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Savage Anxieties: The Invention of Western Civilization. By Robert A. Williams, Jr.

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the evolving Marketplace sought to work beyond a limited reference of artistic “preservation” for Native people by sympathetic non-Native art curators, art instructors, anthropologists, and a growing American art market (27). The Marketplace has worked to substantiate and encourage ongoing evaluation of their artistic merits and cultural relevance by Native artists themselves. Past Indian Fair organizer Margretta Dietrich was dedicated to the survival of Native art and the entwined spirits of artistic evaluation and evolution. Bernstein quotes her 1936 statement that “if native art is to survive it must be a growing thing, suitable for the time and circumstance in which it is made and it must be created out of the imagination of the individual craftsman, not merely a faithful reproduction of the work of his ancestors” (Dietrich 92).

Bernstein’s collection of articles, documents, art works, and photographs capture a notable and ever-growing Native culture being defined through the representation and cooperation of both Native artists and non-Native ethnographers, allowing us to see a “bridge” that was constructed between these often-conflicting camps (48). This detailed sensitive survey challenges the reader to step beyond a comfortable curatorial position into one clothed with the beauty, awe, and inspiration derived from the persistence of Native art. What establishes this text as an invaluable research document is the consistent reminder that Native artists did and continue to establish their own artwork, and “on their own terms by taking . . . ancient art form[s] and creating new circumstances for [their] continuance and revitalization” (42). Bernstein’s book likewise avoids the lingering possibility of confirming a mere historic “revival” of Native art. Rather, the text functions as an open door to the advanced scholar and interested art patron alike.

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**Savage Anxieties: The Invention of Western Civilization.** By Robert A. Williams, Jr. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. 272 pages. \$28.00 cloth.

Western civilization, argues Robert Williams, has defined itself for three millenia through stereotypes of the savage. Indeed, he writes, “without the idea of the savage to understand what it is, what it was, and what it could be, Western civilization, as we know it, would never have been able to invent itself” (1). This is not a new argument, as readers of Roy Harvey Pearce’s *Savagism and Civilization* (1953/1965) or Robert F. Berkhofer’s *The White Man’s Indian* (1978) are aware. But this wide-ranging and accessible text is useful in summarizing the scholarship on stereotypes of savagery for a new generation of readers. It ties that summary to a psychoanalytic theory of anxiety and brings the story

up to date, albeit with a very quick jump from the founding of the United States to the present. It is unfortunate that the psychoanalytic and contemporary materials comprise only the last twenty pages of *Savage Anxieties*.

Williams is a professor of law at the University of Arizona and the author of numerous works on Indian law and indigenous human rights. Among these are *The American Indian in Western Legal Thought: The Discourses of Conquest* (1990), an important analysis of Western legal thought that discusses in detail the medieval discourse of crusade, Catholic and Protestant discourses of conquest, and the colonizing legal theory of the United States. The present volume covers some of the same ground for a general audience, but also looks back at the development of classical ideas of savagery. In fact, fully half of the book concerns the development of the idea of the barbarian in ancient Greece (Homer, Hesiod), classical Greece (Euripides, Herodotus, Plato, Socrates, Aristotle), and the Roman Empire (Caesar, Tacitus, Lucretius, Cicero, Virgil, Ovid, Juvenal). After these six chapters Williams takes up the idea of the savage in the medieval church (Tertullian, Pope Innocent), Renaissance humanism (Rabelais, Boccaccio, Martyr, Purchas), and the Enlightenment (Rousseau, Locke, Montesquieu), ending with the Indian policy of the founders of the United States. These chapters all offer an interesting path through history, providing readers a vantage point very different from the conventional one.

In the final chapter Williams considers "The Persistence of the Doctrine of Discovery in Western Civilization." Here he focuses on the "continued vitality and resonance of the idea of tribal savagery's presumed fundamental irreconcilability with Western civilization in the contemporary human rights struggles of indigenous tribal peoples around the world today" (8–9). It is in this chapter that Williams refers the "savage anxieties" of his title to psychoanalytic theory, arguing that "the idea of the savage persists as an obsession throughout the modern-day West" (226), with obsession understood, following the fourth edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, as something "experienced as intrusive and inappropriate and that cause[s] marked anxiety or distress" (225). Speaking directly to the reader, Williams points to the language of savagery employed by contemporary politicians, military spokespersons, advertising agencies, and the entertainment industry. He concludes with a discussion of the dangers of the language of savagery when allied with legal power, tracing the international impact of US Chief Justice John Marshall's doctrine of discovery in his 1823 opinion in *Johnson v. McIntosh*—in particular, its impact on the treatment of indigenous peoples in the legal systems of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

In ten tantalizing pages on international law in the twenty-first century, Williams discusses the continuing significance of the idea of savagery. He summarizes important developments in international law recognizing the rights

of indigenous peoples, as well as the refusal of the Western settler states of Canada, Australia, and the United States to abandon the doctrine of discovery, with severe consequences for the property rights, health, and prosperity of indigenous people. Williams' expertise in this area is more than theoretical: he has represented tribal groups before the Supreme Court, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Peoples. Given his experience and the originality of his material on contemporary legal cases, readers would have welcomed a more extensive treatment (although for US examples they may turn to Williams' 2005 volume *Like a Loaded Weapon: The Rehnquist Court, Indian Rights, and the Legal History of Racism in America*).

In concluding *Savage Anxieties* Williams states, "My hope in writing this book has been to question a habit of thought and speech that has become an obsession with the West over the course of three thousand years. The very survival of the world's remaining indigenous tribal peoples may depend on whether the Western world can reinvent itself without using the language of savagery" (246). This would seem to be what contemporary theories of multiculturalism, universal human rights, and some forms of feminism and environmentalism aim to do, although ideas of the irreconcilability of savagery are often recycled through ideas of the "natural," "authentic," or "traditional." As Williams puts it, ideas of savagery "shape and inform the way Western civilization continuously seeks to reinvent itself", including those portions of Western civilization that seek to invent radical alternatives (82).

Williams has chosen to couch his discussion in terms of mid-twentieth-century theories of stereotypes and prejudice such as those of Lippman and Allport, rather than more contemporary theories of representation and affect as developed in the interdisciplinary scholarship of Stephen Greenblatt, Stuart Hall, Donna Haraway, Elizabeth Povinelli, Ann Stoler, Michel-Rolph Trouillot, Gerald Vizenor, and others. This leads Williams to write of "Western civilization" and the "idea of the savage" in the totalizing vein characteristic of Pearce and Berkhofer. Considering "the savage" as a product of representational practices might have allowed Williams to deepen his analysis of "savage anxieties" by tying it to scholarship on colonial and postcolonial anxieties and forms of control. But Williams is not primarily interested in contributing to theoretical discussions of representation; rather, he seeks to demonstrate the longevity, pervasiveness, and perniciousness of what Michel-Rolph Trouillot, in *Global Transformations* (2003), has called "the savage slot." This book accomplishes this mission and, one hopes, will give many readers the motivation to explore further.

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