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Indians in Unexpected Places (Book Review)

Jeffrey P. Cain

Sacred Heart University, cainj@sacredheart.edu

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on the textual character of religious communication online and on the role played in such relationship by hypertexts.

One of the key concerns of the book is, indeed, the tension between innovation and traditionalism in modern Paganism, and “how these cultures conceptualize the technologies that make online religious participation possible” (23). The relationship between the Internet and the performance of magic(k) appears to be central in Pagan conceptualizations of “cyberspace” as “virtual reality”—a concept that Cowan demystifies and clarifies by making a distinction between “virtual reality” (as represented in a film such as *The Matrix* (1999)) and “online reality” as “encountered on the two dimensional computer screen, and almost entirely as a world of text, icon and image” (52). Cowan concludes his analysis by noting the “undeniable growth” of modern Paganism, highlighting the significant potential for community in modern Pagan groups—particularly when groups meet both online and offline, thus successfully integrating the two realities (an issue discussed in chapter four). He also de-emphasizes rhetorical assertions about “the disembodied person free from the prison of flesh,” by reminding us that we are “ineluctably embodied” (201), a point that chapter five, dedicated to online rituals, brought to the attention of the reader, since, according to Cowan, “online modern Pagan ritual is, by and large, a theater of the mind. It ‘takes place’ in the imaginations of the participants” (138).

It must be noted that many of the newsgroups that Cowan examines seem to be mostly—though by no means solely—frequented by teenagers. For instance, the analysis of the texts reproduced in the book shows that the authors use routinely the spelling used in text messages. This opens the interesting possibility that the choice of the materials (or groups) to examine may have had an influence on the way Cowan reads certain aspects—such as, for instance, identity performance online.

Maria Beatrice Bittarello
University of Stirling

Indians in Unexpected Places. Philip J. Deloria. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004.

Perhaps the most arresting moment in Philip J. Deloria’s *Indians in Unexpected Places* occurs when he juxtaposes the best-known image of

Geronimo (Ben Wittick's 1887 photograph) with another picture of the Apache leader and three friends sitting in an automobile. In the familiar first image, Geronimo (1829–1909) kneels and glares fiercely out at the camera, holding a Sharps rifle and wearing buckskins. In the second photo, taken in 1904, he wears a top hat and vest as he grips the wheel of an early Cadillac. This doubling of images demonstrates Deloria's most tangible gift: his ability to convert dissonance to resonance and thereby to subvert the historical and cultural platitudes that tend to flatten out Native character. After *Indians in Unexpected Places*, the Jeep Cherokee, the Atlanta Braves, the tomahawk chop, and the "Here Come the Indians" background music in old movies will never be the same. However, Deloria's book is a wonderful example of a text that does not just tell us what various icons and anecdotes might mean in isolation. Instead, he opens up a series of vantage points from which to evolve new cultural understanding.

The method of *Indians* is theoretically sophisticated (Foucault is influential), but Deloria has thoroughly assimilated all the major theories of cultural and ideological formation and thus writes jargon-free prose. Generally, he makes a given theory work for him and then moves beyond its received meaning to fresh applications. This remarkable ability to deal with theory on his own terms makes Deloria's writing enlightening on several different levels. We learn, for example, that there is new ground beyond simple postcolonialism and elementary social deconstruction. Deloria writes of his own method that "it is not simply to assert that ideology and domination have made certain histories unable to be spoken. Instead, it is to ask how we came to certain kinds of tellings and not others" (7). He shows, for example, that the attributes foisted on Indians, whether negative (primitivistic violence) or positive (primitivistic harmony with nature), have served to naturalize white expectations and to place white values into the "civilized" default position. Having done so, however, Deloria proceeds to rethink the very concept of the unusual, making, as he says, "a hard turn from anomaly to frequency and unexpectedness" (6). He points out that there were important groups of Native people who embraced early twentieth-century technology, acted in "wild west" shows for personal profit, played professional sports, and performed music. Thus the popular culture of the Progressive Era emerges as a rich source from which Deloria is able to reclaim an engaging and dynamic variety of subject positions for Indians.

After reading Deloria, one is rather more intrigued than surprised to find that Edward S. Curtis once photographed Geronimo sitting on horseback on the White House lawn. The occasion was Teddy Roosevelt's inaugural parade, in which Geronimo and other Indians actually participated. Such a response is possible because Deloria's method preserves incongruity even as it reconciles anomalies. *Indians in Unexpected Places* is therefore an important book, a reservoir of haunting images and a *tour de force* of mature theoretical treatment. Deloria has done far more than rethink and rewrite the cultural and historical roles of Native people; he has begun to re-imagine the broad relationship that obtains between individual identity and popular cultural expression.

Jeffrey Cain
Sacred Heart University

Gay TV and Straight America. Ron Becker. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2006.

Ron Becker traces the "gaying" of American television, placing this phenomenon in the context of changes in the economy of television and in broader social and political events of the past two decades. He argues that the gay-themed television programs of the 1990s represent a break from earlier television programming in which "families, workplaces, and communities . . . were exclusively heterosexual." He cites statistics supporting his argument claiming that between 1994 and 1997, "40 percent of all prime time network series produced at least one gay-themed episode; nineteen network shows debuted with recurring gay characters" (3). These changes occurred to a large degree because of the slipping ratings of the three major networks, NBC, ABC, and CBS, due to the rise of cable television. The niche programming of networks like HBO, Showtime, Lifetime, and Bravo provided an opportunity for programming that appealed to significant numbers of viewers who fell outside the mainstream traditional network broadcast audiences. According to Becker, NBC was first among the big three to target an upscale 18–49-year-old audience more aggressively by creating more urban, gay-friendly programs, most notably *Will and Grace* in the 1998 fall season.

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