

ASAIL Notes

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ASAIL NOTES

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From the Editor

I want to thank everyone who sent in an announcement or news of a book release. The number of books and notices is proof of the continuing vitality of both the creative and scholarly communities concerned with American Indian literatures. I hope members of our readership were also able to take advantage of the fine selections of panels offered at this past year's MLA Conference in Toronto. These panels have no doubt generated articles and discussions that will continue to inform our work. Please look over the announcements of upcoming MLA sessions on American Indian Literature and related fields to be presented at the end of next month (Dec. 27-30) in San Francisco, California during the annual meeting of the Modern Language Association. I encourage all conference participants to make note of the various panels offered this year and inform others that might be interested as well. In this issue I also have the pleasure of noting the recent publication of a wide variety of works germane to interest in American Indian Literature and scholarship. Please continue to contribute news of recent publications and upcoming conferences. Nia'weh.

Scott Manning Stevens

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American Indian Topics at the 1998 MLA in San Francisco

42. Articulations of Identity In Early American Indian Texts: 27 December, 5:15-6:30 p.m.

Papers by Todd Vogel, Gordon Mitchell Sayre, Susan Bernardin, and P. Jane Hafen. Daryl Keith Carr, Chair.

102. Indigenous Feminisms: Native Women Writers: 27 December, 7:00-8:15 p.m.

Papers by Gloria Bird, Jeane Coburn Breinig, Christopher A. LaLonde, and Larissa Petrillo. Susan B. Brill, Chair.

323. Indigenous Texts in Colonial and Postcolonial Contexts: 28 December, 1:45-3:00 p.m.

Papers by Alesia Garcia, Paul B. Lyons, and Randall Brent Moon. Chadwick Allen, Chair

547. Born Into Memory: Refiguring Language in Contemporary American Indian Poetry: 29 December, 12:00 noon-1:15

Papers by Helen Jaskoski, Robin Riley Fast, and Robert M. Nelson. Dean Rader, Chair.

672. West Coast Native Women s Poetry: A Reading with Gloria Bird, Janice Gould, Deborah A. Miranda, and Nora Dauenhauer: 29 December, 5:15-6:30 p.m.

Virginia I. Carney, Presiding

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785. Teaching American Indian Literatures in Multiethnic Contexts: 30 December, 8:30-9:45 a.m

Papers by Malea Powell and Anneliese Truame. M. Powell, Chair.

829. William Apess and the Foundations of a Native American Intellectual Tradition: 30 December, 10:15-11:30 a.m.

Papers by Stephen D. Osborne and David Lewis Moore. David Lewis Moore, Chair.

870. Black Indian Subjectivity in African-Native American Literature: 30 December, 12:00 noon-1:15 p.m.

Papers by Hertha D. Sweet Wong, Patricia Michele Riley, and Sharon Patricia Holland. Jonathan B. Brennan, Chair.

***N.B. The reception honoring Karl Kroeber, hosted by the Division of American Indian Literatures and the Association for the Study of American Indian Literatures, will be postponed until next year's 1999 MLA in Chicago.**

Book News

Irvin Morris, Navajo, published his first book -- *From the Glittering World: A Navajo Story* (Norman, Oklahoma:

{4} University of Oklahoma Press, 1997). Morris's work combines fiction, memoir, history, and traditional stories in a book cast in the form of a ceremony. Its four parts move from the creation story and the tragic episode of Fort Sumner to a fictionalized account of the author's childhood. With that we move from the reservation to Los Angeles and the present day; ending with a reworking of the stories that have gone before, now woven into the fabric of contemporary Diné life. Irvin Morris received his M.F.A. from Cornell University and has taught Native American Literature in the Department of American Studies at the State University of New York - Buffalo. In the fall Morris will take a position at the University of Arizona.

Simon Ortiz, Acoma, edited *Speaking for the Generations: Native Writers on Writing* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1998). This collection presents a selection of writings by authors representing a variety of backgrounds and cultures of North American Indians from Canada to Guatemala. Among the poets, novelists, and playwrights here are Gloria Bird, Esther Beilin, Roberta Hill, Daniel David Moses, Leslie Marmon Silko, and Victor Montejo. As Ortiz writes in his introductory essay, "the writers in this volume are speaking for themselves, their land, and their people as they speak for the generations. They speak for the continuing Existence of all life."

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William S. Penn, edited *As We Are: Mixblood Essays on Race and Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997). This collection of essays invites readers to explore race and mixblood identity in North America. The thirteen contributors represent mixblood Native American, Mestizo/a, and African-American writers from various cultural and aesthetic traditions as they address aspects of race and identity. The collection is strengthened by the variety of experiences it entails and the various authors' resistance to essentialist points of view. The authors included are Erika Aigner-Varoz, Arturo Aldama, Kimberly Blaeser, Diane DuBose Brunner, Patricia Penn Hilden, Shari Huhndorf, Carol Kalafatic, William S. Penn, Inez Petersen, Alfonso Rodriguez, Rolando Romero, Rainer Spencer, and Craig Womack.

Susan B. Andrews and **John Creed** have edited *Authentic Alaska: Voices of Its Native Writers* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998). This collection of over forty essays and autobiographies by Alaska Native writers tells of their way of life and bears witness to the immense cultural changes occurring in their lifetimes. They explore a range of experiences and issues, including, traditional domestic and subsistence practices; marriage customs; alcoholism; the challenges and opportunities of

{6} modern education; balancing traditional and contemporary demands; discrimination; adapting to urban life; the treatment of Native peoples in school textbooks; and the social realities of speaking standard and "village" English.

Rita Kohn and **W. Lynwood Montell** have collected a series of oral histories entitled, *ALWAYS A PEOPLE: Oral Histories of Contemporary Woodlands Indians* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1997). This is a collection of histories drawn from forty-one elders representing eleven Woodlands Nations -- among which are the Chippewa, Delaware, Iroquois, Miami, Ottawa, Peoria, Potawatomi, Sank and Fox, Shawnee, and Winnebago. Such issues as the boarding school experience and its effects on cultural identity and language retention are examined in the several accounts presented in this collection. Historian R. David Edmunds contributes an introduction that places these narratives in their historical contexts.

Karl Kroeber has published a study analyzing nearly forty Indian narratives entitled, *Artistry in Native American Myths* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998). Kroeber draws on both recent ethnopoetic scholarship and the theoretical constructs of Mikhail Bakhtin and Pierre Bourdieu to reveal how preconceptions deriving from hypervisual, print-dominated culture distort our

{7} understanding of essential functions and forms of oral storytelling. The author demonstrates that myths not only preserve tradition but may also transform it by performatively reenacting the concealed sociological and psychological conflicts that give rise to social institutions. Kroeber hopes to enable modern readers to better appreciate the full range and profundity of Native American mythic narratives from the ancient oral traditions of the past to the living traditions of the present.

Mario Gonzalez and **Elizabeth Cook-Lynn** have written an account of the efforts, beginning in 1985, of the Wounded Knee Survivors' Association's struggle to obtain legal redress for the 1890 massacre at Wounded Knee. This account, *The Politics of Hallowed Ground: Wounded Knee and the Struggle for Indian Sovereignty* (Champaign: University of Illinois, 1998), addresses both the legal and cultural issues behind this ongoing struggle. Mario Gonzalez, the Oglala attorney, offers entries from the diary he kept throughout the legal proceedings around the case. The Santee/Yankton writer Elizabeth Cook-Lynn addresses critical issues of cultural bias and collective memory. The book provides insight into the Sioux struggle to come to grips with history while providing a powerful depiction of the gaps between white and Native cultures.

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Roger Dunsmore has published a collection of essays entitled *Earth's Mind: Essays in Native Literature* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997). In these essays Dunsmore, who teaches in the Liberal Studies Department at the University of Montana, Missoula, considers the works of D'Arcy McNickle, Simon Ortiz, and Laurens van der Post, along with Salish stories and Pueblo sacred Clowns. The author takes his inspiration from Chief Joseph's statement that "the Earth and myself are of one mind." The idea that the mind is something larger and more pervasive in nature than the Western tradition has usually considered suggests respect as central to survival.

Maureen Trudelle Schwarz has published her study *Molded in the Image of Changing Women: Navajo Views of the Human Body* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1997). This study address places Navajo conceptions of the body at its theoretical core. The author, as the mother of a pubescent girl, was uniquely positioned to ask and learn about Navajo views on the lifecycle and how the human body is "molded" by experiences, people and society from conception to adulthood. Schwarz's findings are located in painstaking research, analysis of contested points of view on the body, personhood in the contemporary Navajo world and provides a more complete understanding of Navajo philosophy. Among its most striking features, the study

{9} includes unmodified interview transcriptions. This allows Schwarz to foreground Navajo voices.

Jean Afton, David Fridtjof Halaas, & Andrew E. Masich with **Richard N. Ellis** have published a scholarly edition of the Cheyenne Dog Soldier's ledgerbook found at the site of the Battle of Summit Springs in 1869. This edition, entitled *Cheyenne Dog Soldiers: A Ledgerbook History of Coups and Combats* (Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1997), is the first ledgerbook history to relate Indian drawings to specific people, events, and dates. The authors, working in close association with Cheyenne people, have produced an unprecedented look at the Dog Soldiers, treating these ledger drawings as historical documents.

Anne M. Dunn (Anishinabeg) has published *Grandmother's Gift: Stories from the Anishinabeg* (Duluth, MN: Holy Cow! Press, 1997). This is a collection of some forty stories and legends from the perspective of an Anishinabeg elder offering insights on such subjects as our relationship to the earth, social justice, the power of family tradition, and respect for humankind.

E. Pauline Johnson's *Moccasin Maker* (1913), edited in 1987 by **A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff**, will be reissued in a revised edition by University of Oklahoma Press this fall.

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Conferences

Southwest /Texas Popular Culture Association & American Culture Association,

February 24-27, 1999. Sheraton Old Town Hotel, Albuquerque, New Mexico. Native American Studies is one of the many areas represented at the annual meeting of the Southwest/Texas PCA-ACA.

American Literature Association Annual Meeting, May 20-23, 1999. Baltimore, Maryland.

The Association for the Study of American Indian Literature invites proposals for its three sessions at the 1999 American Literature conference. Descriptions of the three sessions given below. Please Send 250-word abstracts by **11 January, 1999** to:

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Panel 1: A General (Open Topic) Session

Panel 2: Native American Literary Criticism and Theory at the Turn of the 21st Century

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Panel 3: The Safe Space of the Community: Speaking the Experiences of Northeast/Southeast Native America

Panel 2, "Native American Literary Criticism and Theory at the Turn of the 21st Century," invites participants to Consider the following questions: Where are we now? Where might we be headed? What is needed? Proposals might address current critical-theoretical debates in the field, intervene in these debates, and/or propose new approaches, concerns, theories, connections, research areas and projects.

Panel 3, "The Safe Space of the Community," focuses on the importance of the spoken word to Native cultures in the eastern United States and Canada. The culturally distinct styles of eastern Natives tend to be dismissed by western academics, resulting in great pressure upon Native thinkers to abandon their cultural styles if they are to be taken seriously in academia. Worse, the directness of eastern Native speech is chided as "rude" and/or "crude" by cultural gatekeepers who see straightforwardness as aggression, not the natural consequence of living in intellectual safety within the personal and psychic space of a community that respects every spirit.

This panel will be dedicated to exploring and appreciating the culturally distinct styles of Native speakers and writers from the northeastern and southeastern U.S. and {12} Canada -- not as "quaint" but on their own terms as legitimate discourse styles that, many instances, are far older than their European counterparts, and which have guided their respective communities through the fraught space of the present. We urge speakers to come forward knowing that they are approaching the safe space of community.

For Panel 3, spoken presentations will be preferred over paper readings, although proposals should be in written form. Any proposal that does not seem appropriate for Panels 2 or 3 may be offered for Panel 1, an "open topic" or general session.

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The Association for the Study of American Indian Literatures Membership Form

Our association by-laws passes five years ago, and in accordance with them we are calling for readers to join. The association's two publications -- *SAIL (Studies in American Indian Literatures)* and *ASAIL NOTES* -- are funded from membership funds and contributions from supporting institutions. This means you can receive **both** publications, as well as all rights and benefits of membership, by completing the form below and mailing it to the address provided. We hope you choose to do so.

Please mail payment (in U.S. dollars only, please -- check, money order, or cash are all acceptable) and this form to ASAIL Membership c/o R.M. Nelson / Box 112 / University of Richmond, VA 23173-0112

ASAIL membership rates for 1999:

☐ Limited income \$16 ☐ Individual member \$25
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