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**Review of *To Remain an Indian: Lessons in Democracy from a Century of Native American Education* By K. Tsianina Lomawaima and Teresa L. McCarty**

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*To Remain an Indian: Lessons in Democracy from a Century of Native American Education.* By K. Tsianina Lomawaima and Teresa L. McCarty. New York: Teachers College Press, 2006. xxv + 213 pp. Figures, notes, references, index. \$70.00 cloth, \$29.95 paper.

As they trace the shifts in United States government Indian policy over the course of a century, K. Tsianina Lomawaima and Teresa L. McCarty develop a theoretical framework they label “the safety zone” as a way to explain the continuing conflict over the issue of cultural difference in educational settings. Drawing on extensive archival material, the authors illustrate convincingly how educational policies and practices have reflected the federal government’s attempt to make a distinction between “safe” and “dangerous” Indigenous beliefs and practices.

Using Western cultural norms as the standard against which to measure Indigenous ways of being, the government might, for example, sanction children’s stories or women’s arts and crafts. It might also recognize or tolerate entire tribal groups, if these groups produce marketable artistic works that enable them to be economically stable. Outside that safety zone lie such dangers as Native languages and spiritual practices, including music and songs intimately connected to religious experiences. Efforts to preserve Native ways of life are typically enacted only when those languages or traditions are believed to be nearly extinct and no longer threatening.

Linking Native survival to the political reality of Native sovereignty, Lomawaima and McCarty also chart Indigenous resistance to federal policy, identifying moments when Native people have seized opportunities to shape their own approach to educating their children. The authors argue that Native voices and perspectives should be at the center of educational policy making and that schools need to embrace diverse learning modes. From this perspective, the real danger lies in the standardization movement, through tests, for example, that serve to neutralize both the curriculum and the student body. Yet, at the same time, Lomawaima and McCarty caution against the tendency to essentialize Native students according to myths related to their cultural upbringing (e.g., “silent” or “visual” learners)—a tendency displayed not only by non-Native educators but also by some Native scholars, teachers, parents, and students. The authors provide examples of numerous self-determined initiatives, such as bilingual education and Native charter schools, that remain responsive to the multifaceted needs of Indigenous communities and avoid the kind of essentialism characterizing colonial education. These examples of successful civic endeavors provide the critical lessons of democracy the book’s title promises to deliver.

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