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study of religion to transform its ideas on these topics and perform some formidable and much needed work in these areas. In addition, while doing such work, scholars can transform their ideas about themselves and remain self-critical in their own perspectives, allowing new ideas to generate more discussion with others. In other words, scholars need to explore such controversial issues that Cruden presents since "[t]he brighter the fire gets—the more shadows and vulnerabilities become visible—the more imperative it becomes to embrace" such issues and begin to change.

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Crow Dog: Four Generations of Sioux Medicine Men. By Leonard Crow Dog and Richard Erdoes. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1996. 243 pages. \$13.00 paper.

In a world in which books are popping out of every nook and cranny at a speed that defies description much less reading, Richard Erdoes brings some illumination to those who have something to say but don't write; to those who voice the pre-Columbian mindset; those who have not yet joined the dubious honor of being in the Gutenberg brigade. *Lame Deer*. Mary Crow Dog. And now, Leonard Crow Dog, medicine man turned political activist through the circumstances thrust upon him by the American Indian Movement.

Crow Dog will become, for future generations of Natives, an increasingly important figure; as Natives return to their spiritual heritage they will sense the strange dichotomy of what it must have been like to be Leonard Crow Dog in the 1970s; what it must have been like to have been raised in a traditional Lakota family that knew the value systems of the Lakota while the majority of their own people were reaching for the values of the white mainstream.

There are a few families within each tribal nation who, like the Crow Dog family, held to their ancient ways while all about them swirled with tribal dysfunction. Since the end of the military campaigns in the late 1800s, the war on the Indian reservations has been a war of attrition, a war for the minds of the children, an old dog, in this case an old Crow Dog, being hard to teach new tricks.

The bureaucrats, sitting comfortably in their offices in

Washington, D.C., or Billings or Albuquerque or Portland, condescendingly secure in the knowledge that assimilation, total and full and as sure as a body count, was inevitable, had been inevitable since day one, must have come close to infarction when it was announced that a pre-literate Lakota mystic was in league with the likes of Russell Means and Dennis Banks. But there he was, in all his horse and buffalo day glory, claiming he had never gone to the white man's schools, that his father had once stood off the truant officer with a gun when they threatened to take his son away to be assimilated. Crow Dog.

For those in the business of Indian affairs the name immediately evoked an image from law school, from grad school, from old photographs, from the hubris of the history books of the past. Crow Dog. Some remembered. Some went back to the history books, some to the law books; the name resonated a bit louder than the average Native associated with westward expansion. Sure enough. The Crow Dog of the last century, the one the historians and ethnologists and bureaucrats remembered, was remembered for good reason: *ex parte* Crow Dog. Crow Dog killed a member of his own nation, Spotted Tail, and was exonerated by the U.S. Supreme Court, the court decision saying that the U.S. government did not have jurisdiction on an Indian reservation.

Uncle Sam soon realized his mistake, and soon the federal government did claim jurisdiction over Native land with the passage of laws that dealt with major crimes on reservations. That overbearing presence was what brought the American Indian Movement onto the Pine Ridge reservation in western South Dakota in February of 1973. Wounded Knee 11. Crow Dog had been asked to serve in the capacity as spiritual adviser to the militant American Indian Movement a few years prior to Wounded Knee 11. But it was at Wounded Knee that Crow Dog's name began to go out over the wire; in the years following Wounded Knee 11 people from around the world would come to his home—Crow Dog's Paradise—to attend his ceremonies and Sun Dance. Said Crow Dog: "Folks dropped in at all hours, day and night.... The floors of both houses often were covered with sleeping figures. ... Young white people, hippies, and flower children camped out on the Paradise, trying to find something they had lost, some spiritual belief, and they stayed, and stayed, and stayed."

Crow Dog's Paradise was hardly a paradise on the night the FBI and federal marshalls swooped onto the Rosebud reservation looking for Leonard Peltier. They tied Crow Dog naked to a tree. They tied quite a number of people to trees that night. One

imagines the death squads of Argentina or Chile, rounding up the people to be shot. But this was America and it was the state of South Dakota and it was 1975. As Crow Dog tells it they came with flak jackets, helicopters, tracked vehicles, trucks, and even rubber boats to prevent the Indians from escaping across the White River. It sounds like a scene from Tim O'Brien's celebrated collection of stories from Vietnam, "The Things They Carried." It sounded like the grunts as they went from village to village, terrorizing the Native populations, looking for Victor Charlie. Here, Victor Charlie was called Peltier. But this was America. The agents threw Crow Dog's three-year-old son against the wall of his house. This is America.

Because his grandfather had killed a member of his own people, Crow Dog is not allowed to carry a gun. Still, he spent two years in prison. The government and its agents might not have a religious belief, but they recognize the power of spiritual leaders. In prison the inmates told Crow Dog he was now one of them; he was their brother. He answered, "Yes, I am your brother." He is a spiritual being, in prison or out. The ones who imprisoned him were truly their brother's keeper. They kept him in prisons in several states before he was released.

Crow Dog, of course, by now has become a symbol. Natives and droves of non-Natives, are returning to the animistic beliefs of the aboriginal peoples of North America, trying to find a center. Yeats may not have had American politics in mind when he wrote that things fall apart, but the metaphor takes on precarious implications in the final days of the twentieth century when even white people are being burned en masse (Waco) by a government that is not capable of deescalating even minor civil disturbances. The center will not hold; how can it hold when honor—the truth of Native American treaty rights—is no longer part of the political lexicon? Natives have said, "If they can do it to us they will eventually do it to you." *You* being white, middle-class America who daily pay homage to that extremely small group of incredibly wealthy Americans who are not postmodern, who continue the Simon Legree push even if it means, like the blacks of Africa did, selling your own people into slavery. The French had it right: *le roi le veut*. The King wills it.

This book could be considered essential reading if one truly wants to attempt to understand popular American culture and the institutions that are informed by that culture. Erdoes is not a great stylist in the English language, but his message is sure and unequivocal. The Native people he has thus far chosen to spring

from the shackles of silence have something for America to hear. Their message takes its soundings from the deep, from that time before the reservations, from that time when men truly knew something about freedom.

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The Epic of Qayaq: The Longest Story Ever Told by My People.
By Lela Kiana Oman. Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1995.
122 pages. \$22.50 paper.

Lela Kiana Oman's *The Epic of Qayaq* is an engrossing retelling of the Qayaq myth—a story known in other versions to the Inuit of Russia, Canada, and Greenland—and one that Oman heard from her father and other storytellers before setting down her rendition of the narrative in 1947. Oman reminds her readers that *Qayaq* is especially vital to Alaska's Iñupiaq people, of whom she is one, and for whom this epic is the seminal story of origin and culture. Oman has taken on a dual challenge: how best to transmit an Iñupiaq *oral* narrative into written English, and how to shape a work of *epic* length that requires a month of evenings for oral telling by condensing it to a modest 120 pages without sacrificing its drama, mystery, and sense of expanse. Only readers who have heard the story told aloud can hazard such a comparative evaluation, but because Oman has brought the epic to written prose, her work must of course be judged by that standard.

In this regard Oman's reduction of *Qayaq* to the page is most satisfying, beginning with her terse preamble account of the Iñupiaq genesis on two mountaintops amidst endless water and their subsequent dispersal throughout the Arctic regions. The central motif of good and evil is effectively introduced when the dwellers of the east mountain begin experimenting with shamanism—often for selfish reasons—balanced by the dwellers of the west mountain whose approach to life is more loving and gentle.

With this rift in place, and the descendants of the first Inuit scattered around the globe, Oman focuses on the newborn Qayaq, whose parents fish for whales on Alaska's Selawik Lake, and who wish to hold onto Qayaq, the youngest of twelve sons and the only one still at home. Oman skillfully interweaves the qualities of epic storytelling and Iñupiaq culture. As befitting an epic figure, Qayaq is larger than life, a hero with the stamina to