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denied herself) the benefits of professional art training. When she did mature as an artist, it was too late; there was no time left to learn the things she needed to know to be released from her Indian School past. In her case, Indianness may not have been the key issue, but the problem is so endemic among Indian artists as to make the point worth pursuing.

I have technical criticisms that may be more the fault of the publisher than the author. The book lacks an index, which is unfortunate for a volume that is bound to be used as a reference for years to come. More irritating by far, the illustrations are unnumbered, there is no listing or index of them, and they are not cross-referenced in the text. Since Scott's analyses often refer to particular pictures, the reader must interrupt the flow of words and thoughts to search backward and forward for an illustration that may or may not be in the book. On the positive side, the reproductions are very nice indeed.

Scott tells us that Helen Hardin saw and edited a late draft of this manuscript shortly before she died; thus this is, in a sense, an "authorized" biography. So both Scott and Hardin are to be credited for the journalistic objectivity and painful honesty of the work. It could so easily have become a soap opera, a sanitized panegyric, or a phony yawner, but it is none of those. Scott writes as an art critic about Hardin's pictures and seems to pull no punches; Hardin accepts Scott's right to express opinions and offer analyses that she may or may not agree with. Both benefit from a transaction that gives each credibility.

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University of New Mexico

Mean Spirit. By Linda Hogan. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1990. 371 pages. \$19.95 cloth.

"[H]elp us, oh God, we're rich." This line from James Welch's poem, *Harlem, Montana: Just Off the Reservation*, captures the tone of Linda Hogan's fine book, *Mean Spirit*. The book is a work of fiction based on historical events that took place around Watona, Indian Territory, Oklahoma, in the 1920s. The Native American characters are not long off the Trail of Tears that brought them

to a place where vast reserves of oil have been discovered beneath the surface of their newly allotted lands. This would be a boon to anyone but the cosmically blasted Indians, and, true to their fate, it proves to be a disaster similar to the Trail of Tears, Sand Creek, the Baker Massacre, and Wounded Knee.

The story begins with the murder of oil-wealthy Grace Blanket, who turns out to be only one of nearly twenty people killed in the Watona area in 1922. Underlying this mystery is the fact that marriages with Oklahoma Indian women benefit white men financially. The Indian agent in Watona frequently receives letters from white men requesting introductions to these women as a business investment. One white man, when asked what he does for a living, replies that he married an Osage woman, and everyone who listens understands what that means, that he does not work; he lives off her money. For other individuals not so interested in the complications of marriage, it is a small step to realize there are other ways to get at the oil money.

At the head of this line Hogan places Indian Commission agents and clerks who are in charge of oil royalty payments. In a harrowing scene near the beginning of the book, the Indians have arrived to receive their payments, only to be told, "They changed the regulations." It has been decided that the Indians are spending their money unwisely, so they will get only part of what they have coming. Furthermore, they are told that if they protest, they will be declared incompetent, and the government will withhold all their money until they are assigned legal guardians.

Manipulation of the legal system in fact proves to be the intelligent way to get control of Indian land and money, and oilman John Hale and his minion, sheriff Jess Gold, set out to do this in various ways. Their design includes loans, store credit, leases, marriage, and murders intended to accelerate foreclosure and inheritance. The Indians, no match for this Kafkaesque situation, turn to traditional ways as a means of coping. When Grace Blanket is killed, "watchers" come from the more traditional Hill community to look after her daughter Nola. Their spirit-like presence is powerful and effective; through them the more assimilated members of Watona are given hope, strength, and even asylum in the Hill dwelling, hidden away from white rapacity.

Michael Horse, water-diviner and spiritual leader of the "town Indians," also plays a helping role by turning to traditional ways.

He abandons his gold-then-silver roadster for horse transportation and goes into the woods in search of bat medicine he thinks may be useful. In the process, Horse rediscovers Sorrow Cave, a place associated with the use of bat medicine, and the Indians make a successful stand there. Belle Graycloud is jailed briefly as a result of this incident, but she thwarts Sheriff Gold, and, in the end, the tide turns against Gold and Hale.

These events, and the intervention of Lakota Stace Red Hawk, lead to discovery of the murderers and help resolve the plot, but the Indians' victory is bittersweet. Although they have rediscovered their Indianness, they are once again displaced. The novel ends with Red Hawk riding to join the Grayclouds as they leave their oil-plagued land and material possessions. Although perhaps not as dramatic as Sand Creek or Wounded Knee, the events in Hogan's book about dispossession comprise another chapter of the same story.

As additional writers of the Native American Renaissance find their voices, more of these kinds of stories will be told; for it is in the telling of such stories that Native Americans survive and find strength to deal with what is happening and what is to come.

Sidner Larson
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Bighorse the Warrior. By Tiana Bighorse. Edited by Noël Bennett. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1990. 125 pages. \$14.95 cloth.

"I want to tell my life story. My name is Gus Bighorse, and I am Tsé Deeshgizhnii (Rock Gap) Clan. And my father's clan is Tábaqahá (Edgewater Clan)" (p. 1).

So begins this brief, compelling narrative told by Bighorse's daughter Tiana and edited by Noël Bennett. In *Bighorse the Warrior*, they continue a collaboration begun a generation ago. When Bennett, at the age of 28, came to Tuba City in the western reaches of Navajo Country, she met Tiana Bighorse, then a fifty-year-old weaver. Together they fashioned a book about weaving, *Working with the Wool: How to Weave a Navajo Rug*, which they built from Bighorse's mother's stories. Now, in *Bighorse the Warrior*, they retell her father's stories, using his voice.