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***Native Women and Land: Narratives of Dispossession and Resurgence.* By Stephanie J. Fitzgerald. University of New Mexico Press, 2015. pp. 163. \$45.00**

Everything in United States history is about the land. Everything. And as its subtitle informs us, Stephanie Fitzgerald's book is about Native women's narratives concerning the loss of land. The author makes the important point that "To establish an American Indian ecocritical and environmental literary practice is to recognize the inextricability of land tenure, federal Indian law, and environmental issues from the seventeenth century to the present" (8). In making her argument, Fitzgerald considers primary texts by, among others, Navajo poet Lucy Tapahonso, Cherokee novelist Dianne Glancy, Ojibwa novelist Louise Erdrich, Chickasaw writer Linda Hogan, and Crow Creek Sioux writer Elizabeth Cook-Lynn. In addition to discussions of literary works (poems, novels, essays) by these relatively well-known Native writers, Fitzgerald also looks beyond conventional literary texts. She considers, for example, a Youtube video and in other contexts she looks at brief accounts of reports by different Houma people in Louisiana as well as people in the Alaskan Native villages of Kivalina and Shishmaref, and finally to tweets in response to a Twitter hashtag. In these instances Fitzgerald's argument can be seen to become much more about personal responses to the loss of land and about environmental degradation generally in the context of Native Americans and less about the critiquing of Native-authored texts, written or oral. The book thus makes for an interesting mix of the studies of canonical Native American literature, relating of oral narratives, and the mapping of historical-political contexts for that literature and other texts. The critique moves somewhat chronologically from discussion of Ojibwa creation accounts, nineteenth-century removals, allotment, dam building, and the adverse effects of global warming and governmental action (or inaction) on Native peoples in the twenty-first century.

In her discussion of nineteenth-century Indian removals, Fitzgerald offers at one point a brief discussion of an oral narrative of Hwééldi, the 1864 Long Walk of the Navajo "published" as a Youtube video. She describes the presentation by a Navajo woman identified only as Margaret, about "her family's story of the walk to Hwééldi [told] entirely in the Navajo language, with no English translation." Fitzgerald then acknowledges that she "understand[s] only two words." She thus bases her own—necessarily subjective—interpretation of the story on the narrator's gestures and on comments by viewers of the video who "provide insight into Grandma Margaret's oral narrative" (42). There is no question that the very existence of the video is significant, and it is also important to recognize that the Long Walk is remembered and still holds meaning in the twenty-first century. It is one of many shameful instances of the United States government's treatment of Indigenous peoples, and, in order that it have meaning for the reader, this particular moment in the book begs for more detailed explication. Also in the context of removals are Fitzgerald's discussions of works by contemporary writers, Tapahonso's poem, "In 1864," also recounting the Long Walk, and Glancy's novel of the Cherokee Removal, *Pushing the Bear*. These are all accounts "of survival and sacrifice for future generations, of relying on the 'old stories' and incorporating new ones into the land narrative repertoire" (41). Fitzgerald rightly insists that the implications and ramifications of these past injustices continue through and beyond the present day.

By treaty and by broken treaty the United States federal government, sometimes in collusion with state governments—as is the case with the Cherokee removal in the 1830s—has managed to

rob Indigenous Americans of roughly 98 percent of their land base, limiting their holdings to remaining reservations. One of many different means of dispossession was the General Allotment Act of 1887, through which the established reservation land was actually parceled out by the assigning of limited acreage to heads of household and others, leaving unassigned lands open to non-Indian purchase and settlement. In a chapter devoted to several of the interlaced, interlinked novels of Louise Erdrich, Fitzgerald makes the valuable point that “When read in narrative sequence... these novels define the stakes involved for Native people living in the contested spaces of the postallotment reservation” (47). These novels all have land and dispossession at their centers. *Tracks* especially concerns itself with the disastrous consequences of the allotment in severalty policies between the passage of the Dawes Act in 1887 and 1934 with the Indian Reorganization Act. But as Fitzgerald aptly argues, Erdrich's novels demonstrate that the consequences of allotment constitute an ongoing process, lasting into the twenty-first century. The language of allotment “masks realities—of the loss of land, and of what the land represents culturally, environmentally, economically, and politically to Native people” (47). Fitzgerald does a solid job of linking Erdrich's fiction to the historical reality of allotment: “The authors and agents of the [allotment] act essentially rewrote the narrative between the Anishinaabeg and their land” (52), and the novel *Tracks* catalogues the results of this rewriting. There is loss not only of the literal land but also of the idea of a communal land base and the social and kinship systems that accompany such an idea.

In the chapter devoted to a Linda Hogan novel, Fitzgerald argues that “There is a large body of ecocritical and environmental scholarship on *Solar Storms*, but I read it as an activist and environmental justice-oriented text” (71), and furthermore she maintains, “Reading the text through an activist and environmental justice lens diffuses some of the critical tensions that arise with the creation of a fictional tribe” (73). The scholar's challenge in such a context is to demonstrate just how an activist lens helps the reader appreciate Hogan's use of a fictional tribe. Hogan presents actual historical problems such as dam building in *Solar Storms* (or loss of endangered panther habitat, *Power*; or killing grey whales, *People of the Whale*; or exploitation and graft concerning the “Osage” during the 1920s and 30s, *Mean Spirit*), but she then often seems to retreat (or have her characters retreat) into a fictional realm to circumvent the problems she presents at the center of her novels. As the character Dora-Rouge points out, “protest against the dams was their only hope” (quoted in Fitzgerald 79), yet the novel concludes with descriptions of the flooding that results from the dam construction. It is thus not clear how protest has helped except in the most abstract of senses. Nor is it clear how an activist reading pertains particularly to Hogan's novel. Fitzgerald does aptly conclude that the novel “is not a story of nature, but of man's manipulation of nature, which changes the pact between the people and the land” (80). Elizabeth Cook-Lynn's novel *From the River's Edge* has at its center the devastation wrought by the building of a dam. The literal loss of land under the backed-up waters causes the loss of homes, fuel sources, food, grazing land, and even, ironically enough, water resources. The lake resulting from the dam destroys the economic base of the Crow Creek community and of course, as the novel makes painfully clear, threatens the social structures that depend on that land base. The novel contains “images evoking the environmental and spiritual devastation on the Crow Creek Reservation, damage that is likely not quantifiable” (83). Interestingly, Fitzgerald makes no mention of seeing Cook-Lynn's novel through an activist lens, though her novel, like Hogan's, can be seen as an environmental justice-oriented text.

In a chapter on the United Houma Nation of Louisiana and two Alaskan Native villages, Fitzgerald changes method, and in a sense changes direction. After her chapters devoted primarily to published canonical texts by Native women, she turns to oral accounts and testimonies by some male spokespersons. She looks, for example, at Principal Chief Thomas Mayheart Dardar, Jr.'s testimony before the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs in 2012 in the context of the degradation of the coastal lands in southern Louisiana. In this context the book offers an environmental history of the Houma's homeland at the mouth of the Mississippi River. As a result of land degradation, "relocation is a consequence of climate change... and [other] man-made disasters" (101), rather than overtly forced removals of previous centuries. The devastation of the wetlands and the resulting loss of land to an encroaching sea, combined with the oil industry's mishaps, have made the area much more susceptible to destructive hurricanes than ever before—as evident after Katrina and Rita in 2005. However inadvertently the potential for this type of removal has come about, the result is that once again Native communities suffer land loss and are potentially forced to relocate. Climate change is also an important issue for the Kivalina people living in the Alaskan coastal arctic region. Here Fitzgerald turns to comments by village elder Enoch Adams as spokesperson for the Kivalina community. The formerly active removals have now become removals or relocations due to governmental inaction: "power relations have been constructed in such a manner that the communities are left outside the margin" (109).

In the conclusion, Fitzgerald completes her turn away from literary analysis of texts by Native women. Here she presents a discussion of the "Idle No More" movement, started by four Canadian women (three of whom are Native) as a Twitter hashtag. This grassroots movement began in opposition to proposed legislation in Canada that would have detrimental effects on not only Indigenous populations but on Canadians in general. The Idle No More movement contests bills before Harper's administration that threaten to remove environmental protections on an unprecedented 99 percent of Canadian waters: "The majority of these lakes and waterways are in First Nations land or unceded territory" (112). Fitzgerald makes the point that this form of communication could indeed have a wide reach and could have the potential to inspire change at the federal level.

Analysis in these final chapters, following chapters devoted to literary analysis, demonstrates that it can be profitable to look to community and social media texts as well as conventional literary texts to recognize and appreciate that, as Fitzgerald maintains, "land dispossession, environmental crises, and federal Indian law are deeply entwined" (21). Recognizing and acknowledging these interrelationships and articulating them again in various contexts marks yet another step in a Native environmentally focused scholarship.

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