narrative. The final part emphasizes tribal scholars’ sense of purpose in helping indigenous groups by drawing clear lines from historical events to contemporary situations, while the two middle sections describe a wide range of uses for traditional tribal knowledge. Such organization gives each essay a strategic role in the greater argument that indigenous perspectives not only create a richer American historiography but also change the way we perceive the legacies of colonial settings today.

The authors address the context for their work in acknowledging two similar anthologies: *Natives and Academics* (1998) and *Indigenizing the Academy* (2004). Both provide a discourse for indigenous views on the academy at large, but do not achieve the same historiographic center and demonstrative power that Miller and Riding In hope to accomplish. In seeking an historiographic focus, readers should also consider Donald L. Fixico’s edited volume *Rethinking American Indian History*, which itself contains many non-Indian voices but asserts the importance of viewing and writing history with an Indian perspective in mind. Such a collection of the leading scholars of the field is a vital contribution, but Miller and Riding In offer a more completely indigenous voice while pinpointing historiography as an essential tool in challenging entrenched notions of American history.

Susan A. Miller’s intensely purposeful prose sets the book’s tone in the first two essays. She argues that of vital importance to the indigenous paradigm and discourse is its unabashed use of words such as *colonization* and *colonialism* in describing the relationships that affect indigenous people in both historical and contemporary contexts. The authors suggest throughout the book that American historians especially have too long avoided such language, thus misconstruing a key element of the continent’s history. Acknowledging the power of language in scholarship is a key element of recognizing and reversing colonial processes, and Miller’s insistence on precision within her own writing reflects this. Lomayumtewa C. Ishii’s essay on the formation of Hopi history addresses these themes in an historical context. His study of Hopis displays

the disempowering effects of intellectual colonialism, where the colonizer controls the production of knowledge in a non-indigenous discourse. Examples like these allow the book's authors to examine America's history not as a "futile attempt to return to the past," but as a proactive effort to give indigenous individuals and institutions—as well as historians generally—a set of tools for reexamining colonial settings (14).

The first example of these tools is language. In her examination of Choctaw removal, Donna L. Akers advocates the increased use of Native perspectives, and one of her points of emphasis is a call for expanded knowledge of indigenous languages. While not paired directly in sequence, Matthew L. Jones's essay perfectly embodies this call. Jones beautifully constructs his piece with extensive use of Otoe-Missouria language alongside English. The balance of the two allows Jones to emphasize the power of a Native perspective while also presenting it to a wider audience. In relating the tale of early Otoe and Missouria encounters with Lewis and Clark, Jones's essay demonstrates the immediate power of language as the reader begins to anticipate and even recognize bits of the Otoe-Missouria language by the end of the essay. Recognizing these few terms hardly equates to the achievement of an entirely indigenous perspective for the reader, but this rather simple exercise provides a powerful reminder of the possibilities opened up with the study of non-canonical accounts.

One of the most pervasive examples of the indigenous challenge to the colonial canon occurs in the court of law. With this larger context in mind, James Riding In examines the nineteenth-century court case of Yellow Sun and other Pawnees accused of murdering a white man in Nebraska. The event provides the author with a case study for analyzing the broader trajectory of the American legal system's treatment of indigenous people. The legal system relies heavily on precedent, which for indigenous people signifies a lamentable legacy of "prejudicial, capricious, and arbitrary actions" by those in power (161). Riding In's brief but insightful critique advances a key argument for the continued relevance of indigenous legal history as part of a larger colonial process, an argument which gains strength from multiple indigenous voices. Pawnee attorney and author Walter Echo Hawk, for example, employs language similar to Riding In's in his passionate scrutiny of the United States judicial system, *In the Courts of the Conqueror* (2010). Such critiques from an indigenous perspective serve as another reminder of the impact historical processes have on the present.

As addressed in the introduction, an acknowledged and encouraged aspect of indigenous scholarship is its sense of purpose for one's people. This theme emerges most clearly in the final essays of Miller's and Riding In's anthology. In perhaps the most conscious and pointed example of "writing back," Miller

unpacks the historical background of the Seminole Nation's controversial effort to detach two African American Freedman communities from its political body. With part humorous sarcasm and part biting criticism, she chastises scholars and journalists who fail to acknowledge the intricacies of indigenous political history, calling for the recognition of true indigenous sovereignty in questions of membership. Andrew H. Fisher's *Shadow Tribe: The Making of Columbia River Indian Identity* (2010) describes a strikingly similar history of political struggle in the Northwest. These types of cases further bolster Miller's and Riding In's argument that an indigenous historiography provides a vital tool for illuminating contemporary settings.

Overall, this anthology convincingly achieves its goals. Though its voices are many and its topics diverse, the book as a whole resonates with a unified purpose. The use of indigenous perspectives and methodology in exploring the past serves to construct a new historiography. Throughout the text, the authors consistently contribute to that effort to reexamine the past while also drawing clear connecting lines to the present. The writing styles of the various contributors vary, but they all share in common a noticeable passion for their work and a fierce scrutiny of colonial pressures on indigenous people both past and present. The lack of a unifying conclusion represents the only disappointment—and a small one at that. In the end, the collection speaks for itself, and represents an essential text not only for students of American history and American Indian studies, but any reader interested in the greater discourse surrounding colonial and postcolonial literature.

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Navajo Talking Picture: Cinema on Native Ground. By Randolph Lewis. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012. 248 pages. \$30.00 paper.

From the opening moments it's clear that *Navajo Talking Picture* is no ordinary documentary film: less than two minutes from the start, director Arlene Bowman (Navajo) announces in her voiceover narration that when she set out to make a documentary about her grandmother, she mistakenly assumed that the older woman would want to be filmed. The director then admits, although Diné herself, she "didn't know enough about the Navajos" to make the film she planned. Thus begins the puzzling trajectory of Bowman's film: a trajectory within which the filmmaker appears to make one misstep after another as she violates her grandmother's privacy, exhibits little or no sensitivity for Navajo tradition or reservation life, and ignores the wishes of her film's unwilling