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CONTENTS

Un-Becoming White: Identity Transformation in Louise

Erdrich's *The Antelope Wife* by Julie Barak 1

Samson Occom's Diary and D'Arcy McNickle's "Train

**Time": The Real Imperative of "Native" Education in
American Indian Literature** by Jim Ottery 24

But the Shadow of Her Story: Narrative Unsettlement, Self-

**Inscription, and Translation in Pauline Johnson's
*Legends of Vancouver*** by Deena Rymhs 51

Review Essay

A Sacred Path: The Way of the Muskogee Creeks, by Jean
and Joyotpaul Chaudhury, reviewed by Craig Womack 79

Book Reviews

*Contrary Neighbors: Southern Plains and Removed Indians
in Indian Territory*, by David La Vere, reviewed by
Rowena McClinton 91

Drowning in Fire, by Craig S. Womack, reviewed by Daniel
Justice 95

Loosening the Seams: Interpretations of Gerald Vizenor,
edited by A. Robert Lee, reviewed by Chris LaLonde 98

Night Sky, Morning Star, by Evelina Zuni Lucero, reviewed
by Annette Van Dyke 103

The Novels of Louise Erdrich: Stories of Her People, by
Connie A. Jacobs, reviewed by Lori Burlingame 105

Contributors 111

Announcements, Opportunities, and Conferences 112

**Major Federally-Recognized Tribal Nations Mentioned in the
Essays of This Issue** 122

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Un-Becoming White: Identity Transformation in Louise Erdrich's *The Antelope Wife*

Julie Barak

*See, Pahana
how we nest
in your ruins. (35)*

Wendy Rose

My Mama, she once blackened her face with charcoal around when she was my age. She went out in the woods for six days. There, she had a vision of a huge thing, strange, inconceivable. All her life she told me she wondered what it was. It came out of the sky, pierced far into the ground, seethed and trembled. I see this: I was sent here to understand and to report. What she saw was the shape of the world itself. Rising in a trance and eroding downward and destroying what it is. Moment through moment until the end of time if ever there is an end to this. Gakahbeking. That's what she saw. Gakahbeking. The city. Where we are scattered like beads off a necklace and put back together in new patterns, new strings. (220)

Louise Erdrich

Introduction: Some Thoughts on Whiteness

The first epigraph for this piece comes from Wendy Rose's poem "Naayawva Taawi," published in *Halfbreed Chronicles*. She explains in a footnote that "pahana" means "whiteman" in the Hopi language and refers to "a way of life, a set of institutions, rather than to male human beings of European ancestry." She believes that "all of us, including such men, are victims of the 'whiteman'" (35). The second epigraph comes from Louise Erdrich's *The Antelope Wife*. Like Rose, Erdrich implies that Native Americans are nesting in the ruins

whitemen have evoked. And, as in Rose's poem, the fact of nesting, especially in a new environment, means surviving—moving on, making the necessary adjustments for continuance, though sometimes that continuance has meant internalizing aspects of whiteness. It is not an easy transition.

As Fanon and other postcolonial theorists have pointed out, the ingestion of whiteness by a “conquered” people is one of the manifestations of colonialism. “Every colonized people—in other words, every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality,” writes Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks*, “finds itself face to face with the . . . culture of the mother country. The colonized is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards. He becomes whiter as he renounces his blackness” (18). Whiteness is not solely marked by skin color. Instead, as France Winddance Twine points out in “Brown-Skinned White Girls: Class, Culture, and the Construction of White Identity in Suburban Communities,” whiteness is “socially constructed and can be enacted under specific economic, demographic, and social conditions” (239).

There is an expanding pool of recent scholarship investigating what whiteness means and what it means to be white.¹ We have “discovered” that white is an ethnicity, and that if we want to discourage racism, or encourage diversity, or advance a multicultural curriculum we must not only listen to the stories told by “people of color,” but we must also listen to and revise our interpretations of the stories told by and about those people who have been considered to be without color for centuries, white people. This is not an easy thing to do because, like all hegemonic narratives, the narrative of whiteness has been made to seem invisible. It has been assumed as the normal and true. It is hard to articulate what whiteness means, especially for those of us who are white, because we have taken its position and its privileges for granted. Acknowledging whiteness means whites will have to give up those privileges, share the power. This is not an easy transition, but it is a necessary one.²

According to Christine E. Sleeter, an investigation into the sources of racism among whites takes one of two paths. On the first path, racism is defined as an individual psychological manifestation. If racism is defined as a bias in an individual's thoughts and actions and this bias is assumed to stem from ideas and assumptions in people's heads, then we can end racism by changing what is in people's heads. Changing individuals will lead to changes in institutions. According to this way of thinking, observes Sleeter, "[p]rejudice and misperception can be corrected by providing information. With more information, white people will abandon racist ideas and behaviors and (presumably) work to eliminate racism" (158). We can fix the problem through education.

Another way of thinking about white racism is to see it not as a misperception embedded in individual thinking, but as a conscious structural arrangement among racial groups. Whites control racist institutions and use their control to restrict access to power by nonwhites. Sleeter points out that "a structural analysis assumes that how white people view race rests on their vested interest in justifying their power and privileges. White people's common sense understandings of race 'are ideological defenses of the interests and privileges that stem from white people's position in a structure based in part on racial inequality'" (158). She believes that "a structural analysis of racism suggests that education will not produce less racist institutions as long as white people control them" (158). The only way to fix the problem of racism is to change the ethnicity of those in charge.

Either way, through individual psychoanalytical adjustments or through structural recoding, it is unlikely that racism will disappear anytime soon. But small aporias in the structure of racism are opening up. As things start to shift and crack white people are being forced to move into a mental/philosophical borderland position familiar to most people of color in our country. We must learn to live in what Gloria Anzaldua calls a *nepantla* state "an in-between state, that uncertain terrain one crosses when moving from one place to another, when changing from one class, race or sexual position to another, when

traveling from the present identity to a new identity” (110). But for Anzaldua, living in disoriented space is “normal.” The border is in a constant *nepantla* state and it is “an analogue of the planet” (110). To be *en nepantla* is to be in a creative mode, to be in a space that opens you up to the possible, the syncretic, the transformative.

Peter McLaren, leaning on Anzaldua’s theory, defines the *cultural imaginary* as a “a translation of one level of reality into another, creating a multidimension reality . . . a space of cultural articulation that results from the collisions of multiple strands of referential codes and sign systems” (118). He believes that these collisions create hybrids which “can take on the force of historical agency as a new *mestizaje* consciousness” going beyond collage or bricolage to create a “critical practice of cultural negotiation and translation that attempts to transcend the contradictions of Western dualistic thinking” (118). McLaren argues that we need to “abandon pedagogies of protest (which, as Houston Baker reminds us, simply reinforces the dualism of ‘self’ and ‘other’ and reinstates the basis of dominant racist evaluations, and preserves the ‘always already’ arrangements of white male hegemony) in favor of a politics of transformation” (119).

Texts can act as spaces of transformation; they offer readers opportunities for transforming themselves and their thinking. Texts can challenge the structures of our social spaces that we may have forgotten existed, that we may have stopped observing. Literature works not only to delight, but also to teach; it is functional as well as aesthetic. As Greg Sarris observes, cross-cultural texts are particularly effective in fostering transformative learning experiences. He asks “how do people read across cultures? What are the aims and consequences of their readings? . . . Is there a way that people can read across cultures so that intercultural communication is opened rather than closed, so that people see more than just what things seem to be?” (3)

Because it’s so difficult for whites to see markers of whiteness in whites, it might be easier to learn about whiteness by looking at its manifestations in others. Erdrich raises lots of questions about whiteness in *The Antelope Wife*. How has whiteness marked Native Americans? How are the effects of whiteness shaping Native

American individuals, families and communities? What are the powers and privileges of whiteness? How do people “re-become” Indian and/or “un-become” white? What does it mean to live in this borderland of becoming and un-becoming? *The Antelope Wife* is a revolutionary text in that it creates a space for the cultural imaginary that McLaren posits. The novel rearranges the readers’ patterns of thought to create a *nepantla* state and is a novel of becoming in the sense that Deleuze and Guattari define that term. They write: “A becoming is not defined by points that it connects, or by points that compose it; on the contrary it passes *between* points, it comes up through the middle . . .” (293). What’s important is not where we are or where we end up, but how we get there, the space of the transformation. “Becoming is the movement by which the line frees itself from the point and renders points indiscernible” (294). It’s the time spent in transition that is the focus of Erdrich’s novel.

When the empire writes back, it explores the manifestations of the adoption and enactment of whiteness, most often through characters’ battles in accepting or rejecting immolation in the colonial culture. bell hooks argues that blacks in general, and black authors in particular, and by extension, I posit, other writers of color, see whiteness clearly, and they represent it in a way not seen in the works of white authors. Rebecca Aanerud extends hooks’ argument, observing that “one’s ability to see whiteness is equally influenced by his or her relationship to white dominant society as a whole. In other words, the varying abilities to ‘see’ whiteness are as much a result of consciousness as they are of race” (37). Whether or not Native American literature is technically postcolonial, Native American writers still deal with issues of identity and cultural (re)construction that are central to other postcolonial literatures. Reading whiteness and its effects on individuals and communities is certainly one of those issues. It seems then that whites and others who have been blinded to the derogatory affects of whiteness, who, in general, find it difficult to see, define, admit to the privileges of whiteness, might have better luck in locating it by paying close attention to its manifestations in the texts of writers of color.

One of the ways that Erdrich racializes whiteness in order to examine it is by reshaping it, reformulating it, making it foreign—by placing the values of whiteness in other bodies. Whiteness in *The Antelope Wife* is embodied in the values and scenes of the city, in various Native American characters, in animals, but hardly ever in white human bodies. Whiteness is challenged by several characters who have lost their way, and are seeking to return to their people. They are wanderers, border crossers, gender blurrers, language mixers, specie bounders, spirit mediums who work in the liminal space of becoming to redefine a self that is not slave to colonial (white) definitions of itself as “other.” Erdrich’s text is structured rhizomically—stories pop up here and there, in and out of chronological order; narrators are 1st and 3rd person, human and animal, living and dead; tragedy is comic, sorrow is heroic not pathetic. All this works to throw the reader into a chaotic state in which her own arborescent reading tendencies are challenged so that she, too, must move into a state of becoming something other in order to understand the whimsy and will of the text.

Whiteness in *The Antelope Wife*

Scranton Roy is one of the few white people in Erdrich’s novel. We first see him in the middle of a raid on an Ojibwa village sometime in the late 1800s. The bayonet of his rifle is stuck into the body of an old Indian woman. As he planted his “boot between her legs to tug the blade from her stomach . . . he tried to avoid her eyes, but did not manage” (4). This is whiteness, a kind of whiteness we’ve all been trained to recognize in a postcolonial world. It’s a whiteness that heaps guilt on us, that makes us ashamed, that we try to forget, cover up, excuse with narratives of progress and Manifest Destiny. But Scranton Roy is destined to move beyond the cruelty of this whiteness. “His gaze was drawn to [his victim’s gaze] and he sank with it into the dark unaccompanied moment before his birth . . . He saw his mother, yanked

the bayonet out with a huge cry, and began to run” (4). He runs after a dog laden with a “frame-board tikinagun enclosing a child in moss, velvet, embroideries of beads” (1) and he eventually catches up with them.

Beginning his transformation, Scranton Roy feeds the dog and tries to feed the child, but she’s too young to eat any of the food he can catch. To quiet her he puts her lips to his nipple. She sucks hard for days. Later, sitting in the doorway of his newly built sod house he feels “a slight warmth, then in a rush in one side of his chest, a pleasurable burning” (7). Her continuous sucking, and, he believes, her trust that her efforts would produce something, pay off for the infant. He produces milk. There is a transformation. He becomes wo/man. He becomes the mother he killed, the mother he saw at the time of the murder, mother to the child whose mother was forced to abandon her. He becomes the woman he left home for, the woman he killed, the woman whose breasts are even now aching for her absent child.

Klaus Shawano, a self-proclaimed urban Ojibwa, is named after a German prisoner of war who served time in a Canadian logging camp. Klaus-the-German was “captured” from the camp by Klaus’ dad, just after he returned home from the war, his best friend having been killed in battle. One old man, Asinigwesance, an old time warrior, believes that the only way Klaus’ dad can cure his postwar depression is by taking the life of a German in exchange for the life of his friend. But Klaus-the-German turns out to be too much of a good cook to kill. He creates the perfect blitzkuchen in exchange for his life. His cake produces a miracle, really. After it is eaten, the people transcend hatred and difference. “They breathed together. They thought like one person. They had for a long unbending moment the same heartbeat, same blood in their veins, the same taste in their mouth. How, when they were all one being, kill the German? How, in sharing this sweet intensity of life, deny its substance in even their enemies?” (139). Klaus, *in utero* at the time, experiences this oneness, too. He is named in honor of that moment. Some white guys are all right.

Klaus Shawano, urban Indian, is not only named after a German, he’s got a cornucopia of bloods mixed up in him. One of his ancestors

was a buffalo soldier; he's got some Irish ancestors and maybe some French, as well as his Ojibwa forebearers. He is, by ancestry, culturally split. His place is on the rez, in the city, east, west. He belongs everywhere and no where at all. He's also got a split profession, which is where he gets in trouble. During the week he's a sanitation engineer in the city, but on the weekend he sets himself up as a trader at area powwows, driving out into the country to set up his booth. In Elmo, Montana he falls in love with an antelope woman. She's beautiful, wild, both human and not. He tricks her into his van and drives off, leaving her three daughters in possession of his wares in exchange for their mother. She rips apart his hotel room bucking to escape, but he subdues her and ties her to him with a piece of sweetheart calico. He marries her, abuses her, loves her, leaves her, returns to her, almost ruins her, refuses to name her. Everybody calls her aunt Klaus, naming her after him. He wants her to become him, to be like him, but he eventually realizes that "she is another person than me. Lives in another body, walks in a different skin. Thinks different thoughts I can't know about. Wants a freedom I can't give" (155). She is silent, her tongue tied, at first literally by him, but also figuratively by her displacement from her land and her people. She's a trophy he's trapped, caged, tried to display. This is another kind of whiteness. A colonizing whiteness that tries to make the other the same, that refuses to acknowledge the different needs of difference, because that would mean sacrificing something of its own ways, comforts, beliefs.

But Klaus is tortured by his cruelty to his antelope wife, by what she turns into—a smoking, drinking, tight-skirted, high heel-wearing wanderer—by what she turns him into. She is that other inside that stretches out of recognition the shape of the self. "She alters the shape of things around her and she changes the shape of things to come," says Callie, Klaus' sort of cousin, sort of niece, when she first meets aunt Klaus. "She upsets me, then enlightens me with her truthless stare. She scatters my wits" (106). Klaus' stubborn refusal to return his wife to the land, to the west, leads to a scattering of his wits and resources. He loses his job, descends into drunkenness, spends his days searching for *nibi*, water, and a way out of his dilemma. This urban Indian begins to

dream of the old days when “they used to paint the red stripe of the drum down the middle of their faces. . . . I imagine the painted stripe. I try to divide myself up equally—two parts. *Send half of yourself to each direction.* West, east. Let her go with the western half, free” (155). And eventually he does.

Wounded by the blade of a riding lawn mower, Klaus is marked with a red scar down the middle of his face; he gives up drinking and leads her west, to the edge of the city where he lets her go. She isn’t strong. She doesn’t leap into freedom like the antelope people of the past. Instead she “walked forward a weary step. Confused, broken inside, shaking her head, she stumbled over the uneven ground. She began her way west. . . . He could see her slender back, quick legs, once or twice a staggered leap, a fall, an attempt to run . . . she kept going, kept moving, until she was a white needle, quivering, then a dark fleck on the western band” (229-30). Like all colonized people, the antelope wife will have a hard time returning to her past, recovering herself. She recognizes his assertiveness and her own compliance. She wonders how she got caught. “How did he bind her and leave no mark? How did he take away her freedom, when her sense of it was so strong?... Always, in his eyes, that ungated fence. Always, in hers, that silence” (222). Klaus and his city have irrevocably changed her, planted some whiteness in her. But, she has recovered, at least, the use of her tongue, and the freedom to follow her own yearnings.

Richard Whiteheart Beads is one good-looking Indian. He’s got long glossy black hair that he wears pulled back in a thick rope. He’s tall, well-muscled, with smooth brown skin, but he’s got a white heart. Richard is named after some beads Scranton Roy’s grandson traded to an old Indian woman in exchange for her twin great-granddaughters, one of whom became his wife, one his mistress. The old woman beaded the ruby red whiteheart beads into a blanket she gave to a woman who was expecting a child. “[T]he child was named for the decoration it loved....That name went on until Richard ended up with it” (240). This name, the beads, the exchange for the daughters, Richard’s thoughts and actions, none of them are an accident, all of them are metaphorical as well as literal. Erdrich opens her novel this

way: "Ever since the beginning, these twins are sewing. One sews with light and one with dark. ...They sew with a single sinew thread, in, out, fast and furious, each trying to set one more bead into the pattern than her sister, each trying to upset the balance of the world" (1). Richard Whiteheart Beads' fate is sealed by his ancestor's love of that white heart buried in the ruby red of the bead, that love that is set in motion by the twins' sewing. It gets to him.

We first meet him at the office party of the "first Native-owned waste disposal company in the whole U.S. and proud of it" (44). He and Klaus work together as sanitation engineers. We find out that Richard is thinking of buying a new truck. Klaus remarks that "he's always thinking about what he can acquire" (43). He dreams it will come with "pinstripes and a refurbished engine [and] thirstbuster cup holders. 'Wish I could get an automatic sunroof, too,'" he says (43). He likes stuff. He wants a lot of it. At the end, after he loses his wife, his job, his dignity, his sanity, the only thing that is left of him is his power to hold on. "His hand grip, only, remained to the end amazingly resilient. It was difficult to wrest the bottle from his grasp. It was difficult to get anything at all away from him" (197). This is a definition of whiteness we all recognize.

At the height of his career as a sanitation engineer, Richard offers Klaus a pair of tickets to Maui. He's just won them for his fine work in the sanitation line. Klaus takes them, but finds out that they come with a catch. Richard is wanted by the F.B.I. for violations of dumping practices. He trades identities with Klaus, giving him his ID, in order to avoid arrest. As Klaus is hauled off, he vows not to take the rap for Richard. "I won't pay," he says. "I'll rat. I'll speak. Things get dumped, terrible poisons in endless old wells. Nothing's endless, though. Every place has limits. Everybody. Toxins. Resins. Old batteries. Lead. Mercury" (50). Richard's disregard for the environment is an indication of the whiteness in his heart. His betrayal of his friend, another sign. We find out that Richard used to be a tribal politician. But he used tribal money to buy boats and lakeside cabins, to increase his own wealth and comfort. He's dishonest, he breaks promises. He lost that job and was forced to leave the reservation. We

recognize, from our history books, these things as manifestations of whiteness, too.

Richard's relationship with Rozin Roy, his wife/ex-wife, is another manifestation of whiteness. Like Klaus Shawano with his antelope wife, Richard can't let go. He clings. He's jealous. He's possessive. Rozin is not her own woman. She is his. When she tells him she wants to leave him for her lover, Frank Shawano, who is dying of cancer, he refuses to let her go. Only because of his inadvertent murder of their daughter does he allow her to pry herself away, to return, not to her lover, but to her mother on the reservation. Years later, when she marries Frank Shawano, Richard is still there, trying to kill himself at her wedding. He suffers a series of head wounds and wanders through the scenes of the novel with his head covered in huge white bandages, obviously symbolic of his association not only in heart, but also in mind, with whiteness. He threatens her guests with tall tales of poisoned wedding cake and eventually shoots himself in the head outside her honeymoon hotel suite. At that moment she remembers "[his] desperate love, going back, all the way to when they first married. ... He had kissed her over and over with profound and desperate emotion, his tongue a wet flame. She had begun to plot right then, that first year, how in the world she would get away from him" (181).

Like a colonizer, Richard needs Rozin, he is desperate for her presence, but he is never pleased with her; she can't please him. She dreams about her failures, "lives out a day with her daughters' father" (188).

Around him she is clumsy. He cuffs at her or explodes. She is trying to get the tape to stick properly. Her shoelaces spring apart. Her hair messes up in twisted knots. They go home. Fear grips her stomach when she realizes she has lost the ring he gave her, then the watch, then everything. His sandwich toast burns. Ants march across the doorstep and she can't sweep them back. Her

beading loosens and then falls apart in his hand. His Christmas present. He doesn't want her present, the loomed watchband, she can tell that. Where would he put it? How explain the beads clittering off the ends of the watch, falling to the floor? The potatoes she serves him are cold and also she's missed an eye or two that turn up in a spoon of his, unmashed. Staring at her. Not enough butter. Too much. (188)

Can her behavior be described as a kind of resistance against an oppressor? She recognizes the dangers of their relationship from the first, but he has more power. Her resistance must come in subversive forms or she won't be able to survive his wrath. She describes him as a magnet, "with a prickly and unappeasable energy some people resent and others worship" (187). She remembers that around him she never did things the easy way, but instead, "always [found] the method of most resistance" (187). Her thoughts about him and their relationship encourage us to read it in terms of colonizer/colonized relationships. She isn't free of him, even after he dies. She tells Frank, her new husband, that

Richard is a part of her now. ... His suit of anguish has become her own skin. His too-far-seeing eyes her own eyes. And the way he despises her, too, that has become her until even the small praise she gives herself rings false. She tells Frank that sometimes she thinks of herself as an unwitting host and of Richard's personality as something like kudzu or zebra mussels or a wild cucumber, a weed that advances daily or a sea lamprey, so that if she wants to purge herself of him she must poison the waters. (192)

These are all apt metaphors for expressing the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. In Rozin and Richard's relationship we see a microcosm of the effects of whiteness on the planet.

In the first paragraph of this paper, I referred to the footnote Wendy Rose attaches to the poem that serves as an epigraph of the essay. She observes that we are all victims of the effects of whiteness, even those of us who are white. While Richard is not a likeable person in the novel, he is not "the bad guy" either. He suffers for his actions, and not just with outward and physical loss of status and dignity. Internally, too, he is tortured by his broken relationship with Rozin, by his daughter's death. At one of his low points, he's trying to dry out after a long alcoholic binge and he's crying. He's been crying for days. Klaus, still with him in spite of Richard's betrayals, fetches the priest, and then listens along with the priest to his made up story of woe. Four of his children dying of smoke inhalation in his house. His wife, exchanging her body for rent money, leaves the exhausted landlord slumbering with a burning cigarette butt in his hand. The house goes up in flames. His remorse is sincere, but he is unable to repent for the "right" crime. He's trying to lay the blame elsewhere, decrease his responsibility, blame the victim for her loss. We've read this story of whiteness, too.

Klaus observes that Richard

was feeling sorry for himself. He was an asshole then and he was an asshole now, the only difference was that now he was a recovery asshole people listened to him. ... It made me think of the food chain and wonder why this guy deserved to be at the top of it? Theoretically he could devour whatever grazed, pecked, crawled, rooted over the earth, or swarm in the sea. And what had he ever done to deserve such status? (153)

Erdrich has created in Richard Whiteheart Beads an Indian with a white consciousness. This embodiment of the qualities of whiteness in

another makes the effects of it more visible to readers. It's the same story, but the ground has been changed; it's just different enough that we have to clean our glasses, adjust our vision, really see what we've been avoiding or revising to fit our own needs.

Un-Becoming White, Becoming Indian

How can white readers deal with these manifestations of whiteness? Linda Martin Alcoff asks this same question: "What is it to acknowledge one's whiteness? Is it to acknowledge that one is inherently tied to structures of domination and oppression, that one is irrevocably on the wrong side? ... Is it possible to feel okay about being white?" (8). She suggests that whites need to develop a double consciousness, which would require an "everpresent acknowledgement of the historical legacy of white identity constructions in the persistent structures of inequality and exploitation, as well as a newly awakened memory of the many white traitors to white privilege who have struggled to contribute to the building of an inclusive human community. The Michelangelos stand beside the Christopher Columbuses, and Noam Chomskys next to the Pat Buchanans" (25). But this isn't enough to challenge the structure of racism. This works on the level of changing individuals in the hopes that individuals will change the institutions. It doesn't challenge the structure of racism. So, while her solution offers a way into living with whiteness, it doesn't seem to be enough.

Alcoff ponders the idea of white assimilation into non-European cultures, citing Captain John Dunbar's conversion to "Indianness" in *Dances with Wolves*, as a possibility for dealing with the legacy of whiteness. It doesn't seem like a viable possibility to her. Sherman Alexie's novel *Reservation Blues* draws a negative portrayal of two white women, Betty and Veronica, who are "wanna be's," whites who want to be Indian. Do we have to live with this negative attitude toward assimilation? Can imitation be looked at more

positively? Can it change the imitator? Obviously, there are different kinds of assimilation. There is assimilation on the surface, to appear to blend in, and then there is internal assimilation, a real change at the core of being. In this deeper kind of assimilation, one can “un-become” white, and become not the other, not Indian or black or Asian, but an other, un-white, revised-white. Artists often imitate other artists in an attempt to learn the secrets of their technique. Through their imitation, however, they do not become the artist they imitate or produce identical work. Deleuze and Guattari claim that “no art is imitative, no art can be imitative or figurative. Suppose a painter represents a bird; this is in fact a becoming bird that can occur only to the extent that the bird itself is in the process of becoming something else, a pure line, and pure color. Thus imitation self-destructs since the imitator unknowingly enters into a becoming that conjugates with the unknowing becoming of that which he or she imitates” (304-5). Attempts at imitation, in fact, are acts of becoming, of un-becoming. People who imitate other people can transform themselves, not into that other, but into a new self. The imitator who goes beneath the surface of custom to examine the depth of culture with the intent of adopting or adapting its mores moves into a *nepantla* state. It is in this borderland of the in-between that transformations happen. There are several characters in Erdrich’s novel who are in this in-between state, who are un-becoming white, and readers can learn about the difficulties and rewards of the *nepantla* state by observing their progress.

Rozin Roy, for example, married Richard Whiteheart Beads and lived with him for several years, bore twins with him, set herself up in a nice, white, middle-class respectability and isolation from her past, her culture. But her love for Frank Shawano began to shake her out of that isolation. And then the death of her daughter pushed her into a transformative state. She moved back home to the reservation with her aunt and her grandmother. She constructed a shell around herself that protected her from feeling anything, from connecting with anyone. When her remaining daughter becomes deathly ill, Rozin wakes up and begins to reconnect with her daughter, her mother, her aunt, all the women in her family. She begins to bead “roses into a shawl of black

velvet, a border of madder pink and fuchsia flowers, twining stems, fancy leaves that never grew on any tree except in her mind" (90-91). Her beading weaves connections between her daughter's new mind-reading skills, her angry love of Richard, her desire to walk "small between her mother, her aunt again, their arms curving over her like tree branches, making a smooth path for her to travel" (91). With the *manidominenz*, the Ojibwa word for beads, which means "little spirit seed," she creates flowers and powerful vines. "The pattern of her daughter's soul is emerging. With each bead she plants in the swirl, Rozin adds one tiny grain" (91). She takes charge.

Years later Rozin moves back to the city, determined to become a lawyer. She reestablishes her relationship with Frank, goes back to school. But she's still in that *nepantla* state, still in transition, still struggling with the legacy of isolation that Richard left her. After his death she closes herself up in her mother's house. She hears her dead daughter's voice. She's visited by the Windigo, the ice man, who wants to take her with him to the other side. Frank's love brings her through. He feeds her, brings her tea, tucks her in for naps. She lies in bed listening to the sounds of birds and kids on the street then she feels, "unexpectedly, a radiance of goodness, a strange pleasurable intensity sifts into her body and floats her just an inch above herself. Looking down, she seeks how close it is, this line between alive and dead, two countries that don't know each other" (192). Her awareness of the closeness of this border, of how we all live in the space of the borderland all the time, allows her to recover. Once reconnected to her family, living and dead, she is able to reestablish her connections with the world, to fully live her life and to dedicate herself to loving not just Frank and her daughter and her mother and her aunt, but also the rest of the people. She decides to become a public defender, instead of a prosecutor, a savior, not a destroyer.

Callie Roy / Blue Prairie Woman / Ozhawashkwamashkodeykway is Rozin's daughter. Callie has lost her sister, her father, and for a long while, her mother. She also, literally and figuratively, loses her *indis mashkimodenz*, her birth holder, "[the] little turtle connecting me back to my mother, her

mother, all the mothers before her who dug in the dirt" (219), which her mother beaded for her and gave her at birth. She feels the need to wander, to leave the reservation. The city, whiteness, calls her and she doesn't know why or how to deal with it. So she waits and watches and sells doughnuts for Frank while she's trying to find out what it is that she's looking for. She knows that one of the things she needs is to talk to her grandmothers.

Callie has so many things she needs to ask them, but she usually doesn't have the strength to ask, and when she does, her grandmothers answer evasively. She struggles through until one day she hears a word inside her head, *Daashkikaa*, which means "cracked apart." At that moment she had felt as though she was "on two channels all at once, flipping back and forth between us walking up the sidewalk together and me hearing an Ojibwa word, over and over, as the ice shifts, as the snow cracks, as the odd Christmas sun fades" (196). When she tells her grandmother that she has heard that word, the grandmother, who has been reticent, opens up. Callie, she says, is the namer, the one who hears the spirit names. And the names connect them to the past, "they still bear the marks and puckers [of their other owners.] The shape of the other life" (217).

She tells Callie to listen to her aunt Klaus, the antelope wife. Aunt Klaus, freed from the burden of silence because the grandmother acknowledges her power, her essence, takes Callie on a journey, through the city, through time. She describes the nightmare of postcolonial civilization.

They're selling Christ's coffin at Pier 1. I had a vision of it, deep in the heart of the night, a fragile loaded vision like old, long-buried socks. It was a basket coffin with a woven lid. It was made of raw teak strips deep in a third world jungle and made of sharp bamboo by children in China in a stinking backwater polluted by coal fumes and in Borneo from delicate and ancient barks of tress that never will again grow on earth and it was made by young

virgins and their hands are scabbed raw and bleeding so an American has to hose those coffins down when they are shipped over here before they are displayed and he, Christ, was short, too, and just in time for Christmas! . . .

I'm drowning in stuff here in Gakahbekong. In so many acres of fruit. In warehouse upon warehouse of tools. Sheetrock nails, air conditioners, and implements of every type and domestic and imported fabrics, and in the supermarkets and fish from the seven seas and slabs of fat-marbled flesh of warm-eyed cows who love and nuzzle their young. And Klaus, and Klaus. I'm drowning in Klaus. (218-219)

She and Callie walk and walk, to the edge of the city, where suddenly, it's not winter, Christmas time, any more, but summer and, Callie is sitting in a tent of sumac listening to the voices of Hmong grandmothers tending their gardens. She listens and watches their hands in the dirt. "Every time their hands go to the dirt, I feel better. . . . As they move and the sun grows hot on the dirt, so the scent of it rises, same even in the city, that dirt smell, I know they are digging for me" (219). Callie finds her peace. She knows that she can stop wandering. Her connections with family, ancestors, earth have been reestablished.

Zosie Roy married the grandson of Scranton Roy. **Mary Shawano**, her sister, become his mistress. The three of them lived together in the sisters' house. Augustus Roy couldn't tell them apart, though, and it was making his life difficult. He tried to mark them; he tried burning one of them. Eventually he settled on biting Zosie's earlobe off. The sisters, at first divided over the white man, decide to unite against him, to save themselves; they won't be nibbled away. He disappears. Nobody knows what happened to that white man. This is one way to rid the world of whiteness. There are other ways.

One of those ways is to mix things up so that whiteness loses its value. In *Love Medicine*, there's this wonderful scene where Lulu

picks up the yellow beads she's working with and dumps them into the blue bead bowl. Marie Kashpaw is shocked. "The blue and the green were nearly indistinguishable all mixed together in the bowl, a day's headache to re-sort" (318). The green you get when you pour them together makes it hard to pull them apart, to see them ever as the way they were. This kind of mixing happens a lot in Erdrich's novels. All those ancestors, white Irish, French and German, black, Ojibwa, and Hmong get combined with surprising results. The Shawanos and the Roys and the Whiteheart Beads are really one family, so blended by time and marriage that they can't be sorted out any more. Those who carry the name Blue Prairie Woman through the generations are the same and not—sharing a past and moving into an unknowable future. The multiple sets of twins in the novel raise questions about individuality and identity.

Zosie and Mary are one and many. Augustus Roy isn't the only one who can't tell them apart, at least when they're young. Neither of them will tell their daughter or granddaughter who the real mother is, the birth mother. They are both the mom and the grandma, exchangeable women. But as they grow older, they grow into different selves. Little things give them away. They also merge into others, however. They become everyone, all people. Callie stands behind the doughnut counter at Frank's place and asks customers if they know her grandmothers. Everybody knows them, but how they define them depends:

Those old ladies? Sure! They're healers, beadworkers, tanners of hides. They make cedar boxes. Or they work as language consultants in the school system. Maybe one's a housekeeper for a priest. The other dances. I hear she won the Senior Ladies Traditional twelve years in a row. Bums, they roam the streets, Windigos, they ate a husband. Oh, too bad, one or the other died and was buried the month before. (108) ...They have a craft shop. They live over in the housing development. Teach at an

alternative college. Counsel alcoholics. Do drugs themselves. Run ceremonies. Coach the little league. Have between them six Ph.D.s... (119).

They are the same. They are different. They are singular. They are plural. They are nowhere. Callie can't find their apartment when she tries to visit them. They are everywhere. Everyone knows them, has seen them. They spend their summers on the reservation—planting, harvesting, collecting, preserving, storing up. They spend their winters in the city—beading and quilling and weaving stories from their observations, stories about their lives, their children's lives, their people's lives, the lives of all of us. They are aware of the connections, the strings that hold us together. To become Indian, un-become white, we've got to begin to see, as Zosie and Mary do, as their daughter Rozin does, and as their granddaughter Callie does, that we are all caught in the same web. We've got to feel the tensions along the strands that are caused by our actions, learn that those connections are the most important thing, that we can destroy ourselves and each other if we break them.

Conclusion: Some Thoughts on Connections

As I've worked on this essay, I've been bothered by the threads of theory that my reading of whiteness in *The Antelope Wife* has forced me to drop. My focus on this interpretation has ignored, for example, a feminist reading of the text, of the ways that Erdrich's story is one of oppression not only by whites, but also by men. It's not just a story of overcoming whiteness, but also a story of several women's liberation from patriarchal dominance. In focusing my reading on whiteness, I've dropped the thread of postmodern theory that runs through the text. While it may seem that the beading metaphor that runs through the story implies a metanarrative, in that there is a dominant story teller, the narrator's final remarks challenge that notion.

All that followed, all that happened, all is as I have told. Did these occurrences have a paradigm in the settlement of old scores and pains and betrayals that went back in time? Or are we working out the minor details of a strictly random pattern? Who is beading us? ... Who are you and who am I, the beader or the bit of colored glass sewn onto the fabric of this earth? (240)

Who is this narrator? How are we to know the point of view, the ideology that has shaped this story? How has my own whiteness, my education, my family, my socio-economic background determined my interpretation of whiteness in the novel? What assumptions have I made about whiteness and Indianness that will others find offensive, chilling, disconnecting? None of these theoretical interpretations should be ignored; none of them should be privileged. Blended together with others they can create the connections that make reading rich, useful, and, most importantly, transformative.

NOTES

¹ For example, there is Ruth Frankenberg's collection, *Displacing Whiteness: Essays in Social and Cultural Criticism*. There are a myriad of journal articles on the subject, the most interesting among them include "Interrogating the Monologue: Making Whiteness Visible," by Ian Marshall and Wendy Ryden; "Investigating 'Whiteness,' Eavesdropping on 'Race,'" by AnaLouise Keating; "'White Studies': The Problems and Projects of a New Research Agenda," by Alastair Bonnett; and "Uncolored People: The Rise of Whiteness Studies," by David Stowe. A search in MLA on the word "whiteness" culls 194 hits. Just reading through this list uncovers the plethora of directions in which studies of "whiteness" have moved in recent years.

² In "Interrogating the Monologue: Making Whiteness Visible," Ian Marshall and Wendy Ryden posit that it is difficult for white people to teach anybody anything about race because of our own propensity for seeing through it or around it, of making it disappear. Marshall and Ryden suggest that white people need to be learners in this endeavor, not teachers. We need to take heed, shut-up, watch, listen.

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Samson Occom's Diary and D'Arcy McNickle's "Train Time": The Real Imperative of "Native" Education in American Indian Literature

Jim Ottery

The notorious history of American Indians and their "education" at the hands of whites is well known. Luther Standing Bear, in "First Days at Carlisle," provides one of the earliest records of Richard Pratt's "deculturation" methods at the Carlisle school (Gunn 111). A recent article in the *Chicago Tribune*, "Education rescue feared lost; Native Americans worry about shift in dropout effort," by Meg McSherry Breslin, provides a glimpse of how the American nightmare inflicted upon American Indians still takes its toll in regard to their access to education. Breslin cites statistics that are all too well-known in American Indian communities that show that Indian students have "the highest dropout rates of any ethnic group in the country," that their "standardized test scores have also been abysmal," and that the relatively few who are able to get into college most often do not graduate. The history of American Indian education epitomizes the way that the white-dominated, Anglo-European culture has sought to reprogram indigenous peoples in order to destroy identifications with belief and value systems that run counter to the empirical and materialist models of thought that drive the American "dream."¹

Two hundred fifty years before Captain Richard Pratt, in 1879, converted a few empty government buildings in Carlisle, Pennsylvania to the Carlisle School for Indians, education had been utilized as a weapon against American Indian populations. This weapon proved to be as deadly to the languages, tribal customs, mythologies, and spiritual traditions that had nurtured and sustained native life for unrecorded centuries as were firearms, small pox blankets, liquor, and the reservation system. Paradoxically, the extinction of the spiritual and traditional underpinnings of tribal life via education was viewed as the

key not only to civilizing American Indians, but also as the means of saving them from eternal perdition. As early as 1609 the first English colonists believed that their mission in Virginia included propagating the “Christian religion to such people as yet live in darkness and miserable ignorance . . . and may in time bring the infidels and savages living in those parts to human civility and to a settled and quiet government” (Love 3).²

A couple of decades later in New England, a solution to this “problem of civilization” that American Indians represented was pursued with no less zeal by the likes of John Eliot, Thomas Mayhew, and 100 years later by David Jewett and Eleazar Wheelock (1, 8, 32-33), the founder of Wheelock’s charity school which my ancestor Samson Occom attended from 1743-1747 (Ottery 35). The “conversion” of Samson Occom well represents the way that “education” deculturized Indians in colonial America.

In Samson Occom’s time conversion to Christianity and European civilization was not thought of as acculturation. Yet “Civilizing the Indians” had the avowed aim, in the words of Eleazar Wheelock, Occom’s mentor, of “reducing them to Peace and good Order” in order to accomplish a two-pronged goal (Axtell 98). In making the Indians “good Members of Society, and peaceable and quiet Neighbours,” the colonists would also succeed in making them farmers as opposed to hunters and gatherers (99). Having thus altered the nomadic character of American Indian life, the colonies might peacefully bring tribally controlled lands under their governance: “For if [the Indians] receive the gospel,’ *admitted* Wheelock, ‘they will soon betake themselves to agriculture for their support, and so will need but a very small part, comparatively, of the lands which they now claim . . .; and, if they will not receive the gospel, they will, as they have done, waste away before it . . .’” (98, emphasis mine). Two hundred years later, the secularized conversion methods of Indian education continued “to waste away” the peoples it was designed to acculturate. The killing field of Indian education functions even today. For, as noted in the *Chicago Tribune* article, the killing effects of that educational history are still apparent. The dominant white culture often overlooks not only

the cost of such deculturation to Indians, but to the American culture itself. As someone who has been educated by and is now an educator in the system mostly determined by that dominant culture, someone whose ancestor is Samson Occom who was “educated” by Eleazar Wheelock, those are effects that I cannot so easily overlook.

A Story in D’Arcy McNickle’s “Train Time”

One paragraph in D’Arcy McNickle’s “Train Time” has an imperative as a topic sentence. I made this discovery while working with a developmental English class on how grammar (structure and form) creates shades, or shadows, of meaning as much as does content in writing. The point of the lesson was that knowing how to use “proper grammar” in Edited American English isn’t always restrictive, but can be an empowering creative force. It wasn’t until much later that I realized that the imperative in question is the “real” imperative of “native” education in American Indian literature. “Train Time” is the story of Major Miles, a cavalry officer responsible for maintaining “order” on a reservation, and his encounter with a particular Indian boy named Eneas Lamartine. Part of Miles’ duty is to round up Indian children and send them to one of the infamous boarding schools. The story begins as the Major and 30 children are waiting at the depot for the train that will come to take the children away.

Paula Gunn Allen prefaces McNickle’s short story by providing more evidence of the genocidal side effects of the spread of the white man’s culture with its “education” process. She writes of how the railroad, responsible for the spread of diseases such as small-pox, the near-extinction of the buffalo and “no one knows how many other species” of *flora* and *fauna*, transported “thousands of Native children to boarding schools hundreds of miles from their homes and homelands” (216). She writes of how children, such as Navajos, who were not docile during their train ride “were chained to the hard [train car] benches” (217).

Allen also notes the “heavy significance” of the story’s title, “Train Time,” echoing what she had to say about the objective of the white man’s education in her preface to “First Days at Carlisle” by pointing out that “Train Time” also means “. . .time to train the Indian children in the ways of machines that even determine time; time to train them to their proper place in a permanent underclass; time to train them to forget who they are, or that they were ever free” (217). She further notes that in McNickle’s northwest, “the Salish people lost as much as two-thirds of their population in boarding schools; all dead of malnutrition, infections, and despair” (217). She ends her preface by writing of McNickle himself, quoting his statement in *Indians and Other Americans* that ““the schools were dedicated to the ultimate eradication of all traits of Indian culture . . .”” (217).

In McNickle’s story, Major Miles, who has for the first time taken a personal interest in one of his charges, Eneas, decides the best way to help the boy is to send him away to Indian boarding school. He explains to Eneas that he would “go away and learn things. You’ll go on a train” (221). His words invoke a reaction from Eneas, but not the one of happiness and gratitude that the Major expects: ““You won’t make me go away, will you?” There was fear in the voice, tears threatened.” (221)

The Major promises that if Eneas does not want to go, he won’t have to. Major Miles does not see the boy for several months after this conversation. But he does not forget him or the fact that he wants to “help” him. He decides that whether Eneas “understood what was good for him or not, he meant to see that the right thing was done” (221-222). And he is certain that the right thing to do is send Eneas away with the next quota of children slated for the Indian boarding school. He does not discuss this with Eneas; he makes the decision for him, in spite of him. Which brings us to the imperative paragraph:

Thirty children were included in the quota, and of them all Eneas was the only one the Major had actual knowledge of, the only one in whom he was personally interested. With each of them, it was true,

he had had difficulties. None had wanted to go. They said they “liked it at home,” or they were “afraid” to go away, or they would “get sick” in a strange country; and the parents were no help. They, too, were frightened and uneasy. It was a tiresome, hard kind of duty, but the Major knew what was required of him and never hesitated. The difference was, that in the cases of all these others, the problem was routine. He met it, and passed over it. But in the case of Eneas, he was bothered. He wanted to make clear what this moment of going away meant. It was a breaking away from fear and doubt and ignorance. Here began the new. Mark it, remember it. (222)

“Mark it, remember it.” The major’s silent imperative seems aimed at the children—an unspoken demand that they see the good of going away to school and leaving their Native culture behind. But since he keeps the thought to himself the real imperative is for himself: To mark and remember the fact that for the most part the children (and the adults on the reservation) are faceless and nameless to him except for one exception. To mark and remember the fact that the children did not want to leave home, that they were afraid, that there *was* the likelihood that they would get sick and die. To mark and remember that the parents were aware of this too. To mark and remember that until this moment, because of Eneas, he had always “done what was required of him” without hesitation. To mark and remember that, because he *knew* one of the faceless, nameless Native children, his duty began to bother him, evidenced by the fact that he needed to try to convince himself in his own mind that what he was doing was for the Indian’s own good. To mark and remember, “Here began the new” (222). This was the end of *his* ignorance — he would never be able to do his duty unthinkingly again. Thus begins the Major’s Native education.

A Story in Samson Occom's Diary

Samson Occom, as described by Gaynell Stone in *The History & Archaeology of the Montauk*, was “an exceptional person who was a preacher, teacher, hymn writer . . . farmer, fisher and hunter, maker of wooden implements, and book binder for a local library” (xviii). He is known for his “charismatic performances in England preaching to raise funds for a school for Indians, [a school that was] subverted by [the Reverend Eleazor] Wheelock to become Dartmouth College” (148). He was also a founder of a Christian Indian settlement in New York called Brotherton.

In 1774, the Oneidas conditionally granted a tract of land to the New England Indians who would become known as the Brothertons: “the Indians of Mohegan, Naraganset, Montock, Pequods of Groton & of Stonington, Nahanticks, & Farmington” (Venables 519). The main migration and settlement occurred during the 1780s. In 1831, “most of the Brothertons began moving again, this time to the farther refuge of Wisconsin where most of the Oneidas also sought new lands far from the eastern frontier” (515). My personal interest in my ancestor Samson Occom is caught up in the story of the Brothertons. I am Brothertown Indian 20261, and my aunt, June Ezold, Chairperson of the Brothertown Indians of Wisconsin, has been leading a three-decade effort to “re-tribalize” the Brothertowns under Federal law.

But as a college English teacher, I also have a professional interest in Occom's story, an interest that contextualizes a point of convergence between the subject matter of D'Arcy McNickle's “Train Time” and *The Diary of Samson Occom*. Julia Clark, a transcriber of Occom's diary, notes that Occom “who had not known any English before the age of sixteen, had not only learned to read and write the language,” but was also [in the words of Zachariah Weekes, an Oyster Bay schoolmaster] “. . . able to preach using ‘a great Many fine words’” (Stone 223). Stone also writes of Occom's “academic achievements,” noting that he learned “Greek, Latin, English, and theology in three years” and that only Occom's “failing eyesight precluded University study” (504). As a teacher of “developmental-level” writing students

for whom Edited American English is as a second language (not to mention the ESL students who find their way into my courses), I can't help but admire Occom's achievement, can't help but wonder at Occom's teacher's methods.

Stone also notes the value of Occom's writings as "early ethnography," but at the same time, warns that, "Although [Occom's] account contains some of the ethnographic details an anthropologist would record about a group, they have been filtered through the Western Christian belief system adopted by Occom, so the interpretation of 'facts' given by him must be considered in this light" (xviii). And later: "Occom's accounts have been influenced greatly by his acculturation to the European Christian mindset, customs and beliefs, yet his Native background appears from time to time" (149). In other words, as ethnography Occom's writing of his knowledge and experience is scientifically suspect.

A Story in Convergence of Literary Experiences

It is precisely at this point that the convergence of *The Diary of Samson Occom* and D'Arcy McNickle's "Train Time" reveals itself to me: the effect of Indian Education on its subjects. Allen and McNickle dramatically articulate the cultural and genocidal horror of Indian schools in the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In a more scholarly manner, Stone and others note the effects of "acculturation" on the fields of ethnographical and anthropological research in the loss of Samson Occom's native background. The lapsus in such a "scholarly" observation would be almost laughable if the conditions, and the results of those conditions, that evoked it were not so tragic.

The Brothertown Indians, Samson Occom included (and some might say beginning with him), were victims of Anglo-American cultural genocide as much as were the Plains Indians whose lives and ways of life were taken by the railroad and all it represented, as much as were the Navajos whose children were chained to train benches to

force them to go to school, and as much as were McNickle's Salish peoples. During the 1850s, Thomas Commuck, a Brothertown Indian described the "Brothertowns" and the Stockbridges in Wisconsin as:

"an agricultural, mechanical and manufacturing people, that they live, dress and talk like other 'human critters' (having entirely lost their language, the Brothertowns in particular,) . . .

[The Brothertown Indians] were trying to imitate our white brethren in all things except their vices. — Here we have taken our last stand. . . . Already has inter-marriage with the whites so changed the Brothertowns, in complexion, that three-quarters of them would be readily considered as white, where they were not known." (Stone 529, 531).

Samson Occom's writings, as nearly all writings of American Indians, have been subjected to the academic criticism of the American university. Many of these scholars, according to Clark, have deemed Occom's diary to be "dull" and "commonplace" (Stone 223). Clark herself, using the jargon of American academic discourse, notes that "Occom seems to have had a *set formula* in his mind for his entries" and that he "used an unusual *parallel structure* so that sometimes the same phrase is repeated several times in one entry" (223, my emphasis). And while "within a relatively short time, he became more articulate," Occom's "earliest entries are short, clumsy, and not at all expressive" and even later entries contain "blank spaces where names, places, or Biblical references should appear", and that in one section in particular, "the same events are recorded for different dates" (223). She also notes that the diaries contain "little information" about his wife and children or "his own battles with depression and alcohol" (224). Clark believes that many of these later flaws are "undoubtedly the result of Occom not making the entries immediately and forgetting details," of "writing entries long after they [events] had occurred" (223).

It seems as though Clark believes problems in Occom's writing are the result of carelessness and not something having to do with who he was and the language in which he was writing. Also it is apparent that to Clark and other critics Occom's writings are problematic from a literary as well as an ethnographic and anthropological point of view.

A Story in My Education

Which brings me back around again to the point of convergence of *The Diary of Samson Occom* and D'Arcy McNickle's "Train Time," a point of convergence that not only exists for me in the context of my professional role of college English teacher, but also in a more personal context of my history, a history which has been mostly obscured by "left-brained" thinking. Being "brought back around again" is an important point in itself. Writing this essay makes me feel as *National Geographic* photographer Steve Wall must have felt during the 15 years it took him to write *Shadowcatchers: A Journey in the Search of the Teachings of Native American Healers*. Wall wrote:

There's power in the wind. You can fight it and get nowhere, or you can flow with it and ride it into new adventures. In the beginning, writing this book was much like facing into the wind. Struggling to mold the material into what I thought it should be, I got nowhere. (xiii)

Writing this essay has been like that for me, but I know which way the wind is blowing today and so I will go with it. But even more than being about this essay, my comment about being "brought back around again" and Wall's statement has to do with discoveries I have made in my personal life that have affected my professional life as writing teacher. Such lessons begin to expand the context of what I call "the real imperative of 'native' education in American Indian literature." In order to begin to develop a theory of "Native education," I need to provide definitions of "native."

“Native,” according to Webster’s *Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, means “belonging to a particular place by birth; belonging to or associated with one by birth.” Webster’s *New Universal Unabridged Dictionary* adds “belonging to one because of the place of one’s birth; as one’s native language.” And back to Webster’s *Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* again: “living or growing naturally in a particular region: INDIGENOUS.” Many American Indians, while embracing the term “indigenous” as being descriptive of who we are, do not accept the “politically correct” designation of “Native American.” My wife, who is not Indian, but who was “born,” has “lived” and has “grown” in this country, noted that she is, by definition, a “native American.” Native American education, then, is a term that resonates for anyone “born, living, and growing” in the United States. My students, a great number of whom come from the inner city of Chicago, are native Americans who have knowledge and experience that “belongs to them because of the place of their birth.” Native education is an education that belongs to an individual because of where she or he was “born,” has “lived” and “grown.” Native education should reinforce one’s origin and expand one’s knowledge of it and the context in which it exists. The fate of American Indians is the earliest and most graphic example of what happens to people when their American education is not “native” to who and what they are.

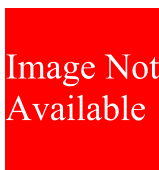
It is imperative, then, that we realize the true value of the meaning made in the stories of the likes of Samson Occom, Luther Standing Bear, and D’arcy McNickle as well as writers who represent all ethnic groups, including our students, and even ourselves. The real lessons of the meaning of being human are that we are taught in what has been, and is becoming even more so, a dehumanized, non-humane American culture. It is imperative in this culture that we “mark” the effects of what we do as teachers, of what has been done to us, and to all of our relations, in the name of an “education” that is aimed at the acculturation of all into “the American dream,” the American way of life.

I have taught freshman writing in many schools in many states in the Midwest for many years. For the great majority of those years, I

“struggled to mold the material” of teaching and scholarship in the academic discourse manner that was designed to build a university career. The wind at that time carried a way of thinking to the University of Missouri that has not been so well accepted by American academics.

The teacher who taught me new lessons at that time, Ellie Ragland, is a Lacanian scholar. The teachings of Jacques Lacan, the French psychoanalyst and philosopher, resonate with lessons I have since learned in my American Indian studies. For example, the goal-oriented certainty is described as the university discourse by Lacan. It is a way of thought that forecloses *meaningful* questions because it is rooted in what has come before, the “same old story” that is told when thesis is disguised as hypothesis. In most fields of American “scholarship,” and, therefore, of pedagogy, the results of a process are pre-determined by products created before. In my field, this translates into “I know what students should write, because I have seen academic writing.”

Lacan also wrote about the recursive nature of the thought process (discourse) that most Western academics try to “straighten out.” He topologized this return, this coming around again to a point that is congruent with a point of departure, via the Möbius strip: ³



Our stories begin at some point, and as they are told they move away from that point and turn inside out so that what is inside us becomes the context that is outside of our inner meaning that touches us and affects that meaning until our stories turn around and move back toward where they began, pass over that point at that point and move away again, turn inside out again, and turn around, make the return and pass over again the point of origin at the point where the story began. Where the story begins, its point of origin is true, but lost in the passage

of logical and real time, language and thought. In telling “our stories,” which, if one thinks about it is what all writing does, we depart from but always approach again that which is true. We cannot go back there precisely, but we can re-recognize and describe over and over again, in new but congruent ways, that which is true (and in the process re-define/re-contextualize it) as we write.

I explain all this to show what I knew before I began to immerse myself in American Indian stories, the stories of others and my story as well, a knowledge that perhaps allowed me to be receptive to something other than the typical academic discourse theory and malpractice of narrative that most teachers of English in American higher education, one way or another, insist upon. This paper is after all about the effects of a native American education inflicted by Western academics (even theology is academic) on people such as Eneas Lamartine and Samson Occom. And it is also about what I am learning concerning how those effects affect my own pedagogy in college English classrooms.

G. Lynn Nelson is a writing teacher at Arizona State University whose work is greatly influenced by the American Indian culture and philosophy he has learned as he has taught Indian students both at ASU and as the Director of the Greater Phoenix Area Writing Project. In his book *Writing and Being: Taking Back Our Lives through the Power of Language*, Nelson describes a non-linear, almost circular process of making meaning in writing in a chapter of the book titled “Entering the River”:

. . . The poet Robert Frost once said that the process of writing a poem begins as a lump in the throat, a sense of wrong, a homesickness, a lovesickness, and that these feelings eventually find the thought and the thought finds the words.

My students respond to my petroglyph-picture of the writing process because the squiggly part . . . reminds us that all writing (a poem, essay, letter, journal entry, whatever) comes from the same

process, and that all effective and meaningful writing has its source not “out there” somewhere but within us. (36-37)

Nelson’s “petroglyph-picture” is a diagram similar to a Möbius strip where “feelings” (affect) circle a point of origin (asterisk), eventually circling (moving away, moving back, never quite touching that point of origin again) in language. Nelson describes it this way:

The asterisk in the picture represents an emotion, a feeling within us. It represents our first, natural response to life. This is where the language/learning/growth process properly begins — in our hearts, not in rational, logical, analytical thought. Depending on the situation, the asterisk may represent anger, fear, doubt, confusion, joy, wonder, delight, or some other emotion.

. . . Feelings are where our words become flesh; they are the grounding of our writing and being. In a technological society, we are too often taught to devalue or deny our feelings. But it is only through our hearts that we can enter the river, touch the world, and establish relationship. Without feeling, without the heart, our writing and our being too easily turn into artifice, image, pretense, games. (37)

Nelson *does* admit to rationality - an important admission, after all, for a teacher of college English. “Rationality” (writing to communicate) in this case is a transaction with the something ““out there”” somewhere” that *is* the cause of the affect within. Writing, then, is a way to confront the Other and for each individual to share her or his experience of it with it - - the inside/outside of the Möbius strip. All of this, of course, is another imperative of story telling.

Another return: I mentioned earlier that I discovered the imperative as a topic sentence in a particular paragraph of “Train Time” while

teaching grammar in a Developmental English class. The school in which I was teaching then, as does the one where I am teaching now, has a large minority population, most of which was the product of Chicago public schools. At that time Chicago schools had the reputation of being the worst public schools in the nation. Furthermore, that first college has as its mission preparation of students for professional careers in business, law, and medicine—acculturation.

As we have seen, educators at the time of Samson Occom and the Indian boarding schools described by Luther Standing Bear and McNickle had no ethical qualms about the deculturating effects of acculturation. Fortunately, the same is not true today. In the 1970s the issue of English education and acculturation was viewed as a matter involving ethical linguistics. This question of ethics led the College Conference on Composition and Communication to publish a declaration of “Students’ Right to Their Own Language”:

We affirm the students’ right to their own pattern and varieties of language — the dialects of their nurture or whatever dialects in which they find their own identity and style . . . The claim that any one dialect is unacceptable amounts to an attempt of one social group to exert its dominance over another. Such a claim leads to false advice for speakers and writers and immoral advice for humans . . . (Vol.25.3 CCC, 136)

More recently, this “matter of linguistic ethics” is being discussed among composition/rhetoric scholars in terms of cultural effect. “Decolonizing the Classroom: Freshman Composition in a Multicultural Setting,” by Esha Niyogi De and Donna Uthus Gregory, highlights the idea that “Westernization seems inevitably to erase individual histories and, with them, the capacity to imagine a future in non-Western terms” as an element “intrinsic to current debates about multicultural education” (118).

The “Westernization” being discussed by Niyogi De and Gregory, and by myself in this essay, has to do with college students learning the “language skills” of writing an academic discourse. In “Embracing a Multicultural Rhetoric,” Bonnie Lisle and Sandra Mano write that this discourse does “not acknowledge or teach cultural variation in rhetorical strategies.” It requires “persuasive writing . . . [that is] necessarily thesis-driven and linear . . . the propositional model as the only appropriate form for academic writing . . .” (16). It is a form of writing that is difficult for *all* students to master (perhaps especially so for students from other cultures as the writers of the two articles cited above emphasize). I know it was difficult for the students I described earlier. The mission statement of the school they were attending and where I was teaching declares that it is “dedicated to providing students from diverse socioeconomic and academic backgrounds the foundation necessary to meet the expectations of *business and society*.” With that in mind, the faculty was urged to promote “professional speaking and writing” across the curriculum.

I have to admit to having mixed feelings about such a “mission.” I think, in fact I *know*, that there was a time in my academic career when I would never even have entertained the idea of teaching in an institution that declared up front that it was providing students with “the foundation necessary to meet the expectations of *business and society*.” After all, I began to come of age in the ’60s. My dogmatism regarding the purposes of higher education probably had something to do with a misconceived notion that to teach a pedagogy that would support something like the mission of the school in question would implicate me in turning students into “automatons.” I suppose I was operating under the assumptions of an “either-or fallacy” that put me on the side of resisting the state as a dominant institution. (Based on what I was learning about the education of American Indians, there might have been good reason for feeling that way.) As a graduate student composition instructor, I remember telling students that we were “us” together against “them,” “them” being comprised of the university’s administration, capitalist forces in our culture, etc.—in other words, the “establishment.” I think I also believed that an academic career

somehow insulated me from “real world” concerns, a not uncommon perception in academia, and especially, in my experience, in English departments, among those teachers and many of the students involved in literature and creative writing programs.

But when I found myself working with students from Chicago’s inner city, people who were suffering, in part, because their lack of academic skills, including those of writing Edited American English prevented them from enjoying the true benefits of “mainstream society” that have to do with making choices in a life lived in language, I began to see my “ivory-tower” viewpoint as the naive point-of-view that appears in much of the current theorizing being put forth in regard to higher education. It appears, for example, in *Up the University* by Robert and Jon Solomon, a book-length lament regarding the endangered status of higher education in America. College teachers who believe in a pure, idealist mission for higher education are likely to agree with the Solomons’ assessment that a college or university is supposed to be “an educational community, a place for teaching and learning. Everything else is [supposedly] secondary, irrelevant, or out of place” (9). Those teachers would probably also agree with the continuation of that statement: “The secondary features of the university have become ends in themselves” (9). One of these “secondary features,” according to the Solomons, is that a college education “should assist students in the pursuit of a career or profession” (9).

Yet this pragmatic reason for attending college has always been a major factor in why the majority of students choose to go to college, in why they often even choose a particular school, even if more idealistic academics do not want to admit it. The proliferation of community colleges, and business institutes, and a variety of technical schools has brought this “dirty little secret” into the open. Now many major colleges and universities, competing for student dollars with the institutions listed above, as well as feeling pressure from politicians and the public for a more pragmatic assessment of what and how they teach, are attempting to attract students with statistics about career placement and claims such as those for “value-added education” that

promise to better prepare students for the work place. Professional programs are being expanded and added. Arts and humanities are being cut.

The “us” against “them” pedagogy I employed early in my teaching career, a pedagogy that was attractive to me for so many reasons (and could still be, all things considered), a pedagogy that would have placed the mission of any institution in which I was teaching into conflict with my own beliefs, had, undoubtedly, many causes. First there was the fact that, as noted above, I was a child of the 1960s. Another factor was that I have a working class background. Before I returned to school, I was a warehouse foreman and member of the Teamsters Union for 13 years, which further entrenched my anti-establishment (anti-management) attitude. Another cause was the fact that I had not yet gotten to the point in my academic career of reading Lacan and did not realize that Lacanian theory places emphasis on the particularity of desire, desire that, Lacan argues, constitutes the crux of the unconscious, the point of return, conjunction, and divergence explained above. Ellie Ragland articulates this particularity in fact in “The Ethics of Desire”:

Passing through the defiles of Lacan’s signifiers, we find that desire is not universal, but entirely particular. One need only consider the specificity of each person’s dream, life story, sense of humor, sexuality, not to mention many other examples. To state the obvious: each of us is unique, whatever our similarities may be. (156)

When I was teaching from a strict “us” versus “them” position, I was appropriating the desire of the students in my classes as much as Eleazar Wheelock had appropriated Samson Occom’s and the teachers at the Indian boarding schools had appropriated that of their charges. I had not begun to “consider the specificity of each person’s dream [and] life story” (and her or his right to them). As I continued my scholarly work in Lacanian theory, and as I heard the life stories of those inner

city students, I began to find a justification for teaching “the mission” of that “preparation for business and society” education. But my work in relation to my scholarship was not concluded, even as I sought to conclude the aspect of my academic career that would result in a finished dissertation. Even if I was beginning to question my own desire in relation to that of others, I had not considered my own life story which reaches back to “the New World” of the 18th century and an ancestor named Samson Occom and beyond.

In “The Man Made of Words,” N. Scott Momaday writes that storytelling “is a process in which man invests and preserves himself in the context of ideas. Man tells stories in order to understand his experience, whatever it may be. The possibilities of storytelling are precisely those of understanding the human experience” (642). American Indian literature highlights the importance of storytelling for America’s First People. The life stories of a people guarantee their survival in the face of extinction resulting from, as Esha Niyogi De and Donna Uthus Gregory point out, “a culture that seems bent upon erasing individual histories and, with them, the capacity to imagine a future in non-Western terms” (118). In “Lakota Language,” Albert White Hat Sr. writes that teaching “grammar without philosophy is teaching a dead language” (593). Even if there is some justification in teaching “Edited American English” to students of all cultures, which there is, a growing belief in Native education tells me that I have to render the implications of my pursuit philosophically. As White Hat Sr. notes, “. . . language contains great power, . . . it can be used to injure peoples’ feelings or to compliment the achievements of another human being, . . . it can be used to harm or to honor and bless . . . language contains the power to give life or to take it away and that it therefore must be used with respect” (594).

The imperative of “Indian education” in “Train Time,” then, “Mark it/Remember it” can be aimed at me and at all teachers of language. As N. Scott Momaday points out, “It seems to me that in a certain sense we are all made of words; that our most essential being consists in language. It is the element in which we think and dream and

act, in which we live our daily lives. There is no way in which we can exist apart from the morality of a verbal dimension" (636).

As Nelson admits in *Writing and Being*, we are Westernized, "rational creatures" (37). Therefore, "public writing"—rational writing that works out complex thought processes via rhetorical strategies formalized at the dawn of Western civilization—is necessary so that we can share our stories. Writing in order to convey one's story is what Momaday would call "moral" writing. Lacan would call it using the symbolic to treat the real, a treatment of the symptom that is ethical because, in coming from the real, such writing involves speaking well the losses that burden us and the effects of which can be "cured" in no other way.⁴ This real is what Nelson identifies as the place *where I feel inside*. Writing from the real means, in a sense, coming home—to the place where I was born, live, and in which I have to grow.

. . . [I]f we do not begin in feeling, our rationality becomes a cold, dead, dangerous thing. It is a skeleton without a heart. So we must take back our hearts. This is the part of the writing process, and of our being, that we have so often been educated to ignore. When we take back our feelings, our words and our being come alive, and things are never the same again. (37)

Taking back our feelings through our words is the Indian storytelling/language imperative of any "native American education." In McNickle's story, it is clear that Major Miles' concept of doing his duty would never be the same once he'd marked and remembered Eneas Lamartine and what was being done to him and the other Native children on the railroad platform and what would happen to them at the Indian boarding school. As a teacher, I've always espoused that *all* writing, even the most academic of it, is autobiographical. In the introduction to "Train Time," Paula Gunn Allen wrote that by the time McNickle's "Train Time" was published in the late 1930s, "*McNickle*

had found his way back to himself more deeply in *Native issues, history and life*,” and that “[p]erhaps we can take from this some hope for little *Eneas Lamartine*” (217). As did Occom, McNickle, writing in the language of his people’s oppressors so that they might understand, tells his life story and the stories of the lives of his people utilizing the Westernized artifice of fiction. Indian storytellers aren’t as certain as Western writers and critics of the importance of such distinctions as “fiction” and “nonfiction.” All stories are true; they are about what is real.

Another imperative of a *native education* for all, an education in language that *connects one to her or his* “*particular place by birth*,” that “*belongs to*” *he or she* “*by birth*,” that “*originates in a particular place*,” that “*lives or grows naturally in a particular region*” *without and within*, is that those of us who teach what is pedagogically, broadly described as “English” do so in the spirit of, above all else, using language as Nelson describes it—as “an instrument of creation” (8). That is the teaching of “English” with all its implications realized, a teaching *to* each person’s specific stories, dreams, and hopes, in the spirit of each. Such a heart-felt rhetoric might lead to heart-felt decision making where the desire of each individual is privileged. That privileging of desire based upon where one is born, where one lives and can grow, I believe, should be at the core of all work in the field “over-rationally” defined as composition/rhetoric. Momaday’s notion “that in a certain sense we are all made of words; that our most essential being consists in language” reflects the Lacanian belief of an individual being determined in language, a determination that is expressed by Ragland as the “the specificity of each person’s dream . . . [and] life story” which “state[s] the obvious: each of us is unique, whatever our similarities may be.” The necessity of heeding the Indian imperative of native American education to “respect language,” to share our stories, is sounded in the following passage from Momaday’s *House Made of Dawn* that Nelson uses as the first epigraph in *Writing and Being*:

In the white man's world, language . . . has undergone a process of change . . . his regard for language — for the Word itself — as an instrument of creation has diminished nearly to the point of no return. It may be that he will perish by the word. (8)

Mark it. Remember it. The act of deculturing others diminishes our own culture and our place as individuals within it.

Utilizing some of the “Westernized” words of Samson Occom’s, words that were written in the white man’s language, I created the following poem:

The Diary of Samson Occom

He put his life into words
 his life
as a protestant preacher
 his life
as a preacher and teacher before
the Society for Propagating the Gospel
 his life
two years in England
raising money for an Indian
Charity School
 his life
funds misdirected for founding
a white Dartmouth College instead

He put his life into words
 not of his mother tongue
in the words of a language
he had not known until turning 16
he wrote of his life until then in words
 not of his mother tongue
he wrote of his life until then

in very few words

*I was born a Heathen
and Brought up in Heathenism
until I was between 16 & 17 Years of age,
at a place calld Mohegan . . .*

He put his life into words that were
not of his mother tongue
the English learned first at 16
in the language that was
not his mother tongue
he would write

*Having Seen and heard Several Representations,
In England and Scotland [two words crossed out]
by . . . Some gentlemen in America, Concerning me,
and finding many [crossed out: misrepresentations]
gross Mistakes in their account, -
I thought it my Duty to Give
a Short, Plain, and Honest Account of my Self
whilst I am still alive, yet to doe Justice
to myself and to those
who may desire [two words crossed out]
to know something concerning [word crossed out] me . . .*

Samson Occom placed
his life
into words and we read
his life
in the words of another
who read enough of
his life
to write of Mohegan
at the center of the most fervent

religious awakening
in New England
and how two converted
were *Sarah Occom* and Samson her son,
how Sarah convinced
a good reverend
who years later *misdirected*
the Indian
Charity School funds
Sarah convinced him
to teach her son
the white man's language
to teach him
despite the fact that she
had no money to pay for lessons
convinced him that
she could *contribute some labor*
to Reverend Wheelock
to other family members

Samson Occom placed
his life
into the words of the white man
because he *believed*
the Indian had to conform
to white ways
conform to the ways of the white man
in order to be saved
conform to the ways of the white man
who slaughtered his mother's tribe at Mystic River
conform to the ways of the white man
who would crowd out Mohegans
and all of the rest of the New England tribes
conform to ways of the white man
who brought *intemperance*

licentiousness
and *disease*
conform to the ways of the white man
because his ways
Samson Occom could see
were to be the New World way
conform to the ways of the white man
the American way
and hope that someday
the white man would be better for it

Samson Occom placed
his life
into the words of the white man
because he believed
it was what he must do
but not his whole life
in the language not
of his mother tongue
he does not write much
of his wife
he does not write much
of daughters and sons
he does not write much of
his personal life
poverty
depression
alcohol
He does not write of these things
in the white man's words

Sometimes there are not
the words for life
in a language that's not
your mother tongue

“Having Seen and heard Several Representations, In England and Scotland . . . by . . . Some gentlemen in America, Concerning [himself] . . . and finding many gross Mistakes in their account,” Samson Occom felt the need to tell his own story, to share his life in the language that was not his own so that those who most needed to “hear it” could understand and mark and remember it. Occom’s desire provides the lesson of that which is the imperative of Native education in the literature that is American Indian storytelling.

NOTES

¹Paula Gunn Allen describes such reprogramming and its objectives in her introduction to “First Days at Carlisle,” noting that “the boys and girls at Carlisle Indian School were trained to be cannon fodder in American wars, to serve as domestics and farm hands, and to leave off all ideas or beliefs that came to them from their native communities, including and particularly their belief that they were entitled to land, life, liberty, and dignity” (112).

²The issue of Anglo-Europeans (and thus Americans) bringing “human civility” to an indigenous population is chilling in these post-9/11/01 days. Writing from his ethnocentric late 19th early 20th centuries point of view, Love secularizes his cause in writing (much as the government of the United States secularizes its cause against terrorists, and those who harbor them, who all happen to be Muslim) by stating his intention to examine what occurred to Samson Occom and his people as a “problem of civilization” rather than religion. “The main inquiry has been whether the Indian is capable of being permanently established in the ways of civilized life; and, if so, what conditions will best accomplish this end” (1). The echoes of that language in our government’s declarations that “we” are not fighting a religious war, but rather one of civilization seems rather chilling considering the outcome of the “conditions” and means chosen to “best accomplish” the end of protecting Western civilization from the American Indians by imposing that civilization upon them.

³ See *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*. Pages 156 and 235.

⁴ See “Function and field of speech and language” in *Écrits: A Selection*. Here Lacan states that, “Analysis can have for its goal only the advent of a true speech and the realization by the subject of his history in relation to a future” (88). “[T]he subject constitutes himself in the search for truth” (95). *Television*. Lacan discusses treating the real with the symbolic (and what happens when one doesn’t) by noting “There is no ethic beside that of the Well-spoken . . .” (22).

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But the Shadow of Her Story: Narrative Unsettlement, Self-Inscription, and Translation in Pauline Johnson's *Legends of Vancouver*

Deena Rymhs

I am a storiér, and my stories enfold the creation of a voice, a time, and a place that is always in motion, or visionary transmotion. And the stories create me. I say that because the circumstances of reading and critical interpretation create stories and the storiér.

Gerald Vizenor, *Postindian Conversations*.

Narrative and identity are performed simultaneously ... the self in question is a self defined by and transacted in narrative process.

Paul John Eakin, *How Our Lives Become Stories: Making Selves*.

E. Pauline Johnson, or Tekahionwake—the Mohawk name she adopted for herself—was one of Canada's major poets during the turn of the century. As well as an accomplished writer, she was a public performer who toured throughout Canada, the United States, and Britain. Johnson's dexterity as a writer is evidenced by her wide array of publications—from adventure stories about Indian life which she published in popular magazines, plays she performed onstage, and poetry which appeared in collected volumes, to traditional stories of the Squamish people later published under the title *Legends of Vancouver* (1911). Though her writing fell out of literary favor shortly after her death in 1913, her stage career and written work met tremendous success during her lifetime. Recent reappraisals of Johnson's literary contribution have restored her former monumental status in Canadian

and Native writing.¹ She is an intriguing figure to critics not only because of her dual career as a writer and performer, but also because of a double life that took root in several other aspects of her identity, fitting of a woman whose name Tekahionwake translates as “double wampum” or “double life.”²

Pauline Johnson was of mixed-blood ancestry. Her father was a Mohawk chief of the Six Nations Reserve in Ontario. Her mother, an English relative of American writer William Dean Howells, came to Canada from a Loyalist family in Ohio. Johnson’s dual ancestry was something she embraced, even spectacularized for her audiences. She is famed for her performances in which she would appear in a buckskin dress—complete with rabbit pelts, a knife, and scalp—and reemerge in an evening gown for the second half of the program. Johnson took adamant pride in her Native heritage. She described herself as “the saga singer of her own people, the bard of the noblest folk the world has ever seen, the sad historian of her own heroic race.”³ Much of her writing deals with Native cultures and issues, curiously yoked with western, European literary forms. Interestingly, Johnson’s writing reflects the two worlds in which she was poised.

Legends of Vancouver plays out these different cultural influences on a textual level. Though much attention has been directed to the way in which Johnson’s poetry and short stories blend together distinct aesthetics and traditions, *Legends of Vancouver* equally reveals the narrative strategies Johnson deployed to negotiate cultural differences. This book is a collection of legends passed down to Johnson by the Squamish chief Su-á-pu-luck, better known to colonial Canada as Joe Capilano. Johnson first met the Salish leader in 1906 in London, where he was part of a delegation of West Coast chiefs voicing concerns over land rights in Canada. The context of their meeting points to the tense relations between Coastal Native groups and the post-Confederate Canadian government. Government prohibition of potlatch ceremonies, combined with the presence of residential schools and missions, continued to wear away at the fabric, traditions, and practices of Coastal Native life. The changes facing West Coast indigenous groups during the period in which Johnson collected and later wrote the

legends form a subtext to the publication. The stories tell of cultural contact, colonization, and resistance, the struggle to maintain a culture's traditions in the face of modernization and encroaching settler activity.

Legends of Vancouver is more, however, than an ethnographic sketch of Squamish culture. Just as much as the chief's stories articulate the changing reality of his people, Johnson's writing of these stories becomes her own statement of identity. Similar to Mary Louise Pratt's concept of autoethnography, the narratives in this collection are cross-pollinated instances of "the interactive, improvisational dimensions of colonial encounters" (7). Produced from a contact zone—Pratt's accompanying term that purposefully describes Johnson's mediation of Squamish and Mohawk tribal cultures, colonial and indigenous influences, and written and oral traditions—*Legends of Vancouver* is a resultantly hybrid text. Johnson patterns her own self-representations out of a strategic crossing of discourses as she brings the master-narratives of imperial Canada into dialogue with the histories and narratives of the Iroquois and Pacific Coast Salish. In her playful exchanging of tribal and colonial perspectives, Johnson embodies Gerald Vizenor's emblem of the "crossblood"—"a postmodern tribal bloodline"⁴ whose survivance bears the signature of the trickster and whose intercultural mediation befits a personality who assumed various cultural poses.

Narrative unsettlement

In the short stories Johnson relates from her encounters with Su-á-pu-luck, the intermingling of different cultural narratives undermines any unitary, authoritative perspective and voice. "The Two Sisters," the first story in this collection, presents alternative histories of a pair of mountains, which in their naming reflect different cultural frames of reference. The name of the mountains familiar to many of Johnson's English-Canadian readers, "The Lions of Vancouver," confers colonial entitlement with its obvious reference to monarchy and less-obvious reference to the lions of Trafalgar Square in London. Yet shortly after

the narrator explains the origin of “the Lions,” she follows it with an alternative history told by West Coast Indians:⁵

But the Indian tribes do not know these peaks as “The Lions.” Even the chief whose feet have so recently wandered to the Happy Hunting Grounds never heard the name given them until I mentioned it to him one dreamy August day, as together we followed the trail leading to the canyon. He seemed so surprised at the name that I mentioned the reason it had been applied to them, asking him if he recalled the Landseer Lions in Trafalgar Square. Yes, he remembered those splendid sculptures, and his quick eye saw the resemblance instantly. (11)

The narrator’s double-awareness of the etiology behind both names signals her position between their respective ideologies. At the same time, these different ideologies, represented here in the naming of the two mountains, co-exist rather than compete within Johnson’s writing. As the narrator emphasizes, the version one tells is contingent on the exigencies of the teller:

But the “call of the blood” was stronger, and presently he referred to the Indian legend of those peaks—a legend that I have reason to believe is absolutely unknown to thousands of Pale-faces who look upon “The Lions” daily, without the love for them that is in the Indian heart, without knowledge of the secret of “The Two Sisters.”⁶ (11)

If the Squamish teller is unused to calling the mountains by their colonial name, Johnson’s Euro-Canadian readership would be altogether unversed in the Squamish legend. Johnson’s own narrative resists undercutting one cultural perspective for another. She dislodges the hegemonic authority of the Anglo-colonial name by presenting it

alongside the Squamish legend. By placing these different accounts proximally, Johnson assigns them equal status and effects a synchronicity in her writing. An instance of “literary infiltration”—Dee Horne’s term for the process in which “[p]reviously denied knowledge ... estranges the basis of the authority of the dominant discourse by infiltrating the values and rules of recognition of American Indians into settler discourse”—*Legends of Vancouver* “unsettles” assumptions of colonial dominance.⁷ Bifurcated in perspective, the tales in *Legends of Vancouver* bring together discrete histories and accounts of a people.

By recuperating a nonwestern perspective, the stories in this collection refuse semiotic domination of official history and discourse. “A Squamish Legend of Napoleon” presents a counter-narrative to western chronicles by re-encoding a significant episode in history with the instrumental role played by the Squamish. This tale attributes Napoleon’s military prowess to a Squamish talisman that serendipitously makes its way over the ocean into Napoleon’s hands. Napoleon’s power diminishes when he loses the serpent bone, which according to the Squamish teller, results in his defeat at Waterloo. Upon hearing the chief’s version of this historical event, the narrator reacts with some surprise: “I looked at him curiously; he had been telling me the oddest mixture of history and superstition, of intelligence and ignorance, the most whimsically absurd, yet impressive, tale I ever heard from Indian lips” (105). In her response, the narrator unwittingly destabilizes the boundaries between “history and superstition,” “intelligence and ignorance,” absurdity and mastery. Her tone of surprise and bafflement appropriately conveys the interpretive dislocation going on within the text.

This same interpretive unsettlement occurs in “Deadman’s Island.” The history of this island makes for an interesting topological reflection: a scene of a battle between two Indian tribes, the island later became a Squamish burial ground as well as a cemetery for White settlers. Deadman’s Island serves as a suitable *topos* for the vying of cultural possession. This struggle for cultural ownership extends to the

struggle for interpretive authority between the Native and non-Native narratives in Johnson's text:

"People seem to think it valuable," I said.
"There is a lot of litigation—of fighting going on now about it."

"Oh! that way always," he said, as though speaking of a long accepted fact. "Always fight over that place. Hundreds of years ago they fight about it ... never be settled what that place is, who it belong to, who has right to it. No, never settle." (92)

This exchange between the narrator and chief underscores the different cultural claims to Deadman's Island. The tillicum explains: "'The white people call it Deadman's Island. That is their way; but we of the Squamish call it Island of Dead Men'" (96). Though the difference is subtle, the linguistic change denotes a movement from the singular to the collective—represented in the change from "Deadman's" to "Dead Men"—and from possessive to descriptive—in the movement from "Deadman's Island" to "Island of Dead Men."⁸ By foregrounding the chief's perspective, this story enacts a re-naming of geographical signifiers of his people's history. The version that the chief tells is not impervious to other accounts—it does not stake its claim by eliding or discounting competing perspectives. Rather, these stories co-opt the discourse of colonialism in their self-narratives and pattern themselves out of an imbrication of histories and voices.

The chief further undercuts the notion of a single, authoritative history in his attention to the variations of stories among and within Coastal Native groups. In "The Two Sisters," the Squamish teller reveals that the title of his story varies from tribe to tribe and speaker to speaker. The story he tells is commonly referred to as "The Two Sisters," as well as "The Chief's Daughters" (12). What these two titles suggest is that the stories themselves are not fixed, but open to negotiation. This understanding of oral narratives as intrinsically dynamic is not a new idea to "storiers" or to those who study their

creations. Anthropologists have devoted similar attention to the way stories are shaped by their tellers and by the particular values of a people. The adaptive and syncretic quality of oral narrative processes emerges in “Point Grey” where the teller explains the hybrid name of the place: “‘It is not altogether Squamish, but half Fraser River language. The Point was the dividing-line between the grounds and waters of the two tribes; so they agreed to make the name ‘Homolsom’ from the two languages’” (66). The merging and blending of different perspectives, represented here again in the naming of place, posit indigenous legends and naming practices as collective and collaborative.⁹ The stories that the tillicum relates are unfixed, hybrid accounts that vary not only among groups but also among speakers.

Johnson alternates between indigenous and western narratives at the same time as she points out the plural and provisional nature of Native stories. In her preface to “The Deep Waters,” the narrator acknowledges the different versions of the flood myth that exist among indigenous groups: “Amongst the red nations of America I doubt if any two tribes have the same ideas regarding the Flood” (44). The narrator emphasizes the variations of flood stories and their contingency upon place and world-view. She contrasts Iroquois and Salish accounts to emphasize the sophistication of the latter:

I here quote the legend of “mine own people,”
the Iroquois tribes of Ontario, regarding the Deluge.
I do this to paint the colour of contrast in richer
shades, for I am bound to admit that we who pride
ourselves on ancient intellectuality have but a
childish tale of the Flood when compared with the
jealously preserved annals of the Squamish . . . (45)

The narrator counterpoints two flood legends out of the many that exist among Native groups, stories that are as sophisticated as their Judeo-Christian counterpart. This attention to the multiple flood stories challenges monologic Christian mythology while it also expresses Johnson’s complex and divided identity. On one hand, she aligns

herself with the Iroquois with her reference to “mine own people.” However, the marking and bracketing of her cultural identity with quotation marks suggest the narrator’s detached stance from the people she here defines as her own.¹⁰ This gesturing toward one’s “people,” James Clifford notes in *The Predicament of Culture*, is a former anthropological convention signifying the cultural group for whom the ethnographer would speak. The appearance of this strategy in Johnson’s text invites a perception of her as a cultural interpreter, mediating between Squamish and Mohawk cultures, basing her insights on both experiential and interpretive authority. “Experiential authority,” Clifford explains, “is based on a ‘feel’ for the foreign context, a kind of accumulated savvy and a sense of the style of a people or place,” a mode that “assert[s] prior to any specific research hypothesis or method the ‘I was there’ of the ethnographer as insider and participant” (35). Interpretive anthropology, in response, “contributes to an increasing visibility of the creative (and in a broad sense poetic) processes by which ‘cultural’ objects are invented and treated as meaningful” (38). This interplay of experiential and interpretive anthropological models enriches our understanding of the ethnographic import of Johnson’s writing. At once observer and participant, narrator and character, Johnson’s arbitration of cultural and narrative boundaries becomes an extension of her similarly complex, liminal identity.

Duplicitous poses: where identity *lies*

In a self-critical process that Clifford identifies with later ethnographic efforts, a displacement occurs in which the participant-observer becomes a subject of study in his / her own text. A crisis, or “predicament,” in ways of knowing occasion a notion of ethnography “not as the experience and interpretation of a circumscribed ‘other’ reality, but rather as a constructive negotiation involving at least two, and usually more, conscious, politically significant subjects” (Clifford 41). Ascendant developments in anthropology cast the ethnographer “as a discrete character” in the narrative (Clifford 44). This estimation

of the participant-observer as negotiating his/her own identity while simultaneously interpreting another culture is consonant with Johnson's role in the legends. *Legends of Vancouver* is an "intersubjective" articulation, a cross-inscription of two, and possibly more, subjects engaged in the dialogic and discursive transaction of identity.

This view of Johnson exploring her identity *vis à vis* the chief's stories is evident throughout the collection, and might be said to subtend the structure and operation of the entire work. Johnson enters the chief's stories as a character, weaves a narrative around herself that centers on her own identity. Though she was a welcome visitor, it is important to keep in mind that Johnson was still an outsider to Squamish culture. "I was hardly sure of my ground," she reveals to the reader in an aside (28). At times, the narrator is uncertain in her interactions with the teller, afraid to reveal herself for fear of marking her difference. Initially, she shows hints of self-consciousness as the chief prompts her to relinquish her authority as a detached observer. When the chief queries her about her own cultural beliefs, she describes her responses as "evasive" and "uncertain" (27). Gradually, the narrator comes to recognize the same afforded to her to work her subjectivity in the stories. When later asked about her belief in mystical signs, she displays a nascent ease with her offering up her identity in the stories:

"I shall believe whatever you tell me, Chief," I answered. "I am only too ready to believe. You know I come of a superstitious race, and all my association with the Pale-faces has never yet robbed men of my birthright to believe strange traditions."
(54)

The narrator's avowal of "superstitious[ness]," her belief in "strange traditions," represents her capitulation to what western discourse dubs the "mythical-imaginary" (Rainwater 13).¹¹ What I wish to foreground here is not Johnson's choice of terms, but her willingness to participate in the narrative construction of her subjectivity. In this passage, she

insists upon her “uncontamination” by the White world—that her acculturation has not robbed her of her own indigenous beliefs. The assurance she simulates is, inversely, an index of self-consciousness, of a yet unstable identity charting new geographical and narrative territory.

“The Grey Archway,” for example, becomes a story of the narrator’s own search for belonging—both as a visitor on new terrain and as a mixed-blood woman with multiple allegiances. Johnson’s teller responds to her desire by sharing the story with her:

He gave a swift glance at my dark skin, then nodded. “You are one of us,” he said, with evidently no thought of a possible contradiction. “And you will understand, or I should not tell you. You will not smile at the story, for you are one of us.”

“I am one of you, and I shall understand,” I answered. (81)

With the story, the *tillicum* offers Johnson a sense of inclusion. Though Johnson was from a distinct nation, a “swift glance at [her] dark skin” invites this shared identification. However, Johnson’s belonging is conditional upon her fully understanding the story. This protracted affirmation of identity becomes especially curious when she initially misapprehends the ‘Grey Archway’:

“What a remarkable whim of Nature!” I exclaimed, but his brown hand was laid in a contradictory grasp on my arm, and he snatched up my comment almost with impatience.

“No, it was not Nature,” he said. “That is the reason I say you will understand—you are one of us—you will know what I tell you is true. The Great Tyee did not make that archway, it was—” here his voice lowered— “it was magic, red man’s medicine and magic—you savvy?” (82)

Despite her careful responses to the chief, the narrator first navigates her initiation erroneously. Her self-consciousness becomes increasingly visible as the tillicum admonishes her: “‘You have not heard of Yaada?’ he questioned. Then, fortunately, he continued without waiting for a reply. He well knew that I had never heard of Yaada, so why not begin without preliminary to tell me of her?” (83). The narrator’s discomfort nears impatience here, and causes her to speak out of role. In this passage, we see a self-conscious narrator whose position slides between narrator and character. This collapsing of identities becomes especially problematic in her narrative frame where her subjective experiences take over the story. At the end of “The Grey Archway,” she relates a mystical sign that affirms her cultural belonging—two silver fish that are reincarnations of Yaada and her mate. By the end of the story, the narrator’s identity is no longer in question: “He smiled. The anxious look vanished. ‘I was right,’ he said; ‘you do know us and our ways, for you are one of us’” (87). Accordingly, one of the themes of this story is the precariousness of identity. The narrator’s self-conscious identity pervades the entire story—indeed, *becomes* the story. In the frame that encloses the tillicum’s story, then, the narrator’s own preoccupations shadow the meaning.

E. P. Johnson: the ergon-parergon of this text¹²

Much like Derrida’s deconstructive theory of parergonality, which posits the frame as both containing and constituting the art-object, Johnson’s entry in and out these stories from the so-called margins is an essential, central part of the story. “[A] frame,” Beth Jörgensen summarizes Derrida, “far from being supplementary or extra to the work itself, is an integral part of it, and plays an active role in its structure and meaning” (83). From the parergonial edges of her text, Johnson penetrates and recedes out of the narrative to tease out the duplicitous poses of observer-participant, editor-author and narrator-character. The boundaries between parergon-ergon and editor-author

dissolve in this text to remind us that “the editorial function is not neutral or transparent, but charged with meaning and the making of meaning” (Jørgensen 84). More than a structuring device, then, the frame that Johnson employs becomes a vital part of the stories’ meaning.

The interaction between frame and body, subtext and text, is set into motion by Johnson, who conflates the tillicum’s account with her own in the stylized narrative she presents. The stories read smoothly and seamlessly, with an absence of mnemonic repetition, verbal interjection, and other oral registers one might expect in the tillicum’s spoken version. On occasion, quotation marks signal the tillicum’s story, but at other points there are no quotation marks to signal the end of the narrator’s frame and the beginning of the tillicum’s story. Even when the narrator distinguishes the tillicum’s narrative from her own, we cannot forget that she re-tells, and thus represents, the story. Johnson’s selected appearances within the chief’s stories actually point to her exploitation of editorial authority in the remainder of the narratives to naturalize her invention. As Derrida reminds us, “what has produced and manipulated the frame puts everything to work in order to efface the frame effect” (73).

The frame is where Johnson explicitly resumes narrative control and intervenes in the meaning of the stories. It is in these frames that the narrator often appends a moral or conclusion that the chief’s story might resist. In “The Lure in Stanley Park,” her concluding commentary extends the meaning of the chief’s story to a universal or definable attribute of Coastal Indians:

More than any other legend that the Indians about Vancouver have told me does this tale reveal the love of the coast native for kindness and his hatred of cruelty ... To these coast tribes if a man is “kind” he is everything. And almost without exception their legends deal with rewards for tenderness and self-abnegation, and personal and mental cleanliness. (113)

The narrator here interprets the chief's story for her reader and didactically extracts the story's "teachings" from its cultural milieu. Yet her definitive ending closes in on the story's performance by interrupting the reader's interaction with the narrative. Catherine Rainwater observes that in traditional oral storytelling, "the storyteller is not necessarily responsible for bringing 'closure' to the narrative ... nor is the audience necessarily expected to arrive at close-consensus interpretations" (7). In oral narratives, implied meaning, or *implicature*, is often where meaning resides. Part of this meaning is metacritical, directed at the process of interpreting. As Dee Horne explains, *implicature* as a narrative strategy calls attention to the relation between reading practices and cultural location:

Implicature can ... effectively displace readers by drawing attention to the gaps in their knowledge and understanding. In such instances, the implied meanings that elude readers may well give them insight into the displacement that diverse American Indians experience. Confronted by their own cultural gap ... readers negotiate meanings, confront their assumptions, and deconstruct their reading strategies. (69)

Johnson's entry in the narrative to explain the "meaning" of the chief's story precludes the self-critical process that Horne outlines. Exegetically, she interprets the story's meaning for the reader, interpolates and fills in the "gaps" that may profitably be left unsolved. In the end, the narrator asserts the universality of this legend, but does not qualify this universal finding with reference to specific West Coast indigenous groups, nor does she acknowledge different possible understandings of the story. She supports her interpretation with a corollary "reading" of the West Coast Indians. Just as her universalizing of West Coast Native cultures erases difference, her own interpretation of the story cancels out other readings.

Translation: a poetics of incommensurability

“What do you call that story—a legend?”

“The white people would call it an allegory,” I
answered. He shook his head.

“No savvy,” he smiled. (58)

The interpretive lens that Johnson interposes in the stories alters their meaning and reception. The narrator approaches the legends from a literary stance, seen in her deployment of a western, literary lexicon. Her indexing of the story in such a manner posits a different reader than the Salish people whose legends she appropriates. In “The Lure in Stanley Park,” for instance, her description of the “Cathedral Trees” points to a specific, literary readership:

There is no fresco that can rival the delicacy of lace-work they have festooned between you and the far skies. No tiles, no mosaic or inlaid marbles, are as fascinating as the bare, russet, fragrant floor outspreading about their feet. They are the acme of Nature’s architecture (108)

In her description of a natural perfection that exceeds human capacity, the narrator defers to a specific, almost exclusive, literary terminology.¹³ Writing within the vein of her Romantic predecessors, Johnson brings this scene to a level of abstraction. The narrator asserts, “none of us can stand amid that majestic forest group without experiencing some elevating thoughts, some refinement of our coarser nature” (109). Curiously, the choice of words, “elevating,” and “refinement” signal the transmutation of the natural formation before her. Though she argues that no artistic rendering can capture the beauty of the trees, she imbues them with aesthetic significance, attempts to harness their magnificence with language. The description becomes paradoxical and counter-intuitive to the thing she describes.

In another register, a discrepancy emerges between the cultural community in which Johnson is situated and the interpretive community for which she writes.

At times, however, the narrator admits her intervention in the text and the limitations of language to convey the full meaning of the chief's stories. Immediately following the description of the "Cathedral Trees" are the narrator's self-conscious reflections on her entry as writer, on the changes she effects in her translation of the story:

My tillicum did not use the word "lure" in telling me this legend. There is no equivalent for the word in the Chinook tongue, but the gestures of his voiceful hands so expressed the quality of something between magnetism and charm that I have selected this word "lure" as best fitting what he wished to convey. (109)

The narrator admits the inadequacies of language that confront her in the act of translation. Although she speaks about linguistic translation here, one could extend "translation" to the process of turning the stories into a literary form, like her description of the Cathedral Trees. It extends also to the story's separation from the original teller. As the narrator admits, there is no equivalent for the oral performance, for "the gestures of his voiceful hands" (109). Severed from the performance, context, and social fabric of its teller, the written version of the stories can be fragmentary at best.

At the same time, the narrator makes provisions for her changes by stating that her written versions cannot reproduce the same meaning as their oral counterparts. The limitations of the written form are an inevitable part of the process Johnson engages. In "Post-Structuralism and Oral Literature," Arnold Krupat addresses some of the inadequacies mythographers encounter when transcribing or translating oral narratives: "We must try to imagine the performative dynamics which their approaches cannot provide, recognizing all the while that

this absence may be inevitable, the necessary consequence of what is present" (124). Krupat adds, "To note that something is missing ... is to confirm the coherence of [one's] method rather than its failure" (124). What Krupat suggests is the "lack" that results in the separation of the story from its teller and context can actually become a dimension of the writing. Veronica Strong-Boag and Carole Gerson, in their discussion of Johnson's textual methods and strategies, additionally point out that in both First Nations and popular culture studies, "meaning is continuously negotiated" and "understandings shift and develop along with performance" (12). Johnson's writing of the stories, then, is very much in keeping with the improvisational aspect of storytelling where the teller imprints herself onto the stories in the process of transmission.

In her textual rendering of the stories, Johnson attempts to recreate the performance of the telling as much as her form allows. In "The Deep Waters" the narrator sets up the occasion of the story by foregrounding the dynamic between the teller and herself:

It was on a February day that I first listened to this beautiful, human story of the Deluge. My royal old tillicum had come to see me through the rains and the mists of late winter days. The gateways of my wigwam stood open—very widely open—for his feet to enter, and this especial day he came with the worst downpour of the season.

Woman-like, I protested with a thousand contradictions in my voice, that he should venture out to see me on such a day. It was, "Oh! Chief, I am so glad to see you!" and it was "Oh! Chief, why didn't you stay at home on such a wet day—your poor throat will suffer." But I soon had quantities of hot tea for him, and the huge cup my own father always used was his (47)

This passage plays out the narrator's interaction with the tillicum. She draws attention to her own role-playing with her ironic, "womanly" protests that are undermined by her admitted anticipation for his visit. Johnson's playfulness here is of no surprise in view of her performing career.¹⁴ A consummate actress, Johnson takes her cues, spurs on her teller, and reveals a deft and trained awareness of what is required of her for the scene to unfold.

Johnson further preserves the context of the telling by drawing attention to the way the speaker relates the story. The narrator makes frequent mention of the tillicum's "half-broken English language" (82). Even though she erases the idiosyncrasies of the teller by smoothing his speech into eloquent, coherent prose, she acquaints the reader with his style. The gestures, manner, and context of the telling form a frame to the story, evident in the following description of the teller: "His inimitable gestures, strong, graceful, comprehensive, were like a perfectly chosen frame embracing a delicate painting, and his brooding eyes were as the light in which the picture hung" (11). Just as central, then, to the story's meaning is the "kinesic" dimension of its telling.¹⁵ In "The Lost Salmon-Run," the narrator describes the teller's manner at the same time as she undermines the capacity of her written form to replicate it. She says of the female klootchman who also tells her a story: "I shall not further attempt her broken English, for this is but the shadow of her story, and without her unique personality the legend is as a flower that lacks both colour and fragrance" (38-39).¹⁶ Johnson acknowledges that her writing is inherently fragmentary, a mere shadow of the story emptied of the vitality of its telling and teller. Given the limitations of written language, she honors the oral performance by admitting that it cannot be replicated.

The narrator pays reverence to the power of oral narratives by admitting the limitations of language and by receding out of the narrative when the chief begins telling his stories. Her retreat into silence is effected typographically in her written version, where a line break signals the tillicum's speech act. She receptively waits for her orator to begin his tale and observes a code of silence as listener: "Immediately I foresaw the coming legend, so crept into the shell of

monosyllables” (47). ““You know the story?” he asked. I shook my head (experience has taught me his love of silent replies, his moods of legend-telling)” (18-19). Other similar passages occur when the narrator respectfully assumes the role of listener. In this way, the narrator preserves some of the dynamics of the oral telling by depicting the communicative silence of the listener. She knows she is just as vital to the story’s telling, to allow the story to breath, grow, and develop. As she admits, “If I said the wrong thing, the coming tale might die on his lips before it was born to speech” (27). The performance extends, then, to the listener. The context that surrounds the telling actually becomes part of the telling, part of the story.

At times, the fragmentary quality of Johnson’s written accounts actually captures and strengthens the thematic elements of loss and concealment in the chief’s stories. No one is more aware than the narrator that writing these stories severs them from their origins, people, and landscape. Her written versions amplify the sense of loss that her *tillicum* conveys. In “The Lost Island,” the *tillicum*’s search for this island resonates with the endemic losses endured by the Native people. “[W]e Indians have lost many things,” the chief begins. “We have lost our lands, our forests, our game, our fish; we have lost our ancient religion, our ancient dress; some of the younger people have even lost their fathers’ language and the legends and traditions of their ancestors” (60). He laments, “We cannot call those old things back to us; they will never come up again” (60). The entire story told by the *tillicum*, and retold by Johnson, hinges on secrecy, on the hidden and cryptic undertones that extend to the equally cryptic meaning of this story. The narrator is not quite sure what the *tillicum* means when he admits, “There is something on that island that I want. I shall look for it until I die, for it is there” (61). The delayed revelation is part of the *tillicum*’s narrative strategy as well as a theme of the story. ‘It’ eludes the narrator and the reader, as it does the *tillicum*. This interpretive ambiguity resounds in the main character’s last words:

“Let not my strength die with me. Keep living for all
time my courage, my bravery, my fearlessness. Keep

them for my people that they may be strong enough
to endure the white man's rule. Keep my strength
living for them; hide it so that the Pale-face may
never find or see it." (63)

The continuance of the strength that the character invokes in this passage lies in its concealment. On a narrative level, the strength and sacredness of the story lies in its inexpressible element; its meaning cannot be pinned down, made determinate. The story, as it is written by Johnson, can only be a fragment, a shadow of the story.

Johnson's written stories thus preserve some of the thematic and performative elements of their oral counterparts. The written version of these stories can also offer something that the oral cannot, a posterity that can assure a sense of continuance in the textual, material rendering of the story. Both the narrator and the Squamish teller acknowledge this capacity of writing. The first story in this collection, "The Two Sisters," for instance, envisions the possible extinction of these oral narratives. The narrator closes with the statement: "This is the Indian legend of 'The Lions of Vancouver' as I had it from one who will tell no more the traditions of his people" (15). Johnson alludes here to the possible dissolution of the stories with the chief's death. By the time Johnson published this collection, Su-á-pu-luck had actually died of tuberculosis and Johnson, herself, was dying of breast cancer.¹⁷ The threatened extinction of these stories with the expiration of their tellers creates an even greater imperative for Johnson's writing.

There is an underlying sense throughout the telling and writing of these stories that the written version will survive when the oral may not, like the landmarks which receive similar attention. "The Siwash Rock" ends with the following assertion:

From far trans-Pacific ports, from the frozen North,
from the lands of the Southern Cross, they pass and
repass the living rock that was there before their hulls
were shaped, that will be there when their very names
are forgotten, when their crews and their captains

have taken their last voyage, when their merchandise has rotted, and their owners are known no more. But the tall, grey column of stone will still be there—a monument to one man’s fidelity to a generation yet unborn—and will endure from everlasting to everlasting. (23)

These land monuments represent a sense of immutability in a world and period of flux. The endurance and continuance attributed to the Siwash Rock coincide with Johnson’s purpose in writing the stories.¹⁸ The written version of this story, like the rock, will provide an etiological function by continuing the value of “clean fatherhood.” If the ritual the chief describes diminishes, the written record might provide for its resurgence. In this way, the writing of stories can preserve a culture’s codes, practices, and values.

A black pony and scarlet blanket

The last story of this collection, “A Royal Mohawk Chief,” enfolds many of the central considerations brought forth in this discussion—the value of written record, the place of Johnson’s own identity in the stories, and the narrative practices that develop out of cross-cultural encounters. Pulled from Johnson’s own storage of tales, this story tells of Prince Arthur of Connaught’s invitation into the Six Nations (Iroquois) Council as an honorary fifty-first chief. Impelled, in part, by Johnson’s Loyalist background, the story launches into a series of statements promoting colonial protectorship of Native peoples. “One of the great secrets of England’s success with the savage races,” the narrator extols, “has been her consideration, her respect, her almost reverence of native customs, ceremonies, and potentates” (125). In filial gratitude for the British crown’s affectionate treatment of her “Indian Children,” the council confers upon the young prince the title of chief. On one hand, the story commemorates this event, but in a text that elsewhere undermines the authority of imperial discourse, Johnson’s seemingly uncritical view of colonial / indigenous relations

and reproduction of infantilizing constructions of Native people rouse initial suspicion in this reader.

As would befit a text that emerges out of a context of cross-cultural exchange and polyphony, the meanings of this story are not so readily determinable. Just as much as this story avows to the beneficent uses of colonial power, "A Royal Mohawk Chief" pays equal tribute to Johnson's Iroquois heritage. With a swell of pride, the narrator describes a scene in which Onwanonsyshon, head chief of the Mohawks, escorts Prince Arthur to his ceremonial installation. Decorated in "full native costume," with a scarlet blanket of British broadcloth draped around his shoulders, the Mohawk chief rides alongside the Prince's carriage. "An odd spectacle to be traversing on a country road," the narrator remarks, "an English prince and an Indian chief, riding amicably side by side" (126). Within the milieu of this text, of course, such a meeting of opposites is not so atypical. This procession continues as the prince meets his "strange reception" of "three hundred full-blooded Iroquois braves and warriors," painted in war colors, and brandishing tomahawks, scalping-knives and various other war implements in ceremonial demonstration (126). With unleashed pleasure, Johnson describes the combined terror and honor that this scene evokes in the prince. With a sidelong maneuver so subtle that it is barely detectable, Johnson also challenges any single, definitive impression of the story.

Following her description of the prince's ritual induction, the narrator slips into her narrative frame to reflect on her place of writing: "As I write, I glance up to see, in a corner of my room, a draping scarlet blanket, made of British broadcloth" (129). In delayed revelation, we realize Johnson's personal and ancestral connection to the story, "for the chief who rode the jet-black pony so long ago," she uncovers, "was the writer's father" (129). As this story becomes more recognizably a tribute to her father, we turn back to the title, "A Royal Mohawk Chief," and ask, is the figure who inspired the story the prince or her father? This ambiguity, I want to suggest, points to a doubling of identities. The prince and chief represent the balancing of cultures and

narratives in Johnson's writing. The fraternal symmetry between the two men is instilled in the following inscription:

Many of these facts I have culled from a paper that lies on my desk; it is yellowing with age, and bears that date, "Toronto, October 2, 1869," and on the margin is written, in a clear, half-boyish hand, "Onwanonsyshon, with kind regards from your brother-in-chief, Arthur." (129)

This image emphasizes the reciprocity between the prince and chief—an emblem of the intercultural and intertextual exchange within Johnson's text.¹⁹ Quite like the legends themselves, the inscription memorializes an encounter and friendship that has withstood the passing of time. This final image confers, self-reflexively, the importance of Johnson's own writing act.

As an intersubjective articulation not strictly limited to its teller and interlocutor, *Legends of Vancouver* testifies to the different personal and cultural investments of story, the ability of story to mediate between ostensibly discrete worlds. Life stories are not so much written, but lived, performed, and improvised in the presence of another. As Annie York, a 'Nlaka'pamux storyteller puts it, "They are really not legends. No. That's the story of life" (184). *Legends of Vancouver* is the story of many lives—the chief's, his people's, as well as Johnson's. The heteroglossic impulse behind Johnson's presentation of the stories serves as an extension of an author whose own identity and aesthetic interests were spread, and whose life story, she recognized, would be an intertext in someone else's narrative.

NOTES

For the initial discussions that led to this paper, I wish to thank my doctoral supervisor at Queen's University, Glenn Willmott.

¹ Johnson's place in the formation of a Canadian literary canon has received a great deal of reconsideration. Carole Gerson and Mary Elizabeth Leighton are two critics who examine Johnson's public and critical reception *vis à vis* the construction of a national literary identity. Though dissimilar in their particular focus, Gerson and Leighton both underscore the point that Johnson's reception by popular audiences and literary critics is, in itself, a rich site of analysis for understanding the "construction of gender, race, ethnicity, empire, value and national literary history" (Gerson, "The Most Canadian of All Canadian Poets" 100). For the most recent, comprehensive study of Johnson's life and career, see Carole Gerson and Veronica Strong-Boag's *Paddling Her Own Canoe: The Times and Texts of E. Pauline Johnson (Tekahionwake)*.

² In Iroquois culture, wampums were woven bands of shells. As well as a form of currency, they represented the history and life-force of the people. Johnson described the wampum as "the history, literature, seal and coinage of the Iroquois." To a London interviewer who asked about the wampum, she also added, "You have the biggest in your British museum." From *The Sketch*. June 13, 1894. Archives and Research Collections, McMaster University.

³ Quoted by Ernest Thompson Seton in his introduction to Johnson's *Shagganappi* (1913).

⁴ From *Crossbloods: Bone Courts, Bingo, and Other Reports* (vii-viii).

⁵ The term "narrator" in my discussion invariably denotes Johnson's female speaker whose own narrative frames the Squamish teller's stories. To avoid confusion, I will refer to Su-á-pu-luck as "the Squamish teller," or by Johnson's own typical naming of him as "the tillicum" and "the chief."

⁶ "The Two Sisters" refers to the chief's account of the mountains. In this story, a great chief offers a potlatch in honor of his two daughters who have become marrying age. At the daughters' request, the chief invites an upper coast tribe with which they are at war. The invitation

seals peace between the two tribes and occasions a “great and lasting brotherhood” (15). In recognition of their well-measured advice, the Sagalie Tyee, or all-powerful chief, immortalizes the daughters in what presently exists as the pair of mountains, the Two Sisters.

⁷ In *Contemporary American Indian Writing: Unsettling Literature*, Dee Horne introduces the term “literary infiltration” in response to Diana Brydon’s concept of “literary contamination” (Horne 22). Horne coins this corresponding term to foreground the creative agency of Native writers and the more positive, transformative practices that come out of cross-cultural encounters.

⁸ It is worth noting that the title given to this published version does not retain the name used by the chief. While Johnson gives voice to the Squamish legend, the title appears to reify a White, settler perspective. Johnson was not solely culpable for such transmutations. Editorial decisions at successive publication stages also altered the presentation of the stories. For instance, Johnson wanted the collection to be called “Legends of the Capilano” to reflect the cultural specificity and origin of the stories. The title the stories were given instead, *Legends of Vancouver*, suggests their colonial expropriation by attributing the stories to a place whose name memorializes the British explorer, George Vancouver, rather than the First Nations people who first inhabited the territory.

⁹ This amalgam of place names suggests the importance of intertribal relations. As anthropologist Wayne Suttles observes, the notion of community among the Salish was not limited to dialect, language, or ecological boundaries (220). Marriage, ceremony, kinship, and economic survival all played a role in defining “community.” The syncretic naming practices to which the chief refers in this story emphasize discursive exchange as equally vital in forging and preserving intertribal relations.

¹⁰ Johnson’s posture as she draws on Six Nations oral traditions invites closer examination. Though some of Johnson’s other writings—her narrative poems, for instance—show traces of an oral heritage, many critics question her authority on Six Nations oratorical traditions. Strong-Boag and Gerson suggest that Johnson’s knowledge of the Mohawk language was scant, an estimation that, if correct, calls into question Johnson’s intimation here that she is offering a translation of a Mohawk flood story.

¹¹ There are two points that I would like to make here on the issue of language—one which concerns Johnson’s language, and the other, my own. An appended glossary to the Quarry Press (1991) edition of *Legends* points out Johnson’s use of “standard imperial English,” and makes the case that certain idioms should not be extricated from the context in which Johnson wrote. Despite contemporary readers’ sensitivity toward the derogatory racial constructions Johnson’s terminology might suggest, they are reminded that “[a]ll language use is time bound” (135).

I would also like to admit the inadequacies of my own language, especially in this section where I defer to the terms “otherworldly” and “mystical” to describe the realm invoked by the chief. Such language, I realize, points to its own semiotic limitations and “the culturally determined boundaries of ‘reality’” (Rainwater 13). Wayne Suttles further observes in his ethnographic study of the Salish that he could find “no real/mythical or natural/supernatural dichomoties of Coast Salish thought” (92).

¹² This appellation was inspired by Beth Jörgensen’s analysis of Elena Poniatowska’s editorial role in the collaborative *testimonio*, *La noche de Tlatelolco*.

¹³ This conspicuous oscillation between oral and literary discourse has fascinated many of Johnson’s critics, including Veronica Strong-Boag and Carole Gerson, who similarly point out the dialogic quality of Johnson’s *Legends*.

¹⁴ Johnson’s life as a professional performer casts an interesting light on her role in these stories. For more extensive discussion of Johnson’s career as a performer, see Marcus Van Steen’s *Pauline Johnson: Her Life and Work* and George Lyon’s “Pauline Johnson: A Reconsideration.”

¹⁵ Catherine Rainwater borrows the term “kinesic” from Andrew Wiget’s “Telling the Tale: A Performance Analysis of a Hopi Coyote Story.” She describes the kinesic dimension of oral storytelling as the gestures tellers use to “both express and delimit their own authority to suggest that the story is greater than the storyteller, that storytellers are not the final arbiters of meaning, and that, in fact, the story as told is a

variant, not a 'definitive text' belonging to a particular 'author'" (26-27).

¹⁶ This female teller was likely the same individual Johnson initially acknowledged as an equal collaborator in the stories. In their earlier publication in the *Mother's Magazine*, several of the stories are attributed to two tellers, Su-á-pu-luck and his wife, Lixwelut (Mary Agnes). In a later phase, the stories were modified and credited mostly to Su-á-pu-luck. For further detailing of the initial publications of the stories and later editorial revisions, see Strong-Boag and Gerson.

¹⁷ *Legends of Vancouver and Flint and Feather* (1912)—a volume of poetry that became one of Johnson's most popular works—were published to procure financial support for the ailing author.

¹⁸ A further correlation between rocks and writing is fascinatingly documented in *They Write Their Dreams on the Rock Forever*, a collaborative account of the rock writings of the Interior Salish. This work draws on the oral histories of 'Nlaka'pamux and Lil'wat nations, largely through Annie York's narrative interpretations of the pictographs found along the Stein and Fraser Rivers. The sites are places of spiritual questing—where initiates go through purification and transformation rituals. At the end of training, they inscribe their visions on the nearby rock. Rock writings have also been found among the Squamish of southern British Columbia.

¹⁹ In a chapter titled "All the Stories Fit Together: Intertextual Medicine Bundles and Twins," Catherine Rainwater also explores the phenomenon of twins in Native American tribal literature. My discussion of the emblematic significance of doubling in Johnson's story owes much to Rainwater's analysis.

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REVIEW ESSAY

A Rich Addition to the Muskogee Creek National Literary Canon

Craig Womack

***A Sacred Path: The Way of the Muskogee Creeks.* Jean and Joyotpaul Chaudhury. Los Angeles, CA: UCLA American Indian Studies Center, 2001. 191 Pages. \$15 paper. ISBN 0-935626-54-9.**

A Sacred Path is perhaps the most important book on Muskogee Creek philosophy to date given the many ways it fills in gaps in the literature written about the tribe. This book does for Creeks what Alfonso Ortiz did for pueblo cultures in his landmark 1969 classic *The Tewa World: Space, Time and Becoming in a Pueblo Society*.¹ Unlike Ortiz, a member of San Juan pueblo as well as a university-trained anthropologist, the Chaudhurys are not burdened with having to prove an overarching anthropological thesis, a task that substantially affected the categories that Ortiz used and the language he employed. Not since Charles Hudson's *The Southeastern Indians*² has a book so thoroughly investigated the *ideas* that inform Creek realities rather than merely the events of Creek history, the material aspects of Creek culture, or the anthropological obsession with folk ways. One might distinguish *The Southeastern Indians* from *A Sacred Path* by observing that while Hudson extrapolates a philosophy based on speculations regarding the meaning of archaeological findings, the Chaudhurys rely on living Creek community members they have known in their own life times.

If one considers the ethnography of John Swanton in his well-known collection of Creek narratives first published by the Bureau of American Ethnology in 1929³ and later popularized in book form—as well as that of William O. Tuggle, the Indian agent whose stories Swanton carried forward into Swanton's own book which is comprised of over half of the earlier Tuggle narratives—most noticeable is the fragmented nature of both men's endeavors. Neither provide any

explanation of their field methods nor any context for the stories they recorded (although Swanton, to be fair, explored Creek culture in depth in other works). The meanings of the story collections, however, for readers who lack grounding in Creek culture, are anyone's guess. George E. Lankford, in a much more recent work entitled *Native American Legends*⁴ tries to correct this obvious oversight, but he does so from a pan-tribal perspective, summarizing the philosophy of the American southeast from a regional studies point of view rather than in relation to Creek culture since the book includes a broad sampling from southeastern tribal nations. Lankford provides a brief survey in introductory chapters and extremely concise commentary in chapter beginnings, chapters in which the stories are arranged by theme. Lankford's book of stories relies exclusively on the ethnographic record for its interpretations rather than living tribal members. The Chaudhurys' work represents the first attempt to place the stories within their complete cycles, rather than a thematic treatment, and to relate them to Creek philosophy, and other tribally-specific concerns, relying on community members to inform their assessments.

A further value of *A Sacred Path* is the Chaudhurys' "credit where credit is due" attitude. They recognize the many works written by outsiders and the contributions they have made toward understanding the tribe. Yet the Chaudhurys are willing to comment, in very specific terms, on the way in which these histories would be modified by the inclusion of Creek perspectives. A recurring theme, in fact, is that the histories have focused on the mixed-blood concessionists such as Alexander McGillivray and William McIntosh, who were major negotiators with the English and Americans, to the exclusion of a very different talent pool in the tribe, the fullblood resistance leaders who sought creative measures to deal with colonialism by looking toward the square grounds and Creek religion, people like Menawa, Opothleyahola, and Chitto Harjo. (One might note that some references to women leaders might have been refreshing and consistent with one of the chapter titles called "The Feminine Principle").

The Chaudhurys are neither hesitant to voice their views about the inadequacies of historical scholarship nor vague about the nature of these failings . In a footnote, they say, for example,

For a contemporary work that combines documentary sources with non-Indian rumors (such as the ancestry of Osceola) and conjecture but misses any settled Creek perspective, see J. Leitch Wright, Jr., *Creeks and Seminoles*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1968), specifically 60-62 and 73-101. Since the Creek perspectives are missing, Wright appears to perpetuate early white confusion (74) about who was regarded as a Creek by Creek communities, rather than by settlers, hunters, or agents. Wright's work at times appears to perpetuate, without objective documentation, many southern white perceptions of Creeks and Seminoles—about Osceola's ancestry and conjecture that "Bowles" is responsible for all the Seminoles with the name of "Bowlegs" (60-61). Wright also fails to distinguish Creek values from the massive onslaught of colonialism which resulted in the rubbing off of Anglo values on some Creeks. Further, without an understanding of the classic Creek economy, he portrays the unregulated pursuit of deer as a Creek preoccupation (71). It would take a separate review to illustrate the errors of Wright when he speculates about Creek values. His work is much more valuable as a review of non-Indian documents about Creeks and Seminoles but needs to be supplemented with Creek views. (66n.4)

In short, the Chaudhurys are willing to single out specific critics and their deficiencies. Many other major works receive similar treatment, and the Chaudhurys' complaints regarding depictions of Creeks are fascinating. These efforts are laudable. They obviously demand a

certain ethics from authors. The same scholars whose failings are pointed out are also praised when their work clarifies rather than obfuscates. No work is singled out as entirely without merit. (An Oklahoma newspaper claimed the book was an attack on white scholarship, an argument so absurd I feel no need to even address it. These critics would do well to examine their own defensiveness before they evaluate Native scholarship. The periodical in question might simply assign its reviews to more qualified readers).

Just as important as the critique of existing southeastern scholarship is a way the Chaudhurys have of relating historical depictions to larger Creek concerns. One such pattern they unfold involves an understanding of the Red Stick faction that is continually deepened by multiple contexts: that of a particular traditional twin story, of Upper town and Lower town relations, of a string of leaders along the lines of Opothleyahola, Menawa, and Chitto Harjo whose aspirations and visions often ran counter to those like Alexander McGillivray, William McIntosh, and Pleasant Porter, to the Snake movement and its resistance to Oklahoma statehood, to those who today participate at stomp grounds. The deep intertwining of these ongoing historical relationships really come alive in *A Sacred Path*; whereas, other works have failed to see the big picture, noting Creek factions apart from both their predecessors and those who came after.

There are other gaps the book fills in, most significantly in relating how women are important both to Creek philosophy and praxis. While many have assumed that Creek women did not have a role in traditional councils, the Chaudhurys point to the circumstances where women did, in fact, participate. Women are at the heart of Creek story and Creek ritual, as are men, children, and other members of communities. Groups that have been completely erased from the historical record, such as Creek gay men, are given attention in the Chaudhury text, if only briefly, in terms of their roles in the tribe. This, at least, is an improvement over all the other works that simply proceed as if gays never existed.

The book also explores the Florida relations of the tribe as well as Creeks' relationships to other southeastern groups. Others have taken

on these subjects in an anthropological fashion by virtue of the study of common language families and so on, but the Chaudhurys do this by means of exemplification. One example is their oral history of Osceola, rendered through a lifelong personal acquaintance with his relatives in Florida, and it is through these oral narratives that they place him within the history of the aforementioned ever-expanding Red Stick contexts.

Almost all of the histories written about Creeks have noted the way the confederacy provided an umbrella for the inclusion of smaller groups throughout the southeast, but the Chaudhurys go further by taking on understudied aspects of identity such as how Creek community membership dealt with non-Indians, especially African Americans with Creek cultural ties (there were and are also African-American Creeks, another group in a confederacy that was able to accommodate an amazing racial and cultural diversity).

Perhaps the most important function of this work, at least for me as a member of one of the Creek traditional grounds, Tallahassee Wakokiye, is the way in which it provides so much understanding for what I have observed and participated in, deepening my love for the grounds by uniting experience with knowledge. Some information that I have been looking for a long time—and even feared might be lost—is brought to light in the Chaudhurys' book. For all of this, I can only express a heartfelt *mado*.

My wild enthusiasm for *A Sacred Path*—I keep wanting to recommend it to everyone I come across—is not lessened by some observations about potential areas of improvement. The style of the book could duplicate more of the oral storytelling that marks the origins of this remarkable work. More and fuller tellings of the oral stories rather than condensed paraphrases could make the work more informative. The challenge of representing oral material is most effectively met in Chapter Five which lays out the twin story that explains the role of Red and White sticks in one of the most developed printed versions of a Creek story to date. Textual rendering of oral narratives is least effective in places where significant stories are simply skipped or rendered in a sentence or two. For example, in the

chapter on women's roles, the authors say, "Another corn woman legend (too long to repeat here) presents the corn woman transformed into a grandmother instructing a young boy about the rules of agriculture and the necessary work ethic. Again, the authority figure here is female" (45). If there is another Corn Woman story, and we are being deprived of it simply because it is long, that is a tragedy. Who knows, this work might have been the last opportunity for such a story to appear in print. Less dramatically, if the story was included alongside the Corn Woman narrative in *A Sacred Path*, it might provide some kind of comparative framework well worth discussing.

If the book were to fully flesh out these stories, it could, and perhaps should, be twice the length it is now. Given the death of Jean Chaudhury, one can give the authors the benefit of the doubt that this work might have developed into a more exhaustive text over time had the co-author survived. Or the authors may have met up with publishing constraints beyond their control given the obsession presses now have with shorter works, even university presses which seem to be losing the battle against making the market place the highest arbitrator of aesthetics.

Further, in terms of both textual style and substance, a sense of dialogue, a person speaking, and a story unfolding would make for more compelling reading than the prose of social science summary. This is accomplished successfully on pages 155-57 when an example of elder James Scott's storytelling is rendered as if Scott himself is speaking. Curiously, this is the only place in the entire book where a specifically named storyteller is actually quoted or simulated; the others are paraphrased in highly summarized fashion or quoted without reference. Though throughout the book the Chaudhurys give credit to the storytellers who have influenced them, giving their names, most often there is no way of telling which of these narrators told the story in question on any given page. A more effective approach might have been to create a sense of a person speaking, naming him or her, and giving readers a idea of what the teller's voice sounded like in performance. The James Scott story could have been treated as a model for the entire text rather than a rare exception. Recent attempts,

such as Stephanie Berryhill's wonderful series on surviving Muskogee allottees published in the *Muskogee Nation News* and rendered in the elders' own voices and broken English, have provided invaluable models that the Chaudhurys might consider. This would further distinguish the book from the literature written about the tribe by outsiders as well as duplicate the spirit of the oral culture which they argue is central to any understanding of things Creek.

Occasionally, the book's categorizations become a bit reductive, overly anthropological in tone, an ever elusive search for cultural purity:

On top of the dislocations and fragmentations of violence, war and rebellion come the varying perceptions of at least four contemporary factions of recent and contemporary Creek society who adhere to varying fragments of Creek values. There are the deeply Christianized Creeks, many of whom have not formally learned or have forgotten or suppressed many Creek beliefs and may wander back and forth to and from traditional practices. A second faction includes mixed-bloods for whom one or both sets of clan lineages are now missing or unknown. They presently appear to number at least half the Creek population. Even in the early days of European contact, through a combination of rape, liaisons, and intermarriages, a class of culturally alienated mixed-bloods developed. Their perceptions and interests were often different from that of most full-bloods. A third faction, the bureaucrats, possibly overlaps with the other categories. This faction follows the familiar behavioral patterns of a colonial bureaucracy emulating or attempting to emulate middle-class mores. The final faction consists of the unchristianized or very superficially Christianized

Creek full-bloods who attempt to maintain Creek beliefs and practices in differing degrees. (3)

The problem is that this analysis fails to account for historical change. As a generality, these categories might have held up somewhat at the turn of the century. Today, however, many of the participants at the stomp grounds are young mixed-bloods who have formed alliances with older traditionals, the younger ones essential to the life of the grounds, in terms of their labor and enthusiasm, as are the older ones for their knowledge of the language and medicine and culture. While some, more concerned with an anthropological sense of purity than this writer, might point out the failings of this younger group, viewing them as lacking in cultural grounding, the main point is that they have returned to the grounds, and, to the best of their ability, they are trying to understand and participate in Creek traditional realities while being guided carefully about the proper way to do things. However one might argue the advantages and disadvantages of these young, mixed-blood participants—my belief is that we need to celebrate their return—it is problematic to say that “their perceptions and interests” are divergent from that of the traditionals when both groups are now often working together to keep the grounds alive.

Other phenomena—like the revival of the older form of a more inclusive confederacy since Creek groups from Alabama and Florida and other southeastern tribal relations are participating at Oklahoma Creek grounds—cannot be adequately explained by this somewhat static model with its four limited categories. The reunification of the Creek confederacy under the old ceremonial system at the grounds is a major change that promises to be a defining moment in the nation’s history.

There is another monumental change. The old breakdowns that have been used to analyze the tribe under the categories of “conservatives” and “progressives” have now broken down. Simply put, people who did not used to attend Creek ceremonies now attend. A noted presence at the stomp grounds now are Creek intellectuals, the very same group who used to stay away from the grounds which, for

them, represented backwardness, the “pull back” position. Now both groups are dancing together, taking medicine side-by-side, learning from each other. This is a first, nothing short of a historic moment for the confederacy, which deserves careful scrutiny. Further, recent formal attempts to seek healing and unity between Creek church grounds and Creek stomp grounds, recognizing the way both groups have been important in carrying forward Creek culture and language, cannot find adequate expression in the “four categories” approach.

A further possibility for the book might be an expansion of the conception of Creek traditionalism by considering the role of Creek authorship as part of Creek traditional ways (or, if this is unacceptable to the authors, at least acknowledging that Creek authorship exists). I am not an anthropologist, so I do not know how many years or how much culture it takes to make something traditional. I do know, however, that Creeks have been authoring books in English since the 1830s if you take George Stiggins work entitled *Creek Indian History: A Historical Narrative of the Genealogy, Traditions, and Downfall of the Ispocoga or Creek Indian Tribe of Indians*⁵ as a possible beginning point. Stiggins completed his text before Creek Removal in 1836 and probably started it somewhere around 1831. To my way of thinking, one hundred and seventy years of writing is long enough to constitute a tradition. Given that two of the leaders of Nuyaka Creek grounds endorsed *A Sacred Path* with very positive statements on its back cover, one might speculate that just such a relationship between Creek traditionalism and Creek authorship is conceivable.

Creeks have such an extensive body of literature that courses could now be offered in Oklahoma within the Creek Nation and elsewhere on the Creek literary canon with possibilities including the aforementioned Stiggins history and his take on the Red Stick War, Alice Callahan’s novel about Methodist missionaries among the Creeks (terrible as this piece of writing might be in terms of both its style and Creek cultural relevancy), G.W. Grayson’s autobiography about his Civil War experience fighting in a Creek regiment, Alexander Posey’s poetry and Fus Fixico letters, William Harjo’s dialect comedy in Oklahoma City newspapers collected in his book *Sour Sofkee*, Louis Littlecoon

Oliver's stories and poems which represent a strong traditionalist perspective including many works written in Muskogee Creek, Joy Harjo's highly acclaimed poetry, Tsianina Lomawaima's book on Chilocco boarding school, Vince Mendoza's life story about his Creek and Mexican background and, now, Jean and Paul Chaudhury's wonderful explication of Creek philosophy (this brief list of Creek authors is by no means exhaustive, and more works keep coming out every year).⁶

While the works of non-Indian outsiders are critiqued throughout *A Sacred Path*, none of these Creek writers are mentioned, even in passing, a footnote, or a bibliographic entry, when, in fact, all of them deal to varying degrees with Creek philosophy and history. These books deserve, at the very least, the same level of careful attention and critique applied to the non-Creek works, that is to say an assessment of both their strengths and weaknesses. Their absence is the book's most serious fault.

A Sacred Path may fail to mention these authors, but the book, nonetheless, provides a wonderful comparative text that will both challenge and affirm the ideas of the aforementioned writers. No doubt its rich contextualization of Creek narratives will affect how the Creek literary canon is read even if the authors of *A Sacred Path* seem unaware of the existence of such a canon (or perhaps feel that these matters are outside the purview of their study?).

The Chaudhurys' book is absently essential Muskogee Creek reading, and I am most grateful to them for this gift and the opportunities it provides for greater understanding.

NOTES

¹ Ortiz, Alfonso. *The Tewa World: Space, Time and Becoming in a Pueblo Society*. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1969.

² Hudson, Charles M. *The Southeastern Indians*. Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1976.

³ Swanton, John R. *Myths and Tales of the Southeastern Indians*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1929. This was Bulletin 88 in the BAE series.

⁴ Lankford, George E. *Native American Legends: Southeastern Legends—Tales from the Natchez, Caddo, Biloxi, Chickasaw, and Other Nations*. Little Rock, AK: August House, 1987.

⁵ Stiggins, George. *Creek Indian History: A Historical Narrative of the Genealogy, Traditions, and Downfall of the Ispocoga or Creek Indian Tribe of Indians*. Introduction and notes by William Stokes Wyman; edited by Virginia Pounds Brown. Birmingham, AL: Birmingham Public Library Press, 1989.

⁶ Callahan, Alice S. *Wynema: A Child of the Forest*. Edited and introduced by A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1997.

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- . *She Had Some Horses*. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1983.
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Craig Womack (Oklahoma Creek-Cherokee) teaches in the Native American Studies Department of the University of Lethbridge. He is the author of *Drowning in Fire*, a novel, and *Red on Red*, a literary history of the Muscogee Creek Nation.

***Contrary Neighbors: Southern Plains and Removed Indians in Indian Territory.* David La Vere. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000. 292 pages with index. ISBN 0-8061-3251-5**

During travels throughout Oklahoma, La Vere discovered through his numerous Indian friends that the five removed southeastern Indian tribes, Choctaws, Cherokees, Chickasaws, Creeks, and Seminoles, and Southern Plains Indians lacked commonality and wondered why such a wide gulf remained even today. Removed Indians believed Southern Plains Indians to be *savage* and *wild*. Plains Indians depicted the Five Nations as strangers and invaders in Indian Territory. La Vere contends that displaced southeastern Indians considered themselves habituated to “customs of civilization”: adopting Anglo-style governments, learning English, and adapting to a market economy. Investigating beyond ways the “arts of civilization” exacerbated tensions, La Vere probed into deeper disparities that had led to bygone militant fervor. In rediscovering their dissimilar pasts, La Vere’s end product was *Contrary Neighbors: Southern Plains and Removed Indians in Indian Territory*.

Prairie Indians, the Osages, Caddos, Wichitaws, Kickapoos, and remnants from Shawnee and Delaware, and Southern Plains Indians, particularly the Southern Cheyenne, Comanches, Kiowas, and Kiowas-Apaches composed the main groups the expunged Five Nations encountered when exiled to Indian Territory during the 1830s. While seemingly indistinguishable to governmental officials at large, the then present Indian settlers represented a hunter-gathering based society while their southeastern counterparts embraced agriculture. Articulating his argument, La Vere details their unique pasts by describing how the most ancient dwellers in Indian Territory became horse-mounted gun-bearing cultures after the Spanish introduced horses in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. By 1700, the French settled St. Louis and St. Genevieve, and they traded firearms for buffalo hides and surplus horses. Some like the Caddos, whose ties linked them to the southeastern Indian tribes as the most western group, had been agriculturalists but changed to mounted gatherers and buffalo hunters

after the advent of the horse. Others like the Osages, traditionally a prairie agricultural based society, changed to strictly mounted buffalo hunters after 1700. This transformation led to the Osages' high mobility and their encroachment on Caddo and Wichitaw territories that brought almost constant warfare among these groups. Other expanding groups vying for the same hunting grounds were the Kiowas, Commanches, Kiowa-Apaches, and Apaches.

Not only did warfare enter into the region's shifts in balance of power, but so did extensive intertribal trade activity that stretched back to very old times. To accelerate and increase trade production, it was not uncommon for young men to become horse thieves and thereby display their bravery that enhanced their tribal status. Even when in 1830s the United States policy makers coerced southeast Indians to go to Indian Territory, they were blind to the competitive and territorial natures of competing indigenous tribes. Therefore, bands of first settlers struck back with their traditional raids. In particular, Osages resorted to time-honored repelling modes and assaulted Cherokees and Creeks because government officials placed these two groups in the midst of Osage domain. Hostilities still abounded even after policy makers reassigned lands to the newcomers.

Moreover, living together would prove problematic for all groups. Inadvertently fueling antagonism among the varying groups was the United States army, who by the 1850s, employed Delaware, Shawnee, and Kickapoo guides to identify Southern Plains "camps by the configurations of lodge poles and campfires" (145). This decade also ushered in heightened tensions when Osages accused Chickasaw traders, who went on an exchange expedition to the Wichitas and Commanches to trade goods and ponies for mules and hides, as United States spies. La Vere contends that at some point, when trading commenced, Osages and Commanches attacked Chickasaws and took all their goods and killed the African bondsman who guarded their property. Eventually, Chickasaws returned to their territory and filed claims against the Commanches and Osages, but the dispute over the case lasted until 1868.

Other events led to further distrust. In 1858 Indian Territory faced incredible unease when the United States Mormon Expedition disrobed Indian Territory of its troops. Indian and whites feared that "Plains Indians [Comanches, Kiowas, and Wichitas] were up to no good"(153). Intensifying the anxiety-ridden landscape, lawless whites on crime sprees could easily blame Indians for the crimes. To protect Plains Indians and particularly the Texas Indians, the United States government established permanent reserves in Indian Territory for bands of some Prairie Indians; it placed them in close proximity to the Five Civilized tribes to make sure "good influence," or the "arts of civilization," would prevail.

However, as La Vere's entitles his chapter, "Civil and Uncivil Wars," "civilizing" was slow to come. Wars in the 1860s provided even more disruptive results in Indian Territory and proved disastrous for all Indians in the area in and around Indian Territory. For example, Confederate allied Prairie and Plains Indian tribes raided the Five Civilized tribes, particularly the pro-union homes of Cherokees and Creeks. Solving differences in bicultural meetings went awry. Chiefs and Anglos attempted peace negotiations at Camp Napoleon near present-day Verden, Oklahoma, in 1865, but Indian leaders could wield little power over their militant young men. Furthermore, hostility continued between Comanches and the Chickasaws. Youthful Comanches raided Chickasaw livestock, and when Chickasaws surrounded Comanche camps, they forced Comanches to surrender Chickasaw property.

Bitterness persisted even some fourteen years after the Civil War. By then Indian Territory comprised three divisions: the Five Nations, the Prairie Indians, some of whom began to adopt the "arts of civilization," and the Southern Plains tribes who still, for the most part, roamed free. After President Ulysses S. Grant's Peace Policy wrecked havoc on the Plains Indians, this once nomadic people would finally be forced into settling on given pieces of land. La Vere argues that even though the Plains Indians needed "civilizing" advice from the Five Tribes, their aid was not welcomed. What further exacerbated a binding relationship was that Comanches and Kiowas held the matrilineal

system, the kinship system of the Five Nations, in disdain. These tribes based their blood kin on an affinal relationship whereby brothers and sisters-in-law might share sexual favors. He raises the question, "Could these very different people work together (199)?"

Throughout the latter part of the 1800s, La Vere contends that the Five Nations still viewed the Plains and Prairie Indians "as savages and their reservations as a wilderness on the western edge of civilization"(212). This was true even though tribal opposition to the 1887 Dawes Act, or the "pulverizing machine" of allotment, gave all tribes commonality. However, the Five Tribes had little time left for "civilizing" the Indians living in the western part of Indian Territory. Every tribe had to fend for itself. Then, by 1890, Anglo policy makers divided Indian Territory into two parts, Oklahoma and Indian Territories. Plains and Prairie Indians were relegated to the western part, or Oklahoma Territory; they were separated beyond the "civilizing" influence of the Five Tribes, whose lands remained in Indian Territory. The 1898 Curtis Act, "Sooner fever," and 1907 Oklahoma statehood almost ended any considerable interaction between the eastern and western tribes, except at church meetings or other casual encounters.

In conclusion, La Vere believes that their basic differences prevented harmony yesterday and today. Poignantly, La Vere points out that peoples with ancient ties to open prairie lands often question if the strangers, the removed southeastern tribes, were *real Indians*. Plains people are willing to call them "brothers" but not "red brothers."

However, those varying lifestyles might be considered to have promoted peace rather than dissonance. These life ways complemented one another's production of foodstuffs. Furthermore, La Vere's argument seems less plausible when considering the overall problems displacement and dispossession wrought when United States policy makers exiled the Five Nations to Indian Territory, where indigenous peoples had already staked out claims. Most probably, insidious enmity arose from these external forces that caused territorial encroachment resulting in intertribal bloodshed and raiding, and then retaliation.

Furthermore, suspicion grew as great disparity between the kinship systems offered little hope for reconciliation.

La Vere offers a fresh departure from other historians, who have generally focused on Indian-Anglo warfare such as Robert Utley's *The Indian Frontier of the American West: 1846-1890* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992), and internecine warfare like William G. McLoughlin's *After the Trail of Tears: The Cherokees' Struggle for Sovereignty, 1839-1880* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993). *Contrary Neighbors* will appeal to scholarly and general audiences. Its argument and other historical data could serve as formats when discussing ways today's Oklahoma Indians might address their differences. La Vere's penchant for mining and using Indian archival material effectively for historical details makes this a well-thought-through and engaging book.

Rowena McClinton

***Drowning in Fire*, by Craig S. Womack. University of Arizona Press. 280 pages. \$35.00 cloth, \$17.95 paper.**

The lives and experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and two-spirited American Indians have long been on the margins of Queer Studies, except as romantic fetishes for earthy New Agers or as token historical references to demonstrate pre-Invasion sexual diversity in the Americas. Some Queer Native women, most notably Beth Brant (Bay of Quinte Mohawk), Janice Gould (Maidu), Chrystos (Menominee), and Joy Harjo (Muskogee), have achieved name recognition in LGBT circles, though their work is generally read and viewed outside of their tribal contexts and concerns as Native women. For Queer Indian men, even that recognition is lacking—Gregory Scofield (Metis), Tomson Highway (Cree), Maurice Kenny

(Mohawk), and Craig Womack (Muskogee) are not names that strike a chord of familiarity with most readers interested in the writings of Queer Native Americans.

As more American Indian voices, including those of LGBT people, are finding receptive audiences in print and person, this erasure may soon be ending. Once marginal, Queer Natives are emerging as some of the most eloquent advocates for Indian survival in this new century. Nowhere is this more true than in the work of Craig Womack, whose first novel, *Drowning in Fire*, sets the artistic standard for all writers who take seriously the call to give something meaningful back to their communities.

Drowning in Fire opens with young Josh Henneha, of Eufaula, Oklahoma, a confused and artistic Creek boy who knows early on of his attraction to other boys. That attraction focuses particularly on the beautiful and popular Jimmy Alexander, an older Creek youth who shows Josh far more kindness than any other boys in the region, all of whom take special delight in tormenting the quiet dreamer. In spite of Josh's struggles to overcome his passions through fantasy, religion, and self-denial, Jimmy's presence is his constant torment and joy. The narrative travels through their adolescence and adulthood, from their early struggles with their same-sex desire, to their separate lives that intertwine again and again, into a growing love for one another that weathers pain and unforeseen tragedy.

Interspersed through the narrative is the story of Josh's passionate Aunt Lucy, a Creek blues trumpeter who challenges the gender and racial mores of Oklahoma when a younger woman and, in later years, guides her nephew to acceptance of himself and his love for Jimmy. The presence and significance of Lucy in the text mirrors the importance of women within Muskogee communities, and further distinguishes this text from its non-Indian counterparts, which often erase, minimize, or vilify the influence of women on the lives of Queer men.

Womack, professor of Native American Studies at the University of Lethbridge, is Oklahoma Muskogee (Creek) and Cherokee, a man deeply rooted in the land, worldviews, and traditions of his community.

His first book, *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism*, a revolutionary assertion of grounding Native literary analysis in the tribal specificity from which it arises, includes a Queer reading of the plays and poetry of closeted Cherokee playwright Lynn Riggs. That text stands as the companion piece to *Drowning in Fire*, the philosophical foundation for the worldview that guides the novel. If *Drowning in Fire* follows the path of its predecessor, it is likely to have a radical impact on how Native writers and their readers engage with one another and the myriad issues impacting Indian Country, including those that surround LGBT concerns.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the novel is that it celebrates the happiness of Queer men in love, not a drama of unrelenting trauma and tragedy—a rarity for gay literature in general, and a notable exception in the small but burgeoning body of gay Indian literature. For all LGBT people, but particularly for those of us who are also Native, such a book provides a touchstone of hope, one that can remind us of how much beauty and healing our love can bring to our communities. Other works, such as those of Tomson Highway (*Kiss of the Fur Queen*) and Gregory Scofield (*Native Canadiana/Songs from the Urban Rez*), give us reflections of Queer Natives who, while moving toward healing, are deeply damaged; a legitimate portrayal of some of our brothers and sisters, but not the only model, and certainly not one to build a life around. The younger generations that are coming out (or, to follow Beth Brant's suggestion, "presenting themselves") to the world and their people need voices of hope, too.

Drowning in Fire is an example of such a hopeful voice. It stands in a distinct place within Muskogee and Native literatures, Queer coming-of-age narratives, and Oklahoma historical fiction. Melding memory and poetic vision, grim conflict and sly humor, Womack provides in this novel a powerful, richly crafted evocation of tribal and geographic specificity, and of the tender same-sex love that emerges from and immeasurably enriches Josh Henneha's world.

Daniel Justice

Editor's note: this review was published in a colonized form that erased most of its Native voice in *The Gay and Lesbian Review Worldwide*. This is the original version.

***Loosening the Seams: Interpretations of Gerald Vizenor.* A. Robert Lee, ed. Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 2000. 313 pp. (293 pp. essays, 11 pp.bibliography, 6 pp. index, 3 pp. contributors)**

One of a total of seventeen essays that are, in the words of volume editor A. Robert Lee, "intended to take up both the span and the detail of Vizenor's writing" (14), Tom Lynch's piece on Gerald Vizenor's poetry begins with a sentence that bears some attention, not least because it speaks to a concern shared by the contributors to this welcome volume on the texts by the crossblood Anishinaabe writer, teacher, and scholar: "Poems on a page bear a decidedly, yet deceptively, fixed being" (203). In what I trust will be recognized as an act in keeping with the spirit of the volume and of Vizenor's tireless attempts to educate his audience about the construction that is the Indian, I want to loosen the seam that joins the sentence to the page, recasting it as verse, perhaps even as haiku:

Poems on a page bear
a decidedly, yet deceptively,
fixed being

Such a recasting, meant to invoke Vizenor's own acts of interpreting and transcribing Anishinaabe dream songs and lyrics originally recorded, transcribed, and translated by Frances Densmore in the 1900s, emphasizes the critical both / and of the traditional and the poststructuralist that, unrecognized by his detractors, is at the heart of Vizenor's corpus. That is, loosening the formal seam allows for us to

better see and hear the possibility of the text accentuating a powerfully playful connection between verb and noun. As a page bear, invoking one of the clans whose traditional role it is to protect the Anishinaabeg, Vizenor is determined from first to last in his writings to undo the images that fix the Native as Indian and other, teasing us to abandon our terminal creeds and recognize the postindian, the figure that “absolves by irony the nominal simulations of the indian, waives centuries of translation and dominance, and resumes the ontic significance of native modernity” (*Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance* viii). That the bear has been fundamental to such teasing acts throughout Vizenor’s career as a writer, hear here the laughter of bears at the sunrise in *Bearheart: The Heirship Chronicles* and the roar of bears under the wire in *Dead Voices* for instance, is recognized with the bear standing beside Vizenor on the cover of *Shadow Distance: A Gerald Vizenor Reader*. Moreover, as a page bear, the writings themselves depend upon the reader’s active engagement, for, as Vizenor recognizes in *Trickster of Liberty*, “the author cedes the landscape [of the text] to the reader” (xi). Thus, it is only with acts of the imagination on our part that the page bear (be) “more than a word, more than a word beast” (*Dead Voices* 30).

The authors of the seventeen essays in *Loosening the Seams* have certainly actively engaged Vizenor’s texts and their theoretical and, to a lesser extent, cultural contexts. Nearly to a person, the authors recognize and articulate the theoretical concerns and the uses of poststructuralism that Vizenor’s texts bring to bear, concerns and uses with which the readers of are familiar. The first essay in the volume, for instance, *Crossblood Strategies in the Writings of Gerald Vizenor* by Donald Murray, stresses the postmodern and poststructuralist characteristics of Vizenor’s works, especially the ways in which those texts function as a supplement, like the crossblood, “both *adding to*, and in *replacing* the idea of a pure Indian identity based on blood and lineage” (21). This is the Derridean supplement of course, usefully glossed by Rudolphe Gasche, that is critical to the recognition and undoing of grand or master narratives. Arnold Krupat wrestles with the implications of Vizenor, “a self-identified postmodernist,” appearing to

embrace Sartre's "belief in the book as a weapon" (171) in and with *Heirs of Columbus*; he turns both to Fredric Jameson's notion of postmodernist fiction's capacity to step "'out of the historical record itself into the process of devising it'" (172) and to Anthony Appiah's recognition of the "ethical universal" articulated in the second stage of postcolonial African novels in order to suggest how Vizenor's novel can speak of "stories in the blood" while being "unqualifiedly opposed to racism in the Americas" (174). Elaine Jahner's "Trickster Discourse and Postmodern Strategies" at once invokes the pragmatism central to Jean-Francois Lyotard's *Just Gaming* and indicates how Vizenor's trickster discourse, "based on a thoroughly pragmatic set of assumptions about language and political power" (40), allows for a gaming that articulates a "paradigm for postmodern action" (55).

Trickster and trickster discourse put things into play, not simply for their own sakes, but in order that we might recognize that, to quote Jahner, "Instantiation requires pragmatic response" (56). Amy Elias stresses the connections between the modern-day tricksters of Vizenor and Ishmael Reed, figures that are part of "differing minority discourses [that] may use postmodernist strategies to combat either the hegemonic realist or the modernist narrative tradition" (85). Trickster as transgressor and liberator, as questioner of boundaries and actor in and with all good humor to heal, is central to Linda Lizut Helstern's reading of *Griever: An American Monkey King in China*, Elizabeth Blair's reading of *The Heirs of Columbus* as a text in which "Vizenor continues to blend oral myth with post-structural narrative, while utilizing the conventions of the postmodern detective story" (156), James Ruppert's examination of the indexical nature of Vizenor's screenplay *Harold of Orange*, Louis Owens' positioning of Vizenor's drama *Ishi and the Wood Ducks* and essay "Ishi Obscura" as texts that "dissect Euramerica's invention of Indians at the same time that it [the play] pays homage to the man called Ishi" (233), and other essays in the volume. In addition to bearing in mind trickster and trickster discourse, the essays encourage us to think about such critical Vizenor terms as transmotion, survivance, and crossblood, on the one hand, and Vizenor's positioning of those terms in relation to both the stories of

the Indian created and perpetuated by the dominant culture and such key terms for poststructuralist thought as binaries, simulation, presence and absence, both / and, and transgression or boundary crossings, on the other.

The authors also recognize and articulate the ways in which Vizenor as “textual shapeshifter,” to use A. Robert Lee’s phrase, “has from the outset equally assumed rights of transgression against virtually every fixed literary kind” (266). David Murray stresses that “in true postmodern fashion, Vizenor is trying to find a form” (31) which will encourage the reader to make connections. Barry O’Connell holds that “The history Vizenor practices, typically, violates and mixes genres” (64) in order to “move beyond the boundaries” (64) established by history, by genre, and by those in power that labor to enshrine both as the truth and the medium by which the truth is made manifest. The five co-authors of “Textual Interstices: Mirrored Shadows in Gerald Vizenor’s *Dead Voices*” examine how Vizenor’s fifth novel functions as a postindian narrative that “shatters the window of objective representation” (187), critiques the written text, and still manages to issue a call to “go on” (*Dead Voices* 144) in and with stories. Others note how Vizenor’s texts confound the readers’ expectations of and desire for realism or romanticism and a clear sense of an ending.

The twenty-one authors include scholars from England and the continent, a practicing journalist, and American academics. Their work will be appreciated by Vizenor readers, teachers, and scholars. That is not to say that the volume is not without shortcomings. Not all of the essays are of the highest possible quality and greatest rigor. The index is sketchy at best, opting to restrict itself to names of individuals and titles of works. This produces an unwelcome loosening of the seams that make up the web of concerns, problems, contexts, and theories that knit the volume, and Vizenor’s corpus, together.

More perplexing though, perhaps even troubling, is the person and title that are for all intent and purposes missing: mixed blood White Earth Anishinaabe Kimberly Blaeser and *Gerald Vizenor: Writing in the Oral Tradition* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1996). Beyond mention in the introduction, Blaeser’s book is nowhere to be found;

only two essays, by Juana Maria Rodriguez and by Tom Lynch, make reference to and use of Blaeser's 1992 essay on Native American humor and 1993 essay on Vizenor's haiku respectively. In a volume that has at the very least the appearance of self-consciously invoking haiku in its very form, the seventeen essays corresponding to the seventeen syllables of a traditional haiku, the omission of any consideration and appreciation of Blaeser's groundbreaking book on her fellow White Earth Anishinaabe writer, teacher, and scholar is startling. Blaeser, for instance, recognizes how a poem in Vizenor's volume of haiku entitled *Seventeen Chirps* invites the reader to use her / his imagination to enter the scene articulated by its first two lines, shatters expectations with the third line, and, in the process, "transports the reader . . . to an experience more alive than words on a page" (*Gerald Vizenor: Writing in the Oral Tradition* 122). So too does she recognize the trickster's voice in the haiku that gives the title to *Seventeen Chirps* and how that voice and poem "nudge" us to a new way of seeing:

It took seventeen chirps
For a sparrow to hop across
My city garden
(*Seventeen Chirps* 47)

Blaeser notes that the haiku subtly asks the reader to call into question a reliance upon certain ways of seeing and taking the measure of the world and of experience, ways that cause one to miss much (128-29). Blaeser's readings of Vizenor's texts in other genres is equally insightful, helping us to see in new ways and to acknowledge and critique perspectives. She also helps us to better see and understand the relationships between Vizenor's texts and Anishinaabe oral tradition, cultural context(s), and worldview.

The seventeen essays that make up *Loosening the Seams: 'Interpretations of Gerald Vizenor* certainly traverse the landscape of Gerald Vizenor's writings; in doing so they help us to take the measure of Vizenor's ongoing creative achievements. It remains, though, for us

to take the measure of the relationship between them and Blaeser's work, and between all these texts and Vizenor's latest offerings. As we proceed, we could do worse than keep in mind Blaeser's poem for Vizenor, her poem on a page bear if you will, as we, like the narrator of "Ice Tricksters and Shadow Stories", are "Sustained now by the hypnotic voices of ice— / trickling, tinkling, cracking, booming / Ice tricksters telling story" (*Trailing You* 8). Our efforts will be sure to make Vizenor smile, as we continue the activity of listening to the deceptively fixed being that is the Vizenor text—and the man—in order that we might arrive at "that ice point of consciousness, / that place of timeless equilibrium / where one begins at last to understand voices" (*Trailing You* 9).

Chris LaLonde

***Night Sky, Morning Star.* Evelina Zuni Lucero. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2000. ISBN: 0-8165-2055-0. 228 pages.**

Night Sky, Morning Star is a first novel for Evelina Zuni Lucero who is an Isleta/San Juan Pueblo. The story is set in the 1990s in Pueblo country. The protagonist, Cecelia Bluespruce, is a Pueblo potter and clay sculptor, and the reader follows her as she travels from Native American art show to art show in the Southwest, showing her work. Cecelia is having disturbing dreams. She has a grown son, Jude, raised by her aunt in Phoenix, who wants to know who his father is. The story enfolds through the voices of the various characters in different chapters, a device other Native American writers have used.

Cecelia struggles with whether to reveal to her son Jude that his father is in prison and that he doesn't know Jude exists. Central to many of the characters in Cecelia's extended family is the question of

male-female relationships. In fact, a deer man story is featured in the middle of the novel. The deer man is someone who lures women away from family, friends and proper behavior and then betrays them. The novel portrays this as very serious, using as its explanatory tribal story the tale of a young woman who is danced to death at a wedding celebration. Her partner disappears, leaving the tracks of a deer.

In the novel, the character who most behaves like a “deer man” is from Laguna and speaks Keres, whereas Cecelia and her family speak Tiwa. This is, perhaps, a pointed comment on the differences between the Tiwa and Keres speaking groups. As one of the most well known Native American writers is from Laguna, Lucero seems to want the reader to notice that she is a voice from another Pueblo group. In that light, Lucero has the involvement of tribal police and ceremonial clowns in her deer-man affair, giving the reader some insight as to how these modern and ancient institutions, respectively, might operate in contemporary Tiwa-speaking society.

Woven though out the chapters from Cecelia’s and her extended family’s points of views are chapters from the point of view of the father of Cecelia’s son. Julian Morningstar James (hence the title) tells his story from prison and through him the reader learns about the American Indian movement in the 1970s. Lucero successfully covers the issues of Native Americans as political prisoners, of allowing Native American religious practices in prison, and of the treatment of prisoners without being preachy. Lucero also takes on the thorny issue of who is Native American — whether being on a tribal roll but without “community ties” or “grounding in Indian culture and values” was enough (209).

By the end of the novel, Lucero has given the reader a good glimpse into contemporary Tiwa-speaking Pueblo life. The question of whether Julian is a “deer man” and has betrayed Cecelia and their son is successfully resolved. My only complaint is that the novel lacks the humor which some of the more recent Native American novels contain. The characters all take themselves quite seriously. In an apologetic tone, the cover blurb notes that “Lucero introduces us to experiences we may find unfamiliar, but she also introduces us to two things we all

live for: the power of story and the power of love.” In this time of many Native American novels and greater reader familiarity, I’d like to see Lucero and her publishers worry less about the reader’s reaction to her showing the “unfamiliar” and do more about courting the unexpected in her next novel which her bio says she is writing. Despite this, this is a good novel over all, and I look forward to reading the next one.

Annette Van Dyke

***The Novels of Louise Erdrich: Stories of Her People.* Connie A. Jacobs. (American Indian Studies Vol. 11). New York: Peter Lang, 2001. \$29.95 paper, ISBN 0-8204-4027-2. 260 pages.**

The Novels of Louise Erdrich: Stories of Her People by Connie A. Jacobs is to date the most comprehensive and meticulously researched study of Louise Erdrich’s fiction, including *Tracks*, *Love Medicine*, *The Beet Queen*, *The Bingo Palace*, *Tales of Burning Love*, and *The Antelope Wife*. This work highlights the importance of Erdrich’s place in the Native American Literary Renaissance and in the American literature canon. Jacobs identifies Erdrich as a “contemporary Native American storyteller” and argues that “Erdrich remains to date the only author whose novels collectively form the story of her people in the twentieth century” (xii). The sheer scope of this book is impressive, as it leads readers, in a compelling and accessible manner, through discussions of the development of written Native American literature, the functions of storytelling in Native cultures, the history of orality and folklore studies, the primacy of family structures in Erdrich’s novels, the historical and mythical contexts for her work, and the relationship of multiculturalism and Erdrich’s fiction to the American literature canon. Readers will also find helpful the maps of Ojibwa

territories in key historical periods, the appendix of “Important Dates in the History of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians” (219), and the notes, which provide detailed information about sourcework and Ojibwa culture and history.

In her preface to the text, Jacobs acknowledges that she was drawn to Erdrich’s writing in graduate school because it subverts the hegemony of the dominant society by challenging its long held cultural myths and stereotypes. Jacobs argues that “Native authors are literally and literarily writing for their lives and the lives of their tribal people as they tell the story of people whose voices have been appropriated ever since Europeans arrived on American shores” (xii). This is a point that she returns to in her first chapter, in which she talks about writing as “an act of recovery,” a descriptor that has likewise been used by James Clifford and Louis Owens to apply to Native writing.

Jacobs’ first chapter traces the development of Native American writing from the works of the first generations of missionized and boarding school educated writers to the novels of N. Scott Momaday and the writers of the Native American Renaissance. She attributes the growth of Native American written literature to the urgent and political need for Native peoples to speak with their own voices, in counterdistinction to the stereotypical ways in which they had/have been represented and defined by Western writers. Whereas in the past, Native peoples may have been defined by percentages of Indian blood or tribal rolls, today, many Native writers are of mixed ancestry. Referencing Paula Gunn Allen, Louis Owens, Gerald Vizenor, Michael Dorris, and other Native writers, Jacobs concludes that the “concept [of the]’Native American novel’ now designates literature written by Indians, about Indians, and with a decidedly Indian articulation of life” (9). What “a decidedly Indian articulation of life” is is a thorny question, especially considering the diversity of Native life; for Jacobs and many Native writers, though, it consists of a seeing the world through a traditional Native mindset rather than an assimilated or Christianized one. Jacobs concurs with Allen, who argues that the central theme in Native fiction is “how Native Americans as a people will adapt and survive” (10). Jacobs highlights five key characteristics

of Native American fiction, which she later applies to Erdrich's novels: the prevalence of the oral tradition, the cyclical nature of time (Allen, *The Sacred Hoop* 59), "the Indian concept of the relatedness of all things" (15), the pervasiveness of Trickster figures, and the self-defining nature of Native writing. Although this first chapter will be familiar ground to scholars of Native American literature, it, along with the second chapter, does provide a necessary framework for Jacobs' analyses of Erdrich's novels and the traditions that inform them.

In her second chapter, Jacobs identifies three types of traditional stories: those that deal with origins and foster a sense of tribal identity, those that stress the importance of animal or other intercessors to human survival, and those that relate the people's history (19-20). She discusses the elders' privileged roles as storytellers in the community. Referencing Karl Kroeber, Michel Foucault, Louis Owens, N. Scott Momaday and other critics, Jacobs provides the reader with a theoretically-grounded discussion of the transition from and, she argues, fundamental continuities between the authorless stories of the oral tradition and the single-author stories of Native novelists. This chapter also provides a concise history of folklore and orality studies and the ways in which they have long been involved in Native studies. Although Jacobs does not discount the role of anthropologists and folklorists, she does suggest that a purely scientific study of the function of Native stories is problematic, and she posits orality theory as a better model for understanding Erdrich's work because it recognizes the importance of both the speaker and the context (35). Based upon the theories of Alfred Lord, Kathleen Sands and Elaine Jahner, Jacobs discusses Native autobiography as a transitional text or bridge between oral traditional and written texts in Momaday's *The Names*, Silko's *Storyteller*, and Erdrich's *Tracks*, and she argues that, critics have stirred up a detrimental controversy between Erdrich and Silko, when in reality, they both write in the role of the "communal storyteller" (41). Jacobs analyzes Erdrich's novels as "storytelling sessions," which center around family and the passing down of tribal history from generation to generation. The traditional winter count is

Jacobs' metaphor for the combined picture and function of Erdrich's novels.

In chapter three, Jacobs argues that "Native writers today balance themselves between two roles: one to speak to and for their tribe, and the other to create a work which will be commercially successful so that non-Indian audiences can read and appreciate tribal stories" (58). Although some Native writers have objected to being put in the position of spokespeople for their tribes, Jacobs illustrates the ways in which Erdrich's writing becomes a vehicle for helping to ensure "cultural continuity" (58). She situates Erdrich's novels within the context of Native American autobiography and discusses her use of traditional story cycles, which cluster the narratives around central themes, characters, and events (69-70). This section is also notable for the ways in which it contextualizes Erdrich's fiction with helpful background information on Erdrich's life and career and the history and traditional beliefs of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewas, including an extensive discussion of the Metis influence, as it is depicted in Erdrich's fiction. Jacobs highlights the ways in which Erdrich's characters represent aspects of traditional Ojibwa life, like the vision quest, which Lipsha Morrissey undertakes in *The Bingo Palace*.

Family structures form the basis for traditional tribal life, and they are also the focus of Jacobs' analyses of Erdrich's fiction in chapter four, which was intended to complement Peter Beidler and Gay Barton's 1999 *A Reader's Guide to the Novels of Louise Erdrich*. Exploring definitions of "family," Jacobs concludes that in Native cultures, "Family, tribe, and community are synonymous" (107). She examines both the circular structures of Erdrich's novels and the touchstone family stories, like June's death in *Love Medicine*, that reverberate through them. Her central argument is that family structures are the focal point of Erdrich's novels; those characters, like Nanapush from *Tracks* and Cally Whiteheart Beads from *The Antelope Wife*, who see themselves as connected to a family and as having a responsibility to succeeding generations are powerful and able to survive, while those who reject or have no family ties, like Sitka Kozka from *The Beet Queen*, lose themselves. Another key point that emerges

from the discussion of Lipsha Morrissey in *The Bingo Palace* is that medicines can be powerful, but real power comes from love.

Chapter five provides an in-depth discussion of the strength and mythic dimensions of Erdrich's female characters Fleur Pillager and Sweetheart Calico from *The Antelope Wife*. Patricia Riley theorizes that the mixed-blood writer, who mediates between Native and white worlds and the human and spirit worlds and hence becomes both an interpreter and a contemporary myth-maker, is similar to Joseph Campbell's idea of a "secondary hero" (149). Based upon this, Jacobs argues that "Contemporary storytellers like Erdrich who function as traditional storytellers by keeping alive the myths and stories of their people are the 'secondary heroes' in Native American writing" (149). Jacobs' analyses of Erdrich's female characters are based upon what Paula Gunn Allen calls the "gynocratic" approach to Native studies, and she sees Erdrich's depictions of Fleur and Sweetheart Calico as an extensions of "the powerful female spirit" (149) that Allen argues permeates Native life. Scholars and teachers will find Jacobs' analyses of Fleur and Sweetheart Calico's mythic connections among the most engaging and helpful sections of this book; Jacobs furnishes readers with detailed and extensively researched discussions of animal helpers and totems, the history of the Leech Lake Ojibwa band of Pillagers, and Fleur's powerful associations with the bear, wolf, and Misshepesu. In response to the speculation about who Fleur really is, Jacobs presents a strong argument that Fleur is an Anishinaabe medicine woman, who transforms into the Great Bear Spirit. Equally illuminating is the commentary on the mythic presence in *The Antelope Wife*; Jacobs outlines the history of the Minnesota Ojibwa and discusses the Plains' influence upon their culture, which is in part responsible for the stories about the beautiful, transformational antelope people. She explores the relationship of these pan-tribal tales to Erdrich's depictions of Sweetheart Calico, suggesting that after she has enacted her story among the Anishinaabe, she will return to the Plains. Jacobs also analyzes Almost Soup and Windigo Dog's narratives as touchstone stories.

In her sixth and final chapter, Jacobs returns to a discussion of Louise Erdrich's place as a storyteller in the canon of American literature. Drawing upon the arguments of Nancy Hartsock and Arnold Krupat, she argues that categories like "Native American writer" only serve to marginalize the study and importance a writer's work, because such categories define it as existing apart from what Krupat calls "'the prevailing social order'" (178). She does acknowledge, however, in what seems to me to be an uneasy tension, that categories can be useful when they serve to emphasize differences and "unique frames of reference" (179), rather than hierarchies. Jacobs' objection to the term Native American writer also seems uncomfortable because in the early chapters of the text, she defines Native writing and the cultural contexts from which it arises as antithetical to individualistic Western ways of seeing. Jacobs asserts that Erdrich and other Native writers should be included in the American literature canon and argues that Erdrich's work is the product of both Native and Anglo traditions; most critics would likely concur with this, although one could also argue that Erdrich's work is already part of both a Native American literature and an American literature canon. Because Erdrich self-identifies herself as a Native American writer, Jacobs has chosen to examine her novels as the work of a Native American writer working within the larger context of the American literary tradition. Ultimately, Jacobs argues that Erdrich writes out of two traditions, as a contemporary tribal storyteller, who narrates the adaptability, strength, and endurance of her people.

The Novels of Louise Erdrich represents a significant contribution to the scholarship on Erdrich's fiction, not so much for its novelty but more for the comprehensive ways in which it ties together existing research on Native American fiction, orality and storytelling, and history and myth in these novels, in order to illustrate Erdrich's role as storyteller, tribal "historian," and myth-maker. I highly recommend it as an invaluable resource for scholars and teachers alike.

Lori Burlingame

{page omitted by printer: review contributors' bioblurbs}

Announcements

NAES Conference 4-6 April 2002, Vancouver BC

The National Association for Ethnic Studies (NAES) annual conference will take place in Vancouver, BC, Canada April 4 - 6, 2002. Our conference theme is "Transborder/ Transcultural Perspectives and Race, Ethnicity, Class, Gender, and Sexuality." More information can be found on the NAES website: www.ethnicstudies.org.

Native American Literature Symposium April 10-13, 2002 Mystic Lake Casino · Hotel, Prior Lake, Minnesota

Topics to be considered will include tribal sovereignty, narrative strategies, cultural mediations, interdisciplinary arts, literature and history, cultural contexts, and individual authors. And we are pleased to locate our symposium this year at a tribal venue.

All queries, registration forms, and checks should be sent to the Program Director:

Dr. Gwen Griffin
Native American Literature Symposium
English Department
230 Armstrong Hall
Minnesota State University, Mankato
Mankato, MN 56001
(507) 389-2117 gwen.griffin@mnsu.edu

For further information, including registration forms and housing information, go to the NALC web site: www.english.mankato.msus.edu/griffin/nativelit.htm

Kegedonce Press Launches New Website!

Award-winning Indigenous publisher Kegedonce Press is pleased to announce the launch of its new website

www.kegedonce.com

The site offers information on Kegedonce Press, our new releases, profiles of our authors, information on events, news from the world of Indigenous writing and publishing, links to related sites, and reviews of our books, as well as online ordering.

To celebrate the launch of our new website Kegedonce is offering a prize to the 100th correct answer to the following question:

Who won the Canadian Author's Association Air Canada Award for "most promising Canadian author under 30" in 1997?

The answer is on the site. To enter and be eligible for a special prize from Kegedonce, send your answer, your name, and a current (snail) mail address to renee@kegedonce.com. The 100th CORRECT answer wins. It's that simple! The winner will be announced on the site . . . Stay tuned.

Kegedonce is also offering visitors to the website a special offer on Joseph Dandurand's beautiful collection of poetry *looking into the eyes of my forgotten dreams*. It's a special, limited time offer, so act now!

Designed by Pineneedle Blankets Productions, an Anishnaabe website company based at Whitefish Lake First Nation, the Kegedonce Press site will be updated regularly. BOOKMARK US NOW & CHECK IN OFTEN.

Chi megwetch!

SUPPORT INDIGENOUS WRITING AND PUBLISHING

Opportunities

Call For Presentations:

Healing Our Spirit Worldwide

"A cultural celebration inviting the world to share the healing experiences of Indigenous People's in the movement toward Self-Determination".

September 2-6, 2002, Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA.

The Healing Our Spirit Worldwide Conference brings together Indigenous people from around the world to focus on the vital issues of substance abuse, health care, traditional healing, and leadership. This important gathering is the only global event to spotlight these critical concerns that impact the daily lives of Indigenous people everywhere.

The conference brings together Indigenous people from the United States, Canada and other countries with a variety of interests from tribal governments, native treatment centers and community self-help groups.

Application Submission Instructions

1. Applications must meet one of the Workshop Tracks listed on the insert.
2. The presentation summary is to be typed and single spaced in the approximate box.
3. The summary is not to exceed 200 words.
4. Provide all information requested as incomplete applications will not be accepted.
5. Presentation summaries can be typed in English, French or Spanish.
6. Your summary needs to include a brief description outlining the major focus of the program or research you will be presenting.

Travel Expenses: Presenters will be responsible for their own travel and accommodation expenses. No honorarium or consultant fees will be paid.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS: April 30, 2002

For further information contact:

National Indian Health Board Telephone: (303) 759-3075
1385 S. Colorado Blvd., Suite A-707 Fax: (303) 759-3674
Denver, CO 80222
U.S.A.

Application for Presentation is also available for downloading at
www.healingourspiritworldwide.com .

Call for Papers:

WEST OF HERE:

Critical Perspectives on Montana Literature

Contributions are invited for *West of Here: Critical Perspectives on Montana Literature*, a volume of scholarly essays on the writers and literature of Montana. In pioneering works such as *The Last Best Place* (1988) and *Ten Tough Trips* (1990), scholars and writers such as William Kittredge, Annick Smith, and William Bevis not only called into being a canon of Montana literature, but also explored the tensions between the myths of the West and the sometimes austere realities of Montana. This volume builds upon these seminal texts, and seeks to expand not only the canon of Inland Northwest writers, but also the critical and theoretical approaches to the poems, plays, essays, personal narratives, stories, and novels of Montana. Essays may explore the

work of such well-known writers as Mary Clearman Blew, James Lee Burke, James Crumley, Ivan Doig, Leslie Fiedler, Richard Ford, Patricia Goedicke, A.B. Guthrie, Richard Hugo, Dorothy Johnson, Norman MacLean, D'Arcy McNickle, Mourning Dove, James Welch, and others, or the work of contemporary and emerging poets, novelists, playwrights, and essayists such as Sandra Alcosser, Judy Blunt, Kevin Canty, David James Duncan, Debra Earling, Dan Flores, Pete Fromm, Deirdre McNamer, Greg Pape, Jenny Siler, Bill Yellow Robe, and others. Contributors may explore the work of a single author and/or address such possible topics as Montana as colonial/postcolonial space, historical fiction, the "rez," nature, the land, Montana *noir* or detective fiction, the New Western, and others. Of particular interest are essays that draw upon recent developments in Native American, Postcolonial, and American Studies and that complicate and extend our understanding of race, place, identity, history, gender, and genre in Montana writing. Send 500-word abstracts or completed papers (20+ pages in length) by March 31, 2002 to Brady Harrison or David L. Moore, Department of English, University of Montana, Missoula, Montana, 59812; abstracts may also be sent as e-mail attachments to harrison@selway.umt.edu or dlmoore@selway.umt.edu.

**Rockefeller Foundation Fellowships in American Indian
Studies at the Newberry Library, 2002-05**

The D'Arcy McNickle Center for American Indian History and the Newberry Library will award one long-term fellowship and a series of short-term fellowships each year from 2002-2005 to encourage teaching and research in American Indian Studies. Each fellow will have the opportunity to research in the Newberry Collections related to American Indian history, participate in an active community of scholars, and present research in a D'Arcy McNickle Center Seminar.

Long Term Fellowships:

These fellowships support residential research in American Indian Studies by postdoctoral scholars. We are especially interested in projects that explore the diversity of American Indian communities, various ways of knowing and telling American Indian histories, and/or interdisciplinary issues in American Indian studies. Long-term fellows will have the chance to present their research to the Newberry Library's Fellows' Seminar. The tenure of this fellowship is a minimum of ten months with a stipend of \$40,000.

Application Deadlines: January 21, 2002-04

Short Term fellowships:

These fellowships are designed to promote research and teaching in American Indian studies by historians working in reservation-based communities, tribal college faculty, and librarians or curators at American Indian cultural centers or museums. These fellowships foster research in any aspect of American Indian studies supported by the Newberry's collections. Applicants' projects may culminate in a variety of formats, including but not limited to curriculum development projects, artistic works, or publications. The fellowships support 1-3 months of residential research at the Newberry and carry a stipend of \$3,000 per month plus \$1,000 in travel expenses. Fellowships may be taken at any time after June 15, 2002.

Application Deadlines: April 15 and September 15, 2002; January 15, April 15, and September 15, 2003-2004.

Founded in 1887, the Newberry Library is an independent research library, free and open to the public. Its holdings center on the societies of Western Europe and the Americas from the late Middle Ages to the early twentieth century, and include two unequalled collections of print and non-print materials on American Indian peoples. The Edward E. Ayer Collection of general Americana has more than 130,000 volumes, plus an extensive collection of manuscripts, maps, atlases, photographs, drawings, and paintings. The Everett D. Graff Collection of Western

Americana focuses on the trans-Mississippi West in the nineteenth century.

Application materials may be downloaded from our web page at:
www.newberry.org.

To have materials sent to you by mail, contact: Committee on Awards,
The Newberry Library, 60 W. Walton Street, Chicago, IL 60610-3380;
by phone: 312-255-3666; or email research@newberry.org

Crossing Waters, Crossing Paths

Proposals and submissions are invited for a collection of essays tentatively titled **“Crossing Waters, Crossing Paths: Black and Indian Journeys in the Americas.”** This collection will address related Black and Native histories in the Americas and the Caribbean with a focus on the theme of movement--forced migration, elected migration, the dispersal and reintegration of cultural forms, and the internal and external movement of gendered and sexualized bodies. We are seeking submissions in three content areas:

1.) historical essays on new world enslavement, forced migration, dispersal, and exploration;

2.) cultural studies essays on the cross-pollination and performance of Black and Native cultural ways;

3.) literary and philosophical essays about contemporary thinkers and writers of Black and Native interrelated lives in the Americas.

Send abstract (1-2 pages) or a submission with abstract to:

Sharon P. Holland and Tiya Miles
Department of African American Studies
University of Illinois--Chicago
601 South Morgan Street
Chicago, IL 60607

Deadline: **March 15, 2002**. For further information contact: Dr. Sharon Holland: (312) 413-1573, pholland@uic.edu or Dr. Tiya Miles: tiya@uclink.berkeley.edu.

Conferences

Canadian Indigenous/Native Studies Association (Cinsa) Annual Conference Toronto Ontario Canada, 29-31 May 2002

We invite you to share with us as we celebrate the knowing that comes from our communities, our Elders, our youth, our women, our men, our cultures, our stories, our songs, our creativity, our music, our teachings, our ceremonies, our languages.

We invite proposals for workshops, performances, circle topics, and presentations.

We want to hear from storytellers, singers, actors, performers, artists, crafters, writers, poets, musicians, educators, researchers, Elders, youth, women, men, from all the directions.

Proposals may include any of the above topics as well as

Aboriginal and/or treaty rights and legal research

Topics in Aboriginal/Indian/Native Education

Environmental or ecological knowledge

Topics in Aboriginal/Indian/Native health

Abstracts and proposals: Send name of participants, a brief description and title of workshop, presentation, performance, etc. to:

Jean-Paul Restoule

Co-ordinator, Cinsa 2002

University College, Room 173

University of Toronto

Toronto Ontario Canada M5S 3H7

Cinsa02@hotmail.com

The deadline for submission of proposals is **15 February 2002**. Late submissions may be accepted but the organizers can not ensure publication in the program. For more information on CINSa visit www.cinsa.ca and keep checking for updates.

**South-Central Modern Language Association Convention
Austin TX, October 31 - November 2, 2002**

Native American Literature Session: "Indigenous Languages and Native American Literature"

How do Native American authors use indigenous languages? How does Native American literature engage or intersect with language revitalization efforts, bilingualism, code switching, code talking, boarding school legacies? We welcome papers and abstracts which speak to diverse historical, regional, and tribal perspectives.

Please submit papers or 500 word abstracts to session chair Joanna Brooks, Department of English, University of Texas at Austin, 108 Parlin Hall, Austin, TX 78712 or email brooks.j@mail.utexas.edu.

Deadline: **March 15, 2002**.

**Sequoyah Research Center Symposium
November 14-16, 2002, University of Arkansas at Little Rock**

Celebrating Indigenous Lives

The second Sequoyah Research Center Symposium will celebrate individually and collectively the lives of the Indigenous peoples of North America by observing, extolling, and honoring their achievements and by proclaiming and publishing them abroad.

The program committee invites proposals for presentations by Indigenous writers, scholars, oral historians, storytellers, and other knowledgeable individuals. Topics include, but are not limited to, the following: art, humor, performing arts, photography, military service, literatures, languages, sports, publishing, teaching/mentoring, and exhibits/exhibitions. Proposals should be for presentations of about twenty-five minutes.

A one-paragraph proposal that provides a clear abstract or summary of the presentation should be sent to

Directors

American Native Press Archives

502 Stabler Hall

2801 S. University

University of Arkansas at Little Rock

Little Rock, AR 72204-1099

or by e-mail to dflittlefiel@ualr.edu or jwparins@ualr.edu or resanderson@ualr.edu or by FAX to 501-569-8185.

Proposals should reach the Directors no later than **April 1, 2002**. Submissions should be accompanied by a brief biographical statement about the writer that might be used in early publicity efforts regarding the symposium.

Additional information about the 2002 Symposium is available by telephone from the American Native Press Archives at 501-569-8336. For information about Symposium 2001, visit the American Native Press Archives web site at anpa.ualr.edu.

MAJOR TRIBAL NATIONS AND BAND MENTIONED IN THE ESSAYS OF THIS ISSUE

Compiled by Daniel Justice

This list is provided as a service to those readers interested in further communications with the tribal communities and governments of American Indian/Native nations. Inclusion of a government in this list does not imply endorsement of or by SAIL in any regard, nor does it imply the enrollment or citizenship status of any writer mentioned; some communities have alternative governments and leadership that are not affiliated with the BIA, while others are not recognized by the U.S. or other colonial governments at this point. We have limited the list to those most relevant to the essays published in this issue; thus, not all bands, towns, or communities of a particular nation are listed.

References are listed by nation, author, government address, and primary governmental officer. Some nations welcome outside scholarly inquiry; while others limit access of information to tribal members or to non-members with whom there is a long-term relationship.

Until recently the BIA hosted a web site that listed the addresses of all U.S. federally-recognized tribal nations, along with current tribal leader information. This site has recently been disconnected by the Department of the Interior in an unnecessarily broad response to a court order that required Indian trust fund information to be kept confidential. Although the trust information was not available on this particular site, the DOI/BIA has discontinued nearly all public web-accessible data posting, thus sweeping away this information along with that covered by the court order. For more information, see www.doi.gov, particularly the memo by J. Steven Griles, Deputy Secretary of the DOI, at www.doi.gov/news/grilesmemo.htm. (But hurry, as even this might not be around too much longer!)

We make every effort to provide the most accurate and up-to-date tribal contact information available, a task that is sometimes quite complicated. Please send any corrections or suggestions to Daniel Justice, *SAIL* Editorial Assistant, 333 Andrews Hall, Lincoln, NE 68588-0333, or send e-mail to sail2@unl.edu.

TURTLE MOUNTAIN CHIPPEWA (Louise Erdrich)

Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa
P.O. Box 900, Belcourt, ND 58316
Richard A. Monette, Chairman

MOHEGAN (Samson Occom, Jim Ottery)

The Mohegan Tribe of Connecticut
P.O. Box 488, Uncasville, CT 06382
Matahga/Mark F. Brown, Chairman

BROTHERTOWN (Jim Ottery)

Brothertown Indian Nation, Inc.
AV2848 Witches Lake Road, Arbor Vitae, WI 54568
June Ezold, Chairperson

SALISH AND KOOTENAI ON THE FLATHEAD RESERVATION
(D'Arcy McNickle)

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribal Council
P.O. Box 278, Pablo, MT 59855

CANADIAN MOHAWK (E. Pauline Johnson)

Six Nations of the Grand River Reserve
P.O. Box 5000, Ohsweken, ON N0A 1M0 CANADA

MUSKOGEE (CREEK) (Craig S. Womack, Jean and Joyotpaul Chaudhury)

Muskogee (Creek) Nation
P.O. Box 580, Okmulgee, OK 74447
R. Perry Beaver, Principal Chief

OKLAHOMA CHEROKEE (Craig S. Womack)

Cherokee Nation
P.O. Box 948, Tahlequah, OK 74465
Chad Smith, Principal Chief

United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians
P.O. Box 580, Okmulgee, OK 74447
Jim Henson, Chief