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FROM THE EDITOR

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I hope the arrival of this issue of *SAIL* finds you well and rested! It's been three years now since we changed the editorial structure of *SAIL* to include an editorial board, and some of you have suggested that it would be useful for me to explain more clearly how the entire editorial staff of *SAIL* functions. I'm happy to do so, not just because I think it's always good to keep ASAIL folks informed about the journal, but because I hope that it will prompt some of you to want to be more involved with the journal—as authors, manuscript readers, book reviewers, and editorial board members.

At any rate, here's how it works. The editorial staff of *SAIL* is comprised of a general editor, an editorial board, a book review editor, a creative submissions editor, the ASAIL treasurer, and an editorial assistant. Traditionally, the general editor of *SAIL* is selected through an open applications process by the outgoing general editor in consultation with the officers of ASAIL. There is no formal limit on the length of time that a general editor may serve; however, when I formally accepted the position in May 2001, I agreed to a five-year term with an option to remain for another three years if desired by the board and ASAIL. The duties of the general editor are fairly simple: to oversee the content, production and design of the journal; to negotiate with the University of Nebraska Press on behalf of the journal; and to represent the journal at professional conferences and in professional organizations affiliated with the study of American Indian literatures.

Editorial board members are selected through an open applications process by the general editor and outgoing board members in consultation with the officers of ASAIL. Editorial board members serve a five-year term with an option to remain for another three years if desired by the general editor, other board members, and ASAIL. The duties of an editorial board member vary but include assisting the general editor in decisions about content, production and design of the journal, and representing the journal at professional conferences and in professional organizations affiliated with the study of American Indian literatures. Since all manuscript submissions to *SAIL* receive a blind editorial review, board members also serve as regular manuscript reviewers, reading as many as thirty manuscripts per year. Current editorial board members are Chad Allen (Ohio State University), Dean Rader (University of San Francisco), and Gwen Griffin (Minnesota State University, Mankato).

The book review editor is selected through an open applications process by the general editor and editorial board. The book review editor serves a five-year term with an option to remain for another three years if desired by the general editor, the board, and ASAIL. The duties of the book review editor are to manage book reviews for the journal, a task that includes finding reviewers, enforcing publication deadlines for reviews, and providing production copy and reviewer information to the general editor for each issue of *SAIL*. The current book review editor is P. Jane Hafen (University of Nevada, Las Vegas).

Truthfully, we've never had to select a new creative submission editor, but if we did, it would happen through a process similar to that of the selection of the book review editor, and the new creative editor would probably also be subject to the same term limit as the book review editor. The duties of the creative editor are to read all "creative" submissions and select poetry and short fiction pieces for publication in *SAIL*. The current creative submissions editor is Joe Bruchac (Greenfield Press).

As you all know, the ASAIL treasurer is elected in accordance with the association's by-laws (every two years at the Association Business Meeting, now held during the Native American Literature Symposium). The ASAIL treasurer's duties in relation to the journal once included

copyediting, overseeing production, circulating the journal (mailing it out to subscribers), maintaining a current database of subscribers, and serving as the financial officer in charge of the journal's budget. With our move to the University of Nebraska Press, the treasurer's duties in relation to *SAIL* include maintaining a current database of members and subscribers, transmitting that database to UNP, and serving as the financial officer in charge of the journal's budget. The current ASAIL treasurer is Bob Nelson (University of Richmond).

I hope that I've answered some of the questions that folks have had about the editorial staff—if I haven't, please let me know. In addition to the editorial staff, *SAIL* enjoys the generous contributions of time provided by dozens of manuscript readers, book review writers, and members whose regular correspondence reminds me that *SAIL* is only a visible fragment of a much larger community of scholars and teachers for whom American Indian literatures takes a central, even urgent, place in their work and in their lives. Please know that we are grateful and appreciative of these contributions.

As always, let me know what we're doing right, and wrong!

Malea Powell

Eulogy on William Apess

Speculations on His New York Death

ROBERT WARRIOR

"And while you ask yourselves, 'What do they, the Indians, want?' you have only to look at the unjust laws made for them and say, 'They want what I want.' "[1] These words, spoken on two occasions in the Odeon Theatre in Boston in January 1836, are among the last history records of Pequot intellectual, William Apess, speaking in public. They come at the end of what is surely the pinnacle of Apess's intellectual career, his *Eulogy on King Philip*, a stunning revision of American history in which Apess condemns the historical and contemporary practices by which Natives lost and were losing their lands to invading Euroamerican. Apess delivered the eulogy on January 8, then again in what was apparently a sort of command performance encore on January 26 (O'Connell, *On Our Own Ground* 275).

The *Eulogy*, published in two editions after it was delivered, is the last of Apess's five books, all of which are nonfiction. He also published an autobiography, *A Son of the Forest*, in two separate editions (1829 and 1831); *The Increase of the Kingdom of Christ: A Sermon* (1831); *The Experiences of Five Christian Indians of the Pequot Tribe* (1833); and *Indian Nullification of the Unconstitutional Laws of Massachusetts Relative to the Marshpee Tribe; or, The Pretended Riot Explained* (1835) (O'Connell, *On Our Own Ground* lxxx–lxxxi). Each of these books is remarkable in its own way, especially given the extremely modest background of their author. "Apess's work," according to Jace Weaver, "must be viewed as resistance literature, affirming Indian cultural and political identity over against the dominant culture" (55).

Apess is among a number of Native intellectuals from the eighteenth

and nineteenth centuries to whom scholars have paid increasing attention over the past decade and more. Others include Samson Occom, Joseph Johnson, Peter Jones, Elias Boudinot, and George Copway. These scholars have produced a range of work that includes extremely helpful and illuminating anthologies and articles built around recovered writings to full-length archival and textual studies of multiple and single authors.[2] The purpose of this paper, though, is not so much to add to what we know of Apess's texts, but to examine the circumstances surrounding his death in 1839, not in New England, but in New York City.

A NEW YORK MYSTERY

What happened to Apess after he departed the stage at the Odeon is shrouded in mystery; the contemporary realities of the 1830s and the attendant problem of Native invisibility in the northeastern United States surround his story outside of his published work. A year after his orations at the Odeon, Apess published second editions of both *The Experiences of Five Christian Indians* and *Eulogy on King Philip*, but has yet to show up in the historical record as having continued his life in the public eye. Indeed, the only public mentions of Apess are in court in debt actions. Even there, an inventory of his household goods appears while he does not.

For years, that was all that seemed possible to know after 1836. One early critic speculated that his political activities had made him violent enemies and that he had been murdered like his African American New England nationalist contemporary, David Walker (O'Connell, *On Our Own Ground* xxxviii–xxxix). Others assumed he fell into dissipation and died anonymously.[3] Eventually, 1839 obituaries from New York City papers emerged in archival research, followed by transcripts of an inquest into Apess's death.[4] Up to the point of the discovery of the New York obituaries, Apess seemed every bit a product of New England and every inch a New England writer. Then, somehow, Apess had moved from New England to New York City and had died there.[5]

The inquest, a document handwritten in script, offers no ironclad answers to the circumstances of Apess's death. In attendance were three witnesses: a wife named Elizabeth, the daughter of the owner of the

boarding house where Apess and his wife were living, and a fellow boarder. Apparently, Apess sought medical attention due to pain in his right side and purging and vomiting that had lasted two days. A Dr. Viers prescribed something to help him purge more quickly. The next day Apess felt better and was able to brush his teeth and eat some toast. The boarder who testified at the inquest reported that he spoke to Apess that day and reported that he seemed well. Five minutes later, according to the boarder, Apess was dead. The coroner concluded that apoplexy had caused his death, indicating that a sudden, stroke-like event had ended his life. Barry O'Connell, who has traced out as much of Apess's history as any scholar, conjectures that bad medicine from Dr. Viers was really the cause, pointing to the woeful state of health care at that time ("Once More Let Us Consider" 168).

The more likely possibility is that a long drinking career, much of which Apess himself details in *A Son of the Forest*, had caught up with him; others have argued this is consistent with the apoplectic conclusion of the coroner. All three of those who testified at the inquest reported that Apess was a heavy drinker, with the fellow boarder reporting that he was known to go on drinking binges that would last for some days, and then would not drink at all. His wife, Elizabeth, reported that "he has lately been somewhat intemperate" (O'Connell, "Once More Let Us Reconsider" 168).

O'Connell contends that none of this adds up to Apess being a victim of alcohol abuse, suggesting that much more likely that Apess had occasional drinking binges. After all, over a hundred years later, life expectancy for a Native male would still be little more than the forty-one years he lived. This, though, seems like wishful thinking given the pervasive theme of alcohol use in Apess's own writing and in the testimony of all witnesses at the inquest.

Why Apess would have moved from Massachusetts to New York City is still not known and may never be. Elizabeth testified in the inquest that she had been married to Apess for either two or ten years (the handwriting is difficult to decipher), which is noteworthy since her marriage to Apess could have overlapped with the publication of his wife, the former Mary Wood's story in *Experiences* (they married in 1821). Further, no record shows Apess as being part of any larger com-

munity through which he might have gained an audience, such as a local Methodist church or society, for instance.

But nearly any of this evidence from the inquest could have been exaggerated, meaning that we might never be able to pinpoint the exact contours of Apess's last years. Perhaps Elizabeth Apess and his fellow boarder underplayed the extent of his drinking in his last days as a way of denying the unhealthiness of their own lifestyles. Perhaps Elizabeth thought a marriage with a decade's duration sounded better than one of a few years, so she overstated how long they had been together.

After briefly reviewing the contours of Apess's life as he presents it in *A Son of the Forest*, I will speculate somewhat on the possible circumstances of his move to New York and his death, using what history says about New York as a commercial, publishing, and intellectual capital in those years.

FROM NEW ENGLAND TO NEW YORK

Apess was born in 1798 in Colrain, Massachusetts, the first child, most probably, of William and Candace Apes.[6] His parents separated in 1801 and young William was sent to Colchester, Connecticut, to live with his mother's parents, where he was physically abused. At age four, the city of Colchester bound him out to a local couple, who sent him to school until he was twelve. Then, Apess's indenture was sold to a judge in New London, but he ran away from the judge's house several times before his indenture was sold once again (O'Connell, *On Our Own Ground* xxix).

During his time in New London, Apess began attending Methodist meetings and, on March 13, 1813, had a conversion experience (O'Connell, *On Our Own Ground* 12, 19–20). His rebellion against his indenture, however, continued following this conversion and he ran away and joined the United States Army and served on the Canadian front of the War of 1812 (O'Connell, *On Our Own Ground* 26–31). After mustering out of the army, Apess wandered around Quebec and Ontario before returning to Connecticut in 1817 (O'Connell, *On Our Own Ground* 37).

Returning to the Methodists, Apess was baptized by immersion in

1818 and began exhorting and preaching. He was married in 1821 and he and his wife, Mary, had at least one and perhaps as many as three children. Apess worked and preached in various places in southern New England and in 1827 was licensed by the Methodists to exhort. Following this, Apess began to work as a missionary in the northeast. In the midst of conflict with this particular sect of Methodists over his ordination, Apess began what was then an unprecedented publishing career for a Native writer (O'Connell, *On Our Own Ground* 50–52).

Apess was raised in the crucible of Native New England, had been abused in various ways in it, and spent his adulthood giving voice to those who experienced the oppression of that world in silent invisibility. He helped lead one of the most important Native revolts of the nineteenth century at Mashpee in Massachusetts and created an unprecedented public persona for himself.[7] Following the publication of his books in his mid thirties, Apess departed New England for New York City. Why exactly Apess moved from Massachusetts to New York is still not known and may never be.

All of this requires speculation, and I would like to suggest that it is worth taking some leeway in doing so. Though we'll never be able to determine specifically from the boxes of correspondence left by Apess, but maybe we ought to suppose that Apess could see that his own infamy was little more than an obstacle to those at Mashpee, about whom he cared so deeply. And perhaps he had big plans for his days in New York, plans to make a bigger name for himself and have a wider impact on the world of Indian affairs than was possible from a New England pulpit or stage. Maybe he saw people like David Walker go out from Boston to Philadelphia, New York, and Washington and wanted to do the same.

New York in 1838 was in the grip of the economic aftershocks of the Panic of 1837, an economic collapse with national implications precipitated by runaway inflation and labor unrest (Burrows and Wallace 603). Following riots in February 1837, the city's infrastructure all but collapsed. Real estate prices plummeted, manufacturing was devastated, banks called in loans and mortgages, and bank patrons started pulling money from accounts (Burrows and Wallace 612-13). The ensuing depression would last until 1843.

The time following the panic was perhaps not the most promising period for Apess to make a move to New York City, but the decade and a half leading up to the panic had been meteoric for the city. The Erie Canal opened in 1825, connecting the city to all the important western markets via the Great Lakes, the Mississippi, and New Orleans (Burrows and Wallace 430). New York, which had been an important place in the development of the American colonies, and then the United States, was poised to become a major metropolitan power. As Edward Burrows and Mike Wallace note, "Not surprisingly, . . . it was during these same years that Manhattan became the center of book publishing in the United States" (441). Readers in the west saw New York publishers like the Harper brothers, flooding the market with cheap books. Further, "during the 1830s New York was the fastest growing city in the United States, and at some point during the decade it surpassed Mexico City in population, becoming the largest city" in the western hemisphere (Burrows and Wallace 576).

Apess's first recorded trip to New York was when he had earlier run away from his indenture and trained for the U.S. Army on Governor's Island (O'Connell, *On Our Own Ground* 24). Years later, in 1829 he deposited the copyright to the first edition of *A Son of the Forest* in New York City and in 1831, published both *The Increase of the Kingdom of Christ* and a revised version of *A Son of the Forest* there (O'Connell, *On Our Own Ground* xxxiv). Given these facts and the considerable gaps in evidence of Apess's whereabouts for months and years at a time, he may have frequented New York City before moving there subsequent to his death.

Any number of aspects of New York might have attracted Apess, including the fact that in 1831 the state abolished prison terms for debtors, except in cases of fraud (Burrows and Wallace 522). Given his debt problems in Massachusetts, he very well could have made his way to Manhattan any time after the first of these actions in 1836, or perhaps he was going back and forth. Additionally, if his struggles with alcohol did, in fact, continue during these years, perhaps the relative anonymity of New York and the pervasiveness of its drinking culture drew him. Burrows and Wallace report that alcohol was a ubiquitous feature of Manhattan social life, especially among the lower classes: "rampant overproduction hammered the price down to twenty-five cents a gallon, less per drink than tea or coffee" (485).

Elizabeth Apess, the woman at Apess's inquest, may be another part of the equation. As previously mentioned, she claimed a marriage to him of two or ten years, meaning they could have been together at the time he deposited the copyright of *A Son of the Forest* in New York in 1829. But he was married to his first wife, Mary, in 1821. Male abandonment of family was rampant in Native communities in New England, which Apess knew from experience from his own father.[8] So conjecturing that his and Mary's marriage split up is not a stretch. Or even possibly, he maintained two marriages at once.

The possibility exists that Mary and Elizabeth are the same person going by different names, but, if so, it is hard to reconcile Elizabeth's testimony of either a two-year or ten-year marriage. Poor women in New York City were particularly vulnerable, especially when they were single, so it seems unlikely she was merely making up her story from whole cloth. The inquest was not a pleasant event, taking place in a well-appointed office, but at the boarding house. It is easy to read as impacted by class as the doctor, a representative of officialdom, imposes himself on the witnesses.

Thus, if anything, if Elizabeth and Mary are the same person, she would seemingly want to make herself sound all the more respectable by claiming all the years of marriage possible. "While a woman's wages might well be instrumental in keeping her household afloat," Burrows and Wallace write, "she could seldom earn enough to support herself on her own. This was particularly evident from the condition of wage-earning widows, who often lived closeted in tiny garrets or huddled in cellars or half-finished buildings, at the edge of destitution" (478). However they came to be together, life without William Apess was most probably going to be grim for Elizabeth.

Absent any new, revealing documentary evidence, it is entirely possible that Elizabeth is a woman with whom Apess had a long-standing affair and with whom he was living as a married couple at the time of his death. New York was a place where something like that could happen in a way that would have been impossible in small-town Massachusetts. Even if they came across as an interracial couple, sections of New York were much more tolerant on that score than most places.

If this scenario is true, it means that Apess left a wife and perhaps

teenage children to face debt peonage in New England. Perhaps the children were already bound out to continue the cycle of servitude already so familiar to generations of New England's Native people. If, on top of that, Apess was dealing with a significant substance abuse problem, he is hardly a moral exemplar to hold up as morally blameless. Then again, is that what we should be looking for when we turn to his writing?

William Apess led an extraordinary life in a desolate time for Native people in New England. Born with no advantages, his early life was a descent into a hellish reality that was a matter of fact for many, if not most, of his Native contemporaries. Somehow, out of all of that, he managed to escape the worst of it only to launch himself right back into the maelstrom of it all. He may have started believing too much that white Christians and their churches could be prompted to make things better for Native people, but our history of writing is littered with plenty of people who did the exact same thing. Apess turned a corner, and by the time of the *Eulogy*, he envisioned his history and his experiences as illuminating a path toward the future.

That, in the end, is what I hope drew Apess to New York before his untimely death—the palpable energy of intellect interfacing with the public in ways that were making the small press runs and public lectures of New England a thing of the past. Observers in the mid-1830s reported people all over the city voraciously reading papers like the *New York Sun* and Horace Greeley's *Herald* (Burrows and Wallace 523–25). The *Sun* cost a penny and could be seen in the hands of common people. Also in that decade, William Hamilton and Peter Williams Jr. launched *Freedom's Journal*, the first African-American paper in the United States (Burrows and Wallace 549). The press, according to Burrows and Wallace, "addressed something that had never quite existed before except in republican theory: a 'public' at large, a civic demos. In doing so, it offered New York's citizenry the technical and textual means to grasp their city's growing miscellaneity" (528).

What an exciting time it must have been for a writer like Apess to witness the wholesale changes that were taking place in the intellectual currents of the United States. Beyond the popular press, the 1830s were the run up to the first great intellectual age in the life of the United States.

And New York was superceding New England at the head of it. This was the era of Washington Irving, James Fenimore Cooper, Edgar Allen Poe, Walt Whitman, and Herman Melville. New England had its share of formidable intellects, including Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, but even one so luminous as Margaret Fuller was drawn to New York in 1844 to take up reviewing for Greeley's *Herald* (Bender 158–60).

To continue speculating about Apess, any efforts he made to be part of this rising tide were, no doubt, thwarted. The literary clubs that were springing up around the city were for white men, most of them minor figures remembered for belonging to those clubs, not the substance of their work. But I can imagine Apess picking up an issue of the *Knickerbocker* or the *Democratic Review* (two of the leading literary journals) and looking for an inroad to Manhattan's burgeoning life of the mind. I can picture him reading the literary gossip and being reminded of what it's like to be always on the outside looking in.

His Manhattan was no doubt one dominated by cramped quarters and short provisions in a crumbling tenement. "New York, it was widely agreed," say Burrows and Wallace, "was the filthiest urban center in the United States; Boston and Philadelphia gleamed by comparison" (588). Still, perhaps there were moments of magic that go unrecorded in the archives—a chance encounter with Cooper, a serious discussion with an editor willing to look at his work.

But an Indian in New York in the 1830s was pretty much what an Indian preacher was in New England—a novelty. Phineas Taylor Barnum moved to New York in 1834 and opened his American Museum in 1841, two years after Apess died. According to Burrows and Wallace, he

> stocked his [m]useum . . . with jugglers and ventriloquists, curiosities and freaks, automata and living statuary, gypsies and giants, dwarfs and dioramas, Punch and Judy shows, models of Niagara Falls, and real live American Indians. (Barnum advertised the latter as brutal savages, fresh from slaughtering whites out west, though privately he groused that the "D___n Indians" were lazy and shiftless—"though they will draw." (644)

That would probably have been the reaction of most New Yorkers who might have helped someone like Apess. If it was dressed up to appeal to the basest fantasies of contemporary America, maybe it would sell. Apess, never having had much truck with such work, may have passed on opportunities that have gone unrecorded.

All someone in that position could do was look at the intellectual stream that was flowing by and hope that the future would create new possibilities. I like to imagine, based not so much on evidence as the sense I get as a reader of his work, that in his brighter moments in those last few years, William Apess peered into the future and knew that someday his books would be recognized for their genius and he would be regaled as having provided a turning point. That he knew he would not always be alone.

Isolation is a persistent feature of Native American intellectual life, a topic of conversation nearly every time and place Native writers and scholars gather. Most Native scholars seem to know all too well the realities of indifferent advisers, insensitive colleagues, insufficient resources, and lack of intellectual camaraderie. Any graduate student or professional scholar can face these issues, but Native people in the academy are affected in particular ways.

Many, if not most, Native students and scholars know what it feels like to be the only Indian on campus, to be alone. Imagine, then, what it must have been like for Apess. He fought hard to make his way back home, then became by position and circumstance a leader more than a member of his communities. He ended up with no known intellectual associates, no one with whom to share the vicissitudes of his writerly life. Maybe he heard Elias Boudinot speak sometime in Boston, but he didn't really know a single other person like himself. So I hope he did allow himself a hopeful glimpse into the future that helped him believe he would someday, as he does through the fact of these words, inhabit a world of his peers.

NOTES

1. From Barry O'Connell, *On Our Own Ground: The Complete Writings of William Apess, A Pequot*. Subsequent references to Apess's writings are to this edition.

Apess spelled his name with both one and two *s*'s. O'Connell argues convincingly that Apess clearly chose by the end of his life to use two *s*'s in spelling his own name rather than using "Apes" as he had in his first two publications (xiv). The name continues to exist among contemporary Pequots and, whatever the spelling, is pronounced in one syllable.

2. Among the anthologies and articles are Joanna Brooks, "Six Hymns by Samson Occom," *Early American Literature* 38.1: 67–87; Laura J. Murray, ed., *To Do Good to My Indian Brethren: The Writings of Joseph Johnson, 1751–1776* (Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1998); Theda Purdue, ed., *Cherokee Editor: The Writings of Elias Boudinot* (Athens: U of Georgia P, 1983); Bernd Peyer, ed., *The Elders Wrote: An Anthology of Early Prose by North American Indians, 1768–1931* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1982); and, Gerald Vizenor, *Touchwood: A Collection of Ojibway Prose* (Original year; 2nd ed. New Rivers Press, 1994).

Book-length projects include Maureen Konkle, *Unbelieving Indians: Treaties, Colonialism, and Native Historiography* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2004); Bernd C. Peyer, *The Tutor'd Mind: Indian Missionary-Writers in Antebellum America* (Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1997); Hilary E. Wyss, *Writing Indians; Literacy, Christianity, and Native Community in Early America* (Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 2000); and, Weaver, *That the People Might Live*. Konkle's book, including a thoroughly researched chapter on Apess, was published after the initial submission of this article. I became familiar with Konkle's research in the midst of my research on Apess, though I have not quoted it directly. While differing in some of its points from this article, Konkle deos not present any new evidence in her book that substantively changes my argument.

Cusick's major work is not available in a recent reprint. It is *Sketches of Ancient History of the Six Nations* (3rd ed., Lockport, New York: Turner & McCollum, Printers, Democrat Office, 1848).

3. In *Roanoke and Wampum*, Ron Welburn speculates that Apess left New England for a career in whaling. He imagines Apess signing up to sail on the Pequod with Captain Ahab in search of Moby Dick.

4. Inquisition on the View of the Body of William Apes, New York County, New York, April 10, 1839, New York County Coroner, Department of Records and Information Services, 31 Chambers Street, Municipal Archives of the City of New York.

5. O'Connell speculates that Apess perhaps wrote *A Son of the Forest* in New York City based on his copyright deposit of the book there in 1829 (*On Our Own Ground* xlii). Given that when he wrote his introduction, the evi-

dence of Apess's 1939 death in New York City had not surfaced, O'Connell's supposition was especially prescient (though, of course, still not proven). Though he does not reference Apess, a thorough literary history of New England can be found in Lawrence Buell, *New England Literary Culture: From Revolution to Renaissance* (Cambridge: U of Cambridge P, 1986).

6. Following O'Connell's example, I have used Apes for the parents since this spelling is the only one that shows up in historical documents in which they appear (*On Our Own Ground* xxvii). O'Connell has traced what can be known of Apess's parents. His father, William Apes, shows up in census documents as a free white man, but the name Apes is clearly of Pequot origin and O'Connell is most certainly correct in pointing to faulty racial classification in those times as the reason for the confusion. Though Apess never names her, his mother was most probably the women listed in the 1820 census, Candace, as the wife of William Apes. Similar to the confusion regarding her husband, in that and other documents, she is described as a "Negro" who was freed from slavery in 1805, a "free white woman," and a Pequot (O'Connell, *On Our Own Ground* xxvii). It is very likely then, that Apess's ancestry was a mix of Pequot, white, and black.

7. For accounts of Apess's role in the Mashpee Revolt, see Russell M. Peters, *The Wampanoags of Mashpee: An Indian Perspective on American History* (Somerville MA: Media Action, 1987), 33–34; and Donald M. Nielsen, "The Mashpee Indian Revolt of 1833," *New England Quarterly* 58 (1985): 400–420.

8. See Jean O'Brien, "'Divorced' from the Land: Resistance and Survival of Indian Women in Eighteenth Century New England," in Colin G. Calloway, ed., *After King Philip's War: Presence and Persistence in Indian New England.* Hanover NH: UP of New England, 1997. 144–61.

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Unraveling Ethnicity

The Construction and Dissolution of Identity in Wendy Rose's Poetics

SHEILA HASSELL HUGHES

Even at its most personal and confessional, Wendy Rose's poetry is primarily a social practice that seeks a sharing. Products of a self-proclaimed urban "half-breed," her poems do not simply *express* the struggle for identity; they actually *do* the work of identity construction itself, through interaction with imagined interlocutors and actual readers over the symbols, practices, and experiences of diverse cultural and religious traditions. This process of self-creation never begins *ex nihilo*. For Rose, it always depends upon the "given" or "found" aspects of ethnicity and tradition, even when those elements constitute a denial or erasure. Indeed, Rose's work operates doubly. For every act of self-conception, there is a concession to dissolution, and the poetry works as much to undo identity and unravel ethnicity as it does to secure them. Rose's project of self-invention through the act of *poesis*, or making, is therefore a ritual that must be both actively shared and endlessly repeated.

Exploring the dialectic of conception and dissolution in Rose's work, I will analyze both patterns of address and her use of specific images drawn from multiple traditions, for evidence of how her poetics might contribute to larger debates about ethnicity, authenticity, and the politics of identity in literature and society. After laying out some of the identity issues in Native American studies and Rose's subsequent dilemma as a mixed-blood author, I will consider how a "constructionist model of ethnicity" has been applied to contemporary American Indians from another disciplinary perspective. I use this as an entrée to

Rose's work in order to highlight the real-world embeddedness and the larger implications of her sociopoetic practice. In sociologist Joane Nagel's systemic analysis, which recognizes ethnicity as an interactive and recursive process, I find a helpful structure for drawing out some of the complexity of Rose's identity project. Rose's dialogic poetics are ultimately richer and more subtle than the sociological framework, however. Indeed, her poetry provides a set of conceptual metaphors for re-envisioning ethnicity that both challenge and supplement the "portfolio" figure proposed by Nagel. I explore Rose's imaginative structures of identity in the second half of the essay, as I turn to examine more closely issues of memory, embodied imagination, and collaboration in her work. Images of material conception and dissolution are prominent in Rose's poetry, and the nest, which is both a home perpetually (re)constructed from variously found objects, and a space for conception, emerges as one especially important metaphor. Rose weaves it for us, at once tenuously and stubbornly, with strands of multiple ethnic traditions.

THE AUTHENTIC INDIAN AND THE MIXED-BLOOD AUTHOR

For a poet writing as Indian—situating herself within the tradition of Native American literature, and contributing to its increasing visibility over the past three decades—the issue of ethnic identity is an important one. There is, after all, a troubling history of whites not only appropriating Indian land and culture but also actually impersonating Native identity.[1] If to become more "real" means taking on a singular and solidified ethnic identity—as either "white" or "Indian"—then Rose is destined to a world of shadows and pre-birth. To become white (an identification complicated by her dark skin) would mean the annihilation of her Indian self, the forgetting of her Hopi and Miwok relations. To become wholly Indian is also problematic, however. To be authentically Indian in the eyes of whites would seem to require another kind of dissolution, since in popular American imagination today, the only "real Indians" are dead ones. Modern, urban, bicultural poets don't fit the museum-based image. And, for genealogical reasons, her tribal

identity is also tenuous and unofficial, unacknowledged by the Hopi tribe.[2]

As Rose's reflections in the autobiographical essay "Neon Scars" reveal, her early naming and training were at odds with both halves of the identification "Indian writer": "How do you reveal that you were a bag lady at fourteen, having been turned out of the house . . . dropped out of high school, were classified as retarded but educable? [she asks,] . . . How do you reconcile being an 'Indian writer' with such a non-Indian upbringing?" (260). For Rose, this upbringing is not a lack easily to be overcome. It is not simply a matter of reclaiming a lost heritage. Unlike the countless children torn away from their families and sent to Indian boarding schools, for instance, Rose has no Indian family or tribe to which she can fully return. She explains,

> I have heard Indians joke about those who act as if they had no relatives, [and] I wince, because I have no relatives. They live, but they threw me away—so, I do not have them. I am without relations. I have always swung back and forth between alienation and relatedness . . . I knew I did not belong among people. ("Neon Scars" 255)

If Rose thus lacks a "natural" set of Indian relations, she nonetheless uses the communal experience and tribal knowledge she has acquired in adulthood to construct a newly relational identity that both affirms Native traditions and also challenges all kinds of identity borders: including those between Indian and white, human and nonhuman. In the preface to her collection *Going to War with All My Relations*, she explains that

> [t]he "war" to which the title refers is a memoir of sorts that documents or recalls my thirty years of observation and activity within the Fourth World (Indigenous Peoples) Movement. The "war" is everyone's war. All of us depend upon the Mother we have in common; all of us are indigenous to Her. Our "Relations" are each other, all that is alive, with the awareness that life is everywhere. (vii)

For Rose, then, identity is the product of constructive and mutual

work, including the tasks of recognition and imaginative connection to all aspects of creation, as well as the labor of memory. Her political commitments clearly align her with indigenous movements worldwide, but her negotiation of ethnicity complicates matters to some degree. In subversion of both white and Native demands for "authentic" Indianness—as original artifact and/or tribal representative—the poet chooses instead to act out integrity as an ongoing spiritual and political practice of integrating diverse elements.

Because she also realizes that multiple factors contribute to identity beyond simple notions of race, Rose considers the "halfbreed" to be a model adaptable to all sorts of people. She explains, "to be a 'halfbreed,' . . . is not a condition of genetics and has nothing to do with ancestry or race. [It] is a condition of history, a result of experience, of dislocations and reunions, and of choices made for better or worse" (*Bone Dance* xvi). The multiplicity of the "breed" is shaped not only by current family dynamics, but also by all kinds of sociohistorical power relations. "It's a political fact," in Rose's terms (Coltelli 123). Because her maternal Scottish ancestors took part in the colonization of Ireland, the poet admits, "[t]he colonizer and colonized meet in my blood. It is so much more complex than just white and just Indian" ("Neon Scars" 258). Indeed, she claims, "[h]istory and circumstance have made halfbreeds of all of us" (Bruchac 87). What makes Rose's poetics distinctive, then, is not a political ground, claimed on the basis of identity, from which she speaks. Rather, it is her mode of address itself, which seeks to unsettle the ground between herself and readers.

This is not to say that Rose is not passionately concerned with history and geopolitics. Her poetry is certainly no invitation to "go Native." Instead, serving as a model of responsibility and responsiveness for her white readers, she herself acknowledges historical ties that she might like to disown. Rose recognizes that imagination alone is insufficient to identity construction, and that memory plays an important role as well. Ancestry may not wholly determine ethnic identity, but it does limit the options to a degree. "This isn't the heritage I would have picked—to be the daughter of the invaders," she confesses, "It is not where my sympathies lie" (Bruchac 87). That Rose is willing to accept all aspects of her lineage—even going so far as "to apologize . . . to all of

Ireland on behalf of John Bull and return . . . [a stolen] castle" to the rightful descendent—demonstrates her refusal to reduce her own experience to pure victimization, to the plight of the Indian (Bruchac 87). She is interested in historical processes of power and their effects on those on both sides of any battle—and, especially, perhaps, on those caught in the middle. Having been neglected by her mixed-blood mother and white relatives, violently abused by her legal father (pushed to the point of begging for foster care as a child), and only tenuously acknowledged by the Hopi man she believes to be her biological father, Rose is keenly aware of the difficulties involved in any "received" identity or familial line ("Neon Scars" 259; *Itch Like Crazy* 113–21). Rather than deny this heritage radically to reinvent herself, however, the poet uses the pain of her experience to fuel the ongoing work of a self-recreation that is rooted in memory and reconnection as well as personal choice.

The poet's approach to memory and reconstruction has surely been shaped by her training in anthropology and archaeology. Rose came to the study of anthropology as something of a last resort—it was the only department at Berkeley that would support her dissertation on Indian literature—and she has since identified herself as a "spy" in the academy, crossing borders and maintaining allegiances elsewhere (Coltelli 124). In many of her poems—in *Lost Copper* and *Going to War*, in particular—we see the poet's identifications shift, unsettling the social-scientific approach to the "discovery" of aboriginal cultures. In her early classes in archaeology, she explains, "[i]t seems that I could *feel* the trowels, *feel* my bones smother in paper bags in a lab, *become* extinct in a museum display. Rather than peering down into the excavated pit, I found that I was, instead, staring up at the archaeologist from below."[3] Since Rose's poetic method aims at accessibility and attempts to encourage "listener[s] to be in the same place, to see what I see," in order to elicit their own response of emotion and irony, she invites readers from all kinds of social locations to identify with her imaginatively, even as she identifies with others (*Bone Dance* xv).

Although, as for any Native writer today, her readership is largely white, and although her poetry presents a strong challenge to oppression and colonization, the poet never takes a singular position against her readers. If she is a "protest poet," then it is with an eye toward utter

transformation, rather than mere opposition.[4] She writes both as subject and object, oppressor and oppressed, living and dead. In "Calling Home the Scientists," for example, she simultaneously laments the museumification of indigenous lives and cultures and yet recognizes her need for what the sciences have managed to preserve. In an odd but powerful reversal of agency that exposes the internalized damage as well as the limits of colonization, she begins, "[t]he museum is gone from my bones now" (1). But when "those lined notebooks" represent "the only names left" of a culture—"perhaps / all that is left, skeleton of humanity," then the speaker finds herself

> . . . wanting it all back,
> calling home the scientists
> calling home the museums (*Going to War* 15, 17–18, 22–24)

This "calling home" is both a reclamation and a chastisement of the prodigal sciences. As the poet exhorts the space explorers in "To the Vision Seekers, Remember This," of course,

> . . . it is women,
> all women, where you come from,
> Earth the one to remember (*Going to War* 32–34)

So to "call home the scientists" is to recall them to their common source with all life. If this is not a rejection of scientific methods themselves, it is certainly a challenge to temper and apply those methods in a context of relatedness to all creation. Ultimately, the separation between subject and object, inside and outside, is itself destabilized. "Discovering" or "uncovering" another culture might then be seen as an act of mutual, deliberate, and ethical reconstruction rather than as the exposure and subsequent appropriation of a pure and pre-existing reality. Rose's poetics offer to reinvigorate social-scientific models of ethnicity with a dialogic focus that blurs subject and object and weds invention to recollection.

ETHNIC CONSTRUCTION

Ultimately, I want to explore how Rose's poetic eye might offer new angles of vision on the scientific framework. In particular, I am inter-

ested in how the counter-element of dissolution—the negativity at work in Rose's poetics—could challenge and enrich our understanding of social construction. But because the poet represents ethnic identity as an imaginative creation in part, it is worth considering a constructionist model of ethnicity as background to her work. I therefore turn, first, to a social-science model, employing it as a lens to focus the social practices at work in Rose's poetry.

In *American Indian Ethnic Renewal*, sociologist Joane Nagel argues for "Indianness"—a pan-tribal identity that is often taken to "exemplify ethnicity at its most primordial and immutable"—as, in fact, a prime example of social construction (32). She explains that "a constructionist model of ethnicity" is one that

> stresses the fluid, situational, volitional, and dynamic character of ethnic identification, organization, and action. According to this view, the construction of ethnicity is an ongoing process that combines the past and the present into building material for new or revitalized identities and groups. (19)

As with all instances of social construction, the creation of ethnic meaning or identity is neither purely an act of individual will and self-invention, nor solely an effect of impersonal social forces. The construction of culture is an ongoing, collaborative, and sometimes conflictual process, and individual ethnic identity is negotiated between the individual and a group or groups. It is "a dialectic between internal identification and external ascription" and "[s]uccessful ethnic identity selection requires matching individual and societal definitions of ethnicity" (Nagel 21, 23).

Identity politics are highly charged within and among Indian communities today, and, given the very material and political effects of debates over aboriginal "authenticity," Nagel is well aware of potential objections to the idea of "ethnic identity selection" and to the larger model of "cultural invention" (67–68). Although the U.S. Census Bureau depends entirely upon personal identification for its statistics on Native Americans, after all, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) takes a more anthropological approach to identifying Native tribes. To qualify for official BIA recognition, a tribe must show evidence that

> a single Indian group has existed since it first sustained contact with European cultures on a continuous basis to the present; that its members live in a distinct, autonomous community perceived by others as Indian; that it has maintained some sort of authority with a governing system by which its members abide; [and] that all its members can be traced genealogically to an historic tribe. (Nagel 242)

To argue that "Indianness" is an invention, subject to volition, context, and strategic efficacy, would therefore seem to undermine claims to the very kind of "historical social and political continuity" necessary to official status, and, in turn, to land claims and all sorts of other legal and political rights (Nagel 242).

While Nagel makes a distinction between tribal affiliation and a broader (pan)Indian identity, affirming that the former does remain "central to American Indian identity and ethnic authenticity," tribal identity itself can be understood variously (139). According to Ward Churchill, acceptance of the BIA standard by tribal authorities today can be understood not only as an embattled response to forced competition for limited resources, but also as a residual and internalized effect of colonization (51–53). The genealogical element, in particular, has been a colonial imposition upon aboriginal societies whose traditional concepts of identity, in many cases, were not genealogical but rather national or cultural. One can even find historical examples where incorporated members of particular tribes outnumbered hereditary ones (Churchill 41–43). It should be obvious, of course, that no culture is "created at some prehistoric point in time, to 'survive' or be 'handed down' unchanged through the generations," but rather, as Nagel points out, that "individuals and collectivities adapt, adopt, discard, and change continually, according to the needs and vagaries of history and the world around them" (63). The efforts of what Churchill characterizes as a handful of self-styled Indian "purity police" aside, some tribes today appear to be reinstating more open policies, asserting their sovereign right to determine membership in creative ways (53). As Nagel demonstrates, some tribes are also implementing "forms of cultural reconstruction . . . to revitalize weakened ethnic boundaries or to rees-

tablish ethnic group solidarity" (197). Indeed, the very continuity upon which notions of ethnic authenticity rest must account for change, process, and renovation in order to allow for survival. What constitutes a single, autonomous community when membership in and the boundaries of community are open to negotiation and reconfiguration is therefore a key question posed by the constructionist approach to the official ethnographic model.

Especially important for this study of Rose, of course, is Nagel's further argument that ethnicity can be multiple—a "status that varies as the audiences permitting particular ethnic options change" (21). She explains:

> As the individual (or group) moves through daily life, ethnic identities are shuffled in and out of prominence depending on the situation. Extending this image, the individual can be seen to carry a portfolio of ethnic identities that can be selected among, depending on the restrictions imposed by various social settings and constituencies. The result is an array or layering of ethnicities, with different identities activated at different times. This variable, negotiated view of ethnicity typifies the constructionist model. (21)

Nagel's prime example of this selective switching would be the "activat[ion]" of a specific tribal identity in one context, such as the reservation, and the enactment of "the additional 'Indian' component" in another, specifically, in an urban pan-Indian context (139).

This sociological model of multiple, layered, and mutable ethnicities is helpful for making sense of the poetic identity construction at work in Rose's writing. As with many postmodern analytical approaches, however, it doesn't quite precisely name what is, at least in part, a particularly indigenous approach to integration. First, Nagel's focus remains on the tribal and pan-tribal layers of ethnic identity. Although she considers intermarriage with non-Natives as a major factor in the assimilation of American Indians, her analysis stops short of considering the bicultural heritage of mixed-blood offspring in any depth.[5] For Rose, however, European and Euroamerican ancestors and traditions are a considerable factor—another layer—in her own negotiations of

ethnic identity. Interestingly, the integration of non-Native elements can also be seen as a particularly Indian style. The incorporation of outside persons, cultural objects and practices has been common, historically, among many tribes, and is part of an inclusive value system. While this approach likely contributed to the exploitation and erosion of Native peoples and cultures, the ability to transform and adapt to new intercultural contexts has also ensured their continuing survival.[6] In any case, Nagel's neglect of the non-Indian ethnicities shared by many Native Americans makes her model somewhat less useful than it might be for consideration of work like Rose's.

Another difficulty with the constructionist model laid out so far is its strong utilitarian emphasis. Nagel argues for "an ethnic 'presentation of self' " by which

> individuals engage in a continuous assessment of situation and audience, emphasizing or deemphasizing particular dimensions of ethnicity according to some measure of utility or feasibility. According to this depiction, calculations of the worth, appropriateness, or credibility of a particular ethnic identity are made on the basis of feedback from various audiences in different social settings. (23)

While pragmatic concerns certainly play a role in the ethnic performance of self, Rose challenges the notion that audience is an overriding factor—at least if we are thinking in terms of ease, or the feasibility of establishing commonality with the group. Indeed, her collections of poetry, which address multiple audiences and yet, as the poet well knows, are read primarily by whites, offer a unique form of expression for testing the negotiation of audience and the "ethnic 'presentation of self.' " Switching, blending, and integrating elements of ethnic identity in her poems, Rose challenges any reader looking for a singular authenticity or familiar credibility of voice. And if practical effects are nevertheless at issue for the poet, her concern is for how larger political and spiritual change might come about through the transformational work of poetry—not for some immediate and calculable social benefit to the writer herself. Although the authenticity of her tribal identity might remain open to question, she clearly does not fall among those "false Indians"

perpetrating "ethnic fraud" as a marketing strategy; nor does she "pass" as white to attract a larger audience.

In fact, Wendy Rose repeatedly brings the very question of her ethnic identity to the forefront in her poetry, unsettling easy affiliations as well as oppositions between the reader and the poetic persona. "If I Am Too Brown or Too White For You," from *The Halfbreed Chronicles*, is a good example of Rose's simultaneous challenge and invitation to the reader, as the poem begins with the caution, "remember I am a garnet woman" (1). Suggesting that she is neither brown nor white, but a changeable red, the speaker chooses the traditional color of the Indian yet also frames it in non-racial terms. She is a stone-in-process,

> whirling into precision
> as a crystal arithmetic
> or a cluster . . . (2–4)

Readers who would reject her are overcome by the speaker's claim that it is we who are "selecting" her from among others "more definitely red or white" (13, 15). It is the readers, we discover, who "piece together" her shape and yet who also seem to desire something "less clouded, / less mixed" (23, 27–28). But if the shape of the poem itself is a mutual creation—offspring of poet and reader—then it must necessarily be "mixed," as the speaker herself is. Its life, its presence beyond the printed page, depends upon an active selection on our part, a gathering attention, and a willingness to infuse the words with our own breath even as they inspire us. Ultimately, the speaker affirms her confidence in the reader's fidelity to that process of mutual creation, asserting that "you always see / just in time" (29–30). The act of identity formation, then, is a mutual work of both remembering and choosing. That the poet confronts potentially antagonistic audiences, in both white and Indian communities simultaneously, challenges the notion that ethnic identity selection is necessarily either sequential or primarily self-serving. In this piece, it would seem, the poet is at least as concerned with the reshaping of her audiences as she is with her own formation and preservation.

Finally, Rose's work offers productive supplements and alternatives to Nagel's dominant metaphor—the portfolio of ethnic identities. Certainly, thinking of aspects of ethnicity as being activated or salient in

some contexts, while others are dormant or backgrounded, makes sense. But ethnicity is not the only element of identity for which this is true. Rose explains, for example, that

> [t]here are a lot of Indian women, myself included, who consider ourselves to be feminist, but we're not feminist like non-Indian women are. We come from a different base; we have a different history. If I'm on the Hopi reservation I am not a feminist; if I'm in Fresno, California, I'm a feminist. (Coltelli 127)

This statement is significant for the way it exposes the intersecting nature of identity categories: ethnicity, gender, and politics, in this case. While gender and politics are shaped by ethnicity, they also mitigate ethnic identity in ways that Nagel's analysis and portfolio model do not indicate. Rose's words here are also telling for what they don't say, of course. If she is *not* a feminist on the Hopi reservation, this is not simply because she *is* a Hopi. As she explains elsewhere, "Hopi people . . . trace their lineage through the mother and I could never be more than the daughter of a Hopi man" ("Neon Scars" 247). So even on the reservation, where tribal identification is most salient for Rose, it is nonetheless partial and contested. It is never an absolute identity, because in the very context and before the very audience where she, as an individual, feels most Hopi, Rose is simultaneously marked as "other" by her mother's dominant Scottish ancestry.[7] What she would keep packed away, others nonetheless identify. There is a degree of mismatching between individual and societal definitions that would, in Nagel's terms, suggest unsuccessful ethnic identity selection. For Rose, however, this tension or negation signals the condition and possibility of self-construction.

Another limitation of the portfolio metaphor is its disembodiment. What it suggests is that ethnicities exist distinctly and apart from the particular bodies they mark, that they are to be put on like clothes, or employed like instruments or props, by pre-existing, non-ethnic subjects. Like cultural or religious traditions and like physical bodies, however, ethnicities are both "found" and "made." We experience our bodies and our cultural traditions as "givens" even as we engage in practices that reshape or reconstruct them. For the body, in particular, there is

never a place strictly "outside" of it from which to engage in the processes of critique and transformation. And just as bodies are always already "ethnicized," so ethnicities are inevitably embodied.

The portfolio metaphor also implies that ethnic identities are as distinct and separate from each other as the material objects one might carry in a portfolio. Following from this, we see that Nagel's model suggests that while an individual may have access to multiple ethnicities, the "choice" that is made from among them in any context implies an either/or relationship, rather than the possibility of integration of some or all at one time. The specification that "different identities [are] activated at different times" suggests a linear discontinuity of identities and contexts (Nagel 21). A tribal worldview, on the other hand, might rather suggest the simultaneity of all realities and identities, and the coexistence and inter-connectedness of all contexts.[8]

These are all common difficulties, of course, in using material objects to represent social realities, and my intent here is not to hold the sociologist's work up to a poetic scrutiny its language was not designed to bear. I do hope to supplement Nagel's insights from another disciplinary perspective, however. Indeed, I aim to show that while Nagel's model is helpful and productive in many ways, the poet's eye and ear for metaphor can enrich it considerably.

A POETICS OF ETHNICITY

In "Like 'Reeds' through the Ribs of a Basket," Kimberly Blaeser argues that Native American literature, including that by mixed-blood writers, interweaves the creative work with its own critical codes (266). And those critical codes are culture-specific, even if that specificity is "at least bi-cultural" (Blaeser, "Native Literature" 56). For Native scholars trained in Western theoretical approaches, and especially for non-Native scholars, the temptation is to "apply . . . already established theory to native writing versus working from within native literature or tradition to discover appropriate tools or to form an appropriate language of critical discourse" (Blaeser, "Native Literature" 56). Although achieving the kind of "tribal-centered criticism" Blaeser advocates is a daunting and perhaps impossible task for a white scholar interested in writers of

various tribal affiliations and of mixed-blood, I find her admonition to look to the work itself nonetheless compelling ("Native Literature" 53). The work of "form[ing]" a critical language, like the work of the reader in "If I am Too Brown or White for You," then becomes a process shaped mutually by poet and scholar, who both participate as subject and object in the work of transformation and integration for the sake of continuance. Rose repeatedly figures the construction of identity, like *poesis* itself, as a kind of conception that is dependent upon memory, embodied imagination, and collaboration. Unlike Nagel's portfolio image, which stresses identity "selection," the poet's images of "conception" suggest a tension between willful creation and frustrated impotence. And the promise of subsequent birth is always double-edged, laced with the threat of dissolution.

Self-Conception as an Act of Memory

Rose represents identity as an act of deliberate memory in poems such as "The Day I Was Conceived" and "Prayer at a Fork in the Road." Although both poems entail a recollection of origins, the former is explicitly Hopi in focus, and the latter, Roman Catholic. Taken together, these two pieces might be seen as the twin strands of the "half-breed." While each poem begins with an act of remembrance, forgetting also plays a crucial role, and the speaker's negotiation of her dual rejections lays the ground for a creative, if "negative," reconstruction of self.

In "The Day I Was Conceived," from *Lost Copper*, the speaker recalls stories of her own origination to reassert her existence against the father-maker's faithless forgetting.[9] Because the speaker cannot literally remember her own conception, she makes use of the stories she has been told of her coming to be at the silver-sandcasting hands of her Badger-father, in "the middle / of a yellow and turquoise time" (1–2). Mythical in tone and concrete in focus, the narrative enables the speaker to employ her own imagination in retelling the process of her creation by filling in visual details such as "his silver heat" and "solid-spilling moondust," by posing questions like "was it a long time it took / to cool the tufa down?" and by offering reflective interpretation such as the conclusion "I dance but do not pray" (4, 21, 19–20, 39). In this way, she

participates in her own reconception, "adapt[ing] rather than merely adopt[ing] elements of her Hopi heritage as resources" (Wiget 33). But the poem is not a triumphant celebration of either paternal or self-configuration. The speaker is too connected to the sandcaster (whose very fingers seem to become the stone for the silver mold) to claim self-invention or autonomy, and she is too clearly abandoned by him ("buried that day / [and forgotten] among the turquoise chips") to claim identity with him; she "sing[s] / but do[es] not carve" (33–34, 36–37).

Gender is important to this conception, in ways that both echo and defy the traditional Western views of male activity/projection and female passivity/reception. It is the father who initiates the creative act, but the feminine moon provides the liquid stuff of invention. The tufa stone, pulled extensions of the badger's own fingers, and symbolically carved with feminine images by him, serves as the womb-like receptacle for the molten lunar silver. If the badger-father in "The Day I Was Conceived" is not the biblical God who creates *ex nihilo*, nor the omnipotent and singularly authorizing Father of Western myth, he is not a romanticized or demonized tribal spirit either. His role in conception is prominent and willful, and yet also limited and faulty. As the conditional mood of the following lines suggests, however, like the object of his conception, he is potentially reclaimable:

> He would need a bone medicine tube
> incised with magic or obsidian
> to see what he buried that day
> to forget among the turquoise chips (31–34)

The work of the poet is as much an act of medicine and magic, of healing remembrance, as the potential rediscovery of child by father.

As in much of Rose's work, and especially in her drawings that accompany some of the early books, the poet's use of negative space is important here. In the drawings, negative space functions to collapse and confuse boundaries between inside and outside, foreground and background, object and context. In the line drawing which faces the title page in *Lost Copper*, a full-length figure (possibly female but somewhat ambiguously gendered) stands sideways, filling the foreground, with head turned to face the viewer/reader. She appears to have paused in the

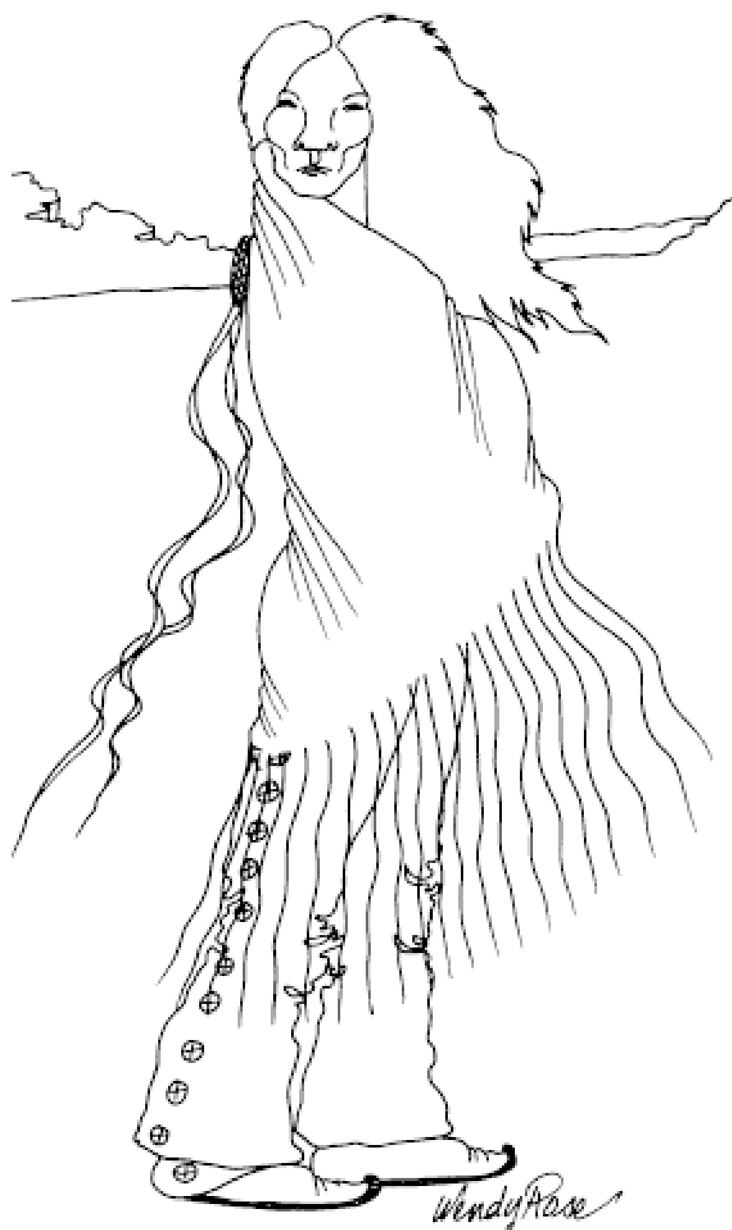

Illustration by Wendy Rose, from *Lost Copper*. Reproduced with permission from the Malki Museum Press, Banning, California.

midst of a walk, a rough landscape suggested by a few horizon-lines coagulating into rugged rocks or trees. The woman's hair is much larger than the shapes in the background, but where it parts at her brow, the lines do not meet, making a continuous space of the horizon sky and the woman's face. Likewise, the tassels of her shawl are indicated by simple unconnected lines, leaving her torso open to the white space of nature around her. The wrinkles in the knees of her trousers are similarly marked by in-folds of space. The effect is that this powerful figure both dominates the picture and incorporates her own background. She appears to be both in and of the barely intimated land, a space continuous with her own body.

In like manner, "The Day I Was Conceived" demonstrates the negative work of art as it fuses subjects, objects, and spaces, even in the act of their creative separation. Unlike pottery (an art explored in some of Rose's other poems), sandcasting is not a "positive" form. Rather, the creation takes its shape by filling a negative cast and seeping into the spaces of design carved in it. So, too, the speaker of the poem is not a positive reproduction of her badger-father, but bears the negative imprint of his hand and handicraft. Nonetheless, she emerges a thing of beauty. "I sing / but do not carve," she explains, suggesting that her poem is an inverse, cast image of her father's art and, perhaps also, of herself (36–37).

The poem concludes with a more ominous contrast, however, claiming, "I grow but do not live" (41). This is an odd assertion, but it makes sense if the speaker is still gestating, yet to be born. The work of poetry is partly restorative for Rose—an act of recovery and memory—and here the work of healing is apparently not yet completed. Her badger-father has conceived her, but she has, to this point, been denied birth. Like conception, birth is an important image for Rose. It is a moment of realization, but it also signals rejection, limitation, and the pressure to resolve and solidify. For now, the speaker appears to remain *in utero*, in tufa, moving, growing, but not yet fully formed. This extended "pregnancy" is a negative state of frustration and tension, but it is also a state of ongoing and molten possibility.[10]

In this poem, identity emerges as an act of memory. The speaker remembers her father and her origins, but she also remembers her self,

willing her own discovery against his act of forgetting. While those elements given by him—both her substance and rejection—shape her identity, they do not wholly determine it. Her creative act of imagination, her singing, makes use of that negative space to cast a new mould for self-exploration, self-choosing, and identity formation.

"Prayer at a Fork in the Road," from the more recent collection *Now Poof She Is Gone*, also applies both remembrance and forgetting to the reformation of self, but here ethnic identity is explored more specifically in terms of the colonizer's religion. The poem bears the conventions of a traditional Christian prayer, beginning, "Dear lord" and concluding with the requisite "Amen." It also mentions baptism, church, the communion wafer, and rosary beads, making it one of Rose's most explicitly Catholic poems in terms of content, but like "The Day I Was Conceived," this poem depicts the shaping of a subject and voice in negative. It similarly begins with a memory of origins—"unfold[ing] these past thirty years"—and ends with a deliberate forgetting, but it is the speaker who is the faithless one in this poem (2). She begins by

> . . . remembering
> that you baptized me hostile
> and gave me the curse of words (6–8)

and then uses that linguistic faculty to enact her alienation:

> I melt the wafer of you
> on my stranger's tongue
> and talk to demons
> behind your back.
> I forget all I ever learned
> about thanking you
> for the connections and the current. (47–53)

What the body of the poem reveals, however, is that other rejections have preceded this betrayal. She credits God with her multiplicity but recognizes that other relations find her—and the darkness of her skin—excessive. She doubts her white grandmother's love and relives the "wounds" of her Euro-Catholic upbringing (29).

In this painful account of her spiritual formation, the speaker twice

mentions dreams. Although the dream state is a crucial means of insight and connection in Native spirituality, its presence in this poem is largely negative.[11] Both references appear to be to the dreams of others, dreams into which the speaker has tried to fit herself. At the end of the first half of the poem, she claims,

> . . . I fit perfectly concave
> into the dream
> circled my finger
> where the pestle nests, (23–26)

suggesting that she has been ground in the mortar of a martyr's suffering. Her concave shape is both vaguely fetal and another sign of negativity. The dream in the second half of the poem is her grandmother's. The speaker enters with her into a dream space that seems a strange conflation of church and hell, and it is here that she takes the wafer and plays Judas. But, of course, this dream is actually a product of the speaker's imagination, rather than her grandmother's psyche. So she recalls her own rejections, then reimagines a loving relationship that grants her the power to reject. She does not, however, overtly reject the white family that raised her. Instead, she rejects their God.

This is not a singularly liberating act, for there appears to be some underlying recognition that their God is also her God. What she forgets, after all, is not a stereotypical image of white male wrath, but rather a very tribal understanding of spiritual relations. And the details that beg to be remembered are "*mimbreno* pictures / on [her] rosary beads"—emblems of the mixing of indigenous and Roman Catholic worlds (54–55). Neglecting to thank the Creator "for the connections and the current," might seem a necessary prelude to severing her ties to half her relations, but it also signals the alienation from self that this entails (53). And although she no longer fits into the dreams of others, she is not quite yet able to dream something wholly other for herself, either, for her recanting is cast in the very language of faith.

A prayer of both remembering and forgetting, the poem is a complicated blend of religious accusation and confession. The final "I forget" could be either a bold pronouncement or a humble self-chastisement (51). Either way, it is also a kind of remembering in negative—

perhaps even an inverted image of faith—for absolute forgetting is unselfconscious, and to speak these words depends upon an act of recognition. The ethnic and religious identity that takes shape in this poem, then, is a split one. On one level it is an account of the speaker's birth and death as a Christian, but it is also suggestive of the preemergent and undetermined possibility we saw in the previous poem. The fork in the road, like the womb and the tufa shell, is a site of mutability and duplicity. If God melts on the speaker's tongue, God comes to life there also, as the silent but imaginable interlocutor. Through a deliberate forgetting, Christian ritual is thus emptied of childhood faith and fear. But through memory and imagination it is also rendered newly open—a negative space for the reconstruction of identity, integrity, and the possibility of faithfulness to oneself in the context of "all one's relations."

Self-Conception as the Work of an Embodied Imagination

Although memory and imagination enable a kind of negative transcendence for Rose, they never function apart from the material, social, preethnicized body. In many of her poems, self-conception appears as an act of explicitly embodied imagination. The body may be understood as a unifying structure—that which holds its various members together and provides material integrity to multiple social identities. Rose figures her own body, however, as rent by all of the social and spiritual tensions of biculturalism and therefore subject to dissolution. But the poet's body, with its inherent passions, is also the site of both a resistant rage and an immense desire to create and procreate—sometimes against, and sometimes through, the unraveling of a given identity.

In a number of the poems in *Now Poof She Is Gone* and *Lost Copper*, in particular, Rose figures her own body as a site and source of conflict and potential dissolution. In "It Was Coyote Made Us Compatible," from *Now Poof She Is Gone*, for example, she claims, "I am pinto, contradiction" (16). This is no Whitmanesque claim to inclusive grandeur, but rather a complaint that she embodies "ivory at war / with red clay"; the speaker goes "to bed each night / an Indian woman" and awakens "quiet and white" each morning, having been painted by the

trickster in her sleep (5–6, 19–20, 21). The resurfacing is not complete or final, as bits of red continue to show through, and the white appears to have faded or peeled by nightfall. The two identities *exist* simultaneously, but only effectively *live* in alternation, and their lives are not equivalent. The Indian woman emerges only in sleep, a private space open to dream and song, whereas the "waking one" presumably goes out into the world (24). The two compete for allegiance from the warring members of the body, which are themselves not stable or singular: "faces and hands battle / with breast and thigh" (8-9). But the two ethnicities are also, as the title suggests, somehow "compatible," and the red woman teaches the other just "enough songs to keep her covered" (25). Here we see a compelling image of the ethnic "layering" identified by Nagel, but without the willful identity selection the sociologist describes. Indeed, the speaker is beset by her own bodily members, some of whom "insist on their white"; she locates the agent of her multiplicity elsewhere (Coyote); and she describes her selves in the third person, in terms that suggest her own impotence and ignorance as to the mystifying transformation (4).

In "Urban Breed, Go Get Your Gun," from *Now Poof She Is Gone*, the multiethnic dilemma is again figured as the half-breed woman's body. The speaker says,

> You are one thing but another as well,
> inside
> one kind of woman,
> outside a different kind. (2–5)

She appears to be addressing herself or selves in the second person here, further emphasizing the split identity that enables simultaneous subject and object positioning. The result is not a clearly productive dialogue, however, for both parts of the addressee are essentially silent in this poem, united in the quantitatively ambiguous "You," which is repeated, chant-like, by the speaker. Because the multiple ethnicities never entirely meld, identity remains unstable not only in the social sphere, but in the realm of her psyche as well, and coherent articulation remains difficult: "[t]he feeling," we are told, "never congeals into truth" (1). The speaker's reflections that "[t]here is no archaeology / to the levels of life," and that

"perhaps there is a place / with no woman at all," suggest that she might occupy a third, unmapped site—a poetic space where identity and voice re-form in language itself (27–28, 6–7). She identifies the addressee as "too white / for the red, too red for the white" (29–30). But if the half-breed is "every color / or a crazy mosaic," there is also the possibility of "no color" (32–33, 31). This ultimate lack of clear ethnic markers operates simultaneously as a double-exclusion and as the free space of voice- and identity-construction occupied by the speaker.

While the tone of much of the poem is accusatory, plaintive, or ironic, the speaker also acknowledges a stubborn, underlying resistance that is ultimately creative, embracing her status "as if" it were positive (38). The "half-breed" need not see herself simply as *less than*, for she is also *more than* the sum of two parts. Indeed, anger is "that part" of the "half-breed" that holds her identities together in a volatile cohort and that strains toward productivity rather than passive victimization (52). The speaker/poet is somewhat removed from her silent embodied selves in this poem, but she can also be identified with the

> small sounds
> in the cosmic noise
> that tell you to fight
> for . . . life. (59–62)

Because these are the very sounds the "half-breed" is "straining to hear," we might then imagine the voice of the poem as the spirit both inspired by and inspiring the bodily breed toward creative life (58). The speaker operates as a projection out of the crucible of the body, her voice the excess that defies mere duplicity. The poem itself then emerges as an irreducible product—indeed, an "achievement"—of the social and material tensions that mark the breed (39).

Alternatively, in "Old-time Potter," from *Lost Copper*, the poet portrays herself as the active and intentional artist of her own body, but the (re)creation still exceeds her own power to control, unify, and inspirit. Mixing impressed clay together with her own ground bones, she fires and ingests them. The bellows of her body and imagination are insufficient to give life, however. Like the badger's offspring, who grows but does not live, the potter's creations here are "pull[ed] . . . from the oven

/ fully formed but stillborn" (16–17). "[H]ung between" cultures, the potter has grown "cautious" in her art, attempting to "spin" a "career" in the middle, and this is perhaps part of the problem (3, 1, 2). The artist has the power to conceive a body from out of her own, but lacks the ability to sustain life beyond her own borderlands.[12] So she makes and makes again, facing the regular undoing of her work as it emerges. Dissolution is both the condition and crux of creation.

Dissolution is also the theme of *Lost Copper*'s "Poet's business: We Catholics learned to love martyrs." In the poem's conclusion, the speaker expresses the desire to

> . . . dissolve.
> Let the bones melt into the rain
> and disappear; let me disappear
> and let those soft bones go. (27–30)

The softness of the bones suggests a fetal stage of development, signaling, again, a growth out of conception that is not yet fully realized. The poet sees language as a trick, and urges herself toward silence. There is a tension here, however, between the pain that is

> struggling to be art
> sounds in a basket
> bilingual and raw (19–21)

and the desire for reticent dissolution. Earlier in the poem, another image indicates that the dissolution of self might not simply be a negative miscarriage, but could have productive possibilities. "This world," we are told, "is a pile of words / compost words" (5–7). Just as decaying organic matter fuels new life in the composting process, so the "melt[ing]" bones and words of the poet might participate in some larger cycle of transformation (28). Although there is clearly some self-critical irony in the poem's subtitle, there is also some concession to a greater creative process in the poem's own articulation. It continues to speak, however far removed from the poet's initial "moan[s]" and "line[s] of shadows" (14, 18). She says she will be silent, but, like the claim to forget in "Prayer at a Fork in the Road," the statement undoes itself, creating a new order of utterance.

Likewise, in the poem "Is it crazy to want to unravel" (*Now Poof She Is Gone*), Rose explores images of dissolution both natural and cultural. In a sort of suicidal soliloquy reminiscent of Hamlet, the poet contemplates various modes of disappearance, including supernaturally

> dissolv[ing]
> as disobedient women
> in the Bible do
> their solemn salt hands
> still pointing
> to the pleasure of sin. (10–15)

This transformational figure is especially powerful because it combines the poet's dual heritages—Euro-Christian and aboriginal. Lot's wife has escaped the annihilation of Sodom, and so the biblical woman appears here, like the Native poet, as the survivor of a genocide sanctioned or accomplished by the Judeo-Christian God.[13] And, like the "half-breed," she is torn in her allegiances and identifications. She is saved by virtue of being Lot's wife, and then dies because of her unyielding connection to the lost world. The figure of the woman's body stands as a remnant and reminder—of her desire, her disobedience, and her will. As one of the few memorable but silent women of the Bible, she serves as an emblem of either weakness or strength, depending upon the reader's perspective and identifications. For the poet she is clearly a tempting model.

The poem's biblical image is also potent for the way it combines dissolution with solidification. As a pillar of salt, the woman is both utterly gone and still standing, a testament to having been. This transmogrification of the body, like the poet's desire to disperse and watch her own blood "spatter on . . . men" demands recognition; it is a literal dying for attention (29). As the book's title, *Now Poof She Is Gone*, suggests, there is an awesome remainder to any such radical disappearance. For the poet, this kind of acknowledgement is clearly problematic, however. If the only "real" Indians are dead ones, as the popular American imagination would suggest, then the path to authenticity would be a dissolution of self that leaves a remnant behind for the musings and museums of others. The desire to "unravel," therefore, could signal a willingness to meet audience demands for the objectification and anni-

hilation of self in order to achieve, ironically, some kind of verifiable reality. Or it could be an urge to forgo the tension of multiple ethnicities by unraveling the various strands of identity and irrevocably splitting the integrative vessel of the body through death. This would entail a "fly[ing] apart" that left only the excess of wonder in its wake:

> a woman
> just was standing there
> and now poof she is gone. (26, 32–34)

This poem leaves the desire and the dilemma unresolved, and it suggests that although ethnic identity is audience specific, it need not be a "command performance" in any simple sense.

Dissolution and (re)formation are portrayed most positively, as a natural, daily process, in "Coarsegold Morning" (*Now Poof She Is Gone*). A moth appears in this poem as well, but instead of angry self-destruction, it serves a rhetoric of renewal. The silver moth cries:

> You, sleeping in the ground, wake up!
> Gather and glue your bones
> with aboriginal skill
> Pull yourself
> into the protesting sky,
> become the sun
> at first whole
> then slowly dissolve
> dissipate, wonder
> what is left of she
> who breaks and crumbles
> fingers teeth skin bones splitting
> from the top down
> with fruit that is ripe
> and songs that explode
> uselessly in the womb. (6–21)

The final lines undercut the poem's optimism, to be sure, and the cycle of life appears in danger of disruption. But what the imperative mode of the poem indicates is that return and rebirth depend upon willful

acts of construction. From an American Indian perspective, any natural dissolution carries the potential for re-formation, for creation and dissolution are recursive processes. But continuation is not guaranteed, and cultural practices play an important role in the creation of the cosmos. The poem suggests, in fact, the kind of regenerative rite embodied in the Sundance, now a pan-tribal ritual of cosmic renewal. In poetry, then, as in all lively processes, there is a need for the "made," which Rose acknowledges here, in conjunction with the "given." And that construction begins with the self as a speaking body.

As both the conduit of all human experience and a product thereof, the body is perhaps simultaneously the most "given" and the most "made" thing imaginable, and therefore a fitting field of exploration for a "half-breed" poetics. Andrew Wiget observes "a larger coherent imagery of Body" in Rose's work, "both body as resource and body as residuum" (31). As I have tried to show, the body appears in her poetry as a site of alternating creation and unraveling, the inescapable locale of and means to the poetic imagination and to social self-construction. If the body of the "half-breed" bears all the social tensions and markers of the "givens" of ethnicity, it nevertheless functions as a source of anger, desire, and mutability that open possibilities for various acts of self-remaking. Like memory, an embodied imagination can operate both positively and negatively as a means to self-conception. In works focusing on the bodily remaking of self, the poet serves, in various ways, as her own imagined audience and interlocutor. Because of her inescapable multiplicity, which derives from but also exceeds her double lineage, the pattern of address is never monologic, but always at least dialogic.[14] The "half-breed's" body, as site of tension and excess, offers a "calabash" for the mixing of "reason / . . . / with pain" and a crucible from which to project poetic utterance in response to and in conversation with silence and dissolution ("Poet's Business," *Lost Copper* 11–13)).

Self-Conception as a Collaborative Process

Rose's imagined interlocutors include others besides God and herself, of course. As suggested earlier, she explicitly addresses actual readers from a range of communities, including both Euroamericans and Na-

tive Americans. Although much of her work is quite confrontational in tone, Rose never succumbs to a simple politics of identity that assumes the reader's response based upon ethnicity—or upon class or gender, for that matter. She knows too well the vagaries of identity, and, inviting her readers to cast themselves in her work, she opens the poetry to the possibility of multiple and shifting allegiances. In so doing, she also opens the work of identity construction to collaboration across multiple lines of difference.

In "Who Speaks, Who Listens? Questions of Community, Audience and Language in Poems by Chrystos and Wendy Rose," Robin Riley Fast complicates the notion of a "political women's poetry" that assumes identity with a feminist readership, by factoring ethnicity as well as gender into the equation.[15] Her essay is helpful for identifying the range of differences and tensions among and between audience and poet, but stops short of recognizing the poet's own shifting role as speaker and addressee and so mistakenly locates "otherness" primarily outside the self. Fast is right to point out that

> [t]he meanings of a collaborative relationship with the audience become problematic for Rose . . . because of the multiple and divergent audiences [she] address[es] and the complex relationships among those audiences and between the poet . . . and some of [her] readers. (140)

She identifies some of these by asking,

> how does the Native address the non-Indian, the mixed blood address the traditional community, the feminist woman of color speak to white feminists, the oppressed speak to the oppressor, the "object" of study speak to the academic? (Fast 140)

Fast concludes that Rose does "not necessarily assume commonality" with her addressees, but instead highlights "the need to create commonality through struggle, sometimes even with audiences 'like [her]' (e.g. women, Indians)" (142). Fast points out that when Rose does "identify a primary audience, . . . it is often an audience of others, characterized in opposition to the poet or speaker . . . and the poem's effort may be to shake, shame, or persuade 'you' into new recognitions and behaviors" (142–43).

Certainly, the creation of commonality is one of Rose's social goals, and it is tied to the construction of identity. Identification with others appears in Rose's poetry as a deliberate and difficult act, and it highlights the ways in which community is a collaborative construction. But, as I have tried to show thus far, the addressee whom Rose's poems attempt "to shake, shame, or persuade" is never wholly other (Fast 143). Even at its most confrontational, Rose's work is also integrative, unsettling the boundaries she straddles. The poet shifts identity locations frequently and occupies the space of the "you" in ways that unsettle the self/other opposition: she sees herself in the subject-oppressor as well as in the oppressed and the object of study—and urges her readers to cross borders through multiple identifications as well. Neither "you" nor "I" is a stable identity, and each is as much a product of collaborative construction as are community and political identification. The mutual identification that holds communities together is a creation that both precedes and follows individual identity. The two are mutually contingent, and each is subject to potential dissolution.

Fast is also right, however, that Rose's concern is to move her readers to "participate in the ongoing creation of history" and that she projects an audience capable of such by reimagining her own history, including both sides of her lineage (165). In *Going to War with All My Relations*, she figures this constructive work as conflict-ridden, even as she advocates nonviolence. It also becomes clear in this collection that, as much as the poet perceives her relations to be at war with another (and she, herself, caught in the middle), she also calls upon them to collaborate in the creative work of restoring and remaking the world—and a place for her in it. By going to war, with language as her weapon, she moves from the position of captive (among but not of the people, perpetually other) to that of a warrior "in the company" of her fellows (vii). As shown earlier, her use of the pan-Indian phrase "all my relations" is radically inclusive, and its full implications become clearer in this collection. Here she identifies as much with her great-great-grandmother, a German settler to America, whom she reciprocally urges to imagine or conceive her (in "Margaret Neumann", as with her Hopi relatives, from whose perspective she reimagines the settlers' project.[16]

In "Naayawva Taawi," first published in *The Halfbreed Chronicles*

and revised for inclusion in *Going to War*, Rose speaks in the first person plural, casting herself as a representative "we" for the Hopi people.[17] She does not do so as an easy means to identity or authority, however, for even as the poem is grounded on the distinction between a Hopi "we" and a white "you," it also works to undo that division in significant ways. Like many of Rose's other poems, this one reclaims and transforms unlikely sources to reassert life in the face of rejection and annihilation. The tone here is quite different from most others, though. It takes on both a more communal voice and a more overtly hopeful tenor, to recast a traditional Hopi "Fight Song" in nonviolent terms.[18] The strength of the poem lies in its stubborn response to a white refusal, just as the strength of the culture it depicts rests in its ability to create out of refuse.

Addressing the "whiteman," or "Pahana," explicitly, the poem describes how the Hopi make use of what he throws away.[19] "[B]ales of barbed wire," like the "fine foreign steers" bereft of their hides, are "not / the garbage you thought" (4, 23, 7–8). She explains, for

> the tiny birds
> [. . . . .]
> have made their nests there
> with barley chaff and string,
> bits of alfalfa, singing
> as sweetly in the wire
> as in the willow.[20]

And, like these birds, the people, who have themselves been written off as "gut-eaters, / savages, squaws," make use of the whiteman's other refuse, "honor[ing]" the animals with their holistic use and even managing to "weave" their own children

> from wire bales and string,
> from bottles and bullets,
> from steer guts and borders. (19–20, 23, 41–43)

The poem exposes the conflicting values held by the white settlers and Indians: in what the former sees as useless, the latter finds value; what one culture discards as excess, the other reincorporates into the organic

cycle; what the newcomers would use to divide and claim for private property (fence wire), the Native people turn into a site of mutual care and creation. The poem concludes: "See, Pahana, how we nest / in your ruins" (45–46). Instead of disappearing, as expected, they house and reproduce themselves in the very terms of their own refusal.

The poem does not simply identify this cultural conflict; it also attempts to transform it by means of a creative, rather than destructive, response. The beset people survive, after all, by making songs and children, and by "re-mak[ing] your weapons into charms, / send[ing] flying back to you the bullets" (34-35). The poem itself is such a charm, seeking to work a transformation on its hearers. It urges its addressee(s) to "See," "Hear," and "Watch" this creative process out of negation, and to respond by being integrated and remade themselves (36, 38, 40). Rose includes a parenthetical footnote in the first version of the poem to clarify that identity is at least in part a product of identification, rather than genetics, and is therefore mutable. Whom—and what—one acknowledges as one's relations is the issue, for it determines how one integrates oneself in the broader sphere of creation. The footnote reads: "'Whiteman' refers to a way of life, a set of institutions, rather than to male human beings of European ancestry. It is my belief that all of us, including such men, are victims of the 'whiteman.' "[21] In this note, the exclusive "we" of the poem shifts to an all-inclusive "us," inviting readers to invest themselves in the poem's subject position and contribute to mutual acts of creation out of negation. Ethnic exclusion (white or Hopi) is reworked into a charm sent back to her readers, enticing us to reimagine ourselves.

Even what appears as a clear we/you opposition in this poem is thus destabilized so that the reader's own identifications, ethnic and otherwise, are newly opened to question. In contrast to the portfolio metaphor employed by Nagel, which suggests that an individual reacts to a single and stable context by making an expedient ethnic identity selection, Rose's poetry proposes a more collaborative and reciprocal model. It is not simply that the individual depends upon communal verification of her chosen identity, but also that the audience for her "performance" of self is likewise subject to improvisation. The conception of ethnic identity, like the "weav[ing]" of children in "Naayawva Taawi,"

can be a process of integration that defies traditional borders. Unsettling oppositions between "natural" and "cultural" elements and between subject and object positions, the poem ultimately urges readers to collaborate with the "half-breed" poet in making a shared "nest" of and for identity.

Rose thus offers us nesting as an alternative figure for the practice of identity. In a perpetual state of unraveling and remaking, and serving ultimately as a point of departure for the next generation, the nest nonetheless provides a necessary refuge and place of nurture for the fragile processes of becoming. As well, its very shape is a hollowing as well as a construction, determined as it is by the pressure of the (bird's) body upon external matter.[22] In these ways, the nest exemplifies both the negative and positive impulses of Rose's poetics of ethnicity.

It is also significant that a nest is classified as such by how it functions, rather than by the origins of its various components. It is "impure" but, when well built, perfect for its task and essential to the survival and reproduction of both self and species. It is a fitting site for the unfolding of flexible and multiple identities in process. In conjunction with the larger pattern of conception and dissolution images in Rose's work, a pattern that incorporates both the found and the made in processes of memory, embodied imagination, and collaboration, nesting offers a powerful condensation of Rose's vision of ethnicity. Like the "work of art" itself, the poetics of ethnicity is an ongoing project and practice that calls upon readers to consider carefully how we respond across space that is simultaneously negative and positive, personal and political, common and sacred.

NOTES

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1. In discussing the factors influencing whether or not someone with American Indian ancestry chooses to claim an Indian identity for him or herself, Devon Mihesuah indicates the problem of "fabricated" identities (30). The reality is that some people with no Indian ancestry have self-identified as at least part Indian in order to gain psychological, material, or social rewards or status. Similarly, Leslie Marmon Silko points to a whole history of "false Indian" authors—those who have illegitimately claimed a Native identity in order to lend an air of credibility and/or mystique to their work (165). As a result of this practice, others who might legitimately claim an Indian identity resist doing so for fear of being mistaken for "wannabe[s]" (Mihesuah 27). Rose herself identifies this as an issue in her life and work. Although she has long claimed some kind of Hopi ancestry, she has only recently named the renowned Hopi artist Charles Loloma as "the man who is most likely [her] father." She has done so in part because she realizes that others may have seen her as a "wannabe" for failing to do so earlier (Rose, *Itch Like Crazy* 121). Such anxieties are not unfounded. As Ward Churchill explains, "[t]he reconfiguration and structural assimilation of the mechanisms of indigenous governance" have rendered Indian identity highly tenuous, and "it is possible to challenge the legitimacy of virtually anyone identifying as Indian on one or several grounds . . . [;]the result has been a steadily rising tide of infighting . . . between and among Native peoples during the past forty years" (53, 55).

2. In an interview with Laura Coltelli, Rose explains, "The Hopi side of my family is more sympathetic to my situation, but our lineage is through the mother, and because of that, having a Hopi father means that I have no real legitimate place in Hopi society" (122). In her most recent book, *Itch Like Crazy* (published after this essay was written), Rose speaks more directly to some of the confusion surrounding her ancestry. Although she is apparently part Miwok, from her mother's side, she laments that "no one can tell me the name or the clan of my biological great-great-grandfather"—the first husband of Margaret Castor (also known as Margaret Newman) (Rose, *Itch Like Crazy* 103). Rose's ties to two possible fathers—her mother's husband, Dick Edwards, and Charles Loloma—have also complicated her family and ethnic identifications as well as confused some readers and critics who have sometimes conflated them. (The third and final section of *Itch Like Crazy*, "Listen Here for the Voices," is comprised of family photographs and accompanying pieces of prose memoir that both explain and complicate the images.)

3. Rose, *Bone Dance*, xiv. Mihesuah identifies this kind of experience as common to the second, "Encounter," stage of Indian identity development (22).

4. I am thinking here of Julie Barak's application to Rose and Louise Erdrich of Peter McLaren's argument about politics of transformation versus pedagogies of protest (Barak 4).

5. This fits, of course, with Nagel's proposal to trace the historical emergence of a pan-tribal "Indian" ethnicity.

6. Silko makes this claim briefly in Bellinelli's video, and Churchill traces the historical evidence for it (47).

7. Ironically, although Rose appears to feel less connected to her Scottish ancestors, her "Great-Great-Grandmother, Henrietta MacInnes . . . [has] given [her] what [her Hopi] father could not"—a clan; as she learns at the Highland Games in Fresno, she is "entitled to wear [her] Tartan" ("Neon Scars" 258).

8. Rose may also help us to find more suitably Indian—or at least "half-breed"—metaphors than the portfolio, which, as a distinctively European invention and emblem of urban, text-based cultures, seems somewhat at odds with tribal life.

9. The poem appears again, in edited form, as "Honani Chunta," translated "Faithless Badger" in a footnote, in *Going to War with All My Relations*.

10. My understanding of pregnancy as a productive negativity that involves both incorporation of the other and exposure of one's inner self has been influenced both by my own experience of pregnancy as I wrote an early draft of this essay as well as by Iris Marion Young's phenomenological reading of her bodily experience. Young explores how "[p]regnancy challenges the integration of . . . body experience by rendering fluid the boundary between what is within, myself, and what is outside, separate. I experience my insides as the space of another, yet my own body"[;] pregnancy undermines the body's "integrity . . . not only by this externality of the inside, but also by the fact that the boundaries of [the] body are themselves in flux" (3).

11. In "Our Other Selves," Arthur Amiotte identifies dreams as signs of "the synchronous existence of various planes of reality" acknowledged by Native peoples (163).

12. Gloria Anzaldúa's theory of "borderlands" and "mestiza" identity inform my understanding of the "half-breed."

13. The story of Lot's wife is found in Genesis 19:15–26.

14. Even in a lyric such as "Is it crazy to want to unravel," which appears monovocal, there is an underlying dialogism in the poem's irony and in the open-ended question posed by the title.

15. Fast's essay begins with Lorrie Smith's articulation of a tradition of "political women's poetry."

16. Rose changes the title of the poem to "Margaret Castor" in *Itch Like*

Crazy (23, [103]). Other poems from the new collection also speak directly to the issues and images explored in this essay and deserve future critical attention.

17. Of course the poet need not be identified with the persona of the speaker in any poem. However, here and elsewhere I mean to suggest that Rose does cast herself as the various speakers of her poems, even as she is always "other" than the speaker as well. We could say, perhaps, that she alternatingly projects the various voices in her head, all of which contribute to her "halfbreed" identity, none of which speak singularly for her.

18. "Fight Song" is the translation of the Hopi title given in a footnote to the poem.

19. The Hopi word "Pahana" is used exclusively in the poem. "Whiteman" is given as the translation in a footnote.

20. I am working here with the revised version of the poem, appearing in *Going to War with All My Relations*. A slightly different version appeared in *The Halfbreed Chronicles*, published eight years earlier.

21. From *The Halfbreed Chronicles*. It is interesting that Rose omits this explanatory note from the revised version of the poem. Other changes to the poem seem to aim at literal clarification, especially for white readers, so this omission might be attributed to a desire to intensify the poem's confrontational tone, at the expense of clarity. The extra-textual note may well have been deemed too "easy" on readers: inviting too quick an identification as victim and/or answering complex questions about identity too straightforwardly. Given the larger context of the latter volume, and Rose's comments in the preface, I do not think its absence jeopardizes the antiessentialist impulse of the work.

22. In *Poetics of Space*, Gaston Bachelard uses Jules Michelet's 1858 study, *L'oiseau*, to make this point about the nest in his phenomenological study of interior spaces. It seems that birds shape the insides of their nests with the pressure of the breast. Bachelard summarizes the nest as "a house built by and for the body" (100–101).

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Stolen From Our Bodies

First Nations Two-Spirits/Queers and the Journey to a Sovereign Erotic

QWO-LI DRISKILL

This is a Warrior Song
From one poor Skin to another
And I don't know what I'm lookin' for
But I know I've found you

These words will shuffle across concrete
Will float across the Rockies
To the Smokey Mountains
We were stolen from
We were stolen from

We were stolen from our bodies
We were stolen from our homes
And we are fighters in this long war
To bring us all back home

And this is a Warrior Song
From one poor Skin to another
And I don't know what I'm lookin' for
But I know I've found you

U-ne-la-nv-hi U-we-tsi
I-ga-gu-yv-he-yi
Hna-quo-tso-sv Wi-yu-lo-se
But I know I've found you

And this is a Warrior Song
From one poor Skin to another
And I don't know what I'm lookin' for
But I know I've found you[1]

This song came to me one night a few years ago as I began to understand that healing our sexualities as First Nations people is braided with the legacy of historical trauma and the ongoing process of decolonization. Two-Spirits are integral to this struggle: my own resistance to colonization as a Cherokee Two-Spirit is intimately connected to my continuing efforts to heal from sexual assault and the manifestations of an oppressive overculture on my erotic life. Like other Two-Spirit people, I am making a journey to a Sovereign Erotic that mends our lives and communities.[2]

I mention my experiences with trauma in this essay because sexual assault, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia are entangled with the history of colonization. Sexual assault is an explicit act of colonization that has enormous impacts on both personal and national identities and because of its connections to a settler mentality, can be understood as a colonial form of violence and oppression. My own journey back to my body, and the journeys of other First Nations people back to their bodies, necessarily engage historical trauma. In her book *Shaking the Rattle: Healing the Trauma of Colonization* Barbara-Helen Hill (Six Nations, Grand River Territory) writes:

> All of the abuse and addiction that we are seeing in communities are symptoms of the underlying cause, the oppression and the stress of living in isolation on reservations or in Native communities within the larger non-Native communities. . . . Healing the spirit of the individual will eventually spread to healing the spirit of family and this in turn will spread out into the communities. . . . (36)

When I speak of a Sovereign Erotic, I'm speaking of an erotic wholeness healed and/or healing from the historical trauma that First Nations people continue to survive, rooted within the histories, traditions, and resistance struggles of our nations. I am in agreement with Audre

Lorde when she writes, "Our erotic knowledge empowers us, becomes a lens through which we scrutinize all aspects of our existence, forcing us to evaluate those aspects honestly in terms of their relative meaning in our lives" (57). I do not see the erotic as a realm of personal consequence only. Our relationships with the erotic impact our larger communities, just as our communities impact our senses of the erotic. A Sovereign Erotic relates our bodies to our nations, traditions, and histories.

The term "Two-Spirit" is a word that resists colonial definitions of who we are. It is an expression of our sexual and gender identities as sovereign from those of white GLBT movements. The coinage of the word was never meant to create a monolithic understanding of the array of Native traditions regarding what dominant European and Euroamerican traditions call "alternative" genders and sexualities. The term came into use in 1990 at a gathering of Native Queer/Two-Spirit people in Winnipeg as a means to resist the use of the word "berdache," and also as a way to talk about our sexualities and genders from within tribal contexts in English (Jacobs et al. 2). I find myself using both the words "Queer" and "Trans" to try to translate my gendered and sexual realities for those not familiar with Native traditions, but at heart, if there is a term that could possibly describe me in English, I simply consider myself a Two-Spirit person. The process of translating Two-Spiritness with terms in white communities becomes very complex. I'm not necessarily "Queer" in Cherokee contexts, because differences are not seen in the same light as they are in Euroamerican contexts. I'm not necessarily "Transgender" in Cherokee contexts, because I'm simply the gender I am. I'm not necessarily "Gay," because that word rests on the concept of men-loving-men, and ignores the complexity of my gender identity. It is only within the rigid gender regimes of white America that I become Trans or Queer. While homophobia, transphobia, and sexism are problems in Native communities, in many of our tribal realities these forms of oppression are the result of colonization and genocide that cannot accept women as leaders, or people with extra-ordinary genders and sexualities.[3] As Native people, our erotic lives and identities have been colonized along with our homelands.

My family is diasporic, descendents of so many removals of so

many kinds it becomes difficult to count them all. Survivors of so many genocides that one simply bleeds into the next. As a Red-Black person, the Trail of Tears and other forced relocations are not the first removals of my peoples.[4] I find myself obsessed with the notion of "home" on many levels. I have not only been removed from my homelands, I have also been removed from my erotic self and continue a journey back to my first homeland: the body. "We were stolen from our bodies / We were stolen from our homes."

Sexual assault was not something that was tolerated in most of our cultures before invasion. In Lakota custom, for example, the "Rare Knife" was given to Lakota women to use only to cut off the heads of men who abused her or her children.[5] Consequently, abuse was rare in Lakota lifeways before white supremacist patriarchy enforced violence against women and children. Wilma Mankiller reminds us,

> Europeans brought with them the view that men were the absolute head of households, and women were to be submissive to them. It was then that the role of women in Cherokee society began to decline. One of the new values Europeans brought to the Cherokees was a lack of balance and harmony between men and women. It was what we today call sexism. This was not a Cherokee concept. Sexism was borrowed from Europeans. (20)

Sexual violence is rampant in all communities in the United States. Recent events within the Catholic Church show how often sexual abuse of children is silently condoned. Sexual abuse must be seen with an understanding of the history of colonization, which uses sexuality as a tool to gain power over others and to control women's bodies. In this country the *white wing* attempts to make abortion illegal at the same time women of color and poor women continue to survive forced sterilization. It is no accident that white masculinity is constructed the way it is in the United States, as European invasion of the Americas required a masculinity that murders, rapes, and enslaves Native and African peoples. It is a masculinity that requires men to be soldiers and conquerors in every aspect of their lives. A masculinity rooted in genocide breeds a culture of sexual abuse. It is vital to remember that most of our traditions did not allow such behavior. Healing from assault is

intimately joined with decolonization and the reclamation of indigenous understandings of the world.

> We were stolen from our bodies
> We were stolen from our homes
> And we are fighters in this long war
> To bring us all back home

A colonized sexuality is one in which we have internalized the sexual values of dominant culture. The invaders continue to enforce the idea that sexuality and non-dichotomous genders are a sin, recreating sexuality as illicit, shocking, shameful, and removed from any positive spiritual context. Queer sexualities and genders are degraded, ignored, condemned, and destroyed. As people often raised under dominant culture's values through our homes, televisions, or teachers, Two-Spirit erotic lives continue to be colonized. Native people survive a legacy of spiritual and sexual abuse at the hands of soldiers, missionaries, clergy, and teachers who have damaged our senses of Self and wounded our sacred connection to our bodies. The boarding school systems in the United States and Canada are one example of the ways our sexualities, genders, and spirits have been colonized by the invaders. Boarding schools continue to have severe repercussions on our communities, including colonized concepts of gender and sexuality. To decolonize our sexualities and move towards a Sovereign Erotic, we must unmask the specters of conquistadors, priests, and politicians that have invaded our spirits and psyches, insist they vacate, and begin tending the open wounds colonization leaves in our flesh.

I have seen no study that tells how many Two-Spirit people commit suicide or turn to drugs and alcohol to cope with the shame colonization brings to our sexualities and genders.[6] How many Two-Spirit people are forced to leave their families and thus their primary connection to their traditions because of homophobia and transphobia? How many of us grapple with deep shame because of our sexualities and/or genders? Our sexualities harbor bruises left by a white supremacist culture. We find ourselves despising our bodies and sexualities, unable to speak of our own erotic lives and desires even with our lovers. We see dominant culture's concepts of the erotic and know they have nothing

to do with our Two-Spirit bodies, often causing us to dissociate from our erotic selves or assimilate dominant culture's concepts into our lives. Marilou Awiakta (Cherokee/Appalachian) writes, "Thinking of sex as an it and women as sex objects is one of the grooves most deeply carved into the Western mind. This groove in the national mind of America will not accept the concept of sex as part of the sacred and generative power of the universe—and of woman as a bearer of the life force" (252). It is not only First Nations people who have internalized dominant culture's concepts of sexuality and gender. The legacy of colonization seeps into every aspect of life in this country, even if only Native folks and other people of color recognize it.

Beth Brant (Bay of Quinte Mohawk) writes about the importance of Two-Spirit engagement in a process of healing from historical trauma:

> Much of the self-hatred we carry around inside us is centuries old. This self-hatred is so coiled within itself, we often cannot distinguish the racism from the homophobia from the sexism. We carry the stories of our grandmothers, our ancestors. And some of these stories are ugly and terrorizing. And some are beautiful testaments to endurance and dignity. We must learn to emulate this kind of testimony. Speaking ourselves out loud—for our people, for ourselves. To deny our sexuality is to deny our part in creation. (63)

To understand our place in creation, I look at the stories within my tradition that celebrate difference. To my knowledge as a non-fluent Cherokee speaker, there is currently no term in Cherokee to describe Two-Spirit people. We simply *are*. However, within our stories are roadmaps for contemporary Cherokee Two-Spirits. Many of our stories address difference, the embodiment of dichotomies, and journeys between worlds. Craig Womack (Oklahoma Creek-Cherokee) reminds us, "Rather than disrupting society, anomalies actually reify the existing social order. . . . That which is anomalous is also an important source of power. The Southeastern belief system is not an oppositional world of good and evil" (*Red on Red* 244). Our stories as First Nations people keep us alive in a world that routinely destroys and discards us. Though our stories were present as survival cartographies before the invasion

of Turtle Island by Columbus and the crowned power of Spain, our stories are perhaps even more vital to our survival now, during the European occupation of our homelands.[7]

It is in our stories, including our written literatures, that I search for meaning and reflection of my Two-Spirit body in order to survive a world in which people like me are routinely killed. How do I make sense of the murder of F. C. Martinez Jr., a Diné/Cheyenne Nádleeh youth killed in June 2001 in Cortez, Colorado? How do I make sense of the February 2002 murder of Amy/Raymond Soos, a Two-Spirit of the Pima Nation whose naked body was found in Phoenix, Arizona? How do I make sense of the strangled and beaten body of Alejandro Lucero, Hopi Nation, whose body was found on March 4, 2002, also in Phoenix? How do I make sense of the slaughter of "Brandon Teena," always spoken of as white, who was actually of mixed "Sioux" and white ancestry, his life erased by transphobic murderers and his Nativeness erased by white Queer and Trans folks?[8] How do we as Two-Spirits remain whole and confident in our bodies and in our traditions when loss attempts to smother us? I return to our stories.

Many Cherokee stories deal with characters considered outsiders, who live in liminal spaces, help bring about necessary change, and aid in the process of creation. In one story, a water spider brings fire to the other animals after many larger and stronger animals attempt to retrieve it and fail. She creates a bowl and straps it to her back with spider silk in order to carry fire across the water. In another version of the story, a dragonfly assists her by pushing the bowl from behind (Mooney 431). This story is significant to Cherokee Two-Spirits because so much of it deals with the embodiment of opposites. Spider is specifically a water-spider, and in Mooney's recording of the story, a species of spider that is black with red stripes, opposite sacred colors in Cherokee cosmology (Mooney 241). Dragonfly also dwells between worlds of water, air, and earth. In Cherokee cosmology, fire is associated with the female principal and water is associated with the male principal. Dragonfly and spider become beings that help join these realities.

A Sovereign Erotic is a return to and/or continuance of the complex realities of gender and sexuality that are ever-present in both the human and more-than-human world, but erased and hidden by colonial

cultures. Oppression is used by the "settlers" to "tame" our "wild" and "savage" understandings of our Selves, to injure our traditional understandings of the world, to pit us against each other along divisions of gender, sexuality, skin tone, geography, "blood-quantum," (dis)ability, and class so that the powers that be have less work to do in maintaining control over our homelands, our bodies, and our spirits.[9]

In discussing the colonization of Queer African and First Nations bodies and sexualities, elias farajajé-jones writes:

> My . . . African ancestors stood on auctioning blocks in this country where their bodies were offered for sale. They were subjected to the white "gaze" quite literally; their genitalia were touched and inspected in a very public way. The bodies of my First Nations (Tsalagi/Cherokee) ancestors were forcibly removed, infected, massacred, locked up. They were so effectively removed and locked up that they do not even enter into the erotic fictions of the dominating culture. (Kay et al. 328)

Knowing this, Two-Spirit writers, artists, and scholars should turn to and create our own Sovereign Erotic literatures.

In Our Oldest Language

Tsuj'/ Boy, you are ga-lv-lo'/sky
continually above me
I am eloh'/earth your hands reach
inside to aching molten rock
Your fingers gilded wings
that rise and thrust against
dark muscle rhythms
rock me until I am coiled
around you blooming

Your lightning tongue
summons me to skim
the sweltering expanse of your back
tempts me to nv-yo-i/the rocky place
between your thighs where

you are hard as a cedar flute
a-s-da-ya/taut
as a drum

Water swells at your bank
threatens to break loose
But I am slow
so slow
and steady as a panther
Nibble and suck
strawberries
Flick my tongue across their dark tips
u-wa-n-sv ale tsu-wo-du/ripe and beautiful
Lure their flavor to the surface of your skin

My mouth hungry for your pulse
even and soft on my lips
My hands blanketed by your hair
Your chest silvered and wet
against mine

V:v/Yes
Our moans a low fierce rumble
a coming storm[10]

Two-Spirit people are creating literatures that reflect Sovereign Erotics, and in doing so participate in the process of radical, holistic decolonization. The erotic within First Nations literatures is rarely examined, and Two-Spirit erotics are often ignored. Womack observes, "I would speculate that a queer Indian presence . . . *fundamentally* challenges the American mythos about Indians in a manner the public will not accept. Deeply embedded in the romanticism about Indians are ideas regarding gender. . . . The queer Indian fits none of these popular imaginings" (*Red on Red* 280).

In Her I Am by Chrystos (Menominee) has received praise from other Two-Spirit, Lesbian, and Queer identified women, but has been

largely ignored by critics. Not only is this due to the fact that unapologetic Lesbian erotica threatens heteropatriarchal culture, but also because the Sovereign Erotic set forth in her book deals with histories of abuse and colonization that deeply complicate the text. *In Her I Am* demonstrates radical Two-Spirit woman-centered erotics as tools for healing from colonization. The poem "Against" grapples with genocide, abuse, and homophobia and their effects on sexual relationships:

> We're survivors of childhood violence with black eyes
> in common from mothers who hated our difference
> [. . . . .]
> Your people as well as mine slaughtered in millions
> Queer we're still open season
> My fingermarks on your ass are loving you
> [. . . . .]
> Desire red & raw as wounds we disguise
> we're open season. (Chrystos 4–25)

It is poems such as this, which examine the complexities of sexuality within an abusive culture, that are needed in order for Two-Spirit people to engage with healing and (re)creating Sovereign Erotic spaces in our lives and work. Chrystos writes,

> Because sex has been split off from us as women in a colonizer culture, we ourselves police our pleasure. . . . We need to engage in a radical discussion & redefinition of our sexuality, a discussion which has been co-opted to issues of biology (abortion & conception), rather than sexual freedom, remembering that freedom needs the bones of responsibility to flourish. (83)

Chrystos undertakes this redefinition through the creation of erotic poems for other Native Two-Spirit women that encompass First Nations traditions and histories. In "Woman" the gathering of wild rice is eroticized:

> will you come with me moving
> through rivers to soft lakebeds
> [. . . . .]

> Will you go with me
> down the long waters smoothly shaking
> life into our journey. (Chrystos 1–6)

Likewise, "Tenderly Your" situates the erotic within historical memory:

> We're in the grass of prairies our grandmothers rode
> Sweet smell of distant cookpots edges the blue
> Your kisses are a hundred years old & newly born. (Chrystos 3–5)

The poem continues by discussing the erotic as a tool for healing from trauma:

> Flaming ride us past our rapes our pain
> past years when we stumbled lost
> [. . . . .]
> This
> is why we were made by creation. (9–14)

Sovereign Erotics are also reflected in Craig Womack's *Drowning in Fire*. Through the narrative of Josh Henneha, lines between historical memory and contemporary lives spiral into one another. The erotic relationship that develops between Josh and Jimmy weaves itself into a history of Creek resistance to allotment and Oklahoma statehood. Snake motifs throughout the text represent both the supernatural tie-snake, an embodiment of opposites, and the Snake faction in Creek resistance history. During a sexual encounter between Josh and Jimmy, snakes appear:

> There were snakes everywhere, shimmering rainbows of color and motion, circles and circles. . . . A copperhead was dancing around one of Jimmy's Air Jordans lying on the floor. A giant rattlesnake sat coiled around the copperhead and the tennis shoes, shaking his tail like an accompaniment to the swaying dance inside the circles they had made, the snakes within snakes. . . . The whip snake came down from the lamp, crawled over our way, placed his head on the edge of the sparse white sheet, and flicked his tongue at us. (Womack, *Drowning in Fire* 200)

Womack also connects the erotic to the sacred through the relationship between Josh and Jimmy. After the couple makes love in a creek, Josh dreams:

> I dreamed that I came back a year later with him and the pond was no longer there, only a large, shimmering mud flat. . . . In the dried-up creekbed, at the exact spot where Jimmy had come in the creek, had grown a red cedar. My Aunt Lucy stepped out from behind it, and she laughed at the way she'd startled us. "See, boys," she said, nodding at the cedar, "now you know where those trees come from. (*Drowning in Fire* 279)

The Sovereign Erotics created by Two-Spirits are part of the healing of the wounded bodies of ourselves, our lands, and our planet. Collections of First Nations erotic writing that include the work of Two-Spirit writers such as *Without Reservation: Indigenous Erotica* edited by Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm (Anishanaabe) and Red Ink Magazine's Love & Erotic Issue (Volume 11:1) are quickly emerging in North America. We were stolen from our bodies, but now we are taking ourselves back. First Nations Two-Spirits are blooming like dandelions in the landscape of a racist, homophobic, and transphobic culture's ordered garden. Through over 500 years of colonization's efforts to kill our startling beauty, our roots have proven too deep and complicated to pull out of the soil of our origin, the soil where we are nurtured by the sacrifices that were made by our ancestors' commitment to love us.

> And we are fighters in this long war
> to bring us all back home

NOTES

This paper was originally presented as a keynote speech to Portland State University Queers and Allies on April 26, 2002.

1. The Cherokee used in the poem is a translation of "Amazing Grace."

2. My use of the term "sovereign" is in no way an attempt to challenge or replace the legal definitions of sovereignty. As Native nations, sovereignty specifically refers to the legal relationships our nations have with other governments and nations, including the United States. By using the terms "sover-

eign" and "sovereignty" in relationship to tribally specific and traditional understandings of our bodies, sexualities, genders, erotic senses of self, terms employed in the formation of identities, or other non-legal contexts, I'm using the words as metaphors for relationships between Native people and nations and the non-Native nations, people, values, and understandings that occupy and exist within our traditional lands.

3. While I am choosing to focus on erotics as a site of decolonization and sovereignty, it should be made clear that I do not think of the term "Two-Spirit" as a pan-Native term synonymous with "Gay," or "Lesbian." The various traditions being called "Two-Spirit" are often much more about gender identity and gender expression than about sexual orientation. I also realize the problematic nature of using one term for our various and vastly differing tribal traditions, understandings, and identities. I am choosing to use the term "Two-Spirit" throughout this essay because it does not make me splinter off sexuality from race, gender from culture. It was created specifically to hold, not diminish or erase, complexities. It is a sovereign term in the invaders' tongue.

4. It should also be remembered that Cherokees and other First Nations people were sold into slavery. For a thorough discussion of the enslavement of First Nations peoples, see Cherokee/Assateague-Gingaskin scholar Ron Welburn's essay "The Other Middle Passage: The Bermuda-Barbados Trade in Native American Slaves" in *Roanoke and Wampum: Topics in Native American Heritage and Literatures* (2001).

5. Dagmar Thorpe's (Sauk and Fox/Potawatomi/Kickapoo) interview with Charlotte Black Elk (Lakota) (157).

6. As of the writing of this essay, there is a study being conducted, however, through the University of Washington's School of Social Work called the Two-Spirit Honor Project.

7. An invasion, it should be remembered, rooted in the murder and expulsion of Sefardí Jews and Muslim North Africans during the Inquisition.

8. While he used the names Billy and Brandon, "Brandon Teena" is a name created by activists by switching the first and last names given to Brandon at birth. I learned of Brandon's mixedblood ancestry through an unlikely text, *All She Wanted* by Aphrodite Jones. The book is widely criticized in Trans communities for its transphobia and sensationalistic "true-crime" style. In a particularly racist passage that at once romanticizes Brandon's Native features and celebrates his light skin and eyes, Jones writes, "Their grandfather on their father's side was a full-blooded Sioux Indian, so Teena . . . was an exotic-looking infant. To JoAnn (Brandon's mother), she almost looked black, even

though it was only her hair that was dark. Teena was beautiful, blessed with the bluest Irish eyes" (Jones 29). Besides "Sioux," Brandon's tribal affiliation is not mentioned. *All She Wanted* is the only book about Brandon's life and murder, and in some ways remains more factual than the highly popular film *Boys Don't Cry*.

9. (Dis)ability, as an alternative to "disability," was coined in 1999 by radical activist and writer Colin Kennedy Donovan and appears in the 'zine *Fuck Pity: Issue Number One: Not Yr Goddamn Poster Child*. I have chosen to use this term because it draws attention to "disability" as a social and political construct rather than an inherent "condition" blamed on our bodies and minds.

10. By the author, originally published in *Red Ink Magazine*.

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Review Essay

Nora Marks Dauenhauer's *Life Woven with Song*

GLADYS CARDIFF

Our struggle at the moment is to continue to survive and work toward a time when we can replace the need for being preoccupied with survival with a more responsible and peaceful way of living within communities and with the ever-changing landscape that will ever be our only home.

Robert Allen Warrior, *Tribal Secrets*

Formulated within the structural coherence of an anthology, *Life Woven with Song* collects Nora Dauenhauer's published work and new writing under one cover. *SAIL*'s readership will be most acquainted with Dauenhauer's fostering of Tlingit oral traditions in the multivolume series *Classics of Tlingit Oral Literature*, an ongoing project produced in collaboration with her husband, Richard. *Life Woven with Song* affords readers the opportunity of hearing Dauenhauer render individualized, contemporary Tlingit experience by means of a wide range of enunciative styles and a variety of forms, including memoir, essay, fiction, and poetry. In the final section of this collection, she departs from the autobiographical with a set of Raven plays. Dauenhauer's aim is that the separate pieces will "come together for readers to form a larger cultural and literary landscape" of the Tlingit of southeastern Alaska (xii).

This is a rich mix in a small container. In addition to the sectioning by genre, this highly formulated book also includes a preface, photographs, an introduction to the plays, a glossary, and a fact sheet about the author. The organizational devices and the attention to

contextualizing Tlingit identity structure *Life Woven with Song* as a user-friendly book for a mainstream readership interested in contemporary tribal lifeways. Overall, Dauenhauer's primary obsession is the enduring reciprocity between the Tlingit people and the specific landscape that is their home: place engenders identity, rights and responsibility to the land; human relation in the physical world constitutes a cosmic kinship relationship. A key feature of *Life* resides in the pleasure Dauenhauer takes in acts of fluidity and fluency within multiple discourses which range from warm and personable conversational diction, peppered with idioms and allusions to popular culture, to the scholarly discursiveness she employs when delivering conceptual and methodological information.

One gets to know Dauenhauer best through her voice. Speaking styles and linguistic playfulness serve not only as features of Dauenhauer's temperament and love of language, but also as markers invoking a linguistic drama for voice. Navigating Dauenhauer's collection rewards sensitivity to the verbal play of language, to nuance, and the implications of what is said and what isn't. On one hand, Dauenhauer's presentation is invitational. She describes, explains, and anticipates questions and difficulties the reader may encounter. Notably, in a book which is mostly autobiographical, she also marshals the readers' ingress into personal experience and the conceptual complexities of Tlingit belief systems. The reticence to delve deeply and elaborate from within emotional, psychological, and spiritual intimacies, is a feature of Dauenhauer's poetry as well as her prose. In the presentation of the Raven plays, where the cathexis of purpose, form, and voice reverberates most actively, there are undercurrents, eddies of indirection, and points of opacity. This set of short comic pieces is the site most charged with the tensions between conservation and innovation, and is best read in conjunction with *Classics of Tlingit Oral Literature*.

THE PROSE: MEMORY AS REGENERATION

The preface and the initial prose piece "Some Slices of Salmon" establish the cultural and economic significance of salmon, thereby linking the salmon cycle of return; acts of memory—"a gift that keeps giving;"

identity—Dauenhauer is Lukaax.adi' (Sockeye Clan); and a specific geography—the range of her family's fishing grounds. Furthering the theme of return, Dauenhauer employs the device of juxtaposition of prose pieces for the purposes of repetition and reconfiguration. For example, following the introductory memoir of subsistence fishing expressed from Dauenhauer's first person viewpoint as a child, is the short story "Egg Boat," a fictive story about Keixwnei (Dauenhauer's Tlingit name), fishing the North Pacific alone for the first time. Like the memoir, the short story is told, again, from a child's perspective, but this time in third person limited omniscience. Formally, literary point of view keys the change from real experience to the fictive.

The quieter "inner dialogue," stated by Dauenhauer as a goal for this story in the preface, proves not to be meditative or psychological deepening of the child's inner life, as the reader of conventional short stories might expect. Because we stay within the child's perspective and receive interactions through the speed and summarizing effect of indirect discourse, the chances for the dramatic action of crisis and conflict through changes in the relationship within and between characters is foreclosed. We never hear Keixwnei speak out loud. The girl's excitement, fear, determination, victory, and the compass of her emotions and motivations, are delivered in summary. Just as quickly as Keixwnei thinks fearfully of Land Otter Man, she pulls up her fishing line, and the thought is whisked away. The "plot" is actually thematic: Keixwnei discovers pride in self, that she can be self-sufficient and capable within her environment. Success is galvanized and braced within the close society of the extended family, especially through the example of female relatives as role models and teachers. Keixwnei, by staying close to her grandmother and auntie and doing "everything that they did," finally catches her first salmon. Rather than a mindscape of private emotions, self-expression is redirected to relationship within the tribally-specific landscape and the group. As in all of the early memories, we get beautifully descriptive passages such as the "spine of the tide" with its "tiny jumping waves on one side," the "tiny tide navels" on the other (21).

"Magic Gloves," about Tlingit cultural survival in the 1990s, works in dialogue with "Chemawa Cemetery: Buried in Alien Land," an autobiographical sketch about the "civilizing" mission of federal education

policies to exterminate it. This pairing forefronts contrasts between outsiders who aid in cultural survivance and outsiders bent on its erasure. In "Magic Gloves," we see Dauenhauer experimenting again with literary point of view as a strategy to transport real life experience into the fictive. Someone, possibly a grandchild, describes preparations by "fictive" grandparents Nora and Dick who, with the aid of relatives and friends from all over the world, assemble dance regalia for the grandchildren. In this case, point-of-view fails under the strain. The candor and sincerity of a clearly intimate, but oddly unidentified, eyewitness collapses into artifice and Dauenhauer's authorial agenda to celebrate friendly alliances between Tlingit people and the world.

Readers of *Life Woven with Song* will be substantially more informed about twentieth-century Tlingit history; Tlingit agency in spite of the social, economic, political, and psychological oppressions on Tlingit sovereignty; the persistence of storytelling and song and their links to oral and ceremonial traditions. They will learn what it was like to grow up in a conservative, monolingual extended family and a subsistence lifestyle. They will understand better the complexity of the holistic life the collection's title invokes. *Life Woven with Song* refutes simplistic notions of Native existence as an effortless and static state of integration. Family members sing in the Russian Orthodox Church and they compose songs and sing at potlatches. Dauenhauer, citing the counsel and example of her relatives and Tlingit elders, asserts identity composed within two belief systems. She quotes Austin Hammond, a leader of Raven House and an officer in the Salvation Army, who replied to queries "by some religions" about how he could lead both. Hammond said "'God made us to be Tlingit and to continue our culture.' He didn't see the need to abandon our culture," which Dauenhauer affirms as "wisdom to continue into the twenty-first century" (43).

THE POEMS: GETTING CLOSE IS HER WAY

The subjects of Dauenhauer's poems, often ordered in topical pairs or series, include elders, grandchildren, storms, work and play, and nature. "Auntie Francis, My Father's Sister" and "Salmon Egg Puller—$2.15 an Hour" use the image of dancing to give two views of work:

Auntie appears to dance playfully as she feeds laundry into a new washing machine and the house hums; the women in the cannery move like dancers to survive grueling labor. "Poem for Jim Nagataak'w (Jakwteen): My Grandfather, Blind and Nearly Deaf," the first of many fine poems, is also emblematic of Dauenhauer's poetic that is to render expressions of connection within little spaces (about half of the thirty or so poems are eleven lines or less). In this poem, the family is on the boat in a storm. While her father and brothers struggle for anchorage against tide and wind outside, she is inside the cabin letting her grandfather know what is happening. The poem ends this way:

> I could see his long eyebrows,
> I could look at him and get
> really close. We both liked this.
> Getting close was his way
> of seeing. (57)

They like this, and so do we. Getting close is also Dauenhauer's way of seeing, not because of blindness, or through shouting, but through her eye for quick, small flashes charged with resonance and feeling. Her idiom is straightforward, brisk, conversational. Verbs and nouns reign over adjectives. Closer to song than the conventions of the Western short lyric, the compass of Dauenhauer's poetry does not aim for the "progressive deepening understanding" radiating out from the "centripetal force at their lyric center" that a formalist like Helen Vendler would expect (Vendler 3–5). Image stands in for argument, paralleling the way concrete images work in oral traditions. Typically, as in the poem "Steel Gray," Dauenhauer introduces a key image, clouds; then jumps to simile, like cold metal, ice; extrapolates relatedness, coldness that grabs gloves' fuzz "like the gray matter of thought"; and then the connection between cold thought and resistance is made explicit, "everything sticks to it, / if you let it" (91). The longest poem "For My Granddaughters Genny and Lenny," clarifies Raven's significance in terms of landscape and family identity because it was he who transformed the places where the children's ancestors lived, died, are buried, and the girls now play. Unselfconscious, unmediated expressions of affection and celebration, with echoes of song, characterize Dauenhauer's aesthetic.

Dauenhauer rarely indulges in public complaint, but when she does speak out, for example about the "white whip" of racism and hatred's "rain of spears," the moments are potent and indelible. Activism resides in descriptive and explanatory modes, rather than through imputation and exhortation to action. Assertiveness is demonstrated through self-respect and resistance to things that are negative, the gray matters that freeze and stick if you let them. The darker mood of the paired "Storms from an Enemy Sky" and "Steel Gray" is the exception rather than the rule. In the poem "Storms from an Enemy Sky" Dauenhauer links thoughts about D'Arcy McNickle and a sense of being surrounded with hostile currents:

> There is an undertow
> created by an unknown force—
> the politics of language—
> turning my love
> into a vile taste on my tongue. (90)

Dauenhauer's identification with D'Arcy McNickle points to the similarities of their struggles. McNickle, as historian and anthropologist, is known for his consensus-seeking leadership in the fractious early formation of ethnohistorical methodology. As a fiction writer, he is known for his insistence on the right to cross boundaries, to write from a broad range of experience and for audiences that include Native and non-Native, a position still discomfiting for many.

THE RAVEN PLAYS

The plays in *Life* were originally commissioned by the Naa Kahidi stage troupe under the sponsorship of the Sealaska Heritage Foundation. Their performance history spans a decade in national and international venues. Dauenhauer experiments within genre in her presentation of "White Raven and Water," "Raven, King Salmon, and the Birds," and "Raven Loses his Nose," adapting these stories as stage plays from oral versions told by Tlingit storytellers. The plays mark a change to a provocative comic mode of social instruction by enlisting Raven as "a negative model," the "ultimate con man," who uses "kinships terms and other co-membership strategies to smooth-talk his 'marks' " (101).

Dauenhauer's offhand description that the Raven plays are "silly" is disingenuous (xii). The plays aren't frivolous in treatment and their message is serious. The complexity of her presentation and the issues surrounding the plays need to be addressed in more detail than I can here. The set of plays will certainly entertain and whet interest. They will help redefine kinship as relations among all beings and the land. In summary, the message they deliver is propositional: as proper modes of relatedness deteriorate and become selfish, short sighted, and uncaring, so too will appetites, desires, and hungers increase. Humanity suffers as do the places they inhabit.

A NEXUS OF CULTURAL INTERACTION

Life Woven with Song is not a perfect book. It suffers from the structural moves to make the pieces cohere and the breadth of the audience and age groups it tries to address. Its experimentation is not always successful. Crucially, in the introduction to the plays, a reliance on the good-natured buoyancy of voice and the friendliness of intention as a means to persuade, is costly. I have deep reservations about the ways complex cultural concepts are marshaled and moralized to serve the aim of social reform. How, I ask myself, might readers who are not scholars of Native literatures understand, or misunderstand, the force and efficacy inherent in the cultural landscape Dauenhauer presents for Raven?

All of the pieces gathered in *Life*, however, are grounded in Tlingit-centric concerns and conventions. Her overt use of familiar structures speaks to creating alliances with a broader, non-Tlingit audience. Dauenhauer jumps the generic boundaries she sets up for her readers and decenters their expectations through the use of juxtaposition, repetition and reconfiguration in the prose, the concrete signification of her images in the songlike poems, and the personal voice in which self-expression is constantly infused with her commitment to the group. The holism the title's images invoke is not a literary "trope" establishing a template over the collection charged with the dialectics of difference. In fact, reading for difference churns up dangerous waters for Dauenhauer's project if the reader positions Dauenhauer's purposes as either of the two modes of mimicry Dee Horne outlines in *Contempo-*

rary Indian Writing. In the first mode, mimicry assumes the "guise of affiliation" (Horne 13–14). Clearly, Dauenhauer's use of Eurwestern literary and scientific constructs is not disguised, nor does she speak as a subaltern, but in modes that are steadfastly Tlingit-centric. Too, I would argue, her strategy is not a form of subversive mimicry used to drive a divisive wedge between peoples. Her strategy differs from subversive mimicry "to unmask, to exterminate, the colonial pattern of filiation that the colonial relationship engenders" in that her aim is not to estrange or to pit dialectical forces against each other (Horne 13–14).

To see more clearly the complicated dynamics of this exchange we must also address the aim of *Life Woven with Song* to serve as a means of allying Tlingit and non-Tlingit worlds. The driving motivations central to the Dauenhauers' textual reclamation project in Classics of Tlingit Oral Literature also apply to *Life Woven with Song*. These include the preservation of Tlingit mores and modes for the Tlingit community and the world at large, and the desire that these lifeways be looked on favorably, and thrive meaningfully and powerfully for the generations to come. Inherent in the desire by the Tlingit to build a larger audience and look outward for new alliances is the gut-wrenching urgency resulting from the ramifications of a history of cultural conflict and "linguicide" experienced by all indigenous peoples in North America.

LIVING CANNOT BE POSTPONED

In *Tribal Secrets: Recovering American Indian Intellectual Traditions*, Robert Warrior quotes Vine Deloria within a context of intellectual work when the situation seems overwhelming: "Living cannot be postponed" (126). The salience of this statement by Deloria, who was anticipating federal policies initiating "yet another assault on the possibility of an American Indian future" in 1972, strikes deep in regard to what is at stake for Dauenhauer personally and for the Tlingit people:

> These elders also became my instructors as I worked with them. Some of them gave me advice when I worked with them; others told me off and declined to have their traditions documented. . . . This work gives rise to mixed emotions. On the one hand, it gives

> me great delight to restore and polish these priceless gems of Tlingit oral literature, composed by the great masters of the tradition. On the other hand, it can be stressful always to be dealing with death, dying, and grief. (46–47)

That Tlingit is among the moribund languages is made explicit by the Dauenhauers: "We work with sober awareness that linguists predict the extinction of the Tlingit language within the next 50 or 60 years. . . . [A]s far as we know, there are no speakers under the age of thirty, and there are only a handful of speakers under the age of 50" (*Haa Shuka* xi). The Tlingit decision to bridge the chasm of cultural difference is not a concession to victimization that would effect another form of colonialism. It articulates one, of many, proactive strategies they are making. *Life Woven with Song* situates the general reader, imaginatively within the material realities of tribally specific human experience by opening a window into a community who faces every day the work of survival and regeneration, and refuses to be overwhelmed. I admire Nora Dauenhauer's singleness of purpose and the breadth of humanistic motive. Girding the desire to broaden and forge social alliances by building a better informed readership, is her belief in the possibility of the "more responsible and peaceful way of living within communities" as Robert Warrior compellingly invokes in the epigraph to this essay (126). In this sense, *Life Woven with Song* is far larger than the sum of its parts.

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Book Reviews

Lanniko L. Lee, Florestine Kiyukanpi Renville, Karen Lone Hill, and Lydia Whirlwind Soldier. *Shaping Survival: Essays by Four American Indian Tribal Women.* Ed. Jack W. Marken and Charles L. Woodard. Lanham MD: Scarecrow Press, 2001. ix + 221 pp. Glossary of D/Lakota words and phrases, index.

Debra K. S. Barker.

In the summer of 2001 Elizabeth Cook-Lynn and Professor Chuck Woodard of South Dakota State University organized their yearly gathering for Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota writers, the Oak Lake Writers' Retreat, affording them not only a time and place to devote to their writing, but also a forum for expressing their ideas on art, politics, and tribal literary traditions. Out of this particular retreat grew four parallel memoirs written by tribal women whose early life histories would be compiled under one title that suggests the themes and subjects of their book, *Shaping Survival: Essays by Four American Indian Women.*

The four sections of this book are individually titled and authored by the contributors, all of whom are enrolled members of the Sioux Nation and born into families in which Dakota or Lakota was the family's first language. With the exception of Karen Lone Hill, each writer experienced a boarding school education that would prompt her to resist the colonizing pressures to shed her Native identity for an assimilated one. While the narratives express unique voices, they also share common topics: the authors' earliest days surrounded by a

tiospaye of immediate and extended family; the land and landscapes with their distinct topographies, spirits and stories; and the forces that worked to shape each writer's life and means of survival. Survival is, of course, a broadly used term, and as these writers contemplate their personal and cultural survival, they explore the roles of education, spirituality, culture, and community in their lives. Inevitably, the stories express varying degrees of social and political critique as they contrast their early, traditional educations at home with their inculcation and upbringing within the boarding school system, an apparatus of colonialism that several of the writers experienced as institutionalized child abuse.

Karen Lone Hill (Oglala Lakota), professor of Lakota language and culture at Oglala Lakota College, titles her memoir "On Learning," shaping her narrative as a quest for knowledge, self-knowledge, and identity. Like many Indian children born in the mid-twentieth century, Hill was brought up by parents who believed that her survival depended upon her assimilation into the dominant culture through her turning away from her Lakota identity, language, and traditional practices. Indeed, when she was young, her father drove her through the South Dakota State University campus, telling her that this would be her future college, thereby planting the seeds of her later ambitions for higher education—not only for herself, but also for future Lakota scholars.

Ironically, given the cultural pressures of the time to deny one's tribal heritage, and the fact that Pine Ridge was a bastion of colonial control, Lone Hill had to leave the reservation to pick up the path that would lead her back home again to the elders and medicine people who could give her guidance. She notes the irony of her sleeping in a tipi for the first time in Hamburg, Germany, and learning Lakota in a language class at South Dakota State University. Paralleling her spiritual journey is her professional development as an educator, as she devoted herself to earning university degrees, while at the same time submersing herself in ceremonial life in response to her visions.

Lone Hill concludes her memoir with a shift away from herself and the educational experiences that both shaped her and aided her in her drive to survive as a Lakota person toward the important work of her life, that is to share her knowledge with not only Lakota students but

also non-Native students working as teachers in South Dakota public schools. Despite the challenges of surviving on the reservation and persevering through high school and university as a single parent, Lone Hill realized her quest to balance traditional knowledge with academic achievement to develop herself as one dedicated to serving her tribal nation by sharing herself in the manner that is distinctly Lakota, wacintanka (to be generous) or canteyukan (to have a benevolent spirit).

The boarding school stories of the other three writers, to varying degrees, represent the experiences of thousands of boarding school survivors who returned from virtual captivity to families fractured by poverty, alcoholism, and alienation from cultural values that would otherwise have offered guidance. As these women explore the impact of the boarding school on themselves as young children, what grows apparent is the generational repercussions this form of education had upon their own parents and grandparents, in some instances creating psychological scarring with generations of family life disrupted. These women's stories recall parents unskilled at parenting—emotionally aloof, self-protective, alcoholic, or simply absent, leaving grandparents to raise the children and work to instill the cultural values and traditions that they themselves had retained. Each of the Oak Retreat writers echoes her commitment to recovering her original tribal identity and culture as a means of restoring balance and wholeness, in Lakota, wapiyehci, or feeling sound and well.

For each writer the imperative for survival began when she left or was taken from the places and people that nourished and sustained an original connection with the land and the stories and spirits rooted to her birthplace. For Florestine Kiyukanpi Renville (Sisseton-Wahpeton Dakota), journalist and publisher of *Ikce Wicasta, The Common People's Journal*, survival began when her family left the psychic comfort of the Lake Traverse Reservation to search for work as migrant workers. In "Dakota Identity Recovered," as she describes the bleak Minnesota terrain where she, her parents, and siblings all labored as ill-paid field hands, Renville historicizes the exploitation of an American Indian underclass forced to serve Anglo immigrants' drive to realize the American Dream of wealth and success. Recounting the hardships of survival in the white world, she contrasts the warm inclusivity of her home reser-

vation with the chilly hypocrisy of the Christian communities in which she came to live, where she learned that acceptance, kindness, and love were withheld from non-white, non-Christians.

In addition to criticizing the church's efforts to eradicate Native cultural beliefs and practices, she indicts an educational system that she deems "was used as a means to dominate and suppress. White education systems were designed to show us how ignorant we were, not only in the eyes of the larger society, but in our own eyes too" (107). The education she received inculcated a view of American history from which Native people and their contributions were erased. Reflecting upon Native America's survival of its own holocaust, Renville explains, "Despite their attempts, we endured! We endured starvation, diseases, massacres, separations, racism, ignorance, and missionaries. Why? Perhaps so we could teach the world something about tolerance, patience, endurance, generosity, and about overcoming almost insurmountable odds" (158).

While Renville castigates Euramerican institutionalized racism, writer and educator Lanniko L. Lee (Minneconjou Lakota) denounces federal land management policy in South Dakota for its destructiveness. Though not as polemic as Renville's or journalistic in tone, Lee's is a lyrical reminiscence imbued with political critique. Titled, "Ways of River Wisdom," her narrative recalls the powerful connection between landscape, spirit, and memory as she describes her "childhood river education" along the Missouri River on the Cheyenne River Sioux Indian Reservation. Lee's management of time, tone, mood, and descriptive detail renders a rich, layered narrative, woven around stories of her education and her various teachers: parents, grandparents, boarding school teachers, and the nations of plants and animals inhabiting the landscape and the river by which she grew up. Lee explains, "Having a memorable childhood means not only having shared a family place but also having had the opportunity to begin building a spiritual identity" (2). The Missouri River, a powerful symbol and unifying theme of her text, conjoins her early memories of childhood romps with siblings and packs of cousins as her extended family came together to eat, visit, and tell stories. As Delphine Red Shirt does so memorably in her memoir *Bead on an Anthill: A Lakota Childhood*, Lee vividly recaptures the

pleasure and play that characterize the best days in the lives of children, particularly when they are both nurtured with the loving attention of grandparents and free to run wild over a landscape alive with the stories and spirits of their ancestors.

The tone and tenor of Lee's narrative darken as she relates the two most devastating events in her personal and community's history: compulsory education in boarding school and the building of the Oahe Dam, which would disperse not only the families that had lived along with Missouri River for generations, but also the plant and wildlife nations upon which people had depended for survival. Lee blames the spiritual and physical ill-health of her community upon the dam project, drawing attention to an aspect of Native life that environmental policy makers have long ignored: the natural world shapes and informs the identities of Native people. In Lee's words, "When we look around us, the evidence is clear that we cannot expect to survive let alone achieve healthy wholeness without an environment of cultural and spiritual significance, which is our river way of knowing" (43).

As with the other three writers, Lee's Euramerican education would prove to be a trial of courage and fortitude, as she and the other children endured loneliness, incompetent teachers, and chilling acts of cruelty that she can still recall in poignant detail. She tells us, for instance, that the smell of burning hair evokes her memory of her first day in boarding school at age six, watching the matrons search for lice in the children's hair: "I stood frozen in fear as I saw those two women moving against the black-shadowed trees in the background. They were combing kerosene into little girls' hair, then striking matches and watching the hair curl and burn off black and powdery to their smokey-white scalps" (30).

In a narrative as suffused with bitterness as Renville's, Lydia Whirlwind Soldier (Sicangu Lakota) shocks readers with her ability not only to tell but to dramatize the violence and brutality of the boarding school teachers who bullied, beat, and emotionally abused the children in their care. In "Memories," Whirlwind Soldier recalls haunting images of students fainting of hunger and of little children kneeling in corners all night, shivering, asleep, long forgotten by the nuns who ordered them there as punishment for small infractions. On one occasion a nun

drowned a litter of kittens before the horrified eyes of the girls who had been caught cuddling them in the cellar. On another, Whirlwind Soldier witnessed a nun dragging a child by the hair, leaving the girl bloodied but nevertheless quietly defiant.

What Whirlwind Soldier discerns in the course of her institutionalization is the mission of her teachers to obliterate the values and practices that had sustained her nation for centuries: generosity, wisdom, courage, and respect for her culture. With the re-education of Sioux children, the church and the federal government embarked on the genocide of the Sioux nation as a cultural and political entity. In terrifying the children with the introduction of lye soap and eternal damnation, the nuns sought to break their spirits. To erode the bonds of tribal community, the nuns favored some children over others, often depending upon the children's degree of Anglo blood and the religious affiliation of their parents, assailing the infrastructure of cultural values that would have otherwise sustained them emotionally and psychologically as they became adults. Whirlwind Soldier explains, "A Lakota society that valued cooperation was losing its children to the teachings of competition, to the philosophy that one should strive to be better than her brothers and sisters. The concept of Mitakuye Oyasin, the Lakota philosophy of relationship, would lose its meaning for many of the children" (167).

Whirlwind Soldier's means of survival was in fact a site of contestation, her Lakota identity. In reminding herself of a cardinal Lakota virtue, wowancintanka, fortitude, she—as do the other three writers—expresses her agency and determination to survive her life and tell her story. Her determination to indict her boarding school teachers draws her narrative into passages of simple vituperation toward the end, however, weakening the rhetorical power of a narrative otherwise moving in its imagery and drama. And like Renville, she tends to shift from a narrative to a polemic mode, anxious to testify to the damage rendered to their lives.

Nevertheless, the four narratives offer corroborating testimony that calls for the attention of readers who perhaps have not viewed Christian missionary work as a kind of holy war upon American Indians. These stories work powerfully to offer, in John Beverley's term, *testimonio*, a type of autobiographical narrative that seeks to represent the

experience of oppression as a collective one, rather than that of an individual person. For these Sioux writers, their narrative accounts serve as acts of political subversion to challenge and correct the dominant culture's unexamined assumptions regarding the benefit of deracinating and assimilating American Indian children. Deploying the language and autobiographical modes imposed upon them, these women articulate to themselves and their audiences the process of transcending poverty, racism, and internalized colonialism, effecting a decolonization of identity and a call to action to perpetuate personal and political sovereignty in all the respects that distinguish us as distinct cultural and political entities.

For a broad audience *Shaping Survival* affords readers insight into the complex experience of growing up during an era when Indian parents found themselves persuading their children to learn English and conform to the expectations of the dominant culture in order to survive. In the meantime, grandparents and aunts were pulling children aside to share stories and cultural knowledge they valued and feared losing to the cultural genocide project of the United States government. Those particularly interested in the history of Indian education will recognize the cultural and philosophical forces that collided with federal policy, ultimately to shape Native communities and Native attitudes toward Euramerican western educational processes in negative ways the federal government and state departments of public instruction could not have predicted. Informed researchers and educators quickly discover a correlation between the history of the boarding school and the alarmingly high dropout rate that persists among Native youth even today. Today it is important for educators and policy makers to attend to the opinions of these survivors because they offer unique insights into what does and does not, has and has not worked where Indian education is concerned. Those insights are memorialized in this book as it joins other Native boarding school accounts, such as Lomawaima's *They Called It Prairie Light* and Brenda Child's *Boarding School Seasons*, in privileging the voices, stories, and points of view of the students, rather than those of historians and researchers interested in the history of Indian education.

For Native readers, these four narratives help us understand our

parents and grandparents, affording us an insight into the extent to which institutionalization shaped the social and parenting skills we have seen enacted in our own families. In a broader sense, these women help us see why and how the commitment to language and cultural preservation directly supports the imperative for tribal sovereignty. With their defiance and personal acts of courage in sloughing off their indoctrination, they show us how to live, how to recover the cardinal values that had sustained the Sioux Nation, for one, in practicing fortitude, bravery, generosity, and wisdom. In their choices to teach their Native language, cultural traditions, and spiritual practices to young people eager to link back to their culture and ancestors, they prepare a new generation to assume a responsibility for the future of the Sioux Nation of the twenty-first century. Finally, with their decisions to advocate for the institutionalization of public school curricular units teaching non-Native students about South Dakota Indian culture, they subvert and ultimately vitiate the federal government's attempts to assimilate American Indians and eradicate Sioux people as a distinct political and cultural entity rooted within the borders of the United States.

Shaping Survival is a valuable book for a host of other reasons as well: it affords readers an insight into D/Lakota family culture of the mid-twentieth century, dramatizing the pressures reservation families faced from government bureaucracies, economic oppression, and the racial animus of Anglo border communities uncomfortable with racial integration. The book also offers us a glimpse into reservation classrooms run by those teachers who may have felt as though they had been stranded in an American "heart of darkness," as a result of their professional incompetence or simple misfortune. Finally, this collection of narratives presents models of courage, perseverance, and generosity, as these women share their personal stories and give us an insight into their commitment to dedicating their lives to educating and writing for Native audiences, seeking to share both the traditional knowledge they have recovered and the tribal values that they have learned are essential to the survival of the Sioux Nation.

Margaret Dubin, ed. *The Dirt is Red Here: Art and Poetry from Native California*. Berkeley CA: Heyday Books, 2002. xiv + 82 pp.

Dean Rader

Why is it that when we review books we only talk about the content of the book and not the book itself? When we read or teach a poem, we usually draw attention not simply to the thematic qualities of the poem but also to its formal elements—the way it sounds, how it's put together, the way it looks. In short, why *don't* we judge a book by its cover?

I raise this issue in regard to *The Dirt is Red Here* for two reasons. The first is largely inconsequential, but I think it bears mentioning here. The second I'll try to use as springboard for a less topical review of what actually comprises this anthology. To my first point: when I picked up *The Dirt is Red Here* for the very first time and opened the front cover, it fell apart in my hands. Literally, the binding completely came unglued, and pages tumbled to the floor. Normally, this wouldn't bother me, as I have dozens of books that are coming apart at the seams, but this particular incident disappointed because the book and its binding were new in every way. I mean, it had never been used as a coaster or a makeshift writing surface. I hadn't trashed the spine making illegal copies for my classes or cracking the spine to save my place when I went to answer the phone. It simply fell apart, and in my mind, new books shouldn't do that.

However, the real reason the poor binding disappointed is because *The Dirt is Red Here* is a beautiful book—a fact that I hope will serve as a moderately elegant segue into my second point. Comprised of poems, photographs, paintings and reproductions of sculptures, this collection of texts is so well done in terms of layout, graphics and document design, it is doubly painful that the binding was at variance with the quality of the internal aesthetics of the book. It feels lovingly put together, carefully laid out, meticulously planned. The poems and paintings work well together. The thick glossy pages feel good to the touch. The balance of text, image and white space suggests a keen eye and an artist's sensibility. In brief, when the cover is not falling off and the pages not coming unhinged, the book is a model of sophisticated design and printing and demands to be regarded as such.

And it is the art that sets this book apart from other similar anthologies. Of course, there are poems from some of my favorite poets, such as Janice Gould, Deborah Miranda, and Wendy Rose. So, I already have the poems reprinted by these folks. That being said, I did enjoy the work of Stephen Meadows. In fact, the first line of his poem "Grass Valley" provides the title of the collection itself. "Reweaving the World Ohlone," the final poem in the collection, serves as a kind of metonym for the book, making palpable connections between art, artisans, renewal, movement, beauty. I was also moved by Shaunna Oteka McCovey's provocative poem "I Still Eat All of My Meals with a Mussel Shell." Two poems woven into one bolded and italicized text, McCovey's piece moves like a Native L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poem, though it remains much more interesting and resonant than most from that genre, and I found myself going back to that poem as much as any other.

But it was the paintings and the photographs that kept arresting me. Well-known artists like Harry Fonseca and Frank Lapena sidle up alongside newcomers (for me) like Frank Tuttle, Bradley Marshall, and the photographer Lorencita Carpenter. Carpenter's photographs stood out among the other visual texts, first, because they are photographs and not paintings, installations, or regalia, but secondly, because their subject matter is not overtly "Native" whatever that may mean. I still don't know what her photo "Fresh" *is*, exactly, but I like it nonetheless.

I first came across Mike Rodriguez's work recently, on a trip to Sacramento, and I became an immediate fan. His copper etching "Untitled" is among the most beguiling texts in the book. Divided into four quadrants, the petroglyphic etchings merge abstract and figural gestures. It looks like parchment, windows, a book, tiles, a tapestry, stone. I was also taken by Fritz Scholder's work. His "Indian Kitsch" is perhaps my favorite in the entire collection. A photo collage from 1979, the piece tessellates eighteen photographs of the heads of Indian stereotypes. It's a disturbing amalgamation of dolls, statuettes, photographs and carvings. It recalls (or predicts) Jaune Quick-to-See Smith's "Paper Dolls," though it is quieter and less textual than Smith's. And, it will work its way into my classes immediately. Scholder's other pieces, including the abstract expressionist, "Indian Land," are no less political but altogether more aesthetically oriented, and they, too, are impossible to gloss over.

Even so, the artist whose work I kept coming back to is Rick Bartow. I've always admired his paintings, but for me, they stood out beyond anything else in the book. A cross between Smith, Scholder, Francis Bacon, and Paul Klee, Bartow's canvases simultaneously startle and appeal. The figures, whether foxes or bears or birds are both petroglyphic and simply graphic. There always seems to be more going on in them than mere representation, and the paintings' ground is both uncertain and structured—a reality that is always another reality. And yet not. And then there are the colors. I tend not to be moved by the wispy primary colored canvases in every gallery in Santa Fe, but Bartow problematizes the color schemes in his work. They are always in dialogue with the figures, instead of in service to them. His painting on the title page, "Coyote and the Dust Devil XVI" is marvelous.

For some time now, I have had a vision for a book about Native Oklahoma. It would collect stories, poems, essays, photos, paintings, and music about Oklahoma by Native artists and writers. The book would provide a series of unique lenses through which one could get varying perspectives on what makes Oklahoma Native realities fundamentally *Oklahoman*. So, beyond the binding issue, if I have any real complaints with *The Dirt is Red Here* it's that dirt is also red in Oklahoma; and I don't learn much about California. As a recent transplant, that is of major interest to me. But, I don't want to detract from the vision or the execution of this book, so I will end with an appropriately positive observation—the collection of texts assembled in this book is both an aesthetic and an ethic. It doesn't just show us how Native artists and writers see the world, it helps us see the world through these lenses that refocus our attention on what it is we are all trying to do here: communicate. And what this text ultimately communicates is that there are still California Indians in California. They are alive, well, and doing good work.

What's more, I eventually was given another copy of *The Dirt is Red Here*, and like the contributors to this important book—it's holding together and doing just fine.

Carter Jones Meyer and Diana Royer, eds. *Selling the Indian: Commercializing & Appropriating American Indian Cultures.* Tucson: U of Arizona P, 2001. xix + 279 pp.

Michelle Raheja

From grocery store dairy sections carrying Land O'Lakes butter to toy store shelves stocked with Pocahontas and G.I. Joe Navajo Code Talker dolls, it is clear that Indian-themed merchandise sells well. In *Selling the Indian: Commercializing & Appropriating American Indian Cultures*, Carter Jones Meyer and Diana Royer have collected a series of essays treating the various ways Indian-produced arts, crafts, and performances "were commercialized and appropriated in the twentieth century" (xi). The book is divided into two sections, "Staging the Indian" and "Marketing the Indian," marking the difference between performances of "Indianness" for a non-Indian audience and the creation of tourist markets for Indian arts and crafts by both Indian and non-Indian entrepreneurs for a primarily non-Indian consumer. The editors argue that the various ways in which Native American cultures have been sold to a mass-mediated public is akin to the wholesale theft of indigenous land. As a result of commercial imperialism and appropriations of indigenous spirituality, Native Americans "will no longer own their own identity in the same way that Indians no longer own most of the land that was theirs when whites began to settle in the New World" (xi).

Two of the strongest essays appear in the first section of the book. Nancy J. Parezo and John W. Troutman's "The 'Shy' Cocopa Go to the Fair" is a study of the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis and the indigenous people who participated in the fair. While Parezo and Troutman argue that World's Fairs "served as tools for the imperialist countries who staged them to justify and essentially celebrate the subjugation and dispossession of indigenous peoples worldwide" (4), they also contend that Native American participants in the fairs' ethnographic spectacles also possessed some degree of agency in reversing the colonial gaze and thwarting efforts to view them solely as "primitive" cultures. For example, the Cocopa delegation that traveled from

Arizona to become part of "a semicaptive research laboratory" required that professional photographers and tourists who desired to capture images of them pay twenty-five cents per photograph (11). Although not everyone honored their request, the Cocopa and other Native American delegations present at the fair "met the tourist gaze . . . on their own terms" (25).

Katie N. Johnson and Tamara Underiner's "Command Performances: Staging Native Americans at Tillicum Village" is another essay that highlights the strategies used to commodify Native American cultures while at the same time it makes a powerful argument demonstrating the ways in which Native people themselves possess agency in transforming commercial venues into ventures that benefit Native communities and educate the public. Johnson and Underiner examine Tillicum Village, a four-hour dinner theater performance in Blake Island State Park off the coast of Seattle to illustrate their claim. While Tillicum Village was founded in 1962 by a non-Indian and initially employed Boy Scouts to serve as dancers in the spectacle, as of 1992 a majority of the Village's employees are now members of local tribes and exercise "a degree of control over what is presented of and by them and are compensated both for their participation and for the handicrafts they sell in the tourist market there" (54). While Johnson and Underiner conclude that Tillicum Village is "a bundle of contradictions" because the white owners of the dinner theater continue to earn a lot of money from the performances and control the primary elements of the spectacle, Native American performers participate in the event willingly and have modified some elements of the performance by including local dances with tribal elders' permission (57).

While the essays included in *Selling the Indian: Commercializing & Appropriating Indian Cultures* engage various twentieth-century sites of commercial fantasy and Native American reaction in interesting ways, the introduction to the collection is both short (nine pages) and consists primarily of summaries of the essays included. Lacking is a detailed discussion of the theoretical and historical contexts of what it means to "sell the Indian" that would unify the essays in the collection. In particular, the editors employ the terms "commercialization" and "appropriation" without defining either term and without placing the

terms within a broader context. This would have been particularly useful since the collection examines transnational indigenous contexts (individual Native American nations, the United States, and Mexico) and the terms operate on different registers depending on historical period, tribal history, legal parameters, etc.

The introduction also elides the Indian Arts and Crafts Act, an important piece of legislation passed in 1935 and amended in 1990 that seeks to determine what constitutes Native American art and who qualifies as a Native American artist in order, ostensibly, to protect Native American artists and craftspeople from the kinds of commercialization and appropriation against which the editors argue. A discussion of the Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-644) would have been useful to scholars of Native American studies in relation to the essays included in the collection because it demonstrates how important the relationship between indigenous identity and cultural production is to many Native American communities.

Although the introduction could have provided the reader with a stronger grounding in the major themes of the text, the essays included in the collection cover a wide range of ways in which elements of Native American material culture have been commodified for a non-Indian audience. For example, the essays examine the exploitation of indigenous peoples at early twentieth-century World's Fairs, the various changes Cherokee women made to the art of basketry for the promotion of the tourist trade, and the relationship between tourism and traditional life in Chiapas. Despite the book's shortcomings, *Selling the Indian* will be of use to literary scholars interested in the connection between performances of identity, the economic circulation of "Indianness," and writing.

William M. Clements. *Oratory in Native North America.* Tucson: U of Arizona P, 2002. xv + 186 pp.

Susan Berry Brill de Ramírez

Within the study of Native American literatures, scholars have widely recognized the importance and relevance of those literatures' oral storytelling roots as foundational to their literary development. With this understanding, the literary critical study of Native texts has often been interwoven with early orality studies by Native and non-Native ethnographers and folklorists. This notwithstanding, contemporary rhetoricians and literary critics have directed scant attention to those highly crafted Native American oral texts that were explicitly oriented towards the purposes of information and persuasion: namely, formal speeches. In his book *Oratory in Native North America*, William M. Clements investigates those early forms of highly crafted, oral indigenous communications that were recorded (in one form or another) and largely directed towards an audience of non-Native listeners (e.g., explorers, traders, soldiers, government officials, ethnographers, and missionaries and members of the clergy). Clements brings to bear his combined training in literary and folklore studies, bringing helpful light to a field of study that, to date, has not received the attention it deserves. Of especial value to this project are Clements's knowledge of orality and his ethnographic rigor that point the way towards future directions in the study of indigenous oratory. In his book, he illuminates the diversity and wealth of those Native American public speeches directed to audiences that included those non-Native outsiders who either recorded the speeches or provided the reports of the given speeches. Although Clements gives relatively little attention to indigenous oratory within its own respective tribal and cultural frameworks, including scant reference to Native scholars of rhetoric and tribal storytelling traditions, this is not the direction of this book. To lament what Clements does not do in his book would be to overlook its value and the wealth of overview for a crucial area of Native literary study.

The book begins by defining the genre of oratory, delineating oratory as specific to those formal oral speeches that are delivered in public

settings. To understand the Anglo-American reception to Native oratory, Clements investigates the early rhetorical history of North America, noting its especially high value among the American colonists and their descendants. The role of oratory in the British colonies and later United States is described, by Clements, in terms of its Aristotelian, Cartesian, Puritan, and Jeffersonian influences, thereby providing a helpful lens and contextual framework for understanding the worlds in which Native American oratory was recorded for Anglo-American posterity. This contextualization of the Anglo-American reception provides the needed background for the critical evaluation and interpretation of those specific cases of Native American oratory in which the speeches were delivered to their Euroamerican audience. This is crucial in light of the fact that the recorded response to those speeches was largely informed by the American and European traditions of their audience. The Euroamerican literary and critical framework of oratory played a great role in the Euroamerican (generally Anglo-American) receptions, interpretations, and consequences meted out in response (whether the speeches were made as part of treaty negotiations, the artificial recording by early ethnographers, or formal communications with clergy). To review past indigenous oratory and its response by Euroamerica, scholars will need to take into account the interpretive framework of past Euroamerican response, and Clements's volume provides a strong primer for such scholarship. What is absent in Clements's book is the indigenous and tribal contextualization that would place each example of oratory within the oral and literary tradition of the orator's respective tribal and regional communities. This would be work well worth doing by scholars able to bring to bear an indigenous and tribal understanding to their work.

The one contemporary Native voice found in the volume (other than a citation from N. Scott Momaday in the preface) involves a brief mention of the work of Nora and Richard Dauenhauer, yet this occurs without reference to Nora Dauenhauer's tribal ancestry, nor any statement regarding the value of that fact for the Dauenhauers' own ethnographic work. I note this as a means of clarifying the orientation and scope of Clements's book which provides a valuable introduction to the range of indigenous oratory delivered to audiences with Euro-

americans and which was recorded, in turn, for a larger Euro-american audience. The focus of the volume is explicitly Euroamerican, focusing on the Euroamerican reception to Native oratory. Nevertheless, in an overview of the recording and analysis of Native American oratory, Clements gives the Dauenhauers his strongest praise. He commends their work on Tlingit oratory as "perhaps the most comprehensive treatment from ethnographic and literary perspectives of a specific occasion for oratory in any of the literature on Native American verbal art," and yet even here he does not credit the crucial importance of the Dauenhauers' ability to approach Tlingit oratory from within the tribal culture, which brings to their work tribal, cultural, and regional knowledge and insight less available to outside researchers (130). Clements's own recognition of the quality of their work underscores the significant value of those scholars who have deep knowledge and familiarity with the texts, peoples, cultures, and tribes they study.

There is one aspect of Native American oratory that I believe Clements's misconstrues by virtue of the non-indigenous and discursive approach taken in the book. It is important to clarify what may be the central distinction between indigenous oratory and non-indigenous or western oratory—a distinction that Clements overlooks. In noting the importance of oratory, Clements asserts that one of its roles involves emphasizing and "establishing [the] personal prestige" of the speaker (122). Writing that oratory "may demonstrate the superiority of those who practice it, but it also illustrates the inferiority of those who are swayed by it," Clements points to the privileging of the Native American orator (123). By viewing Native American oratory through the privileging lens of contemporary theory, Clements views such speechmaking discursively, dialogically, and dialectically. This privileges language over relationality, information over empathic knowing, secular textuality (oral or written) over the sacredness of language. Discourse and dialogue emphasize the argued position rather than a conversive emphasis on the sort of deep, empathic knowing and understanding that leads to wise and right and just decision-making. When Te-o-kun-hko spoke to keep white men from his people's Red Pipe Quarry, when Te-cum-seh (Shawnee) spoke to the Osage people regarding peace, when Red Cloud (Oglala Lakota) spoke to New Yorkers in 1870 of his

people's struggles to survive and their desires for peace, and when Ka'maltkak (Pima) delivered his oratory to his early twentieth-century ethnographer, in each case, they were not privileging themselves nor their own positions, rather they were emphasizing the larger story that their words related, attempting to connect in meaningful ways with their listeners through deeply conversive oratory that is more akin to conversation than to monologue. Native speakers have articulated to their ethnographers over and over again that even though they may often be part of their stories, the emphasis is not on themselves. It is not an act of self-privileging. Their presence in their stories was either a requirement of the ethnographers (seeking life histories) or simply by virtue of the speaker's own life experience that provided him or her with the knowledge of the related story.

The larger argument of the book maintains that the oral artistry of many of these recorded speeches is well worth further study, noting that scholars will first be needed to thoroughly investigate the literary, editorial, and recording history of each document in order to verify its accuracy and legitimacy. In looking at a number of such pieces of indigenous oratory, Clements demonstrates the sort of critical and evaluative approach that scholars need to take in approaching each text, and evaluating its originating context and the history of its textualization. As he advocates, "The first order of business for the study of American Indian oratory requires identifying texts and accessing their reliability and comprehensiveness" (124). Then "researchers should consider whether texts provide textual, situational, and contextual information or whether that information can be culled elsewhere" (125). This is where a thorough grounding in the tribal, cultural, and historical backgrounds of each speech and speaker is needed for solid analysis, interpretation, and understanding of the speech and its larger context.

Clements explains that copies of indigenous oratory can be found in various sources, depending on the actual historicity of the particular speech. In some cases, proceedings of treaty negotiations will include the text of speeches given by Native leaders. Other speeches may be recorded in "accounts by secular explorers . . . missionary reports . . . captivity narratives . . . the memoirs of soldiers . . . newspaper reports . . . and early ethnographic and linguistic surveys" (21). Each of these

sources are discussed briefly in their own subsections of the book's longest chapter "Sources and Resources for Native American Oratory." The beginning of this chapter identifies the scholarship that informs Clements's own view of oratory: namely that of "the ethnography of speaking, performance folkloristics, and ethnopoetics" (24). Clements emphasizes that oratory is far more than its text and that oratory must be understood within the frame of its own speech and storytelling "event"—including "paralinguistic and kinesic devices," the informing significance of the particular setting, and the orality, repetition, emphatic pauses, etc. (24–29). Most important here is Clements's call for thorough evaluative studies of Native American oratory in order to provide authoritative, authentic, and reliable collections. Clements argues for the importance of an evaluative and interpretive "ethnopoetically-informed literary criticism" (130). He determines that orations are to be authenticated. Then they are to receive cultural analysis. Clements holds up the work of the Dauenhauers as exemplary. Clements provides the explicit argument and critical approach for a thorough evaluation of particular orations. The work of Nora and Richard Dauenhauer provide us with the applied model of how to do this. Clements clearly presents his work as a beginning, a volume to encourage other scholars to delve more deeply and closely into the rich legacy of indigenous oratory. *Oratory in Native North America* is an important introduction to the field, elucidating the diversity and wealth of Native American public speaking, with a caveat that this external ethnographic approach is balanced with the tribally-based ethnographic approach of the Dauenhauers, as Clements himself recommends.

Reprinted Books of Note

COMPILED BY DENARA HILL

Ellis, Jerry. *Walking the Trail: One Man's Journey Along the Cherokee Trail of Tears*. 1991. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2001.

Henry, Gordon, Jr. *The Light People*. 1994. East Lansing: Michigan State UP, 2003.

Linderman, Frank B. *Indian Old Man Stories: More Sparks from War Eagle's Lodge Fire*. 1920. Introd. Celeste River. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2001.

———. *Indian Why Stories: Sparks from War Eagle's Lodge Fire*. 1915. Introd. Celeste River. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2001.

Malotki, Ekkehart, comp. and ed. *Hopi Animal Stories*. 1998. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2001.

Opie, John. *Ogallala: Water for a Dry Land*. 2nd ed. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2000.

Posey, Alexander. *The Fus Fixico Letters: A Creek Humorist in Early Oklahoma*. Ed. Daniel Littlefield and Carol Petty Hunter. 1993. U of Oklahoma P, 2002.

Sexton, James, trans. and ed. *Mayan Folktales: Folklore from Lake Atitlán, Guatemala*. 1992. Albuquerque: U of New Mexico P, 1999.

Skolnick, Sharon (Okee-Chee) and Manny Skolnick. *Where Courage is Like a Wild Horse: The World of an Indian Orphanage*. 1997. Lincoln: U of Nebraksa P, 2001.

Sneve, Virginia Driving Hawk. *The Trickster and the Troll*. 1997. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1999.

Viola, Herman J. with Jan S. Davis. *It Is a Good Day to Die: Indian Eyewitnesses Tell the Story of the Battle of the Little Bighorn*. 1998. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2001.

Zitkala-Ša. *American Indian Stories*. 1921. Intro. Susan Rose Dominguez. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2003.

———. *Iktomi and the Ducks and Other Sioux Stories*. Foreword Agnes M. Picotte. Intro. P. Jane Hafen. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2004. Rpt. *Old Indian Legends*. 1901.

Contributor Biographies

DEBRA K. S. BARKER is an enrolled member of the Rosebud Sioux Nation and associate professor of English and American Indian Studies at the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire, where she teaches courses in American Indian literatures. She has published articles on Louise Erdrich, John Steinbeck, the history of the boarding school, and on the trafficking in American Indian art, among other topics.

SUSAN BERRY BRILL DE RAMÍREZ is a professor of English and teaches Native American literatures, environmental literatures, women's literatures, and literary criticism at Bradley University. She is the author of *Contemporary American Indian Literatures & the Oral Tradition* (U of Arizona P, 1999), *Wittgenstein and Critical Theory* (Ohio UP, 1995), and numerous scholarly articles, and is completing a book manuscript on the ethnographic construction of twentieth-century American Indian "autobiographies" and beginning a large project looking at ethics in various storytelling traditions. She relates that her work is deeply informed by her sacred tradition—the Bahá'í' Faith and by her mixed Appalachian/German-Jewish heritage.

GLADYS CARDIFF is an assistant professor of American literature at Oakland University (Rochester, Michigan) where she teaches courses in creative writing, contemporary poetry, and Native American literatures. She is the author of two collections of poetry: *To Frighten a Storm* (Copper Canyon Press) and *A Bare Unpainted Table* (New Issues Press). Her work has also appeared in numerous anthologies including: *Carriers of the Dream Wheel*, *Songs from This Earth on Turtles Back*, *The Remembered Earth*, *That's What She Said*, *Harper's Anthology of 20th Century Native American Poetry*, and *The Gift of Tongues*. She received her MFA at the University of Washington and her doctorate from Western Michigan University. She is an enrolled member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee.

QWO-LI DRISKILL is a Cherokee Two-Spirit also of African, Irish, Lenape, Lumbee, and Osage *ascent*. Hir creative and scholarly work has appeared in several publications including *Many Mountains Moving*, *The Raven Chronicles*, *Revolutionary Voices*, *Speak to Me Words: Essays on Contemporary American Indian Poetry*, and *Nurturing Native Languages*. S/he lives in the Duwamish Nation, currently called Seattle, where s/he is the founder of *Knitbone Productions: A First Nations Ensemble*.

DENARA HILL is currently a doctoral student at University of Nevada Las Vegas with a focus in Chicana/o literature.

SHEILA HASSELL HUGHES holds an interdisciplinary PhD in women's studies from Emory University and is an assistant professor of English and acting director of women's studies. She has published articles on gender, culture, and religion in works by a range of women writers, including Teresa of Avila, Gwendolyn Brooks, Joy Harjo, and Louise Erdrich. She is currently collaborating on a book about the representation of religion in Erdrich's work.

DEAN RADER is an assistant professor of English and Associate Dean for Arts and Humanities at the University of San Francisco. He is the coauthor of *The World is a Text*, (Prentice-Hall 2002), and the coeditor with Janice Gould of *Speak to Me Words: Essays on Contemporary American Indian Poetry* (U of Arizona P 2003). He is also an associate editor of *SAIL*.

MICHELLE RAHEJA is an assistant professor in the Department of English at the University of California, Riverside.

ROBERT WARRIOR is the author of *Tribal Secrets: Recovering American Indian Intellectual Traditions* and, with Paul Chaat Smith, *Like a Hurricane: The Indian Movement from Alcatraz to Wounded Knee*. He currently directs the Native American Studies program at the University of Oklahoma.

Major Tribal Nations and Bands Mentioned in this Issue

This list is provided as a service to those readers interested in further communications with the tribal communities and governments of American Indian and 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 United States, Canada, or Mexico, while others are not currently recognized by colonial governments. 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.

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 *SAIL* Editorial Assistant, *Studies in American Indian Literatures*, Department of Writing, Rhetoric, and American Cultures, 235 Bessey Hall, Michigan State University, East Lansing MI 48824-1033, or send an e-mail to sail2@msu.edu.

Cherokee Nation
Chadwick Smith, Principal Chief
P.O. Box 948
Tahlequah OK 74465
918-456-0671
918-458-5580

Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians
Leon D. Jones, Principal Chief
P.O. Box 455
Cherokee NC 28719
828-497-2771
828-497-7007

Hopi Tribal Council
Wayne Taylor Jr., Chairperson
P.O. Box 123
Kykotsmovi AZ 86039
928-734-2441
928-734-6665

Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation
Kenneth M. Reels, Chairman
P.O. Box 3060
Mashantucket CT 06339
860-396-6500
860-396-6540

Osage Nation
Osage Tribal Council
Jim R Gray, Principal Chief
P.O. Box 779
Pawhuska OK 74056

Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Nations of Alaska
320 W. Willoughby, Suite 300
Juneau AK 99801
1-800-344-1432
1-907-586-1432