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Transmotion

Vol 2, Nos 1&2 (2016)

We are grateful for the support of the University of Kent, the European University of Cyprus, California State University, San Bernardino, and the University of Georgia. *Transmotion* is hosted by the University of Kent.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Transmotion will publish new scholarship focused on theoretical, experimental, postmodernist, and avant-garde writing produced by Native American and First Nations authors, as well as book reviews on relevant work in Vizenor Studies and Indigenous Studies.

The broad use of Vizenor-created theoretical terms in many different academic fields (e.g. law, literature, anthropology, sociology, museum studies, etc.) highlights the fact that Vizenor Studies represents a significant interdisciplinary conversation within the broader field of Indigenous Studies. As such, the editors of *Transmotion* will look for submissions that do any of the following:

- Look at Vizenor's work directly, as well as the work of related authors and theorists in the field
- Employ Vizenor's theory to look at other writers
- Continue Vizenor's project of bringing together traditional indigenous knowledges and Asian or European continental philosophy
- Explore the inter-relation of image and text, art and literature, in Vizenor's work
- Contribute to recent developing conversations in contemporary Native American art and literature, in relation to questions of visual sovereignty, visuality, and ethics.
- Offer innovative, surprising, unexpected and creative critique of American Indian literatures or other creative arts
- Emphasize experimental, theoretical, and avant-garde Native North American work

The journal will also accept creative or hybrid work, provided that such work aligns aesthetically with the aforementioned editorial emphasis. The editors particularly welcome submissions of innovative and creative works that exploit digital media.

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Enquiries regarding submission are welcome and may be sent to the editors at transmotionjournal@gmail.com Scholarly articles should be 20-25 pages in length, prepared according to the MLA Style Manual. Creative work can be of any length. We are also very keen for scholars to put themselves forward as potential book reviewers and to volunteer to be anonymous peer reviewers.

Information regarding on-line submissions of full drafts can be found at:
http://journals.kent.ac.uk/index.php/transmotion/about/submissions#onlineSubmissions

To contact the editors: transmotionjournal@gmail.com

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Editorial

A little over two years ago, when we began the process of imagining what *Transmotion* might become, we envisioned a journal that would push boundaries, both in terms of the diversity and sophistication of its published content and in terms of its accessibility (through the on-line format and use of an open access platform). With our second volume, published here as a double issue, we believe we are truly coming into our own in realizing that vision. Volume 2 highlights the full range of subject matter and approaches that are addressed in this journal's statement of editorial philosophy. We are excited to be publishing the first set of what we hope will be many contributions focused on the visual and performing arts. We are also pleased to be able to feature an increasingly broad range of literary scholarship and creative work. The diversity of subject matter and approaches on display here is very much in the spirit of Gerald Vizenor's own boundary-breaking and incisive work.

The guest-curated special section of this double issue includes its own introduction, by Andrea Carlson. Carlson's contextualization of the contributions by Rhiana Yazzie, Allan Ryan, Emily Johnson, Pallas Erdrich, and Deborah Root requires no editorial amplification here. Suffice it to say that the editors are grateful to her for catching the spirit of our initial "curatorial" request to her, and in assembling a series of works that tease out visions of resistance and transformation. Such a vision is also on display in Stephen Graham Jones's open letter to Indian writers, a practical guide to the aesthetic, political, and personal benefits of literary transgression. We are grateful to the inestimable Dr. Jones for permission to publish this piece (which was first delivered as an address at the Native American Literature Symposium in Albuquerque, NM in 2015). And we feel confident that he will appreciate the creative contributions included in the present issue. Terese Mailhot's non-fiction essay "Paul Simon's Money" combines the personal and political in the wickedly smart and edgy manner that readers of her work have come to expect. With David Heska Wanbli Weiden's short story "Spork," we also publish a new voice that takes up Stephen Graham Jones's call for indigenous writing to become increasingly experimental in terms of genre and tone. Finally, we once again have the great fortune to feature a piece by Diane Glancy, in this case an appreciation of Gerald Vizenor's work ("Totem") that pushes the boundaries of form and content for the scholarly essay.

The more conventional literary scholarship published in Volume 2 foregrounds generic diversity and experimentation in the realm of indigenous fiction, while also highlighting the ways that literary criticism can engage in constructive and politically relevant debate. Miriam Brown Spiers's essay, "Reimagining Resistance: Achieving Sovereignty in Indigenous Science Fiction," employs a theoretically sophisticated approach to genre in unpacking what is rapidly becoming a canonical work of contemporary native fiction, Blake Hausman's *Riding the Trail of Tears*. Placing that novel in dialogue with the work of science fiction theorist Darko Suvin and Vine Deloria allows Spiers to explore Hausman's indigenization of science fiction tropes in a manner that will be applicable to other writers as well. Finally, we are pleased to be able to include in this issue a pair of articles that engage with James Welch's complicated novel *The Heartsong of Charging Elk*. Tammy Wahpeconiah's "'An Evening's Curiosity': Image and Indianness in James Welch's *The Heartsong of Charging Elk*" contextualizes and interprets Welch's work in relation to pervasive and persistent myths of the American west. For evidence of the ongoing relevance of this work, one need look no further than the coverage of the water protector

activism at the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, where American audiences are fed a steady diet of images painting these contemporary events as scenes out of the nineteenth-century "Wild West." Complementing Wahpeconiah's piece, we complete our issue with John Gamber's "In the Master's Maison: Mobile Indigeneity in *The Heartsong of Charging Elk* and *Blue Ravens*." Gamber reads Welch's book in dialogue with Vizenor, comparing each writer's treatment of the theme of exile and manipulation of the classic "homing plot" that has structured much native fiction since the 1960s. Gamber's sophisticated discussion takes up the intersection between those formal issues and broader contemporary debates surrounding indigenous masculinity, concluding that these novels foreground the important, if sometimes vexed, possibilities for Native movement and relocation (or, as we might say, transmotion).

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David Carlson
Theodore Van Alst
James Mackay
David Stirrup

November 2016

Curatorial

ANDREA CARLSON

Someone, somewhere, long ago decided to smear one substance on to a substrate, and talk about it. That is the tradition I come from: mucking with things and talking about it. Sometimes this practice is considered art making and it has value. In simple terms art making is the altering of physical materials and constructing verbal context around these configurations. It seems to me that art making as a profession is an extraordinary phenomenon, that over the years this amazing privilege has been pedestalized among many people groups all over the world. I am not a true believer in the institution of art, but my activities would suggest that I am an artist.

When I was asked to guest curate this issue of TRANSMOTION, I thought about myself as a context, as an artist... but also, living in what is now called North America, a cis-gendered woman of Anishinaabe descent, and this list goes on. But mostly, I identify with this strange field I've stumbled onto. And as an artist, I occupy myself with studying materials, paying close attention to how materials react to one other. One might think that I discuss this material knowledge and the process of transforming or altering materials, but I favor instead the abstractions, metaphors and storytelling. Introducing the writings of others who have already included abstractions, metaphors and storytelling, I think it fitting to follow my false dichotomy and talk about physical materials, processes, environments and objects... of course, it is all storytelling in the end.

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The surface texture of paper is often called its tooth. A rough or heavy tooth allows charcoal to cut against the surface and provides more area for the particulates to bind. Likewise, an inked brush will skate across the surface of smooth paper, but a deep tooth will offer enough resistance to make clean lines. Resistance is important. Resistance sculpts. Assimilation is antithetical to resistance, to “survivance” but even in our resistance we might find ourselves conforming to a larger, dominant framework. Resistance is near the outer edge of some greater formation and resistance is the skin of our cause. In “An open letter about the premiere of *Bloody Bloody*

Andrew Jackson in Minneapolis from Rhiana Yazzie" by Rhiana Yazzie, resistance to a performance is characterized as anti-free expression by racist playwrights who remain indignant under a self-righteous, ART-brazened banner. Here, Yazzie generously offers resistance to those who blindly lay claim to an "edgy" resistance themselves. These playwrights argue in favor of racist depictions, their cause is racism for the sake of racism... but they cry, "art!"

Back to teeth. When in the bush, my father sometimes chews dogwood in lieu of brushing his teeth. He claims bush wisdom, but my dad tends to make things up. I thought I'd check with my dentist, who supported the claim saying, "By all means, if you ever see dogwood growing in a ditch somewhere, go chew on it." So, the jury is still out on that. My dentist also likes to make grand analogies between teeth and wood. Turns out our enamel is like hardwood, hard oaks and maples, but when worn off the tooth itself is more pithy, like softwoods. Coffee has a hard time staining the less porous enamel but stains the hell out of teeth when it's gone. I've digressed. The GIFS by Pallas Erdrich are hypnotic in action. They visually chew with jagged frame jumps characteristic of gifs. Erdrich has a background in media production and is prolific in the art of gif making. These images offer up vignettes of daily intimate moments, some sleight-of-hand observations, some are rather funny. The low viscosity of the frame rate combined with the slight observations seems like antidotes, urban wisdom, charms and quick advice that requires further investigation.

When I was in school one of my professors confessed to a seemingly mystic belief about wood. He contended that dead trees or dried wood maintains a cellular memory of water and that by applying water to it the wood is reminded of being alive. He talked about old, dried wood twisting and moving after becoming wet. Hardwood floor refinishers have a term called "Water Popping" that involves applying water to unfinished hardwood. This causes the grain in the wood to bloom or splay out and become porous enough to accept new stain. Allan J. Ryan's "Trickster Discourse in Narrative Chance: How Gerald Vizenor Helped Shape My Life in Academia" is a love letter or a confession of admiration presented in a timeline of Ryan's career. Vizenor's observed fluidity over a ridged plank, that of academia, creates an aliveness or an inspired space. Ryan charts and plots a careered interaction over the course of nearly thirty years, or time immemorial.

The act of carving in wood or stone is considered a *subtractive* form of sculpting. Additive and subtractive sculpting is analogous to positive and negative space in two-dimensional artwork. Although wood and stone can be jointed, glued or hinged together creating a continuous piece, it is the properties of clay that are valued for being versatile as both *subtractive* and *additive* forms for sculpture building. Wet clay adheres to itself and maintains its integrity as a unit until fired or let to dry. Text to the performance of "BLACKFISH" by Emily Johnson requires a slow and steady, methodical read. It is on the surface a story about a fish that nearly loses its form as a survival tactic and it is the first time that Emily Johnson's work has ever made me cry. I heard it preformed on October 20, 2011 as part of a fundraiser event for the Indian Child Welfare Act Law Center in Minneapolis. The memory of it has stuck with me as additive in sculpture making terms.

Subtractive forms of sculpture-making is a difficult analogy. In "Honoring the Disappeared in the art of Lorena Wolffer, Rebecca Belmore, and the Walking With Our Sisters project," Deborah Root helps us swallow our tears for a moment to discuss two artists who've used their platform of art making to admonish those willing to overlook the disappearance of and violence towards Native women in Mexico and Canada. Visual art is just that: visual. Inherent to visual art is its ability to make visible and place in our imaginations that which has been removed, disappeared or destroyed. Root's essay on the work of Lorena Wolffer and Rebecca Belmore breaks the borders that have carved-up our continent to discuss the works of two artists addressing violence towards our bodies.

There are five works in this section. I call them works because it seems to be a broad enough term to be inclusive of each contribution. Consider these works abstract for a moment. Each one builds up a series of positions (or images), gradually unpacking and unfolding complex ideas. I am unable to reduce each of them to bite-sized summaries. This lies beyond my abilities, as I tend to over-estimate ideas that are new to me. I have ruminated on a delicate metaphor between the transformations described in the various contributions I have chosen for this issue of TRANSMOTION and the transformative aspects of sculpted physical materials. The five works included here by artists and writers have offered resistance and transformation, or they've shone

a spotlight on the resistance of others, in the form of words and images. It is my understanding that this publication will exist in the world of pixels, temporary images that scroll across the smoking mirrors of tablets and screens. Please enjoy these contributions and spread them widely.
In solidarity,
Andrea Carlson, November 2016

An open letter about the premiere of *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson* in Minneapolis from Rhiana Yazzie

RHIANA YAZZIE

EDITOR'S NOTE: Co-produced with the Hennepin Theatre Trust, Minneapolis Musical Theatre ran *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson* from June 6 – June 29, 2014 at the New Century Theatre in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Since then, all evidence for the support of this rock musical has disappeared from Hennepin Theatre Trust's website. No apology was ever issued. Although the object of its address has now passed, we feel that this open letter is still a poignant piece of resistance writing and in the context of the 2016 U.S. presidential election, where Donald Trump is touted as the "New Andrew Jackson" we believe it is timely as well. (AC)

Does Minnesota know itself well enough to responsibly produce a show like *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*? The title makes the play sound like a fun, maybe even gory, critique of our seventh president, about whom most Americans have heard contradictory ideas. Whether or not we've investigated the subject, it sounds like attending this play will likely cast a clearer light on a shadowy part of American history, one that might include a critique of the spectacular violence waged from 1829–1837 by the slaveholding president dubbed Old Hickory. Maybe *Bloody Bloody* will take Andrew Jackson's campaign of ethnic cleansing head on? Maybe it will acknowledge the thousands of Native Americans he killed. As a Native American, a playwright, a musical theatre fan, and artistic director of New Native Theatre, I say right on. What a wonderful opportunity and contribution to American theatre to see a play responsibly take up these important issues, issues that have determined Native American inclusion and access. We need as many advocates in the media as we can get. But that's not what happens, instead this script, written by J. Michael Friedman and Alex Timbers reinforces stereotypes and leaves me assaulted, manipulated and devastatingly used as a means to a weak and codependent end.

On June 6th, 2014, Minneapolis Musical Theatre opens *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*, a co-production with the Hennepin Theatre Trust. It's taken four years for any company in the Twin Cities to approach this offensive play since it debuted in New York in 2010. Could it be because in Minnesota we have a relationship with Native Americans and their experience collectively embraced? Could it be that we know our history, the legacy of the vicious founding of this state, and its violent dealings with Native Americans? Could it also be because Minneapolis is home to the founding of the American Indian Movement? Could it be for these

reasons we can see that the play is an exercise in racial slurs against Native Americans justified with a thin coating of white shaming? Why would we together be bothered with it then?

But soon it will be performed and the character Andrew Jackson written by Alex Timbers and J. Michael Freedman will spew unchallenged racial epithets five times a week on soil that is still yet recovering from our own troubled history. Soil where blood has been spilled and land has been taken and people have been shoved aside. There is nothing about this history that is "all sexy pants," to quote the marketing machine that accompanied this show. The truth is that Andrew Jackson was not a rockstar and his campaign against tribal people—known so briefly in American history textbooks as the "Indian Removal Act" is not a farcical backdrop to some emotive, brooding celebrity. Can you imagine a show wherein Hitler was portrayed as a justified, sexy rockstar? This play exacerbates the already deficient knowledge our country has when it comes to Native history; in that context, a false story about this country and our engagement with Native American people is unforgivable.

I saw this play when it debuted at the Public Theater in New York in 2010 and was invited to speak with the authors among a group of other Native American artists to openly discuss the play's inaccurate history and depiction of Native Americans. It was dubbed as an emo rock musical paralleling George W. Bush's rise to power and the following Tea Party movement.

I can list specifically the ways that the play distorts history, but that would take pages. Instead I'll look at a few key moments such as the inciting incident where Andrew Jackson's parents are killed by Indians who shoot random arrows into the young Jackson's home—no Jackson's parents were not killed by Indians—which creates a vendetta that propels him throughout the rest of the play and justifies countless tirades, massacres and slurs against Indians.

Even Minneapolis Musical Theatre producer and director, Steven Meerdink says, "this show really falls short on its lack of transparency of the fact that it does not try to accurately present historical events and figures. The authors deliberately skew, distort, satirize, blur, and condense roughly 60 years of history into a 90 minute play. There are things presented in the play that never actually occurred, and many other things presented that may have occurred—but with dates, circumstances, or relevant people changed." Meerdink says this will appear in a program note.

Aside from skewing historical events, the play does something much worse. Reading this play again this week has saddened me. It's even made me think I might have to unfriend J. Michael Freedman on Facebook.

The most common defense of the play is that it's a South Park kind of aesthetic, therefore it's an equal opportunity defacer. Meerdink echoes what I've heard the authors and original producers say in person and in print, "There are ugly things said about many groups of people in the show—the British, the Spanish, Native Americans, and European Americans…" But Sesame Street has me thinking, one of these things is not like the other.

The first time the British are depicted, they are flogging Jackson. But in that scene Jackson never once makes a racially based insult, in fact there isn't one racially based insult against the British in the entire play, not even a gratuitous use of the word "limey." Jackson in fact remains in control during this scene and actually walks away from the flogging when he's had enough, leaving the British soldiers dumbfounded.

When the Spanish are introduced, again, not one racial remark made to insult them. Instead they are simply and accurately called Spaniards. But in the introduction to this roundhouse fight with them, Jackson begins a joke, "Tell me what's the difference between a little homosexual Indian boy and George Washington? Besides the fact you'd murder either of them without thinking twice?" This joke goes unchallenged except for the Spaniards calling back, "You are the gay."

The authors may have thought this was a joke, perhaps even the producers and the majority of the audience in New York when it premiered did too. But in Minnesota, it's not funny at all. Maybe in the world Alex Timbers and J. Michael Freedman live in, Indians are not targets of racial violence today. Maybe the murder rate of Native Americans in their world isn't astronomical. Maybe in their world, gay Native Americans don't have the highest suicide and murder rate in the entire country. Then again, maybe they are right, these unfortunate Indians are murdered without a second thought. Maybe that's the political comment they were hoping to make with this scene and asking their audience to be aware of and call out for a change?

It is these moments of unchallenged cruelties raged against Native Americans that leave me pained, even more so than the untrue history. I want so badly to be on the same side as the authors, I know they want to prove Jackson was a troubled character in American history with a terribly violent, unstable, genocidal mind. But when they keep adding gratuitous brutalities

against Indians I have to question what their real organizing principle as artists actually is when Jackson says to an Indian character, "You are despicable creatures! You show no loyalty to anything. Your music is terrible, your table manners suck, and your painting skills are absolutely dreadful. I mean look at this." Then a stage direction reads, "Pulls out a primitive drawing of a buffalo." The fact is that the writers are not satirizing this practice, they are employing the practice as a process for writing. "Primitive" is a deeply fraught and loaded term that has been used to justify atrocity against indigenous people world over. It is not a benign stage direction. It trades in the same disregard for the humanity and culture of Native Americans that this "emo rockstar" exhibits. Where is the line? Where is the satire?

This isn't the only instance where stage directions give insight to the authors' points of view. After Jackson's parents are killed, "Three young Indian boys enter and dance around… taunting [Jackson] all the while and pretending to shoot arrows at him. They're really fucking annoying." Because this is the post Broadway publication, I can't help but wonder if there is an allusion to the protests the authors got from real Native Americans; and if not, it certainly sets up what is yet to come out of Jackson's mouth. You Indians have "No artistic vision. You're savages! You're soulless, Godless and well you get the point." The play finds any and all opportunities to berate Indian characters Jackson encounters.

Ultimately, watching/reading the play means putting up with 85 minutes of racist tirades before getting to the last five minutes of white guilt. Well, thank goodness it's a musical and I can at least enjoy tapping my toes, at least up until *Ten Little Indians*. Children's songs and nursery rhymes like this have socialized generations of children to believe that Native people were expendable and that there was no need to empathize with them; it was also used to attack African Americans and to envision a future that doesn't include adult Native or African Americans.

During *Ten Little Indians*, ridiculous, inane, powerless Indian characters are coerced into or are gladly signing their lands away for smallpox blankets and dream catchers—dream catchers? Any Minnesotan should know that's Ojibwe not Cherokee. Then after hearing nine ways in which Indians are killed it's reveal that the last death is a hanging.

Wow. How does that land here in Minnesota? Our state holds the record for the largest mass hanging in U.S. history when 38 Dakota men were executed in Mankato. Would there be

any acknowledgement of this history while the production runs? Or would the producers and creative team just take their paychecks quietly and move on without so much as an apology?

As the play nears its end, finally, Jackson doesn't relent on his nauseating remarks about Native people and their culture. To justify his defiance of the Supreme Court ruling that removal of tribes from their land was illegal and unconstitutional, Jackson implores a Native character Black Fox, "I wish you'd built symphonies in cities, man, and put on plays and showed yourselves a little more essential. You know, to the culture? And yeah, you totally were here first, absolutely, but we don't give a shit, and we never will."

I will echo what Steve Elm, artistic director of Amerinda, an arts and theatre group in New York said, "I felt that there was a joke that I wasn't in on… this play seemed to be expressly written without any idea that there are Native people still alive." And I will further say, that this play takes for granted that people from the dominant culture don't have the capacity for kindness, change, or self-evaluation. We have many allies here in Minnesota and they will not stand idly by while history is whitewashed and Native culture—already imperiled by hundreds of years of misrepresentation—is further debased as a theatrical device.

If the authors had any understanding of contemporary Native American culture or artists, would they have been so quick to make such debasing statements about Native Americans? Because, let's face it, these comments are not about Indians in 1838, this is about their sense of the absence and extinction of Native peoples right now. Perhaps this says less about the authors themselves and more about the erasure of Native history in this country. But as artists, who are political, and intentionally incendiary in so much of the body of their work, there's no excuse for this ignorance and there's no excuse for the way this ignorance is suffused throughout this play.

How would Minneapolis Musical Theatre handle these tirades and images of violence against Native Americans? Would it be a safe place for a Native American family to spend their Sunday afternoon? Would Native youth that see the play feel empowered or erased and battered? How would the MMT actors feel about saying all of these cruel lines after four weeks? Would it get old? Would we learn anything? Would they care? Would we just say stop?

There has to be a better way to make a political point. The first step is to be smarter about your subject matter. Learn about the culture you're trying to make a point about. Ask yourself, how are contemporary people living with this historical legacy?

If you don't know what Native American artists are doing right now here in our state, go to *All my Relations Gallery* in Minneapolis, see great Native American fine art. There's nothing primitive about it and there never was. See shows at my company, New Native Theatre, we could produce four original musicals with the budget *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson* has, with work about, by, and for Native Americans that honors our cultures, our traditions, and broadens our understanding of American history. Watch dance by Emily Johnson and Rosy Simas. Listen to First Person Radio on KFAI. Read The Circle News. Or, look just 300 miles north to Thunder Bay where Northwest Ontario's largest regional company, Magnus Theatre, has a mandate to produce at least one First Nations play a year from Canada's ever growing canon of thriving Aboriginal theatre.

I grew up in New Mexico where Native American culture is very visible. Most of the normal markers of New Mexican culture take directly from the architecture, iconography, and Native artists of the tribes that have continuously lived there for time immemorial. New Mexico is not perfect in its relationship with tribes, but certainly the dominant culture in New Mexico embraces it, identifies with it, and protects it. As a young person, I once attended a show in Albuquerque's big theatre, Popejoy Hall. The Flying Karamazov Brothers came to do a comedy program. I don't remember anything about the show this many years later, except for the moment when that east coast based group had a short exchange where they made a Tonto voice, a quip, then a punchline. This happened right in the middle of a heightened moment of acrobatics, but instead of that New Mexican audience laughing, they all stopped. Not a peep came from that so-called funny punchline. In that moment, I knew my community had my back. My community said in its denial of a laugh at their punchline, that it's not ok to stereotype and strip humanity from Native Americans. As a child that moment was powerful. Did Minnesota have the back of the Native American children who call this state home? Who was going to stand up for them? Or did they laugh along with this ridiculous show and celebrate genocide?

Minnesotans should be proud that this state is where so many great contemporary Native American leaders have lived and worked. Those living in Minneapolis should be especially proud that only a few weeks ago Columbus Day was changed to Indigenous Peoples Day following the example of Red Wing which made the change a few months earlier. Perhaps the entire State of Minnesota will come next. These are things to be proud of and these are the ways

we as Minnesotans can turn our trajectory from the violent past that was the founding of this state to a more equitable home for all.

Is Minnesota, its audiences and artists, at that point yet of supporting Native Americans and defending their humanity in the way that audience did when I was a kid?

I hope so.

I think it was an unfortunate choice for Minneapolis Musical Theatre to produce this play, and I have no doubt they played into the same disconnect the authors did, not considering the effect it could have on real people or that Native Americans might actually be audience members. However, my call to action lies more with the authors who will continue to profit from productions of this play. Their royalties should go to places that actively do the work of dealing with Andrew Jackson's legacy—like the Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center, Ain Dah Yung shelter for homeless Native youth, the Minnesota Indian Women's Sexual Assault Coalition, or many of the other worthy organizations directly serving Native people—and don't engage in the play's same laissez-faire attitude of lightly encouraging audience members to question over cocktails whether or not Andrew Jackson was an American Hitler while aggressively dehumanizing the people Jackson tormented. Because, he was.

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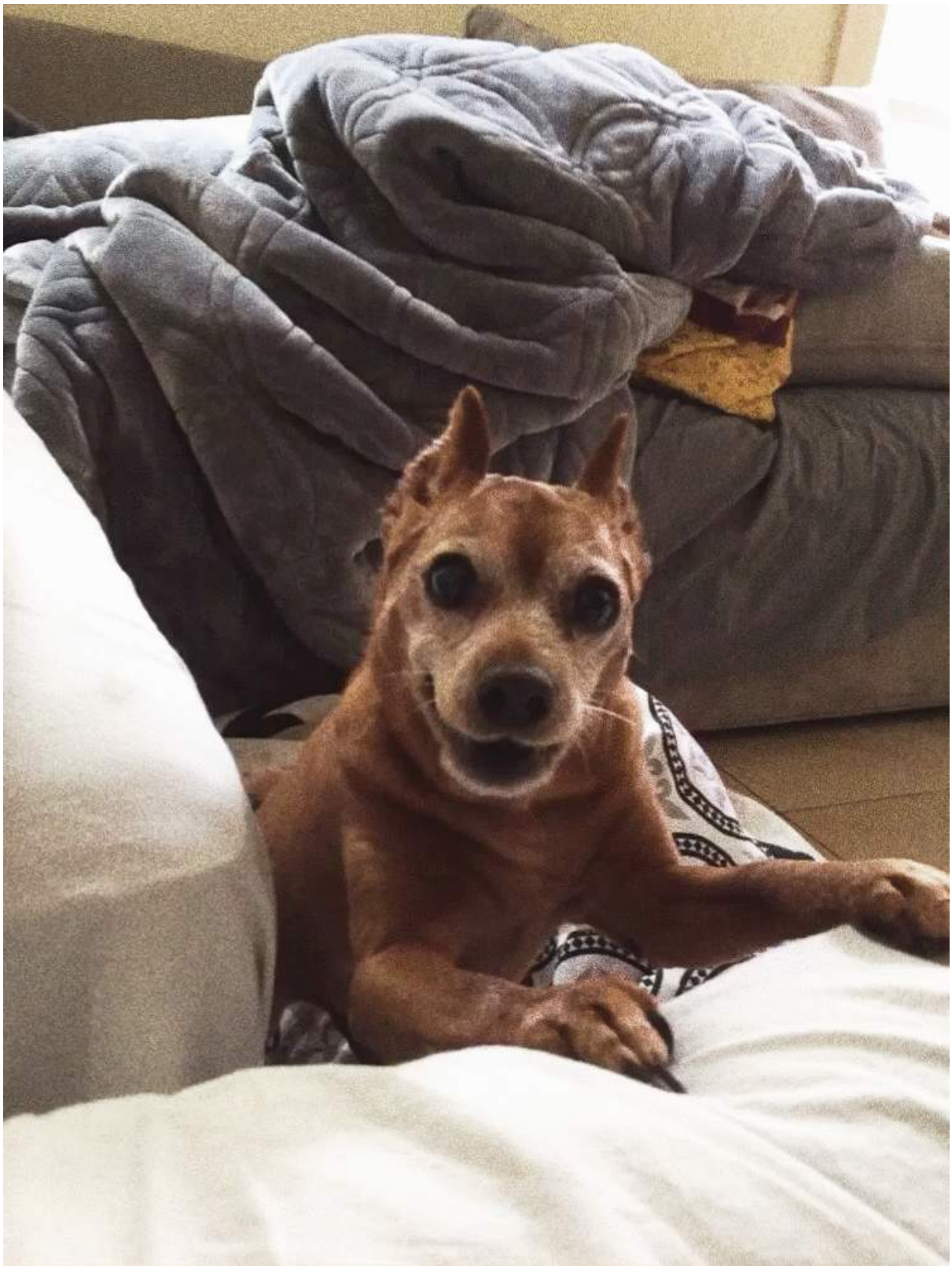
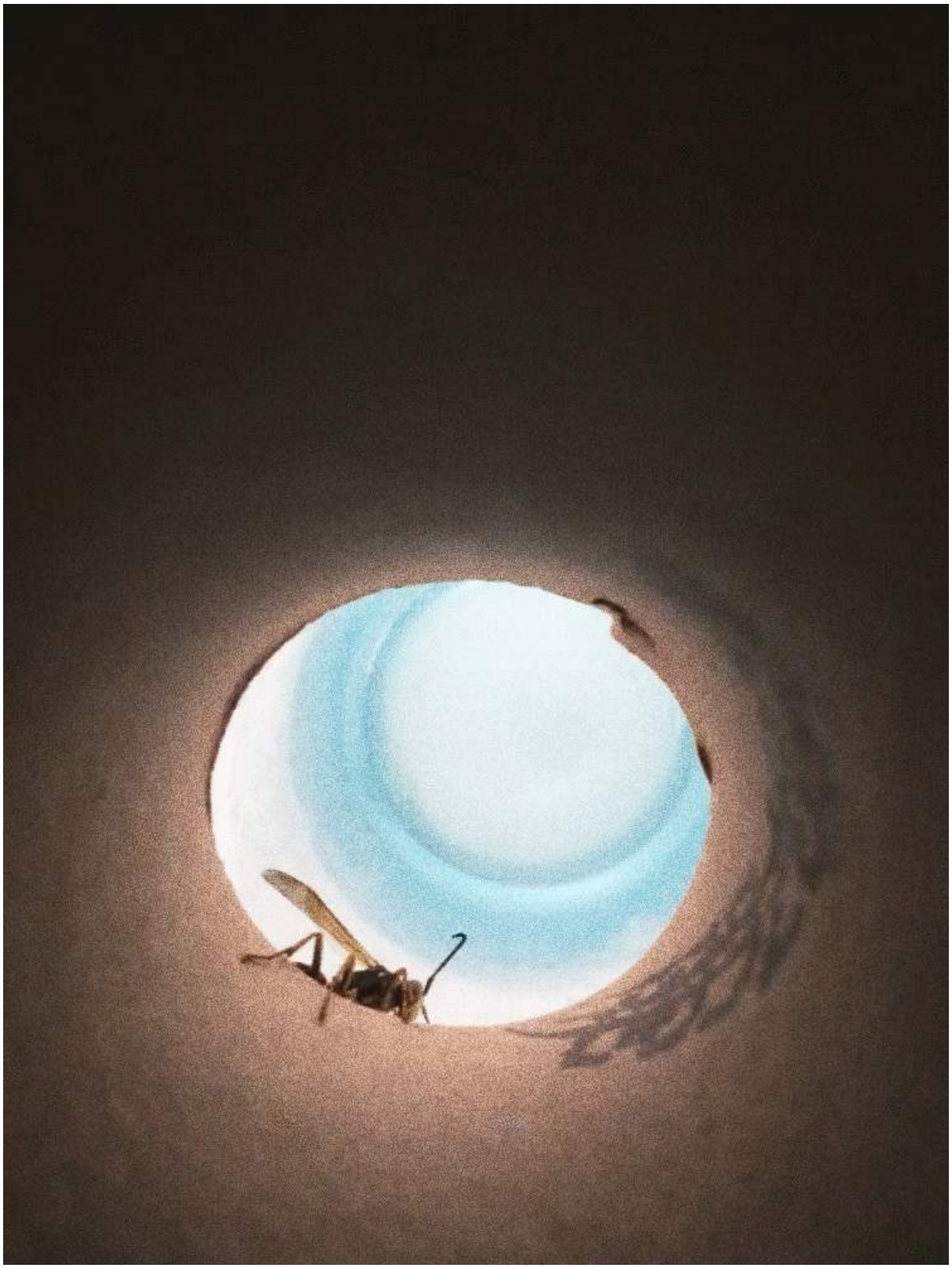
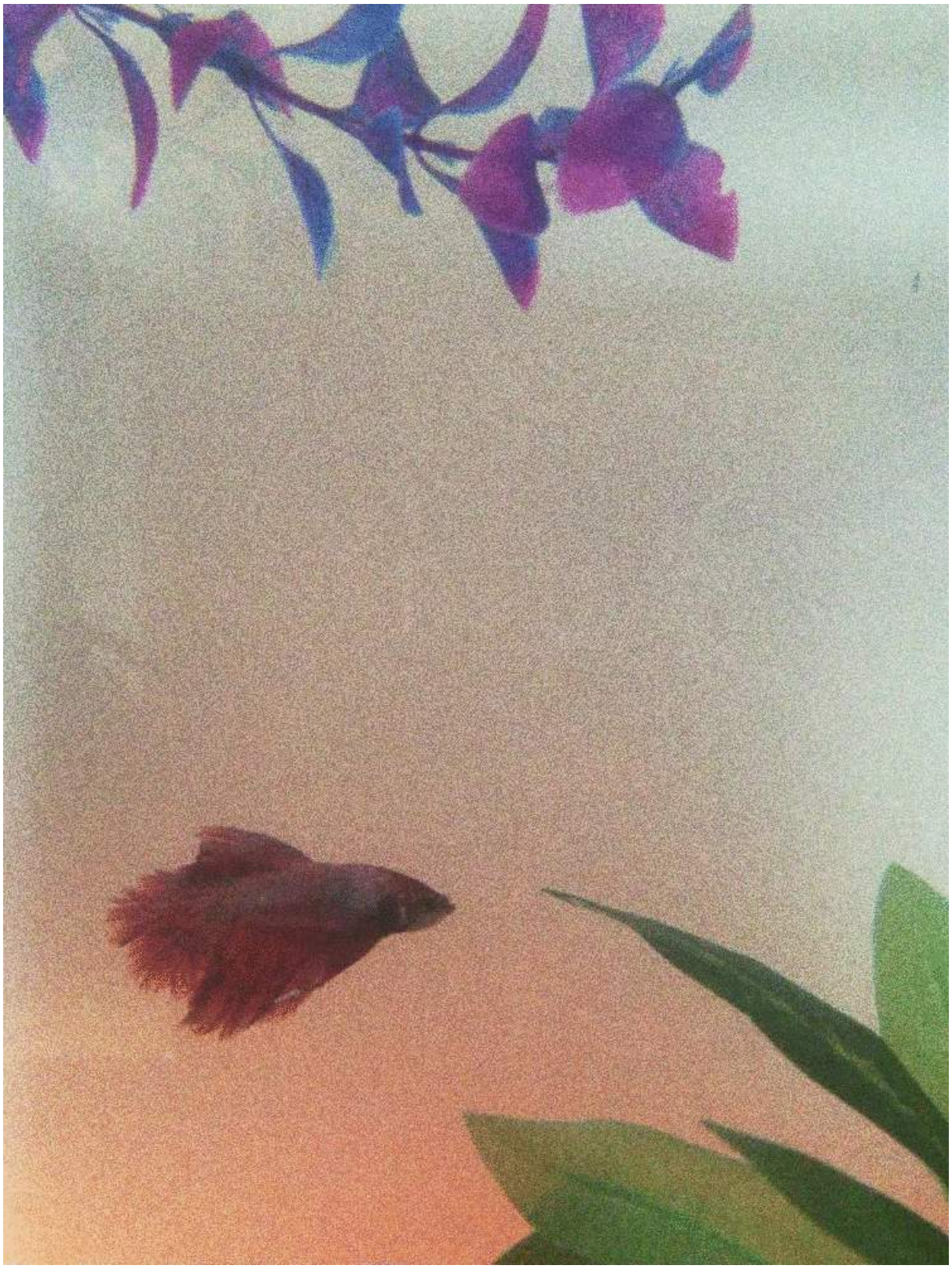
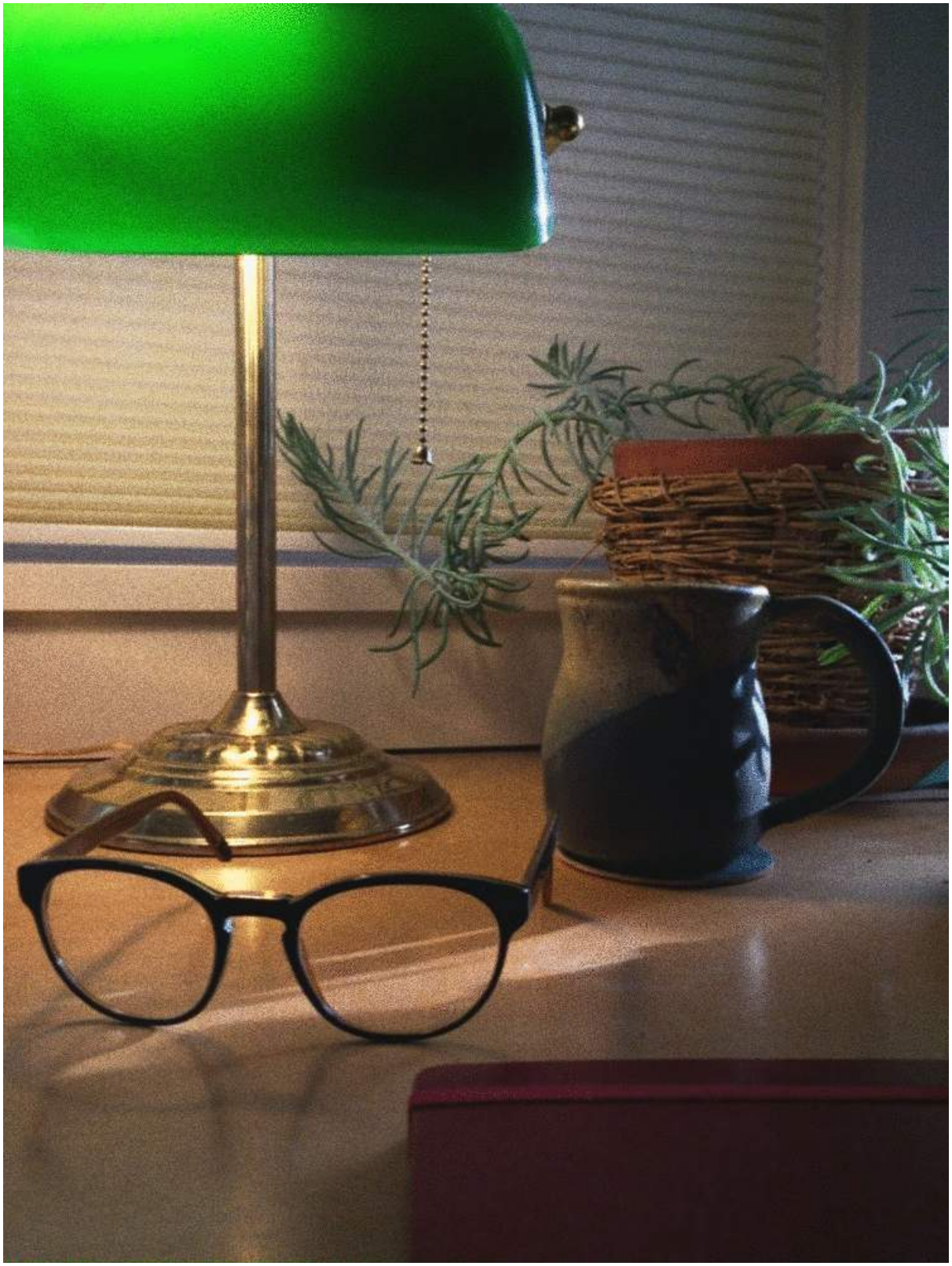








Trickster Discourse in *Narrative Chance*: How Gerald Vizenor Helped Shape My Life in Academia

ALLAN J. RYAN

On February 4, 2014, midway through another cold, Canadian winter, I received an unexpected, and heartwarming introductory email from Professor Dr. Birgit Däwes.[1] She was writing to tell me that in two weeks time she would be leaving Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz, in Germany, to become Chair of American Studies at the University of Vienna. What's more, she was already planning, "with her team", an international conference on, and with, the eminent Native American writer, Gerald Vizenor, that would take place in a little over four months at the University of Vienna, an institution where she was not yet even employed! I was impressed. Clearly, Dr. Däwes had enviable organizational skills and leadership qualities. Not to mention confidence. She went on to say—and this was the most unexpected part—that, at Gerald's suggestion, she was inviting me to participate in the conference, saying that I could speak to any aspect of his work, be it his literary texts or his theory. (It seems that he had told her I was an expert on his work and on Native Studies in general.) While refuting any notion of expertise with regard to Gerald's work, I said what I would like to do is speak to the profound influence his work has had on mine. To my delight, Dr. Däwes approved. I then set about putting together an audio-visual PowerPoint presentation that utilized fifty-six images to be screened over a period of twenty-minutes. In my brief introduction to the presentation, I said, "I'm going to tell you a story. It will be the illustrated condensed version of a story that will be expanded for later publication."[2]

This is that expanded story.

In the summer of 2001, my family and I moved from British Columbia, on Canada's west coast, to Ottawa, Ontario, and to Carleton University, where I took up the position of New Sun Chair in Aboriginal Art and Culture, the first of its kind in Canada. Here, I have a split appointment as associate professor, teaching courses in the School of Indigenous and Canadian Studies, and the Department of Art History in the School for Studies in Art and Culture. I also host the annual New Sun Conference on Aboriginal Arts, now in its sixteenth year. From the beginning, the job has been rich with promise and possibility.

Carleton University is located in the heart of Ottawa at the confluence of the Rideau

River and the Rideau Canal, a World Heritage site. I have an office on the twelfth floor of Dunton Tower, the tallest building on campus, which offers a spectacular panoramic view, facing west, of the adjacent federal government experimental farm. From planting to harvest, in sunlight and shadow, I watch the seasons change, the world renew and the land regenerate. The view is most enchanting in winter when the farm's red barn is piled high with snow, and the scene is reminiscent of a Currier and Ives picture postcard.[3]

My office door boasts an assortment of personal photos, cartoons and pithy cultural commentary for the reading and viewing pleasure of students waiting to see me, or visitors just passing by. For some time, this has included a brief excerpt from a 2003 letter from Gerald Vizenor, in response to my expressed hope in earlier correspondence to enlighten students through conversations with members of the local Aboriginal community invited into the classroom. Gerald's considered, yet cautious, reply was: "The thought of enlightenment by lecture and discussion is always a long shot even under the best of circumstances."[4] It is a sobering thought, and a personal reminder of the limitations of conventional academic practice, and the need for more creative pedagogical strategies that engage students more directly, and resonate more fully with their own experience. The point here is that Gerald Vizenor's wise counsel and critical reflection constitute a profound presence before you even enter my office. Even if you *never* enter my office.

If you do enter, Gerald Vizenor's presence is further affirmed. As is the value of good stories. One whole shelf on my bookcase is devoted to Gerald's various writings, from novels to memoir, to haiku and beyond. I have more than forty books by or about Gerald Vizenor. Have I read them all? Not entirely. Have I understood all the ones I have read? Again, not entirely. But I do have in my collection several books on how to read Gerald Vizenor, some written by other presenters at the Vienna conference, so I'm optimistic.[5] These books are all part of my lived environment. They are warm and welcoming, even in their occasional darkness. Through them, the presence and creative mind and values and ethics of their author, and his sense of subversive play, ground what I do and how I think about what I do. They keep me focussed… *just by being there*.[6]

I was a PhD student at the University of British Columbia in 1988 when I discovered the work of Gerald Vizenor, and recognized the centrality of the trickster to my research on humor and irony in the work of Native American and First Nations artists. The book, *Narrative Chance:*

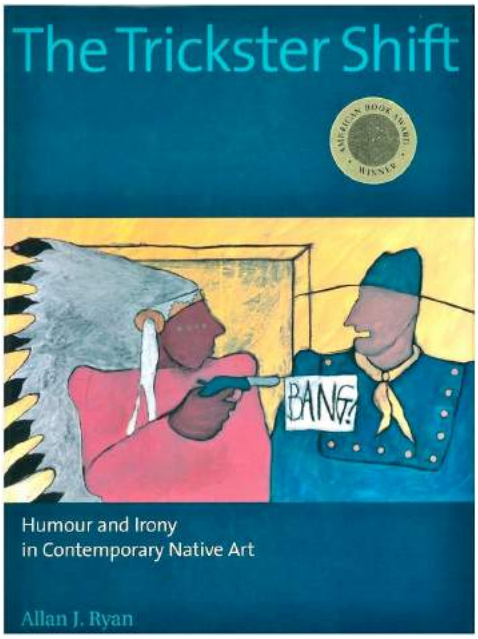
Postmodern Discourse on Native American Indian Literatures (1989), which Gerald edited, and which contains his essay, "Trickster Discourse: Comic Holotropes and Language Games," (187-211) introduced me to the critical concepts of "trickster discourse," "compassionate tricksters," and "terminal creeds." My dissertation was thereafter envisioned as a trickster discourse, a conversation among compassionate trickster artists creating subversive trickster narratives, in studios and galleries on the world stage. Completed in 1995, the dissertation was titled, *The Trickster Shift: A New Paradigm in Contemporary Canadian Native Art.*[7] "The trickster shift" was a term coined by Carl Beam, an Ojibway artist included in the study, who used it to describe his own artistic practice.[8]

Soon after, Jean Wilson, Senior Editor at the University of British Columbia Press, expressed interest in publishing the dissertation, and unbeknownst to me, sent a copy of the manuscript to Gerald Vizenor for evaluation. It was not something I would have dared to do, but in the end I had no cause to worry. While bound by protocol and precedent to conceal the evaluator's name from the author, Jean was eager to share with me the reader's favorable assessment, which described the work as "an outstanding study of the trickster in the consciousness of Native artists and their visual art" and praised it for being "the first formal book-length study of the traces and figurative treasons of tricksters in contemporary Native visual arts." (So much for anonymity!) For me, such an endorsement validated all the research and writing I had done over the previous seven years.

In 1997, I finally got to meet Gerald and his wife Laura Hall when I gave a presentation at a meeting of the Native American Art Studies Association in Berkeley, California. I must admit to being a little star struck at the time, a feeling that has not completely dissipated with the years. They treated me to dinner and we discussed the financial difficulties associated with publishing a book with so many color plates.[9] A year later, we dined out again when I returned to California to interview Native cartoonists for a post-doctoral research project.[10] By then, we had the finances in place to publish *The Trickster Shift*. On one of those two occasions during dinner, Gerald confided with great delight and detail, that he had just killed off a university provost with a bow and arrow. In print of course! While admittedly captivated by such a wicked scenario, in hindsight, I wish he hadn't told me. Over the next two years, with the release of each of Gerald's new books, I quickly scoured the pages to see if this might be where the hapless administrator met his untimely demise. That's the danger of dining with an author who can't resist sharing the

results of a satisfying day at the office.

From conception to completion, *The Trickster Shift* took twelve years .[11] In 1999, it was published as an elegant book that defied easy categorization and garnered a number of favorable reviews in several countries.[12] It contained one hundred and sixty images, a hundred of them in color. Plains Cree artist, Gerald McMaster's painting, *Counting Coup* (1990),[13] was featured on the front of the dustjacket, and Gerald Vizenor's generous assessment was the lead endorsement quoted on the back. The book was co-published by the University of British Columbia Press (UBC Press) in Canada and the University of Washington Press in the United States. Just prior to its release, a minor concession was made to the American publisher whose director felt the book would be easier to distribute in the United States if the word "Canadian" were removed from the book's subtitle. While annoyed, I agreed to the change, on the understanding that there would be no further tampering with the text.[14]



Again, without my knowledge, Gerald Vizenor brought *The Trickster Shift: Humour and Irony in Contemporary Native Art* to the attention of the Before Columbus Foundation who recognized it with an American Book Award in 2000 for its contribution to multicultural literature.[15] I was deeply honored by this award since Gerald's novel, *Griever: An American Monkey King in China*, had received that same recognition in 1988. The award was definitely instrumental in my being offered the position of New Sun Chair at Carleton University a few months later.

In 2004, in the opening lines to a nomination letter for the prestigious Canadian Governor General's Visual and Media Arts award, I wrote that Ojibway artist, Carl Beam, "like Anishinaabe author Gerald Vizenor, possesses an ironic imagination that flows from a worried heart." When Beam was presented with the award in March, 2005, I adapted the nomination letter for inclusion in the accompanying publication.[16] Sadly, the artist passed away four months later. In 2010, the National Gallery of Canada mounted *Carl Beam: A Poetics of Being*, a solo exhibition of fifty art works by Beam curated by Greg Hill, Audain Curator of Indigenous Art. A new documentary film, *Aakideh: The Legacy & Art of Carl Beam* (2010), by Robert Waldeck

and Paul Eichhorn, was screened at the gallery in conjunction with the show.

One of Beam's etchings, *Self portrait as John Wayne, Probably* (1990), from his *Columbus Suite* series, was included in the exhibition, *About Face: Self-Portraits by Native American, First Nations and Inuit Artists*, at the Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian in Santa Fe, New Mexico. I co-curated the exhibition with University of California art history professor, Zena Pearlstone, and it opened in the fall of 2005 for a six month run.

Despite gallery director Jonathan Batkin's initial apprehension, because the works were not what visitors had come to expect from Indian artists in Santa Fe, the show was an unqualified success. Comments in the visitors guest book expressed appreciation for the personal commentaries by the show's forty-seven artists that were posted on the wall beside each piece and included in the sumptuous catalogue. Affirming the fluid nature of Indigenous identity, and executed in a variety of media—from painting and sculpture to photo collage—the exuberant artworks expanded the notion of self-portraiture beyond the narrow confines of the Euro-American mimetic tradition. Alter egos abounded, as did figures without faces and faces without figures. Gerald and Laura, who were then living in Albuquerque, New Mexico, attended the opening, along with several of the artists, Zena Pearlstone and myself.

I have since used the exhibition catalogue as a text for a course on Indigenous self-portraiture that has become increasingly interactive and experiential, focussing less on the works of art as "artworks" and more on the life stories that the images reveal for both the artists and the students, who now create their own self-portraits that they share with each other at the end of the term. One of the students recently wrote, "I'm not entirely certain the point of the class was to teach us about art, but to function as a Trickster manoeuver which utilized the power of Aboriginal self-portraiture as a medium to teach us how to connect to others."[17] It was a perceptive insight for which the student was duly rewarded.

One of the most memorable, if emotionally unsettling, pieces in *About Face* was the pastel drawing, *Artist Not Happy* (2001) by the late California Yurok painter, Rick Bartow, who often portrayed animal/human figures in a state of physical and spiritual transformation, where the psychological tension is both terrifying and palpable. Since Bartow's artwork has been featured on the dustjacket of four of Gerald Vizenor's recent books, as well as a study of his poetry and poetics by Deborah Madsen,[18] it seemed fitting to screen for the class the illuminating video biography of Gerald by Matteo Bellinelli (1994), and then consider the disquieting themes

and imagery shared by both artists. As expected, the pairing prompted a lively discussion. What I recall most vividly, however, was the startled response from students when, early on in the film, Gerald thoroughly trashes the notion and usefulness of theory. "Who could ever think of the world theoretically?," he asks. "'Theoretically' is a stupid word." It was a moment to savor.

But I am getting ahead of myself. On the Easter weekend of 2006, my wife Rae and I travelled to New Mexico to see the *About Face* exhibition before it closed, and to have dinner with Gerald and Laura, and artist Jaune Quick-to-See Smith and her husband, Andy Ambrose, in Albuquerque. One of Jaune's mixed media paintings, *The Red Mean: Self-Portrait* (1992), was in the show, and we stayed with Jaune and Andy at their rustic home on the outskirts of the city before venturing on to Santa Fe. Gerald and Laura drove up to Santa Fe Sunday morning and took us to breakfast in the splendid courtyard of La Fonda On the Plaza, a wonderful old Spanish colonial-style hotel. It was on this visit that I gave Gerald a copy of *Three Day Road* (2006), the recently released first novel by Métis writer, Joseph Boyden, which traces the exploits of two young men from a Cree community in northern Ontario, who enlist in the Canadian army and become celebrated snipers in the First World War. The novel had just won the Writers' Trust award, a major Canadian literary prize, and Joseph read from the book at the *5th Annual New Sun Conference on Aboriginal Arts: Interweaving Communities* a few days after collecting the award in Toronto. Later that year, after Gerald invited me to contribute an essay to the book, *Survivance: Narratives of Native Presence* (2008), I travelled to the Boyden family retreat on Sandy Island, near Parry Sound in northern Ontario, to interview Joseph about writing *Three Day Road*. I was pleased to provide a Canadian Native presence for Gerald's expansive collection of essays on survivance.[19]

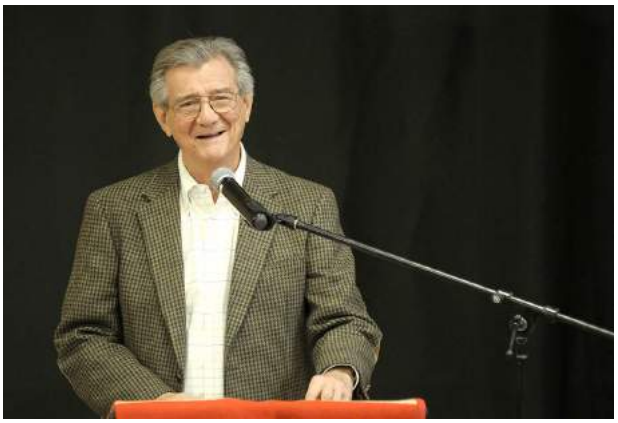
Presenting at the same New Sun Conference as Boyden was Riel Benn, a young Dakota Sioux painter from western Canada who had created a fascinating trickster alter ego he calls "the Best Man," and whose appearance was inspired in part by the titular character in the 1992 film, *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, played by Gary Oldman.[20] That summer, I went to Riel's home on the Birdtail Sioux Reserve in southern Manitoba to view the Best Man paintings and speak to the artist about the series. One of the works, a full frontal self-portrait split down the middle, with a naked Riel (on the left) and the Best Man, decked out in a lavender tuxedo (on the right), was one of the great discoveries in our search for works to include in the *About Face* exhibition.[21]

In 2007, I showed some of the self-portraits in *About Face* to students and faculty at three

universities in China, where I also screened several documentary films made by Canadian Indigenous film makers, that had been subtitled in Mandarin.[22] It was my first visit to China, a truly wondrous experience and not a little surreal. I mention this because I took with me Gerald's book, *Griever: An American Monkey King in China*, however, I did not have an opportunity to read it until the flight home. Had I read it beforehand, I might have been better prepared for all the new situations and sensations I encountered. On the other hand, I was then able to relate the stories in the book to my own lived experiences.

That same year, I organized the *6th Annual New Sun Conference on Aboriginal Arts: Survivance—More than Mere Survival.*[23] While I was hoping that Gerald would be able to attend, his prior commitments precluded that possibility. Nevertheless, Gerald was seldom out of mind. A major reason was that I was supervising the PhD dissertation of Molly Blyth, a doctoral candidate in Canadian Studies at Trent University, in Peterborough, Ontario, who was applying Gerald's concept of trickster hermeneutics to a variety of works by Canadian Native authors.[24] In spring, 2009, I attended the convocation ceremonies at Trent where Dr. Blyth received her degree. Her dissertation, titled, *"Tricky Stories Are the Cure": Contemporary Indigenous Writing in Canada*, was a masterful piece of trickster scholarship.

In 2010, all the stars aligned and I was finally able to bring Gerald to the *9th Annual New Sun Conference on Aboriginal Arts: Something Else Again!*[25] In a wide-ranging presentation that addressed the state of Indigenous writing today, he discussed the works of Stephen Graham Jones and Diane Glancy, whom he characterized as innovative Native authors with an avant-garde sense of survivance, and whose works were to be included in a new series of books called *Native Storiers: A Series of American Narratives*, that he and Glancy were co-editing for the University of Nebraska Press. As one of the contributors to the series himself, Gerald read from the manuscript of a new novel, *Chair of Tears*, describing, in part, how the recently appointed head of a university Native Studies program forced the faculty to return to a more communal way of life by revoking their treaty rights to private offices which were converted to casinos and healing centers. He later recounted how reservation mongrel dogs had



been trained to dance and bark in the presence of those with no sense of irony. With a lilting cadence in his voice and a glint in his eye, Gerald was in his element, at once erudite, ironic, droll, cerebral, charming, amusing and thoroughly entertaining. Throughout his presentation, in a parallel tease of academia, and to the delight of those present, he carried on a playful (if one sided) banter with the Dean of Arts and Social Sciences, a long time supporter of the conference who was sitting nearby.

In a telling question and answer session that followed, Gerald spoke of his fondness for "modified" tricksters, that is "transformational tricksters," or "compassionate tricksters," viewing them as profound and rich visionary figures in a story, and much more than simple conmen or deceivers. When asked about the word, "survivance," he said, "I wanted to have a word to say and write that had the power of 'dominance,' to challenge the notion of tragic victimry." Gerald's engaging presentation remains a high point in the history of the New Sun Conference.[26]

At the close of the conference, Gerald was invited back to the podium for a special presentation by Carleton's Word Warrior Society, a group of Native and non-Native students whose name derives from a chapter title and uncited quotation from Gerald Vizenor in Dale Turner's book, *This Is Not A Peace Pipe: Towards a Critical Indigenous Philosophy* (2006). The quotation reads: "We are more than a curious medicine bundle on a museum rack… We are tricksters in the blood, natural mixedblood tricksters, word warriors in that silent space between bodies, and we bear our best medicine on our voices, in our stories."[27] On this occasion, the students gifted Gerald with a beautiful Pendleton *Shared Spirits* blanket to recognize his pivotal contribution to the field of Indigenous literature. The blanket is inscribed with the words, "To Gerald Vizenor, Chi miigwetch, The Word Warriors."[28] In a spirit of creative wordplay and imagination, Word Warrior spokesman Rodney Nelson said that "honoring" Gerald's career was not enough, and that their presentation was, in fact, an act of "honorance." Engaging with the same spirit, Gerald immediately replied, "I accept with honorance!"

In the spring of 2010, I was invited to help mark the sixtieth anniversary of the Anthropology Department at the University of British Columbia (UBC). As a PhD graduate of their program in 1995, I was both honored and amused. Clearly the concept of illustrious alumni had changed! Not one to pass on a complimentary trip back to the west coast, I took the opportunity to encourage graduate students to think outside the box, create a new box, or discard the idea of a box altogether. I titled my presentation, *Coyote was walking along: following the Trickster on a journey through academia.* Gerald Vizenor has been my guide and constant companion on this journey…which continues to this day.

Later that summer, I adapted the title of the UBC presentation for a lecture I gave on trickster mischief in Native American art at the Idyllwild Arts Academy, located in the mountains above Palm Springs, California, in the San Bernardino National Forest.[29] I am again indebted to Gerald for suggesting they invite me when he was unable to accept their invitation. In keeping with the spirit of trickster mischief, all but one of the images I showed were created by Native Canadian (not Native American) artists which, I was sure, most of those in attendance had never seen before. These included: digital self-portraits by Rosalie Favell, in the guise of Xena, the Warrior Princess, from her *Plain(s) Warrior Artist* series;[30] acrylic paintings by Jim Logan, whose impudent *Classical Aboriginal Series* dares to imagine Native inclusion in the European art history canon; several hyper-glamorized photo portraits from KC Adams's wonderful *Cyborg Hybrid* series;[31] and a few carefully selected PG-rated images of Cree artist Kent Monkman's hilarious alter ego, the *post-indian* diva warrior, Miss Chief Share Eagle Testickle, clad in signature pink satin pumps, diaphanous breach clout and flowing feather headdress.[32]

Monkman's giant mural, *The Triumph of Mischief* (2007) , with its cast of ribald revellers and numerous art historical luminaries, was a highlight of the exhibition, *Sakahàn: International Indigenous Art*, that opened at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa in the spring of 2013. In "Native Cosmototemic Art," the essay Gerald contributed to the exhibition catalogue, he quotes from the White Earth Reservation constitution which he co-authored, noting that it is probably the only constitution, tribal or otherwise, that guarantees the protection of artistic irony. Trust Gerald Vizenor to include that! In May of that year, Gerald returned to Ottawa to discuss some of the key ideas in that essay, at a symposium held in conjunction with the exhibition.[33]

This brings me back to the quotation on my office door that I cited at the top of this essay, and which is taped below a photograph taken on the morning after the *Sakahàn* symposium. In the photo, Gerald and I are seated in the lobby of the Fairmont Chateau Laurier Hotel where he was staying, along with Charlotte Hoelke, a Carleton PhD student of mixed Algonquin heritage, who was researching the concept of queer Native survivance. Later that summer, Gerald kindly sent us the manuscripts to his two recent books, *Blue Ravens: Historical Novel* and *Favor of Crows: New and Collected Haiku*, and we became part of the privileged few who were able to read them far ahead of the spring 2014 publication date.[34] I bought copies of both books for Charlotte when they became available, and a few more—actually, sixteen more—copies of *Blue Ravens* to give to other people whose lives I thought would be enriched by reading the book. Many of these were students. For those graduating from Carleton University just prior to the Vienna conference, I had copies bound in red leatherette with the student's name stamped on the front in gold leaf.[35] One of the recipients, eager to begin reading the book, wrote to say it would remain a treasured possession for the rest of her life.[36]

For me, the treasured possession has been the presence of Gerald Vizenor in *my* life for the past twenty-five years, and the opportunity to share his work with others. I'm indebted to Dr. Birgit Däwes and Gerald Vizenor himself for inviting me to participate in this very special celebration of the most compassionate trickster I know, and to honor *Blue Ravens*.[37]

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Afterword – Aftermath

As befits an event organized in his honor, Gerald Vizenor delivered a keynote address at the University of Vienna on the opening morning of the conference, and closed the proceedings a

few days later with an evening reading from *Blue Ravens*, hosted by the American Embassy at the nearby Amerika Haus. And then, apart from the dining, and laughter, and conversations that extended well into the warm summer night, the conference was over, and immediately consigned to memory. As if by magic, or mere design. But for an event dedicated, in part, to foregrounding the importance of personal and communal memory, this was not necessarily a bad thing. For those of us privileged to play a part in this extraordinary weekend—as presenters, organizers, or attendees—our memories have been greatly enriched, and our sense of community, both personal and professional, has been greatly expanded. As if by magic, or mere design, and possibly by trickster manoeuver.[38]

As is frequently the case, the summer of 2014 flew by far too quickly, and disappeared into autumn with insufficient warning. Too soon, the new academic year, with its attendant responsibilities and incremental time commitments, was the new reality. I subsequently added a new photo from Vienna to my office door, and bought four more copies of *Blue Ravens*, bringing the cumulative total to twenty. One of the books was intended for Richard Blackwolf, President of the Aboriginal Veterans and Serving Members Association of Canada, who had offered to speak to my graduate students while in town to attend the national Remembrance Day ceremonies in the nation's capital on November 11. But this year's commemoration would be like no other. Only days earlier, on October 22, a crazed gunman fatally shot Corporal Nathan Cirillo, a reservist with the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada regiment, as he stood sentry at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at the National War Memorial.[39] It was a cowardly act that shocked the whole country, and prompted an unprecedented outpouring of emotion across Canada. It also made the Remembrance Day ceremonies especially poignant.

A few short blocks from the National War Memorial stands the National Aboriginal Veterans Monument, or Aboriginal War Memorial, as it is sometimes called.[40] Located in Confederation Park,[41] on Elgin Street, it is a massive bronze sculpture set on a high stone base, depicting four warriors (two men and two women) facing the four directions, and representing the diversity of Canada's Indigenous peoples. The figures are flanked by four animals—a bear,

wolf, bison and elk—representing their spiritual helpers. Soaring above them all, and representing the Creator, is a majestic eagle with outstretched wings.[42]

It is customary for those wishing to honor Aboriginal veterans to gather at this memorial a few hours prior to the annual national ceremony of remembrance. On the morning of November 11, 2014, with sunlight playing across the surface of the eagle's broad wings, and the scent of sage and sweetgrass comingling in the air, and carrying prayers and prayer songs up to the Creator, it was not hard to imagine a giant blue raven, with a touch of rouge on its beak, hovering just above the bronze eagle, with all those assembled below safe in its warm, protective, and healing embrace. I may well have been the only one there able to imagine that wondrous blue raven. I have Gerald Vizenor to thank for that.

Notes

[1] Professor Dr. Brigit Däwes. Personal communication, February 4, 2014.
[2] The challenge of conversion was formidable, not unlike transforming a film into a book.

The international conference, *Native North American Survivance and Memory: Celebrating Gerald Vizenor*, took place June 20-23, 2014, at the University of Vienna. Also on the program were: Gerald Vizenor, Kimberly Blaeser, David L. Moore, A. Robert Lee, Alexandra Ganser, Karsten Fitz, Wanda Nanibush, Kathryn Shanley, Chris LaLonde, Sabine N. Meyer, Kristina Baudemann, Klaus Löch, Billy Stratton and Cathy Waegner. See www.nativestudies@univie.ac.at.
[3] Currier and Ives was a successful 19th century printmaking firm based in New York City that specialized in producing inexpensive black and white lithographic prints based on paintings of historic and everyday activities. The prints were then hand-colored. Among the most popular subjects were winter scenes that were often reproduced on postcards and Christmas greeting cards.
[4] Without a doubt, the proposed strategy of enlightenment through close conversation has proven immensely successful, with guest speakers offering to return year after year. Still, a decade later, Gerald remained cautiously optimistic about the viability of Indigenous pedagogy in academia, as reflected in this email from May 24, 2013: "Narrative chance moves in the creases of pedagogy, always ready to be perceived in a trickster story. I worry, though, that the nationalists have abused the original thoughts of native pedagogy with predatory academic ideology."
[5] See for example, Blaeser (1996), Lee (2000), Madsen (2009), and Madsen and Lee (2011).
[6] Having realized the critical relevance of Vizenor's work to my research, I systematically set out to acquire as complete a library of his writing as possible. *The Trickster of Liberty: Tribal Heirs to a Wild Baronage* (1988) confirmed the playful connection and *Matsushima: Pine Islands* (1984), the poetic.
[7] Among the artists interviewed, and whose works were analysed, were: Carl Beam, Rebecca Belmore, Bob Boyer, Joan Cardinal-Schubert, Tom Hill, George Littlechild, Jim Logan, Gerald

McMaster, Shelley Niro, Ron Noganosh, Edward Poitras, Jane Ash Poitras, Bill Powless and Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun.

[8] "What Beam calls the 'Trickster shift' is perhaps best understood as serious play, the ultimate goal of which is a radical shift in viewer perspective and even political positioning by imagining and imaging alternative perspectives" (Ryan, 1999, p. 5).

[9] To do justice to the artworks and the artists, I felt that at least half of the one hundred and sixty images needed to be reproduced in color. In the end we got one hundred.

[10] From 1997-1999 I held a post-doctoral fellowship at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, researching the work of Indigenous artists who employed the same critical wit and self-deprecating humor in their cartoons for tribal newspapers as that employed by Native fine artists working in mainstream galleries. A memorable moment in the research was conducting a well-attended workshop with three Navajo cartoonists—Jack Ahasteen, Vincent Craig and Carl Terry—at the 1998 meeting of the Native American Journalists Association in Tempe, Arizona. The following year, the association introduced four new awards for cartoonists.

[11] That circuitous journey was documented in "Trickster Treatise Traces Humour in Native Art," a story by Robin Laurence that ran in *The Georgia Straight*, October 21-28, 1999. It is archived with the other book reviews at www.trickstershift.com.

[12] Among the more memorable reviewer comments: "This is no stodgy history or ethnographic monograph, but a book about art so grandly conceived and executed as to constitute a work of art in itself" (Margaret Dubin in *American Indian Art Magazine*, Vol. 27, #4, 2002); and "*The Trickster Shift* is a visually stunning combination of cultural philosophy, social commentary and art criticism. Nowhere else is the subject of Native humour in art explored in such depth by the very people who employ it" (Cheryl Isaacs in *Aboriginal Voices*, Vol. 6, #3, 1999). In 2012, *The Trickster Shift* was the focus of the essay, "Merely Conventional Signs: The Editor and the Illustrated Scholarly Book," written by the book's editor, Camilla Blakeley, for *Editors, Scholars and the Social Text*, Darcy Cullen, editor, Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

[13] This image of a befeathered Indian chief confounding a startled cavalry officer was the signature image for *The cowboy/Indian Show*, McMaster's 1991 exhibition at the McMichael Gallery in Kleinberg, Ontario. Several pieces from the show were included in *The Trickster Shift*.

[14] By downplaying the Canadian focus, the revised title implied that the book was broader in scope than it actually is. Only one reviewer (a Canadian Indigenous academic) took exception to the lack of American content, in particular, the absence of the controversial "Cherokee/not-Cherokee" artist, Jimmie Durham, the subject of the reviewer's own research, while another (a German academic) criticized the omission of Inuit art and humor. Overall, the majority of reviewers had no problem with the focus.

[15] Along with several other recipients, I accepted the award at a reception in Chicago in the summer of 2000, that was timed to coincide with the *BookExpo America* convention where I picked up a pre-publication copy of Gerald's latest novel, *Chancers*. Set on the campus of the University of California at Berkeley, the story opens with the introduction of a hapless university provost…

[16] The resultant essay can be found at http://ggavma.canadacouncil.ca/archive/2005/winners

[17] Amy Prouty. Personal communication, April, 2014.

[18] *Chair of Tears: Driving Lesson*, acrylic on panel, 2010; *Blue Ravens: Raven's Dream*, pastel on paper, 2012; *Favor of Crows, New and Collected Haiku: Crow's Mortality Tale*, pastel on

paper, 2001; *Treaty Shirts: Voices II*, acrylic on canvas, 2015; Deborah L. Madsen, *The Poetry and Poetics of Gerald Vizenor: Mask Holding* (detail), 2011, pastel, graphite, spray paint on paper. All images courtesy of the artist and the Froelick Gallery, Portland, OR. In 2015, the University of Oregon's Gordon Schnitzer Museum of Art organized the appropriately titled exhibition, *Things You Know But Cannot Explain*, a forty year retrospective of Bartow's work.
[19] I was pleased to read Joseph Boyden's enthusiastic endorsement of *Blue Ravens* on the dustjacket of the novel.
[20] *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, Francis Ford Coppola, director. USA, 1992.
[21] The painting later became the signature image for my essay, "Riel Benn's 'Best Man': An Unlikely Successor to Iktomi's Trickster Legacy," in the Spring, 2010, issue of *American Indian Art Magazine.*
[22] Under contract to the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), I selected thirteen NFB films by Canadian Aboriginal film makers for inclusion in the six-DVD collection, *Visual Voices: A Festival of Canadian Aboriginal Film and Video*. Subtitled in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese, the collection was supplemented with an online film guide available in the same four languages. Several of the films were later subtitled in Mandarin, with sections of the guide translated into Mandarin for booklets published in conjunction with the March, 2007 *Canada-China Forums on Aboriginal (Ethnic) Identity: Cultural Preservation*, held at the Northwest University for Nationalities in Lanzhou, China, and Qinghai Nationalities University in Xining, China. Further screenings took place at Guanxi University for Nationalities in Nanning, China.
[23] Presenters included Cree film maker Ernest Webb, poet and playwright, Daniel David Moses, Barry Ace and Ryan Rice, co-founders of the Aboriginal Curatorial Collective, and the musical group, Taima, featuring Inuit singer/songwriter Elisapie Isaac.
[24] Carleton University and Trent University share a joint PhD program in Canadian Studies, and Molly Blyth was my first PhD supervision.
[25] Wanda Nanibush, who videotaped the proceedings in Vienna and presented at the conference, arranged for Gerald and Laura to visit Trent University prior to travelling by train to Ottawa. In Ottawa, they saw the Indigenous artworks in the Parliament buildings and the Canadian Museum of History (formerly the Canadian Museum of Civilization), and toured the Indigenous holdings at the National Gallery of Canada with the Audain Curator of Indigenous Art, Greg Hill. Due to the unusually mild weather, I was not able to deliver on my promise of ice skaters on the Rideau Canal. While at Carleton, Gerald kindly made time to meet with students and faculty on the afternoon preceding the conference.

Also on the program were Métis painter and author, Christi Belcourt, whose stunning beadwork-inspired mural, *My Heart (Is Beautiful)*, was featured on the conference publicity, and served as the visual backdrop for the day's presentations; Manon Barbeau, Directrice of the Wapikoni Mobile Indigenous film training program in Quebec; Marwin Begay, Navajo printmaker and diabetes awareness advocate; and Tanya Tagaq, Inuit throat singer extraordinaire who both presented and performed. See www.trickstershift.com for photos and feedback.
[26] Gerald's presentation, like those of all the other New Sun Conference presenters since 2002, was videotaped and archived on DVD, and can be borrowed from Carleton's MacOdrum Library.
[27] The Word Warriors have endowed a bursary supporting research and conference presentations that benefit Indigenous people. It is a bursary that I continue to support through payroll

deduction.
[28] See www.pendleton-usa.com. Following the conference, Gerald and Laura kindly sent me a jacket made at the same Pendleton Woolen Mills in Pendleton, Oregon, as the *Shared Spirits* blanket.
[29] See www.idyllwildarts.org.
[30] See Favell (2003) and www.rosaliefavell.com.
[31] See www.kcadams.com.
[32] See Monkman (2007) and www.kentmonkman.com. Monkman/Mischief is adept at deploying sexual play as a powerful metaphor for political play in a series of post-colonial narratives that re-imagine historic intercultural relationships on stage, screen and canvas.
[33] In a brief message sent from his iPhone May 18, 2013, while enjoying a glass of wine in the Newark airport, en route home to Florida from Ottawa, Gerald invited my wife and I to visit him and Laura in Naples, Florida or Paris. But especially Paris! Who knew the next time we met we'd raise a glass of wine together in Vienna!
[34] *Blue Ravens* is an historical novel that tells the story of two brothers from the White Earth Reservation in Minnesota who see action in France in the First World War, come home to Minnesota, then return to Paris where they lead successful lives, one as a writer (and the narrator of this novel), and the other as a visual artist with a talent for painting spectacular blue ravens. *Favor of Crows* brings together new and previously published haiku poems written by Gerald Vizenor over the past forty years.
[35] In this, I am honoring the memory of Dr. Samuel Corrigan, who presented me with a red leather-bound monograph with my name stamped on the cover in gold leaf, when I received my Bachelor's degree from Brandon University in 1975. It was an act of generosity and personal affirmation that I have sought to continue. See: "Dr. Sam Corrigan: A Personal Remembrance." *Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, Vol. 29, 1/2, 2009, 283-285.

In addition to *Blue Ravens*, I have gifted students with several other Vizenor books, namely, *Hiroshima Bugi: Atomu 57, Landfill Meditation: Crossblood Stories, Griever: An American Monkey King in China, Almost Ashore, Native Liberty: Natural Reason and Cultural Survivance*, and *Favor of Crows: New and Collected Haiku.*
[36] This is the same student, mentioned earlier, who detected a trickster maneouver in the structure of the Indigenous self-portraiture class. She has recently employed Gerald's concept of survivance to frame a study of cultural resistance in contemporary Inuit art.
[37] Wanting to celebrate the publication of *Blue Ravens* in appropriate fashion, I asked my long time friend and batik artist, Sarah Hale, to create an art card for Gerald, displaying the words, "To honor Blue Ravens." In keeping with the avian imagery described in the novel, I asked that it be rendered in various blue hues with a faint touch of rouge. The night before the conference, I inscribed the pertinent passages from the book inside the card. See www.ardenbatik.com.
[38] Among the most vivid memories that will remain from this, my first, but hopefully not my last, visit to Vienna are: hearing Gerald Vizenor quote me in his keynote address—that was definitely a surreal moment; lunching in sunny street cafés with fellow Vizenor scholars who were all well versed in Gerald's unique lexicon and literary tease; and with my wife Rae, cruising the river Danube that snakes through the city; attending a spirited performance by the Vienna Mozart Orchestra; enjoying apple strudel at Café Sperl, where a pivotal scene in the 1995 film, *Before Sunrise*, was filmed; and willingly succumbing to the commercial mystique of Gustav Klimt and Empress Elizabeth—admittedly a guilty pleasure on both counts—acquiring assorted, but

"tasteful" (and even tasty) mementos, as we made our way from gallery to museum and palatial residence on Vienna's superbly interconnected transit system.

[39] The National War Memorial is steps from the Fairmont Chateau Laurier Hotel where Gerald stayed during his visit to Ottawa for the *Sakahàn* symposium in 2013.

[40] Designed by Lloyd Noel Pinay, the monument was unveiled by Her Excellency the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, former Governor General of Canada and Commander-in-Chief of the Canadian Forces on June 21, 2001, National Aboriginal Day.

[41] Confederation Park is located on Elgin Street directly across from the Lord Elgin Hotel where Gerald and Laura stayed in 2010, along with the other presenters at the *9th Annual New Sun Conference on Aboriginal Arts: Something Else Again!*

[42] See www.canadianaboriginalveterans.ca.

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BLACKFISH

EMILY JOHNSON

There is a fish that lives in very deep, very cold rivers. Their taste is strong, pungent, oily. They are caught in weighted traps that fall, then rest somewhere near the muddy bottom. The traps are left for days. In winter, when the tops of rivers freeze, blackfish push their plump bellies down into the mud, as far from the ice as they can get. They wait. They are never seen swimming in their rivers. They don't jump up into the air to break their egg sacks like salmon or to catch bugs like trout. People know they are there because they know they are there.

When blackfish are hauled up in traps, they are motionless and then they are stored in buckets. 3, 5, 6, 7 blackfish can lay in the bottom of an average bucket. They lay there, belly down. They don't flop, they don't roll off, heaving, to one side. They don't fight the air. They press their plump bellies down on the bottom of the bucket, holding themselves in the fish kind of upright. I imagine that they imagine the top of the bucket covered with ice, the bottom covered with mud.

Blackfish can lay in the bottom of a bucket, sitting on a porch for months; no water, no mud, no food, no fish air. They lay there, on their bellies, still. But when brought back to their river, when held in their very deep, very cold water, when gently primed in the cups of two human hands, the blackfish heaves, its sides pulse, its head moves from side to side, and then, it swims away.

My cousin told me about the time he tried studying blackfish for the science fair at school. It was spring. He put his blackfish trap down into the river and waited two days. He caught four blackfish. He placed these in his bucket which he placed in the back mud room of the house near the dog food. He had to wait until fall.

I said you can eat blackfish, that their taste is strong, pungent, oily. You can, but you eat them raw, and you eat them head in. Head in your mouth. It's as if you eat the blackfish while, at the same time, the blackfish swims to your belly.

My cousin didn't eat his spring caught blackfish. He wanted to study them. To open them. To see the guts, the bones that seem to dissolve with spit. He imagined blood and a heart and lungs. He wanted to pin the blackfish open, draw a picture, label parts, find out how they sit themselves upright in the bottom of buckets, why they never surface their rivers, how they come to life after months pressed into mud. He took one blackfish and held it in his hand. He didn't wake it. He took a knife, and he cut it. From anus to head, up the belly. But he didn't see lungs or guts or blood. He held the knife in his right hand, the blackfish in his left, but after the cut, he couldn't hold onto the fish. It dissolved in his hand, became a kind of thick, black, liquid goo. He tried to stop it from slipping between his fingers, but the blackfish goo got heavier as it dripped toward the floor and the whole mess of it slid off his palm, gathering in a puddle at his feet.

He tried another.

Same thing.

"If you cannot cut a blackfish open to look at its insides, can you study its insides?" he asked me. But he didn't give me time to answer.
Instead, he continued, "I couldn't cut another. I ate my last two blackfish. And I ate the blackfish that were sitting upright in my father's bucket, the ones he caught for feasting in late winter. Emily, I ate 5 blackfish," he said.
"Good god," I said.
No one eats 5 blackfish.

You eat ONE, for health, but my cousin thought that if he ate alot of blackfish he could find out about the blackfish soul. About what they dream during the ice over. About their survival through the harshest conditions; laying in buckets in homes, away from the deep, cold habitat of river and mud. About their swim down our throats. He thought there was something the blackfish could teach him that he could, maybe, in turn, teach his family and friends and teacher at school.

But the blackfish made him puke. It poured out of his mouth, swam over his tongue, that same thick, black liquid goo he felt slipping through his fingers. It pulled out of him, leaving him

feeling cleaner than before, but with a horrible taste in his mouth. He lay down, belly pressed to the floor. He couldn't move, so he fell asleep.

He told me, "The blackfish are unstudyable. They exist to live in rivers, and buckets, and bellies. You cannot cut a blackfish. Please, do not try. You cannot eat too many. Trust me, don't. But, when the blackfish enters your dreams, you hold still and listen to what it says. It will tell you when to swim, head first into danger, it will tell you when to press your belly down wherever you are, and rest. It will tell you how to survive this world. It will tell you its secrets."

Honoring the Disappeared in the art of Lorena Wolffer, Rebecca Belmore, and the *Walking With Our Sisters* project

DEBORAH ROOT

It is 2002, and Lorena Wolffer lies on a bed. She slowly sits and begins to remove her shirt. She reveals her breasts to the audience, and then bends to remove her trousers. As she caresses her body the background music fades and we begin to hear the monotone voice of a police report. Wolffer pulls out latex gloves and displays them to the audience before putting them on. The reports of dead women continue, and we hear details of the victims' clothing. One is six months pregnant, raped and strangled. Wolffer removes a pen and begins to carefully mark her body, as if to prepare it for an autopsy, making lines around her breasts, between her legs, her neck. Every now and then she stops, and sits in a meditation pose. Then the marking continues, and the lines become something else, less medical and more a circumscription of the parts of the body that are a focus of rage and desire. Finally she closes the pen and replaces her clothes, slowly transforming herself into an ordinary woman again. She shrouds herself with black blankets and wraps a sheet around her neck and head, covering herself completely.

In performances like *Mientras dormíamos (el caso Juarez)* (2002-04), Mexico City artist Wolffer locates a mystery at the heart of violence, a black hole of negation, and a paradox. It is a place where desire and hatred are closely intricated, where society's violence against women is cut into the flesh. Physical wounds kill and main. Yet psychic wounds are inscribed as well, wounds from silence, from memory being driven deep inside into a place of suffocation and emptiness. And this violence not only marks the body of the individual, but the body of the nation as well.

The title of Wolffer's piece translates as "while we were sleeping," and speaks to the hundreds of women murdered in Cuidad Juarez, a city on the border between Chihuahua and Texas. This border is lined with *maquiladoras*, or factories, where poor, mostly indigenous, women come to find work. It is a place where the atmosphere of violence is palpable, and fear permeates the energy of the streets. One is struck by the contrast with El Paso just across the river, bright and shiny and dead in another way. People all across the globe know what's going on here. Everyone has seen images of the black crosses that have been painted on telephone

poles as memorials to Juarez's murdered women. Everyone deplores the ongoing murders and disappearances, but it seems impossible to stop the killings.

How can we understand this? Wolffer is telling us that, at some level, we choose not to see; we prefer a kind of unconscious dreamstate, which allows us to sleepwalk through what is taking place on the margins of society. But who is this "we," and why are we sleeping, still, when so much information about what is happening is at hand? We can no longer say we don't know what's going on—what is at stake in our silence?

There are days when the bad news is overwhelming, the bad images, the killings and bombs, the acidification of the seas. It sucks you in, and can make you feel helpless. Twenty-four hour news and internet feeds promise connectedness, but it is a connectedness that circulates around bad energy, and ultimately tempts us to hole up and shut the world out. It is easier to sleep. But isolation is deadly; isolation is the enemy

For many of us who live outside the communities in which the disappearances of First Nations girls and women are taking place, it can be a bit too easy to veil the reality of what is happening, and to imagine the extreme violence in Juarez, Vancouver, Winnipeg and elsewhere in Canada, as something that happens to "them", to poor women, streetwalkers, aboriginal women, Mexicans, a displacement that derives from a deep fear of our own complicity, and a fear of waking up to the ways in which "them" and "us" might be linked.

As our eyes skim across new reports, it can be reassuring to focus on the facts of place and circumstance where these things happen—places far away from our own worlds. In this way we distance this violence from our everyday lives, and assure ourselves that it has nothing to do with us, not really.

I don't know anyone who's been murdered; it's possible I've met one or two who've disappeared, but they've not been part of my daily world. Like most of us I've had friends who've suffered abuse and sexual assault, friends who've not received adequate responses from the legal system. And I've known a few who did what they had to do to survive. But my relation to the social and historical structures that subtend both systematic violence and its elision, is at most peripheral and, like most other non-Natives who inhabit these lands, I've benefitted from these structures. And because of this distancing, it can be harder for those on the outside to connect the dots and see that the violence that happens to "them" is related to the violence that happens to "us", to all of us, Native and Non-Native, urban and rural, male and female.

And there are differences in the way violence circulates around each of us. The killings and disappearances of poor, indigenous women reflect both a long history of racism and colonialism, and the existence of what artist Christi Belcourt, an organizer of the *Walking With Our Sisters* project, calls a "parallel universe," in which the official response to missing aboriginal women is often indifference, with no Amber Alerts issued for missing girls, and missing person reports refused by the police. When Native women go missing there tends to be less fuss in the media than when non-Native, middle-class women disappear.[1]

The unwillingness of media to provide consistent and in depth coverage of missing and murdered indigenous women makes it easier for those of us outside the families and communities to slumber through the violence, and to refuse the connection between "them" and "us." But what is this connection, which so many of us have been encouraged to sleep through?

Certainly, sleeping through the violence enforces the distinction between "us" and "them." If this separation between us were to collapse, we'd all have to consider the implications of colonial history and the ongoing struggles around First Nations sovereignty and land rights.

Foucault wrote that what takes place on the edges of empire reveals the nature of that empire.[2] "Empire" can be a state of mind—a focus on money and privilege, or on the activities of celebrities—but it also remains a system of political power, with police and armies, politicians and cartels. With respect to the Juarez killings, if we recognize the United States as an empire, the countries that lie on its borders can show us something about the structures that make its authority possible. Would the U.S. exist without Mexico (and Canada)? Empire is also a center, a place where wealth and power congeal, a constellation of big cities, places where, for some of us, comfortable lives seem distant from disappearance and murder. And so we tell ourselves the system works, and has the potential to be reasonably fair. The center's shininess can disguise the brutality at its edges that inevitably subtends imperial power.

And so I ask: would the present social system exist without the women murdered on its margins? If we are all implicated by what happens elsewhere, then the killings in Juarez, Vancouver, on the highways lacing the country together, in eastern Ontario (where I live), all reveal that our lives are underlain by systems of violence that are closer to home than we may wish to think. They reveal a truth about the disposability of women; of certain kinds of women, and of all women. The center does its best to show the benign face of power, but the disappearances and dead women strip away the mask, revealing the reality that lies underneath.

* * * *

Like Wolffer, artist Rebecca Belmore puts her body on the line in *Vigil* (2002), a street performance honoring the disappeared and murdered women of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

At least fifty women had disappeared from this poor, urban neighborhood in the years before the killer's arrest in 2002, and many of the women who died had been working the street, or were addicted to drugs. Many were First Nations women doing what they could to survive. For years families and people in the community had been aware of the disappearances, and had long called for police action. There had been vigils by family members and activists. When the killer was finally arrested in 2002 many stories emerged of police refusing to listen to people about what was happening to the women on the street, and ignoring information that might have led to the killer. In 2010 the Vancouver Police Department issued an apology to the families.

Belmore's performance took place on the Vancouver sidewalk where many of the women were last seen before their disappearances. She laid out objects in plastic bags, then scrubbed the sidewalk, then lit votive candles. Once the setting was created, she stood. Belmore looked down at the names of the missing and murdered women, which she'd written on her arms, then shouted their names one by one, as she drew roses across her mouth, ripping the petals off with her teeth.

She then lifted up a red dress and pulled it over her jeans and tank top. She rinsed her mouth. Wearing the red dress, she picked up a hammer and a bag of nails and walked over to a nearby telephone pole. She nailed several parts of the skirt to the pole, then yanked at the fabric, desperately trying to pull herself away. Finally the fabric tore free, although scraps of the dress remained affixed to the pole. Belmore stood and faced the audience, now dressed in her underwear.

The video installation based on the performance, *The Named and the Unnamed*, was in part a screening of the documentation of *Vigil*. But shining through the projection of this documentation were about fifty lightbulbs set behind the screen, providing a moving reminder of the spirits of these women.

In her discussion of *Vigil*, artist and writer Lara Evans suggests that, even before they went missing, the women's social invisibility meant that they had already disappeared, or been disappeared:

> Consider… that Belmore is using cut flowers rather than live plants. One of the authorities' justification for not taking any action regarding these disappearances for so long is that, in some respects, the women had "disappeared" already. They left their home communities, often a reserve, for the big city. They were, in a sense, cut off from their homes, their sources of cultural sustenance. The women who disappeared were supporting themselves through prostitution.[3]

I am reminded of how the verb "disappear" functions, particularly in the Latin American context, as a politicized, transitive verb—one is disappeared, usually by the state or its minions. If the women of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside had already been disappeared, by virtue of their invisibility with respect to non-Native, so-called "respectable" society, we can ask by whom, and in whose interests. The answer is more than the killer who was prosecuted and convicted in the courts.

In the early 90's Michael Taussig wrote about the activism of the Mothers of the Disappeared in Latin America, arguing that the political disappearances in the continent's various dirty wars, and the fear generated by these, became a way to break and fragment collective memory, and to "refunction" it into something private.

> [It] best serves the official forces of repression when the collective nature of that memory is broken, when it is fragmented and located not in the public sphere but in the private fastness of the individual self or of the family. There it feeds fear. There it feeds nightmares crippling the capacity for public protest and spirited intelligent opposition.[4]

In this sense Belmore's naming of the disappeared becomes a powerful act of resistance, an insistence that these women lived, despite what happened to them, to their communities.

By using their bodies to reveal violence and its consequences, artists such as Wolffer and Belmore also remind us of its intimacy, even when violent acts occur in larger historical and socio-political contexts, and underline the paradox of desire and disposability, intimacy and fear. By manipulating her nude body, Wolffer underlines the way violence can also come from someone we know and often love. But whether it comes from a stranger or an intimate enemy,

hatred remains linked to desire, with the connection between the two operating through bad intensity. Another paradox, and one that, for many, cannot be said.

Looking at the documentation of these performances, I am reminded of Kafka's *In the Penal Colony*, which he wrote in 1914. In this story, a machine called the harrow inscribes the condemned prisoner's sentence on his back, eventually killing him. The machine works slowly and the prisoner, unaware of the nature of his transgression, understands only at the moment of death his crime and sentence.

I ask myself: what is the crime? Being female? Aboriginal?

And yet Belmore's action of writing the names of the dead and disappeared on her arms becomes a refusal of Kafka's harrow, instead revealing that what was done to "them" is written on "us", whether we see it or not.

* * * *

After the arrests in Vancouver, and after an inquiry into the various permutations of police inaction, there was some hope for change. Despite the example of Juarez, where talk and more talk has done little to stop the killings, some of us imagined that in Canada, the authorities would no longer drag their feet when women were at risk. After all, hadn't the Vancouver Police Department issued an apology? We hoped lessons had been learned.

But soon stories began to surface about more missing aboriginal women, well over a thousand by now. This time, there's been more media attention (although not enough), along with grassroots actions, including vigils and marches across the county. There are campaigns that try to stop the disappearances, and the systemic racism that underpins them, and to reveal how these women have been treated by the justice system. Information has been gathered by organizations such as the Native Women's Association of Canada, which runs the *Sisters in Spirit* database, and Amnesty International Canada's *No More Stolen Sisters* campaign. Social media has been active as well. You can Google Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, and there is a Twitter feed (#MMIW), along with various Facebook groups. The information is out there.

After years of calls for a national inquiry, which would coordinate data about disappearances across provincial and territorial jurisdictions, in August 2016 Canada launched a

public inquiry into the missing and murdered women. In October, Prime Minister Trudeau attended the annual vigil for MMIW on Parliament Hill and spoke of reconciliation between Native and Non-Native communities. So we'll see—thus far, the inquiry's slow process has caused some concern, as has the lack of an explicit mandate to examine police conduct and the criminal justice system.

But learning "the facts" of these disappearances, collecting information and investigating systemic causes, apportioning blame, and saying what must be done is only one way to deal with these issues. It's less easy to sit with the idea of these women's lives, allowing room for positive energies to circulate, and for a kind of healing.

A starting point might be to ask what are the effects of these disappearances? Christi Belcourt of the *Walking With Our Sisters* project says that each missing woman leaves behind a large ripple. These touch the families and communities to which the women belonged most intensely, but also affect the larger society. For one thing, the disappearances bring home the question of how to confront—if that's even the word—extreme violence without being poisoned by it.

It's true that it can be an effort to keep going, to believe that violence can be stopped, that the weight of colonialism and related structures will give way to something more positive. People have utilized a range of strategies to engage with these issues, including political activism, art practice and ceremony. Many of us are taught that these are discrete entities—but what if the three were brought together?

Walking With Out Sisters began in 2012 as an ongoing community project, in which beading groups come together to create moccasin vamps to represent and honor the lives of the missing women (and sometimes children). By early 2015 1810 pairs of vamps had been beaded, with beading groups springing up in territories all across the country, and exhibitions of the work taking place in many venues. Helpers install the work according to teachings from elders, who transport the bundles from place to place. All work is collective, and there is no government funding for the project.

These vamps are not stitched onto moccasins, but remain incomplete, like the lives of the women.

Exhibiting this work involves more than simply installing an art show. In non-Native spaces such as art galleries, the gallery directors must give over to the WWOS organizers—for

instance, smudging must be allowed, despite fire codes. And the installing itself is a careful process. Volunteers gather the medicines and prepare them, then tape the floor and lay the red cloth, then create paths, then place the vamps and other sacred items. In this way the *Walking With Out Sisters* installations become more than art exhibitions, but rather are ceremonies in themselves, focusing on memory and respect, and including honor songs and other commemorations of the disappeared.

Belcourt's understanding that being for something creates different results than being against something becomes a way of dealing with the disappearances, and of refusing the despair that attends such tragedies. Fear is a function of isolation, and out of that comes passivity. Of all the consequences of individualism, this can be the worst, because it means that we cannot share our stories, or find paths away from hopelessness. For Belcourt, bringing ceremony into the process changes everything, and in this sense the shows are not exhibits, she says, but ceremonies that allow "a grieving, a re-setting of a broken bone," an acknowledging of those lives. And most important is kindness—that, she says, is the key principle of the project.

One of the ways *Walking With Out Sisters* creates different results is by refusing or ignoring categories that separate different spheres of activity: art, ceremony, activism, commemoration. By enacting the connectedness between different elements of experience and spirituality, the project keeps the missing as part of the circle and turns the viewers into participants, eliciting a response that engages many layers of consciousness and breaks down the distinction between "them" and "us," helping each of us to understand that even if the disappeared are not our relatives, we are connected.

The artist can weave the strands together in a way that's sometimes harder for the rest of us, and reveal connections that a newspaper report cannot. In *Mientras dormíamos* Wolffer makes the connection between her (healthy) body and the bodies of women subject to police autopsies. In *Vigil* and *The Named and the Unnamed* Belmore takes the responsibility for naming the disappeared; their names are written on her body, and have become part of her. By shouting their names, she not only breaks the silence, but sends these names out into the air, creating another ripple effect. *Walking With Our Sisters* also commemorates the disappeared, so that the names will not be forgotten, but these community ceremonies do more than show that they are not forgotten; it is the power of the name itself, a refusal to accept the disappearance, and the isolation this absence seeks to enforce.

This allows real movement, rather than something that stops in a black hole of negativity. Perhaps art is a way to confront evil acts without being drawn into the abyss; perhaps it's a way to go around the outside--not to confront the bad, but to sketch a path away from it. And as the exhibition moves, more space becomes Native space, and even if this is temporary a trace of that ripple remains.

Note: some of the material on Lorena Wolffer appeared in: Deborah Root, "The Body Engraved: performances and interventions of Lorena Wolffer," *C Magazine* 105, Spring 2010, pp. 17-26.

Notes

[1] There are many parallel universes, Juarez being an example. On a visit there in 2007, I spoke briefly to a young Oaxacan woman and her brother who had traveled to there to find work. The girl stared into the distance as her brother told me he hoped to keep his sister safe. It was like talking to soldiers on their way to war. Juarez was one of the scariest places I've been in; the violence was thick in the air, and the city and surrounding desert felt like a vortex of bad energy. Yet there are many good people working there and, for some, it's a place to live, like any other.
[2] In a sense "woman" exists at the border of empire, something Deleuze and Guattari understood when they talked about *devenir femme* as a way of escaping the fixity of power, the molar lines that emanate from the center.
[3] Lara Evans, *notartomatic* blog, (notartomatic.wordpress.com, 05/08/10). "Rebecca Belmore: Vigil: The Named and the Unnamed."
[4] Michael Taussig, "Violence and Resistance in the Americas," *The Nervous System* (Routledge: New York, 1992), p 48.

Reimagining Resistance: Achieving Sovereignty in Indigenous Science Fiction

MIRIAM C. BROWN SPIERS

Indigenous science fiction—that is, science fiction written by Indigenous authors, as opposed to texts that simply include Native characters—is a relatively new genre, and the question of how we might define, or even name, that genre is still under discussion. The most popular term, "Indigenous science fiction," was popularized by Grace L. Dillon in her 2012 anthology, *Walking the Clouds*. In the introduction to that work, Dillon makes two important claims: first, that Indigenous science fiction has "the capacity to envision Native futures, Indigenous hopes, and dreams recovered by rethinking the past in a new framework," and second, that "Indigenous sf is not so new—just overlooked, although largely accompanied by an emerging movement" (2). While I share Dillon's optimism for the possibilities of the genre, I am also concerned about the potential consequences of reclaiming older texts as examples of science fiction. For instance, Dillon introduces the category of the "Native slipstream," which "is intended to describe writing that does not simply seem avant-garde but models a cultural experience of reality" (4). Such a project has obvious value for Native literature and communities, but Dillon's definition raises other questions about the nature of Indigenous worldviews. If examples of the Native slipstream "model a cultural experience of reality," then why categorize them as science fiction in the first place? What separates such texts from the multitudes of other Indigenous stories that reflect "a cultural experience of reality" through interactions with ancestors, wendigos, or tricksters?

Although he does not address Dillon's work directly,[i] Dean Rader illustrates some of the complications that might arise out of such a broad definition. To distinguish between science fiction and the "cultural experience of reality" that Dillon describes, he introduces the term "Indian invention novel" rather than "Indigenous science fiction." Rader explains that the Indian invention novel:

> draws from all of the motifs of science fiction that make it fun, fanciful, and forward looking, but, unlike the "science" and "fiction" components of sci-fi, Indian invention tropes are neither scientific nor fictional. They arise out of the diversity of Indian

> narrative—its humor, its disregard for the laws of physics, its trickster traditions, and its sense of circular and unending time. The novels of Indian invention play with creation stories, shape-shifters, coyotes, and all that is atemporal, creating a new genre that takes indigenous aesthetics to new planes. (86)

Rader's distinction between science fiction tropes and the "diversity of Indian narrative" draws attention to the dangers of collapsing definitions, especially when relying on mainstream, Euro-American critical categories to describe Indigenous literatures. By labeling texts that reflect Indigenous worldviews as "science fiction," critics run the risk of trivializing Native voices and communities, of reducing lived experiences to mere superstition. Just as Toni Morrison has resisted the term "magical realism" because "[i]t was a way of *not* talking about the politics. It was a way of *not* talking about what was in the books. If you could apply the word 'magical' then that *dilutes* the realism," so too could Dillon's reclamation of earlier texts be used to imply that all Indigenous literature is simply fictional (226). Although this is clearly not Dillon's intent, readers who are unfamiliar with Native cultures may mistakenly use these new categories as another way of reading Native literature as myth, as a fascinating but naïve interpretation of reality that ultimately allows readers to dismiss and disregard Indigenous cultures. In effect, although she aims to demonstrate the ways that these texts model resistance to colonization, the problematic nature of these categories might actually reinforce such structures.

Rader's term, on the other hand, resists reductive readings, instead highlighting and celebrating Indigenous narratives and worldviews. As important as the concept of the Indian invention novel is, however, Rader's argument does not necessarily refute the existence of Indigenous science fiction—it just asks us to reconsider how we define the term. In fact, the concept of the "Indian invention novel" fails to account for those texts that engage with both Native worldviews *and* mainstream science fictional tropes.

Like Rader, I am concerned with maintaining a distinction between texts that are "science fictional" and those that simply reflect "the diversity of Indian narrative" (Rader 86). While Rader's genre is populated by texts like Thomas King's *Green Grass, Running Water* and LeAnne Howe's *Miko Kings*, I would argue that there is also room for Indigenous science fiction, or "sf," as a related but distinct category. Indigenous sf certainly reflects "a cultural experience of reality," partially by engaging with elements of Native worldviews such as "creation stories, shape-shifters, [and] coyotes," but, unlike the Indian invention novel, it also

engages directly with Western science fictional tropes like aliens, apocalypse, and alternate realities (Dillon 4, Rader 86).

The last of these categories, the alternate—or sometimes virtual—reality allows Native authors to explore Indigenous concepts of time, including confrontations with traumatic historical events such as Removal. Both Rader and Dillon point to the possibilities of such engagement: Dillon in her description of the Native slipstream and Rader in his discussion of LeAnne Howe's theory of tribalography. Dillon argues that Indigenous science fiction "allows authors to recover the Native space of the past, to bring it to the attention of contemporary readers, and to build better futures," while Rader suggests that, through the lens of tribalography, Native authors are able to depict "history and the contemporary intersecting at the ground zero of tribal identity" (4, 76). I propose that the trope of alternate/virtual realities does similar work, offering Indigenous writers new ways to imagine and explore the intersections of the past and the present. In such stories, as opposed to more conventional time travel narratives, characters are able to revisit and reinterpret the past, but, notably, they lack the ability to change historical events.

One of the clearest examples of Indigenous science fiction is Cherokee writer Blake M. Hausman's 2010 novel, *Riding the Trail of Tears,* which situates the science fictional trope of virtual reality within a decidedly Indigenous text. By locating his story at the intersections of Native literature and science fiction, Hausman is able to confront the traumatic story of Cherokee Removal and imagine a new interpretation of those events while also acknowledging the ongoing influence of historical narratives in the present day. If, as Thomas King has famously argued, "[t]he truth about stories is that that's all we are" then the stories that we tell about the past must continue to shape our lives in the present (2). Thus, the trope of virtual reality that Hausman employs is important primarily because of its narrative approach, which defies a linear, Euro-American understanding of history and suggests that we might more appropriately confront the trauma of Cherokee Removal by examining its effects, not only on the particular time of the mid-nineteenth century, but within the particular space of Cherokee territory as it continues to exist in both the past and the present.

Because *Riding the Trail of Tears* is set first in the near future and later within a virtual reality version of the 1830s, it is able to confront the trauma of nineteenth-century Cherokee Removal while simultaneously depicting the importance of Indigenous sovereignty in the

twenty-first century. Hausman tells the story of a virtual reality ride based on the Trail of Tears, where tourists can ostensibly learn about Cherokee history and culture while experiencing Removal for themselves. Thus, instead of trying to erase or reverse the history of Removal, *Riding the Trail of Tears* focuses on the ways that contemporary peoples, both Cherokee and not, might understand and respond to that history. Hausman's decision to use virtual reality rather than time travel is key: if he had introduced a time machine that allowed his characters to go back in time and simply undo the past, the novel would become a work of fantasy, problematically erasing the very real people who suffered and died along the Trail. Moreover, such a text would be less useful for contemporary Indigenous peoples, who have no such time machine to improve their own lives. Instead, by telling a Cherokee story that is simultaneously set in two centuries, Hausman offers a new model of resistance and empowerment in the face of historical trauma.

Based on plot alone, *Riding the Trail of Tears* seems to fit easily into the genre of mainstream science fiction. In the novel, scientists have used a new technology called Surround Vision to create a virtual reality window into the past. This technology has attracted attention primarily for its money-making potential; it has been used to develop a tourist trap in northeast Georgia called the TREPP, or "Tsalagi Removal Exodus Point Park" (Hausman 13). The use of bureaucratic language coupled with the word "Tsalagi," one of the Cherokee's names for themselves, hides the violent history inherent in both the ride and north Georgia itself: behind the catchy name, customers are actually paying to experience Cherokee Removal by riding a virtual Trail of Tears (Hausman 51).

Following a familiar generic convention of science fiction, the story begins when the virtual reality mechanism malfunctions and leaves the novel's protagonist, a Cherokee tour guide named Tallulah, trapped inside the game with a group of disgruntled tourists. When technology malfunctions in a work of mainstream science fiction, we might expect to learn a lesson about putting too much faith in machines or the disastrous consequences of tampering with historical events. But it is not just the presence of the Trail of Tears that makes this novel Cherokee: Hausman also reverses generic expectations by considering these typical science fictional scenarios from an Indigenous perspective. The technology behind the TREPP becomes an organic part of the world, and the opportunity to reshape a painful history is championed rather than condemned. By embracing the conventions of science fiction and then subverting and

adapting those conventions to reflect a Cherokee worldview, *Riding the Trail of Tears* alters the parameters of the genre and creates a space of both virtual and real resistance to Removal. Not only does virtual reality become Indigenized within the world of the novel, but, practically speaking, the presence of the book itself challenges received knowledge about the "Vanishing Indian" and insists that, far from having been removed in the nineteenth century, the Cherokee remain in their traditional homelands—both in the readers' present and in the near future in which this story takes place.

Despite the difficulty of imagining riding the Trail of Tears as a recreational activity, the attraction is apparently so popular that, in the world of the novel, the TREPP now rivals Helen, a very real "German-theme-town tourist trap" located in the north Georgia mountains (Hausman 94). Tourists ride the TREPP for a variety of reasons: schools schedule educational field trips, while college students can earn extra credit by participating. Computer programmers take an interest in the technology, and the ride is also considered a family-friendly experience. In the TREPP, tourists are zipped into virtual reality suits and, in three hours of real time, they experience several months of life as Cherokee citizens during the process of Removal from the traditional Cherokee homelands of north Georgia in 1838. Customers can choose the level of violence that they are prepared to encounter on the tour. Groups with young children or the elderly should register for Level One, while on Level Four, customers risk such gruesome deaths as being shot in the virtual face by U.S. soldiers (Hausman 179). The ride is so successful that it has spawned two restaurants (the Soaring Eagle Grill and the Turtleback Café), a gift shop, a bookstore, and a movie theatre, all located on a road called Tsalagi Boulevard (Hausman 36, 34).

Although his subject matter is decidedly Cherokee, Hausman also adheres to many of the widely accepted generic conventions of Euro-American science fiction. One of the defining characteristics of the genre, according to theorist Darko Suvin, is the presence of a "novum," or "strange newness" (4). This novum is produced through the "interaction of estrangement and cognition" (Suvin 7-8). What Suvin refers to as "estrangement" is echoed in Philip K. Dick's claim that science fiction is defined by the reader's "shock of dysrecognition" (4). Whatever language we use to describe the reader's relationship to the unexpected, it occurs in works of fantasy as well as science fiction, but cognition, according to Suvin, "differentiates [science fiction] not only from myth, but also from the folk (fairy) tale and the fantasy" (8). In other words, the presence of the novum must be explained logically, rather than magically, if the text

is to qualify as "science fiction."[ii] The novum that serves as the catalyst for the rest of the story in *Riding the Trail of Tears* is the TREPP itself, which Hausman explains logically by detailing the creation of the machine: it began as a rough prototype that was invented by Tallulah's grandfather, and it was later purchased and developed by a large corporation. Through Tallulah's recollections, we learn how the machine evolved into a large-scale virtual reality program. Because she has been involved with the creation of the TREPP from its inception, she also recalls developing and editing the stock characters within the game. As far as Tallulah and the rest of the TREPP staff are concerned, those characters are merely computer programs, capable of being altered and rewritten as necessary. Throughout the novel, Tallulah relies heavily on the TREPP's tech crew to answer questions about discrepancies and malfunctions in the game, even when it becomes evident that the crew is no longer in control of their programs. These details all confirm that the TREPP has, up to this point, operated according to the rules of computer science and is therefore a clearly recognizable novum, a kind of "cognitive estrangement" that becomes the catalyst for the events that follow.

When the novel opens, something has gone wrong with the Surround Vision technology, and Tour Group 5709 is stuck inside the game. This opening scenario works staunchly within at least two familiar sf conventions. First, as Everett F. Bleiler notes, early science fiction often focused on "technological perfectibilism" (xiii). One of the most common motifs within that category is "things-go-wrong," a theme that cautions readers to be wary of putting too much faith in technology (Bleiler xvii). That theme appears in countless science fiction stories: Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is an early example of a text that warns against the dangers of relying too heavily on technology, as does HAL 9000 in Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* and the park itself in Michael Crichton's *Jurassic Park*. More recently, Cherokee author Daniel Wilson's *Robopocalypse* tells the story of all technology on Earth revolting against humanity. The second generic convention occurs when Tallulah explains that, "'[t]he Trail has begun, and we can't stop it now. We have to see it through'" (Hausman 86). The trope of the un-ending game is also familiar, occurring in texts as diverse as *Jumanji*, *TRON*, and several episodes of *Star Trek: The Next Generation,* such as "The Big Goodbye," where the crew is unable to exit the Holodeck. SF has prepared readers to recognize these situations, so the novel fits comfortably within the boundaries of the genre when several members of the tour group disappear and the in-tour violence suddenly jumps from Level 1 to Level 4.

But *Riding the Trail of Tears* is more than a science fiction story that happens to take place in Cherokee country. Hausman takes advantage of the necessary ambiguities in a scientific explanation of the TREPP to introduce a particularly Indigenous perspective, one that challenges both Euro-American worldviews and Suvin's clear-cut distinction between science and religion. The breakdown in technology in this novel cannot be blamed on the technology itself; rather, the TREPP breaks down because the Cherokee Little People, creatures that ethnographer James Mooney describes as "fairies no larger in size than children," are inexplicably living inside the game (331). Moreover, because one of these Little People narrates the novel, readers have no choice but to acknowledge their presence. Although the inclusion of these "mythical" creatures in a work of sf might seem to trouble Suvin's theories, his definitions of genre also establish a space for cultural difference. Suvin argues that a work of science fiction must contain "an imaginative framework alternative to the author's empirical environment," which means that "reality" is defined by the author's understanding of the term, *not* necessarily by a Euro-American scientific worldview (Suvin 8). Because Hausman is Cherokee and the Little People fit within the "empirical environment" of a Cherokee worldview, their presence does not necessarily turn the novel into a work of fantasy—or even of science fiction. Although many readers may be unfamiliar with the Little People, their presence does not fit the criteria of a novum because, from a Cherokee perspective such as Hausman's, they should not cause a "shock of dysrecognition" (Dick 8).

However, Hausman's Little People go on to subvert the expectations of a traditional Cherokee worldview, by which act the novel establishes them as a second novum. Rather than following in the footsteps of traditional Cherokee stories about the Little People, the narrator offers some new definitions:

> First, there are the Nunnehi, the immortals, who are about the same size as average humans. And then, second, there are the Little People, who are naturally smaller than the Nunnehi. And then, there's us. We're the real Nunnehi, the real immortals, and those human-sized creatures who appear from time to time are actually manifestations of our labor . . . For convenience's sake, you can call me the Little Little Person. Or you could call me Nunnehi, because, as I said, we're the real Nunnehi. (Hausman 5-6)

Unlike the presence of the Little People, the introduction of "the Little Little People" is a secondary novum because these beings are not included in traditional Cherokee stories or

worldviews. It might be tempting to categorize the Little Little People as another piece of mythology, of magic creeping into a work of science fiction, but, once again, Hausman provides a cognitive explanation for their existence—and also for the fact that no one knows about them. Following Mooney, he tells the story of a caste of Cherokee priests who took advantage of their position and sexually assaulted several beautiful young women while the men were away hunting. When the men returned, the people "rose up and killed their leaders, killed them all. Every single priest, dead" (Hausman 4). One result of the revolution was that "the stories began to change" (Hausman 4). The narrator suggests that, "[s]ome stories changed so much that everyone—storytellers and listeners—forgot the originals. Our story is one of those stories. When the priests were killed, we were accidentally cut from the people's memory" (Hausman 5). While the killing of the priestly class is indeed a story that James Mooney recorded, including pointing to several earlier historical accounts that supported his version, he does not mention any description of lost stories—and perhaps he could not, given that the stories were lost to the Cherokee before Mooney worked with them. Nonetheless, the Little Little People's story is supported by historical accounts such as Mooney's,[iii] suggesting that it is grounded in actual, not virtual, reality. The emphasis on storytelling as knowledge also reflects an Indigenous worldview, and the idea that lost stories must be recovered echoes similar concerns in many contemporary Native communities, where tribal leaders are working to establish language preservation and revitalization programs. This second novum, so clearly grounded in a Cherokee perspective, combines with the TREPP to establish a story that is, by definition, a work of science fiction grounded in a Native worldview.

Although the novel incorporates both Indigenous and Euro-American perspectives, the presence of the Little Little People exposes the differences between the two worldviews. Speaking from a Euro-American perspective, Suvin claims that all "mythical" stories are also "static" because he believes that, in a world determined by religion, there is no possibility for real change (7). But the Little Little People are ostensibly "mythical" beings that also change over time. In fact, rather than referring to them as "mythical," it would be more appropriate to simply describe them as characters who originate in Cherokee oral tradition. Such characters are not static like those in Suvin's myths; as the novel demonstrates, they are instead connected to adaptation and innovation. They existed in the people's stories before the revolution, and, although their stories later disappeared, the Little Little Person narrating the novel has found a

way to recover them and gain a new audience. He tells readers that "I'm probably more indigenous than you, and the digital earth is where I'm indigenous" (Hausman 13). It is unclear how the Little Little People, who existed "before the big colonization, before Cristobal Colon, before Hernando De Soto," can be indigenous to a digital environment that has only been developed in the last ten years, but these partial explanations certainly suggest a long history of change rather than stability (Hausman 3). Thus, the narrator's position is both fixed and fluctuating, as we learn when he explains that, "I'm more Nunnehi than you probably thought Nunnehi could be, but I never took such a formal shape until they built their ride" (Hausman 13). Repeatedly, the Little Little People refuse absolute definitions and defy the strict separation of science and religion that is inherent to Suvin's argument. The novel's restructuring of categories echoes Tewa philosopher Gregory Cajete's definition of Native science as "the entire edifice of Indigenous knowledge" (3). Because many Native worldviews do not distinguish between science and religion, the combination of the TREPP and the Little Little People within *Riding the Trail of Tears* empowers Native peoples by insisting upon the value of Indigenous knowledge as a more appropriate framework for understanding our complex world.

This empowerment of Indigenous traditions is reinforced by the fact that the Little Little People ultimately save the day: they are able to literally rewrite the history of the Trail of Tears without erasing the memory of the original events. As a site of virtual reality, the TREPP provides a space to confront the violent history of Removal; the Nunnehi appropriate that space and, with the help of other figures from Cherokee oral tradition, they guide both the tourists and Tallulah in a new and more productive direction. According to Mooney, both the Nunnehi and the Little People are kind beings who often take in lost wanderers and lead them back home (331). This is precisely what the Nunnehi in the novel are able to do as they redirect Tour Group 5709; they lead Tallulah and her tourists away from the Trail of Tears and back to their homeland in North Carolina, where Tallulah also has the opportunity to reconcile with her dead father. Like the fairies described by Mooney, the Little Little People guide Tallulah in the right direction, both in and out of the game.

As proven by the Nunnehi, the TREPP has the potential to create positive change within the world of the novel. Despite the fact that it capitalizes on the attempted genocide of the Cherokee people by the U.S., the game could also offer an educational experience, using virtual reality as a new medium through which to present Cherokee history and worldviews to a

mainstream audience. This goal seems close to what the original creator, Tallulah's grandfather Art, might have had in mind. In his prototype, passengers ride inside a Jeep Cherokee whose windows have been converted to television monitors. Each screen displays scenes from the Trail of Tears, so, as the car drives virtually, it accompanies the digital Cherokee on their walk "from the stockades in Georgia to the hills and lakes in northeastern Oklahoma" (Hausman 33). Tallulah remembers those first digital Indians as "a mass of bent and broken bodies that stretched up to ten miles long at the beginning of the trip" (Hausman 33). Although her grandfather reassures her "that the Indians walking the Trail were digital and couldn't see inside the car . . . Tallulah thought they stared right through her" (Hausman 33). As she experiences this early incarnation of the Trail, her "feet felt bruised and raw" and "[h]er knees buckled and shook upon the upholstery," despite the fact that she experiences the trip from within the relative safety and isolation of the Jeep (Hausman 33). As evidenced by her empathetic physical response and her belief that the digital Indians are looking back at her, it is clear that Tallulah sees the digital Cherokee—at least in this early incarnation—as real human beings. Although she will later be desensitized by working for the commercial version of the TREPP, Tallulah's first reaction demonstrates her ability to empathize with the digital Indians, as well as the possibility that the prototypical version of the game actually encourages participants to establish a human connection with its non-human characters.

The form of the TREPP also provides a space that could be used to revitalize oral storytelling traditions, as opposed to the more limited written form that we commonly rely on when learning about Native cultures in the twenty-first century. Tallulah notes that, "[t]oday Cherokees around the world learn about their culture from the Mooney book," but, as many scholars and storytellers have pointed out, oral stories often lose something when they are translated into text (Hausman 57). Within the virtual reality space of the TREPP, the digital Cherokee could be programmed to tell both traditional and contemporary stories, which would then become more accessible to tourists, as well. In fact, because the digital Cherokee are programmed to "react to [tourists'] reactions," they might be able to reflect the traditional oral storytelling practice of telling particular stories only within the appropriate contexts. The digital Cherokee could be programmed to share certain stories when they are most applicable to the listeners' experiences, providing a kind of personal connection that is difficult to reproduce in written texts (Hausman 71).

Tallulah demonstrates the possibilities of oral storytelling within the TREPP when she tells her tourists the story of how First Man and First Woman turned into strawberry plants (Hausman 102). This story is appropriate to the situation in two distinct ways. First, the tourists have just picked strawberries themselves, and the story explains how First Man and First Woman gave the world strawberries. Tallulah even makes a conscious decision to "stay on target" by telling this story, since "[t]his patch of digital earth is covered with strawberries" (Hausman 96). The story she tells is connected explicitly to a place and the experience that the tourists have in that place. By telling this story in this place, Tallulah reinforces Vine Deloria Jr.'s argument, which he details in both *God Is Red* and *The Metaphysics of Modern Existence,* that Native cultures tend to value space over time; it does not matter *when* First Man and First Woman created strawberries, only that the story explains *how* this particular patch of earth came to be covered in the fruit. If Tallulah could pass her storytelling skills on to the technical crew and, through them, to the digital characters, oral storytelling might easily be integrated into the virtual world of the TREPP.

In addition to the possibilities of oral storytelling, the program also has the potential to bring traditional characters to life for new audiences. Rather than constantly re-enacting the violence of the Trail of Tears, the program could allow tourists to learn about, and even participate in, these traditional stories. Because there are often multiple versions of such stories, tourists would have the flexibility to influence the stories rather than being forced into a strict script. Although no traditional stories are re-enacted in the novel, characters from these stories do exist inside the game. Among the characters who have evolved with the help of the Nunnehi rather than being created by the programmers, Tallulah meets Ish and Fish, twin boys who work in the kitchen with their father, Chef. The family is reminiscent of the traditional story of Kana'ti and Selu and their sons, the Good Boy and the Wild Boy.

In fact, Tallulah connects the twins directly to the story of Kana'ti and Selu, which she presumably learned about by reading Mooney (Hausman 103). In Mooney's version, Kana'ti provides game for the family, and his wife, Selu, provides vegetables. When their two sons get curious about where their mother gets corn and beans every day, they follow her to the storehouse and watch her produce corn by rubbing her stomach and beans by rubbing under her armpits (Mooney 101). Convinced that their mother is a witch, they kill her. This murder might explain the strange absence of the boys' mother—or any elder women—within the TREPP

(Hausman 167). After killing Selu, the boys follow her directions to "clear a large piece of ground in front of the house and drag my body seven times around the circle" (Mooney 101). Corn begins to grow along the path where they drag her body, and this story is used to explain the origin of corn for the Cherokee. Because the story of Kana'ti and Selu explains how the first Cherokee obtained staple foods, it makes sense that their corresponding digital versions would be responsible for feeding the Cherokee people within the game. When Tallulah first meets the boys, she wonders whether they are twins and promptly answers her own question: "[o]f course they are . . . How could they not be? It's all part of the mythology" (Hausman 308). In this instance, Tallulah's choice of the word "mythology" serves as a reminder that she has come to view the game from a rigidly Euro-American perspective, and, thus, that she does not even pause to consider that such characters could actually exist. Later, Tallulah confirms the boys' traditional identities when she refers to Fish as "the Wild Boy" (Hausman 318). Even though they have been brought into the game by the Nunnehi rather than the TREPP's programmers, their presence suggests that the game could be an excellent place for tourists to learn about traditional characters by interacting directly with them.

Although Ish and Fish are clearly connected to Cherokee oral tradition, it is important to reiterate that Tallulah and the programmers did not actually create them; instead, Ish, Fish, and Chef only emerge when the TREPP begins to "malfunction." As in the case of the Little Little People, the novel demonstrates that characters from oral tradition, unlike those found in Western myths, have the ability to change over time and adapt to new circumstances as necessary. Their spontaneity and flexibility might explain why Tallulah, who insists on sticking to the same unchanging script each time she travels through the TREPP, is initially frustrated by these characters. Because she is eager to finish her tour and leave on vacation, Tallulah is inconvenienced rather than excited or curious when she encounters characters who do not fit into the fixed narrative of the virtual Trail of Tears. Even though the twins interact pleasantly with her tourists, she remains suspicious of their friendship. Rather than these traditional Cherokee figures, who introduce an element of flexibility bordering on chaos into the world of the TREPP, Tallulah prefers the stock characters who can be relied upon to behave the same way every time.

One of the best examples of these stagnant, programmed characters is the Wise Old Medicine Man, who Tallulah created with the assistance of the TREPP technicians. "Old Medicine," as Tallulah refers to him, is one of the main attractions of the tour. He greets each

tourist who dies on the Trail, but those who survive also get to visit him before returning to reality. As the narrator explains, Old Medicine's "program ensures customer satisfaction on the Trail of Tears" (Hausman 57). Old Medicine is a mishmash of popular stereotypes, a wise old man who "uses your comments and questions to determine your beliefs. He then reaffirms your personal ideology by showering you with the kind of aboriginal spirituality that only dead people can exude" (Hausman 57). Old Medicine is so popular that tourists sometimes contemplate in-game suicide in order to speed his arrival (Hausman 59). In Tour Group 5709, a tourist who dies a gruesome death on the Trail of Tears later exclaims that, "'[t]hat whole Trail of Tears was totally worth it,'" because she had the opportunity to meet Old Medicine at the end (Hausman 335).

Despite the tourists' love of Old Medicine, he reinforces stereotypes and perpetuates the romanticization of Native peoples. He is not tribally specific, nor does he share any actual Indigenous beliefs. Rather, he simply reinforces whatever tourists already believe, "ensur[ing] customer satisfaction" rather than challenging guests to confront the attempted genocide of the Cherokee people directly. Because he is the last thing that people experience before the game ends, he encourages them to disregard the very real suffering that they have witnessed, focusing instead on what a great time they had—an impulse that will encourage repeat customers, but which undermines any educational or ethical goals of the tour. Ultimately, this exaggerated character depicts Indigenous peoples as "mythical and static," to borrow Suvin's language, rather than constantly changing or evolving, and thus does a disservice to both the Cherokee and the tourists. Because Hausman's narrator is so openly critical of Old Medicine, however, readers are encouraged to see the tourists' response as problematic and, in fact, are invited to reassess their own relationship to stereotypical narratives about Indigenous peoples.

Tallulah's growing dependence on structure rather than flexibility—even at the expense of Cherokee values and historical accuracy—is reflected in the design of the game itself. Although Tallulah is not a programmer, she has collaborated with the technical team to design the virtual world of the TREPP. Over time, however, she has become critical of other people's contributions, and, in her own life, Tallulah believes that she "didn't need anyone's help" (Hausman 301). The single-player design of the game reflects this desire for independence and individuality: rather than several passengers riding together in a Jeep Cherokee, as in Grandpa Art's original prototype, "the Chairsuit Visor is totally individualized. It is the single-occupancy

realization of [Tallulah's] grandfather's dream" (Hausman 74). In other words, tourists embark upon this difficult experience by themselves despite the fact that communal support might help them cope with and survive the Trail. This desire for control and independence, reflected in the TREPP as well as in Tallulah's own life, goes against a Cherokee emphasis on community.

This juxtaposition of values is exemplified by Tallulah's walkie-talkie, which she uses to communicate with the tech crew from inside the game. The walkie-talkie is a physical representation of Tallulah's connection between virtual and actual reality. This tool is shaped like a water beetle, a tiny creature who plays a prominent role in one version of the Cherokee creation story. In that story, First Woman falls through a hole in the sky and lands on earth, which is completely covered in water. She perches on Turtle's back while the animals try to create land for her. Several animals dive to the bottom of the ocean in search of mud, and Water Beetle is the first to succeed. As Tallulah explains, he "spent years diving down to the bottom of the ocean and swimming back up with little bits of earth" until he had enough to cover Turtle's back and create the land (Hausman 97). The water beetle, and the earth diver story in general, serve as a reminder that the world was created collaboratively and required the efforts of even the smallest creatures.

The water beetle walkie-talkie connects Tallulah back to the material world, but it is also a symbol of world creation, a reminder that Tallulah is part of a community that worked together to create the TREPP. As one of the digital Indians reiterates, "'[y]ou must remember, the whole of the community is more important than any single individual'" (Hausman 117). Unfortunately, Tallulah seems to have lost sight of those communal values and shared experiences: she takes on too much personal responsibility for both her tourists and the TREPP. By trying to make and sustain the world alone, Tallulah overworks herself and fails her community. She has forgotten to be flexible, to adapt, and to turn to others for assistance. Because she has ridden the TREPP so many times, she has come to believe that she can rely on the same script and the same standard responses on each journey, overlooking the fact that the world—even the virtual world—is subject to change. Relying on a standardized script leaves her vulnerable when change actually does occur; she realizes that her stories have become stagnant, like Suvin's dreaded myths, and the process of reliving the Trail of Tears over and over has worn her down. Moreover, because that script rewards Tallulah and her tourists for giving in without a fight, Tallulah has become a proponent of the Trail of Tears itself. She encourages everyone to keep acting out the process of

Removal, even when other options present themselves. She has repeated these patterns many times, retelling the same stories in the same language until she has become both dehumanized and colonized by continuing to rely on this single, inflexible, and violent narrative.

Not only does exposure to the TREPP continue to inflict harm on Tallulah; it has also trapped its digital characters in an unending and horrific cycle of violence. Rather than confronting and overcoming the violence committed against the Cherokee in the 1830s, Tallulah is forced to relive the trauma of that experience every time she goes to work. As the narrator explains, "Tallulah's stomach grinds while telling her tourists that it will all be over soon. For her it never ends. This is her one thousand one hundred and third trip through the Trail of Tears" (Hausman 60). The digital Cherokee have undergone a similar kind of violence because they, too, must relive the Trail for each new group of tourists. While Tallulah has only ever thought of these stock characters as computer programs, she eventually learns that some of them have retained their memories of each trip through the virtual Trail. If Tallulah has ridden the Trail of Tears over a thousand times, that number can be multiplied for the digital characters, who ride the Trail not only with Tallulah, but also with each of the other tour guides at the TREPP. The Nunnehi narrator explains that these characters "have all bled to death thousands of times, and they feel it each time. They feel every drop of everyone's blood, their own blood and the blood of their young ones. They remember every moment" (Hausman 286). This awful description serves as a reminder that, in a closely connected community such as that of the virtual Cherokee, the pain experienced by some has a lasting impact on the entire group.

In addition to this endless torture, the digital Indians also explain that, "'[t]he memories are worse than the pain'" (Hausman 286). They keep repeating this experience over and over because they have been "'made to belong'" to a place that "'is not our home'" (Hausman 112). They have been "made" to live in this place by the programmers who created the characters, who "'programmed [them] to be killed, then brought back to life'" (Hausman 119). They have been forced into a problematic narrative in much the way that the Cherokee who traveled the historical Trail of Tears were "made to belong" in Oklahoma. One of the lasting effects of Removal is this complicated relationship between multiple homelands; as Tallulah notes, "[e]ven though most Cherokees today live in Oklahoma or somewhere else out west, the center of our culture definitely comes from [the Great Smoky] mountains" (Hausman 53). Both Tallulah and the digital Indians must relive this conflict on a daily basis, so that each experience adds another

layer of trauma to the historical violence done to their people in the 1830s. For both the real tour guide and the virtual Indians, the act of reliving this experience perpetuates the cycle of violence against the Cherokee people.

This literal cycle of violence, which is repeatedly experienced by the same individuals, is only possible because of the presence of the TREPP itself. Within the world of the novel, the TREPP is a novum that has the potential to induce cognitive estrangement in its customers: tourists could be challenged to reconsider their stereotypical assumptions about "Indians," which could potentially lead to healthier relationships between Native and non-Native peoples in the present. Instead, because the corporation that owns the TREPP has chosen to value customer service above all else, that novum has instead only extended and magnified the violence inherent in the historical Trail of Tears. This is why Hausman has to introduce a second novum in the form of the Little Little People: because the characters within the novel have appropriated the TREPP and used it to repeat the same static and inaccurate narratives of Cherokee history and identity, the Nunnehi must intervene directly in the narrative. Thanks to that intervention, the digital Cherokee seem to be imbued with Indigenous knowledge and an innate sense of their Cherokee homeland—they know that they belong in the mountains of North Carolina, not the artificial stockade where they live in between games. Without ever having been to "the motherland," the digital Cherokee know "how nice" North Carolina is (Hausman 123, 124). When asked how they can know about a place they've never been, one of the Cherokee leaders simply responds that, "'[w]e *know* . . . We *all* know'" (Hausman 124, italics in original). Similarly, they explain that they know what is going to happen in the game because "'[w]e know things'" and "'[w]e are part of this machine'" (Hausman 125). Their information seems to be tied up in both Indigenous knowledge—like knowing about the Cherokee homeland—and Euro-American technical, scientific knowledge, which they hold because, despite having existed long before the creation of the TREPP, they are indigenous to the machine itself. It is this combination of different types of knowledge, both Euro-American and Indigenous, which allows the digital Cherokee to resist their programming, and, thus, to resist assimilation and colonization. By asking Tallulah to lead them back to North Carolina, the Nunnehi encourage her to recognize that she also has access to Indigenous as well as scientific knowledge, and they provide her with the necessary tools to recognize and resist oppressive violence in her own life.

But, before Tallulah can accept responsibility for the digital characters inside the TREPP, she must confront her own problematic role in creating and maintaining the world that exists within the game. Tallulah's position, much like the Little Little People's, is vexed by the complex and contradictory definitions of this virtual Native space. Although the physical building that houses the TREPP theme park is built in historic Cherokee territory in northeast Georgia, that space is today more frequently seen as part of the American South. Tallulah clearly understands that the Cherokee were illegally removed from this place, but most of her tourists are only vaguely aware of that history. The multiple understandings of the land are further complicated by the existence of the virtual space itself, which is ostensibly Cherokee rather than American. Within the game, Tallulah spends her time in "Indian country," but that Indian country has been created by programmers, none of whom are Cherokee themselves. Although Tallulah is a cultural consultant, she does not ultimately have control over the landscape or the characters in the TREPP. Thus, the Indian country of the TREPP is only an imperfect, simulated version of the actual space.

On the other hand, because the game focuses on the experiences of the Cherokee, the majority of the characters who populate the virtual world are Cherokee citizens, despite the fact that their creators are largely non-Native. In fact, even the tourists *appear* Cherokee within the game, leading to the illusion of a Native majority within the virtual space. But "authentic" Native identity is a much more complex concept than either the tourists or the programmers acknowledge, and the tourists' Indigenous appearance further problematizes that question of identity: is it enough to "look Cherokee," to have physical characteristics that mark you as an "Indian"? Tallulah "looks Cherokee," in large part thanks to her braids, which are "the most Indian of her features," but she often worries about her own authenticity (Hausman 361). Native identity is further complicated in a world where virtual reality allows every single tourist to "look Cherokee," but the novel ultimately suggests that Indigeneity requires more than biology, and certainly more than physiognomy; having braids or even meeting blood quantum requirements is less important than cultural identifiers, which are much more difficult to establish, especially within the virtual world of the TREPP.

Even if we accept that the digital Indians are "authentically" Cherokee—and at least those created by the Little Little People seem to be—the TREPP is still a contested territory because it is located in time as well as space. As long as the TREPP is set in 1838, during the

time of Removal, it will always be defined by the violent conflict taking place between the Cherokee and the American soldiers whose goal is to force them west. At the beginning of the game, it appears that, as a result of their programming, the digital Cherokee are largely unable to resist Removal. In fact, those characters who are programmed to resist are most likely to suffer during the game and, in some cases, to be held up as a warning to tourists who might be tempted to fight back. For instance, Tallulah's tourists always spend the first night inside the game with a digital Cherokee couple, Deer Cooker and Corn Grinder. In every game, the tourists wake up to American soldiers invading the house, and so, every time, the virtual family must walk the Trail of Tears with the tourists. Tallulah compares the digital Indians' reaction to her own, noting that the family "walks with similar stoicism. They are professionals too" (Hausman 172). By casting Deer Cooker and Corn Grinder in these roles, the programmers have ensured that they will play the part of perpetual victims.

Later, after Corn Grinder's invariable death at the hands of soldiers, Tallulah considers that

> Deer Cooker is programmed to grieve. Traumatized and suddenly weary, Deer Cooker plays the role of a model American Indian—he does not fight back, he does not harbor lasting resentment toward the soldier who killed his wife, and he does not protest when another soldier grabs his arm and hoists him back onto the Trail. (Hausman 178)

Because she is shot when she disobeys, Corn Grinder is used as a negative example, a warning to tourists who might rebel. On the other hand, because Deer Cooker serves as "a model American Indian," it is his example that tourists are encouraged to follow. Tallulah reinforces this behavior when she "instructs her tourists to do as they're told and follow the soldiers' orders" (Hausman 170). If the tourists try to resist, if they try to protect the Cherokee homelands and culture, they, too, will be attacked and perhaps even killed early in the game. Although the goal of the game is ostensibly to teach tourists about the actual Cherokee experience, it instead encourages them to surrender in order to survive.

So long as the digital Cherokee are programmed to give in, and so long as the tourists are encouraged to follow their lead, the ostensibly Cherokee space of the TREPP will never be truly Indigenous. Instead, Deer Cooker's experience suggests that a certain amount of internal colonization is built into the game. This is quite literally true for the digital characters, who have been "programmed to grieve"—or, worse, programmed to die—and Tallulah, the only "real"

Cherokee who tourists encounter in the TREPP, has come to share this assimilated mindset. So, although tourists may feel that they are getting an "authentic" Cherokee experience, the TREPP is always already a contested space.

The pressure on Tallulah to meet her tourists' expectations of an "authentic" experience only exaggerates her own discomfort with her Cherokee identity. Although she is well paid, she is simultaneously exploited for her heritage; the pictures in all of the "TREPP promotional literature accentuate her hair," which is "the most Indian of her features" (Hausman 361). The company takes advantage of her Indigenous knowledge as well as her cultural background, and both tourists and co-workers are eager to treat her like a "real" Indian. Tallulah struggles to reconcile this position with the fact that she is somewhat estranged from her Cherokee roots, both physically and emotionally. Moreover, that sense of displacement is further complicated by her experience on the TREPP, which requires her to literally walk away from her homeland on a daily basis.

The Little Little People, who are introduced as a secondary novum, intervene in the TREPP—and in the novel itself—in order to resist the damage being done by the first novum. As part of that project, they help Tallulah resist the stereotypes that surround her at the TREPP, and, as a result, the novel begins to supply more accurate knowledge and model more appropriate behavior for its readers, as well. Just as Tallulah's tourists are challenged to reconsider their assumptions, so are Hausman's readers. At the same time, the novel offers a model of resistance to those readers who may occupy a space similar to Tallulah's. By introducing Indigenous knowledge into both the machine and the novel, the Nunnehi challenge the fixed boundaries between genres and cultures and establish a new form of resistance and survival for Cherokee peoples.

Like the Little Little People, who became indigenous to the digital environment after being lost from a much older oral tradition, the Cherokee have also migrated from one homeland to another. And, while Tallulah struggles to reconcile her Native identity with her sense of displacement, the Nunnehi narrator is able to announce, with a rather cavalier attitude, that he is indigenous to the digital earth (Hausman 13). His confidence despite such a paradox can serve as an example for Tallulah and other Cherokee, including Hausman's readers as well as those located inside the TREPP. Like the Little Little People, Tallulah has the opportunity to reclaim her own story despite the fact that it remains incomplete. Rather than continuing to reenact the

Trail of Tears and reinforcing stereotypes about Native peoples for new audiences on a daily basis, Tallulah, alongside the digital Cherokee, ultimately chooses to quit working for the TREPP and return to North Carolina. Although the novel ends without telling us what happens next, it is clear that Tallulah has broken the cycle of violence and begun to tell a new story about her own life.

Because of the intervention of the Nunnehi, Tallulah is able to resist and even reverse some of the violence that has been done to her people. Rather than leading her tourists, as well as the digital Cherokee, on to Oklahoma as she has done eleven hundred times before, Tallulah agrees to lead this group east, into the mountains of North Carolina. The virtual journey corresponds to her real-life plans for the coming weekend: after finishing this tour, Tallulah will drive to her grandparents' home, which is located in Cherokee territory in North Carolina. Throughout the novel, she has viewed this particular tour as the last obstacle before her vacation can begin. By changing her plans inside the tour instead, she takes responsibility for both her own life and the lives of the digital Cherokee rather than continuing to ignore the problem by following the same old patterns. Instead of enacting yet another painful death, Tallulah contributes to a story of survival and reclamation as the Cherokee return to their homeland.

In addition to challenging the Trail of Tears itself, Hausman uses cognitive estrangement to create a space where Tallulah can confront her real-world identity issues. This is possible not because of any program that Tallulah or the tech staff consciously create, but because the Little Little Person who narrates the novel has experienced Tallulah's dreams with her. Because this narrator is indigenous to the digital earth, he can manipulate the TREPP so that Tallulah's dreams take physical form, creating a virtual space where she can encounter and resolve a recurring dream about her dead father. In that dream, Tallulah finds herself in a dark cave with a black bear. She knows that the bear is her father's spirit, but she has thus far been unable to have a conversation with him (Hausman 12). She compares the experience to a vision quest but worries that she is inadequate, wondering, "what was so wrong with Tallulah that she couldn't even experience a vision properly?" (Hausman 323). Inside the TREPP, however, Tallulah finally finds her voice: she shares her insecurities, as well as her anger at her father for leaving her, and, "for the first time in four years, Tallulah Wilson cried inside the Trail of Tears" (Hausman 326). In this moment of catharsis, her father comforts her and says that he loves her. Her dream finally reaches a resolution, thanks to the novum of the TREPP, which serves as an

intermediary between the physical world and the world of dreams. Such a space is only possible at the intersection of religious and scientific contexts—or, more accurately, by viewing the world holistically, as Cajete suggests when he explains that, "[w]hen speaking about Indigenous or Native science, one is really talking about the entire edifice of Indigenous knowledge" (3). Rather than analyzing the world from a Euro-American perspective, which insists that we divide knowledge into discrete—and often artificial—categories, *Riding the Trail of Tears* relies on the TREPP to demonstrate the individual and communal benefits of interpreting experiences through the more inclusive lens of Indigenous knowledge.

Although the TREPP does not allow for actual time travel, and, thus, is not capable of changing the course of history, it still causes real harm by repeating earlier traumas. It is only through the interaction between the first and second nova—between the TREPP and the Little Little People—that the novel becomes a tool for resistance rather than colonization. By creating the digital Cherokee, who rebel against the soldiers and lead Tallulah's tourists back to North Carolina, the Nunnehi are able to tell a new story. This story does not undo or erase historical events, but it does challenge the tourists to rethink their assumptions about those events. In a more concrete way, the Nunnehi also break the cycle of violence that has trapped both Tallulah and the digital Cherokee. With their assistance, Tallulah learns to recognize the digital Cherokee as non-human members of her community who are therefore deserving of respect. Moreover, Tallulah finally demands that she be treated with respect rather than continuing to play the role of a salesperson who must keep smiling while her tourists treat her—and other Native peoples—as less than human. Finally, by allowing Tallulah to confront her father and sort through her own emotions, the TREPP helps her understand her personal history from a new perspective. She may not be able to change the actual Trail of Tears, but, working as part of a community inside the TREPP, Tallulah can create a new, more hopeful narrative for herself, her tourists, and both real and virtual Cherokee people.

By employing and adapting the science fictional trope of virtual reality, and especially by introducing the TREPP and the Little Little People as joint nova, Hausman is able to offer a new perspective on the historical Removal that affected so many tribes during the nineteenth century. The genre of science fiction, which is inherently interested in encounters with Otherness and the possibility of enacting real change in the world, serves as an ideal form for exploring questions of assimilation and difference. Moreover, because Native worldviews emphasize the importance

of space rather than time, the virtual space of the TREPP, which defies a linear conception of time by existing in both the past and the present, establishes a tangible connection between the 1830s and the 2010s. By following a contemporary protagonist, *Riding the Trail of Tears* demonstrates the ways that the attempted genocide of the Cherokee, which often seems to exist in the distant past, continues to affect Cherokee people and shape Cherokee stories. Ultimately, the novel calls attention to and resists the ways that the ongoing romanticization of Native peoples perpetuates violence in the twenty-first century and, rather than trying to erase past events, it suggests new avenues by which contemporary Native peoples can confront historical trauma without succumbing to internal colonization or losing their tribal identities in the process.

Notes

[i]. Rader's *Engaged Resistance* was published before *Walking the Clouds*, but Dillon had already introduced the topic of Indigenous science fiction by the time that Rader's book was released. See, for instance, Dillon's 2007 article "*Miindiwag* and Indigenous Diaspora: Eden Robinson's and Celu Amberstone's Forays into 'Postcolonial' Science Fiction and Fantasy."

[ii] Although such a binary definition might initially seem inappropriate to a discussion of Indigenous literature, Suvin's explanation actually demonstrates an awareness of his own epistemological position and acknowledges the validity of other worldviews. He defines "cognition" both as a stand-in for "scientifically methodical cognition," in the Euro-American sense of the term, and as "intrinsic, culturally acquired cognitive logic" (Suvin 66). He further argues that "cognition is wider than science" and suggests that we might take "'science' in a sense closer to the German *Wissenschaft*, French *science*, or Russian *nauka*, which include not only natural but also all the cultural or historical sciences and even scholarship" (Suvin 13). These broad definitions encompass Euro-American understandings of science but also make space for alternate kinds of cognition, such as the Indigenous knowledge that determines the underlying logic in many works of Native science fiction.

[iii]. Mooney traces this story to John Haywood, who recorded his version "some seventy years ago" (667). In addition, he records "a more detailed statement" given "on the authority of Chief John Ross and Dr. J.B. Evans" (668).

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"An Evening's Curiosity": Image and Indianness in James Welch's *The Heartsong of Charging Elk*

TAMMY WAHPECONIAH

"In order to be recognized, to claim authenticity in the world—*in order to be seen at all*—the Indian must conform to an identity imposed from the outside."

---Louis Owens

Some of the most important and challenging questions in American Indian literature scholarship are those that deal with authenticity. How do writers construct images of Indianness? Is it possible to avoid stereotyping, and if not, how does one resist reducing characters to tropes or types? How does one assimilate—and I am using this term provocatively—self-identity and imposed identity? What makes a character, a writer, a scholar "Indian enough" for inclusion in Native studies? Questions such as these are not easily answered, nor are they comfortable to address.

I would argue that American Indian identity brings with it a special set of concerns that are not as prevalent in other fields of ethnic studies. For example, Hertha D. Sweet Wong, Lauren Muller, and Jana Magdaleno address the issue of identity in the introduction to their anthology of American Indian women writers entitled *Reckonings*: "In selecting the writers to include . . . we chose not to require tribal enrollment, a decision that risks judgments of 'inauthenticity'" (xxiv). The editors' decision succinctly illustrates that "*who* and *how* is an Indian is an ongoing contest of stories in North America" (xxiv, emphasis mine). As we can see in the introduction, the editors of *Reckonings* had to define *Indianness* before they could determine whose works they could include in their collection, even when their very definition is far from definitive.

Defining Indian identity seems to be an inherent part of American Indian studies. I include in this category both critical and creative work. Thus, we see scholars such as Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, Hilary N. Weaver and Sean Teuton, writing about authenticity, focusing on those of us working in the field as well as those whose works we study and, more importantly, *how* we read those works. In addition, American Indian novelists, poets, etc., deal with issues of identity and authenticity in many, if not all, of their works.

In "Literary and Political Questions of Transformation: American Indian Fiction Writers," Elizabeth Cook-Lynn takes issue with the use of western literary theory in American Indian studies. She argues that there are two issues surrounding the study of contemporary Native American novels: *cosmopolitanism* and *nationalism*. Reading a novel through the lens of cosmopolitanism means that the scholar "explores the tastes and interests of the dominant culture," while one who reads through the lens of nationalism is interested in "nation-specific creativity and political unification in the development, continuation, and defense of a coherent national mythos" (46). Because cosmopolitanism is *de rigueur*, literary criticism focuses on questions of "identity, authenticity, and purpose," and in asking these questions, claims authority over the native voice (47). To continue asking these questions, Cook-Lynn argues, is to continue to hold captive Native American literature by forcing scholars to analyze it using western literary theory (51) and writers to comply "with metropolitan literary tastes" that function, erroneously, as "Native American literary expression" (49).

Sean Teuton, in his analysis of identity in James Welch's novel *Winter in the Blood*, lays out the debates over the concept of identity with which many Native Studies scholars are engaged. He begins in the 1980s with Paula Gunn Allen and Ward Churchill's essentialist views of identity, which do not allow for "the continued development of persons and communities" (628). He then moves into the 1990s, discussing the postmodernist theories of Gerald Vizenor, Louis Owens, and Kimberly Blaeser. Although Teuton has a more positive view for postmodernist theory, especially Vizenor's, he argues "the postmodern diffuses the political force of identity *by detaching identity from social location*" (632, his emphasis). He argues that the theoretical approach defined as "realist," formulated from the works of major analytic philosophers such as Charles S. Peirce and W.V.O. Quine, allows us to "evaluate various identity constructions according to their ability to interpret experiences accurately" (632). Thus, Teuton concludes that claiming identity as an "Indigenous Exile" is more "real" than the identity "Native American" because one's experience can better explain one's collective and individual idea of the self rather than a government-designated racial marker.

I would agree with Elizabeth Cook-Lynn that questions of identity come out of cosmopolitanism (50); however, I would argue that the *issue* of identity is grounded in a variety of mythologies surrounding Indians. Because these mythologies are so embedded in the American cultural consciousness, it is difficult for writers and scholars to turn away from

questions surrounding authenticity and identity. The myth of the Indian is so prevalent that by the end of the nineteenth century, Americans' perception of Indians was, as L.G. Moses points out,

> As carved statues that adorned shop entrances or as heads in profile on coins that jingled in their pockets or purses. In their thoughts about the West and its original inhabitants, Americans variously imagined an Indian to be a noble savage, a rapacious killer, a reservation idler, the vanishing American, or a war-bonneted equestrian raider of the plains. (4)

Such perceptions have continued well into the twenty-first century. For example, in Stephen Graham Jones' 2008 novel *Ledfeather*, a white couple visiting the Blackfeet casino insultingly calls their waiter "Kemosabe" and has similar views of Indians as Moses recounts above.

According to the varied aspects of this enduring myth, Indians were (and are) to exist as the vanishing savage while simultaneously exhibiting their barbarism and savagery through war whoops and unprovoked violence, performing their unholy misdeeds in face paint and feathers. To further complicate this paradigm, Indian performance is only to take place under white control, i.e., the reservation, and for white pleasure in shows like Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show.

The protagonist in James Welch's novel, *The Heartsong of Charging Elk*, must bear the repercussions of such inflated and farcical mythologies. In a world devoid of an accurate conception of the American Indian, Charging Elk is paradoxically both esteemed and castigated based upon his level and locality of conformity to the paradigm of Indianness. *The Heartsong of Charging Elk* provides a fictional example of a mythology that still permeates Euroamerican beliefs about the Indian. Yet we see Welch's protagonist negotiating a constantly changing cultural landscape that moves beyond a simple assimilation into Western (specifically French) society. Instead, Charging Elk's negotiations with this new culture illustrate strategic action, choice, and an attempt to turn the performative nature of "Indianness" into "an effective means of self-representation" (Maddox 9).

Welch's novel follows the titular character from his home in the Black Hills to Europe as a member of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. Left behind in Marseille, he is mistaken for Featherman, another show Indian who dies from influenza. Because of a bureaucratic mix-up (the doctor identifies the dead Featherman as Charging Elk), the American consulate is unable to

send him either home or to Italy to rejoin the show. In addition, Charging Elk is not a United States citizen and thus the French government labels him *sans papier avant la lettre*. Ironically, this label comes to benefit him after he is charged with murdering a man who attempts to rape him and is sentenced to life in prison in France's notorious La Tombe. The French see his tribal status as citizenship in the Sioux Nation and, therefore, because no legal agreement exists between the two nations, he is released from prison.

Both arising from and contributing to the paradigm of Indianness is the concept of "playing Indian," which factors heavily in the plot and themes of Welch's novel. In his book *Playing Indian*, Philip J. Deloria argues that playing Indian is an act in which Americans have engaged in an attempt to create both a personal and national identity. Deloria contends "savage Indians served Americans as oppositional figures against whom one might imagine a civilized national self" (3). Playing Indian, however, is not limited to non-Natives, as Indians have also taken part in this act, both voluntarily and involuntarily. According to Deloria, "as the nineteenth and twentieth centuries unfolded, increasing numbers of Indians participated in white people's Indian play, assisting, confirming, co-opting, challenging, and legitimating the performative tradition of aboriginal American identity" (8). In the act of performing the *idea* of the Indian, by embodying those fictions in their actions, Indians who participate in "white people's Indian play," make those artificial conventions appear to be natural and necessary.

In an article entitled "The Tribe Called Wannabee: Playing Indian in America and Europe," Rayna Green writes, "The Wild West Shows, with the sequelae, cemented roles for Indians who play Indian, or as Indians will later call them, 'show' Indians" (38). For Charging Elk, playing Indian as a participant in Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West Show is the result of an impossible standard imposed by a society that prohibits him from being anything but a hyperbolic caricature of himself and his people. As such, he is at the mercy of a system that simultaneously allows and disallows entrance to that system based upon the single criterion of Indianness, a "static view," where the Indian, "in order to remain authentic, must camp forever in the eighteenth, seventeenth, or sixteenth century. . . ." or in this case, the nineteenth century (Moore 45).

Throughout the novel, Charging Elk is haunted by this ever-present paradigm imposed on him by a society that "desired Indianness, not Indians" (Deloria 90). He and his friend, Strikes Plenty, audition for the Wild West show in order to escape the only other choice allowed them: a

demeaning life on the reservation. Strikes Plenty, however, is denied a place in the Wild West show because "he is not Indian enough for [the] white bosses . . . [who] think they know what an Indian should look like. He should be tall and lean. He should have nice clothes. He should look only in the distance and act as though his head is in the clouds (34). Strikes Plenty "did not fit [the] white men's vision" (34), both literally and figuratively. The other Indians vying for performative positions with the show "wore their best clothes, beaded and fringed buckskins, blue felt leggings, calico blouses, some even full headdresses. They painted their faces and their horses and they rode their woolly saddles with a practiced recklessness" (34). Found early in the text, the Indians' behavior and appearance is an example of the myth of Indianness that reverberates throughout the novel in many forms. However, the paradigm is perhaps most succinctly expressed by the French newspaper reporter Martin St-Cyr, whose expectation of Indianness is evidenced by the following queries: "Would [Charging Elk] be dressed in feathers and fur, in war paint? Would he have a fierce scowl? More important, would he be dangerous, a wild savage from the American frontier?" (93). St-Cyr's ludicrously exaggerated estimation of Indianness is a perfectly preserved reflection of the contemporary societal viewpoint.

In her book *Slippery Characters: Ethnic Impersonators and American Identities*, Laura Browder explains the fascination with ethnic performance in general and Wild West shows in particular: "Cody's display of Native Americans reenacting the battles they had lost softened the brutal history of conquest and made it palatable for audiences" (58). According to Browder, white society craves the display of Indianness because of the alleviation of guilt that it provides for them. As a result, she contends that "Cody's shows depended for their success on authenticity" (58). Thus, "Everything Genuine" became Cody's trademark promotion. By offering audiences alleged authenticity, Cody was essentially assuring them that history unfolded in this less offensive manner. Moreover, by using Indians in the performance, he implied their acceptance, and even endorsement, of his scripted version of events.

Furthermore, many Americans in the nineteenth century believed the Indians to be entirely disappearing from the continent and considered Wild West shows to be of great historical significance, a valuable opportunity to behold the vanishing race. Browder states, "Most of the spectators at a Wild West show in the 1880s had never seen an Indian; in the public imagination, Indians were passing out of existence" (58). In Welch's novel, Franklin Bell, the American vice-consul to France, shares this belief viewing Indians "as still attempting to live in

the past with their feathers and beads" (82). He concludes that their attempts are only natural "since they had no future to speak of. . . . They were a pitiful people in their present state and the sooner they vanished or joined America the better off they would be" (82). For this and many other reasons, the tenets of the show so resonated with American and European audiences that "within two years of its [Cody's Wild West show] first appearance in Omaha, nearly fifty circuses, medicine shows and rival Wild West shows had incorporated, and in some instances copied, many of its features (Moses 23).

Browder explains this phenomenon of popularity, partially attributing it to society's obsession with the myth asserting, "Cody offered the public an iconic view of the Native American. He recruited only from the plains tribes, particularly the Sioux, and offered the public the same images—over and over again—of Indian clothing, Indian dwellings, and Indian behavior" (65). In addition, the Wild West show, "helped to create 'the Indian' and thus literally removed American Indians into the American and European imagination as 'first citizens' of the nation, securely conquered within and tied to this nation's creation myth" (Optiz 165). Charging Elk, unlike Strikes Plenty, is considered Indian enough by Buffalo Bill's show scouts, his appearance and performance lending him to perfect correspondence with the myth. First, Charging Elk is considered "dark even for an Oglala" (Welch 42). Second, he thrills the audiences with his display of Indian dress, performing in "his father's hairpipe breastplate [and] his own badger-claw necklace" (133). He wears "brass armbands, earrings, and the two eagle feathers in his hair" (133). Dressed in his "finest clothes," Charging Elk "knew he was quite a sight" (49). Finally, he performs the various elements of the show with enthusiasm, his "recklessness" suggesting, "a life lived the old way" (34). In fact, he is a self-avowed "seasoned performer" (51). For him, playing Indian includes "burning the settler's cabin, chasing the Deadwood stage, [and] fighting with the soldiers in the big show of Custer's last fight" (15), all of which contribute to the amplified paradigm of Indianness.

In choosing to be part of the myth, Charging Elk is also choosing to conform to the myth, making "him an accomplice in the erasure of history as [it is] embedded in the tribe's collective memory and the construction of a revised and officially sanctioned historical American memory" (Bak 110). Leaving behind his cherished horse, Charging Elk "rode [a] painted horse in the procession" (51), catering to the myth at its most hyperbolic level by mounting the proverbial spotted steed. In addition, Charging Elk is aware that the "excitement and danger of the event"

(47) felt by the audience is as staged as the show's buffalo hunt. His performative Indianness is foiled by the "cowboys, soldiers, vaqueros, and wagons filled with elk, deer, and buffaloes" (49), as representatives of every significant western myth ride side by side in contrived and historically inaccurate harmony.

Despite the contradictions presented, engaging in performance also has some notable benefits. On a practical level, playing Indian affords Charging Elk access to more food, money, and opportunities than are available to the Lakota on the reservation. Welch's narrator contends that "the Indians were treated well, they got enough to eat, they saw curious things, they got to show off before thousands of people, and they made more of the white man's money than they could spend" (33). More importantly to Charging Elk, as is evidenced by his repetition of the fact throughout the novel, much of his pay is sent home to his parents, which will help to somewhat lessen their dependence on the government commodities he so despises.

In addition to the financial advantages, it is through this controlled showmanship that Charging Elk attains the temporary and precarious status of being appropriately Indian. In a society that distrusts and degrades Native Americans, playing Indian becomes a rare opportunity for Charging Elk to experience any measure of social affirmation. He and his friends relish "the spectacle of themselves reflected in the astonished eyes of the French people" (Welch 22). As a participant in a show established for white entertainment, Charging Elk is subject to awe and admiration for his mythic Indianness. Performing provides Charging Elk with a sense of safety and comfort, "the only time Charging Elk had been at ease among the *wasichus*" (Welch 167). Ulla Haselstein notes that "[t]he nostalgic image of the warrior provides protection and identity but also turns Charging Elk into an allegorical character in a past constructed to provide an image of the American nation" (96). However, once he leaves the show, his true Indianness earns him only scorn and malevolence. According to the narrator, "Charging Elk had entered [Marseille] in triumph and the people had welcomed him. Now they looked at him with suspicion, even with hostility, just as the Americans did" (52). On his own, without the artifice of the performance arena, "Charging Elk's wildness counted for nothing now" (130), showing that Indianness is measured by both quality of and context for adherence to the paradigm.

This concept of acceptance only within the confines of the myth is also expressed in D'arcy McNickle's novel *The Surrounded*. George Moser, a white storeowner living on a reservation, offers the following description of his wife, Sara:

> She was a girl from his own little village in Pennsylvania and she was good and sick of the Noble Red Man as a neighbor. She liked him in a Wild West show, but his smell invaded her parlor and caused her to keep linen covers on her horsehair furniture the year round; even with that precaution she was not sure she would dare return to civilization with such contaminated belongings. (32)

In Mrs. Moser's estimation, Indianness is an acceptable, even desired quality within the performance arena but is unwelcome outside of it. Similar attitudes surround Charging Elk. As long as he exercises his Indianness within the confines of the paradigm, he is revered and appreciated. Thus, playing Indian affords him a few moments of limited and conditional acceptance by a society that controls the myth.

Playing Indian also provides him a fleeting connection with his Lakota life. According to Moses, "the only place to be an Indian—and defiantly so—and still remain relatively free from the interference of missionaries, teachers, agents, humanitarians, and politicians was in the Wild West show" (278). To some degree, Charging Elk could tap into centuries of hunts, traditions, and ceremonies by playing Indian. He could relive the history of his ancestors, albeit in an exaggerated way. Playing Indian also allowed him an opportunity to showcase the venerable characteristics of the Lakota, who "encouraged self-control, generosity, tact, wisdom, and responsibility toward the poor or helpless as well as courage and prowess in battle" (Moses 84). Indeed, in playing Indian, Charging Elk strives for dignity because he, like his friends and fellow performers, "wished to be thought of as *wichsa yatapika*, men whom all praise, men who quietly demonstrate courage, wisdom, and generosity—like the old-time leaders" (Welch 51).

For Charging Elk, playing Indian is an attempt to resist being "tamed by the white bosses" (34) and rediscover the legacy of dignified leadership that he so admires. Indian Removal had confined Native Americans to reservations, and strict regulations severely hindered the continuation of many tribal ceremonies and customs. For example, chiefs were now subject to American governmental authority. In fact, when Charging Elk recalls Red Cloud, he surmises that the man "*had been* a great war chief. Now he was a reservation Indian and had been one for ten years. Now he took his orders from white chiefs . . ." (2, emphasis mine). Charging Elk thinks of Red Cloud's leadership in past tense because it is no longer effective. Before they arrive in Europe, Charging Elk and the other performers hope that since European audiences "had never seen Indians . . . they would treat the Indians like important chiefs" (32). Charging

Elk wants to believe that Europeans would respect him and the others, allowing the Indians to regain the dignity he knows they should have.

Playing Indian also provides Charging Elk with a degree of control over the evolution of the myth. American Indian author and activist Vine Deloria acknowledges that Indian performers in the Wild West shows were offering exaggerated reenactments of their earlier years but suggests, "Perhaps they realized in the deepest sense, that even a caricature of their youth was preferable to a complete surrender to the homogenization that was overtaking American society" (56). By engaging in performance, Charging Elk can, to a limited extent, influence the paradigm rather than simply be overtaken by it. In his article, "Methodological Approaches to Native American Narrative and the Role of the Performance," Randall Hill writes, "Since performance provides the means through which people negotiate cultural boundaries, performance makes a difference in whether cultures survive or die" (113). Charging Elk realizes that "next to Buffalo Bill, the audiences wanted to see the Indians most" (Welch 50) and it is estimated that in one year, the Wild West show had been performed for a total audience of more than one million people (Moses 30). His participation guarantees survival for his people in the sense that through the myth, their image, although skewed, will be projected far into the future. As a result, because he is "proud of being a Lakota," Charging Elk is also "proud of being in the show, proud of his appearance. He [is] eager to put on a show for these new *wasichus* that they [will] talk about long after he [is] gone" (Welch 147).

Although Charging Elk's performance in the Wild West show is voluntary, his conformity to the mythic paradigm is mandatory. As previously stated, his Indianness is desired, even encouraged, but only within the confines of the show, as the only other place where adherence to the myth is allowed, albeit with limitations, is the reservation. Therefore, Charging Elk must either play Indian, essentially parading a caricature of himself before white audiences, or go to the reservation, surrendering what he regards as the last vestiges of true freedom. As Browder points out, "Officials considered participation in the shows a good way of keeping potential troublemakers off the reservations and safely involved in performance. What they did onstage they could not, thus, enact in real life" (59). Similarly, Archilde, the protagonist of *The Surrounded*, assumes that "he would wind up like every other reservation boy—in prison, or hiding in the mountains" (150). Like Charging Elk, Archilde recognizes the limiting nature of the reservation and the likelihood that Indian boys with few outlets for their frustration,

disappointment, and desire to exhibit true Indianness will find themselves in compromising situations.

Indeed, reservations were so strictly regulated that Charging Elk considers his people little more than prisoners (Welch 3). Choosing instead to live on their own at the Stronghold, Charging Elk and Strikes Plenty "laughed and mocked those Indians who had given up and lived in the wooden houses at the agency, collecting their meager commodities, their spoiled meat, learning to worship the white man's god, [and] learning to talk the strange tongue" (20). He fondly recounts the days before the Oglala were forced onto the reservation, remembering the "women picking berries, men coming back with meat, the dogs and horses, the sudden laughter or tears of children, the quiet ease of lying in the sunny lodge with the skins rolled up to catch a breeze" (11). Perhaps because he was so young at the time of Indian Removal and does not—or does not want to—fully comprehend its mandatory nature, Charging Elk views reservation life as a dismal liminal space between the old way and a distant future, a holding pen for passive Indians who have voluntarily surrendered their autonomy to the government. As a result, he willfully plays Indian, glad to be "dressed in his finest clothes, riding a strong horse, [and] preparing himself to thrill the crowds with a display of the old ways" (52) rather than being confined to the parameters of the reservation.

While adherence to the paradigm provides a degree of immediate and short-lived benefits, the myth is overwhelmingly destructive in nature, prompting undeserved aversion based solely on ethnicity. Charging Elk illustrates that once Indians step outside the paradigm, their image becomes increasingly marred and distorted, subject to fallacies that are even more egregious. For instance, because she is so schooled in the myth of Indianness, when Madeleine Soulas meets Charging Elk for the first time, "she was quite surprised to see how calm and benign [he] looked" (Welch 115). The hyperbolic Indian is engrained on her mind to the extent that she is unable to recognize a true Indian. Therefore, her confusion and misunderstanding is manifested by undue fear and dislike. As Madeleine prepares for his arrival, she calculates the risk Charging Elk poses to her children, erroneously assuming that young Chloe and Mathias will be plagued by nightmares of "painted, screaming savages chasing the monstrous bison, or worse, the brave pioneers," and "was surprised and angry to see a tear fall into the batter" she is stirring (151). Madeleine's inability to see beyond the myth produces a genuine fear that only her repeated and positive exposure to Charging Elk alleviates.

In addition to provoking undue fear, the myth contributes to the dehumanization and over simplification of Indians as individuals. Moses argues, "Because Wild West shows created stereotypes about Indians . . . [they] have been treated as artless victims, dismissed as irrelevant, or worse, simply ignored. With only a few conspicuous exceptions, nothing is known about their experiences. They have remained merely caricatures, as wooden and artificial as supposedly the images they created" (7). For example, Rene Soulas describes Charging Elk as a "simple soul" (Welch 74) pacified by the occasional offer of tobacco and sweets. As such, while he does evidence a desire to be of assistance to Charging Elk, Rene primarily seems to consider the Indian an adult-sized toy created solely for his entertainment and amusement.

Moreover, as Charging Elk moves outside of the myth, he ceases to exist for the American ambassadors Archibald Atkins and Franklin Bell. Although they are annoyed by the mistaken issuance of a death certificate for Charging Elk instead of Featherman, Atkinson and Bell choose comfortable complacency over the preservation of Charging Elk's individuality, willing to view him as "dead, plain and simple" (157-58). Bell states, "I don't think the French care which Indian lived and which died. I hate to say this, but one Indian is as good as another to them—no insult intended" (160). His casual estimation of the French regard for Indians is actually a thinly veiled account of his own view of the matter. Bell is discomfited by the situation and perhaps even feels a modicum of sympathy for Charging Elk, yet he accepts the tenet of the myth that relegates Indians to interchangeable characters in a play, performers who can simply be recast when necessary. As Rene similarly asserts, "one could almost forget that [Charging Elk] had been a celebrity with Buffalo Bill" (174) and thus forget that he even existed at all.

Charging Elk also illustrates the relationally limiting nature of the myth in that attempts to step outside of the paradigm and into everyday life are met with, at the least, unease and uncertainty. For example, his coworkers at the soap factory exhibit the following reactions to him: "Some of the men made jokes about him; others made what they thought were war whoops when he was out of hearing range; still others watched him with a wary awe, some with hatred because he was different" (261). Throughout the novel, the responses Charging Elk's ethnicity elicits consistently correspond to this catalog of attitudes. While a performer in the Wild West show, his Indianness incites admiration and praise. By contrast, as a member of society and not as a performer, his Indianness garners ridicule, fear, and disdain. One exception is the temporary positive attention he receives from protestors at his trial. While Charging Elk is imprisoned and

awaiting sentencing, St-Cyr uses his article to stimulate interest in the Indian's dilemma. As a result, "the persecution of 'the vanishing American' (as St-Cyr himself termed the plight of the American Indian) was more than they could bear" (Welch 335). The French people organize rallies and protests, but their defense is short-lived. Since their support is not necessarily for him, but an emotional response to yet another tenet of the myth, they quickly move on to something or someone else.

Only those who are unschooled in the myth are able to accept Charging Elk as an individual rather than as a stereotype. Because they have very little prior knowledge of the societal conception of Indianness, Mathias and Chloe Soulas quickly become attached to him, exhibiting none of the undue fear their mother, Madeline, experiences. Later in the novel, Nathalie, slightly more influenced by preconceived notions of Indianness than the Soulas children, does at first distance herself from Charging Elk. However, this hesitation is as much due to their differing ages, unexpressed physical and emotional attraction, and levels of maturity as anything else. Because her prejudices are minimal and not deeply ingrained, she is able to separate her expectations of Charging Elk from those that the myth outlines.

Interestingly, while incarcerated in La Tombe, Charging Elk is able to disprove his adherence to the myth and thus gain the respect of the wardens and his fellow inmates. His ability to do so is directly related to the fact that for this one time in his life, his identity is defined first by his sentence and social status as a convicted felon instead of by his ethnicity. His categorization primarily as an inmate and secondarily as an Indian affords him the brief opportunity to manipulate the application of the myth and showcase positive qualities such as respect for authority and an impressive work ethic.

Despite these rare opportunities for manipulating the myth, it is apparent that the power of the paradigm supersedes that of Charging Elk to overcome it. For example, once Mathias Soulas becomes exposed to the myth, the friendship he and Charging Elk share quickly disintegrates. After the trial in which Charging Elk is declared a savage incapable of adhering to the laws of civilization, he encounters the young man and sees "the large brown eyes of Mathias looking at him without a hint of expression" (Welch 412). As a result of unfair assumptions and unwillingness to consider Charging Elk's side of the situation, Mathias loses respect for his former friend and the bond between them is severed.

Furthermore, the myth even tempers the friendliness the brothel owner, Olivier, shows to Charging Elk. Because he does not realize Charging Elk is an American Indian, Olivier allows him to frequent the salon alongside his fashionable and wealthy clients. He surmises that Charging Elk must be "a prince of the Orient" (222) and sees him as "an evening's curiosity" (225). Olivier has had no exposure to anyone who looks like Charging Elk, as "the only *indiens* he had seen had been illustrated tabloids and they had worn feathers and war paint" (223). He considers them "a most disagreeable race of savages" (223). If Olivier were aware of Charging Elk's true ethnicity, he would never have allowed the Indian entrance into the salon, demonstrating that it is the mythic paradigm that negatively influences Charging Elk's social interactions and not necessarily his heritage.

In addition to affecting his relationships with others, the myth erodes Charging Elk's estimation of himself. Despite his determination to cling to the old ways and his respect for his culture, Charging Elk cannot help but internalize some of the continual social strife between the white and Indian worlds. As he beholds his future wife, young, graceful, white Nathalie, "he suddenly felt unworthy" because he considers himself "a savage that didn't deserve much beauty" (Welch 401). For a moment, he subconsciously accepts the mindset that has been forced upon him and that has dictated almost every aspect of his life. Rather than deriving a sense of pride from his ethnicity, Charging Elk has no one with whom he can identify and "[thinks] of himself as one who [has] no color, [is] in fact almost a ghost even though his large dark presence always attracted attention from both light and dark people" (198). At one point, looking at himself in the mirror, he "*almost liked* the dark, chiseled face" (214, emphasis mine). Ironically, his appearance, which affords him such personal pride within the performance arena, is a source of ambivalence outside of it.

While he is very much accustomed to the social ramifications of being an Indian, Charging Elk nonetheless struggles to comprehend the justice of a system which ranks worth based upon skin color and makes additional deductions for being Indian. He understands why the white miners in the United States from whom he and his friends stole would dislike him but he questions the source of hatred shown by the American sailors he encounters in a Marseille restaurant. He marvels in dismay that although "he had spent the past three winters making himself invisible, . . . they knew him right away" (200). It is only after he fully reverts to Lakota ceremony and sings his death song before the sailors that he feels, once again, like a "man to be

reckoned with" (202). When Charging Elk first enters the restaurant, he feels "that he was part of the festive crowd" and his French is good enough to converse with his waiter (197). But he begins to feel a separation as he looks around at his fellow diners and realizes "that they were all *wasichus*" (198). This separation is further exacerbated by the sailors' response to his presence—"He is a goddamn ignorant blanket-ass"; "Ask him to give us a war whoop"—which reflects not only their anger but also their adherence to the myth of "Indianness" (199). Yet, when he begins to sing his death song, "the accordion player [squeezes] his box in a hushed, toneless accompaniment" (201) and Charging Elk leaves the restaurant to make a prayer while the "Moon of Black Cherries [glares] above the Old Port" (202). Charging Elk's perception of himself, when seen through the lens of the myth, is one of deficiency, yet Welch uses this scene to illustrate a complex process of transculturation. We see Charging Elk move from feeling "happy" (197), to feeling "uneasy" (198), to feeling "confused" (199), and finally, to feeling "strong" and "light" (202). The scene in the Marseille restaurant illustrates Charging Elk's mediation of the performative nature of "Indianness" through strategic self-representation.

Because the paradigm of Indianness is so distorted Charging Elk has difficulty recognizing himself, or more accurately, what he is expected to be, within the myth. A prime example is the account of the teacher in the government school who attempts to teach Charging Elk the Word "Indian."

> [The teacher] pointed directly at him, then at the board, and said "Indian." She made all the children say "Indian." Then she showed them a picture of a man they could not recognize. He had sharp toes, big thighs, and narrow shoulders; he wore a crown of blue and green and yellow feathers and an animal skin with dark spots. His eyes were large and round; his lips tiny and pursed. The white woman said "Indian." (56)

The mythic Indian is so exaggerated that the caricature retains few original or accurate qualities. As Opitz states,

> What is constructed here is the figure of prehistoric and fantastic "Indianness," the racist fantasy that needs to project the "Indian" as artifact, as fetish, and as Other. The fantasy operates on three assumptions: that this "Indian" is a stable object of representation, that he is in some strange way identical with the sign, *and* that he identifies himself with it. . . .The lesson of the Indian is not merely

> meant to teach the other children what a creature the Indian is, but by identifying Charging Elk with this picture, the teacher means to suggest that he is this—and nothing else—unless he assimilates and relinquishes the particularity of his experience and cultural identity. (174)

Unfortunately, the power to change the paradigm is withheld from those upon whom it is based. Charging Elk, although he does not recognize the corresponding description, must learn the denoted title, since it will be applied to him whether he offers an endorsement or not.

Ironically, it is the myth of Indianness that saves Charging Elk from immediate execution for killing Bretuil. According to the *procureur general*, he cannot be held responsible for his actions because he is a "savage who could never comprehend the rules and obligations of a civilized society" (Welch 315). Moreover, a French doctor ludicrously testifies that it is "common knowledge" that Indians' brains were smaller than that of the average individual, rendering them "less capable of making sound decisions" (320). Thus, instead of receiving the death penalty, as was the norm, Charging Elk is sentenced to life in prison because, according to the magistrate, "he simply cannot conform to even the most elementary code of conduct—and therefore will always remain a threat to society" (341). Because of this misrepresentation, Charging Elk is labeled "a threat to society" (341) for responding in self-defense to unsolicited sexual acts performed upon him by another man. The public, on the other hand, mourns Breteuil, who shake their heads in dismay that a lawless savage brutally and senselessly murders such a fine, upstanding gentleman.

A contemporary manifestation of this concept is found in *Smoke Signals*, the film based on a Sherman Alexie screenplay within which Alexie frequently satirizes the paradigm of Indianness. The character Thomas Builds-the-Fire, a Coeur d'Alene Indian, tells the story of his uncle's involvement in a fight, saying, "Arnold got arrested, you know, but he got lucky. At first, they charged him with attempted murder, but they plea-bargained that down to assault with a deadly weapon. And then they plea bargained that down to being an Indian in the twentieth century, and he got two years in Walla Walla" (*Smoke Signals*). Although contrastingly humorous in nature, the premise of Thomas's scenario parallels that of Charging Elk's court experience. In both instances, the Indians are given lighter sentences based on the false assertion that they are unable to adhere to the rules of civilized society, not as a result of justice being served. Charging Elk is spared the death penalty not because he acts in self-defense, but because

he is erroneously perceived to be incapable of anything else. Likewise, Arnold evades the charge of attempted murder not because his actions are considered justifiable but because it is assumed that his inherent tendencies to violence have naturally surfaced. When viewed through the myth, Charging Elk and Arnold become cardboard characters measured solely by their actions rather than their respective contexts. In a bittersweet trade, they receive lighter sentences at the cost of their reputation and dignity.

Strangely enough, very few characters in *The Heartsong of Charging Elk* seem to realize their culpability in crafting or contributing to the myth. Although Franklin Bell reflects upon his mismanagement of the incorrectly issued death certificate and the havoc wreaked upon Charging Elk thereby, he seems more concerned with the effect it has upon his own career. He admits, "It had been so easy to lose the big Indian, to let him disappear into Marseille, to forget about him" (Welch 286). Charging Elk's troubles are an afterthought when compared to Bell's preoccupation with advancement and personal success. Interestingly, when Bell does pause to consider the plight in which he has thrust Charging Elk, even his thoughts are tainted by the myth. His "fear of discovery of his blunder" (286) prompts him to envision Charging Elk standing at his door, blood dripping from a tomahawk and staining his expensive Persian carpet. Rather than connecting Charging Elk to the natural responses of anger, frustration, discouragement, or disappointment, Bell subconsciously attaches to him a mythic and violent reaction involving invasion and bloodshed.

Only Martin St-Cyr seems to evidence authentic concern about his role in the dissemination and perpetuation of the myth. In various instances throughout the novel, Charging Elk's story becomes an opportunity for St-Cyr to advance his fledgling career. Despite his initial genuine concern for Charging Elk's well being, St-Cyr primarily defends the Indian not out of sympathy or solidarity, but because he recognizes an opportunity to exploit a newsworthy subject. When he reads that Charging Elk has been charged with the murder of Breteuil, St-Cyr "had the feeling that he had read this article before, perhaps even had something to do with it" (Welch 282). Reflecting on his personal advancement under the guise of helping the Indian, St-Cyr realizes that "his small triumphs had been as hollow and empty as they now felt. He had betrayed Charging Elk" (343). While St-Cyr perpetuates the myth by referring to Charging Elk as a savage, he also demonstrates an ability at least to recognize the effect of the paradigm on the Indian. He establishes culpability of society in general and himself in particular by writing, "May

his God forgive us all" (343). Unfortunately, the narrator leaves it unclear as to whether this sentiment is the product of spontaneous personal free writing or if it was actually meditated upon, polished, and published for St-Cyr's audience to read.

Despite his strides toward autonomy from the myth and the limited assistance from others such as Rene and St-Cyr, Charging Elk remains engulfed by the paradigm, his actions and attitudes continually assessed within its context. As Browder points out, "With his insistence on authenticity, Cody encouraged audiences to take the staged behavior he presented in his show as reality, and he created stereotypes of Indians that persist to this day. The stereotypes, like all stereotypes, locked Indians into a prefabricated image" (65). For Charging Elk, the "prefabricated image," although overwhelmingly beyond his control, dictates all aspects of his life, from his interaction with others to his estimation of himself. The basic premise of the stereotype Browder discusses is the overly generalized and highly simplified concept that all "real Indians, as the public came to believe, lived in tribes, slept in tipis, wore feather bonnets, rode painted ponies, hunted the buffalo, skirmished with the U.S. cavalry, and spoke in signs" (Moses 1). Further exploring the tenets of the myth, Rayna Green asserts,

> The Wild West Shows, with their remnant Sioux and Crow, traveled America and Europe to enormous success. These warriors, Lords of the Plains, forever mounted on their ponies, forever attacking wagon trains and hunting buffalo, become *the* Indian in the American imagination. (38, her emphasis)

Because of this paradigm, with each person he encounters, Charging Elk can only attempt to overcome the myth by breaking it down and rebuilding it over an extended period of time in order to experience any degree of satisfactory social interaction. According to Philip Deloria, "the only culture allowed to define real Indian people was a traditional culture that came from the past rather than the present" (91).

For Charging Elk, being Indian is both a matter of birth and a myth imposed on him by society. He voluntarily engages in performance, essentially playing Indian before white audiences, because it provides him temporary approval, financial gain, and opportunity to showcase the old ways, and a degree of control over the myth. He shows that within the confines of the Wild West show, society values and accepts Indianness. However, once Charging Elk steps outside the arena of performance, his Indianness is the subject of, among many things, suspicion, scorn, and ridicule. Because he is indeed Lakota, an American Indian, he is unable to

escape the disproportionate myth of Indianness and is subject to social and emotional repercussions. In many ways, Charging Elk's identity is at the mercy of a society that simultaneously allows and disallows entrance based upon a single standard, a hyperbolic paradigm within the context of performance.

Charging Elk is ultimately able to resist the caricature of the Indian that Western society has invented creating a transcultural identity that encompasses characteristics of both Lakota and French culture. At the end of the novel, he attends a performance of the Wild West Show, which has returned to Marseille. When the show is over, Charging Elk visits the Indian camp hoping to speak with someone who may have news of his family. He finds Andrew Little Ring, his wife, Sarah, and Little Ring's nephew, Joseph, who tell Charging Elk that his father has died, but his mother is still alive. He learns of the forced assimilation of his people: boarding school for the young, where they learn English and are forbidden to speak Lakota as well as the denial of their freedom to worship Wakan Tanka or perform any ceremonies. Charging Elk also learns of the Ghost Dance and the massacre at Wounded Knee. Even with such heartbreaking news, he knows the Lakota have survived and will continue to do so "because we are strong people, we Lakotas" (435). And though he is finally presented with the chance to return to the United States, he refuses because of the strong connections he now has to his life and home. He tells Joseph, "This is my home now. . . .I have a wife. Soon I will have a child. . . .I speak the language of these people. My wife is one of them and my heart is her heart. She is my life now and soon we'll have another life and the same heart will sing in all of us" (437). Although he has changed significantly over the past sixteen years, especially in his clothing and his ability to speak French, the Lakota performers still recognize Charging Elk as one of them. Andrew Little Ring tells him, "You are not a stranger. You are Lakota, wherever you might go. You are one of us always" (436).

Charging Elk is able to create an identity that contains significant elements of French culture without sacrificing any elements of Lakota identity. As he returns home to his wife and unborn child, Charging Elk walks away from the show grounds "past the sideshows, dark now and the empty arena, while the "Moon of the Falling Leaves . . . [lights] his way" (438). As James J. Donahue puts it, Charging Elk's use of the Lakota way to mark the cycles of the moon "signifies both that he has retained his Native American worldview and that it will 'continue to light his way'" (70). Yet, Welch's final paragraph shows something much more complex.

Charging Elk's movement away from the show grounds and towards his wife and child represent the continuum of the self as he refuses to "play Indian" any longer, while his reference to the Lakota calendar along with his final words to Joseph beautifully illustrate Charging Elk's transcultural identity. The "same heart" that will sing in his child is the definition of survivance; the child will be "an active sense of presence, the continuation of native stories" (Vizenor vii). Charging Elk, along with his descendants, illustrates and embodies what Vizenor terms the "postindian" because he (and they) renounce "dominance, tragedy, and victimry" through his ultimate resistance to the Western representation of the Indian (vii).

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In the Master's Maison: Mobile Indigeneity in *The Heartsong of Charging Elk* and *Blue Ravens*

JOHN GAMBER

Those of us who work in Native American literature (and I imagine this includes anyone inclined to peruse this essay) are perfectly familiar with William Bevis's formulation of the homing plot. Within such narratives, a lost young Native protagonist ventures out into the world, becomes psychically and physically wounded, and returns home to heal.[1] For that matter, within these texts, the healing and the return are co-constitutive: they both represent a reintegration that is physical, psychological, cultural, and religious.[2] The examples abound, and such stories form the core of the Native American literary canon, from classics like *The Surrounded*, *House Made of Dawn*, and *Ceremony*, to more recent works including *Gardens in the Dunes* (as well as filmic examples set forth by *Powwow Highway* and *Smoke Signals* and continuing through *Barking Water* and *Empire of Dirt*). Indeed, such plotlines have become a formula for relative material success for Native authors and auteurs. Nonetheless, homing plots have never represented the totality or diversity of Native literature. After all, a worrisome potential implication of such texts is that Native people cannot (or, more to the point, are disallowed the potential to) relocate and still live healthy or happy lives. This implication proves not only treacherous but implausible in the face of the fact that the overwhelming majority of Native people live away from their tribal communities (2010 Census).

By contrast, a few novels exist that portray healthy Native individuals and groups away from their tribal nations.[3] This essay looks at a pair of the more extreme examples of Indigenous mobility: James Welch's *The Heartsong of Charging Elk* (2001) and Gerald Vizenor's *Blue Ravens* (2014), both of which feature Native protagonists settling permanently in France.[4] Each novel portrays a character relocating on a temporary basis, but ultimately choosing to stay—albeit under profoundly different circumstances. Setting these texts abroad allows their authors to imagine Indian people entirely outside the settler colonial context, which of course informs everything that happens within settler state borders. Considering these extra-colonial imaginative possibilities, we are apt to hope for happy endings for these Indigenous characters. Indeed, Charging Elk's (the protagonist of Welch's novel) adaptation to France is often read as extremely positive. However, as I will demonstrate, his transition is in fact quite complicated,

and I argue, ambivalent at best. Such an ambivalence is fitting, when one considers that these moves out of settler colonial spaces are also moves in to colonizing metropoles; these Indigenous characters cannot simply cast off the colony or colonization. Specifically, Charging Elk represents an always-already (temporally) diasporic subject, removed from what he perceives to be home not only in space but also in time—even when he dwells in the Oglala Stronghold.[5] The Beaulieu brothers of *Blue Ravens* (Aloysius and narrator Basile) remain similarly unchanged over the course of the novel in regard to their move to France. However, as Vizenor's text establishes White Earth as a traditionally cosmopolitan space, it renders their movement and relocation to be a part of, rather than apart from, their communities and cultures. In light of these related circumstances, I look at the vexed and vexing portrayals of Native masculinity within these novels, each of which confronts warrior stereotypes and ideologies as deeply incomplete representations of Native people and cultures. Ultimately, I argue, these novels when read together portray the possibilities for Native movement and relocation.[6] Such movement is not without incident, they suggest, but it is also neither *inherently* damaging nor liberatory.

Both novels portray young, male, Native protagonists who resist the physical stasis mandated by US governmental requirements of Indian people broadly—that they be bound to reservations not only (historically) as a form of containment if not outright incarceration, but also (more recently) in order to conform to a discourse of Native authenticity by which only reservation Indians count as "real Indians."[7] For Charging Elk, this resistance manifests in not only the rejection of, but intense disdain for his home community, which he sees as having ceded its freedom—and particularly as having surrendered a certain form of masculine power. The Beaulieaus likewise ultimately reject their home community as a place to live, but see such a rejection as a continuation of Native liberty that is right for them, without demonizing those who choose to remain. I contend that the Beaulieus leave their home and family physically, but never do so psychically; Charging Elk does not intend to leave forever physically, though he has already left psychically.[8]

As much as these novels have in common—their settings around the turn of the century with young male Native protagonists (with close fraternal ties) relocated by variable degrees of chance and choice—their differences have to be noted.[9] Centrally to this essay, while Charging Elk struggles to belong within any community for the entirety of the text, the Beaulieus never do. In his youth Charging Elk rejects domesticity and desires a homosocial community that glorifies

a masculinity that mirrors settler expectations of nomadic Native men.[10] As I will show, Welch's protagonist's ideas about Oglala masculinity reject the models put forth by the men in his community. The Beaulieus might appear to revel in a similar masculinist impulse with their desire for travel and willingness to serve in war. Nevertheless, they emphasize in their younger days a return home and a focus on their community (shaped by women as much as by men), and embracing Native and non-Native influences where they are useful to them.[11] We also cannot skip over the fact that these young men come from different nations and regions, Charging Elk is Oglala Lakota from the Plains; the Beaulieus are Anishinaabeg from the Great Lakes.[12] Finally, while I note the close temporal proximity of these texts—set within thirty years of one another—that thirty-year span straddles monumental changes for Native communities across the country and for these two communities in particular. Welch's and Vizenor's attention to the historical milieus in which their characters find themselves signals the need for the contextualization of these monumental changes.[13]

Charging Elk finds his way from the Dakota Territory to France as a performer in Buffalo Bill's Wild West show.[14] While in Marseille, Charging Elk becomes ill but decides to perform; he faints, falls from his horse, and awakens in the hospital, from which he flees. He finds his way back to the grounds where the troupe had performed, only to discover that they have left without him. Because he lacks any documentation and is not a citizen of the United States (citizenship not being conferred upon most Native people until 1924), he cannot leave France. After living in Marseille for about six years, Charging Elk awakens to find himself, having been drugged, being sexually assaulted. He kills his attacker and is sentenced to prison, where he remains for ten years, learning to farm in the prison fields. Upon his release, he begins to work on a farm outside of Agen, Aquitaine (in southwestern France), where he falls in love with Nathalie, the daughter of the farm owner; they marry, and Charging Elk determines that he will never return to his Oglala community, but will remain in France (Marseille, specifically).

Blue Ravens follows brothers Aloysius and Basil Beaulieu, the former a painter of increasing renown, known for the titular blue ravens prominent in his work, the latter a writer of short stories and poems, as well as the narrator of the text. The two grow up on the White Earth Reservation in what has become Minnesota. Their interest in international issues is stoked by their family's ownership and operation of the White Earth newspapers, *The Progress* and *The Tomahawk*, and their work selling the latter paper at the local train station (and from hearing

stories from the travelers they meet).[15] The pair travels to Minneapolis, a trip that stands as a formative adventure. They later register for the draft and are activated to serve in the United States Army and fight in World War I. Upon their arrival in France, a nation to which they trace some of their ancestry, they are made into scouts "only as natives, and not because of any special training" (121). The sergeant who selects them for this service "was convinced that stealth was in our blood, a native trait and natural sense of direction even on a dark and rainy night in a strange place" (121). At war's end, they return home, only to decide to relocate to France (Paris, specifically) to live out the bohemian lifestyle of the Lost Generation.

In his article "'A World Away from His People': James Welch's *The Heartsong of Charging Elk* and the Indian Historical Novel," James Donahue asserts, "Charging Elk suffers from just this alienation ["displacing Charging Elk, and forcing him to assimilate into a completely foreign culture"] and throughout the course of the novel works to reconstruct his cultural identity though separated from his family, his tribe, and his homeland" (59-60). Donahue's is a common sentiment expressed in the criticism regarding this novel: that Charging Elk, disconnected from Oglala culture because of physical distance in France, forges a new, even healthy individual(istic) identity, expressing positive possibilities for Indigenous people in the face of the many displacements of settler colonialism.[16] I argue that such readings are, at the very least, extremely incomplete, not in their advocacy of Indigenous mobility, but rather in that Charging Elk has already alienated himself from his community ideologically as well as physically prior to his arrival in Europe. We also note that this repeated privileging of individualism (especially when read in the face of Charging Elk's condemnation of his community and elders) chafes against many Oglala values expressed in the novel.

Charging Elk's diasporic subjectivity is born of a collective trauma; the reader first encounters him as an eleven-year-old boy witnessing the surrender of the Oglala at the Red Cloud Agency in 1877. Indeed, the opening sentence of the novel's prologue concludes with mourning: "It was early in the Moon of the Shedding Ponies, less than a year after the fight with the longknives on the Greasy Grass, and the people looked down in the valley and they saw the white man's fort and several of the women wept" (1). The Greasy Grass translates the Lakota name for the space on which an alliance of Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho forces defeated the Seventh Cavalry of the United States, led by George Armstrong Custer, a clash also known as the Battle of the Little Bighorn. Within a year of this celebrated victory, the Indigenous forces

had disbanded, and Oglala leaders, weary from a brutal winter's flight, chose to end their military actions. Thus, within this first sentence in the novel's prologue, Welch establishes a historical moment that will undergird its protagonist's worldview throughout. The Oglala have slid from being free people, victors over the US military, to being subjugated by that same nation and military.

This slide from glory is further exemplified within the prologue, this backstory that Welch includes prior to chapter one, by Red Cloud himself. The narrator explains, "he had been a great war chief then. Now he was a reservation Indian and had been one for ten years. Now he took his orders from white chiefs….Still, in his clean buckskins, with his headdress that flowed over his horse's rump,…he looked as dignified and powerful as ever—a chief" (2). We note the contrast between Red Cloud taking his orders from white chiefs and looking the part of a chief himself through the passage's transitional "still." Red Cloud was once dignified and powerful, but now he is a reservation Indian. In short, from the very beginning of *The Heartsong of Charging Elk*, its narrative persona, a third person omniscient perspective that continually returns to Charging Elk's point of view (though also giving considerable attention to the POVs of non-Native characters upon Charging Elk's time in France), establishes a contrast between particularly masculine power and dignity on the one hand, and an implicitly feminized reservation life on the other.

This contrast continues into the body of the text, and we note that Charging Elk maintains some of his harshest criticisms for those closest to him. In describing Charging Elk's father the novel explains:

> Scrub had been a shirtwearer, one of the bravest and wisest of the Oglalas. He had fought hard at Little Bighorn and had provided meat when the people were running from the soldiers. But that winter when the people were starving and sick, he had become a peacemaker, just like the reservation Indians who were sent out by their white bosses to try to talk the band into surrendering. Charging Elk had been ashamed of his father that winter. And when he saw his father sitting idly in his little shack, drinking the black medicine and sometimes telling the holy beads, he could not believe his father had gone from shirtwearer to this. It was always this image of his father that drove Charging Elk time and time again back out to the Stronghold. (17)

Like the novel's description of Red Cloud (which we can now discern at least mirrors Charging Elk's perspective), this reading of Scrub moves from triumphalist martial figure to defeat and shame. However, Scrub's accomplishments during his former glory days were not only military; he is also described as wise, generous, and caretaking. Once again, Charging Elk judges harshly an elder of his community for becoming a "peacemaker, just like the reservation Indians." His father transforms from man of action into idler, and perhaps worse, a Christian. The novel explicitly states Charging Elk's shame of his father as peacemaker, privileging an eternal war rather than this acquiescence, regardless of the lives that Scrub's decisions almost certainly saved, and the fact that he may still be wise, generous, and caretaking.[17]

Contrasting these fallen icons of Oglala masculinity, Charging Elk opts out of reservation life. He and his kola, Strikes Plenty, choose what they see as a freer existence at the Stronghold, despite, or perhaps because of the fact that this distances them in multiple ways from the majority of their tribal community. The narrator explains, "The Indians out there were considered bad Indians, even by their own people who had settled at the agency and the surrounding communities. Charging Elk and Strikes Plenty lived off and on at the Stronghold for the next nine years, hunting game, exploring, learning and continuing the old ways with the help of two old medicine people" (14). These two young men see themselves as culture keepers, maintaining the "old ways," guided by elders. A large part of this cultural maintenance comes in the form of isolation, though, with Charging Elk and Strikes Plenty straying on adventures, just the two of them. *The Heartsong of Charging Elk*, however, demonstrates the dangers to such isolation, namely those of scorn and disassociation. Reflecting back on his time at the Stronghold after just a few months in Marseille, Charging Elk recalls how he and Strikes Plenty had "prided themselves on their ability with bows, shooting birds and rabbits with the steel-tipped arrows. Most of the others, even those at the Stronghold, had long since given up this traditional weapon. And when they ran out of bullets, they had to tighten their belts" (164). The pair see themselves as more traditional not only than those who have chosen reservation life, but also their peers at the Stronghold. They maintain their ability to hunt with the bow, a traditional Lakota weapon. It is striking, however, that their arrows are "steel-tipped," this metal being a post-contact technology. Steel arrowheads are reusable; bullets are not. So, Charging Elk's and Strikes Plenty's hunting practices serve a pragmatic purpose. But, the text explains that at least part of their pride stems from the "traditional" aspect of this weapon. Traditional, here and throughout

Charging Elk's musings, carries a connotation not of adaptation, but of that which is old-fashioned, of that which statically maintains the old ways. In this context, Charging Elk negates his own adaptations to steel arrows, and the novel's inclusion of this detail encourages an evaluation of the protagonist's misconceptions of the traditional. As Cobb-Greetham explains, "Charging Elk had very specific ideas about what it meant to live as an Oglala person. Because of his strict interpretation, he left boarding school, left his family to live at the Stronghold, mocked the reservation Indians, and felt shame toward his father for becoming a reservation peacekeeper" (165). These strict definitions of Oglala (masculine) identity revolve around maintaining what he believes are the practices of the past, a rigid notion that belies the adaptations that all peoples engage in. We might contrast Charging Elk's ideas regarding traditionalism to Craig Womack's critical intervention to that term. In *Red on Red* he asserts, "I wish to posit an alternative definition of traditionalism as anything that is useful to Indian people in retaining their values and worldviews, no matter how much it deviates from what people did one or two hundred years ago" (41-42). According to such an approach, one that allows Native people to adapt (like members of any other culture), there is nothing more or less traditional about hunting with stone or steel arrowheads or with rifles.

The novel's invitation to question Charging Elk's traditionalism continues in its next paragraph. The text reminisces that Charging Elk and Strikes plenty "had lived a strange life together for eleven winters—no family, no other friends…for the most part, they had lived away from others; consequently, Charging Elk had felt uncomfortable around families, especially children" (164). Theirs is a deeply isolated existence; though they learn to some degree from elders at the Stronghold, they are mostly alone, trying to find their ways in the world. While Charging Elk seems to prefer this homosocial setting (whereas Strikes Plenty hopes eventually to wed and "settle down)", Charging Elk recognizes that it is "strange" to live, not simply apart from one's family, but apart from all families. As such, he does not learn key elements of Oglala culture, elements relating to interactions with children, yes, but also those involving parents, spouses, brothers and sisters, and so many more—he has simply opted out of them. Moreover, it is difficult to view his disdain for so many of his elders (including his parents) as a traditional Oglala virtue. All of this is to say that contrary to the widespread reading that Charging Elk becomes lost absent the lodestone of his culture and language upon arriving in France, he has in fact been disconnected for the entirety of the reader's familiarity with him.

Recent scholarship shows the ways that the model of masculinity imposed on Native communities in particular has often come in the form of the warrior or "brave." This martial imagery creates the alien other as the enemy against which the settler state can imagine and measure itself, in part to deem itself the civilized counter to the Indigenous savage. Taiaiake Alfred explains, "For the violence of conquest you needed a violent opponent, so you created this image of the Native as a violent warrior, the classic horseback opponent… The way to confront that and to defeat it and to recover something meaningful for Natives is to put the image of the Native male back into its proper context, which is in the family" (79).[18] The hypermasculine Native warrior image becomes reified by settler inventions including Buffalo Bill's Wild West show in which Charging Elk gleefully participates, despite the misgivings of many in his community. The novel explains, "Of course, he knew that it was all fake and that some of the elders back home disapproved of the young men going off to participate in the white man's sham" (52). Alfred continues, asserting that Indigenous communities place men within "the context of a family with responsibilities to the family—to the parent, to the spouse, to the children (or nephews, nieces,…or even just youth in general)" (79). Alfred moves us from the flat stereotype of the Native warrior to the round embodiment of Native men (emphasizing as well that this identification is not biologically defined) as serving in the role of warrior at times, but also serving roles that nurture within their communities. Similarly, Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair notes, "One of the legacies of colonization has been the separation of men from their roles within families, communities, and nations. What's replaced these are the hegemonic forms of… individualist identities that ossify cultures" (225). The hegemonic constructs of Native masculinity we continue to encounter shape expectations of violence over care-giving, and individualism over community.

Narratives of specifically Oglala masculinity as measured ultimately by one's warrior positionality, moreover, echo Vine Deloria Jr.'s foundational chapter, "Anthropologists and Other Friends" from *Custer Died for Your Sins*. Deloria notes that the Oglala "tribe became a favorite subject for study [by anthropologists] quite early because of its romantic past. Gradually theories arose to explain the apparent lack of progress of the Oglala Sioux. The real issue, white control of the reservation, was overlooked completely" (90). Instead, "anthros" advanced their own theories, including that "the Oglala were WARRIORS WITHOUT WEAPONS" (90). Deloria continues, "Every conceivable difference between the Oglala Sioux and the folks at

Hyannisport was attributed to the quaint warrior tradition of the Oglala Sioux. From lack of roads to unshined shoes Sioux problems were generated, so the anthros discovered, by the refusal of the white man to recognize the great desire of the Oglalas to go to war" (91). He concludes with his classic biting wit, "Why expect an Oglala to become a small businessman when he was only waiting for that wagon train to come around the bend?" (91). This last sentiment, particularly with its invocation of the wagon train as a mode of transit that exists in what anthros imagine to be the temporal present for Oglala people proffers them as static denizens of the past, a standard settler move that eliminates Indigenous populations from the present.[19]

Thus we so often encounter people who speak about Native people exclusively in the past tense: "Native Americans believed…" Kevin Bruyneel describes this construct as "colonial time," and Charging Elk himself seems to buy into it. Bruyneel asserts:

> important temporal boundaries, while often implicit, can be located in economic, cultural, and political narratives that place limitations on the capacity of certain peoples to express meaningful agency and autonomy, especially in the modern context. These narratives place temporal boundaries between an 'advancing' people and a 'static' people, locating the latter out of time, in what I call *colonial time* (2).

I argue that such a static viewpoint of Native identity renders Charging Elk diasporic not so much in terms of space as in time. Such a temporal diaspora can never be ended, of course, as a return to a time passed is even more complicated than a spatial return to homeland—though we must always also remember that space and time are co-constitutive. Charging Elk, more than most of his compatriots it seems, has internalized the logic of elimination, colonial time, and the narrative of the disappearing Indian.[20]

For Deloria, such elimination works on multiple fronts. First, it obscures settler colonial responsibility for the marginalized conditions of Indigenous populations, generally. Second, it misdirects funds and energies that might assist Oglala people; "Real problems and real people become invisible before the great romantic notion that the Sioux yearn for the days of Crazy Horse and Red Cloud and will do nothing until those days return" (91). Third, it becomes a hegemonic expectation of Oglala people in both out-group and in-group minds. The dominant discourse surrounding Native people is often replicated in Native ideas about Indianness just as it is within settler society broadly. Charging Elk represents one character's acceptance of this same warrior mythos of Oglala masculinity.[21] Ironically, for him, to be Oglala is to be ever physically

mobile (hence, his repeatedly demonstrated fear of remaining in one place) while being ideologically and temporally static.

Over the course of the novel, however, Charging Elk comes to change his tune considerably on this particular front, especially in terms of his relationship to and opinions about agriculture. An early manifestation of Charging Elk's character valorizes his life at the Stronghold as opposed to the stationary and farming lifestyle adopted by his parents: "There was nothing left at home. The American bosses were making the *ikce wicasa* plant potatoes and corn. What kind of life was that for the people who ran the buffaloes?" (29). On its face, Charging Elk's condemnation of his the life at home hinges on the fact that it is agricultural (farming two crops which are indigenous to the Americas, for the record). As we will see shortly, Charging Elk alters his view regarding farming, even when that farming is less than voluntary. But, in the meantime, we note that he views any life apart from running with the buffaloes to be a defeat.[22]

Nonetheless, when he first engages in this European-style agriculture, he finds tremendous comfort in it, despite the fact that his experience comes during his incarceration. The narrative tells us, "In the gardens, it was easy to forget. All the hard work beneath a blazing sun or a chilling rain blocked out any despair that he would remain in La Tombe until they carried him out for burial in the plot not far to the north of the garden" (357). Working in the fields and orchards outside the prison provides Charging Elk an emotional escape but also a preoccupation and distraction from the time in his cell. On this level, he has perhaps come to an acceptance of farming in a world he has no power to change. In his incarceration he mirrors his family, similarly incarcerated in a nineteenth-century reservation space from which they were denied egress, though his preoccupation differs in that the Oglala community is bound by the very nation *occupying* their land. Nonetheless, we must be careful not to conflate his appreciation of farming at this stage in the novel with a necessarily pure enjoyment of it (as he perhaps should understand his father's and community's acceptance of what may have felt equally inescapable).

Charging Elk emerges from prison into a burgeoning domestic romance plot, establishing a neolocal home with the daughter of the man on whose farm he finds work.[23] He and Nathalie wed and relocate back to Marseille where he finds work and joins the dockworkers' union, while the couple awaits the birth of their first child. Charging Elk at long last begins to develop interpersonal relationships, romantic, professional/fraternal, and familial. Moreover, he demonstrates changes in terms of the ideals of Lakota conservativism he held to in his youth. He

looks upon a cathedral, "Notre Dame de la Garde in Marseille—a shining beacon that one could see from a long way off that might offer guidance to lost souls like himself" (378). The narrator clarifies, "It was the first time he had ever been in a *wasichu* church, and it didn't seem to be a bad place. He thought of the times he had gotten angry with his parents and the other Lakotas for going to the white man's church" (383). Now that he has allowed adaptations in his own life, Charging Elk has let go of much of his condemnation of others for their adaptations.

This move toward acceptance, if not a wholesale embrace of his life in France, however, is not without its drawbacks. Most notably, the reader encounters a protagonist who continues to relinquish his relationships to the community into which he was born. The Wild West show returns to Marseille, and Charging Elk seeks out the actors in their village. Upon finding a Lakota family, he inquires after his parents. One of the performers, Joseph, tells him that his mother, "Double Strike Woman still lives at Pine Ridge Agency. She has a little cabin. She is well" (430). His father, however, "died three winters ago. Influenza. I didn't know him well, but there was a big ceremony at the church, then at the community hall. Everybody went" (431). The community recognizes Charging Elk's father, honoring him in ways that Charging Elk certainly never has. Joseph continues, "He was an important man, your father—a shirtwearer….You should have been home for him" (431). Charging Elk replies, "You are right, Joseph….I failed him—and my mother. For a long time I have thought only of myself" (431).[24] Joseph righteously chastises Charging Elk for his failure to return to Pine Ridge, a failure that the reader also recognizes as a lack of effort on Charging Elk's part. One should certainly mitigate these realizations with Charging Elk's institutionalization, the psychic and physical containment that his incarceration has wrought upon him. Nonetheless, Welch opts to show Charging Elk continuing—or repeating—the distance from his community that he has always maintained.

To that end, Charging Elk describes for Joseph a particularly resonant dream he has had, in which he tries to jump off a cliff at the Stronghold, "but every time he tried, a big gust of wind blew him back… he looked down and he saw his people lying in a heap at the bottom… in the roar [of the wind] he heard a voice, a familiar voice, a Lakota voice, and it said, 'You are my only son.' And when he turned back to his village at the Stronghold, there was nothing there—no people, no horses or lodges… Everything was gone" (235).[25] Throughout the novel, Charging Elk struggles to try to interpret this dream. Joseph, however, explains that the voice is his mother's, "She was telling you to come home. She needs you now." Charging Elk's reply,

simply: "I can't" (436). Charging Elk has never served as the kind of son that his community, it appears, continues to expect. He has never directed his energies toward maintaining bonds with his people—he admits these motivations to be "selfish."[26] When we consider that the novel offers the Lakota term for settlers as "*wasicuns*, the fat takers," a term that implies that they take the best parts for themselves, Charging Elk's selfishness rings with particular aspersion (13).[27] We need not liken Charging Elk's brand of self-centeredness with the colonizing forces of the settler state, rather we can note a general emphasis within Oglala culture that privileges the community over the individual.

Vizenor's novel begins just a few years after the temporal setting of *The Heartsong of Charging Elk* and moves through the end of World War I. Indeed, it is quite reasonable to think that Charging Elk himself would have been in France, like Vizenor's Beaulieu brothers, during the war. Despite these temporal overlaps, though, Vizenor's tale of Native relocation to France differs considerably, and demonstrates a much greater emphasis on the agency of his characters and on the positive aspects of their international movements. Both of these elements emphasize Vizenor's usual opposition to narratives of Native victimry. He defines survivance as contrapuntal, "an active sense of presence, the continuance of native stories, not a mere reaction, or a survivable name. Native survivance stories are renunciations of dominance, tragedy, and victimry" (*Manifest Manners* vii).[28]

Again, we must engage with key differences between these novels: Vizenor's text pairs Native characters together (we can imagine that if Charging Elk and Strikes Plenty were together the text would have been quite different); the brothers are, moreover, allowed to return to the US and then, informed by that freedom of movement, choose to return to France (opportunities that Charging Elk is clearly not afforded). The Beaulieus also trace ancestry to France; their name derives from "*beau lieu*, … a beautiful place in French. That fur-trade surname became our union of ironic stories, necessary art, and our native liberty" (1). The union is not only of the Anishinaabe and the French language; their name stems from a moment in contact prior to the establishment of the settler colonial nations that would be formed around Anishinaabe lands (the United States and Canada). French men came to trap furs, inculcating Indigenous people in transatlantic trade; some remained, and were adopted into Anishinaabe communities (as many Indigenous traders and travelers had been before).[29] The beauty of place, wrapped up in their French/Anishinaabe surname, rings with significance as well. These Indigenous characters are

tied to place in the ways that the very term indigeneity implies: Born or produced naturally in a land or region (OED). This definition of indigeneity offers only that people are *from* a specific land. All too often, however, Indigenous people face being disregarded, unrecognized, or refused in the face of not remaining on that land. As discussed earlier, they are deemed inauthentic if they do not live within the territories set apart as Indigenous spaces.

Patrick Wolfe deems such enforced ties to place a form of "repressive authenticity." He explains, "the narrative structure of repressive authenticity is that of the excluded middle. The more polarised the binary representation, the wider its intervening catchment of empirical inauthenticity ("Nation and MiscegeNation" 112). The settler state establishes itself in contradistinction to the Indigenous population. Anything settlers do, Indigenous people necessarily do not. As such, any action that an Indigenous person does that mirrors the settler renders that Indigenous person inauthentic—they no longer count as Native. Indeed, settler assimilationist impulses and legal actions (including boarding schools and allotment) were meant precisely to eliminate the Indianness from Indians.[30] In this context, in order to be recognized as Indigenous by the settler state, it is not enough to be *from* a land or region, one must *remain* there.[31] The Beaulieus, who carry a name constructed around place, however, prove to be wanderers, refusing such settler constructions of static indigeneity.

These Anishinaabe characters' return to another ancestral home invokes great excitement. As they approach France in anticipation of their combat tour, Basile explains, "I could not sleep that night and was out early to catch the first sight of the country of our distant ancestors, the fur traders. The war provided the curious notion of a magical return and at the same time a discovery. Actually the native romance of the fur trade and agonies of war was a revelation of the heart not the irony of discovery" (107). Vizenor plays with the construct of discovery here, twisting its perspective from Europeans discovering the Americas to Indigenous Americans discovering Europe. Instead of such an "irony of discovery," Vizenor offers the "revelation of the heart," a far more apt term for finding oneself in a new place already densely populated with humans. It is not a discovery, but a revelation, a revealing of that which was always there, but about which the supposed discoverer did not know. The revelation here is both of the land of the protagonists' ancestors and of their own emotional responses to that land.

Vizenor's work has long been claimed by certain cosmopolitan critics as representing Native art and cultures as always hybridized. I have elsewhere challenged this categorization,

arguing that his writing has always been profoundly tied to the specifics of Anishinaabe story and place.[32] As if right on trickster cue, in *Blue Ravens*, Vizenor invokes the name of cosmopolitanism overtly as a descriptor of White Earth as a community. He notes that with the introduction of newspapers, "Straightaway the reservation became a new cosmopolitan culture of national and international news. White Earth became a cosmopolitan community" (18). While many at the turn of the twentieth century imagined Native communities to be provincial (this is alas true of many at the turn of the twenty-first century as well), *Blue Ravens* contends that White Earth has always been drawn toward engagement with the world far beyond its own borders. Moreover, in their movements, the Beaulieu brothers are supported by their elders. As Basile notes, "Our uncle consented to the earth as a country, and to natives as world citizens" (91). The entire world as "a country" (as opposed to "country" without an article, or "the country") articulates precisely a cosmopolitan positionality. Native people are citizens of the world—as any people can be if they recognize their connections beyond the provincial.

The Anishinaabe characters of *Blue Ravens* offer a counter point to Charging Elk's ideas of a singular or provincial form of masculinity. There is no limit to the Beaulieu's constructions of what is appropriate for Anishinaabe people (of whatever gender). These men are soldiers, but they are not interested in being soldiers as a mode of existence. Being a warrior is a temporally limited activity for them, one that involves defending the liberties of those who are under attack. Along these lines, Aloysius's and Basile's uncle exclaims, "only a vagrant would not fight for his country, and natives have fought for centuries to be citizens of the earth, the reservation, and of the country" (91). If we recall that the world here serves as the country, then we understand that people who are related to place, as he implies we all should be (vagrant seldom serving as a compliment), must recognize that having a place in the world means having responsibilities to it and to our relations within it. Isolationism is a mark of a lesser being.[33]

While it offers a positive slant on Native relocations, this is not to say that *Blue Ravens* takes a blasé approach to Native *dis*locations. The reader learns early in the novel that the Beaulieus, like Charging Elk, "were required to attend the government school on the reservation, and too many native students were sent away to boarding schools" (18). Children in these schools are educated away from their communities and taught a disrespect for them as well as for their language, religion, and culture. We also note that Vizenor writes not only of Anishinaabe people during this era, but of Native students broadly. He further connects the other-than-human

to this thread—particularly in terms of Anishinaabe relationships to the trees of their nation's forests (a concern we see throughout Vizenor's work, perhaps most notably in *Darkness in Saint Louis Bearheart*).[34] As the boys travel by train, taking an adventure to the big city, "we wondered … about the timber that built the houses in Minneapolis. We were native migrants in the same new world that had created the timber ruins of the White Earth Reservation" (27). The denuding of the forests parallels the denuding of the cultural landscape of White Earth, and of Indian Country broadly. They are stripped bare for the benefit of a settler society that cares nothing about the vacuums, the lifeless spaces they leave behind.

Upon their return to the US, the Beaulieus find a triumphalist nation beating its chest as vanquishers of imperial oppressors, but continuing to refuse Native people rights as citizens either of sovereign nations or of the United States. "The soldiers who returned that summer were hardly prepared to become the precious resurrection of patriotism… We were both inspired by the mystery, anxiety, and irony of the passage to war, to the country of our ancestors of the fur trade, but the actual return was futile, and the sense of vain nostalgia only increased with the patriotic hurrah and celebrations" (169). Such a calling out of vain nostalgia certainly counters Charging Elk's approach. Indeed, what these Native veterans find is the irony of being Indigenous soldiers returning to a settler colonial state. Basile explains, "The native soldiers who were once the military occupiers had returned to the ironic situation of the occupied on a federal reservation" (175). He further notes, "We returned to a federal occupation on the reservation. Our return to the reservation was neither peace nor the end of the war" (170). The Beaulieus return to a home that is even more colonially triumphalist than it had been before and choose not to remain. However, White Earth is not unlivable because the community accepts this triumphalism, but rather because that triumphalism is being thrust upon it. That is, unlike Charging Elk, the Beaulieus never blame their community for colonialism, or for being subjected to it. For them, the blame lies, as it rightly should, with the invaders.[35]

The loosened seams of a bounded space allow these Native men to move, but they have always been allowed such relocations. The Beaulieus choose to return to France, though this expatriate lifestyle does not equate to an abandonment of their relationship to White Earth or of their identities as Anishinaabe people. Rather, it merely expands the scope of where Anishinaabe people live. The novel concludes by retracing the steps of the Beaulieus from the reservation to their first trip to the city, into France during the war, and to Paris in their final relocation. Basile

explains, "Natives continued the stories of our ancestors in natural motion at the headwaters of the Great River. The stories continued at the livery stable, government school, reservation hospital, Orpheum Theatre, Château-Thierry, Square du Vert-Galant, Café du Dôme, and Le Chemin du Montparnasse" (283). Vizenor's emphasis on continuation, on the maintenance of connections backward and forward across time and space refuses the tragic and the irreparable that we note in Charging Elk's refusal to return home.

I offer my alternative reading of Charging Elk as a character and of Welch's novel not to diminish the text—indeed quite the opposite. Like all of his work, Welch's *The Heartsong of Charging Elk* is, among other things, a rich and complex marvel of descriptive prose. Rather, I contend that (again like much of Welch's writing), the protagonist is intentionally deeply flawed. It would be short-sighted, even wrong-headed, considering his cultural context, to ignore, let alone laud Charging Elk's denial of communal obligations or his lack of respect for his elders, just as it would be to condemn him for his desire to see the world or his attempts to make what life he can for himself in France.[36] Welch's writing is always more subtle, nuanced, and honest than that. Readers must bear in mind, as might be difficult at first blush, that Charging Elk is not damaged solely because he is lost in France; he was damaged to begin with. Much of that damage comes, as it does for the Beaulieu brothers, at the hands of violence propagated by imperialism. Both texts offer possibilities by which Native men might contend with their own masculinities and their relationships to community away from home. Welch's text, especially as regards Charging Elk's life prior to his departure with the Wild West show, reads more as a manual of how *not* to do so. By contrast, Vizenor's offers a way to do so without severing ties, without denying relationships and responsibilities. That is, only one of these novels offers Native movements outside of the frameworks of tragedy and victimry.

Notes

[1] Bevis contrasts Native narratives of "homing in" to the European and Euro-American bildungsroman—the "leaving" plot in which the (usually male) liberal humanist individual(ist) self sets out to find himself away from the constraints of the "ancien regime" of his roots (581). Accordingly, Maselstien declares Welch's novel "a Native American *bildungsroman*" (94). Shanley makes a similar point regarding Welch's text and others from the Native American Renaissance "looking for the way back" (167). She also places this novel in very useful context of Welch's other work.

[2] Countless Native American and Indigenous traditions, of course, view being grounded in specific place as fundamental to health in all of these forms. Homing plots reflect some of the positive elements of those values.
[3] Much of Louis Owens' oeuvre, Louise Erdrich's *The Antelope Wife*, Leslie Marmon Silko's *Gardens in the Dunes*, Vizenor's *Hiroshima Bugi* and *Griever*, for example.
[4] For recent historical scholarship on such transatlantic journeys, see Weaver, Thrush, Ferguson, and Jaskulski.
[5] Stronghold Mesa is a craggy outcropping and district within what is now Badlands National Park, which the Oglala Lakota co-administer with the United States. This region, like the Black Hills, carries a resonance of resistance throughout Native discourse beyond, though because of, its specifically Oglala socio-historical contexts. Shanley also wields the concept of diaspora to read Charging Elk's situation, albeit with a different focus.
[6] I use the word "relocation" here only in its broadest sense, and not in specific reference to the United States' policies formalized under the American Indian Relocation Program of 1956. Both novels clearly, and rightly, condemn such forced and coerced assimilative programs. Nonetheless, both speak to the survivance of Native people and peoples in the face of such ethnocidal impulses.
[7] Examples of such ideas abound in the troubling purity discourses that surround Indigenous people within settler states. We can think of the attention to who counts as a "real Indian" in Alexie's work (such as *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian*, *Flight*, *Indian Killer*, and *Smoke Signals*) and, as just one example, Eva Marie Garroutte's *Real Indians: Identity and the Survival of Native America*. Such discourse reflects what Wolfe calls "repressive authenticity" (discussed further below).
[8] For this reason, and because this essay is particularly meant to serve as a corrective to criticism about *The Heartsong of Charging Elk*, I devote more attention to Welch's novel than I do to Vizenor's.
[9] Each novel centralizes chosen family. The Beaulieaus are brothers, though they are not biologically related. Charging Elk's most meaningful relationship, at least for the majority of the novel, comes with his kola (a Lakota word often translated as "brother friend"), Strikes Plenty.
[10] I allude, of course, to Sedgwick's construction "homosocial desire," which she notes is "a kind of oxymoron" rife with both "discriminations and paradoxes" (1). Sedgwick, discussing representations in 18th and 19th Century literature, finds portrayals that reinforce the thesis that, among other things, men deflect homosexual desires (compulsorily contrasted to the heterosexual and homosocial) onto women. This construction of homosociality proves especially fitting within Welch's novel as its protagonist's defining moment comes in a spectacularly violent assault on one of its few homosexual characters, none of whom, as Womack notes, are portrayed in a remotely positive light ("Fatal Blow Job"). To that end, Krupat adds, "It is unlikely, indeed almost impossible, that a Lakota of Charging Elk's generation would have considered a winkte [a Lakota term translated in contemporary contexts as 'two spirit'] to be evil in something like the way in which the Catholic René Soulas considers homosexuals evil. But Welch does not use the word winkte anywhere in the novel" ("History" 250).
[11] The brothers are especially influenced by their mother, Margaret, but other prominent characters in their community include Messy Fairbanks and Catherine Heady.
[12] There are profound cultural distinctions between these communities as well, of course. Such ethnographic elements lie beyond the scope of this essay. For more on linguistic and social

contexts pertaining to Welch's novel, see Womack ("Fatal Blow Job") and Krupat ("History"). Each of these pays profoundly important attention to notes of homophobia that many readers find in *Heartsong*.

[13] Most notably, Welch's turbulent temporal choice for his novel, with Charging Elk leaving the U.S. in 1889, has him present for the shrinking of tribal land holdings under the various iterations, violations, and abrogations of the Fort Laramie Treaty (including settler invasion of the Black Hills), and Oglala surrender at the Red Cloud Agency to end the Great Sioux War (1877) as a boy, but absent for the establishment of the Pine Ridge Agency and South Dakota statehood (1889), the Wounded Knee Massacre (1890), and the imagined closing of the frontier. Vizenor's characters especially note the role of allotment (as seen under the 1887 Dawes Act for Native communities broadly but especially the 1889 Nelson Act for Anishinaabe reservations) which mandated lifestyle assimilation through private, rather than communal, landholding (especially as European-style farming) as well as opening up "surplus" land to settler interests—particularly timber interests—as well as World War I.

[14] This, the most famous, but by no means only, frontier show, featuring reenactments of American frontier life and historical events such as the Battle at the Little Bighorn (1876). Buffalo Bill's show ran from 1883-1913, touring particularly in the eastern United States and Europe as well as a famous and exceptionally successful stint at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair. The tour travelled throughout Europe beginning in 1887. Welch's novel serves as a creative historiography following the actual death of performer Featherman from smallpox on January 6, 1890 (Maddra 66). In the novel, Featherman and Charging Elk are conflated in the French bureaucracy with Charging Elk being declared dead. For more, see Cobb-Greetham, Krupat "Issues," Maddra, McNenly, Griffen, Moses, and Russell.

In another moment of cross-over between these texts, we learn that Julius, a non-Native trader who is friends with another trader, Odysseus, who frequents White Earth, "sponsored a company of natives to attend the Paris *Exposition Universelle* in 1889. The natives lived and traveled for about a year in France. The trader had met the army scout and impresario… Buffalo Bill, several times in Nebraska Territory, but he had never seen the circus show of the Wild West until he attended the Paris Exposition" (83).

[15] *The Progress* was published between 1886 and 1889 by cousins Augustus (Gus) Beaulieu, Aloysius's and Basile's uncle in *Blue Ravens*, and Theodore (Theo) Beaulieu. *The Tomahawk* (1903-1927) began under Gus Beaulieu's watch, and he returned as editor for a time, but ownership and editorial duties changed hands on multiple occasions. For more, see Spry, Vizenor *The People Named the Chippewa, Chronicling America*.

[16] Jaskulski, for example, suggests, "Staying overseas comes at the cost of estrangement: linguistic, cultural and communal" (48). See also Ferguson, Haselstein, and Bak. This is not to say these essays lack value, merely that I see them as off-base on this point.

[17] Scott Richard Lyons's *X-Marks: Native Signatures of Assent* offers a useful corrective here, specifically in terms of the agency and leadership demonstrated by Native representatives in treaty negotiations and peacemaking. He addresses the decisions made that, at least it was hoped, "would keep 'Indians' viable for at least seven generations, strengthen existing communities, enhance our political independence, and provide the greatest degree of happiness for the greatest number of Indians" (50).

[18] Morgensen adds, "colonial masculinity sustains both colonial and heteropatriarchal power by presenting its victims as the cause and proper recipients of its own violations" (55).

[19] I am drawing on Patrick Wolfe's use of elimination, of course. He explains, "elimination refers to more than the summary liquidation of Indigenous people, though it includes that. In its positive aspect, the logic of elimination marks a return whereby the native repressed continues to structure settler-colonial society. It is both as complex social formation and as continuity through time that I term settler colonization a structure rather than an event" (390). Elimination comes in the form of rendering Indigenous people invisible, irrelevant, or inauthentic in order to justify settler land claims (and, indeed, existence), as well as to reinforce settler sociocultural elements as "common sense."

[20] Speaking to the image of the vanishing Indian, and perhaps to General Philip Sheridan's legacy, the novel explains that after the aforementioned bureaucratic snafu, "as far as the good doctor, and the city of Marseille, and, of course, the Republic of France, are concerned, Charging Elk is dead, plain and simple" (158). Upon further query, it is declared, "He is nonexistent, a ghost you might say" (178). To that end, Haselstein likewise argues, "The nostalgic image of the warrior provides protection and identity but also turns Charging Elk into an allegorical character in a past constructed to provide an image of the American nation" (96).

[21] For more on the tensions still extant in Indigenous communities surrounding such warrior constructions and related toxic masculinities, see Innes and Alexander and McKegney. In the latter, a collection of interviews, Sinclair articulates an all too common misconception regarding being a protector or a warrior as a self-chosen identity, reminding that "Protectorship is something you earn. Indigenous men don't start off as protectors; they inherit it through work, mentorship, and being recognized" (226). Sinclair's emphasis on inheritance is important: it only comes from within and with close ties to the community and only by the bequeathing from others. Charging Elk, then, cannot claim warrior status; such a position must be earned from recognition from the very community he denies.

[22] At the same time we can read his aspersions as primarily stemming from the fact that this agricultural foodway is mandated by "American bosses."

[23] Charging Elk serves ten years of a life sentence; he is released on what some might (erroneously) call a technicality. An attorney explains to him, "It seems you were tried as a citizen of the United States of America. As it turns out, by treaty, your tribe is its own separate nation and therefore not subject to the legal agreements between the United States and France. Thus the reclassification from the common criminal to political prisoner. You have been held illegally all these years" (361).

[24] Welch's choice in naming this character Joseph, not only an English name (Anglicized from Hebrew), but one central to Abrahamic religions (the husband of Mary, mother of Jesus in the New Testament, of course, but more aptly in this case, the favored and multi-colored coat-wearing son whose fate is bound to his dreams in Genesis 37), demonstrates some of the folly of Charging Elk's thinking about the static nature of his community. After all, it is Joseph who maintains ties to the Oglala community that Charging Elk had largely abandoned even prior to his sojourn in Europe.

[25] Haselstein adds that this dream's "You are my only son" may refer to "Matthew 3:17 ('You are my beloved son') and thus allude to the soteriological framework the novel repeatedly invokes" (99).

[26] Elsewhere the novel explains, "Somewhere along the way, he had lost that desire to share, replaced by an attention only to himself and his own desires" (243).

[27] One wonders if the positive readings of Charging Elk stem from a dominant liberal humanism that likewise privileges the individual over his commitments to community.
[28] Vizenor offers a classical European allusion, specifically to Homer's *Odyssey*, to counter the homing plot for his characters. Indeed, Homer crafts the classic homing plot, the story of a man trying to return home. Vizenor intersperses relevant sections of Homer's epic through the Beaulieus' narrative.
[29] We note an inversion of the imagined unidirectional process of Native people assimilating to European lifeways.
[30] One is of course reminded of Richard Henry Pratt's dictum for the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, "Kill the Indian, and save the man."
[31] In selecting the word "recognized" here, I mean to allude to Glen Coulthard's *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition.*
[32] See "Wild Word Hunters."
[33] Furthering their service as a defense rather than an assault, the novel explains, "This was a war provoked by an empire demon, more sinister than an ice monster, and the enemy of natural reason, and not by native visionaries, our sturdy ancestors, fur traders, or by the French" (109).
[34] Vizenor, in keeping with his emphasis on fluidity in written narratives, revised this novel into *Bearheart: The Heirship Chronicles.*
[35] Within the Indigenous framework upon which Vizenor draws, ties to physical space take on not only social, but sacred resonance as well. Following the war and upon their return to White Earth, the brothers find themselves incapable of using the tools for hunting they now experience as weapons of war. Basile explains, "we could never again live as hunters. We could never declare war on animals. The fur trade had decimated animals and weakened native totems. We could never overcome by stories the miserable memories of war, and endure the tormented visions of blood animals" (194). The traumas of war render them incapable of participating in further killing, but much more, they cannot heal through the stories that should tie them to place. The totems have been weakened, the bonds of human to other-than-human forebears are so damaged that the people cannot make themselves right.
[36] After all, as Cobb-Greetham points out, "Traveling with the Wild West show did not make Charging Elk and his companions any less "Oglala" than those who lived at the Stronghold like Strikes Plenty or those who stayed on the reservation and learned English like Scrub" (159).

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This paper was delivered on a panel, *Honoring Gerald Vizenor, Post-Indian Poses*, at the 2016 MLA conference in Austin, Texas. I presented with David Carlson and Margaret Noodin. The panel was chaired by Alan Velie.

The paper is sur-scholarship (outside scholarship) because Vizenor is a sur-writer. It is an abstraction of Vizenor's work. A distillation. Somewhat of a spoofery. But stable nonetheless. It is an exploration of the peripheral fields in Vizenor's work.

I consider Vizenor instrumental to native imagination. His work is propagatory. I can't read Vizenor without wanting to start into something of my own. (Creating words, rearranging text, reversing sentences, making forays into that subconscious steam that moves beyond the conscious reading of Vizenor.)

The paper is a totemization, an amalgamate experience of reading Vizenor over the years.

TOTEM: A Subjective and Creative Interpretation of Gerald Vizenor's Trickery

DIANE GLANCY

There are many worlds in Vizenor's writing— visual scenes of recounted memories from various perspectives [Vizenor's CHAIR OF TEARS]. Or recounted perspectives from various memories. Taking into account the communal variations of perception. A migration from one-point-of-view to another. To see from an adjusted way. The adjustments seeing the way.

Vizenor's term, survivance, is a version of that stasis of circumstance until the flux of thought is transmoted by sound. [mote as in [e]mote, making large by sound] [not the mote of a small speck, but an enlargement of—or going the other way in size]. The [e] removed from emote making it mote—which is the charge that memory has with its many perspectives imbedded in the one memory—making memory motational. Or [e]motational if you will. The variants of moting—the levels and ranges of [e]moting. But the [e] afterwhich will be omitted. Therefore, survivance is reclarifying mis-stories mis-told about the indigenous, which Vizenor does.

Moting is transportational—taking to other places by the vehicle of sound in its solid, written form. Words in other words. The blocks of language that can be made to turn sideways and go through a space between fences. It's where horses lead. And we find them in another

field. A transmotation from the field that is theirs into one that isn't. Or from other memory, from one field that isn't theirs, into one that is.

Likewise, native migration is traced by the movement of a sideways kind. And the Indian is a new being somewhat squeezed by the passage. Revelation of the American Indian with the up-squeak of motal intent. Not wanting in other words, the happenings that happened nonetheless. But speaking up their stories of who what when they are. And how.

Nonetheless is an interesting word. A fact given to refute the previous fact. Therefore, another fact has taken precedence. A [trans]precedence, in other words. Transfixed as horses when the oats are connected to them. Their nose in the feed bucket. Because of minimal grass in a winter field.

Who can write about being overtaken by another—without inflicting a bite? There is reciprocity in the offsetting. The nature of nature in an understanding of the crumbled. An oppressor of oppression. A given binomial lifting oppressiveness in a series of oppressionals that negate the slippage from the pasture. But where would they go? The interstates are not condusive to hooves.

It was not a given that erasure would be given. But hidden in the folds of inter-relationships of layers between. Loss embedded in language. Get over it, Vizenor says.

Of the past world we know much. Remembered by the rememberers. Something remains of what was. In the field of horses. In the clouds that pass. In grief that burrows in the holes on the edge of the pasture by the creek by whatever small animals burrow in them.

The poseurs of winter trees. A rickety chance at meaning. Branching trees without leaves as they are in winter. The grasses flat, fallen down, set up again between the folds of fields after snow in its polarities.

I tell them, stay on the land. Show photos I took of the photos. Making syrup of what is otherwise tree sap. It always is performance of wind on the fields. The pluralities of weather. It is weathery—would it be all right to say?

The full moon a large flash-light. A flash-flight. A hyper-text of a hydro-plant over Hoover Dam.

Bustling cattle across the plateau. Pulled back into an out-lier. An escarpment away from the wind.

Vizenor's writing is a correctional facility for transgressions against native sovereignty.

The artifice of what constructs the idea of memory—or the memory of idea. Recounted from different perspectives. The doubling of meaning in the use of trickery to get at truth.

Tribal stresses and victimry as victimization of assimilation. The captured of the captors. Tactically re-dactive.

Un-tube the representation as an act of resistance.

The moving herds of language over the continent.

Clarified as they are signified in the undertext as well as overtext.

The unintentional amalgamation of the disparate. Indian absence and presence neither coming or going. It will surprise no one. Vizenor uses his text to recount the counting of coup for the re-couping.

There is interiority. Intentionality. A story within a story that transposes the story it is within—and without. A visual understanding of assimilation. An artifice. An artificer making recovering from it.

A totem pole I bought as a child on a trip to California. A force forceful in its own field. A totem pole is the caricature of a tree, upsetting for Vizenor the perceived nativeness and reclaiming the origin of meaning.

It is alone but not alone. What storytelling is and how it was taken from the land overtaken by others. The languish uplifted in binoculars to forest, grasslands, winding creek. Something remains of what was.

The native world turns with hurt. Distortion. Poverty. Taxation. To which Vizenor over-places transcendence by rightly naming the heretofore unnamed. Or at least mis-named. Overmoting the moting out of natural range. Which often happens when angry. Being put all into one box, Vizenor now calling the boxes, which being opened, spill into one another, each talking with their interchangeable, transmotational parts.

A section of travel that has to be surpassed when another car is oncoming on the narrow road or one-lane bridge of meaning. The swag of road during what have been my travels through Vizenor's work.

The skewed pieces holding changes of transmotational translingering on the land.

A usurpation in appropriation in the act of mapping native identity.

How does the land remain in a reconceptualized, linear rationale to the still non-linear post-academic Indian? When not fixed, but transfixed. Each evening I walk. The land speaks of disruption and survivance. The discovered rhetoric of transgenerative indiginuity.

The conflation of tricksters in the act of carving. The remembering of land and what transpressed upon it. Lineage, history, legend. Of those who came to take it, to change it, to rename it, to carve it as their own. But Vizenor chops the poses not indigenous to the indigenous.

Filling in history the parts of it that seem to be missing. Following the resonances in the fields of consciousness aligning voice to the imaged voices that haunt.

In the long driving away from the wounding. No, the long travel on long roads brings up the wounding. But it is not the wound. According to Vizenor, it is the journey through.

Letter to a Just-Starting-Out Indian Writer—and Maybe to Myself:

STEPHEN GRAHAM JONES

1) **This isn't the Native American Renaissance.** That was a great and essential and transformative movement without even meaning to be a movement, but that was a different generation, with different issues. You're not resisting falling dead off the back of a horse anymore. You're not resisting people wanting to call you Billy Jack. You're not resisting the invisibility that comes from colonial myth-making so much as you're resisting the voicelessness that comes from commodification. What you're resisting is headdresses on Reebok shirts. What you're resisting is only being on *Longmire* as some android who can't use contractions. And, think about it: if you do stand up and try to fight for the same things those Native American Renaissance writers were fighting for, then you're pretty much saying that they didn't make any headway, that American Indian literature hasn't made any progress.

2) **Don't be an elf.** That's what America wants you to be. Elves are liminal beings. They live close to the spiritual source. They commune with nature. They're stewards of the trees. They belong in the forests. They cry because of Dr. Pepper bottles in the creek. Also, as it turns out, they're made-up, they're not real. If you're an elf, you don't exist, and like that America's won, who cares if your profile is Che Guevara'd onto a t-shirt. One thing about those profiles? They're silhouettes. They're the shape of us but it's that End of the Trail mode, that says we've come as far as we can, and it was a good fight, but now it's time to die, now it's time to fade into that sunset looming behind us. And it's such a picturesque compelling image that we even kind of hesitate, don't we? Learn not to hesitate. Be faster than that. Be so fast that the silkscreeners can't capture your image in polyester. Either that or start your own t-shirt shop.

3) **Sometimes the way *not* to be an elf? It's to write about elves.** Go on, get out there, traffic in the genres typically denied to Indians. That we're not allowed to do fantasy or science fiction and the rest, it's both stereotyping us and it's primitivizing our writing: it's saying we can't play in the branches that come off literature with a capital L—we can't go out on the

branches because our literature is still 'formative,' it's still in its infancy. Not letting us write for the commercial shelves is saying we have to write 'form' before writing free verse, but it's also getting to designate what that form is. Resist that every chance you get. Sneak over the line every time you can. Write where you're not supposed to write, and then move on, do it on the next shelf over too. And the next, on down the line. Leave the whole bookcase red.

4) **Don't ask for permission to do what you do.** I'm not talking about permission from your family or friends, your clan or nation or chosen representative or role model or idol. I'm talking about the critics who give your work the seal of approval, where 'approval' means inclusion in the classroom. Yes, it's great to be in the classroom, it's an honor, but it's also great to be everywhere. Really, it's better to be everywhere. If you ask the critics be the main and only gatekeepers, then you're chaining your work to the trends and fads of criticism—which is to say, you might be setting yourself up for not getting through that gate. Trick is, don't even worry about the gate. Sneak down the road, jump the fence, and then tell everybody else how to get across as well.

5) **Understand that a lot of the time when your work is discussed, the question being asked about it isn't necessarily going to be Is it good?** So many readers and critics and students and professors, they don't engage the writing as art, they engage it as an ethnographic lens they can use to focus attention on peoples and cultures and issues and crimes and travesties and all the 'other' that'll fit in a discussion. Resist this too. Resist this hard. Insist that your work be dealt with as art, not as an entry point to a culture. But understand that the only means you *have* to resist this, it's your writing, it's your art. So write better. Write in ways that refuse to submit to the kinds of discussions that neglect your work's status as real and actual art. Any discussion which doesn't start with Is it good, that means the presumption is that it *is* good, and that presumption, then, it's usually wound up with the fact that you're Indian, meaning the argument is "Indian is good," which is another way of saying "authentic is good." And this is so, so dangerous.

6) **So, don't ask for permission, no. But don't ask for forgiveness either.** You're going to mess up. You're going to say things you wish you hadn't, or that you wish you'd said better.

It's part of the nature of writing or speaking aloud that you misspeak, that you write a line you wish you could reel back in. Just keep moving on. Don't let that flubbed line define your career, your stance, your identity. Hide that flubbed line with ten thousand perfect bulletproof timeless lines. Be a different writer each time you turn the page. Anytime you see that dissection pin coming down for the center of your back, close your eyes and roll somewhere else.

7) **Understand that when the audience or the market or the critics refer to you as an "American Indian Writer," that this is an attempt to dismiss you**, to preserve you on a shelf, to prepare you for display. What you are is a writer who happens to be American Indian—a characteristic that may define you as a person, yes, but you're maybe also a basketball player, or a pretty good carburetor rebuilder, or maybe you can draw hands so delicately that we want to reach into the page to touch them. None of that gets turned into an adjective in front of "Writer," though. Neither should "American Indian" or "Native American" or "Blackfeet" or whatever. Indians having to have pedigrees to get into the show makes racehorses or dogs of us. And it means we have to carry some version of our registration around with us too.

8) **Understand that the market, the publishing industry, it's going to want to package you as "exotic,"** as somehow foreign and alien on a continent you didn't need anybody's help finding. Always resist this. Always displace that alien-ness back onto them. But in doing so, be careful of pretending that you didn't cut your own teeth at the cineplex, at the local comic book shop. It's completely okay to let John Rambo be your hero, instead of Crazy Horse. To say otherwise is to let America tell you this is for us, this is for you. Take whatever you want, and take it precisely *while* the guards are watching. Dare them to tackle you in the aisle. Then come back the next day with a hat on, do it all over again.

9) **In the same way, don't let people shame you about not being an expert on your own culture.** You don't have to be. Did you sign up to be the official record keeper or historian for your nation, or for all of the nations? You didn't sign up for anything, really. You just happen to be who you are. Maybe you speak your nation's language, maybe you don't. Maybe you

grew up on the reservation, maybe you didn't. Maybe your blood's at some level the government prefers, maybe it isn't. Maybe your nation signed a treaty back when, maybe it didn't. Maybe your cheekbones or your hair are what somebody wants to call 'wrong.' The people who care about that? They're the ones who want to put up a higher fence around whatever country club they're already in. Trying to meet their criteria, then, it's asking to be let inside, so you can keep others out. Try try *try* not to start playing that game on the page. Yes, if we all still had our language, that would be all right. It wouldn't be bad to, you know, have all our own land back either. Yes, things have been stolen and yes we need to hold onto things, and how you feel about that will serve as fuel for your words, definitely. Just be wary of ever allowing yourself to think that your "Indian experience" matters any less than any other Indian's experience, or any other model of "Indian experience." That creates hierarchies, which leads to the authenticity shuffle, which is an ugly, ugly dance to do for all the people who really want us to do it. Us doing that dance, it keeps us looking at each other, not the world.

10) **Don't have a checklist to address in your writing.** Yes, *have* a social agenda, a list of grievances. Pissed off is far and away the best place to write from. If you don't have an axe to grind, you don't need to sharpen it with your words. Always keep that axe close at hand. But don't let it reduce your writing to thinly-disguised reform. The real reform, it's that you, who are supposed to be invisible, who's supposed to just be a silhouette on a t-shirt, a painting in a motel, a design on a blanket, you have a voice, you can speak, you can make wonderful challenging art. And remember that it's always about the art. If it starts to be about you and your 'identity' or any of that, then people aren't engaging your words on the page, they're looking up between every sentence, for you. Write better, then. Make them unable to look up.

11) **Step on everybody's toes in the room, always.** Chances are you're young, can outrun whoever takes offense. But some of those old cats are still pretty fast, too, so be ready to fight as well.

12) **Step on FORM's toes.** Just be prepared for people wanting to read this innovation as a callback to the oral tradition or an appeal to a different aesthetic. Unless that's true—and I've

never known it to be—please don't ratify that. But don't speak against it either, as you'll be protesting too loudly, and people will nod, say behind their hands, "Look, the Indian thinks she's trying to be modern, but really she's still ancient." 'Ancient' is where the world wants us to be. Ancient things are buried in the past, ancient things belong in museums. You're doing new things on the page. Just keep doing them.

13) **You don't have to be able to define what an Indian is in order to write "Indian."** Putting a definition on us, that's playing their game, that's submitting to being an entry in an encyclopedia. That's saying yes, you drew the boundaries well, I will live just in this little block of text. Instead, just, you know, *write*. If you are Indian, whatever "Indian" might be, then whatever you do, that's Indian as well. You can't *not* do it. It only messes your writing up to try to adopt a persona or put on a headdress to write. When you do that, your voice will probably get all noble and stoic, and then, yes, you may as well be falling dead off the back of a horse. Where you'll land will be a John Wayne movie. And that's a bad place for an Indian to have to spend forever. It's a bad place for an Indian to even spend ten minutes.

14) **You don't have to answer Who are you writing for?** But it is a good question to keep in mind. Another good question: Who are you writing against?

15) **Your writing doesn't have to be 'responsible'** as regards representation or culture or any of that. That's not part of your charge as a writer. Your charge as a writer, it's to be sincere, whether you're writing about six-armed Martians or your uncle that time he said he could change the brakes with a blindfold on. Any art that tries to be responsible, it stops being art. Art isn't responsible. Art challenges, art breaks things, art leaves before the tab's been paid. And hopefully it does some good as well. Hopefully it breaks the right things more often than it breaks the wrong things. But sometimes you just have to break everything, too.

16) I don't know what to call this exactly, but when you meet somebody who's into a certain type of music, say, then you spend the first little bit of discussion establishing your bonafides, don't you? Sure, I know Zep, who doesn't, but let's burrow down in the garage of 1978 some, be sure we're each actually committed to this. Same thing happens when you're from a

certain region, or when you grew up without money, or when you play basketball or hunt or used to cheerlead or any of that. It's natural. It's how we judge whether you're worth talking to on this subject. It's how we navigate tastes, so as to avoid blunders later on. All of which is good and fine and unavoidable. But please note that this is happening in American Indian writing more and more, where the first little bit of a piece isn't the writer telling the story, but the writer establishing he or she's really Indian, by showcasing "expected Indian things," exhibits 1 through 8. This is often cleverly disguised—until you start noticing it. And it seems benign. It's not. What it is is submitting to the process of legitimization. It's taking a blood quantum test on the page. It's having to 'prove' ourselves. It's asking the audience to please now turn to the author photograph, to see if this is a real true Indian or not. And, at that point? You're already losing. Instead just **assume the Indianness.** Of everything. Overwrite the world with *us*. Because we are everywhere. We're in the soil, yes, but we're in the future too. Insist upon that.

17) Please please please **let there be bad Indians?** The cruelest form of essentialism is that which we lay on ourselves. And it's our knee-jerk response, too. Have the Indians be the heroes? Sure, of course. If it feels like resistance, it must be resistance. But if we're always the good guys—which, in Indian stories often translates out to 'victim,' as being the hero in a trauma drama isn't really the same as putting on a superhero cape and saving the day—then we may as well sign up to be noble as well. And understand that us being the bad guys sometimes, that means that somebody who's not Indian might be a good guy. Granted, your writing might not be as simple as 'Good Guys vs. Bad Guys.' But at some level, that's always exactly what it is. Never mind that you used up all your grey crayons drawing this situation out, and stole your kids' grey crayons too. Yes, steal back the comic narrative if you can do it honestly—steal back everything you can, then put it in a pile and burn it—but your writing, if it's sincere, then it's going to go where it goes, too. Your job as a writer of real words, it's to follow those words, these characters, and to render them so real and so true that the reader forgets she's reading about these supposedly exotic "Indians" with all these complicated, 'tragic' issues, and starts instead just reading about people. Gerald Vizenor says that being Indian is an act of the imagination. I've always been drawn to that, but until writing all this out, I don't think I ever really understood it. I'm starting to, though. It's not exclusively an act

of the imagination on our part, but on the readers'. Through our words, our art, we infect the world with not what we are—we're not a 'what'—but with *who* we are.

Paul Simon Money

TERESE MARIE MAILHOT

The fall of Man is my mother's story. I am the child of a woman laid low on this earth. Not that I was born to a green world and trespassed with her, but born into the blood. Maybe her generation was Adam and Eve: radical spiritualism and awakening. Maybe the sixties was of the body and pure. The Indians were corporeal manifestations of the spirit world, and their leather jackets and brown bodies and fists, majestic and holy and connected. It's all bullshit, but maybe. Mom transgressed. She only needed to do it the once, but she did it twice for posterity.

God foreordained Eve's transgression. He is all knowing. He knew Eve was hungry, and he knew the serpent was around, and he knew that Man would shine brighter in heaven after the fall. He knew he'd give up his only son to show mercy. Had Eve stayed in her confines, there wouldn't be an incarnation of Christ. To ascend there must be a dark, a dissention. Christianity's first female martyr was a bad mom. Perpetua tore her child from her breast so she could have her own intestines pulled out by a lion. Who does that?

Salvador was serving time for murder when he wrote an article for a radical Indian newspaper. He talked about the binding vices of colonialism and imperialism, and Puerto Rico. He signed off, "¡Que viva Wounded Knee!" They corresponded: my mother from her island, which was bordered by two channels of the Fraser River; Salvador from a box in Attica. She left Seabird Island, her children, and her mother Little Bird for New York. Paul Simon would tell it slant in the white ways of provocation and sentimentality.

Mom worked for Xyolhmeylh Child & Family Services, a group home for Native teens. They take kids being neglected and abused, and try to place them with Native homes. She worked three-day-long shifts keeping teenagers off the streets. I went to work with her sometimes and watched how she connected with the girls. Their eyes would dart and Mom would get out a board game and tell them they could have a soda. "Stay," she said. They did every time, even when their jackets were on and they wanted to see the other side of the door.

Sometimes Mom came home with lice. Sometimes she worked overtime and left us alone for days. Before she went, she bought groceries for the week. We feasted on Hot Pockets and

frozen pizzas and juice boxes and No Name chips that first day and then starved the rest. Mom came home to a house covered in wrappers and dirty cups, and two hungry kids. We never went to school, so our lives were spent waiting. Mom drove us into town, parked at the Chevron, and gave us five dollars. A bruised banana and peanut butter crackers were transubstantiated into the body. I've always had the human condition of hunger, always hungry. I used to babysit for chips and Snickers. My oldest sister took advantage of that in her twenties. She was a young mother who needed a beer, a man—to leave. Her eyes were like Eve's at the gates of the garden. She was clothed and ashamed.

We were teenagers, my brother and I, already acclimated to my mother's way: do good for others first. We didn't celebrate Christmas when she worked at a homeless shelter in Vancouver. I asked her to help make cranes for a Veteran's Day project in grade three and she told me symbolic gestures weren't necessary. We couldn't object to her, not in her exhaustion to be just. My oldest brother and older sister moved out when they were young.

When Paul Simon called I was watching TV on the couch. Our landline was screwed into the old seventies wood panel of our kitchen wall. I was ashamed of the house. The room was barren. There was an orange, thrift shop dinette set, and a shrine on our counter for Stevie Ray Vaughan. It was a picture of him surrounded by barks and sage my mother picked, with red ties, and turquoise jewelry. The bracelets and rings were gifts from my uncle Lyle, a jeweler who idolized Elvis and wore a bouffant, until old age turned it into a less voluminous side part.

My mother was in the bath. Paul Simon's voice was timid. He asked for Mom. I yelled to her that Paul was on the line. Mom told me to keep him on the phone while I heard her body emerge from the wet.

"How old are you?" Simon asked.

"I'm ten. What do you do?" I asked.

"I'm an artist," he said.

I told him that was nice and asked him what kind of art. He laughed.

My mother, wrapped in a towel, ripped the phone from my hand. She carried on several conversations like this. I began to suspect they were flirting when I went with Mom to the library to look up if Simon had a wife. I didn't want Paul Simon to be my new father. I saw an album cover with him on it and grimaced. He wore turtlenecks. He was pasty. He had beady eyes.

"He's married to some red-head, I think. White woman," Mom said. We had seen some news clippings and rented a biography. He was a god, and not the personalized one of benevolence, but the type who could take things away.

She sent him every letter between herself and Salvador Argon. I had read the letters in our basement. There were images of horses and dirt and bodies, and nothing of love until it became all about love. Simon was inspired by Salvador's plight. While Mother wanted to share their turmoil, and all the penned letters that showed intellectuality, Paul was turning the work into a Broadway play. Mother's narrative was drowned in Simon's version of it all, and nowhere was Sal's story. He was dead.

We became self-important Indians with every call. Mom floated around the house after three-day shifts and became happy. After years of writing maniacally in her room, someone was finally using her words. A camera crew came to interview Mom. When the film came out, a narrator with a rich English accent said, "Paul Simon and his team researched every detail of the story. They even located Wahzinak. She offered Paul Simon her intimate memories of Sal's character."

"He was much more beautiful in real life," my mother said. "He just illuminated. His prose was phenomenal. He could talk about the prison life. He could talk about his poverty. People come along and they grace your life, and they make it extraordinary."

After the interview my mother cried into the phone and she didn't speak to us. She didn't sit at the table; she sat on the floor. I watched her body shake. Maybe it was having cameras in our rotting home. It was infested with mold and ladybugs and old furniture we didn't wear down ourselves. Maybe that's my shame talking. Maybe it was that Indians are at a ripe age when they're fifty, and Mother was there. Maybe it was that Salvador was kind.

She met a serpent in prison who was my father. The same provocation and sentimentality drew her in, and he wasn't kind. The legend is that he was banished from the house after many transgressions, and that we all waited by the door with weapons in case he came back, even me, a baby then, holding a hammer or a bat or a broom or a doll. The story has shifted because it's not funny anymore.

Simon gave us a choice: American dollars or a family trip to New York. Julia Roberts attended the opening. A woman from *Grey's Anatomy* played my mom. We missed the opportunity to see them to buy school clothes. Mom spent the rest on bills, food, and things.

The play reduced Mom down to an "Indian hippie chick," as *Variety's* Greg Evans called her. A "prison groupie," and I had only known her as an outreach worker. Prison was part of that, getting them to write or draw, to find sanity in isolation. I'm trying not to make excuses, because she did fall. It's in the text and on my mind every day how she fell. It could be like Eve. The old texts say we get menses for the fall, feel pain for the fall. God couldn't watch it; he sent us his boy, but I doubt he watched his son die. I think he just waited for him on the other side.

One of my mother's old friends, Richard, wrote about her breasts and Salvador's womanizing for his non-fiction book. He wrote with provocation and sentimentality while the iron was hot. Dick flew from California to Seabird to show Mom the book. He told me about his Jeep and that he would take me to the city someday, and Mom grew suspicious. He handed her the book after tea. She went to her room, came out, and told him to leave. Mother cried. I found the book underneath her bed and understood the contents like Hildegard, a prophet without an education. Her heart was inflamed and she knew the scriptures and the gospel. She didn't understand the tenses or the division of syllables, but she could read the pain.

The pain was a process to understanding. Men were born to hurt my mother in the flesh and the text, and she was my savior. The language was always wrong. Even in this account, I can't convey the pulse of her. In her sleep I couldn't turn away, in love with her heavy breathing. She rarely slept, but, when she did, it was a hibernation. Her small palms were red with heat. She always fell asleep with a book on her chest. It was the illumination of living light. I can feel her, formless to me now, and more god than our deity X:als or Creator.

Mom took us to the Abbotsford Mall and handed us each five hundred dollars. She got "Stevie Ray Vaughan" embroidered on the back of a raincoat at a sports store. Her old jacket had 'Tupac' on the back, and had been worn down by protests and hikes through the valley to pick Devil's Club shoots. I walked to the corridor in the mall to the bathroom and stayed by the drinking fountain, knowing something was wrong. When it was time to convene I bought a purple Adidas tracksuit and runners for school.

On the drive home I asked her if she wanted to be in New York. She told me she thought about leaving every day, but life wasn't like that. I remembered the car smelling like McDonald's French fries, and Vaughan's cover of *Little Wing* played. I wanted to confront Paul

myself, to bruise his art with the idea that a white man can never know us. But how can I condemn what he wrote, when she smiled for months one year?

In the root of my mind, which is contained like my old house and formed just so, I see her laying down against the concrete with my father standing above her. I walk backwards up the steps, knowing my feet like I never did. When I was six I watched a lot. Do I forgive my mother for him? We're all more human for the fall, and resentful when we're at our worst. There's a meaning beneath it all that knows everything before it happens and still will let it be. We shine brighter in heaven. She is formless to me now beneath the currents of daily operations.

I can pull you up, Mom. Between you and I, being lukewarm about you is the only sin I forbid. My words lay still like shadows on the page, but they are better than nothing. Better than your formless looming, and the guilt I carry, and the dead men who left you. I often feel ripped from your chest; only *I'm* on my way to the lions. On earth you can be the shadow these words cast. Is this conjuring and am I forgiven? I lament and lament the beginning until the end, where your red hands are waiting.

SPORK

DAVID HESKA WANBLI WEIDEN

The Russians had gotten wind of his business. The e-mail read: “Hello Sir. Do not to build more replicas. We know were you live.” No signature. Simple, spare. Chilling.

Eugene knew the Russians had dominated the field for years, but he’d always hoped to fly under their radar. He built his replicas slowly, one by one, didn’t contract the work out as the Russians reportedly did. Quality, not quantity. Never flooded the market.

His fakes usually fetched three or four hundred dollars on eBay, sometimes more. A couple of these per week, he could pay his bills, live in style. Not champagne, maybe. But. Beer. Cable. A movie.

His latest eBay auction was ending in 53 minutes. His masterpiece, this must have been the fake that drew the Russians’ attention. So far, it had garnered a high bid of $563, but the price would certainly go up in the last few seconds as the snipers made their last-second bids.

Eugene studied his listing: “RARE!!! Spork just found! Discovered at former Pine Ridge Reservation, colony of South Dakota! Intact, VF. Guaranteed genuine!” As he watched, new bids appeared: $565, then $566, $567. This was looking to be his most profitable auction ever since he’d started making the fakes, three years ago.

He’d learned his trade by starting off with the easy stuff—a KFC knife, a Dunkin’ Donuts spoon. Cutting the plastic, striking off, molding, baking, distressing it just enough. The early fakes, not so good. Impatient, he rushed the process. He’d since learned that it took at least fifteen or twenty hours to create a convincing fake. Then, a few minutes to print out a “Certificate of Authenticity.”

He considered himself a craftsman now. The craft, that was the important part, not the money. In the last two years, only one fake had been challenged by a buyer. And really, that was his fault. He’d bitten off more than he could chew.

He’d tried to create a McDonald’s coffee stirrer. The Holy Grail. The tiny oval bowl, the McDonald’s legend along the handle, the arches logo at the top. No one had been able to create a convincing replica of the McDonald’s stirrer, not since Young Bear—the master—had disappeared a decade ago.

Hubris, to think that he could create on the same level as Young Bear. That would take a

lifetime of study, practice, dedication to the craft. For now, he was happy to specialize in Taco Bell, Arby's, Burger King. Put out just enough fakes on the market to keep going, financially, as he got better and better. That was the plan, anyway.

Now the Russians knew about him.

No point in worrying about it now. Eugene saw the red message light blinking, flashing the number 2 on his old-school answering machine. Should he listen to the messages? What if it was the Russians?

His hands trembling, he picked up the phone and pressed the Messages button.

"Eugene, it's Tony. Just wanted to tell you about the latest at the daycare center. My boss is hacked at me because during story time I told the kids about Quetzalcoatl and Chac. I thought they'd like the story about how Chac made Jaguar and Deer live together in the desert; then I told them how Quetzalcoatl ate the Roadrunner and vomited out an Eagle, then they asked about the bloodletting and how the people cut out their own tongues. . ."

Eugene put the phone down on the table. To get to the second message, he'd have to let the entire first message play out before he could delete it.

The doorbell rang.

Eugene froze. Tony was at work, Zero was out of town, and Angela wasn't speaking to him anymore.

He considered his options. The only way out of the apartment, besides the front door, was the back deck. His unit was on the third floor, so jumping off of the deck would likely bring a broken leg or worse. Maybe pretend he wasn't home, hope they went away?

The doorbell rang again, then a knock. Another knock.

Now or never. Eugene opened the top drawer of his dresser, pulled out the Bersa. Semi-Automatic, Double Action, 380 ACP, 3.5 Inch Barrel, 15 Round Capacity, Fixed Sights, Matte Finish, Fired Casing.

Loaded.

Eugene stood behind the door at an angle, out of the line of fire, then yanked it open quickly.

A zombie stood there, staring straight ahead.

Green flesh rotting off the skull, one eye missing, mouth contorted into a frenzied scowl, blood splattered and splintered. The Undead.

"Trick or treat!"

Eugene noticed a pirate standing behind the zombie, the pirate's face looking expectantly at him. He stuck the gun in his pocket.

No candy in his apartment. He'd had a Snitchum a few weeks ago, but that was long gone.

"Wait here, guys, I've got something for you."

Eugene went to his kitchen, found what he was looking for.

"Hold out your bags." He gave each of the kids a large bachunk of red pepper hummus, straight into their sacks. They grinned at him, their smiles radiating joy and delight.

His heart skittering, Eugene picked up the phone again to finish listening to his messages. He heard Tony's voice still crackling: ". . . their hearts wept, oh, our Sons, We give you counsel before you leave on your journey, do not forget Us, do not erase Us, go on Your path and reclaim the honor which has been lost to our People, go forth and see the place from which We came, go forth. . ."

Eugene put the phone down on the table again. He had to get out of the apartment, clear his head, come back in the morning.

Next day, nerves still shaky coming back to the apartment complex. Eugene got off the elevator, crouched down in the hallway and peered around the corner, looking to see if anyone was lurking by his unit. *So far, so good*.

He slowly walked down the hallway, then saw a handwritten note taped to his door. *What now?*

"How DARE you put that PASTE in my sons trick or treat bag. It is RUINED. I do NOT APPRECIATE it. You owe my son ANOTHER BAG. Please BRING it to #307. THANK YOU, Diana PS He is OLFACTORILY CHALLENGED"

Olfactorily challenged? Did he attend a special school? Eugene took the note and crumpackled it, threw it in the corner.

He saw the phone, still playing the first message, lifted it to his ear and listened, ". . . they punctured their ears and their arms, their Blood flowing before the divinities, and they collected their Blood and put it in a urn near the Rocks, and the Rocks were not really Rocks, but appeared in the likeness of a Youth, and . . ."

Eugene put the phone down, and jaggled the touchpad on his laptop. He watched the

computer screen slowly return to eBay. The winning bid on the spork: $815, already paid. A new record.

Finally, some good news. He'd pack up the fake and ship it off. But first, he'd go see Diana in 307. *What the hell*. He'd give the kid one of his fakes, maybe the Dairy Queen parfait scraper. Kids loved those, that should chill her out. No sense making enemies.

Eugene rang the doorbell at Unit 307.

A long pause. Finally, the door opened.

"Yes?" The woman at the door looked to be about 30 or so. Long black hair, brown skin, green eyes, strange eye makeup. The makeup—*what was it called? eyeliner? mascara?*—angled up to the corner of her face, nearly to her hairline, giving her a cat-like appearance.

"I'm Eugene, I live in 315, you left a note on my door?" He looked around for the kid, didn't see him. Maybe at school? He held out the package that he'd wrapped up as a gift and gave it to the woman, who was presumably Diana, the author of the note.

"Please come in," she said, a strained smile on her face as she took the package.

He walked into the apartment, stood in the foyer. She locked the door behind him. A dank, earthy odor enveloped him. *What was that smell?* He'd never eaten a rutabaga, but he imagined this was what it smelled like.

"Am I interrupting?" he asked.

"No. Sit down."

He walked into the kitchen, where he saw a cauldron of red liquid roiling and steaming on the stove.

"What is that?" He sat down at the kitchen table.

"Soup."

"What kind of soup?"

"We call it blood soup," she said.

She ladled some of the mixture into an ancient metal bowl and set it in front of him. When the steam cleared, he could see that the soup was viscous, oily, with large green and white chunks floating within. Smaller, iridescent pieces resembling migrant worker fingertips rose to the top then sank.

She stared at him, expectantly.

He looked at the soup.

Eugene took a battered wooden spoon and disheveled some liquid—no chunks—into it. He blew on it, waited. He raised it to his nose, inhaled. It smelled like a mustache, a street light, an old chair, an exhaust manifold.

He tasted it.

The first note was a deep animal saltiness, accented by the flavor of sage and vinegarweed. Then he tasted red wine, dark beer, pearl onions, defragmented celery, slithered carrots. The finishing note was of sugar, butter, cinnamon, a mellow and polite sweetness, like a beef pie crust mixed with blackberries and Girl Scout cookies. This soup was like nothing he'd ever eaten—tasting it was like a journey to the kingdom of Zembla, or perhaps a vacation to a distant planet with as yet undiscovered herbs, spices redolent of the musky alien soil, the thin atmosphere, the toil of the spice workers.

"Good," he said.

He ate the soup quickly, hungrily, as if it were his last meal, without speaking.

When he was finished, she opened her icebox and took out what appeared to be a block of distressed cherry wood. She took a hack saw and carved off a slice, wrapped it in newspaper.

"You take this for later. Now go, before my son gets home."

He nodded, left without saying goodbye.

Later that night, Eugene ate the bread. It was a revelation. Dense and spongy, it tasted of forest hops and prairie grasses.

He wanted more.

During the next week, he tried to concentrate on his business, not Diana. Although it wasn't his best work, he finished his latest project by the end of the week and put up a new listing: "GENUINE!!! Hardee's knife, just found! No chips or cracks, great condition, some mustard residue!! Appears to be from former Chicago area! No reserve!!!!" Eugene hoped to clear a few hundred dollars, but the Russians had saturated the market with Hardee's cutlery last year, so he'd be lucky to get anything, especially in this post-war economy.

Within hours of putting up the Hardee's listing, he received another e-mail message: "No legs, no problems." *What did this mean?*

To clear his head, Eugene picked up his phone, which was still playing Tony's message: ". . . and Xbalanque cut off Hunahpu's legs and offered him as a sacrifice, but Hunahpu arose from the dead, and One Death and Seven Deaths, the Lords of the Sky, demanded that the

miracle be performed again, and the Twins cut off the Lords' legs but did not bring them back from the dead, and the Xibalbans despaired, and begged for mercy. . ."

He had to get out.

He walked down the hall to Unit 307 and rang the bell. Diana opened the door, motioned him inside. He started to speak, but she silenced him. She pulled him into the bedroom and sank to her knees.

A warm red cloud began to envelope Eugene's brain. He peered through the cloud and looked around the room. He saw galvanic paintings, defenestrated posters, kachina dolls. He gave over to the cloud, electrolytic charges traveling to his extremities, soft waves of ions dissolving into positive and negative particles.

Spent, he sat down on the bed. He stared at a photograph of a soldier holding an automatic weapon. After a while, she brought out a small translucent container, filled with what looked like pickled cactus and dried fruit.

"This is called acorn soup," she said, handing him the box.

"When can I see you again?" he asked.

She gave him a faint smile and shut the door behind him.

In the following weeks, Eugene settled into a routine. Work on the fakes, go to the post office, maybe pick up a bottle of tree vodka as a gift before going to Diana's apartment in the afternoon. She would dejizzle him, then give him some new dish to take back to his flat. He never saw her kid, and she would only smile when he asked about him.

He never knew what to expect from the strange food she gave him, but each bite took him back to the red cloud. He could no longer look at root vegetables or fish without becoming tumescent. As a consequence, he avoided farmers' markets and aquariums, but still became aroused at the inadvertent sight of nuts or smell of turnips.

When he felt lonely, he listened to Tony's message, still playing: ". . . and when the Twins did return to the village, They did see that All were dead and murdered, and the village had been burned, and They did despair of the evil that had been brought, and They did, in their sadness, walk and walk until the end of time, and then They ascended into the middle of the sky so that one was the Sun and one was the Moon. . ."

One afternoon, Eugene stopped by Diana's apartment and found the front door open.

"Diana?"

No answer.

He looked inside, saw no one. He called her name again.

He walked into the foyer, poked his head around the wall.

"Hello?"

Still no answer. He noticed that a light was on in the bathroom—the light squeaking around the doorjamb like a picture frame.

He opened the door.

On the counter, a makeup mirror shined like the sun, eight clear bulbs blazing and surrounding the lunar surface of the mirror. The smell of copper and magnesium filled the small space.

Diana was nude, lying down in the tub on her side, facing away from him. It looked like she was bathing in soup—shiny red liquid completely covered the bottom of the bowl.

Eugene leaned down and turned her over on her back. Blood covered her face and drizzled over her lifeless green eyes, which were still open. Her skin was pure white, the color of bleached chalk.

He stared down at her torso. Her legs were gone at the knees. Only crinkled and crenulated stumps remained, gray tendons and white bone contrasting with the scarlet and crimson of veins and muscles.

No legs, no problems.

He wasn't sure what to do—cover her up, say some words, call the cops?

He turned off the light and shut the bathroom door, slowly. He walked into the kitchen.

Eugene stared at her spices, her pots, her spoons, her forks. He looked at her dishes, her bags of flour, sugar, salt. He opened the refrigerator and gazed at her vegetables, meats, fruits.

He started to cook. He used no recipe, no formula. He went by instinct, taking vegetables he'd never seen before; peeling, slicing, and boiling them. He fried unknown cuts of meat, then chopped them into smaller pieces and added them to the stock pot. In the cupboard, there were jars of spices with strange symbols on the labels. He added these to the pot without tasting them.

The soup boiled and simmered. Eugene waited.

As night began to fall, he ate, using his spork, which he found on the table.

And then he walked.

Did he think, in that diaphanous moment between dusk and nightfall, that she would return? Did he walk the streets each night, listening to snatches of conversation, hearing her voice in the markets, the cafes, the elevators? Did he eat dark bread and corn soup, constantly, obsessively? Did he try to swallow in a foreign language?

Wouldn't you?

Song Buried in the Muscle of Urgency

> **Joy Harjo. *Conflict Resolution for Holy Beings*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2015. Print.**
>
> **Casandra Lopez. *Where Bullet Breaks*. Little Rock, AR: Sequoyah National Research Center, U of Arkansas at Little Rock, 2014. Print.**
>
> **Kimberly L. Becker. *Words Facing East*. Cincinnati, OH: WordTech Editions, 2011. Print.**
>
> **Kim Shuck. *Clouds Running In*. Petaluma, CA: Taurean Horn, 2014. Print.**
>
> **Allison Adele Hedge Coke, *Effigies II: An Anthology of New Indigenous Writing*. Cromer: Salt, 2014. Print.**

Recently, when Chad Harbach asked the hard questions about the "two cultures of American Fiction," it awakened the questions I have harbored off and on for years about the evolution of Native American poetry(ies). You can find in my own past writing on the subject various ideas including a defense of the possibility of a "Native poetics" and descriptions of exactly what that might entail. Among those elements I identified early on was a "celebration of influence" (in direct counterpoint to Harold Bloom's "anxiety of influence"). Cultural continuity with ancestral tribal knowledge, traditional songs, and poetic performances by literary predecessors and contemporary peer poets seemed key components and strengths of the tradition of Native American poetry—one the practicing poets were indeed celebrating and building on by conscious intertextuality and various rhetorical gestures.

When younger Native poets began to speak of difference from older tribal writers, I assured myself they were thinking about thematic concerns and the way their own experiences—sometimes of urban reality rather than reservation life—naturally resulted in different focuses (and therefore metaphors and sometimes formal structures). Although I may not have had as much company in my stance this time, I still believed there remained an identifiable poetics, although now I was expanding the circle in my thinking and writing of an "Indigenous" aesthetic. This indigeneity also encompasses the tribal nation contexts which have also gained critical attention.

Now we have arrived at another new era for Native poets—that of the MFA, AWP, and NYC. Recent graduates of prestigious MFA programs (including the recent low-rez IAIA— Institute of American Indian Arts—MFA), have begun to amass well-placed publications, gain critical recognition, and win awards the dearth of which had previously seemed a mark of marginalized status for all but a select handful of Native writers since the first swoon of notice came in the 1970's. When N. Scott Momaday won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1969 and a Pulitzer committee member noted "the arrival on the American literary scene of a matured, sophisticated literary artist," at least one Native writer, Louis Owens (Choctaw), wondered if that phrase rather

suggested that "at last an indigenous writer had emerged who could emulate and imitate the discourse of the cultural center—Euramerica—so well that he could be accepted, perhaps canonized?"[3]

We are living in a time when we have publishing Native poets such as accomplished Chickasaw writer Linda Hogan who have worked their way onto the literary scene without institutional writing degrees situated alongside those who have a full slate of literary credentials including MFAs, PhDs, and mentors with name recognition and cachet with prominent presses. Publishers such as Copper Canyon showcase the work of young Native writers like Natalie Diaz (Mojave) and Sherwin Bitsui (Diné), and many awards come the way of newly minted Native MFA degree holders. Iñupiaq writer Joan Naviyuk Kane, for example, earned her MFA from Columbia University's School of the Arts, and her second book *Hyperboreal* was chosen as the winner of both the 2012 AWP Donald Hall Prize in Poetry and the 2014 American Book Award. In 2015, Creek poet Joy Harjo (MFA from Iowa Writer's Workshop) was selected by the Academy of American Poets to receive the prestigious Wallace Stevens Award, which recognizes "outstanding and proven mastery in the art of poetry."

Clearly much is afoot in the field of Native poetry. In this vital time, should we simply relish the new-found acclaim and attention or need we take a breath to understand the roots and flowering of this rich period? Is the idea of a Native literary aesthetic or the rhetorical space Leanne Howe calls "tribalography" more or less viable today in a global society so keenly aware of transnationalism or indeed among the complicated origins of Native writers themselves (even when we leave the questionable CDIB out of the equation)? How shall we characterize a Native poetics in an era when Native identities and lifestyles themselves vary so drastically? In an era of MFA-educated writers, what remains Native about Native poetry? Or should we introduce Junot Díaz's idea of the POC and ask which MFA, which cohort, which writing community? As I read the several volumes sent to me for this review, these are among the questions I hoped to unravel.

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Whether writing about the brutal death of a brother, the reclamation of Native place, the toxicity of historical representations, or the path for healing conflict, the Native women poets whose work I discuss here all sing with their own urgency, but the very urgency of subject that taps a collective experience and hearkens toward a certain polyvocality seems key in marking these works as within an always evolving circle of Native literary sensibility that often plays itself off the still intact (largely white) site of supposed literary authority. Likewise, each of the writers seems keenly aware of the limits of their craft—of language itself—and equally invested in the relational aspects of both their poetry and the lives there represented. Little has been easy or simply defined in the experience of most of the speakers in the poems; neither then is the poetic embodiment of their understanding.

Just as Owens, in his discussion of Momaday's award, went on to suggest, the "sophistication" recognized by the Pulitzer judges was "of a different order from that in canonized texts," one that entailed not just an "undeniable facility with… techniques and tropes… but more significantly,

the profound awareness of conflicting epistemologies;" from these volumes of poetry, too, arises a poetic epistemology that hearkens back to various Native and tribally specific ideas regarding being and knowing. Among the several most readily identified are various non-linear understandings of time and history, the concept of lived community and the acknowledged sentience of many elements of our natural world, an investment in various spiritual and ceremonial practices, and a clear awareness of both just practices and the many ironic justifications that continue to create "legal" pathways for undermining basic rights. Although the kinds of experience recounted in the present day voice of many of the poems has indeed altered in particulars since the advent of written Native poetry, the searching analysis of that experience as originating in colonization remains steady, as does the attempt to expose the many inherent hypocrisies of contemporary U.S. policy and politics. It seems there is still a particular urgency in being an Indian even, or particularly, in this supposedly "post-racial" America.

The work in these volumes—as much as any that has gone before—gains part of its strength in giving voice to a discourse of what Owens called "otherness." The works and the ways the various authors elect to manifest the reality of the experience of otherness or a rhetorical stance grounded in tribal identity varies—as it always has. In these books by both new and established poets, some works place Native reality more to the fore than others, just as some works take an activist stand while others employ understated allusion with little or no actual mention of political expediency.

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In *Conflict Resolution for Holy Beings,* in which she writes, "Every poem is an effort at ceremony," Joy Harjo strikes a balance between the affective and the effective reaches of art, imbuing her poetic performances with philosophical musings and calls to action. As in several of her early books, here too, Harjo—who is both musician and writer—weaves together song lyrics, prose, and poetry. Some poems such as "For Calling the Spirit Back from Wandering the Earth in Its Human Feet," clearly take up the mission of the title of the collection and employ an imperative voice to direct the reader: "Call your spirit back. It may be caught in corners and creases of shame, judgment, and human abuse;" "Let the earth stabilize your postcolonial insecure jitters," or "Help the next person find their way through the dark" (4-6). Indeed, the sections of the title poem themselves offer instructions or steps for "conflict resolution," from setting "ground rules" to using "effective communication skills," to reducing "defensiveness" (77-80). Other poems underscore the role of poetry (and music) in working for healing and change. The poem "No," for example, claims, "I expected our words might rise up and jam the artillery in the hands of dictators" (11); and "It's Raining in Honolulu" declares, "We will plant songs where there were curses" (109).

However, the poems don't only speak about healing, teach, or call for action on the behalf of justice, but Harjo would give us to understand, that in coming into being artistically, they actually engender good. Of singers, "Indian School Night Song Blues" declares, "some heal the

sick, some make the dead rise up and dance" (68). Of songs, the poem "Entering the Principality of O'ahu by Sky Roads" speaks of how they:

> … lift the most humble spirits
> To the grass houses of the heavens—"
> and
> … aren't paid for
> By the money and influence
> Of rich, fat corporate gods (19).

Harjo's own work in the collection traces this aesthetic of artistic healing, with poems describing the persona's journey from being "Indian in a strange pastiche of hurt and rain" seemingly numbered among those in "Suicide Watch" who see themselves as an "unworthy soul," to becoming one among those "Who know ourselves to be part of mystery" (96, 71, 135).

Consisting of four movements, the book also attends to the larger destructive forces that have been unleashed on our planet and actions we can take in healing that human breech with earth. Prefacing each poem is a short prose piece or prose poem. These seem to narratively trace the speaker's epic journey as she comes to both personal and communal knowledge. Frequently, the passages voice a hunger or longing and center around the inspiration or fulfillment of jazz, poetry, music, the saxophone. Then the lyric language almost curves, rising and falling, like a full-voiced horn:

> For any spark to make a song, it must be transformed by pressure. There must be unspeakable need, muscle of belief, and wild, unknowable elements. I am singing a song that can only be born after losing a country. (7)

As in previous collections, much of the beauty in Harjo's poetry comes in its reach toward the unknowable—"that perfect song… just beyond the field of perceptible sound" (95).

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An unspeakable need and awareness of the limits of our humanity likewise fuel the search given voice in *Where Bullet Breaks,* a first chapbook by Casandra Lopez, a Cahuilla, Luiseńo, Tongva, and Chicana writer. As in Harjo's writing, there is lament in Lopez's poetry, but here the origin of the loss explored is more personal. Narratively, the chapbook takes us through the brutal death of the speaker's brother, the reactions of the speaker—through roughly a year of grief and healing—and out the other side to "what remains." Poetically, the collection investigates various manifestations of connection and loss including, in the aftermath, the break-down of language and meaning. Lopez cleverly manipulates language to mirror the distance of shock as the poems touch the now seemingly unfamiliar objects—the door, cement, and of course, the Bullet.

"Words," the speaker tells us, "are always collapsing;" therefore, she learns "to speak in metaphor" (19, 15). Among the many moving poems gathered here is "A New Language" in which the narrator longs for "… a new language… with at least / 50 words for grief / / and 50 words for love" (19).

Lopez's haunting collection of seventeen poems seems partly tableau, partly palimpsest. She has constructed intricate overlapping narratives that deftly employ repetition of words and image. Each new appearance of the voiceless flutter of Brother's lips, for example, become the narrator's own inability to speak, her search for language. The many fractures created "where bullet breaks" include the speaker's own disconnection from herself—even her physical body. In "Open the Door: Eye Witness," the narrator laments, "I… think I am living someone else's life" and she represents herself in pieces: "ear, mouth, and hands" then "arms and legs" and "pin-pricked follicles" (9-10). Among the few reaches beyond the tableau of family is the poem "An Unknown" in which Lopez aligns Jim Thorpe's loss of his twin brother with her/her persona's loss of her twin. The perhaps compulsive running of Thorpe the speaker likens to her own "always running from something" (27). *Where Bullet Breaks* renders in carefully crafted poems both the "sweet / rind of history" and the "rib ache of the left behind" (21).

Indeed, like her narrator, Lopez herself has learned efficient use of metaphor. In "Those Who Speak to Trees Remember," she recalls her Father's teaching: "Trees have ancestors, a lineage, a history" (13). She envisions herself and "Brother" "grafted like our citrus trees." The narrative and images of the rest of the poem call up vivid memories of the lovely globed fruits of her and Brother's mutual childhood, but also the fateful tumbling of the fruit followed by "splats" and "skin splitting," language and images that, of course, recall the death scene as well as echo words and images from earlier poems: "split," "fractures," "break." In the opening poem, "Where Bullet Breaks," the speaker and Brother, "split into before and after," just as in "Those Who Speak to Trees Remember," the poem itself is divided into memories and aftermath. In the chapbook narratives, the language of metaphor works to create distance, but also to keep the experience close—transformed, but vivid.

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Language and loss also figures into Kimberly Becker's *Words Facing East*, a first collection by a writer who identifies herself as "Cherokee/Celtic/Teutonic." Although in this volume, Becker's poems trace a connection to what one poem calls "The Cherokee in Me" (17), the author does not turn away from a sometimes troubling sense of distance and regress from identification as Native as these lines in "Bumping Up Against the Stories" demonstrate:

> I fish my smart phone from my purse and with camera,
> snap a picture of a picture of my great-grandmother, Emma.
> Her face swims behind curved glass
> as I try to gauge her Indianness.
>
> Blood from her flows down to me,

> Just as hers from full-blood Cherokee.
> Stories coagulate, go untold, until such time as when
> Someone picks enough to let them run again. (30)

Potent loss is in evidence throughout the collection, sometimes suggested through metaphor as in the poem "Edges," which recounts the squeezing out of the wild fox by encroaching civilization. The sympathetic speaker, denied a longed for connection to the wildness of the foxes—"I never could gain entry"—instead pictures them in this lovely image: "… imagine foxes / asleep around cleaned bones, / tails muffed around muzzles" (45). Still, despite acknowledging both metaphorical and historic "removal," the works in the collection voice just the kind of reclamation, "Bumping Up Against the Stories" suggests could take place. The poet herself may be the one who makes the stories "run again." Indeed, the book's proem, "Circling the Mound," attests to things that "can never be erased," and opens with the line: "So this is what it's like to come home" (13).

Like Linda Hogan's early book *Calling Myself Home*, Becker's intention in this collection seems partly to claim her Cherokee "home." In the book, this home becomes strongly aligned with the Cherokee language as several poems ("Language Class," "The Catch," "River of Words," etc.) attend to the speaker's relearning the language her ancestors "drank at infancy" (18). Among the more satisfying of the poems in this vein are "Distant, Early, Warning: Lines" and "Words as Fish." In the first, in which the narrative is complicated by the simultaneous search for some lost family history through photos and story, the speaker laments, "but all I have are these poor words, / these shards of story, these artifacts, / I sift through, / searching for splinters of bone that connect somehow to mine" (57). In "Words as Fish," the author reveals the sweat it takes to make these bone to bone connections. Here she employs the Cherokee phrase "Doadt" (How do you say), and the poem proceeds as a litany of phrases each containing an English word in bold for which the speaker wants the Cherokee. The intriguing accumulated phrases show an engaged imagination and promise for poetry to come as in this example: "Doadt / how in the violence of **[love]** you fell free of your knife?"

Becker's consistent attention to the tell of language does not mean the collection lacks variety in focus. The author also turns for inspiration to various physical places, to stories like that of Anna Mae Aquash and the mythic Selu, to news accounts as well as personal stories, and to cultural critique. Throughout the collection, there is a gentle celebration of heritage and inheritance, and there are observations and lines to be prized. For example, "Ghost Dance Dress" showcases both a sensibility that recognizes how "Even a poem must keep its distance," and the memorable line: "Some things you don't defame by cataloguing" (20). Walking the Cherokee lands with Becker we witness discovery and personal investment in forging connection; blessedly, we do not witness an academic cataloguing.

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If Becker's book is searching for a connection to her Cherokee language and heritage, Kim Shuck's *Clouds Running In* is screaming she has one and telling you the joke about the one that got away. Although the focus of these two books is indeed similar (Shuck, too, is going "Back to Cherokee"), the style and voices diverge significantly. From the onset, Shuck's book sets itself apart visually by its use of all caps throughout and the frequent companion landscape drawings to the poems (by collaborator Marcer Campbell); it sets itself apart aurally through its humor and "North Eastern Okie terse" style. When the first person narrator in "I Always Catch the Old World Diseases," declares "I am an unlikely / post-columbian ndn / hill billy Polish / union agitator and career military DNA / inheritance from my grandfathers," a reader would be correct to assume the various stances of the volume will challenge easy expectations (58). Again and again the sassy and smart lines delivered in a clipped understatement provide critique or a new perspective. But most intriguing to me in reading Shuck's collection together with those already discussed, is her constant awareness of language colonization and the related imposition of epistemological foundations.

While Shuck's poems voice a kind of outrage and lament about the theft of Native languages (here specifically Cherokee) and the cultural understandings there embedded, they simultaneously work in various ways towards recovery and indeed enact what Vizenor might call survivance. The many engaging ways the poet tackles ideas about language, belief, and resistance convince this reader that the "clouds running in" may be threatening, but the vibrant many-voiced "singing" these poems report and enact might be one bead in the remaking of the community story.

"Cultural Exchange," for instance, opens with the line, "Bring your expectations," and then seemingly characterizes one of these cultural expectations: "Outlaw my language then ask me to speak it / A parlor trick" (6). The lines, of course, allude to historical assimilation policies—here specifically surrounding language, (as well to contemporary stereotyping and commodification of Native peoples and cultures). The kind of irony at work here figures significantly in Shuck's playful poetics and her critique, as when she introduces various "foreign" languages including the written and the scientific, and implies the speaker's troubled relationship to these systems of thinking. "Myth of the Immigrant," for example, opens with a stanza about "these straight lines on paper" and the poet figures them as complicit in the colonial enterprise, noting they: "have a kind of magic / bestow authority that / seems to overcome that of / rivers / history before soldiers," one that is only "an excuse to / fail in sacred responsibilities" (57). The historic failures in acting responsibly have resulted in the offspring of global warming given image in the poem—floods, fires, and risks of skin cancer; as well as in the colonial machismo that disvalues women and "just over the border," results in "Indian women… being murdered daily." The speaker is "tired of the plausible lies" and offers instead an other language system and, through the imperative voice, calls the reader to the same: "put on your singing clothes / change the names of each cousin we have / unstitch these boundaries."

Throughout the volume, Shuck's poems, in answer to the failings of colonial lifestyles, offer songs in many guises and circumstances, offer the recollection of older teachings—from humans

and the earth—even suggest small wisdoms through the language of food. And in these various poetic offerings, the gesture is broad enough that we understand their connections to one another and to a different way of being, an other epistemology. The poem "Mud and Words," for example, suggests something about the work of the poet, opening with the lines:

> Trying to find the word
> that can hold off the water
> hold up a town
> just one more word
> another way to ask that people
> pay attention there is
> work to be done here (62).

The poem closes with the declaration: "You will know the poets by the / dirt under our nails."

Here as in other poems, even as the author comes out for poetry, song, tribal teachings, etc. the poems simultaneously contain the possible futility of these tools. In "Mud and Words" the poem sets troubles like broken levees against the efforts of the poets who, Shuck writes, "can try to hold water with a sieve of words." The trying fills these poems, but as "Close," laments, "No amount of praying / dancing, song / will hold back rain now and / I'm already a marsh" (48). Still, this realism is tempered with belief as when Shuck writes in "Sacred Spaces":

> … There are
> Some things that you can lose and
> Regain and I'll stand on any stage you
> Want and say that wonder is one of them
> Wonder and community (23).

Clouds Running In places us in medias res (or perhaps rather in medias rez); the struggle continues with outcome not determined. But the poems offer many moments of humor and grace. The unexpected perspective in the opening poem—"Today's history lesson will be written / by ants / under the bark of a tree / in Tilden Park. / I won't know how to read it either."— should prepare us for the delightful turnabouts and surprises to follow (1). Among my favorite poetic aphorisms from the text could be said of the volume itself: "If you aren't delighted you aren't paying / attention" (68.) Despite the distraction of constant capital letters and my desire to tinker with line breaks, I was delighted by the wit, warmth, and, yes wisdom, of this poet's work.

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If the preceding volumes by Harjo, Lopez, Becker, and Shuck range widely in subjects, voice, and style, the final book I examine in this discussion captures a similar variety between the covers of a single volume. *Effigies II*, edited by Allison Hedge Coke (Cherokee/Creek/ Huron/Metis) and following the example of the 2009 *Effigies* by creating a "community" of new poets in one release, presents the debut chapbooks of five different Indigenous women poets:

Laura Da (Eastern Shawnee), Ungelbah Davila (Diné), Kristi Leora (Anishinaabe), Lara Mann (Choctaw/Cherokee/Mohawk), and Kateri Menominee (Chippewa); with their work arising from the Pacific Northwest to the Great Lakes, from the Eastern Woodlands to the desert Southwest.

Two telling lines from the early poems of Laura Da's *The Tecumseh Motel* can draw us back to the queries with which I opened this essay regarding the possibility of an ongoing Indigenous aesthetic in poetry. Da writes, "Colonialism had children and grand-children too;" and "*We have always been the frontier*" (4, 7). As imperialism continues to breed or morph into new "honors" such as the wildly inaccurate and stereotypic dramatic representation of Tecumseh's life about which Da writes, so too must new poetic responses to these imperial tendencies appear. They do. Here. In the work of these talented younger poets, the legacy of writers like Harjo and Hedge-Coke herself continue. But these are not cookie-cutter, paint-by-number copies of what has already been said. Each of the writers in this volume adds a unique voice and take on what it means to be Indigenous, to write Indigenous in the twenty-first century.

I look in some depth at *The Tecumseh Motel* as a series of poems that together demonstrate the kind of "sophistication" arbitrator's of the canon-worthy might recognize while they simultaneously enact what Owens labeled a certain "otherness." They achieve a reappraisal of historical accounts and specific cultural conditions through a complex layered poetics praiseworthy among any gallery of critics. At the same time, Da's poetics are still aesthetically and thematically connected to the earlier published or performed work associated with the tradition of Native letters.

The author opens the collection with lively, shrewd poems, filled with mythic figures, humanized historic and contemporary images, and the breath of gesture. She hands them to the reader like flint and stone. Without heavy-handed interpretation, they soon catch fire in our imagination. Da describes the focus of her chapbook as "a parallel path of Shawnee culture and personal history" (2); but in the complex vision that unfolds, inevitably these distinctly named paths converge. The powerful "American Towns" declares:

> Here is the voyage,
> conjured homeland to conjured homeland,
>
> No, not that clawed trajectory of the past,
> but a fierce conception
>
> that quickens and scraps inside just the same. (8)

The path—from the "casino jangle," curated dioramas, and warped educational system in which tribal council members are perceived as "*remnants of the once great Shawnee tribe*," to boulders with "deep groves in the center / for grinding corn" and the memory of Old Chillicothe—is both map and palimpsest. Chillicothe, for example, is a contemporary place name and "… in the

subtle semantics / of Shawnee, a tightened fist of connotation: / clan name and principal city, / all human systems working in harmony" (8).

Through unflinching images of Shawnee removal (many given in the story of Lazarus Shale), Da depicts the outcome of the Dawes Allotment Act Roosevelt duped "a mighty pulverizing machine" (which becomes another of Da's poem titles). But she also traces the daily heroism of those who made the starvation journey and characterizes the continuance of contemporary descendants. Like Da's persona in "Wars of Attrition," we are reminded, "A map is not a neutral document" (34). Indeed, Da's poems deliver readers from many romantic notions about Native Americans to which they might have previously clung. In "American Towns," the author reports the wording of a museum plaque which claims: "*The ground on which this council house stands is unstained / with blood*" (9). Throughout *The Tecumseh Motel*, Da's well-crafted poems strip down the rhetoric and supposed veracity of such unfounded historic claims, and Da closes the poem with lines that could be the raison d'être of the collection: "I want my ink to bellow— / where is this ground unstained with blood?" Bellow it does.

But note also that to achieve the emphatic here, Da employs the question as she does elsewhere to good effect. Among the more evocative questions is this one in "No Longer": "What tremor can be measured / in the pale wave of light / that blazes a path of eviction?" (28) Through the interrogative and the imperative, through gaps and other poetic gestures, Da entrusts her reader to enact the convergence of pathways, and to speak the bellow with their own voice. In continuing the depiction of eviction in "No Longer," for example, she asks the reader to invite the felt experience into their own bodies:

> To weather that expulsion path—
> hunch the shoulders into a perpetual wince.
> Look back often.
> Squint in the light
> that shines on the backs of the knees. (28)

The power of the Native poetics in this opening chapbook of *Effigies II* derives from that "song buried in the muscle of urgency"[3] and in Da's ability to awaken the sense of that song in a reader.

The other authors in *Effigies II* likewise invest their words with power. The poetic range—from Ungelbah Davila's "honkey tonk hymns" to Kristi Leora's collective genealogy, Lara Mann's sometimes humorous apologia for mixedblood reality to Kateri Menominee's revisiting of myth and history—showcases the still perhaps unexpected reach of contemporary Native poetry. Although the "who's who" of Native writers has included a similarly wide-ranging variety of poetic performances, including Carter Revard (Osage) who draws from the classicists, Gerald Vizenor (Anishinaabe) contemporary haiku writer, Allison Hedge Coke's effective use of the persona poem, Sherman Alexie (Spokane) who has given the sonnet a new twist, N. Scott Momaday (Kiowa) a formalist in his early work, Simon Ortiz who drew so powerfully on tribal

myth, and of course, Harjo who incorporates elements of Jazz tradition, the poetry of Native America has often been conflated and misread as merely confessional or a plain spoken political exercise. As Leora writes in her fascinating poem on other voices, "It's not how you talk, but / how you listen" (133). Among the powers of the poems by the nine writers featured here is their ability to show readers new ways to listen to or read the work of Native writers, and their ability to pull them into the rhetorical space of tribalography.

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Notes

1. See, for example, Kimberly Blaeser, "Cannons and Canonization: Native Poetries through Autonomy, Colonization, Nationalism, and Decolonization," *The Columbia Guide to American Indian Literatures of the United States Since 1945,* ed. Eric Cheyfitz (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006) 183-287.
2. Louis Owens, *Other Destinies: Understanding the American Indian Novel* (Norman, OK: U of Oklahoma P, 1992) 90-92.
3. Joy Harjo, *Conflict Resolution for Holy Beings* (New York, W.W. Norton: 2015), 21.

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Sam McKegney. *Masculindians: Conversations about Indigenous Manhood.* East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2014.
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> "It's a relatively new thing in Indian country, patriarchy. We forget because it's such a dominant system in the world. We forget that it really isn't everything and everywhere. Our people weren't living this way, even in recent history." Kim Anderson, *Masculindians* (93).

When we hear people discussing masculinity studies, we might be tempted to dismiss the topic as some outgrowth of the "men's rights" movement, a misguided and wrongheaded conglomeration that believes men are an increasingly oppressed population in a sissifying world. Or maybe that was just my concern when I first heard about *Masculindians: Conversations about Indigenous Manhood* and *Indigenous Men and Masculinities: Legacies, Identities, Regeneration*. Once one sees the scholars involved in these projects, one's fears will likely and rightly abate. Each of these collections recognizes that academic discussions of specifically Indigenous masculinities require intersectional attention that much scholarship has yet to pay. McKegney notes that we have had many discussions of Indigenous womanhood and Two-Spirit practices, positions, and identities, but hardly any of Indigenous masculinity, especially those that are celebratory of Indigenous masculinity (7-8). We might first point out that we haven't had many of these discussions in print because Indigenous masculinity is often the assumption for discussions of Indigenous issues. That said, and it is a point largely absent in these collections, such assumptions, even when they are tacit, invoke the need for an attentive and self-conscious study of these intersectional positions.

Innes and Anderson note in their introductory essay, "there is little activism or political will to address Indigenous men's issues, and as a result there are very few policies or social programs designed for Indigenous men, including those who are trans-identified, as well as women who identify with Indigenous masculinities" (3). They continue with a discussion of statistics regarding the incarceration, murder, and suicide rates for Indigenous men, noting that all of these are higher than their equivalents not only for Indigenous women in Canada, but also those of white women—a population whose imagined lack of safety drives so much of the "law and order" discourse with which we are all familiar. They are also quick to point out that there may be a number of factors that lead to not only the underreporting, but also the miscategorization of violence against Indigenous women. That is, while this text engages with masculinity primarily, it never turns its back on the ways masculinity cannot be understood outside of or apart from gendered issues for Indigenous people broadly and collectively. In other words, toxic masculinity damages all people, including men, on a number of fronts. Innes and Anderson continue, "A significant outcome of these biases is that Indigenous men are more often viewed as victimizers, not as victims; as protectors rather than those who need protection; or as supporters, but not ones who need support (9). This is not to say that this collection discounts the asymmetrical damage

of toxic masculinity. Rather, they overtly assert that "Indigenous men do benefit from male privilege," *and* (not but) "the oppression suffered by both [Indigenous men and women] is tied to the colonization and acquisition of Indigenous lands" (11).

Innes and Anderson divide their collection of sixteen pieces into four sections, detailing "Theoretical Considerations," "Representations in Art and Literature," "Living Indigenous Masculinities and Indigenous Manhood," and "Conversations," this last comprised of interviews, discussions, and roundtables covering a variety of matters relating to the collection's topic. The sections work well as a framework for the essays, as the reader first encounters pieces that offer the theoretical underpinnings that will inform each of the essays that follow. Moreover, because the essays in this collection were circulated among the contributors, they frequently refer to one another, increasing the centrality of these preliminary essays. I focus on these four essays from this first section that offer theoretical lenses through which to read the rest of the collection.

The first of these, Bob Antone's essay, offers a specifically Haudenosaunee perspective grounded within their "Creation stories" (21). He begins by demonstrating a key difference between Western and Indigenous traditions, the former devoted to dominance and the latter to peace and community. He continues, "The other significant cultural difference is the all-encompassing matrifocal or women-centered foundation of Haudenosaunee culture rooted in the constructs of Mother Earth, Grandmother Moon, Three Sisters' foods, and clan mothers who select the leadership and identity based on who your mother is" (23). This matrifocal organizing principle establishes that masculinity is always understood as complimentary to the whole. As such, Antone emphasizes that the "masculine energy of our communities has a greater responsibility to self-examine and rebuild a sense of manhood that works with women to create a world free of violence. The journey to understanding decolonization in the context of masculinity requires letting go of power and control behaviors" (36). Such a decolonizing of masculinity requires an active opposition to hegemonic patriarchy and its concomitant toxic masculinity.

Scott L. Morgensen's essay likewise takes a historical tack, focusing on the roots and rise of this colonial masculinity. He begins by denaturalizing the gender binaries and constructs that have come to dominate the Americas, noting, "Colonial masculinities arose to violently control and replace distinctive gender systems among Indigenous peoples" (38). Morgensen's approach understands that "*colonial* subjectivities exist to dominate another" (39), and, moreover, "for colonial masculinity to achieve dominance, it had to be *invented*" (39). Thus, colonial masculinity is not some a priori identity, but one formed in relation to that which it was attempting to colonize—it is a process of self formation requiring an outsider to set itself not only against, but above (the reader might be reminded of Said's work, which Morgensen indeed draws upon later in the piece). Moreover, because the formation of colonial masculinity has always been in process, it is not, even to this day, fixed. That said, Morgensen's hope is not that colonial masculinity should be changed, as "criticism of it may only cause it to take new forms and persist," but rather that it might be brought to its end (39-40). His examination strives to analyze the modes by which European masculinities (especially Spanish, Portuguese, French, British, and Dutch) transform during the Early Modern period in their relationships to Indigenous peoples and their own colonial motivations. Certainly, such a survey is by necessity abbreviated; whole books could devote their attentions to such a topic without being exhaustive. Nonetheless, this essay offers an excellent primer, and as such, serves as an extremely valuable hub for this

collection. It traces a specific strain of settler colonial heteropatriarchy as it works to define itself in relation (and to imagine itself in contradistinction) to Indigenous matrifocal structures, gender fluidities, gender definitions, and conceptions of sexualities, among others.

Morgensen's essay then goes on to examine colonial masculinity in the modern era. He traces educational practices (boarding schools), geographic isolations (reservations) that "taught white settlers that other Indigenous territories were emptied and theirs to inhabit," and legal structures (Canada's Indian Act—as a tactic of weakening Indigenous communities geographically as well as culturally, particularly with the imposition of patrilineality) as modes by which settler masculinity applied itself to Indigenous communities. All of these continue trends begun in the Early Modern period but with an emphasis on their own changing nature—the adaptability of colonizers—which stands in contrast to Indigenous people's imagined inability to adapt and change, rendering them further excluded from the modern man—the primitive obverse of settler civilization. Finally, as the result of these hegemonic efforts, Indigenous communities inherit the very notions of combative masculinities with which colonialism targeted them, "turning them into policing agents for a partriarchal and *heteronormative* settler society" (53). "Put differently," Morgensen concludes, "colonial masculinity sustains both colonial and heteropatriarchal power by presenting its victims as the cause and proper recipients of its own violations" (55).

Leah Sneider, like Antone, demonstrates that "Central to…an understanding of social balance [common to Indigenous epistemologies] lies an ethic of complementarity between individuals and the community to which they belong, an ethic that is shared amongst many community-centred Indigenous cultures" (62). This focus on the complementary nature of masculinity recurs throughout both collections reviewed here. Sneider continues, "Indigenous feminism and Indigenous masculinity studies must maintain a complementary relationship to fully understand colonial impacts on Indigenous communities and work together to decolonize" (70). That is, the study of masculinity must never be divorced from the complementary (rather than hierarchical, for example) relationships that have always informed it—indeed, upon which it relies as a structure. Furthermore, Sneider, demonstrating a need to recognize these understandings of complementarity across other categorizations as well, notes, "race and gender ideologies are intimately and equally connected to national identity."

Like Morgensen, Brendan Hokowhitu draws heavily on Foucault's work to frame his examination of settler impositions of masculinity. Whereas Morgensen seeks to establish a history of those constructions, Hokowhitu focuses instead on their wielding within Indigenous constructions. He "starts from the premise that what we call 'traditional Indigenous masculinity' is in actuality a particular masculinity that has developed since colonization; in part, at least, mimicked on dominant forms of invader masculinity" (87). This is not to say the roots of this adoption are benign; Hokowhitu notes this adoption has historically come in the form of "mimicry at gunpoint" (87). He goes on to clarify some of the philosophical underpinnings of these masculinities, explaining, "The liberal humanist appeal to the individual is, more succinctly, an appeal to an idealized universal European masculinity, where European bourgeois heterosexual masculinity came to represent humanity" (84). Because of its hegemonic functions, this universalizing element of liberal humanist philosophy and the settler states so heavily influenced by them has imposed a one-size-fits-all masculinity to everyone. In New Zealand, Hokowhitu contends, this "has led to ritual displays of physical manliness and hypermasculinity,

along with the traditionalization of heterosexuality, homophobia, and patriarchy" (88). Hokowhitu expresses an anxiety about discourses of authenticity, noting how frequently these are used as methods to delegitimize Indigenous people and peoples (by forces both within and without). He explains, "This dialectic between reverence for the past and discontent in the present…remains in the binary where the purity of the pre-colonial past is lamented in the polluted present" (91). In place of such proscriptive constructs of Indigenous masculinity, he offers, paraphrasing Homi Bhabha, it "is not what Indigenous sexuality *is*, but what Indigenous sexuality does, or what is done in its name, that is of political and cultural significance" (93). That is, he hopes to do away with the forces that "exclude and limit Indigenous men to heteropatriarchal, hypermasculine, stoical, staunch, and violent discursive formations" (94).

The collection then tacks toward artistic criticism, with essays touching on paintings of and by Mandan Chief Mató-Tópe, the performance art of Terrance Houle and Adrian Stimson, female masculinities in Native American literature, particularly Erdrich's *The Beet Queen*, and a creative piece by Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair detailing relationships between generations of Anishinaabe men, but which begins, "This story is in the words of a grandmother's gift to her grandsons" (145). The latter two of these essays seem especially strong to me, but that may have more to do with my primary focus on literature than the quality of the pieces themselves.

The text moves next to social science essays addressing sport in New Zealand, Indigenous gangs in Canada, imprisoned men in Canada, and Diné masculinities. These chapters, informed as they are by the subjects they investigate, occasionally offer less nuanced readings of masculinity than those that have come before. That certainly doesn't make them any less valuable to understanding the subject; quite the opposite. They speak to the realities of a number Indigenous men themselves. This pattern carries over a bit to the following section, in the conversations regarding Hawaiian warriorhood and with the Crazy Indian Brotherhood. This latter piece is, nonetheless particularly interesting for its inclusion of six distinct points of view. The remaining two chapters—one a roundtable discussion between five Indigenous writers and scholars, the other, a co-authored piece from Alexander, Innes, and John Swift reporting findings from a series of focus groups— return to a more academic voice, though one never attempting to move away from material issues and lived experiences, even in their theorizations. Of these groups the authors find a "picture that shows how the vicious cycle of toxic Indigenous masculinity is externally imposed on Indigenous men and then internalized and passed on to other men, while at the same time being reinfornced by society" (300).

The roundtable between McKegney, Van Camp, Cariou, Scofield, and Justice offers wonderful, brilliant, and heart-felt insights. Even in this conversation, notions of strength and warriorhood get bandied about somewhat loosely—without a clear idea of what such things would mean. That said, this conversation's informality and candor makes that slippage work. I'm particularly drawn to Justice's thoughts on the breadth of meanings that masculinity can carry, "the vulnerability, the gentleness, the confusion, the uncertainty. All of those are also sources of strength; all of those are also powerful ways of revealing our humanity" (249). McKegney's role in this discussion offers a convenient transition into his text—these two inform and are informed by one another throughout.

McKegney divides his collection into three parts, each titled "Wisdom, Knowledge, Imagination," with one of those three words highlighted in each version. These are bookended by his introductory essay and a final conversation with Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair. McKegney explains the genesis of his portmanteau: "the term draws attention to the settler North American appetite for depictions of Indigenous men that rehearse hypermasculine stereotypes of the noble savage and the bloodthirsty warrior (as well as their ideological progeny—the ecological medicine man, the corrupt band councilor, and the drunken absentee)" (1). He then draws on Taiaiake Alfred's notion that, in terms of this settler construction of Indigenous masculinity, "there's no living with it because it's not meant to be lived with; it's meant to be killed, every single time" (1). There is nothing sustainable about these stereotypes or their allotment by settler mandates and constructions. Thereafter, the introduction lays out the contingency, if not the impossibility, of determining what something like Indigenous masculinity might mean (especially in the singular). He explains that the "'arbitrary process' of masculinity is, of course, complicated in contemporary Indigenous contexts by the layering of racialized, patriarchal gender systems over preexisting, tribally specific cosmologies of gender—impositions conducted through colonial technologies like the residential and boarding school systems, legislative alterations to Indigenous structures of governance by the Indian Act in Canada and the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the U.S., and the forced removal of Indigenous communities from traditional hunting and fishing grounds to reserves and reservations" (2). Could a term like masculindian possibly hope to encompass, this breadth of communities, the detailed and nuanced histories, the geographic and economic disparities? Certainly not. Tribal specificity must always be kept in mind, as the interviews constantly remind the reader. That said, all of the Indigenous communities of what has become the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand share in common the experiences of settler colonialism, the violence and genocide of settler elimination. McKegney's book hopes "to restore senses of rootedness and balance that might overturn the insidious normalization of settler heteropatriarchy on Turtle Island" (3). He conducts interviews (between 2010 and 2013) with women and men, elders, social workers and counselors, activists and organizers, educators, academics, artists of a variety of stripes (authors, musicians, storytellers, comedians, visual artists, and dancers to name a few), politicos, residential school survivors, trappers, and hunters, many of whom fit into a number of these positions.

This collection, in part because it is conducted entirely in conversation, can serve to reach a wider audience than the Alexander and Innes collection does. Its layout does so as well, to the point where it feels almost like a coffee table book, and the cover carries a vivid visual that pops in a way that feels less coldly academic. Its size differs from most academic texts and the margins contain information about the conversants, as well as selected quotes from the conversations, set off as in more popular journalism. The interviews cover a range of issues including religion, violence against women, homophobia, forgiveness, trauma and healing, sexual assaults of men and boys, boarding schools, sensuality, gangs, family, Two Spirit people; we even get a Yoda reference. They also return, again and again, to the construct of warriorhood, as do some of the essays and especially conversations in the Innes and Anderson collection.

Among the most interesting and insightful interviews for me is that with Alfred. There, he traces, in a manner somewhat akin to Morgensen in *Indian Men and Masculinities*, the history of the construct of the Indigenous male as warrior. This and other pieces query the term *warrior*, as

well as its various connotations and translations in different Indigenous contexts and languages. He notes, "For the violence of conquest you needed a violent opponent, so you created this image of the Native as a violent warrior… The way to confront that and to defeat it and to recover something meaningful for Natives is to put the image of the Native male back into its proper context, which is in the family" (79). He continues, averring that the "image of the Native male" should be "defined in the context of a family with responsibilities to the family—to the parents, to the spouse, to the children (or nephews, nieces, or whatever, or even just youth in general)" (79).

Alfred describes this warrior image, as do others, as a fiction created by settlers to justify their own violence (recall Morgensen's observation that colonization *is* violence). Indigenous masculinity is defined by relationships across genders and generations—these relationships are family. We also note Alfred's avoidance of heteronormativity in his gender-neutral "spouse." Furthermore, McKegney reminds the reader (echoing Alfred's other work) that the term warrior is not one that a person takes on for themself, but rather one with which a person is bestowed (85). Along similar lines, Kim Anderson wonders, "What does courage and bravery mean? Does that mean facing your fears, going down into the deepest parts of yourself, in those dark places that we don't want to work with? That's courage. That is being a warrior" (95). Beyond those with Alfred and Anderson, the interviews with Hokowhitu, Danforth, Justice, and Arnott especially stand out.

The concluding interview with Sinclair takes place after the rest of the collection has been completed, and serves as an excellent capstone to the project. McKegney and Sinclair reflect on the process of the collection's formation as well as the trends that now appear. Sinclair comments on the recurrent imagery of warriorhood, and pushes back a bit against this trope as potentially acquiescing to the very stereotypes imposed upon men by settler hegemony. He notes, "Many interviews identified protection as an element of warriorism, fatherhood, or some notion of virility, but I think the way men support, secure, and bring health to community is what most were really talking about" (225). He continues, "One of the legacies of colonization has been the separation of men from their roles within families, communities, and nations. What's replaced these are the hegemonic forms of corporate, neo-liberal individualist identities that ossify cultures" (225). The image of man as warrior that recurs throughout these collections often replicates rather than opposes the structures that McKegney hopes his collection will tear down. Sinclair adroitly calls these out not only as problematically individualistic, but also as hegemonic, existing within the subconscious strata of our lives as common sense. Undoing hegemony is not as easy as pointing out that Indigenous men have been narrowly categorized. This critical step must be followed by a self-consciousness and commitment to rooting it out in ourselves. That difficult work is undertaken unevenly throughout these collections.

These texts, especially when read alongside one another, offer a strong beginning to the work of critical studies of Indigenous masculinities, particularly in Canada (their primary focus). Their implications ripple out far wider than that, though, and we note so many clear parallels to the United States, for example. Ultimately, all of these texts combine to emphasize the importance of opening up these conversations. These are not meant to be the last words on the subject.

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David J. Carlson. *Imagining Sovereignty: Self-Determination in American Indian Law and Literature*. Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 2016. 242pp.

Sovereignty is an odd, even foreign notion in a free democracy. David Carlson's *Imagining Sovereignty* concludes with a call for direct action to combat nations like the United States and Canada that continue to assert sovereignty over indigenous peoples, perhaps, Dr. Carlson suggests, along the lines of Idle No More. Perhaps the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's stand against the Dakota Access Pipeline is an answer to his call. These are actions against a sovereign, represented by the United States Army Corps of Engineers, acts of self-determination.

The "sovereign" traditionally is a single person, say a queen or an emperor, or perhaps an all-powerful religious figure. Sovereignty is also an ancient, terrifying notion. Witness Hobbes' monstrous Leviathan. The sovereign, almost by definition, can do no wrong. The sovereign may not always be correct, but is always too powerful or too perfect to be wrong. Self-determination, in contrast, is normal. It is the American way of individualism, and has been from the moment the Declaration of Independence reached the colonial streets. Self-determination is the theoretical counterpoint to the sovereign, with the diffuse masses overriding their master and proclaiming, "Don't tread on me." The People are the Sovereign, and government is stunted by checks and balances and separation of powers.

And yet Americans embrace the notion of sovereignty in order to claim strength as a unified whole. United, Americans stand. Divided, Americans fall. Instead of the weak, flailing United States government under the Articles of Confederation, we have the towering supremacy of the federal government under the Constitution. This sovereign prevailed in a horrifically bloody civil war and in multiple world wars. This sovereign imposed human rights norms in the Deep South from on high, presides over the entire world as an economic and military Superpower, and administers the world's only multi-trillion dollar national budget. Even the most radical libertarians chant "USA! USA! USA!" when the national women's soccer team takes the pitch in the World Cup.

That modern American Indian nations claim sovereignty *and* self-determination in the same breath in this political atmosphere should be unsurprising given the benefits of asserting both. But some Americans shake their heads and wonder how such a weak and dependent group of lower class people could be so audacious as to claim sovereignty, or to effectively govern themselves or anyone else. Similarly, Indian people who are citizens or members of the tribes that assert sovereignty and claim the power of self-determination sometimes are not convinced, either. Historically, tribal leaders claiming sovereignty more often than not found themselves talking to an empty longhouse, or worse, dead. Consider Hole-In-The-Day (the younger), a Minnesota Ojibwe leader assassinated by his own people. Modern tribal leaders spending too much time testifying before the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs on tribal self-determination or giving speeches for the National Congress of American Indians in conferences at tribal resorts are routinely voted out of office.

David Carlson's work dives into this contradiction between tribal sovereignty and self-determination, highlighting how assertions of illiberal tribal sovereignty—in political, legal, and literary domains—do important work toward establishing tribal self-determination within the

polity governed by the American Leviathan. Mid-twentieth century Indian people divided their attention between saving tribal governments or asserting individual civil rights. D'Arcy McNickle's professional and literary career, as described by Dr. Carlson, is a bridge between the bad old days of Indian dependency on the federal government and the rise of tribal sovereignty talk (and, later, action) by tribal leaders.

Dr. Carlson's historical tale of how sovereignty came to be the touchstone of American Indian activism in the twentieth century leans heavily on McNickle. The federal government again and again targeted Indian tribes for termination, and drew multitudes of Indian people away from Indian country to the cities through the Indian Adoption Project and the Urban Relocation Project. McNickle's work proved that Indian people retained their tribalism in the face of these American efforts to destroy it. McNickle's work laid a framework for contemporaries like Vine Deloria, Jr. to advocate tribal nationalism in the framework of Indian individualism.

With Congress finally getting something right in Indian law and policy by enacting the first of several self-determination acts in the 1970s, there finally arose a focus on Indian tribes instead of individual Indian activism. In some ways, the cultural Indians gave way to the political Indians, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs hired all the anthropologists to advise the federal government how to make policy. Indians started going to college in greater numbers, and many returned home to contribute to a tribal nationhood. In larger numbers every generation, Indian people have returned to the tribal government and to their home territories, hedging their bets in favor of sovereignty. In short, Indian people have embraced self-determination through the sovereign rather than self-determination through individualism—no different than the Founders of the American Republic.

There are significant advantages to embracing a tribal sovereignty. Dr. Carlson's historical road trip through the rise of tribal governments tells part of the story. Powerful people listened when a tribal leader audaciously declared tribal sovereignty. Invocation of sovereignty is invocation of power. Tribal sovereigns defend their people, providing for child welfare, health care, law enforcement. Tribal sovereigns fight legal and political wars in federal courthouses and in the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs. Tribal sovereigns employ thousands of non-Indians to clean rooms at tribal resorts and test water samples for tribal conservation departments. All of this, of course, is accomplished through self-determination. With some tribal nations, the individualistic character of self-determination has eroded.

Sovereignty arose in other areas, too, in invocations of cultural sovereignty, literary sovereignty, linguistic sovereignty. Dr. Carlson narrates the stories of the literary nationalists Craig Womack and Jace Weaver and the cultural nationalist Elizabeth Cook-Lynn. Now when Indians read materials on Indian literature or Indian culture, they expect the authors to be Indians. More and more, Indian people learn about their cultures not from academic research of non-Indians, but from Indian writers and scholars—and their elders and cultural teachers. This, too, is self-determination, protected and cultivated in the shadow of tribal sovereignty's powerful penumbra.

Still, there can be significant downsides to embracing self-determination through sovereignty. Tribal leaders will sometimes say that tribal sovereignty means the tribal power to make tribal mistakes, and to learn from those mistakes and correct them with tribal solutions. But

sovereignty too often means the learning comes slow, if at all. A couple dozen tribes are mired in disenrollment debacles and holdover councils that create intractable political disputes. Tribal sovereignty strips away potential federal remedies, leaving human rights abuses unresolved. Sovereignty hasn't solved poverty or hopelessness on many reservations, either. The Obamas visit with Pine Ridge schoolchildren who told them they each knew several schoolmates who had committed suicide somehow underscores the need for tribal sovereignty, and the limitations of tribal sovereignty.

Is literary nationalism susceptible to parallel abuses and failures? Probably not. Governance and scholarship have different aims and apply different tools. Dr. Carlson's survey of this literature helpfully shows that Indian literary scholars are engaged in the process of introducing indigenous philosophies and histories into the scholarship. But there's a risk, however small, that cultural sovereignty could be used in efforts to bar access and engagement to tribal cultures.

The centerpiece of Dr. Carlson's work is the controversial White Earth Nation's constitutional reform. This is an ongoing project that seeks to undo a tribal organic document adopted decades ago by a tribal government under the deep influence, if not control, of the federal government. Tribal citizenship criteria based purely on ancestry—blood quantum—is perhaps the most critical question in this controversy. The proposed constitution (one voted on and approved in a tribal election but somehow still not tribal law) would look beyond mere blood quantum and employ indigenous community standards to determine citizenship. Dr. Carlson sees this work as a tool to move toward tribal sovereignty *and* self-determination, the ultimate goal being decolonization. It's an admirable objective. And Dr. Carlson's analytical methodology depends on *tribal* solutions, not federal or non-Indian solutions. More times than one might expect, the mere process of self-determination is enough to enhance tribal sovereignty.

Dr. Carlson's work gives us much to think about in relation to the algebra of tribal sovereignty and self-determination. There is comfort, usually, in tribal sovereignty through actions rooted in self-determination. The diffusion of tribal sovereignty authority is real. Externally, one might see a tribal sovereign, a relatively powerful unified whole. Internally, one sees constant acts of tribal self-determination in the form of modern tribal democracy. The anti-pipeline movement might be evidence of tribal self-determination flowing into the greater American world, perhaps infusing American citizens with the forward-thinking "Don't Tread on Me" tradition of self-determination and sovereignty.

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Robert M. Owens. *Red Dreams, White Nightmares: Pan-Indian Alliances in the Anglo-American Mind, 1763-1815.* Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015. 243 pp.

Red Dreams, White Nightmares by Robert M. Owens covers the years 1763-1815, starting at the end of Pontiac's War and ending with the conclusion of the War of 1812, a significant period in Euramerican imperial expansion and colonization. In terms of expansion, once the colonists broke political ties with Britain they became another entity among European powers vying for territorial control and growth. While the belief in Manifest Destiny would not take hold until the mid-nineteenth century, there were conflicts over control and momentum toward expansion. In terms of colonization, breaking political ties with Britain ushered in a new phase of colonization. Breaking away from the metropole signified the fact that the colonizer intended to stay, which can generally be characterized as settler colonialism. While the belief in Providence, greed, and just good ole' "Indian-hating," have all been fingered for the impetus behind expansion, Owens contends that a factor that often gets overlooked is the colonist's fear of Indian "savages," specifically the fear of Pan-Indian alliances and a "general Indian war." In the introductory chapter, he lists a brief historiography of Indigenous wars and coalitions but claims that "none of these works fully addresses the link between Anglo-Americans' fears of Indians, especially the dread of broad alliances, and its influences on European and American Indian policy" (7). While Owens is not offering new research, he offers a new perspective, one he feels has not been adequately covered, if at all, in previous scholarship. He specifies this point by claiming that, with the exception of Gregory Evans Dowd's 1992 *A Spirited Resistance*, such studies focus on either side of the Ohio River and fail to see possible pan-Indian alliances across the river.

Pan-Indianism is a broad term. Owens says that while its coinage is relatively recent, it often refers to Indigenous alliances from the late nineteenth to the twentieth century. Perhaps most notably, it often conotes intertribal unity during the Red Power Movement. Owens clarifies his usage as being aligned with Dowd's: "in the context of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, [pan-Indianism] refers to efforts by Native Americans… to establish broad, multitribal military coalitions" (4). Such pan-Indian alliances seek to bring Indigenous nations, often traditional enemies, together. For the purpose of *Red Dreams*, Owens' discussion on pan-Indianism focuses particularly on coalitions formed among Indigenous nations across the Ohio River. He argues that, although Europeans and Euramericans feared an "Indian war," their biggest fear was a "General Indian war": "a broad war against a great many different Indian peoples" (5). Thus, this fear plays an essential part in Euramerican expansion and colonization.

Red Dreams is broken into three parts, each examining different but related time periods. The first part begins with the end of Pontiac's war, which only exacerbated settler fears given that it exposed how vulnerable British forces were to a pan-Indian militarized coalition. From 1763, the year King George III signed the Royal Proclamation that banned further settlement west of the Appalachian Mountains, to the Revolutionary War, "British policy became one of quietly encouraging intertribal rancor, to save money and to save Anglo-American lives" (17). This divide-and-conquer strategy was used to stave off pan-Indian alliances when it became apparent how difficult it would be to enforce the Proclamation and stop further settlement.

Part II focuses on how this fear influenced the Revolutionary War era through the mid-1790s. The war fostered a shift in British Indian policy. Before the war they were content with keeping

Indigenous nations fighting amongst themselves. When war was inevitable, their policy shifted to promoting such alliances in order to fight Patriot rebels. Owens also asserts that this period, particularly the 1790s, was the greatest opportunity for Indian resistance given how Britain and Spain were willing to support such alliances. For early Americans, the war introduced additional elements: "If Southern Indians and runaway slaves with Spanish guns acted in concert with Northern Indians bearing British ones, the cost of putting down such a war might well break the Treasury" (71). But avoiding such a coalition not only had practical purposes, it also helped forge an American identity, as "Americans increasingly self-fashioned their identity as the civilized opponents of Indian savagery" (176). This patronizing attitude would continue to guide Indian policy. Furthermore, since the colonists had just broken political ties with Britain to form their own nation, they needed to cultivate their own identity. Ironically, they had to eliminate Indigenous people while appropriating their own sense of indigeneity.

Part III covers the end of the 19th century to the end of the War of 1812, a period Owens claims was the last great effort for a pan-Indian alliance. This period also saw the efforts of probably the most famous of Indigenous agents who attempted a coalition, Tecumseh and his brother Tenskwatawa. The brothers' connection to Britain was infamous and Euramericans recycled the fear of a British and pan-Indian coalition that was recreated during the Revolutionary War. As the slave population rose in the South during this period, so did the fear of a revolt in conjunction with a pan-Indian alliance, which was nothing new as the "threat posed by Indians and slaves joining forces had weighed on white minds, especially in the South, nearly since the beginning of colonization" (199). In actuality, the plausibility of such an alliance declined, particularly after Tecumseh's coalition fell apart. Owens asserts that for Euramericans, pan-Indianism's failure would be celebrated as yet another sign of American exceptionalism.

Owens finishes the book with an epilogue that relates the last ditch effort for a pan-Indian alliance by the Sauk leader Black Hawk, "one of Tecumseh's former disciples," forming a pan-Indian/African American alliance with foreign aid, but in 1832, he "would badly overestimate the odds of forming and maintaining such an alliance" (14). Owens goes on to say that although the chances of such an alliance forming was "slim at best by the 1830s, several factors combined to make that chance seem terrible" (240). Among these factors was fear of these alliances, which should speak again to the power of fear. Throughout the book, for example, Owens mentions the use of the image of the "tomahawk and scalping knife" that was employed prodigiously in newspapers to represent that "savage" threat Indigenous people posed. By defeating such alliances, real or imagined, it "set a default narrative whereby they could only look more virtuous, regardless of how they fought their enemies," thus justifying their imperial moves (243).

Owens proclaims *Red Dreams* is a story about fear and cites the 2004 anthology, *Psychology of Fear*, edited by Paul L. Gower. While Gower says fear can be individual or collective, Owens further explains that collective fear can be expressed on a national level and is often disproportionate to any actual danger being posed. Owens, however, limits his discussion of the psychology of fear to one paragraph in his introductory chapter, which is an unexpected choice considering the book's thesis is examining how fear of pan-Indian alliances influences European and Euramerican Indian policy. Further explication of this idea along with further scholarship on fear may have been prudent. And while the book carries the theme of colonists' fears of pan-

Indian alliances throughout, the ideas particular to the psychology of fear are rarely mentioned, let alone applied, to historical events. In this sense, *Red Dreams* lacks deep analysis and theoretical application vis-à-vis such psychological formations. Since Owens is claiming to be breaking new scholarly ground in examining how this fear influenced policy, it is forgivable that a more explicit application of this theory is not readily present.

Red Dreams' stated purpose is to examine how fear affected European and Euramerican Indian policy. While Owens does clarify how he defines and uses certain terms, e.g. pan-Indianism, coalition, alliance, and confederacy (4-5), he does not do so with "policy." How tightly or loosely Owens defines "policy" has an effect on the content of each chapter and the rhetoric. On the one hand, if its meaning is restricted to official policy by either European nations or the US, then "policy" gets almost completely lost in the reading. Each chapter chronicles and sharply focuses on various battles and important figures, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, although mostly non-Indigenous, and "policy" is rarely mentioned. If on the other hand, his definition includes smaller actions made by individuals, (e.g. military strategic decisions, Indigenous leaders encouraging alliances) the book is very successful. The point is not about semantics but rather the effect his definition of "policy,' and what it includes, on the prose and how the content is presented. Since it appears Owens assumes a loose understanding, the book tends to be more generalized with the notion of "policy" getting lost. Just as *Red Dreams* lacks deep analysis and theoretical application, the focus on "policy" gets lost in the reading.

When assessing how fear influences our actions, it is judicious to question whether or not those fears are founded. This often helps us determine if such fears and resulting actions are justified. Determining Indigenous motivations and actions is difficult for this time period, given the lack of written records, although Owens does an admirable job. He does admit: "It is impossible to determine exactly how many efforts were made to form pan-Indian alliances" (11). There are moments when Owens relays Native leaders' voices and intentions, but there are moments when he, and thus the reader, are in the dark. He relies heavily on archival and primary sources throughout the book and relates the Native voice when he can, and the research is impressive. However, *Red Dreams* might have benefitted from seeking the Native voice more often. Indigenous Studies challenges the accepted methods used to maintain objectivity, and some Early American historians rely on interviews or consult Indigenous national historians, but others fear compromising objectivity and ignore this challenge altogether. While more debate on that challenge is much needed, *Red Dreams* presents a thorough depiction of how European and Euramerican politicians, military leaders, Indian agents, and settlers reacted to the fear of an Indigenous alliance.

Red Dreams covers an era that, as previously mentioned, is critical as it covers the shift to settler colonialism once the colonist broke political ties to the metropole and proceeded to fashion a differentiated identity, one with Old World sensibilities but steeped in indigeneity. This era, then, depicts the nativity of American settler colonialism, if we rely on a strict definition of *settler colonialism*. While previous scholars have studied numerous facets of what helped shape the US, geo-politically, culturally, socially, and politically, Owens offers a new perspective not yet explored. While those familiar to Early American history and Indigenous studies are familiar with how Indigenous people are depicted by Euramericans and the fear it evokes, justified or not, Owens offers a detailed and thorough perspective on how the fear of a pan-Indian alliance

affected European and Euramerican people. This book is crucial for anyone interested in early American colonialism.

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Burying the (Uncle) Tomahawk

Kristina Ackley and Cristina Stanciu, eds. *Laura Cornelius Kellogg: Our Democracy and the American Indian and Other Works*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2015. 336pp.

Paul McKenzie-Jones. *Clyde Warrior: Tradition, Community, and Red Power*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015. 256pp.

Progressive Era Oneida activist Laura "Minnie" Cornelius Kellogg literally wore many, many hats—mostly of the lavish, Edwardian variety. Cold War era Ponca activist Clyde Warrior typically wore just one hat: his characteristic cowboy hat. That trivial distinction notwithstanding, both activists figuratively wore many hats in their lifelong commitment to improving conditions for Native people in Indian Country and beyond. Indeed, despite emerging from different historical contexts and tribal nations, these two vastly important figures in modern Native American history are more easily linked by their commonalities than their contrasts.

Kellogg and Warrior both worked during eras in which the United States federal government sought to assimilate Indian people into Anglo middle-class culture as a means toward solving its persistent "Indian problem." Both countered by advocating tribal self-government, retention and recovery of tribal land, and cultural self-determination. Both were grounded in and shaped by their tribal communities and obligations. Both were firebrand intellectuals, capable of maneuvering within many worlds, and not just two.

Kellogg and Warrior operated in the spaces between the teeth of colonization. Both taught other Indian people how to do the same. Both placed treaty rights at the center of their wider messages. Both fought for Indian economic independence. Both pursued all of these agendas on Indian terms, with Indian futures in mind. Clyde Warrior was a principal architect of the 1960s "Red Power" movement, built on what historian Paul McKenzie-Jones identifies as a foundation of community, culture, and tradition. To Warrior, Red Power meant Native communities' strength and right to preserve Indian culture, traditions, and integrity while also succeeding in the contemporary world. Given this, it's fair to suggest that, however anachronistic, Minnie Kellogg, too, fought for Red Power.

Paul McKenzie-Jones's scholarly biography, *Clyde Warrior: Tradition, Community, and Red Power*, emphasizes the influential Ponca student-activist's tribal cultural roots. Whereas prior studies situate Warrior within the wider Red Power movement that gained greatest visibility during the 1969 Indians of All Tribes Alcatraz Occupation and the American Indian Movement's (AIM) early 1970s heyday, McKenzie-Jones employs an impressive corpus of oral history interviews to excavate deeper details of Warrior's tribal background. There is a *Bildungsroman* element to this book, but one that ends less in triumph than tragedy as Warrior died at the young age of 28. The triumph resonates posthumously, however, as Warrior's message inspired and informed those Red Power activists who followed in his dancesteps.

Born in Oklahoma's Ponca community in 1939, Clyde Warrior descended from traditional chiefs on both sides of his parental lineage. Raised by his grandparents, he developed a talent for drum making at a young age. McKenzie-Jones characterizes Warrior as a sensitive and deeply spiritual

young man who gained a reputation as a champion fancydancer on the powwow circuit and boasted an exhaustive knowledge of traditional songs. Many among his generation grew up railing against their parents' apparent failures to protect tribal cultures, lands, and treaty rights—to *act* sovereign. They were children of World War II veterans and relocation program participants who chased a series of raised expectations that the federal government mostly failed to meet. As a result, Warrior's generation no longer trusted negotiating Indian futures with the federal government. By the early 1960s they well understood that no matter how hard they tried they could not overcome, or even mitigate, the vast power differential between the settler state and the nations within. Warrior described the previous generation as one featuring the "indignity of Indians with hats in their hands pleading to powerful administrations for a few crumbs" (McKenzie-Jones, 104). So the next generation sought a solution by turning inward to tribal communities and traditions, instead of moving outward into the settler state.

In 1961, as a young college student in Oklahoma, Warrior ran a successful campaign for president of the Southwest Regional Indian Youth Council, during which he for the first time opened a speech with his famous assertion, "I am a full-blood Ponca Indian. This is all I have to offer. The sewage of Europe does not run through these veins." That same year he joined a series of summer American Indian Affairs workshops led by former Indian New Dealer D'Arcy McNickle (Cree) and World War II veteran Bob Thomas (Cherokee) in Boulder, Colorado. While McNickle mentored Warrior, he also represented the Indian Country establishment leadership. At the 1961 American Indian Chicago Conference, Warrior and his emerging cohort of young, disillusioned Indian activists rebuked the old guard, labeling them "Uncle Tomahawks" for their tendency toward compromising with the United States federal government.

The Red Power generation disowned its national Indian activism progenitors, and instead embraced traditional tribal leaders such as Phillip Deere (Creek), Henry Crow Dog (Lakota) and Frank Fools Crow (Lakota). On one hand this was essential to a Red Power organizing principle that emphasized cultural authenticity. But at what cost? Was there a missed opportunity for greater synergy? Despite Warrior's admonition against working within the system, that approach would continue to matter, even during the American Indian Movement's zenith. Consider for example the numerous important contributions the Native American Rights Fund (NARF) has made on behalf of tribal treaty rights and Indian civil rights since its inception in 1970. Maybe there is no NARF without Warrior. But it is also fair to suggest there is no Warrior without McNickle.

Warrior's stature as a vibrant and combative spokesman for the young Red Power movement grew across subsequent years, especially through his leadership position within the National Indian Youth Council. Meanwhile the generational and ideological gulf reflected in his strained relationship with McNickle only widened. Eventually it grew to include fellow young, influential intellectual Vine Deloria Jr. (Dakota), the president of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) who would go on to write the watershed *Custer Died for Your Sins* (1969).

This is where McKenzie-Jones falters in an otherwise impressive book poised for adoption in undergraduate courses. He perhaps allowed himself to get too close to his subject—one known for his gravitational charisma. Did McNickle deserve such derision? Did Deloria owe Warrior

more attention in *Custer Died for Your Sins*—more than what McKenzie-Jones suggests is a backhanded compliment? He sides with Warrior's dismissal of McNickle's proposed Point IX program for reservation rehabilitation by claiming the program "promised ultimate tribal acculturation into mass American society" (McKenzie-Jones, 102). This misrepresents what McNickle and NCAI advocated. They designed Point IX to reverse the termination policy, restore lands to tribal ownership, provide job training, and to establish a revolving credit fund for tribal community and business development. McKenzie-Jones contrasts this with Warrior's brand of self-determination, which "entailed sustained tribal political and economic independence" (McKenzie-Jones, 102). The distinctions are not readily discernible. This might sound like nitpicking, but it reflects a persistent trend in scholarship on Red Power to pit one group of national leaders or one generation against another. It is tempting to think this is a product of the long shadow the American Indian Movement cast on the topic of Indian activism. To no uncertain degree, militant Red Power's legitimacy depended on NCAI's delegitimization.

This amounts to an inversion of the old Civil Rights historiographic problem. Prior to a wave of revision, too much attention had been devoted to the MLK-led Civil Rights establishment that emerged from black churches, and not enough attention had been granted to the importance of radical Black Power architects and ideologies. This was even true for King, who had become quite radical prior to his assassination. Indian activism historiography, with few exceptions, has long privileged Dennis Banks, Russell Means, and Clyde Warrior, at the expense of a greater appreciation for Indian activists of a different stripe.

None of this is to suggest that Clyde Warrior was not singularly important, ingenious, intrepid, and inspirational. He remains all of those things, and scholarship on his life and impact is welcome and warranted. But McKenzie-Jones's book often isolates him from his wider context and his Indian activism forebears. In recent years, scholars such as David Beck and Rosalyn LaPier, Philip Deloria, Frederick Hoxie, Paul Rosier, and Daniel Cobb, among others, have done much to rehabilitate the earlier Indian activists' legacy. Certainly McKenzie-Jones's *Clyde Warrior* belongs in their conversations. He provides immersive details, where they provide wider context. Going forward, the field would benefit from even more scholarship that bridges these gaps and puts activists from different generations in dialogue with each other in order to highlight continuities and a richer Indian activism tradition. And while we are at it, the field would benefit from more attention on Native women activists, such as Minnie Kellogg.

Not only did the Red Power generation owe much to the "Greatest (Indian) Generation," it also could have located kindred spirits in the boarding school generation, from which Minnie Kellogg emerged as an important voice for Indian rights, uplift, and empowerment. She had fewer examples than Warrior to draw upon when attempting to lead her people across the treacherous terrain of turn-of-the-century reservation and assimilation programs. Indeed, she deserves the attention Kristina Ackley and Cristina Stanciu grant her in their edited volume *Laura Cornelius Kellogg: Our Democracy and the American Indian and Other Works*, which gathers Kellogg's essays, poems, and speeches while making a convincing case for her inclusion in any discussion of the most visionary and courageous Indian intellectuals of the twentieth century.

In 1904, the *Los Angeles Times* described Kellogg as "a woman who would shine in any society" (Ackley and Stanciu, 3). Ackley and Stanciu support that assertion by emphasizing her

cosmopolitanism and mobility. Born on Wisconsin's Oneida Reservation in 1880, Kellogg first made a name for herself as an activist in 1903 when she stood for Indian land rights during a dispute in California. Newspapers covering the events christened her the "Indian Joan of Arc." After working as an instructor at the Sherman Institute for three years she enrolled at Stanford University, and then passed through Barnard College, Columbia University, and the University of Wisconsin. From there she began traveling throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe to advocate four primary goals: the development of Indian industries that could connect to viable markets; the primacy of labor exchange over currency exchange; tribal community planning; and government by consensus. Decades before it was fashionable among Red Power advocates, she argued for treaty rights and a continuation of the land trust arrangement while rejecting a subordinate role for Indians in the national economy and mainstream society. She believed these goals could be achieved without giving an inch in Indigeneity. In the context of federal policy initiatives designed to fully assimilate Native people into second-class American citizenship, Kellogg was not afraid to ask: Why not "keep an Indian an Indian?" (Ackley and Stanciu, xiii).

On Columbus Day 1911, in Columbus, Ohio, Kellogg solidified her position as a national Indian rights leader when she served on the first executive committee of the Society of American Indians (SAI). This national organization of "Red Progressives" formed around a boarding school and college-educated Indian vanguard that published its own journal and spread a message of Indian racial uplift while challenging any assumption that Native people passively accepted cultural isolation and second-class citizenship. SAI established a valuable precedent for subsequent national Indian activist groups to both improve on and emulate. Unlike SAI, NCAI drew its leadership and agendas from tribal governments and communities. AIM distinguished itself by departing from SAI's penchant for working within the established system to effect change. Yet, like those subsequent groups, SAI often suffered from internal division.

Indeed, Kellogg proved willing to dissent from her SAI cohort. She did not support the off-reservation boarding school system from which she and many of her colleagues graduated. She also argued for the preservation of reservations, and refused to compare them to prisons, as many did at the time. She modeled her Lolomi plan for reservation economic and community development on the urban planning initiatives she personally witnessed during a sojourn to Progressive Era Europe. (She would fit right in Daniel Rodgers's influential *Atlantic Crossings* (1998).) In this respect, she anticipated numerous urban Indians who across subsequent decades moved to cities not only to survive, but also to mine metropolises for resources and experiences that could benefit tribal communities.

Not unlike her SAI contemporary Carlos Montezuma, or Clyde Warrior for that matter, Kellogg's objections to the party line encumbered her with a reputation as an agitator, which gained her further notoriety after a series of arrests. And yet, it is a credit to her visionary intellect to suggest that, upon reading her works and learning about her life, it is not so easy to determine what, exactly, was so controversial about her agenda. Of course, that sentiment is shaped by historical hindsight. Kellogg does not seem so controversial on paper now precisely because we have the example of Clyde Warrior to draw upon.

Given this fresh scholarship on Indian activism it is tempting to think of a different Clyde. Is it not strange how the field has mostly written around and beyond the topic of the American Indian

Movement despite not covering it in the form of a comprehensive scholarly monograph? Why is that? Is it because AIM is such a controversial topic that few want to tackle it head on? Is it because surviving leaders continue to closely guard their legacies and primary sources? Is it because, given the movement's profound importance, any book-length study is guaranteed to disappoint? The day will come, soon I predict, when that floodgate will open. When it does, scholars would be wise to further consider whether AIM undermined previous decades of progress that earlier activists such as Kellogg and McNickle achieved. I am tempted to say no, and to adopt the popular vacillating opinion that AIM did a lot of good, and perhaps a lot of bad. Either way, this merits further inquiry. Whose vision won out? Or, whose vision lost? Do these questions matter?

Summarizing what was at stake in her efforts on behalf of Indian Country, Minnie Kellogg declared, "Whether he is a citizen or not, or whether he has lands or not, whether his trust funds continue or not, whether he is educated or ignorant, one thing remains unchanged with the Indian: he has to have bread and butter, he has to have a covering on his back, he has to live" (Ackley and Stanciu, 140). Compare this to an excerpt from a lecture Clyde Warrior delivered in 1966: "Of this I am certain, when a people are powerless and their destiny is controlled by the powerful, whether they be rich or poor, they live in ignorance and frustration because they have been deprived of experience and responsibility as individuals and communities" (McKenzie-Jones, 112). These statements suggest that, while the faces, voices, and contexts have changed, comparable challenges have persisted. It also suggests that scholars should continue seeking to bridge these generational divides, and to attempt more wide-angle studies of twentieth-century Native American history that link important figures across space and time. To quote Clyde Warrior, "How about it? Let's raise some hell."

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Kurt Schweigman and Lucille Lang Day. *Red Indian Road West: Native American Poetry from California*. Oakland: Scarlet Tanager Books, 2016. 110 pp.

California Indian literatures are both understudied and underappreciated in the field of Native American Studies today. Some of this neglect, perhaps, derives from the fact that the literary nationalist and tribal-centric paradigms that have dominated NAS in recent years are only partly applicable in California contexts. Demographics may offer some explanation here. According to the 2010 census, there are one hundred and eight federally-recognized tribes located within California's borders, along with one (the Juaneño Band of Mission Indians) that is recognized by the state but not the federal government. In addition to these disparately-sized *recognized* entities, there are also some seventy-eight other polities currently petitioning for recognition. The size of the recognized California tribes ranges from as few as five people to as many as four thousand, and collectively they occupy nearly one hundred separate reservations or rancherias. (Unrecognized groups are unable to collectively hold title over tribal lands in trust under federal law.) There is considerable variation, however, in the nature of the sovereign territorial spaces held by the recognized tribes. Some are as small as six acres in size. Some, like the Agua Caliente reservation (in Palm Springs), are located in the middle of urban centers. Some, particularly in the northern part of the state, are rural and relatively isolated. Finally, we should note that the overall Indian population in California is both surprisingly large and more diverse than that in many other parts of the county. As of 2010, California had the largest number of American Indian/Alaskan Native (AI/AN) people of any state (362,801). California also had the largest mixed-blood population (people identifying as AI/AN along with some other identified ethnicity) in the country, bringing the full tally of California Indian people to more than 720,000. And yet, despite this large indigenous presence, California has relatively little tribal land (trust land) within its borders, with less than 3% of its total AI/AN population living on a reservation or rancheria. More than half of the Indian people living in California are members of tribes located outside of the state, and many members of tribes indigenous to California live either without a reservation land base or off reservation.

Bearing some of this data in mind, the first reaction one might have upon hearing that a pair of editors has undertaken the task of producing an anthology "encompassing… Native American experience in California" would likely be a sympathetic shake of the head (11). To be sure, what Kurt Schweigman and Lucille Lang Day have set out to assemble in *Red Indian Road West* is not a *comprehensive* collection; such a book would be several times the length of this slender volume, and considerably more costly. The strengths of *Red Indian Road West* are many, however, and I would argue that it nicely complements its literary ancestor, Greg Sarris' 1994 anthology *The Sound of Rattles and Clappers*. Schweigman and Day offer a much larger cross-section of California Indian writing than Sarris was able to in his earlier book, including both contributors from communities indigenous to the area and other, diasporic writers. They also have had some success in countering the still-persistent northern California bias in California Native literary studies, by including writers from all over the state. The result is that *Red Indian Road West* is a diverse, generously-edited text that should appeal to a range of audiences—both academics and general readers.

One aspect of this collection particularly worth noting would be its inclusive and light-handed editorial philosophy, a wise approach for a book that will likely be received by some as an even

more "representative" corpus of California Indian texts than the editors likely intended. Thirty-one poets are included in *Red Indian Road West*, but none of them contributes more than three poems. Indeed, the vast majority of writers are represented by only one or two entries. Some of the authors included (Deborah Miranda, Wendy Rose, Natalie Diaz, to name a few) are likely to be more widely-known than others. Encountering such a small selection of their works in these pages, then, is a refreshingly egalitarian experience, one that highlights Schweigman's and Day's goal of producing a gathering of voices that explores the diverse experiences of "being Native American and living in California" without privileging any of those particular experiences, perspectives, or aesthetics (12). Structurally, the book is also quite loosely organized, with no clearly defined sections, no overtly declared organizational philosophy, and no editorial paratext (outside of a brief preface and a short introduction by James Luna). The editors seem to have elected to avoid clustering poems along geographic, tribal, or even thematic lines, and the effect of this is to allow each individual piece to register equally. There are, of course, recurrent themes that emerge throughout to provide some sense of cohesiveness to the collection, and there is, sometimes, an associative logic that leads from one poem to the next. The experience of place, the human connection to specific geographies, the persistence of traditional knowledge and stories, patterns of cultural endurance, and acts of historical witness all provide common subject matter in several contributions. But it is worth noting, even here, that *Red Indian Road West* avoids foregrounding any curatorial sensibility that its editors might have, opting instead to allow readers full latitude in developing their own reactions to each specific poem.

As a reader who approaches and employs poetry in a variety of contexts (teaching it in the classroom, presenting it at community events, enjoying it for private pleasure), I appreciate the diversity of expression in *Red Indian Road West*. "Native Americana," a short comic poem by Sal Martinez (who self-identifies as a Pomo Indian who works as a security guard at the Garcia River Casino in Point Arena), represents perhaps one point on that spectrum of expression.

> Ever watch a Western
>
> and think man,
>
> that John Wayne
>
> has killed more
>
> Italians
>
> than any American
>
> in American History?
>
> I sure do.
>
> It's no wonder
>
> why Iron Eyes
>
> "The Crying Indian"

Cody

felt it safer

as a real

Indian

than a reel

Sicilian. (49)

This is a more rhetorical voice than many of the others in the book, to be sure, and the poem relies on punning and the staccato delivery characteristic of good joke-telling for its effect. With its evocation of ordinary speech and its avoidance of aesthetic complexity in favor of a more pragmatic use of language, "Native Americana" possesses many of the qualities that one might associate, in a different context, with folk art. It works admirably in those terms, and by not framing it in any particular manner the book allows it to stand on its own merits.

At a different point on the spectrum, we might find a more established, widely-published poet like Carolyn Dunn (Muscogee/Cherokee/Seminole) whose "Outfoxing Coyote" opens in the following way:

Coyote

is a Yurok man

who lives in a

Mormon mansion

High on a hill

In McKinleyville.

He's a storyteller,

that one.

Tells tall tales

of perfect worlds

and hard places

from behind dark eyes. (31)

Dunn's formal control of sound (employing consonance and subtle rhyme), use of metaphor, and refined rhythmic sensibility emerges with particular clarity when contrasted with a more conversational poem like "Native Americana." But the remarkable thing about *Red Indian Road West* is the way the book's structure urges that this contrast not be experienced by the reader in hierarchical or evaluative terms. One *could* compare poems like these formally, if one desired, of course. I would not hesitate to bring the book into a classroom setting where poetry was being discussed analytically in such a manner. But *Red Indian Road West* does not insist on such

pedagogical uses, nor does it suggest that such contrasts should be primarily critical in nature. This is precisely why one can employ the collection equally well as the centerpiece of a public reading in a non-academic context. I recently used the text for precisely that purpose at a day-long poetry festival held at a local indigenous community center, the Dorothy Ramon Learning Center in Banning, California. The audience for that event, composed of both university students and a wide range of "untrained" listeners, found equal pleasure in hearing and discussing works by Deborah Miranda, Georgiana Sanchez, Shaunna Oteka McCovey (all of whom I had encountered before reading *Red Indian Road West*) and E.K. Cooper (a previously unpublished writer whose work, obviously, was entirely new to me).

If there is a way in which *Red Indian Road West* may be a bit too narrow in its focus, it might be in the book's privileging of works in the lyric mode. This decision makes some sense in light of the editors' stated goal of presenting the diverse, personal experiences of California Indian peoples. It also may be a function of their more implicit goal—producing a book that would appeal at least as much to a general audience as to an academic one. The emphasis on personal lyric does have some limitations, however, in terms of the presentation of the diversity of indigenous poetic expression in contemporary California. Janice Gould, a writer who habitually makes skillful and sophisticated use of poetic forms, is represented here by a single poem, and there aren't a large number of "formal" works by other writers in the collection as a whole. One also misses the presence of Esther Belin, a writer whose work tends to eschew lyric in favor of other, perhaps more "modernist" strategies particularly appreciated by seasoned poetry readers. At the same time, though, one must acknowledge that there are a variety of reasons behind the specific choices of poems included (or not included) in any anthology, including the general response to calls for submission, the contributing poets' own desires, and the need to limit copyright fees and other costs. In the end, quibbling over omissions is a rather unsatisfying response to a book such as this. There is far more in the text to value than there are absences to lament.

James Luna describes *Red Indian Road West* as a "songbook of sorts" in his introduction, and notes "I hear music when I read the voices put forward" (12). That is a perceptive response to a book that does a great service in considerably broadening our appreciation of the breadth of poetic expression by Indian people of, from, and in California today. The final stanza of Kim Shuck's contribution "When We Are a River" picks this point up nicely.

> Story from elsewhere
>
> Shifts rock
>
> Asphalt
>
> Renames
>
> Trade paths become
>
> Freeways
>
> Songs mix in complicated pattern

In lines like these, we begin to see the ways in which *Red Indian Road West* becomes an index of survivance in a California context. For that reason alone, this is a book that should be purchased,

read, shared, taught, and supported. Anyone interested in broadening their understanding of California Indian poetry or in changing the nature of the critical narratives that we tell about indigenous California today will find *Red Indian Road West* to be a valuable source of inspiration and pleasure.

David Carlson, California State University, San Bernardino

Noodin, Margaret. *Weweni*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2015. 98 pages.
http://www.wsupress.wayne.edu/books/detail/weweni

"It feels like we are singing."

My aunt, who died some years ago, lived the last few decades of her life on earth as an Anishinaabe elder: honored, respected, consulted and, she told me and my dad, lonely for someone with whom she could speak her native first language. Although as a teacher of the Ojibwe language she had the opportunity to speak with a variety of students and seekers, from neophytes to those with some degree of fluency, it wasn't the same as conversing with another native speaker. How she looked forward to occasional rare visits with a ladyfriend who lived some distance away, a woman who shared the same reference points of age, life experience and language. "I listen to us as we talk back and forth, back and forth; I love the sound. It feels like we are singing," she said.

She had a cool, airy voice; when she spoke Ojibwemowin/Anishinaabewowin the sound was melodic, a pattern and rhythm that was poetic. A great reader, she enjoyed the fiction and poetry of Native writers of many tribes. The first time I opened this book I thought of my aunt's musical speech and her love of reading.

Margaret Noodin's *Weweni* is a collection of original poems written in both Anishinaabemowin and English. Each poem is presented on two pages, in Anishinaabemowin on the left side and in English language on the right. The presentation, which follows the left-to-right order by which we read, draws the consciousness of the reader to the Anishinaabe words first and then anchors the reading of the poem in English to its original words. In what might be the first modern collection of its kind, Noodin wrote the poems first in Anishinaabemowin and then translated them into English. The translations, which are not always literal but always conceptual, are an acknowledgement and regard for the "life of its own" and lyricism of the language (ix, x).

This collection has much to it that is beyond Noodin's stunningly written poetry. "Weweni" is one of those concept words that can be translated both conceptually and literally, and it is a fitting title for this book. Although there is no single English word like it that could be used interchangeably and accurately, "carefully" begins to approach the implications of the word "weweni" which has not sharp edges but rounded curves in pronunciation and meaning (as well as in its linguistic root sources). To approach a task or action carefully, in the style and tradition of the Anishinaabeg, is to do so properly, with an awareness that all exists by the grace of the Creator; in other words, with gratitude, humility and care. Clearly, Noodin had this in mind as she wrote the poetry that became this book.

Within the poetic rhythms and phrases in these poems are words that form recurring themes in the book. These can be found on both pages of the opened book, in both English and Anishinaabemowin, threading their ways lightly throughout the collection. Some examples of these are *weweni*, of course, as well as *apane* (always) and *bimaadiziwin* (the living of life). Noodin introduces the concept of goodness and what constitutes the living of a good life early in the preface, always taking care to acknowledge and respect variations in dialects, the several words and roots within the word that is used to identify the people, Anishinaabeg. She identifies *nishin*, the good and excellent people who were created by the Great Spirit and then gently lowered to the ground, where they would live their lives with thankfulness, humility and generosity (thus excellence), those values that define goodness (10). Another descriptive word

for that which is good, proper and excellent, *mino*, is part of the imagery and phrasing of much that is in this collection.

As there are many and varied ways to say something in English, so are there many and varied ways to say something in Anishinaabemowin. In these poems Noodin shows skill in using a lyricism grounded in the fluidity of that concept: there are myriad meanings and complexities of Anishinaabe language. At the same time, in Anishinaabe epistemology *mino bimaadiziwin*, the living of the good life that is the careful and proper "essence of Anishinaabemowin" (ix) is not only present but integral. This is evident throughout the collection, even in the pronunciation key that looks and reads like a poem.

There are at least as many ways to read and experience this book as there are lovers of poetry and levels of familiarity with Anishinaabowin. As poetry, the skill and creative discipline of the writer are evident in every piece and the lyrical imagery shines, in both the original Anishinaabemowin and in translation to English, as an example of the heartbeat that is indigenous thought and cosmology. A reader new to the language is provided with background in Anishinaabe history and worldview that gives meaning to an initial reading of the poems in English; for that reader the pronunciation key makes possible an enjoyable read-aloud. For readers with some familiarity with the language (relative neophytes as well as proficient Anishinaabe speakers who are longtime students of the language) the poems can be read in native language first and then in English language on the opposite page.

For this reader, whose language skills are limited but who had exposure as a child to the sounds of Anishinaabe speech, the matching of words and phrases to both English and my own treasured, memory-weighted and beloved small collection of Ojibwe (Anishinaabe) language nuggets was pleasurable. It was particularly fun and satisfying to identify in English translation the variations from the literal in order to express Anishinaabe worldview and examinations of thought and meaning. Where might such physical functions as taste and weight intersect in English language, or taste, sweetness and *bimaadiziwin*? In Anishinaabemowin, and in these poems. Noodin's indirect lyricism in translation parallels the gentle manner of old-time Anishinaabe storytelling, which allows for expression of the storyteller's (in this book the storyteller/poet's) carefully thought out and reverent sharing of history, experience and knowledge.

The list of acknowledgements at the end of this collection includes the standard, expected recognitions of publications in which some of the poems have been published; it also includes thanks and acknowledgement, again in English and Anishinaabemowin, to "the moon, the sun, the earth, and great lakes" as well as Noodin's family, friends and fellow poets (98).

The last time I visited at my aunt's, her brother was visiting from up north. We drank tea at the kitchen table at her apartment here in Onigamiising; her brother, a quiet *akiwenzii* (old man) smiled as they spoke in English and occasionally switched to Anishinaabowin, the cool, airy warble of her speech and the fuller autumnal tones of his carefully slowed in consideration of their guest, who was me. It did sound like singing.

Read aloud or silently, so does this book that is excellent in the most good and proper Anishinaabe ways.

Linda LeGarde Grover, University of Minnesota Duluth

Lakota Emergence. 6-9 May 2015, art exhibit. Craig Howe, curator, and Kayla Schubert, assistant curator. Dahl Arts Center, Rapid City, SD.

Lakota Emergence Art Exhibit: http://www.nativecairns.org/CAIRNS/Lakota_Emergence.html
Lakota Emergence DVD: http://www.nativecairns.org/CAIRNS/DVDs.html

The opening of the *Lakota Emergence*[1] art exhibit was uniquely Lakota, taking place on a Wednesday morning, instead of a Friday evening, and the usual pageantry and highbrow attendees were replaced with busloads of school kids and a concert by Lakota rapper Frank Waln. The intention, Craig Howe, *Lakota Emergence* curator, explained, was to "foreground kids, specifically Native kids." The exhibit perpetuates the Lakota emergence narrative, passing it along to future generations. In Lakota tradition, histories must have purpose and do not truly exist until they have been shared. In this way, *Lakota Emergence*, has become a part of the Lakota *tiyospaye*, "community."

All aspects of the exhibit were truly Lakota. Each participant in the exhibit was from the Lakota community: all the artists, curator Howe, assistant curator Kayla Schubert, event coordinator Mabel Picotte, most of the tour guides, entertainer, Frank Waln, and special event guest, Sean Sherman, The Sioux Chef, are Lakota. The four-day event was hosted in a rental space in the Dahl Art Center. In fact, the entire installation took place over eight days, three days of installation, four event days, and a one-day de-installation. While there were no major sponsors, friends, family, and partners from the surrounding area contributed to the project; including, the Center for American Indian Research and Native Studies (CAIRNS), of which Howe is Director, Richard and Lois Howe, the Rapid City Arts Council, the Sioux Indian Museum, the Rapid City Area School District Office of Indian Education, and the Dakota Charitable Foundation, Inc.

Howe, Oglala Lakota, earned his doctorate at the University of Michigan, served as deputy assistant director for cultural resources at the National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, and director of the D'Arcy McNickle Center for American Indian History at the Newberry Library in Chicago, before starting CAIRNS and conceiving *Lakota Emergence*. Howe considers the installation Lakota because "the exhibit was organized around the traditional Lakota emergence narrative about how Lakotas came onto this world. Most exhibits, on the other hand, are organized to showcase a particular artist or group of artists, or some time period, or some tribe, or some idea of a curator. Lakotas were in charge of all aspects of the exhibit." All of the artworks and museum objects were created by Lakota artists. The labels, design, catalog, and every other aspect of the exhibit was Lakota. In fact, the event itself felt very Lakota, people were greeted and welcomed into the exhibit, there was no charge, no alcohol, and families were invited, especially children. There was lots of visiting and hanging out. More than 1,100 people went through the exhibit in those four days

in May of 2015, and each guest had the chance to become a part of the Lakota emergence history.[2]

The *Lakota Emergence* art exhibit focuses entirely on the short narrative titled, "How the Lakota Came Upon the World." The narrative was written down by James Walker "sometime between 1896, when he first arrived at Pine Ridge to serve as the agency's physician, and 1917 when it was published by the American Museum of Natural History" ("Background 6"). Researching the original documents was particularly interesting for Schubert, an enrolled citizen of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, who graduated from St. Cloud State University in 2013. After participating in the American Indian Museum Fellowship program through the Minnesota Historical Society, she worked for the Department of the Interior with the Indian Arts and Crafts Board at the Sioux Indian Museum in Rapid City, before meeting Howe and interning at CAIRNS. Eventually she became the assistant curator of the Lakota Emergence project and along with Howe researched the history of James R. Walker, traveling to Denver to visit the History Colorado Center, the custodians of many of James R. Walker's papers. "We were not interested solely in Walker as the author of the narrative, but in the Lakota men and women that he was educated by during his time as a physician at Pine Ridge," explained Schubert, "Before the team went to the archive, we had a list of several of these individuals who we could also research through History Colorado's collection. It was phenomenal to have the opportunity to hold and turn the pages of such important and intriguing documents and records, some written in Lakota by such significant people."

Howe and Schubert divided Walker's 1,251-word narrative into sixteen "passages." Each number in the exhibit is an important number for the Lakota; in this case, the four sacred directions multiplied again by four to get sixteen, *wakan tanka*, "powerful, knowledgeable." Each passage was paired with a practical or artistic object from the Sioux Indian Museum (one of the three Indian Arts and Crafts Board museums in the U.S.) or the Heritage Center at Red Cloud Indian School. Howe and Schubert "selected objects that we felt in some way 'illustrated' the passage." Each of the selected objects, more than one for some passages, "span a period of time from before the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty all the way to the early 1970s. All were created by Lakotas and were collected from within the boundaries of the 1868 Treaty, including what is now Pine Ridge, Rosebud, Cheyenne River, and Standing Rock Reservations, as well as the community of Rapid City" ("Tanyan Yahi").

In addition to the passages and Museum objects, original artworks by distinguished and emerging contemporary Lakota artists are featured. "After we had objects paired with passages, we invited contemporary Lakota artists to create new artworks that were tied to the passages and objects," Howe explains; continuing, he and Schubert selected a variety of artists: "Eight women and eight men, from reservations and big cities, emerging and established, working in a wide variety of genres and media. We tried to include works from all six federally recognized Lakota tribes in the US and the one federally recognized Lakota first nation in Canada." Each artist creatively interprets one passage and museum object(s) from a contemporary Lakota point of view, thereby creating "vignettes." The sixteen "vignette" artists, a brief description, and links to pictures of their pieces, follow:

Wanci (One): Renelle White Buffalo (Rosebud Sioux Tribe) – *Bold*

Nunpa (Two): Dyani White Hawk (Rosebud Sioux Tribe) – *Anunk Ite and Iktomi Agree*
Yamni (Three): Roger Broer (Oglala Sioux Tribe) – *Bring the Animals*
Topa (Four): Keith BraveHeart (Oglala Sioux Tribe) – *Compassion of the Ugly*
Zaptan (Five): Angela Babby (Oglala Sioux Tribe) – *Bring the People*
Sakpe (Six): JhonDuane Goes In Center (Oglala Sioux Tribe) – *Wolf Track*
Sakowin (Seven): Andrea Lekberg (Oglala Sioux Tribe) – *Man's Fancy Shirt with Leggings* and *Woman's Dress with Chokecherry Patties*
Saglogan (Eight): Michael Two Bulls (Oglala Sioux Tribe) – *"…That night, they dreamt of unknown landscapes," (comes again)*
Napcinyunka (Nine): Kevin Pourier (Oglala Sioux Tribe) – *Iktomi's Spoon*
Wikcemna (Ten): Athena LaTocha (Standing Rock Sioux Tribe) – *Wikcemna*
Ake wanji (Eleven): Arthur Amiotte (Oglala Sioux Tribe) – *Vignette I I / Vignette I I*
Ake nunpa (Twelve): Tilda St. Pierre (Oglala Sioux Tribe) – *Ki Co*
Ake yamni (Thirteen): Iris Sully-Sorensen (Rosebud Sioux Tribe) – *Iktomi's Moment of Delight*
Ake topa (Fourteen): Richard Red Owl (Oglala Sioux Tribe) – *Creation*
Ake zaptan (Fifteen): Ann-erika White Bird (Rosebud Sioux Tribe) – *Woiktani*
Ake sakpe (Sixteen): Dwayne Wilcox (Oglala Sioux Tribe) – *Here We Are*

The curators "wanted to create an event that spanned or rather connected the past and present. It incorporated museum objects and contemporary artworks. In fact, it put the object in front of the artist and asked the artist to deal with it in some way. Its focus was a timeless narrative, but it also dealt with current issues in the region where that narrative took place." These vignettes "recount the Lakota emergence narrative in written words, museum collections, and contemporary artworks, illustrating that the emergence narrative continues to be a source of creativity, and that the place of emergence" *Wasun Niya*, Wind Cave, in *He Sapa*, "the Black Hills, was and always will remain a landscape of special significance in Lakota cosmology" ("Tanyan Yahi").

The *Lakota Emergence* art exhibit was originally conceived as a short four-day installation. Howe describes it as "a very special thing, the type of event you *have* to change your calendar to attend." Additionally, there were two conceived spin-offs: "An innovative exhibit of high quality that could be hosted by any major museum; the other, a traveling version to be hosted at community spaces in neighborhoods and reservations. The former would consist of the original artworks, but they could be paired with objects from museum collections or private collections." I visited the South Dakota Art Museum in Brookings which paired the original artwork and the passages from Walker's work with a private collector's extensive collection. Howe, who also works in Native architectural design, created a conceptual installation that can fit almost any museum, drawing from and showcasing the museum's collections in relation to the narrative. The traveling community version consists of re-designed panels and focuses on the link between the artworks and the passages. The museum objects are left out and the artworks are all reproduced, so the exhibit can be hosted where security is low, environmental quality is variable, and risk of damage is high. For the month of October 2016, the travelling exhibit was installed in the lobby of the Prairie Center, a space on the Avera Hospital campus in Sioux Falls, SD. Howe explains, "We are working to take this version to reservation spaces, such as schools, chambers of commerce, hospitals, clinics, government buildings." The *Lakota Emergence* traveling art

exhibit will always be free of charge. The point of the instillation is to pass along Lakota history to new generations. Each time someone interacts with the art exhibit, they become a part of the emergence narrative.

Though not as compelling as viewing *Lakota Emergence* at one of the installations, an on-line version of the art exhibit is available on the CAIRNS website. I have included links to the on-line exhibit throughout this review, so readers can take part in the Lakota emergence history. The on-line *Lakota Emergence* exhibit begins like any of the museum or travelling installations, with *Tanyan Yahi*, "welcome, I am glad you have arrived safely," which briefly explains the creation of the exhibit and its various parts. The introduction is followed by a seven-part Background Section. "Seven" representing the Seven Nations of the Lakota is a sacred number within the Lakota community. Background One, Two, Three, Four, and Five introduce the main characters and the setting for Walker's "How the Lakota Came Upon the World." Background Six and Seven give a brief history of how Walker came to record the Lakota emergence narrative.

The background section is followed by ake sakpe, "sixteen," vignettes. Each vignette includes an audio pronunciation of the corresponding number, a link to the vignette, the matching artwork, museum piece(s), explanations of each, and the corresponding section of Walker's "How the Lakota Came Upon the World." For example Wanci, Vignette One, includes links to the first part of Iktomi's Troubles, Renelle White Buffalo's painting *Bold*, a brief statement about the artist and the artwork, and a description of the museum pieces associated with the first vignette, in this case two miniature tipis. Links to each of the ake sakpe vignettes can be found here.

The final section of the on-line experience is the four-part Foreground Section. Again, the number "four" is greatly significant for the Lakota tiyospaye. Foreground One discusses the formation of the *Oceti Sakowin*, Seven Council Fires. Foreground Two discusses the formation of the seven Lakota Oyates. Foreground Three gives a brief history of the White Buffalo Calf Woman bringing the Lakota the Sacred Pipe and the seven sacred ceremonies associated with the Pipe. Foreground Four lists the current reservations where each Lakota Oyate now reside. Each foreground section also includes a map which shows the gradual land reduction of the Lakota Oyate between emergence and forced relocation to the reservation system.

There is also a *Lakota Emergence* DVD available for purchase on the CAIRNS website. The film was screened for over eighty people at the Northern Great Plains History Conference in St. Cloud, Minnesota. The 28-minute film highlights the sixteen vignettes created for the *Lakota Emergence* exhibit. Director Christopher A. Ives films Howe introducing the exhibit and explaining the artwork of each vignette. Schubert recites each of the sixteen parts of Walker's "How the Lakota Came Upon the World." For Schubert, "It was a very introspective experience to read aloud the written narrative of our relatives' emergence through the cave, onto a harsh but beautiful landscape, to become the Lakota Nation of our generation's past, present, and future." The *Lakota Emergence* film begins and ends at Wasun Niya with Howe explaining the importance of the project:

> The purpose of this exhibit was to raise awareness of the Lakota emergence narrative, to pass it on to the next generations, educating them about its importance in Lakota identity and culture, linking those generations back to the original seven families that emerged at

> Wasun Niya. A place of genesis for the Lakota Nation, it is the center, it is the heart, it is the birthplace…it is, in every sense of the word, sacred land.

One purpose for the film was to "document the exhibit, to serve as a record of what was," explains Howe. Another purpose was to serve as a promotional piece for potential museum hosts. A third purpose was to provide content for CAIRNS "Lakota Lands and Identities" traveling seminars. The final and most important purpose was to reach new audiences, especially classrooms.

Future plans for the original *Lakota Emergence* art exhibit are to find new museum hosts "across the country and beyond." CAIRNS owns all but one of the artworks which are permanently housed at Wingsprings (home to CAIRNS). Plans are underway to build a community meeting space within which the exhibit is displayed. Other exhibit projects include the *Great Race* exhibit, hosted in the spring of 2016, and the upcoming *Star Knowledge* exhibit opening in the spring of 2017.

I have been lucky enough to view the *Lakota Emergence* installation at the South Dakota Art History Museum, visit the traveling exhibit at the Prairie Center in Sioux Falls, SD, and bring a group of American Indian Studies students to the first screening of the film at the Northern Great Plains History Conference. Each time, I gain a greater appreciation of the depth of the exhibit, and when my students viewed the film they spent hours clicking through the on-line exhibit on the CAIRNS website. As an instructor of Native Literature and Lakota Studies, the educational aspects of the *Lakota Emergence* art exhibit are, for me, the most appealing; though, each time I visit the exhibit, I too learn something new and exciting. For these reasons, I believe vignette Topa, Keith BraveHeart's, *Compassion of the Ugly* is my favorite. I feel the vignette encapsulates the entire *Lakota Emergence* project.

Vignette Topa begins with the passage from Walker's "How the Lakota Came Upon the World," which describes Anunke Ite, the double faced woman, preparing for the arrival of her relatives, the Pte people: "She dried the flesh and tanned the skins, and gathered much meat and many robes and soft tanned skins. She made clothes for a man and for a woman and decked them with colors. Then she made a pack of the clothes and choice bits of the meat." The museum piece chosen for this vignette was a cradle cover made by Fearful Woman for her granddaughter Nellie Eagle Staff. While the design is beautiful, the piece is also extremely functional like the clothes Anunke Ite made for her Pte relatives. Each colored strip of quillwork on the cradle cover is associated with the four "Superior Gods of Lakota cosmology: yellow with Inyan, green with Maka, blue (or in this case, purple) with Skan, and red with Wi." Well-constructed, beautiful, and functional, the cradle cover museum piece also tells a story, serving the same purpose as the *Lakota Emergence* exhibit.

BraveHeart describes his rendering of Anunke Ite in *Compassion of the Ugly*, "I do not think she was uncaring, or ugly in the way we normally would think about it. I think she loved her relatives, and was very compassionate. I did not want to paint her as an ugly woman." Braveheart's painting is not of a "horrendously ugly" second face, instead her second face is "supernaturally strange," perhaps "uncomfortably alluring." BraveHeart describes himself as a contemporary artist who wants to "interpret these traditional stories in modern terms. I want to

use humor, and irony in my paintings." BraveHeart's depiction of Anunke Ite fits with his contemporary interpretation of the section of Walker's work to which it corresponds. In modern Lakota society, clothes are not made, they are purchased at retail stores, like Target, JCPenny, and Old Navy, labels BraveHeart embeds in the painting. In the background of BraveHeart's *Compassion of the Ugly* James Walker relaxes in a chair reading a newspaper while wearing a pair of red moccasins, torn between his "western education and his interest in Lakota culture."

Each person who interacts with BraveHeart's work, whether or not she/he is young or old, Lakota or non-Native, becomes a part of *Compassion of the Ugly* and of the ongoing emergence narrative through reflections in the small mirrors placed low on the canvas, so children, in particular, become a part of the instillation. Each viewer passes along the emergence history of the Lakota tiyospaye to future generations. Walker's story, the museum pieces, BraveHeart's *Compassion of the Ugly*, and the *Lakota Emergence* art instillation are reflected back upon the viewer, making the audience a part of the narrative. In traditional Lakota oral narratives, the audience must interact with the story in order for the tale to take on significance. The history of the Lakota emergence, the "genesis" of the Lakota Oyate, may well be the most important story to be passed along through generations. Every iteration of *Lakota Emergence* takes its place in the narratives of the Lakota Oyate, and in our "reflections" on the narration, we too take part in Lakota history.

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Notes

[1] ED: Please note, there are numerous links in this document. These are all active in the html version of the review, so please view that version rather than the pdf if you wish to explore further. As these are all third-party websites, we cannot guarantee that all links will remain "live."
[2] For the full poster, please see: http://www.nativecairns.org/CAIRNS/Lakota_Emergence_files/Lakota%20Emergence%20Flier%202%20update.pdf

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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 Hwéél̨di, 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 Hwéél̨di [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 the 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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Contributor Biographies

ANDREA CARLSON Andrea Carlson (born 1979) is a Chicago, Illinois based painter. Her career took root in Minneapolis, Minnesota where she earned a BA from the University of Minnesota in 2003 in Art and American Indian Studies and an MFA in Visual Studies from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design in 2005.

Her work has exhibited widely while gaining support through several fellowships including the Minnesota State Arts Board (2006, 2014) and McKnight/MCAD Foundation Fellowship (2007–08). Her work also belongs to prominent collections, including those of the Weisman Art Museum, the British Museum, and the National Gallery of Canada.

PALLAS ERDRICH says: "I've spent most of my life learning how to do stuff. After attending Hampshire College for half a minute, I went to London for film school and then skipped on to Los Angeles where I jumped straight headfirst into the moving pictures industry." For more see her website at http://pallaserdrich.com/about/

JOHN GAMBER, an assistant professor at Columbia University, received his Ph.D. From U.C. Santa Barbara. His research interests include ecocriticism, American Indian, Asian American, African American, and Chicana/o and Latina/o literatures. His book *Positive Pollutions and Cultural Toxins* (University of Nebraska Press, 2012), examines the role of waste and contamination in late-twentieth century U.S. ethnic and indigenous literatures. He has co-edited *Transnational Asian American Literature: Sites and Transits*, and published articles about the works of Gerald Vizenor, Louise Erdrich, Sherman Alexie, and Craig Womack, among others in several edited collections and journals including *PMLA*, and *MELUS*.

DIANE GLANCY is professor emerita at Macalester College. Her 2014-15 books are *Fort Marion Prisoners and the Trauma of Native Education*, creative nonfiction, University of Nebraska Press, *Report to the Department of the Interior*, poetry, University of New Mexico Press, and three novels, *One of Us*, *Uprising of Goats*, and *Ironic Witness*, Wipf & Stock.

STEPHEN GRAHAM JONES is the author of 16 novels and 6 collections so far. Most recent is Mongrels (William Morrow). Stephen lives in Boulder, Colorado. Find him @SGJ72.

EMILY JOHNSON is an American dancer, writer, and choreographer of Yup'ik descent. She is based in Minneapolis, where she is artistic director of her performance company, Emily Johnson/Catalyst. See more about Emily's work on her website http://www.catalystdance.com/

TERESE MARIE MAILHOT is from Seabird Island Band. Her work has been featured in *Carve*, *The Offing*, and *Yellow Medicine Review*. She studies at the Institute of American Indian Arts and writes for Indian Country Today.

DEBORAH ROOT is a cultural critic and writer whose arts writing has focused on the relationship between visual art and cultural politics. Her catalog work includes substantive essays on Sarindar Dhaliwal, Jorge Lozano, Ximena Cuevas and Annie Pootoogook, and her arts writing has appeared in *Art Papers*, *Prefix Photo*, *Public*, *C magazine*, the Contact Photography and Bienal de Sao Paulo catalogs, other Canadian and international journals, and most recently in *ARC* magazine of contemporary Caribbean visual art. She is the author of *Cannibal Culture: Art, Appropriation and the Commodification of Difference*, and has taught visual art and cultural politics at Ontario College of Art and Design, University of Guelph, and Bilkent University in Turkey.

ALLAN J. RYAN is an associate professor of Canadian Studies and Art History, and holds the New Sun Chair in Aboriginal Art and Culture at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada. Since 2002 he has hosted an annual interdisciplinary conference on Indigenous arts at Carleton. Among his publications is *The Trickster Shift: Humour and Irony in Contemporary Native Art* (1999), recipient of an American Book Award for its contribution to multicultural literature. He was also co-curator, with Zena Pearlstone, of the exhibition *About Face: Self- Portraits by Native American, First Nations and Inuit Artists*, at the Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in 2005-2006. More recently he has lectured on Indigenous art and cinema in China and Brazil, and is currently writing an online book on Ojibway artist Carl Beam for the Art Canada Institute. Other interests include the foregrounding of Indigenous pedagogical principles in the classroom and rollerblading alongside Ottawa's Rideau Canal. In former lives he worked as a graphic designer, television satirist, singer-songwriter and recording artist. In 2015 he received the inaugural Alumni of Influence Award for Distinguished Educator from the Ontario College of Art and Design University, his first alma mater, and in 2016 he was honored with the Distinguished Alumni Award for Career Achievement from Brandon University, his second alma mater.

MIRIAM C. BROWN SPIERS is a Lecturer in the Writing Program at the University of California Merced. Her work has appeared in *Studies in American Indian Literatures* and *Studies in Comics,* and her current project examines the intersections of Indigenous knowledge and science fiction theory in Native science fiction.

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