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superior tactics and firepower soundly whipped his opposition. According to Owsley, “the reduction of the Creek Nation made it possible to remove all Southern Indians from their lands east of the Mississippi,” and further, “without an Indian buffer state, defenseless Spanish Florida was annexed to the United States” (p. 194). Significant consequences indeed.

Owsley’s original contributions to this field of scholarship are important. He inserts the largely overlooked Spanish influence on the Creek War, and claims that it was Spain, not Britain, that extended support and encouragement to the Red Sticks, hoping that a Red Stick victory would impede US designs in Florida. When the Red Sticks on their own provoked military action by their attacks on other Creeks and US citizens, the Creek Nation became a training ground, a rehearsal of sorts, for an army and its general, who moved on to defeat the British at New Orleans in 1815.

The Battle of New Orleans did not end the British threat in the South, nor did Horseshoe Bend entirely stamp out Red Stick embers. Red Stick refugees filtered south into the swamps around the Apalachicola River in Spanish Florida, where they met the Lower Creeks, who had not participated in the Creek War and remained intact and unscathed by the American invasion. The undaunted British, who had mostly kept out of the Creek War, began pumping arms and supplies into these Lower Creeks and Red Stick refugees. In an initiative even more dangerous to American interests, they began recruiting troops from the slave populations of Georgia and Alabama. Jackson was called on yet again in the cause of US territorial expansion. His invasion of Spanish Florida to suppress the mounting British and Indian threat and to restore the runaway slaves to slavery is known to history as the First Seminole War.

Owsley makes it abundantly clear that the South’s Gulf Borderlands from Florida to New Orleans were pieces of very complicated real estate. Boundaries of the United States as we now know them did not exist. In 1812, there were three major powers blocking the path of US expansion: Spain, Britain, and the Creek Nation. Over the next ten years, all these powers relinquished their claims through diplomacy carried on the barrel of a gun. Eventually the Creeks gave up Alabama and, with a few exceptions, were displaced to a western reservation. The Creeks in Florida became known as the Seminoles, and they were to lose Florida when Jackson became president. There is a lesson here for those who think that the current complexities of geopolitics are a unique feature of our time and have no precedent in American history.

This 2000 paperback is a republication of the original 1981 University Presses of Florida volume. In a new preface, the author states that his original scholarship remains strong and essentially unchallenged by subsequent studies. He points to the more recent works by J. Leitch Wright (1986), Joel Martin (1991), and Robert Remini as complementary but not identical. This is a very solid historical study that deserves the wider dissemination now made possible by the publication of this paperback edition.

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**Telling Their Stories: Essays on American Indian Literatures and Cultures.**

Edited by Elizabeth Hoffman Nelson and Malcolm A. Nelson. New York: Peter Lang, 2001. 186 pages. \$24.95 paper.

The three anecdotes that commence this collection's brief preface foreground in a variety of ways the prominent concerns of linguistic and cultural (mis)understandings discussed in its thirteen essays. As a whole, the collection challenges the colonizer/colonized binary that has often structured American Indian and similar postcolonial studies. In place of such dichotomies, many of these authors take a look at how multiple perspectives of lives lived within and/or outside a given tribe—or such experiences as depicted in literature—can provide a broader understanding of the range of tribal life, particularly the complex relationships and negotiations between Indian and white cultures. By the end of the collection, it is possible to feel that perhaps a shift has begun to take place in the field of American Indian studies that should provide for richer interpretations of texts and cultural practices that move beyond the now-typical binary reading.

As the preface explains, the essays collected here have come from the 1997 American Culture Association's meeting in San Antonio, Texas. This yearly interdisciplinary meeting that brings together peoples of Native and non-Native backgrounds, students, professors, and writers, provides a rich environment for the interdisciplinary sharing of ideas in the interrelated fields of American Indian studies. The collection, true to its origins, seeks to create an interdisciplinary text similar in scope to *Native North America: Critical and Cultural Perspectives*, edited by Renée Hulan (1999), or the more recent *Native American Representations: First Encounters, Distorted Images, and Literary Appropriations*, edited by Gretchen M. Bataille (2001). *Telling the Stories* has two major divisions: the six pieces of section one center on linguistic and ethnographic concerns, while section two's seven essays focus more singularly on Indian literatures. This interdisciplinary grouping is effective in how it demonstrates the complex interrelationships among culture, language, and literature. Within each section there are a few notable essays; however, unlike the collections noted above, in *Telling the Stories* there are some thin pieces that read more like conference proceedings. These particular authors having missed the opportunity to explore further the ideas of their brief presentations.

In the first section, "Stories of Identity: From the Oral to the Written," the insightful contributions of Scott Manning Stevens, Robert M. Nelson, and Sidner J. Larson give the collection grounding. The editors have done an admirable job placing first Stevens's "Mother Tongues and Native Voices: Linguistic Fantasies in the Age of the Encounter." In short, Stevens contends that dating from the Age of the Encounter, a profound misunderstanding of language and a need to acculturate Native speakers to the colonizer's tongue structured initial and subsequent hegemonic relationships between Europeans and Native peoples. Stevens outlines a general movement from what he terms "the primal scene" (p. 3) to "linguistic fantasy" (p. 4), demonstrating how Columbus "inexplicably passes from speculating that the Natives have no language to claiming that he now understands their language" so that it becomes possible to believe "the speakers are telling just what you wanted to hear" (p. 4). Stevens pushes his ideas further to explain how linguistic fantasy in postconquest

colonization led in part to the creation of the noble savage myth; and, when this myth seemed incongruent with what Indian languages actually were signifying, there manifested for the colonizers a “linguistic despair” associated with their “confronting the profound linguistic and cultural differences” grounded in language (p. 10). Such a gulf of understanding led colonizers, as Stevens argues, to view Indian languages as inadequate to the projects of Christian and cultural conversion. Stevens’s essay is not only instructive but also foregrounds the collection’s emphasis on the necessity of acquiring an understanding of the cultural differences between Indian and white cultures often structured in culture-specific linguistic practices.

The notion of language taken out of context also plays a prominent role in Robert M. Nelson’s “Rewriting Ethnography: The Embedded Texts in Leslie Silko’s *Ceremony*” Nelson focuses largely on the debate begun by Paula Gunn Allen, who felt that Silko had transgressed Laguna convention in making public clan materials in *Ceremony*. Nelson, however, presents a strong rebuttal, arguing that “Silko’s use of such materials is better read, not as an exploitation or improper exposure of Keresan materials, but rather as a ‘re-appropriation’ of these previously expropriated materials [by Franz Boas in his *Keresan Texts*], and further as re-appropriation in the service of very traditional Keresan purposes” (p. 49). In other words, Nelson claims that Silko’s uses of such materials, often set in poetic form, not only recovers them from the sterile ethnographic record but places them back in their proper order after having been disordered by Boas. The debate over the use of private materials for public ends, especially as it concerns the possibly sacred, is one many writers eventually face. Such choices, Nelson shows, can have deep cultural significance and must be considered carefully. As Nelson makes a convincing case for Silko’s recovery of the sacred, this article should be of interest to all scholars and teachers of *Ceremony*.

Similar to Silko’s desire to make sense of her people through culturally specific language, Sidner J. Larson explains in the last anchoring piece of the collection’s first section the problems facing Indian writers of autobiography in “Constituting and Preserving Self through Writing.” Larson’s work largely finds structuralist, poststructuralist, and deconstructionist ideas regarding language’s self-referentiality to have little applicability to Indian writers who use language to represent very real life experiences: “Within a situation where to live is to suffer; where to survive is to find meaning in life, Indian people often are not as interested in abstractions of experience as they are in making some sort of usable sense of their lives” (p. 60). In this regard, there is a sense of the general failure for Indian peoples and writers of postmodern philosophies of language that have seemingly displaced language from the actualities it signifies. “Autobiography,” Larson explains, “provides important opportunities for grounding representation in some prior reality and for intimate expression of subjective experience, a way of making meaning out of complex reality by a combination of history and narrative” (p. 65). Larson’s ideas foreground a gulf between Indian and white cultures, particularly with regard to cultural-specific functions of language, a situation having much in common with Stevens’s description of “linguistic despair.”

These concerns of the collection’s first section come to figure promi-

nently in the second section's analyses of Indian literatures. There is a nice variety here with pieces on McNickle, Silko, Welch, King, Alexie, Erdrich, and Indian sleuths. One of the strongest is Jeri Zulli's "Perception in D'Arcy McNickle's *The Surrounded: A Postcolonial Reading*." What the piece lacks in postcolonial theory it makes up with its cogent reading of the novel's "tropes of seeing and vision" to conclude how "the novel debunks the myth of unity of perception that colonialist readings have forced upon this text and, hence, colonized culture" (p. 72). In its brevity, Zulli points to a number of important moments in the book that emphasize her ideas. She reaches many of the same conclusions regarding binary readings that others in the collection make noting how "In order to understand more fully the dynamics at work both within the colonized culture and within that of the colonizers—as well as cross-culturally—we as readers need to avoid binary polarization and move toward less essentialized interpretations of Native American texts" (p. 79).

Such a cross-cultural reading strategy de-emphasizing binary oppositions plays a similar role in the well-presented essay by Carrie Etter, "Dialectic to Dialogic: Negotiating Bicultural Heritage in Sherman Alexie's Sonnets." Etter's piece moves into new ground in the emerging body of Alexie criticism. She demonstrates soundly how in the sonnets of *The Business of Fancydancing*, *Old Shirts & New Skins*, and *First Indian on the Moon*, "Alexie negotiates between his cultural inheritances" (p. 143). These sonnets, Etter points out, often avoid the typical resolution found in traditional sonnets to create a "disrupting" and ironic effect (p. 146). Even in Alexie's more traditional sonnets with ending couplets found in *First Indian on the Moon*, "Alexie retains the irresolution" (p. 147). Etter concludes, "Through his sonnets, Alexie 'countersocializes' his reader to accept the irresolution inherent in American Indian experience" (p. 149). Such disruptive strategies and their effects are ones that readers should also find applicable to Alexie's novels.

At the end of *Telling the Stories*, what becomes clear in moving away from binary readings are the more complex and nuanced cultural negotiations these primary authors explore in their novels, poems, and tribal lives. The us-versus-them dichotomy, perhaps most prevalent in the criticisms of the 1980s and early '90s, seems to have moved in a new direction that may better account for linguistic confusion, mixed-cultural backgrounds, texts that disrupt conventional expectations, and the actualities of people's lives affected by such multivalent experiences. The Nelsons' collection has created new possibilities and new directions yet to explore. Furthermore, Elizabeth Hoffman Nelson's work in organizing the annual American Culture Association panels on American Indian Studies that bring together scholars, students, and writers of interdisciplinary and mixed cultural heritage should be aptly applauded. Such meetings represent an opportunity for those in fields that often remain estranged from one another to come together to share just as they have done interestingly and informatively in the best pieces of *Telling the Stories*.

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**Travels among the Dena: Exploring Alaska's Yukon Valley.** By Frederica De