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fication. She emphasizes the need to study the effects of change on Native American music styles and forms, and confronts the often neglected issue of ethics in American Indian research. Mentioned too are changing research methods and approaches which employ several disciplines, such as linguistics and archaeology—implying that future research needs might best be served through team efforts.

The usefulness of this review paper as a reference tool is limited by the lack of subject and culture group indexes. Researchers wishing specific references for comparative work must re-read the listing of references cited. It is hoped that subsequent printings of this book will include a system of indexes to the material.

The bibliography includes not only works whose primary focus is ethnomusicological, but also references to music and dance in ethnographies and publications on Southwestern religion, kinship and material culture. The concentration of diverse references makes this paper a useful introduction to the literature for survey courses in Native American musics.

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Fig Tree John: An Indian in Fact and Fiction. By Peter G. Beidler. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1977. 152 pp. pap. \$4.95

Juanito Razon was a Cahuilla Indian who lived northwest of the Salton Sea in the California desert until his death in 1927. He probably lived in that area most of his long life—perhaps a hundred years—and he achieved local fame as a kind of character who was willing, for a fee, to pose for tourists' cameras in an army tunic and a top hat which he always wore "in town." For various reasons his reputation among his white neighbors was ambivalent. He was reputed to have found a secret gold mine and to have served as a scout for Fremont. Various rumors about a murderous past circulated along with true stories about his frequent kindnesses to lost travelers. And because he maintained an orchard of fig trees, he was known to everyone as Fig Tree John.

After Razon's death Edwin Corle published his novel *Fig Tree John* (1935), which he based on certain misinformation he had picked up from local white people—including the notion that Razon was really an Apache—and on research into Apache myths and traditions. Out of all this he produced a commercially successful novel which excited the enthusiasm of reviewers, one of whom, for example, said that Corle "knows his Indians from the inside." But whatever the value of the novel, the life of Corle's Fig Tree John has very little to do with that of Juanito Razon.

Peter Beidler, an anthropologist, has uncovered everything that can be known about Juanito Razon and has examined the historical and ethnological materials upon which Corle based his novel. His book is an account of Razon's life, a comparative study of the differences between the events of that life and those of Corle's novel, and a defense of the novel as a work of art in spite of those differences. The biographical section is brief, but it includes all of the existing documentation on Razon's life. What it suggests is that Corle's protagonist is wildly at odds with the actual person upon whom he was based. His Agocho is a colleague of Geronimo who comes to the Salton Sea area in 1906 with his young wife. They settle there, and she bears a son and is later raped and murdered by white outlaws. Corle made Agocho an Apache because one of Razon's white neighbors was certain that that is what he was. The same informant told Corle that Fig Tree John was disgusted when his son, Johnny Mack, "went white," and that he assumed sexual rights to Johnny's wife because "Apaches are polygamous." Obviously this is not what polygamy means, and, just as obviously, Apaches are not such strange people that they think so lightly of incest. But this was the germ of the lurid catastrophe of Corle's novel. Agocho waits twenty years for the chance to avenge the death of his wife. Then when Johnny Mack marries a Mexican girl, Agocho concludes that the Apache gods have sent her as the means by which he is to fulfill his vengeance. He rapes her and attempts to kill her. She runs away, discovers that she carries Johnny Mack's child, and writes to tell him to come to her. Agocho assaults Johnny's Ford with an axe to keep him from leaving, and Johnny kills him and drives away—"gone white."

Beidler demonstrates, by citing later statements by Corle, that the theme of *Fig Tree John* is that the salvation of the American Indian is to be found in "assimilation." In 1953, for example, he wrote, "My theme . . . was the result of Fig Tree's running into white civilization. . . . The result meant the end of . . . the race symbolized by Fig Tree himself. The next generation 'goes white,' and the son of Johnny Mack and Maria the Mexican girl will be entirely conditioned by white civilization. The ortho-

dox Indian will die out." Leaving aside the question of assimilation as a goal for Indians, it is worth asking whether Corle's novel succeeds as the work of art its defenders consider it to be. Beidler makes strong claims for its artistic success, asserting the legitimate proposition that a novelist is entitled to re-shape his raw material because the requirements of the artist are not those of the historian. Walter James Miller, in his introduction to the Liveright paperback edition of the novel (1971), would have us believe that Corle's "little classic" is relevant to present-day environmental concerns because Agocho's conception of the natural world is so eloquent a rebuke to the ecological blundering of modern America. Perhaps it is. But the image of Agocho derived from Corle's novel by a reader unburdened by ideological baggage is not only of a philosopher of nature but also of one of the "wild" Apaches described in a letter quoted by Beidler: "...I made my character a White Mountain Apache... These are the wild and warlike Apaches, more or less typical of the Athapascan stock." An objective reader of a statement like this must conclude that it is just one more expression of the old stereotype of the "red savage."

If Agocho, with his wisdom about man's place in nature, is meant to be a rebuke against white America, then his moral authority must be clear. In fact it is not, and this is precisely where Corle's novel falls down as a work of art. Corle is sympathetic with Agocho's sensitivity to the natural world; and obviously the murder of his wife is appalling. But the natural man who is the victim of the brutality of white men becomes, at the end of the novel, a racist who assumes that Maria deserves to be raped because she is white. Since bigotry and rape cannot be justified, what explains this transformation? The answer is in Agocho's Apache gods; because he believes himself to be their agent, he becomes, in effect, a homicidal maniac. It is clear, in other words, that Corle believes that Johnny Mack has no choice but to kill his father and that we are supposed to admire Johnny's flight toward "assimilation." But if the Apache gods are responsible for Agocho's homicidal behavior, then we are left with the dubious proposition that Agocho is guilty of reprehensible behavior because he is an Apache and cannot help himself. It's just the way "they" are.

Beidler's exploration of the problem of how Indian fact is turned into white man's fiction is a valuable addition to the study of the American Indian experience even if, as I believe, he over-rates Corle's novel. This basic problem has not yet been resolved satisfactorily though it has been present in the history of American literature at least since Cooper. Beidler does not resolve it, but two lessons to be drawn from his study are that a great need of American literature is for realistic fictional treatments of Indian experience and that we are not apt to get them from non-Indian authors. We have had plenty of "noble savages" and "red devils"

—Miller's definition of Agocho as an ecological philosopher is an example of the former just as Corle's description of him as a "wild and warlike" Apache is an example of the latter—but these are only projections of the fantasies of white writers. Beidler says, "Juanito Razon's life was interesting enough, but as near as we can tell it was not sufficiently dramatic or exciting to make a good novel." This can be compared to the old cry of Cooper and Hawthorne and, most notably, of Henry James, the lament of the novelist over the artistic inappropriateness of life in America, where everything is so dull. The only answer to this charge is that of William Dean Howells, who responded to James's catalogue of "absent" things by saying that America contained "the whole of human life." Or to put it another way, we ought to consider the possibility that a novel *could* be made out of the life of the real Fig Tree John.

That life, as Beidler's account makes clear, certainly possessed heroic elements. Juanito Razon was *not* a loner cut off from his people. He was, in fact, much involved with the life of the Cahuillas, and he took pride in their achievements, history, and lore. Unlike Agocho, who is as much a squatter as any white man and who claims nevertheless that "this is all my land," Razon had a legitimate title to the land he called his own. He possessed a letter from Chief Cabazon of the Cahuillas naming him *Capitan* over the land where he lived, and he had another from a California Indian commission affirming that title. On the basis of this he fought the Southern Pacific Railroad and his white neighbors to maintain his rights, even retaining a lawyer to press his claims. He was, in fact, "assimilated"—at least to a degree where he was willing to fight the white man with the white man's own weapons. And he was successful. By any definition he was a hero, and his long life, considering that its events included many kindnesses to strangers, some of whom literally owed their lives to him, was a useful one. It is a sorry fact about their culture that a good man whose life is a record of everyday courage, is not "colorful" enough for the attention of literary artists.

Unfortunately, Beidler accepts the premise that Razon's life, though "interesting," was not "dramatic," so the full critical exploration of the possibilities of a realistic treatment of the American Indian in fiction remains unfinished. But Beidler's book will be a necessary document for those who make that exploration.

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