

within American Indian nations. It provides future scholars in American Indian studies, African American studies, and history a foundation upon which to investigate the dynamics of this phenomenon further. The wealth of context-specific information offered in Naylor's book (for example, maps and photos) will make this intriguing read an excellent textbook that will generate vigorous discussion in the classroom. If there is one critique that I could offer, it is that more discussion is needed on the dynamics of African Cherokee identity, particularly the relationships and sentiments between those defined as Cherokee by blood and those deemed slaves. Despite this one critique, however, Naylor's well-researched and supported discussions should prove enlightening for the academic and the layperson, American Indian and African American, citizen of a sovereign American Indian nation and everyday American interested in the ways in which humans can suppress their common humanity for the sake of creating sources of free labor.

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American Indian Education: Counternarratives in Racism, Struggle and the Law. By Matthew L. M. Fletcher. New York: Routledge, 2008. 223 pages. \$140.00 cloth; \$37.95 paper.

Matthew Fletcher has woven scholarly content with fictional ethnography in a masterstroke. His *American Indian Education: Counternarratives in Racism, Struggle and the Law* takes the—sometimes—clinical tone out of federal Indian policy by couching it in the story of contemporary fictional Native American students. This interesting literary device makes the law-and-policy content accessible to a wide audience.

Fletcher, an enrolled member of the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, draws on his extensive knowledge of several topics: federal Indian education policy, tribal law, the daily angst of Indian students, and the historico-cultural milieu of Great Lakes tribal communities. He creates a fictional reservation named for local Lake Matchimanitou, an emblematic Indian school, the Lake Matchimanitou Band of Ottawa Indians, and the non-Indian inhabitants of this northernmost part of Michigan's Lower Peninsula. The protagonists, such as Niko Roberts, Parker Roberts, Gil Ogema, and Anthony "Beercan" Mark, are from the Lake Matchimanitou rez.

The structure is unique; in most chapters, a single character is center stage. The narrative moves through the struggle of that featured player with a legal issue in an educational setting. As the connected stories unfold, weaving together the history of Indian country's love-hate relationship with formal "white" schooling, loss of tribal identity, and the objectification of indigenous symbols by the dominant culture, ethical issues are raised for the reader to contemplate. This is poetics, not polemics. Fletcher said he collected material by interviewing many Great Lakes informants, then crafted the results into the guise of a few fictional characters. If so, it was a brilliant device.

Essential to an understanding of the brilliance of this device is to recognize the central role that storytelling plays. Fletcher says that with traditional Native cultures being oral cultures, law and mores were conveyed through stories, just as were other aspects of culture (Michigan State University College of Law, Legal Studies Research Paper Series #06-13, 2008). Indigenous people relied upon their spoken tradition of law and on parables to inculcate community values and expectations in rising generations. The characters from Lake Matchimanitou Reservation are not new. Fletcher created them as storytellers for articles like "Stick Houses in Peshawbestown" (*Cardozo Public Law, Policy and Ethics Journal*, 2004) and "The Legal Fiction of the Lake Matchimanitou Indian School" (*American University Journal of Gender, Social Policy and the Law*, 2005).

Although this reads like fiction, it is far from that. The foundational Indian education policies that took children from their families and tribes and sentenced them to involuntary residence at boarding schools may come as a surprise to those not familiar with this dark period in Native American/First Nations history. Even though apologists continue to assert that the federal government was just trying to do what it thought best for Indian children at that uncertain juncture in Indian country, Fletcher's work leaves no doubt that a concerted effort was made to strip tribal identity from students in order to dissuade them from returning to their reservations. With the success of deculturation, the policies simply created an alienated repatriate youth whose lack of identity left them open to a variety of social problems.

The fact that this is counternarrative from the viewpoint of critical race theory is the impetus to "gently bombard" readers with such issues as blood quantum versus identity, authenticity/essentialism in literature about Natives and by self-described Natives (shades of Forrest Carter aka Asa Earl Carter), and the ethical implications of using Indian sports mascots. Case in point is an interesting class discussion about whether a self-described Native author's lack of documentable indigenous ancestry makes his literary work less valid. As some students decry the work of fiction because of the author's dubious background, others ask the fictional Lake Matchimanitou students for guidance in understanding what makes someone a "real" Indian. The usual "looks like/doesn't look like" interplay occurs and the Matchimanitous find themselves struggling with the fluid constructions of Indianness in their own community.

The author raises many of the same questions as previous treatments of this topic. K. Tsianina Lomawaima and Teresa L. McCarty's *To Remain an Indian: Lessons in Democracy from a Century of Native American Education* (2006) and Sandy Grande's *Red Pedagogy: Native American Social and Political Thought* (2004) come to mind. Both are more traditional scholarly treatments. Fletcher's unique method of using fictional people (wherein the reader is omniscient) and places is more like lay literature, but it resonates with the social justice and legal issues at its root. In trying to find a work of fiction that engages the reader so completely in debate over such issues through the lens of imaginary people, the best example this reviewer could bring to mind is *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Harper Lee's use of created history actually mirrors her own childhood and an incident similar to Tom Robinson's trial and lynching

that occurred near her hometown in the mid-1930s. The presence of the law as an overriding aspect is likewise similar. Perhaps the content of *To Kill a Mockingbird* is more particularly life and death, but the shared schema of a societal attempt to silence an entire ethnic group is apparent. Fletcher's characters read like Louise Erdrich's, fluid, quirky tricksters who live the dilemma at the intersection of history, culture, education, and law. By way of another style comparison, Fletcher writes with a sardonic wit highly reminiscent of the late Vine Deloria Jr., also a lawyer by training.

The fact that Fletcher is a lawyer is the springboard for his work, and he even appears to write himself into *American Indian Education* in the guise of Niko Roberts. Niko is followed from adolescence to adulthood in the chapters, the son of Parker Roberts (the activist-teacher). As a man, Niko pursues a career in the law, ending up representing his grandfather (Toledo Marks), a man who distanced himself from his tribal heritage but who returns to Lake Matchimanitou in the denouement of character-based chapters.

As the collected result of the book's legal quandaries drives a growing sense of self and tribal identity in the characters, *American Indian Education* closes with a hilarious chapter on the Lake Matchimanitou Indian School. Think Horace Miner's "Body Ritual among the Nacirema" (*American Anthropology*, 1956). It is a resounding denunciation of what "Indian school" used to mean, what it means when people take the reins of their own community's education, and how history repeats itself in (in this case) a benignly bitter vignette.

With characterization so complete and human, Matthew Fletcher could easily turn his "cast" to other issues in Indian country. A treatment of the role of more Lake Matchimanitou Band of Ottawa Indians in Indian education and legal policy at the federal level would be welcome. Perhaps the placement of Parker Roberts among the Obama appointees, Niko defending a Native community's use of an Indian mascot when surrounding non-Indian communities feel pressed to remove theirs, or Toledo Marks's successful first novel and the ensuing debate over his authenticity as an Indian writer who spent most of his life trying to outrun his Indianness . . . this reviewer doesn't want to dissuade Matthew Fletcher from continuing to teach Indian law to nascent lawyers but selfishly hopes he will not ignore his gift for fiction that truly educates.

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Born of Fire: The Life and Pottery of Margaret Tafoya. By Charles S. King. Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 2008. 160 pages; 88 color and 10 black-and-white illustrations. \$45.00 cloth.

Margaret Tafoya (1904–2001) was unarguably one of the finest and most important Pueblo potters of the twentieth century. She was from the Pueblo of Santa Clara, known in their Tewa language as Kha'p'oo Owinge, a village about thirty miles north of Santa Fe on the Rio Grande. Once primarily an



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