

developed innovative methods that aimed to empower indigenous populations such as the Zuni and Hopi as well as archaeologists.

The growing recognition of the importance of place-centered studies in socio-cultural anthropology and archaeology is also clearly manifest in the writing of *Crow Indian Rock Art*. McCleary's volume complements some seminal place-centered writings such as *Wisdom Sits in Places* and *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History*, and the development of numerous archaeology cultural landscape studies such as *Collaboration in Archaeological Practice: Engaging Descendant Communities*, *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Places, Paths, and Monuments*, and more recently, *Sacred Sites, Sacred Places*. Just as these writings are redefining the fields of sociocultural and linguistic anthropology and archaeology, texts such as *Crow Indian Rock Art* promise to augment and possibly reshape the interpretive methodologies currently employed in the subfield of rock art. McCleary's tripartite approach of consulting large numbers of contemporary indigenous Crow consultants, gathering data derived from ethnohistoric accounts, and employing data derived from archaeological methods is in keeping with the best of the classic approaches to Plains anthropology, including those of Alice Kehoe, James Murie, Ella Deloria, Preston Holder, and Douglas Parks, and more recent scholars such as Maria N. Zedeño and Linea Sundstrom, among others (9). In addition to conducting holistic and integrative scholarship, McCleary introduces a deeply collaborative component that honors the communities who are linked to the rock art through oral traditions, social memories, and personal experiences.

McCleary's book represents a third trend in archaeology that is in keeping with the theoretical insights of post-processualism, particularly the critical examination of not only what counts as knowledge, but also whose knowledge counts. Regarding what counts as knowledge, McCleary treats the oral traditions and cultural perceptions of contemporary Crow consultants as legitimate forms of knowledge that can potentially expand collective understandings of the archaeological record. In regard to whose knowledge counts, McCleary chooses to integrate indigenous Crow consultants in all stages of the research, thus implicitly and explicitly acknowledging the shared authority and authorship of the present and past.

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**Dying from Improvement: Inquests and Inquiries into Indigenous Deaths in Custody.** By Sherene Razack. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015. 328 pages. CND \$75.00 cloth; CND \$32.95 paper.

Sherene Razack has written a meticulously researched book that indicts the Canadian criminal justice system for its cruel and indifferent treatment of Aboriginal offenders and victims. Using detailed content analyzes of inquests and inquiries into deaths in custody of Aboriginal men in British Columbia and Saskatchewan, she explains that colonialism has not ended, as many state officials and university scholars profess, but

can be seen to play out in the interactions between police, medical personnel, and the indigenous “bodies” who are victims of their occasionally lethal brutality, repeated failure to care, and/or indifference and callousness. The colonial role of inquests and inquiries is to excuse these acts by focusing on the victims as alcohol or drug users in poor health. Instead of finding that medical and justice systems directly contribute to these deaths, these official bodies find instead that, due to the victims’ refusal to be helped, these systems are showing compassion at best and frustration at worst.

Using a case-study method, the author reviews the transcripts and reports from inquiries into several deaths: Frank Paul, an ill, elderly man unable to walk, who was dumped by Vancouver police to die in an alley; Paul Alphonse, who was brought to the hospital by the Williams Lake, BC police, and then died with a large boot-print on his chest; Anthany Dawson, a man in physical and mental distress who was hog-tied by Victoria, British Columbia police and stopped breathing on the way to the hospital; and Rodney Naistus, Lawrence Wegner, and Darryl Night, three Aboriginal men who froze to death on the outskirts of Saskatoon shortly after release from police custody. She also briefly reviews three Aboriginal deaths by medical neglect and suicide in jail cells. In all these cases, alcohol or drugs became the focus of the inquiry instead of the actions of the police or correctional officers. She critiques the inquiries and inquests both for ignoring the complicity of the police in the deaths and for glossing over the underlying dehumanizing and devaluing colonial attitudes that allow the victims’ lack of protection by the law. As she states, “the activity of clearing settler spaces of Indigenous bodies becomes morally defensible if Indigenous people can in fact be turned into debris, a transformation that can be accomplished by viewing the Indigenous body as sick, dysfunctional, and self-destructive” (17). This perceived pathological fragility or vulnerability “obscures the striking indifference that doctors, nurses, guards, police, and others display towards Indigenous people in their custody” (23).

Razack finds that these inquiries serve as a source of redemption for non-indigenous settler society by confirming its capacity to care and renewing its commitment to “improving Indigenous lives through understanding cultural differences,” a diversion from the more unacceptable, unacknowledged problems of racial violence and routine indifference that characterize interactions between indigenous and non-indigenous people (23). Evidence of physical brutality or questions of intent to cause suffering or death are dismissed as irrelevant or “mysterious” in favor of casting the Aboriginal individuals as dying remnants of a subhuman, premodern group afflicted by alcohol and/or drugs and incapable of surviving modern life. In their testimonies, the voices of the indigenous victims’ families and communities are suppressed and discounted as unreliable, compared to the “expert evidence of [non-indigenous] men and women of science” (9). As she states, through inquests and inquiries “states provide themselves with alibis not only for inaction but also for crimes of overt violence” (5).

*Dying from Improvement* asks, “What do these stories do?” The author finds that these inquests and inquiries are essential to the ongoing settler project of legally taking over indigenous lands and discrediting and removing indigenous peoples: “Indigenous people stand in the way of settler colonialism, contesting settler entitlement and throwing into the question settler legitimacy as the original and rightful owner” (7). As

she explains: "Through a legal performance of Indigenous peoples as a dying race who are simply pathologically unable to cope with the demands of modern life, the settler subject is formed and his or her entitlement to the land secured" (6). At the same time the inquests and inquiries also paint settlers "as exemplary in their efforts to assist Indigenous people's entry into modernity" (6).

This kind of racism as part of the colonial project is not restricted to Canada, which Razack shows by briefly applying her analysis to the Australian Inquiry into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. This reader finds her analysis equally relevant to the United States; for example, it applies to the death of Tony Lester, a young Native American man in an Arizona jail who committed suicide. The correctional officers who were the first responders did nothing to stop his bleeding, and instead videotaped him as he died. The subsequent investigation by a local news program and the Arizona Department of Corrections (DOC) focused entirely on Lester's mental illness and the inaction of the correctional officers, mentioning only briefly that he was indigenous. The news story notes that as a result, suicide prevention training was recommended for all correctional personnel and that three of the four officers involved are still working for the DOC. The video embedded into this news story is graphic and horrific; moreover, as with the Canadian examples Razack analyzes, this story "medicalizes" an indigenous death (23) and does not investigate the possible relationship between the victim's indigenous status and the (in)actions of the officers.

It is sobering to think that the casual brutality, systematic inhumanity, and indifference by criminal justice personnel and medical personnel portrayed in Razack's book have many of the same consequences as hate crimes against indigenous peoples. All act as negative messages to the Aboriginal community: they are not wanted in settler space, they are inferior to non-indigenous settlers, their lives are of less value, they are incapable of properly using their lands and resources, and they should have the good grace to either disappear or die so the superior race can take over. Barbara Perry's 2008 volume *Silent Victims: Hate Crimes Against Native Americans* contains relevant research on the normalization of ethnviolence against American Indians.

Razack's research makes it clear that in order to accomplish social justice for indigenous peoples in Canada and other colonized countries, there is a need to address colonialism as an ongoing, still-relevant process that continues to have an enormous impact on indigenous people, and further, to address the ways the state uses alcohol and drug use to discredit the ability of indigenous people to self-govern. Most importantly, it is necessary to change the continuing settler-colonial attitudes towards indigenous people that underlie such horrific interactions as those described in this book. This book is highly recommended for criminology, sociology, and Native American studies and indigenous studies scholars and students in the United States, Canada and other colonized countries, and anyone who wants insight into the callous, even lethal treatment of indigenous people by some members of organizations that are supposed to be dedicated to "service" and "help."

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