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presence in First Nations writing focus too exclusively on a negative aspect of Aboriginal history?” She concludes, after much reflection, that her work opens a window on the ways that indigenous peoples “maintain their sense of sovereignty . . . where these things have been eroded by law.”

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**Me Sexy: An Exploration of Native Sex and Sexuality.** By Drew Hayden Taylor. Vancouver, BC: Douglas and McIntyre, 2008. 186 pages. \$21.95 paper.

“Think of [*Me Sexy*] as a ‘How to Make love to a First Nations person without sexually appropriating them’ type of book. It will inform you. It will shock you. It may make you laugh. It may even make you blush” (3). When I first read the press release for Drew Hayden Taylor’s newest book, *Me Sexy*, I knew I wanted to read it. When I received the book and saw the cover, I knew I had to read it. The cover depicts the age-old stereotypical image of a strong, muscular, dark-brown Indian man with bulging arms and flowing black hair clutching a small, helpless-looking white woman whose bosom is heaving with desire for this forbidden creature. She is scared but excited anticipating the animal nature of this dark beast. The book does not disappoint and fully lives up to the expectations created by Taylor’s past work in *Me Funny* (2006) and the titillating promise of the “erotic” image on the cover of *Me Sexy*.

*Me Sexy* is an anthology that explores myths and truths of Native sex and sexuality. Perhaps no issue in Native studies has been studied less, or is misunderstood more, than the sexuality of First Nations people. Taylor writes in the introduction: “When I told people I was thinking about putting together a book about the world of Native sexuality, the two comments I got back most often were: (1) ‘That will be a short book’ and (2) ‘Isn’t that a contradiction in terms?’ Usually these comments were said with a knowing smile, but I knew there was a grain of social belief buried deep within” (1). Several of our best First Nations writers contributed to this anthology, including Joseph Boyden, Makka Kleist, Tomson Highway, Nancy Cooper, Marius P. Tungilik, Michelle McGeough, Daniel Heath Justice, Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm, Norman Vorano, Marissa Crazytrain, Gregory Scofield, and Lee Maracle. It is a glorious collection of works, some of which are laugh-out-loud funny while others are more serious and give us lots to ponder. All provide a window into the little-known world of Native sexuality.

The first selection, “Bush County” by Joseph Boyden, explores the question as to whether or not, as a drunken man noted, “Indian girls got barely any hair on their pussies. Just a little black fuzz” (7). As much as this “gross, icky non-sequitur” disturbed Boyden at the time it was said, in later years he began to wonder if “Dale” (the pig of a man who made the comment) knew something about First Nations women and their pubic hair that he didn’t. Boyden set out to answer the question: “Do Aboriginal women (and men, for that matter) have sparser pubic hair than other races?” (10). His journey

is documented for us in this essay. At one point, he imagines calling Louise Erdrich, the great aboriginal writer and lovely, beautiful woman, to pose the question to her. Boyden also ponders calling the “handsome and imposing” Thomas King for his perspective; however, Boyden’s wife convinces him to abandon those ideas (11). He does, however, find some folks to call and query. In the end, Boyden realizes that the hair issue is secondary to the racism and sexism inherent in Dale’s comment. His essay concludes with one of the most philosophical statements in print to date: “The beauty of the bush is in the eye of the beholder” (14).

If the first essay captures your interest (and you are not put off by a sociocultural discussion of pubic hair), you will certainly read on. I read the anthology at will: picking it up and turning to essays based on their titles or their authors. In the space of a book review, I cannot discuss each essay but will provide an overview of the entire body of work by discussing representative essays.

Drew Hayden Taylor’s “Indian Love Call” documents the history of “the dominant culture’s skewed perception of Native sexuality” (20). Taylor presents a wide-ranging argument discussing everything from Shakespeare’s Caliban to Twain’s Injun Joe. Taylor also covers *The Searchers*, John Ford’s classic film starring John Wayne, the ubiquitous *Dances with Wolves*, and the 1983 video game *Custer’s Challenge* in which “Custer must make his way through a hail of continual arrows to a Native American princess tied to a pole. If Custer can survive the obstacles in his way, he then gets an opportunity to have ‘sexual intercourse’ for big points. Whether his needs have been sated, or brought down by enemy fire, Custer will return again and again to get what he wants” (25). According to Taylor, a spokesperson for Mystique, the company that launched the game, said in response to criticism of the game from women and Native groups that “It’s obvious the woman [tied to the pole] is enjoying it” (26).

Although Native women “enjoy” being tied to poles and raped by white men (Custer no less), Native men play a different role in the fantasy lives of non-Indians. Indigenous men populate Western romance novels and are portrayed as larger than life on the covers of such books. As Taylor points out, “This is the literature of the middle-class Caucasian housewife, and, to be fair, your average working-class woman, who dreams of romance and escape. In the arms of an Indian. And not just your average Indian. An über Indian” (28). It is in the pages of these books that Indian men become wild, savage, and proud. They are depicted with “long flowing locks and [as having] powerful horses between [their] legs” (29). It is quite a fantasy for suburban housewives, perhaps because interracial relationships between indigenous and nonindigenous folks have only recently become less scandalous than they once were. Taylor concludes, on a humorous note: “These books make us [Indian men] out to be caring, sensitive and interesting partners, far superior to those abusive or non-existent husbands. Not to mention fabulous lovers. It seems our secret is out” (31).

Marius Tongilik (Inuk) presents a much more somber discussion of Native sexuality in “The Dark Side of Sex.” Tongilik has served his community

in many ways. In addition to noting his professional credentials, Tongilik ends his introduction with personal information: "I have two children, and I have married and divorced twice. I enjoy hunting, fishing, camping, travelling, reading and spending time with family and friends. I am also a victim of the child sexual abuse and have for many years played a lead role in exploring the sordid legacy of residential schools. I hope that this essay will provide insight into Inuit heritage and also to some of the challenges we face with the darker side of sex" (50–51). Tongilik presents a riveting overview of the legacy of child sexual abuse that occurred in so many residential schools, literally impacting the lives of thousands of First Nations children. His essay is an excellent source for gaining insight into the effects of taking children away from their families, placing them in unregulated residential schools, and allowing them to become sexual fodder for the people in leadership of those schools. Tongilik did not publicly reveal his abuse until the late 1980s. In 1992, he initiated a meeting for victims of residential school abuse in order to make this issue more public. He notes that for many victims, this meeting was "the first time that they could finally talk about the trauma they suffered as children." As a result of this meeting, Tongilik and other victims began a criminal investigation into the abuse and worked with governments and churches to elicit acknowledgment of the abuse and to garner public apologies. He also formed "healing institutes." Although Tongilik points out that "the healing has begun," he quickly notes that healing from childhood sexual abuse does not come quickly or easily (52). There are, according to Tongilik, several steps involved on the journey to recovery.

Although the essay provides details about the criminal investigations, it is the personal stories that are so compelling. Not only did the children suffer, but also the abuse "had an intergenerational impact" leading the victims to live dysfunctional lives and affecting how their own children learned to live their own lives (53). Tongilik's overview of traditional Inuit sexuality, marriage, and gender roles makes this a comprehensive, yet brief, introduction to key aspects of Inuit culture.

One of the most devastating impacts of the residential school sexual violence was that it fostered a sense of shame in so many victims, leaving them to suffer in silence. Tongilik's work is an effort to break that silence. Tongilik's conclusion is hopeful, concrete evidence of the "survivance" of First Nations peoples: "I was not at all sure I could write about these subjects at first, but I am glad that I have. . . . More victims of abuse need to write and share their stories so that people will have a better appreciation into our plight and predicament. Sharing can be therapeutic as well. Me Sexy? Ask me. I certainly think I am" (58). Although the essays discussed above are all written by men, women are represented in this anthology, which includes pieces by critically acclaimed writers Nancy Cooper and Lee Maracle. Cooper's "Learning to Skin the Beaver: In Search of Our Aunties' Trapplines" provides a glimpse into the world of what she calls "a modern-day Aboriginal woman traveler, as comfortable in twin props as in jumbo jets. . . . This is the modern-day Aboriginal lesbian, as comfortable at home with Mom and Auntie as she is hanging out at a dyke event in the latest 'it' club in Toronto" (41). Cooper

discusses the difficulties in balancing life in both of her worlds: the world of home and her world as a Native lesbian. This is Cooper's story of searching for her aunties' traplines, a foray into the "beauty, strength and chutzpah of [her] community" (42). She notes that it is not easy nor is it always safe to be out and queer in many Native communities. However, she also writes of the annual two-spirit gathering, presents an overview of the work being done by Native queer activists, and reminds us of the power of Chrystos's writing. I particularly enjoy Cooper's "Sexy Native Lesbian Facts" and her discussion of how to be an ally for Native gays and lesbians in our respective communities.

Lee Maracle, always a joy to read, discusses aging and sexuality (among other things) in "First Wives Club: Salish Style." As Maracle notes, "There is an old saying, 'The older you get, the less sex you have and the more you talk about it.' This society is focused on projecting sexiness through youth, but many of our elders don't buy into that idea very much, and of course neither do I" (169). Although this piece begins with a discussion of aging and sexuality, Maracle includes commentary on the depiction of First Nations women in the general public and in their own communities. She discusses the work of comic Don Burnstick who says as part of his routine, "I saw a beautiful Ojibway woman once" and follows that with the line, "It could happen" (170). Although Burnstick's work is comedy, he is, in essence, classifying an entire community of women as unsexy and unattractive. Maracle provides her own criteria for what sexy is as she writes, "When sexual desire is sparked up, no matter how old we are, our movements become elegant and smooth, determined, nearly urgent and sure, and our voices acquire that husky come-hither musicality that is so sweet" (171). Without a doubt, Lee Maracle, grandmother of seven and mother of four, is sexy.

I wish there was room to provide an overview of the other works included in this anthology; however, there really is no way to capture the humor and brilliance of Tomson Highway's "Why Cree Is the Sexiest of All Languages" or the depth and insight of Makka Kleist's "Pre-Christian Inuit Sexuality" in a brief discussion of the respective texts. Drew Hayden Taylor, who demonstrated in *Me Funny* that First Nations people have a fabulous sense of humor, convinces us in *Me Sexy* that Native people are just as sexy, if not more so, than their non-Native counterparts.

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**Native Americans and the Christian Right: The Gendered Politics of Unlikely Alliances.** By Andrea Smith. Durham, NC: Duke University, 2008. 356 pages. \$23.95 paper.

From the moment the first Europeans stepped foot on the North American continent, Native people have engaged in numerous ways with the "new" religion the Europeans brought with them. Responses varied from acts of rejection or resistance to accommodation and conversion. Some Native