

UCLA

American Indian Culture and Research Journal

Title

Going Native: Indians in the American Cultural Imagination. By Shari M. Huhndorf.

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/0sn382js>

Journal

American Indian Culture and Research Journal , 26(1)

ISSN

0161-6463

Author

Baringer, Sandra

Publication Date

2002

DOI

10.17953

Copyright Information

This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial License, available at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

which often provide flawed or even fictitious accounts of Geronimo's violent attacks upon American and Mexican civilians. Often tinted in sensationalist and even racist language, many army accounts of Geronimo's escapades also suffered from the inability of military translators to assess correctly the testimony of eye witnesses, the majority of whom were often Indians or Mexican peasants. This could partially explain why Geronimo appears more vicious in Kraft's account than he likely was.

Despite these shortcomings, *Gatewood and Geronimo* is a worthy summation of the steadily growing body of scholarship concerning the Apache resistance and the army's role in the settlement of the Southwest. Kraft's narrative of events is lucid, concise, and readily negotiable for all audiences. His attention to detail in reconstructing the military campaigns of 1884–1886 is particularly successful, free from the obsessive attention to tedious minutia that occasionally bogs down traditional military accounts of the Indian wars. Kraft also should be commended for his ability to make sense of the tangled and interlaced movements of other Apache dissidents, including Chihuahua, Josanie, and Naiche, and present a clear, albeit brief, account of their activities relative to those of Geronimo.

Nonetheless, *Gatewood and Geronimo* likely will leave scholars and students seeking fresh interpretations disappointed. The book's unbalanced format renders it far more useful for those interested in Gatewood than Geronimo. Those interested in a more balanced pairing of Geronimo with an American military leader might turn to another recent parallel life portrait, Peter Aleshire's *The Fox and the Whirlwind: General George Crook and Geronimo, a Paired Biography* (2000). In any case, an updated, comprehensive biography of Geronimo remains very much in demand.

Daniel P. Barr
Kent State University

Going Native: Indians in the American Cultural Imagination. By Shari M. Huhndorf. Cornell University Press, 2001. 220 pages. \$42.50 cloth; \$16.95 paper.

Negotiating the boundary between cultural understanding and cultural appropriation is not always easy. Given the inherent imbalance of power between dominant and minority cultures, acts of defensive border policing are often employed, as in Sherman Alexie's preemptive strikes at white men who can't drum (*New York Times Magazine*, October 4, 1992) or Seattle bookstore owners who write songs about being Indian "in my bones" (*Reservation Blues*, 1995). Shari Huhndorf applies such policing to selected acts of appropriation of Indian identities in this book, following close on the heels of Philip DeLoria's *Playing Indian* (1998), to which it will inevitably be compared. Within the spectrum of American studies, DeLoria's approach is more historical and Huhndorf's is more grounded in textual analysis. DeLoria is undeniably kinder to the wannabes. Huhndorf is relentless and for the most

part convincing in linking performance of Nativeness to American nationalism and its subtext of conquest. As the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian is scheduled to open its Washington, D.C., facility in 2003, let us hope that its experts take her critiques of past and present exhibitions to heart before opening its doors to her scrutinizing gaze.

Huhndorf's examples date from the late nineteenth century on, and she argues that they reflect a "widespread ambivalence about modernity" (p. 8), invoking Renato Rosaldo's phrase "imperialist nostalgia" (p. 76). This book is at its best in its close reading of specific texts and its articulation of the conflation of narratives of race and nationalism. In leaving several questions unanswered and avenues unexplored, it may help point the way to further work.

Given the first chapter's focus on the late nineteenth century and specifically the opening discussion of the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876 and the World's Columbia Exposition of 1893, it seems curious that Frederick Hoxie is never mentioned. His important history of federal policy, *A Final Premise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indian, 1880-1920* (1984), includes an extensive discussion of these two expositions and reaches some of the same conclusions. The Boy Scouts, a movement dating roughly from the early twentieth century, have likewise provided fertile ground for analysis; a picture of young white boys dressed in Indian war bonnets appears on the cover of *Going Native*. The discussion of the Boy Scouts is limited to the final section of the first chapter and though it appears to comprise a fairly thorough history of the movement's founding texts, it omits entirely the input of Charles Eastman, Arthur C. Parker, and Ella Deloria, Native Americans involved with the Boy Scouts and Campfire Girls who, in Phillip Deloria's words, "wanted to become bridge figures, using antimodern primitivism to defend native cultures against the negative stereotypes left over from colonial conquest" (Deloria, *Playing Indian*, p. 122). For example, Charles Eastman, the Santee Sioux doctor who witnessed both the Sioux Uprising of 1862 and the Wounded Knee massacre, was a prolific writer best known for his later autobiography *From the Deep Woods to Civilization* (1916). He wrote *Indian Scout Talks: A Guide for Boy Scouts and Campfire Girls* in 1914 (republished in 1974 as *Indian Scout Craft and Lore*). Eastman was seen as a model of the successfully assimilated Indian by many of his white contemporaries, but his interest in the Boy Scouts was a consistent part of his "campaign of education on the Indian and his true place in American history" (Eastman, *Deep Woods*, p. 187).

Acknowledging Stuart Hall's model of popular culture as "an arena of consent and resistance," Huhndorf says that her primary focus is "European-American performances and representations of nativeness," yet claims a "secondary goal" in "also attend[ing] . . . to the ways in which Native peoples contest the definitions imposed upon them or actively utilize them for their own subversive purposes" (p. 13). Given the secondary goal, it is disappointing that she edited out much of her material on the Boy Scouts from the version previously published in William Penn's anthology *As We Are Now* (1997) rather than expanding it. As Deloria says, the relationship between Indians and non-Indians on this issue is "extraordinarily complex" (Deloria, *Playing*

Indian, p. 122). Deloria focuses primarily on the effect such mimetic cultural fence-sitting had on the Native figures engaged in it. Did Eastman, Parker, and Ella Deloria fail in redefining Indianness “for their own subversive purposes”? The question remains open to discussion. Huhndorf documents “Indian-inspired men’s and boys’ clubs” such as the Order of Red Men dating back to the middle of the nineteenth century (p. 65), an early ritualized appropriation of Native identities that seems to have been operating independently of the attitudes toward Indians that Eastman experienced. The white people Eastman encountered on his lecture tours saw in the American Indian a “barbarous and atrocious character” which Eastman attributes to the bad effects of the “transition period,” meaning the period of contact though the end of the nineteenth century (Eastman, *Deep Woods*, p. 187). Such inconsistencies in the popular imagination point to the significance of Native participation in the shaping of notions of “Indianness” within the Boy Scouts.

The chapter on Eskimo representations offers interesting and valuable insights into the making of Robert Flaherty’s 1922 docudrama of the vanishing Eskimo, *Nanook of the North*, along with its documentary companion compiled from footage filmed during the same period, *My Eskimo Friends* (released 1924). The story of Minik, the Eskimo child who survived the trip to New York with Peary’s expedition in 1897, is covered here, as compiled from Minik’s letters and interviews in Kenn Harper’s *Give Me My Father’s Body* (1986). Early anthropologists suffer greatly under Huhndorf’s analysis, though as she explains in a footnote, these anthropologists’ observations focused on the Central Eskimos of Canada, a group whose lifestyle is not representative of more widespread Inuit peoples (she discusses her choice of terminology in a separate footnote). Her point that racial indeterminacy seemed to play a fundamental role in Western fascination with the Eskimos is well taken, but her characterization of Johann Blumenbach’s speculation about “Finnish origins” as “absurd” (p. 101) would seem to compel further elaboration in light of phenotypical characteristics such as blondeness acknowledged by the author in the same paragraph. “Origin” may be an ethnocentric characterization, but when the subject is cross-cultural contact, there seems room for further speculation rather than dismissal.

Perhaps the most interesting chapter, yet at the same time troubling, is the one on Asa (a.k.a. Bedford Forrest) Carter and his two novels *Gone to Texas* (1973), later to become the Clint Eastwood film *The Outlaw Josey Wales*, and *The Education of Little Tree* (1976). Huhndorf makes significant headway in addressing the contradiction implicit in the posthumous revelation that Carter had been a Klan member who at one point worked for George Wallace. Amidst all the furor over the identity of Little Tree’s author, few have actually pursued a close reading of the text. Huhndorf’s reading of racial discourse in *Little Tree* is deft, detailed, and at times compelling, as in her decoding of the narrative of the vanishing Indian in Granpa’s description to Little Tree of “hard freeze winter . . . [breaking] off the weak limbs of the trees, so only the strong ones come through” (Carter, *Little Tree*, p. 206). But sometimes the racial lines being drawn are oversimplified. For example, she points out that Granpa Wales “is now racially white” in the 1997 film version of *Little*

Tree. But Granpa is half Scottish in the novel as well, representing an alliance between Scottish mountain people and the Cherokee that Huhndorf describes as “peculiar” (p. 153), thus dismissing out of this analysis the long history of intermarriage among Scottish and Cherokee—a history that likewise problematizes any definitive proclamation about Carter’s own ancestry.

The affinity of the “mountain man” with the Cherokee is a major theme in *Gone to Texas* as well. Carter describes the mountain man’s lack of the “land hunger of the flatlander” who instigated the Cherokee removal (Carter, *Gone to Texas*, pp. 58–59). Huhndorf argues that in the novel “Southern mountain folk and the Cherokees . . . share a common history as victims of Northern progressives . . . conceal[ing] violence inflicted on the Indians by the same ‘noble’ white southerners the text identifies as their allies” (p. 143). But the land-grabbing flatlanders were not poor white mountain folk, and the novel does not confuse the politics of the Cherokee removal with the Kansas/Missouri border conflict to the extent Huhndorf implies with her use of the term *Northern progressives* (a term apparently intended to encompass both Kansas border raiders and Andrew Jackson along with the Union army). The term *Flatlander* identifies plantation owners in the South—not poor Appalachian whites—as having engineered the Cherokee removal. It is an important distinction. Huhndorf argues that Carter’s alleged “kinship” between Cherokees and white mountain men (Josey Wales) deracializes the basis for the Cherokee removal and deracializes the Indians themselves (p. 144), but class conflicts in the South should not be ignored in analyzing Carter’s novels. Likewise, the historical fact of intermarriage—as opposed to the narrative prohibition of miscegenation—should be acknowledged as at least as significant a factor in “deracialization” of the Cherokee as anything Carter wrote.

The author critiques Mary Rowlandson’s classic Indian captivity narrative followed by a lengthy reading of Lynn Andrews’s *Medicine Woman* (1981) as a New Age captivity narrative. Andrews’s book is a well-heeled Californian’s account of how she obtained ancient wisdom from a Cree woman, retrieved a sacred basket for her collection, and became a New Age healer. Those interested in the issue of white people masquerading as Indian shamans will find plenty of grist for the mill here. Continued exploration of the “arena of consent and resistance” might discuss at length the interplay of the more recent Native crossover hits Huhndorf mentions—Vincent LaDuke (Sun Bear) and Ed McGaa (Eagle Man), author of *Rainbow Tribe: Ordinary People Journeying on the Red Road* (1992)—with the more blatant appropriation of Native spirituality practiced by Andrews, especially in light of the gender issues foregrounded by Andrews. Huhndorf argues that women’s cross-racial identifications articulate a form of white dominance concealed under the guise of gender identification (p. 183), and so one might well interrogate the sort of dominance, or consent, or resistance, being practiced by Sun Bear and Eagle Man.

The discussion of Leslie Marmon Silko’s recent novel *Gardens in the Dunes* (1999) constitutes the book’s most extensive analysis of a Native text as counternarrative. Euro-American fascination with primitivism is symptomatic of a critique of modernity that is broader than issues of racial domination and

American nationalism. Perhaps Silko has best succeeded in utilizing one byproduct of the discourse of domination, the captivity narrative, for her own subversive purposes in redirecting Euro-Americans back to their own spiritual roots in European paganism. Her novel thus provides a fitting final note on the ramifications of “going Native.”

Sandra Baringer

University of California, Riverside

The Great Peace of Montreal of 1701: French-Native Diplomacy in the Seventeenth Century. By Gilles Havard. Translated by Phyllis Aronoff and Howard Scott. Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2001. 308 pages. \$70.00 cloth; \$24.95 paper.

Gilles Havard, a historian living in Paris, provides a detailed study of the Great Peace of Montreal and the events leading up to it. First published in French in 1992, his work has been revised, updated, translated, and published in English on the three-hundredth anniversary of this major international peace accord.

The seventeenth century was punctuated by increasing warfare between the Five Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy on the one hand, and the French and their predominantly Algonquian allies on the other. By mid century, multiethnic villages on the western shores of the Great Lakes were crowded with displaced peoples seeking refuge from Iroquois attacks. By the 1680s French agents were helping forge these peoples into an anti-Iroquois coalition. By the end of the century, Ojibwas and other western tribes were inflicting defeats on the Iroquois, while the Iroquois were getting dragged into escalating Anglo-French colonial conflict. Their numbers thinned by war and disease, the Iroquois looked to chart a new course, while the French hoped to neutralize them as England’s most formidable Native ally. The Great Peace at Montreal established peace between the Iroquois and the Great Lakes nations, and provided for Iroquois neutrality in the event of renewed war between England and France.

By any standards, the Great Peace was a major diplomatic feat. Many ethnohistorians—William Eccles, Francis Jennings, Daniel Richter, William Starna, and Jose Brandão—have written about it, but Havard has given it the book-length treatment it deserves. Part one surveys the political and diplomatic arena, identifies the agendas and strategies of the different nations, describes the workings of forest diplomacy, and traces wars and peace in the seventeenth century. Part two reconstructs the long round of negotiations that began in the winter of 1697 and culminated at Montreal in the summer of 1701. Part three concentrates on the conference itself, when 1,300 representatives from thirty-eight or thirty-nine Indian nations and one European nation met at Montreal. After almost three weeks of negotiation and ceremony, marred by outbreaks of disease, headmen from the various nations put their marks on an agreement and brought an end to the wars most of them