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Book Review: Americanah by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

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Feature: Books to Show You The World

Indigenous Peoples *continued from page 7*

art Banner and Robert A. Williams, Jr., the legal concepts discussed in the book will not be new. The applications of then-existing domestic law, constitutional, and military law, as well as a modern discussion of human rights, treaty law, and the law of war, in the overall context of the battle, provides a new angle on an old story.

THE EROSION OF TRIBAL POWER: THE SUPREME COURT'S SILENT REVOLUTION

By Dewi Ioan Ball

Reading the introduction to this book made me so envious. The thesis of this book is that between 1959 and 2001, the actions of the Supreme Court precipitated the erosion of the Indian sovereignty doctrine. In order to support this thesis, the author researched the notes and papers of Supreme Court decisions at the National Archive in Washington, D.C. Rather than providing the analysis of an outsider, this book analyses the cases using the materials produced and used by the Justices when making decisions. The title tells you the story.

African Law Interest Group Recommendation

Yemisi Dima

AMERICANAH

By Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Americanah is based on a love story that revolved around 3 continents - Africa, North America, and Europe. The themes of race, gender, and identity feature prominently in this award winning novel. Adichie's story gives a vivid description of the lives of young teenagers of various ethnic and class structures in military-ruled Nigeria from the late 1970s to the 1990s and the beginning of a democratic government. It subtly describes the different ramifications of corruption and highlights a very degenerative period and the beginning of professional brain drain in the country.

Ifumelu and Obinze dated from high school until they went to university. But in the early part of her undergraduate education in Nigeria, the main character, Ifumelu, receives a partial scholarship to study in the United States where she eventually completes her education.

The novel is an excellent illustration of the experiences of an international student in search of greener pastures "who hungered to understand everything about America". In her many trips to the library, Ifumelu reads and learns more about "America's tribalisms – race, ideology, and region".

NOBODY HERE WILL HARM YOU: MASS MEDICAL EVACUATION FROM THE EASTERN ARCTIC, 1950 – 1965

by Shawn Selway

This story of a little known episode in Canadian history presents another aspect of settler colonialism: the use of western medicine as a pretext for Canadian imposition on the Inuit. The book shares the stories of the Inuits removed from their villages and moved to Hamilton, Ontario for treatment. This action split families and is seen by some as equivalent to the problems created by residential schools. "The medical evacuations were an extreme of colonial assertion and Aboriginal subordination not previously seen in the North, although matched also by a number of relocation experiments occurring at the same time (Tester and Kulchyski)." (p. 216). Telling the story of the identification and treatment of tuberculosis infection among the Inuit in the 1940s, this book explores in detail the history of white/indigenous contact the ways in which contact influenced the creation and spread of the disease, the impact that a caring attempt to combat the disease had on the Inuit, both intentionally and unintentionally, and the implications this history has for genuine reconciliation.

The novel brings out a lot about African immigrants in the United States: their lifestyles, mode of dressing (Ifumelu's natural hair and experiences at the African salon), and education. Meanwhile, after graduation, Obinze travels to the United Kingdom after the system in Nigeria fails him. Facing all odds and in the midst of his "immigration worries," he misses his love and never fails to reminisce about their times together.

The two young lovers find ways of surviving in their foreign environments by engaging in odd jobs, socializing, and forming new relationships with people of various ethnic backgrounds. In the midst of this learning curve and adjustment, Obinze remains in Ifumelu's thoughts even as she finds herself in cross-cultural relationships. The story ends with both characters moving back to Nigeria under different circumstances and reuniting for good.

Adichie's award winning book is a good read that resonates through fiction the culture shock experienced overseas by African immigrants on issues of race and identity. The author uses poetic humor to engage the mind of the reader. It identifies the role of social media, constantly including excerpts from Ifumelu's blog and relating to the use of other media. *Americanah* is a good pick for FCIL librarians who love to read fiction for a broader understanding of other jurisdictions.