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Reviews

America Is Indian Country: Opinions and Perspectives from *Indian Country Today*. Edited by José Barreiro and Tim Johnson. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 2005. 338 pages. \$16.95 paper.

America Is Indian Country is a compilation of selected editorials, essays, and illustrations originally published in the national newspaper *Indian Country Today* between 2000 and 2004. The paper's editors, key tribal leaders, politicians, and scholars are the contributing writers. The book's purpose is to "elevate the art [of storytelling], to inform, share, shape, and activate the minds of those making differences at all levels of American Indian policy, from education, health, or housing workshops to meetings and conferences" (xviii). As such, it touches on many, if not most, of the contemporary Native issues and national concerns of those years and offers information, opinions, insights, and heart.

The book is organized into ten chapters that include editorials from *Indian Country Today* written by the book's editors, José Barreiro and Tim Johnson, and perspectives on the same topics that were originally op-ed pieces written by nineteen guest contributors, including Rebecca Adamson, Ben Nighthorse Campbell, Katsi Cook, Suzan Shown Harjo, Winona LaDuke, Kevin Gover, John C. Mohawk, Steven Newcomb, and David E. Wilkins. *America Is Indian Country* covers some of the most important and historically significant issues of our times, issues as diverse as gaming, intellectual property rights, economic diversification, religious freedom, tribal colleges, health care, control of tribal assets, tribal justice systems, identity politics, blood quantum, the mainstream press, the United Nations, and the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI). Each piece is no more than a few pages and all are written in a straightforward and readable style. A series of social commentaries and cartoons by Marty Two Bulls are dispersed throughout.

The book includes short biographical sketches of the twenty-one contributors and an extensive index, something rarely found in an anthology of this type. These are extremely useful, particularly if the book is intended as a resource for classroom discussion.

[*Susan Lobo*] This book will be equally useful for students and scholars, as well as for the general public. The dedication notes that the audience is

“the core intellectual and community-oriented tribal networks and peoples and their circles of activist allies in the world” (iii). The topics are approached in an inclusive way that crosscuts and links tribal entities, American Indian nonprofits, and Indian organizations in urban, off-reservation areas (as well as those on reservations) and throughout the northern and southern portions of the American hemisphere. As a result of the range of content and the structuring of this anthology, it has strong potential as an excellent teaching tool, one that is both thoughtful and challenging and “that provides a dynamic interpretation of national events, legal and legislative trends, and how they influence and shape Indian country” (xix).

Some of the topics, such as those related to the Bush/Kerry election, are now outdated, but even these bring up pertinent themes. Considering the concentration of Indian peoples in the Southwest and on the West Coast of the United States, I would have liked more pieces focusing on these regions and those issues that impact the Native peoples living there. Although interesting, a few of the pieces in the book, such as “Faith-based War Coverage,” felt a bit removed from the American Indian focus. I took issue with just a few opinions and stances expressed in the book and would relish sitting down with José, Tim, and some of the other contributors to see where a face-to-face discussion would take us. This is a book with attitude, and it engages its readers to think about issues and clarify their opinions.

The contributors show courage to speak directly, often forcefully to critique not only policy and events external to Indian Country but also those within, for example the damage caused by envy and jealousy. The contributors do not flinch in offering opinions that are unpopular in some quarters of Indian Country, such as the comments by Charles Trimble who in hindsight appreciated and gained from his experiences in boarding school (284). There is also the courage to air opinions and comments in presenting a perspective, and perhaps stir healthy controversy, as in the Barreiro and Johnson piece titled “Anna Mae, the Beginning of Clarity” (69).

In sum, Barreiro and Johnson are to be congratulated for pulling together a useful book that addresses issues of contemporary concern in a way that is both insightful and provocative.

[*Colin Ben*] As an American Indian Studies Master of Arts student at the University of Arizona, I was eager to read *America Is Indian Country* for its Native intellectual discussion. One common goal among American Indian studies programs nationwide, American Indian scholars, and the editors of this book is to increase the understanding of our culturally unique tribal nations and the socioeconomic needs each nation faces. This book offers a candid response to contemporary issues, such as the misinformed American public on the success of Indian gaming in “*Time Has Slanted View of Indian Country.*” Additionally, historical financial concerns and issues of accountability are addressed that include the US federal trust responsibility and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) trust assets discussed in “*President Bush, Not His Father’s Son on Indian Policy.*”

The contributors’ writing styles are strengths that demonstrate their wide knowledge base and expertise. For example, “Navajo Code Talkers and

Other Native American Heroes” offers the readers detailed information about the Congressional Gold Medal and the process of its being introduced and authorized by Congress. The thematic chapter topics are varied enough to be incorporated into almost every American Indian studies course. For instance, “In the Media Eye” can be discussed in undergraduate courses with a focus on mass media coverage of Indian affairs. “Nation Building Is Key” has the potential to be incorporated into the graduate-level curriculum for courses pertaining to Native nation building.

This book provides students with a rich resource and basis for discussion. The direct voices and perspectives of skilled Indian professionals are strengths. In academia, American Indian students read many Western scholarly sources and, at times, might overlook indigenous perspectives. It strengthens students’ work when we incorporate these unique tribal voices in our research papers. Also, the cartoon sketches stimulate the reader to relax, recap, and refocus on the topic at hand. The editorial “An American Indian Protagonism” is a useful reference for students who need to cite the Census 2000 statistics pertaining to American Indians.

One challenge I foresee is that the chapters with a strong political focus may be a little confusing for readers if they are not familiar with federal Indian law and policy. The references to the specific foundational Supreme Court Cases of the Marshall’s Trilogy and federal acts such as the Major Crimes Act or the Indian Reorganization Act may be challenging to understand if a student is new to this difficult area of study. When reading the political chapters I encourage the reader to read or skim a federal Indian law and policy book that summarizes foundation laws and policies. This will encourage the student to gain a thorough understanding of the authors’ political stance.

In summation, *America Is Indian Country* will be useful in the classroom setting. I highly recommend to my peers and colleagues that they read this outstanding book. Furthermore, an important strength of the book is that it allows tribal leaders to learn of similar issues that other tribes are working on or have successfully overcome. *America Is Indian Country* can aid in identifying possible solutions to specific tribal challenges, offering tribal leaders solutions that will help them serve their tribal members.

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Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late-Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast. By Paige Raibmon. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005. 307 pages. \$79.95 cloth; \$22.95 paper.

Authentic Indians is a history of how European notions of the “authenticity” of Native North American cultures have been powerfully implicated in Native/settler relations. Raibmon successfully lays out how these notions of the authenticity of Native cultures—with all the loaded cultural assumptions and stereotypes that accompany them—have been imposed on and used