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peoples, but it did so on the backs of young Indian women and children. Their lives definitely deserve incorporation into broader narratives of American history, just not in such hopeful and celebratory tones.

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Choctaw Prophecy: A Legacy of the Future. By Tom Mould. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2003. 263 pages. \$60 cloth; \$34.95 paper.

In his new monograph, Tom Mould offers a detailed description and painstaking analysis of a form of Choctaw verbal art that he argues is, in fact, prophecy. Mould has a two-pronged task: he both explains modern Choctaw prophecy and enlarges the genre of American Indian prophetic discourse to include not just the familiar grand, cataclysmic pronouncement often associated with a charismatic individual in the manner of the Shawnee prophet Tenskwatawa, but semi-anonymous, quotidian utterances that serve an altogether different and crucial purpose. The author supports his arguments with a large number of speeches, generally from tapes, gleaned from his own extensive fieldwork in Mississippi and rendered into texts. An important factor in the plausibility of Mould's work is the quality of his long-term relationships with many Choctaw people. The speakers both deliver the prophetic speeches and offer comments on them, which, along with Mould's own academic analysis, give us deeper insight into how these speeches function in Mississippi Choctaw communities.

The book's thesis is that, among Mississippi Choctaws, there is a marked form of discourse, which Mould terms *prophecy*, that is directly descended from the prophetic speech of the traditional *hopaii*—chosen, recognized prophets before conversion to Christianity—who assumed the role of guide to chiefs and other decision makers through their connection to the supernatural world. Modern prophecy is similar to traditional in that a chosen prophet, always an elder, and frequently, perhaps preferentially, the deceased elder of an elder, is invested with powers of foresight. The content of modern prophecy might be grouped into two major types, each of which serves a different but critical role. The first centers on accomplished events, notably the coming of technology, that have directly affected each Choctaw individual and that serve to validate the powers of the prophet-elder. The second type of prophecy is vaguer and darker, tending to be concerned with the extinction, diminution, or displacement of the Choctaws. Necessarily unfulfilled, its purpose is to serve as a focus for cultural anxiety about loss of identity, while at the same time providing a remedy for that threatened loss. Revival of and submersion in exclusively Choctaw cultural practices, including sustainment of prophecy telling, instructs Choctaws in appropriate attitudes and behaviors, thus allowing the community to monitor its members.

The author opens the book with an example of the first kind of prophecy, written in Choctaw with an English gloss, then goes on to schematically analyze this and other prophecies in terms of the "prophetic formula": attribution

to an elder, who often is him- or herself a conduit of the prophecy of a deceased person; the special language that marks the prophecy (“Things are going to come up”); the repetition of one of the set of core prophecies; expression of amazement (“How did they know?”), followed by a reconciliation of the prophecy with current life events that will confirm its validity. Mould exhaustively interweaves analysis of the actual speech of several prophecies with current events in Mississippi Choctaw culture and theoretical models of discourse, which form the core of the text.

He does an excellent job of integrating the form and role of prophetic discourse with the Christian faith of modern Choctaws, a point that could hardly be left unaddressed. Mould describes the various and nuanced ways in which Choctaws are able to validate both traditions, sometimes by allowing that “God could have talked to the Choctaw peoples too” (119), or by conflating biblical themes with traditional ones. My favorite of these, although he does not identify it as such, is a kind of new Passover, in which future Chinese masters will kill everyone except those with a Choctaw shirt hanging on the porch (166).

The book is somewhat less successful in creating an overview of the place of prophecy in Choctaw culture. Mould argues persuasively that the described modern adaptation is a continuation of traditional prophecy, which serves to enculturate and guide Choctaw people. However, he omits one extremely important group from his analysis: the Oklahoma Choctaws, the larger of the two political entities. The author goes to some length in his opening paragraphs to point out the “invisibility” of the Mississippi Choctaws, their political limbo between blacks and whites in the segregated South, and their economic marginality until the advent of casino gambling. He ties this cultural experience to the motives for prophecy making, but also suggests that it is a traditional Choctaw verbal art from long before Removal and the separation of the two peoples. The Oklahoma Choctaws have an entirely different history: they are politically powerful in a state where the Native American tribes, in the aggregate, are some one of the largest employers, where there are no reservations, and where Choctaws are highly integrated into the dominant society. The question looms large: is prophesying something that the besieged Mississippi Choctaws developed themselves to preserve cultural integrity, or is prophecy part of a larger Choctaw tradition? If it is, does it have a different form, or does it exist as such at all, in Oklahoma? Although the author is not obliged to investigate these questions in a book that is, after all, about the Mississippi group, he probably should have demurred in magnifying the significance of this form until there is a clearer path from the prophetic speech of the *hopaii* to its modern forms in both Choctaw societies.

The treatment of the language itself forms a valuable part of this book, an aspect that is often omitted perhaps because it is so hard to deal with native languages. Mould gives an excellent rendering of his speakers’ English speeches, transcribing them as uttered, including false starts and distinctive grammatical features, but without irritating and condescending attempts to reproduce the phonological aspects of their speech. I found the transcriptions to have a pleasing, authentic correspondence to the speech of Choctaw

people in my own world. Taking on Choctaw orthography is another question: although there are two “official” orthographies (one developed with linguistic consultation by the Mississippi Band of Choctaws and the other based on the missionary Cyrus Byington’s work and adopted by the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma), in reality, writers seem to develop idiosyncratic spelling systems borrowed from many sources. Those who read Choctaw soon learn to tolerate all spellings short of hieroglyphics. When transcribing long speeches, the author uses a hybrid of the Mississippi system—accents and polish hooks on vowels, but an odd and inconsistent mix of symbols for fricatives—then, for other examples of Choctaw in the text, he uses clearly Byingtonian spellings. A word to the reader about orthography might have been prudent.

With respect to style and organization, the book makes some jarring switches in register from the strangely literary preface (xix): “be lured and lulled by the lights and shows and siren song of the Big Jackpot . . .” to the numbered outline of a “research problem” a few pages later. The body of the text similarly mixes dissertation-level jargon with homey descriptions of Choctaw lives, folksy editorial comments, and the use of the second-person (“you”) form of address. It seems that the intended audience for the book is both the academic and the general reader; as it is, both might be mildly frustrated with the book’s style, although ultimately both will gain appreciable knowledge and insight. I found my concentration being interrupted constantly by one of the 163 endnotes, a large fraction of which could have been profitably folded into the body of the text or dispensed with. The book’s main points are laid out in a rather peripatetic manner, leaving the reader to make inferences as she can manage to put the pieces together. The major example of this is the concentration in the early chapters on the fine points of the verbal art itself, saving the context until much later. I would have benefited from having the main points made early and decisively, showing how the prophetic form fits into the culture, then providing the close analysis. It was only in the latter part of the book that I was even convinced that the speech could indeed be called prophecy. Similarly, the list of prophetic themes is placed in an appendix at the end: familiarity with those themes from the beginning would have helped me to see the unity of this discourse and supported the author’s arguments.

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Evolution, Creationism, and Other Modern Myths: A Critical Inquiry. By Vine Deloria, Jr. Golden, Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing, 2002. 274 pages. \$24.95 cloth; \$18.95 paper.

No other Native American author is as prolific or as passionate in tackling controversial topics as Vine Deloria, Jr. For the past thirty years, he has set the standard for discourse on such topics as Native American religions, metaphysics, and social and political policy. *Evolution, Creationism, and Other Modern Myths* again breaks new ground by extending his corpus to include a direct