

and defines a People's existence, whether it be the songs and stories of the past and present or whether it be the poems and fiction recorded by these contemporary writers.

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**The Jailing of Cecelia Capture.** By Janet Campbell Hale. New York: Random House, 1985. Pp. 201. \$15.95 Cloth.

Although some American Indian writers and scholars feel their hackles rising at the term "American Indian Renaissance," arguing convincingly that such a term denigrates both the incredible richness of American Indian oral tradition and the contributions long made by American Indian writers to American letters, it is impossible to argue that a renaissance in the American Indian novel has not occurred since the publication of N. Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* in 1968. The latest addition to an increasingly impressive list of novels by and about American Indians is Janet Campbell Hale's *The Jailing of Cecelia Capture*. In this, her second novel, Janet Campbell Hale adds a second and powerful voice to Paula Gunn Allen's depiction of the plight of the mixed-blood Indian woman in contemporary America. While Hale joins Allen as only the second writer to give voice to such a protagonist since Hum-Ishu-Ma's *Co-Ge-We-A* in 1927, Hale's protagonist, Cecelia Capture, differs from Allen's Ephanie and almost all previous Indian protagonists by American Indian writers in significant ways.

In *The Jailing of Cecelia Capture*, Janet Campbell Hale, a member of the Coeur d'Alene tribe, skillfully traces the mental peregrinations of her heroine from a jail cell in Berkeley, California to a reservation childhood in Idaho and back to the hippie era in San Francisco and law school at the University of California in Berkeley. From a jail cell shared by prostitutes we journey on a kind of psychic exploration, or vision quest strangely appropriate to contemporary American Indians in urban America, moving with Cecelia Capture on an associational journey through the thirty years that have brought her to the Berkeley City Jail.

Drunk driving and welfare fraud have landed Cecelia Capture in jail; the welfare charge is very old and very tenuous, the result of a young, unwed mother's attempt to support herself and her

young daughter. And while she is alone in her final cell, Cecelia recalls moments in her childhood on the Idaho reservation with her father, Will Capture, ex-prize fighter, tribal activist, alcoholic and would-be lawyer, and her mother, a half-breed whose green eyes and light skin belie her American Indian blood and whose desire it is to deny the blood that ties her to the land. Groomed by her father to be the son he did not have, Cecelia excels in classes and on the high school track, outdistancing her White classmates in every way and preparing herself to become the lawyer her father could not be. With every stride Cecelia simultaneously leaves her American Indian identity behind, preparing for a future in which she will be deracinated and isolated, alienated and displaced, a future in which she will become one of the "sidewalk Indians" she is warned about in San Francisco.

From the stark jail cell Hale takes us to the bitter cold of Cecelia's reservation childhood and from the reservation to Tacoma and beyond, as a sixteen-year-old runaway, to San Francisco. The remembrance of things inexorably past includes the first love who leaves behind an unborn son and dies in Vietnam; the White husband whose liberal inclination couples him with Cecelia Capture; a daughter; law classes at the University of California; divorce; other lovers; and Thomas Running Horse, the one American Indian lover of Cecelia's thirty years.

The tale of the mixed-blood caught between worlds is a familiar one to readers of American Indian literature, a theme central to the fiction of Momaday, Leslie Silko, James Welch, Gerald Vizenor, Louise Erdrich, Paula Gunn Allen. Where Janet Campbell Hale differs from these predecessors, however, is in her willingness to force her protagonist to confront the trauma of her life alone, without a people, a tribe, a pueblo, a tradition to fall back upon. In *House Made of Dawn* Momaday's Abel is able to return, to reintegrate; in *Ceremony* Silko's Tayo heals himself and his land and his people by a process of rediscovery; in Welch's *Winter in the Blood* the unnamed narrator discovers, through Yellow Calf, a world rich in tradition and meaning; in Vizenor's *Darkness in Saint Louis Bearheart*, the author's sacred clowns and misfits journey back to the center, the place of power; in Allen's *The Woman Who Owned the Shadows* Ephanie's psychic quest is aided by Spider Woman and tradition; and in Louise Erdrich's *Love Medicine* self-knowledge is a knowledge of people, tribe and place as

well as an understanding of the soul. In *The Jailing of Cecelia Capture* Janet Campbell Hale allows her heroine to confront the difficulties of simple existence without Spider Woman, without Betonie, without a Coyote or Yellow Calf. While the result of this confrontation lacks the celebratory power of most of these previous novels by American Indian writers, at the end of this novel one is left with a feeling of grim determination that suggests, in its very simplicity, a new valuation of life, of going on.

In this work, more than a decade after her first novel, *The Owl's Song* (Doubleday, 1974), Janet Campbell Hale has added a new and valuable perspective to fiction by American Indian writers, one that, considered along with Allen's *The Woman Who Owned the Shadows* and Erdrich's *Love Medicine*, suggests a new direction in American fiction.

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**American Indian Novelists: An Annotated Critical Bibliography.** By Tom Colonnese and Louis Owens. New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1985. 178 pp. \$28.00 Cloth.

Compiling bibliographies of living authors is an absolutely necessary yet often thankless task. My own experience with primary and secondary bibliography has been with such eminently "safe" authors of the American literary establishment as Kurt Vonnegut and Donald Barthelme. Yet even here one can unintentionally step on some very tender toes, as I did when I closed my Barthelme coverage in December 1975, for an edition going to press in early 1976. When the book appeared in 1977 Barthelme's British editor wrote an outraged letter to The Shoe String Press complaining that his 1977 editions had been overlooked: "This strikes me as a substantial error and I hope you will take the appropriate punitive measures against the book's editor."

Thankfully, no punitive measures (one thinks of a typically British Public School!) will have to be taken against Tom Colonnese and Louis Owens, since even though their subjects were growing and writing and reacting to critical scholarship as this book was being prepared, its substance has survived the vicissitudes of current literary history—a history in which a year's