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Review of *Native Historians Write Back: Decolonizing American Indian History* edited by Susan A. Miller and James Riding In

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## BOOK REVIEWS

*Native Historians Write Back: Decolonizing American Indian History.* Edited by Susan A. Miller and James Riding In. Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2011. ix + 280 pp. Photographs, tables, notes, index. \$65.00 cloth, \$45.00 paper.

Susan Miller and James Riding In position this anthology as the first to collect historical work from Native scholars participating in an “Indigenous discourse”—an academic conversation “rooted in North American Indigenous thought” and, they claim, global Indigenous thought. If your essentialism alarm bells are ringing, it is for good reason. Ignore the alarms long enough to work your way through the entire anthology and you will find rich, complicated, vibrant historical analysis and critique from Indigenous historians working in Canada and the United States.

The introduction and framing essays by Susan Miller in part 1 elaborate on the idea of an Indigenous paradigm in the historiography of Native North America. Although clothed in essentialist language and thinking, her essays provide some provocative and vital analysis. By the end, the authority of the works collected here will force you to productively rethink aspects of Miller’s framing essays advocating for methodologies that centralize Native historical narrative and experience.

The essays in part 1, “Challenging Colonial Thought,” cast light on methodological and theoretical hypocrisies of academic knowledge production. Part 2, “Affirming Indigenous Historical Narrative,” showcases works illustrating the power of serious engagement with Indigenous thought to undermine sloppy or outdated historical analysis. In part 3, “Asserting the History of Dispossession,” the essays render central the historical experience and narrative of Indigenous people and provide searing depictions of colonial violence. Part 4, “Examining Issues in Light of History,” shows the deep contemporary public engagement possible for scholars of Native American history.

Of particular interest to Great Plains historians are the essays by Elizabeth Cook-Lynn and Waziyatawin, both of which deal with separate aspects of the 1862 Dakota Conflict and its aftermath. Scholars interested in jurisdictional issues in the Plains—whether over land, bodies, or tribal status—should examine the essays by Vine Deloria Jr., both Riding In essays, and Miller’s essay on the status of Seminole freedmen. Miller’s essay and Donna Akers’s on Choctaw removal both illustrate the complications that arose and continue to haunt communities when the Southern Plains became a site of removal for southeastern tribes; together, they succeed in reminding historians of community mobility and interconnectedness beyond the Plains biome. Finally, Matthew Jones’s essay on the Otoe-Missouria encounter with Lewis and Clark provides an intervention for those who may focus on the journeyers and not on the realities of the peoples who lived in the landscapes through which they journeyed.

On many levels, this anthology presents compelling and provocative material. The weight and power of the collected scholarship make it well worth reading.

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