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CONTENTS

SPECIAL ISSUE: HONORING A. LAVONNE BROWN RUOFF

- 3 Guest Editor's Preface
JAMES RUPPERT
- 5 "There's still more digging to do": A Story in Honor of
A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff
MALEA POWELL
- 10 Eastman's Maternal Ancestry: Letter from Charles Alexander
Eastman to H. M. Hitchcock, September 8, 1927
A. LAVONNE BROWN RUOFF
- 18 Yellow Women and Leslie Marmon Silko's Feminism
LOUISE BARNETT
- 32 The Queen Writes Back: Lili'uokalani's *Hawaii's Story by
Hawaii's Queen*
LYDIA KUALAPAI
- 63 "The literature of this nation": LaVonne Ruoff and the
Redefinition of American Literary Studies
DAVID L. MOORE
- 71 Grateful for the Push: A Tribute to LaVonne Ruoff
CHADWICK ALLEN

- 75 Tribute to LaVonne Brown Ruoff
GRETCHEN M. BATAILLE
- 77 Footnotes on a Friendship, February 2005
KIMBERLY BLAESER
- 80 Appreciations
JOANNA BROOKS
- 81 Offering, in Return
CARI M. CARPENTER
- 83 Dear LaVonne
SUSAN ROSE DOMINGUEZ
- 84 A Fair Voice
P. JANE HAFEN
- 85 To LaVonne—With Good Thoughts
GEARY HOBSON
- 87 First Impressions of A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff as an Author
PATRICE HOLLRAH
- 89 An Appreciation
HELEN JASKOSKI
- 96 Honoring LaVonne Ruoff
ARNOLD KRUPAT
- 98 The Archive
ROBERT DALE PARKER
- 100 Rough Ruoff, Pirate Fighter
WILLIS REGIER
- 101 The Multi-Missionary Eleanor Roosevelt of American Indian
Literatures
KENNETH M. ROEMER
- 106 Thank You, LaVonne
SIOBHAN SENIER

- 107 In Praise of Old Friendships
 KATHRYN W. SHANLEY
- 109 Those Treasured Purple-Inked Pages
 MARTHA VIEHMANN
- 111 Contributor Biographies

Special Issue
Honoring A. Lavonne Brown Ruoff

Volume 17, Number 2

GUEST EDITOR, JAMES RUPPERT

GUEST EDITOR'S PREFACE

I am pleased to put together this special issue of *SAIL* honoring A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff. She is the dean of Native American literary studies and has helped many scholars bring to fruition innumerable projects. Her efforts with *ASAIL*, *MLA*, and the *NEH* have built the foundations that all of us have used to raise our scholarship and teaching. My idea was to use the tradition of the *Festschrift* to honor her. Accordingly, you will find some thoughtful appreciations and tributes to her towering accomplishments in the field and articles that advance areas of study close to her heart. As you read and ponder this special issue of *SAIL*, please join all of us in thanking LaVonne for her unselfish assistance to the field and to our lives.

James Ruppert

“There’s still more digging to do”

A Story in Honor of A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff

MALEA POWELL

This is a story.

When I started thinking about this story, I thought it would be a pretty standard biographical summary of LaVonne’s life as a scholar. As I sifted through some of the materials that LaVonne had sent me upon finding out we intended to devote this issue of *SAIL* to her, I found such a summary impossible to write. It was impossible not just because LaVonne’s life, and her scholarship, has been complicated, extensive, and inspiring—though it has been. It just seemed strange to sit with that small stack of materials that she had provided to me and not think about all the other things that LaVonne has provided and made possible for me—for so many of us. I know that the simple fact that I am sitting here at this computer in my very comfortable university office, that I occupy a tenured position at a Research One university as a scholar of American Indian literatures and rhetorics, that I edit this journal, that I have been able to find a compelling and fulfilling scholarly life in archives and libraries, that I am a native woman scholar at all—all of these things are, at least partly, her doing. Many, many other scholars will testify to her influence and her significance in the following pages. My voice here is just one more attempt to echo that refrain.

A. LaVonne Brown was born in 1930 in Harvey, Illinois, to Oscar Brown and Laura Witters Brown. As a young man, Oscar Brown traveled, with his brother, Bert, to North Dakota to prove up land for farms. Oscar homesteaded eighty acres near present-day Halliday, North Dakota, from 1909 until 1913. During his time there he started,

and managed, a semi-professional Indian baseball team and made friendly acquaintance with his native neighbors. LaVonne remembers fondly sorting through her father's pictures of the team and his neighbors—her first interest in Indians—photos that were disposed of after his death in 1967, and whose absence she worries about with an archivist's sensibility: "I would have loved to have made copies and given the originals to the Fort Berthold tribe or to the North Dakota historical society." LaVonne graduated from high school in 1948 and started working at the publishing house where she would meet her first husband, Milford Prasher, a World War II veteran and Menominee. Her fourteen-year marriage to Prasher extended her previous interest in Indians to a full-fledged education in understanding the lives of native people in the United States and the position of American Indians in the imaginations of the non-Indian populace.

LaVonne now saw first-hand the consequences of federal policies like termination: "It was a disaster for the Menominee tribe" (qtd. in Marsh 20). During this same time period, she began studying at the University of Illinois branch at Navy Pier (a two-year institution that later became the University of Illinois at Chicago). She later applied at Northwestern despite much pressure from her friends to "continue to work to save money for a house and to have a family" (qtd. in Marsh 20). Her friends, and even her doctor, believed that college would be "too much for a married woman," but her grades were high enough to earn her a scholarship after the first quarter of her enrollment (qtd. in Marsh 20). She earned her bachelor's degree in secondary English education in 1953 and immediately went to work at University of Illinois–Navy Pier. While there she and her husband adopted two children—Stephen and Sharon, an Ojibwe girl. She and Prasher were divorced several years later. LaVonne had also returned to school during this time and earned her doctoral degree in 1966 in nineteenth-century English Romanticism and took a job at UIC, where she met Gene Ruoff. They were married a year later and now live in a gorgeously restored Victorian home in Oak Park, Illinois.

Meanwhile, LaVonne's school-aged children "weren't learning about American Indians in school. [The subject] only came up at Thanksgiving," an absence that bothered her a great deal given the

large native community in the Chicago area (qtd. in Stuart 33). But it wasn't just her own children's education that started to disturb her. In 1971 UIC began a federally funded support program for Native American students, and LaVonne began a twenty-six-year stint on its board of advisors. Her work with students in this program offered many opportunities for her to create better experiences for native students in the university. For example, she noticed that native students were having difficulty in their first-year composition courses, so she developed a special section of first-year writing designed to address the needs and interests of native students. Her students in this course "had never read anything by an American Indian," and when she "went looking for material, almost everything was out of print" (qtd. in Stuart 33). So LaVonne started finding things, and she made a lot of copies those first years.

LaVonne's persistence with "finding"—at the Newberry Library in Chicago, Dartmouth College, the Will Rogers Memorial Museum, the Oklahoma Historical Society, and many other venues—has turned into thirty-two years of working to make American Indian literatures an established, respected academic field. She saw, when others didn't, that there was a history of native literatures that could be drawn upon for scholarly and creative endeavors, and she helped to make that history not just visible but *available* for the generations of us who have followed behind. Ruoff's editorial, recovery, and archival work is renowned for its thoroughness. In the process of finding the native writers whose texts had fallen out of print, LaVonne also encountered a new generation of native scholars and writers whom she has befriended and mentored over the past thirty-plus years. In addition to her critically important recovery of several nineteenth-century native texts and her editorship of the University of Nebraska Press's American Indian Lives series (currently at twenty-nine volumes of native biography and autobiography), for which she was awarded a Wordcraft Circle of Native Writers and Storytellers award for scholarly editing (2003), many of us can recite a litany of her other accomplishments: her presence as one of the attendees at the 1977 MLA/NEH seminar on Native American literatures in Flagstaff and as a contributor to the book that came out of that seminar,

Studies in American Indian Literatures, a text designed to help teachers teach in the field of native literatures; founding the MLA discussion group on American Indian literatures (which preceded the Division); founding the Association for the Study of American Indian Literatures; serving as a member of the MLA's Committee on the Literatures of People of Color in the United States and Canada (CLPCUSC) during the time when they drafted the "Guidelines for Good Practice" for recruiting, mentoring, and evaluating faculty of color; writing *American Indian Literatures: An Introduction, Bibliographic Review, and Selected Bibliography*, the text through which many of us found the resources we needed to do work in the field; serving as interim director of the Newberry Library's D'Arcy McNickle Center for American Indian History; and her role as one of the architects of the CIC's American Indian Studies consortium.

We weren't surprised when LaVonne received the MLA Lifetime Scholarly Achievement Award in 2002, the first time the award has been given to a scholar from a public institution in the Midwest who works in a "non-traditional" field of study. We weren't surprised when she shared that award with the community: "it represents the recognition of the MLA for the development and importance of the field" (qtd. in Stuart 37). I am, however, gratified that an institution like the MLA *noticed* the volume and degree of commitment to native people's lives and writings that LaVonne has amply demonstrated throughout her own life. As a current member of CLPCUSC I have had the opportunity to see much of the work that LaVonne does that doesn't get included in the above litany—all the difficult, time-consuming talking, drafting, revising, talking, and persuading that goes into her advocacy for native people in the academy and for native literatures.

LaVonne's work isn't finished yet. As she works on the second edition of *American Indian Literatures*—a book that will be at least twice as big as the first one because of the increased interest in and production of native literatures—we learn once again by her example that our work is really just beginning. There are still a lot of native writers we don't know much about, still a lot of places that we might find things, still a lot of "material in people's attics, in newspapers and

magazines of the time" (qtd. in Marsh 21). There's still more work to be done; "There's still more digging to do" (qtd. in Stuart 37). So, *newii* (thank you), LaVonne! You have made a difference in the life of the field; you have made a difference in the lives of dozens of native scholars; and you've made a difference in the life of this scholar in setting such a good example of how to be a scholar, a mentor, a colleague, an ally, and a friend. *Newii* for finding our stories, for telling our stories, and for giving me this story to tell in honor of you. *Newii*.

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Eastman's Maternal Ancestry

Letter from Charles Alexander Eastman to H. M. Hitchcock,
September 8, 1927

A. LAVONNE BROWN RUOFF

The H. M. (Hiram M.) Hitchcock papers in the Edward E. Ayer Collection contain four letters from Charles Alexander Eastman (Ohiyesa; Santee Dakota, 1858–1939) to Hitchcock, dated from 1927 to 1935.¹ The most interesting of these letters is that of September 8, 1927, transcribed below.² Here Eastman proudly describes his parents' lineages and poignantly expresses his deep sorrow at the death of his mother when he was an infant.

Little is known about Hitchcock, a businessman and historian from Minneapolis, Minnesota. In 1930 he published several articles about early Minnesota history and in 1931 wrote one on Eastman, "An Indian Returns Home."³ During the early twentieth century, Eastman became one of the most prolific authors and speakers on Sioux ethnohistory and American Indian affairs. Among his most acclaimed and widely read books are *Indian Boyhood* (1902), *Old Indian Days* (1907), *Soul of the Indian* (1911), *From the Deep Woods to Civilization* (1916), and *Indian Heroes and Great Chieftains* (1918). In *Charles A. Eastman (Ohiyesa)*, Raymond Wilson describes him as "the first major Indian author to write Indian history from the Indian perspective."⁴ Eastman's mother, named Winona at birth and later Wakantankawin and Mary Nancy Eastman (1830–58), was the daughter of Seth Eastman (1809–75) and Wak inajin win (Mdewakanton Dakota). In 1830 Seth Eastman and Wak inajin win married at Fort Snelling in present-day Minneapolis, Minnesota. Born in New Hampshire, Seth Eastman was a West Point graduate who became a topographical engineer and celebrated painter.

In 1833 he left his family behind after the War Department ordered him to Louisiana. He returned to Fort Snelling as commander in 1841, bringing with him a white wife, Mary Henderson Eastman (b. 1818).⁵

The maternal grandfather of Wakantankawin (Mary Nancy Eastman) was Mahpiya Wicasta, sometimes given as Wichasta (Cloud Man, b. 1780). A Christian convert, Cloud Man was a Mdewakanton Dakota chief who had a French father and Mdewakanton mother. Wahkantanawin and Ite Wakanhdi Ota (Many Lightnings), a Wahpeton Dakota, married in 1847. She bore three sons and a daughter before Charles was born near Redwood Falls, Minnesota. After he converted to Christianity, Many Lightnings took the name Jacob Eastman.

The transcription of the signed, autograph letter below retains as much of Eastman's personal style as can be discerned. His divisions and omissions of words, grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization have been retained.⁶ Deleted words are indicated thus: ~~mother~~. Distinguished anthropologist Beatrice Medicine (Lakota) provided invaluable assistance in the transcription of Dakota names. I am deeply grateful for her help.

Reserve, Wis.

Sept. 8, 1927

Mr. H. M. Hitchcock
Minneapolis, Minn.

My dear friend,

I received your letter and the copies of the picture my beloved mother. I found Mr. Mayer's picture of my mother three years ago in the collection of Mr. Ayers, which was placed in the first floor of the Newberry Library in Chicago, and I had copies made for me by "Underwood and Underwood."⁷ However, I am grateful and thank you just the same as if I hadn't the pictures already. Further more I thank you for your kind interest in our family history. I certainly will do what I can toward getting your article in proper and authentic form. I know Mr. Samuel Pond of Minnesota personally and historically, for the family were closely associated with my mother's family in their early missionary efforts among the Sioux.⁸ My great grandfather and my mother's grand-

father was instrumental in establishing the first Protestant missionary work among the Sioux and at Minneapolis. My great grandfather's village was located between Harriet and Calhoun Lakes, facing perhaps more toward the latter.⁹ But, my mother was born on the shore of Lake Harriet, while camping there, sugar making and fishing, not far from where the old pavilion used to stand, north of the old schoolhouse, where there is, I think ~~then~~ a tablet is now marks it. I do not know the month of her birth, but I think, it was in the early summer of 1830. She married my father in 1847. She only seventeen 17 [*sic*]. The ~~the~~ picture was made of her in 1851. Therefore, she must have been just twenty one or approaching it. She died sometime in ~~September~~ July, in 1858, from what I learned, of acute Tonsilitis and weakness from my birth. At any rate, it was a throat trouble and not of long duration. The entire Mde wakan towan tribe mourn for her loss because she was generous and kind and a friend to every body, young and old. Every nursing mother came to my rescue, her child; consequently I was nursed by many mothers, until my paternal grandmother was able to feed me.

From my sister's account is ~~my~~ different from this account and also that of my grand mother's. I was born in Feb, which was recorded by one of my mother's half breed friends, and mother died early in the spring. I consider the latter is likely—but it is true she died in the summer of 1858. When I was four weeks to three four ~~mother~~ months old. So there is confusion in the exact time of her death, a difference of four or five month. She was about twenty-eight—(28) when she died. She was buried about 20 rods south west from the farm house situated about a mile or so east of the old agency stone house, on a knoll, where ~~the~~ or near the brick building of her grand father Chief Cloud Man had stood. She was the daughter of the third daughter of Chief Mahpiya wicasta (Cloud Man) and Captain Seth Eastman U.S. Army, a New Hampshire young man and a graduate of West Point Military Academy. The latter also was an artist. Two of his paintings are exhibited in Washington, D.C. One was a master piece painting of a great inter-tribal lacross game, played on the

plain just north of Fort Snelling. That hangs, among the masterpiece, in the Cochrane's gallery in Washington.¹⁰ The other, a painting of the Santee Sioux women gathering or harvesting wild rice. That hangs in the rooms of the House Committee on Indian Affairs. It was not very long after her birth Capt. Seth Eastman was ordered from Fort Snelling to the Seminole War in Florida. It appears that he did not see her again until 1848. She was then married and had one child (my sister Mary).¹¹ Traditions ~~exac~~ existed in the Cloud Man family, that Seth was very tender toward his child, and when on his last visit to his child, he pressed it to heart while tears ran down his noble young face. He had ordered all her needs from Henry Sibley's store and when he went away to war, he told my grand mother, when ever she needs anything for the child go to "Wasicun hanska" or "Wapeton hanska" and ask for it and she would have it.¹² That was Gen. Sibleys Sioux name.

Mother's [~~beauty?~~] beautiful face, body, soul was easy explained when one know the line of her forebear, humblest line is her ~~p~~Puritan father, but again he was unusually gifted.

Chief Cloud Man was the son of a french noble man, but was the son of ~~one~~ a woman, a daughter of a most noted Mdewakan towan chief whose ~~received~~ father, also great chief, of the same tribe, receive the noted Jesuit Priest Hennepin and entertained him nearly three years.¹³

As I remember him, small as I was. Chief Cloud Man was very fine looking old. His hair was pure white, silky and wavy, altho he must have close to hundred years in 1862, he was active. He comes to my paternal grand mother's sugar camp, "to see little Hak a dah" that was childhood name. He had three daughters and two sons. Anpetu inajinwin ("The Day Sets" or "The Day Finishes"), Hanye tu kihn ayewin (Hushes-still-the-night) and Wakan inajin win (Stands Sacred, or Stands Holy, or Stands Mysteriously) but it was meant the first translation. The last is my grand mother. The[y] were all unusually beautiful and spirited ~~one~~ all of them married officers. The oldest left children. The second left one child, namely Mrs. Jennie Titus

~~what~~ who married a white man by the name Titus. She had three sons, Harry, Samuel, and Moses.¹⁴ The two latter were in banking business at Grand Forks, N.D. in early days. The other was farmer at Tracy, Minn. I do not know whether they are living.¹⁵ It appears that my mother had inherited french noble blood as she was also descended from the noblest blood America. She had the best cultural blood of both as well physical and mental gifts. As I said her humblest blood was the puritan from her father, but it was gifted and cultured.

On the other line—my father was also descended both sides long lines chiefs and great leaders. The happiest compliments that I ever received from any was Gen. Sibley and Gov. Alexander Ramsey, both said to me, “You have done well but you have nothing on your ancestors. We knew them for three generations a long line of great leaders and honor. You inherited some thing from them.”¹⁶

These lines are hastily written but essential and authentic account of the genealogy of my beloved mother whose spirited [*sic*] inspired in all endeavors, may assist you preparing your prose article on my mother. I assure you again my appreciation of your interest bringing the life of my mother before people. Her Indian name was Goddess, viz. Wakantankanwin, and her childhood or birth name was Winona. No other Sioux Woman ever was given that name, as far as tradition can tell, Because of her beauty of ~~and~~ body and soul.

I shall be here until this month, then I intend go back East. In fact, I am waiting for letters from the Brooks-Bryce Foundation of New York City, an organization for writing all the English speaking people for peace.¹⁷ They engaged me to speak for them in England and Scotland in all colleges and schools. If my health will permit I will go.

My warm regards—

Yours truly,

Charles Alexander Eastman
(Ohiyesa)

On the back of the last page, Louise Stegner's penciled note reads:

"original—
family history
Eastman"



F. B. Mayer, Winona (also know as Wakantankawin or Mary Nancy Eastman, mother of Charles Eastman). Sketchbook #41, July 28, 1851. Newberry Library, Edward E. Ayer Art Collection.

NOTES

This article is a substantially revised version of a draft previously published in *The Meeting Ground*, 41, 42, 43.

1. The letters are in Ayer Box MS 3064. Louise Stegner, niece of Hitchcock, sold the letters to the Newberry Library. She also sold to Yale University additional letters and papers of H. M. Hitchcock that pertain to Elaine Goodale Eastman, dated June 10 to November 17, 1935. They are in the Western Americana Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. Stegner's descriptive manuscript notes in pencil appear on both sets of letters and papers.

2. A version of this essay was published as "Exploring the Newberry's American Indian Collections: Charles Alexander Eastman's Letter to H.M. Hitchcock, 8 September 1927," *The Meeting Ground*, 42, 42, 43 (Fall 1999, Spring 2000, Fall/Winter 2000–01): 3–5. The editor inadvertently published an early and incomplete draft, rather than the final version. Both my name and my acknowledgement of the assistance of Professor Beatrice Medicine (Lakota) were omitted as well.

3. Hitchcock published in the *St. Anthony Review* an article on the Minnesota fur trade and another on "Minnesota's first farmers" at the missions on Lake Calhoun and Lac qui Parle. These appeared in two numbers of the December issue. The *Review* was a journal of the St. Anthony Commercial Club. Hitchcock also published an account of Father Hennepin and George Catlin in the February issue of the *Review* (*Minnesota History* 11 [1930]: 216). Hitchcock's article on the career of Charles Alexander Eastman, "An Indian Returns Home," appeared in the *Minneapolis Journal* on September 28, 1931 (*Minnesota History* 12 [1931]: 97). It was written in honor of Eastman's visit to Minneapolis during the celebration on October 12, 1930 of the 250th anniversary of Father Louis Hennepin's "discovery" of the Falls of St. Anthony (Raymond Wilson, *Ohiyesa, Charles Eastman, Santee Sioux* [Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983] 186).

4. *Native American Writers of the United States. Dictionary of Literary Biography*, ed. Kenneth M. Roemer (Detroit: Brucoli Clark Layman, Gale Research, 1997) 175:83.

5. Henderson wrote *Dakotah: Or, Life and Legends of the Sioux around Fort Snelling* (1849).

6. An earlier transcription of this letter appeared in "Additional Genealogical Notes Regarding the Ancestry of Dr. Charles A. Eastman, a Minnesota Mdewakanton Dakota," *Minnesota Archaeologist* 12.1 (January 1946): 7–11. This version inaccurately transcribes the Dakota names of some of Eastman's relatives; alters Eastman's paragraphing; supplies words for those Eastman omitted; and changes the author's sentence structure, capitalization, and spelling.

7. Frank Blackwell Mayer (1827–1899), a painter born in Baltimore, made a pencil drawing of "Winona" (Wakantawin or Mary Nancy Eastman).

8. Samuel Pond (1808–91) and his brother Gideon (1810–78) moved in 1834 from Connecticut to the Upper Mississippi, where they worked to convert the Sioux. They established missions at Lake Calhoun, Lake Harriet (both in present-day Minneapolis), and Lac qui Parle. The brothers labored to translate oral Dakota into a written language.

9. Lake Calhoun and Lake Harriet are located west of the Mississippi in western Minneapolis, Minnesota.

10. The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.

11. Stegner's marginal note identifies "She" as "his daughter."

12. Henry Hastings Sibley (1811–91) was a trader whose headquarters were at Mendota, Minnesota, across the Minnesota River at Fort Snelling. He became governor of Minnesota in 1857. During the 1862 Minnesota Uprising, he commanded the state militia, which defeated the Santee Dakota in the battle of Wood Lake on September 23. For this service, Abraham Lincoln made him a brigadier general.

13. Father Louis Hennepin (1640–after c.1701) was a Belgian-born, Franciscan missionary and explorer. Captured by the Mdewankanton Dakota on April 23, 1680, he was taken to their camp near Mille Lac in present-day Minnesota. He accompanied them on several hunting expeditions. After his rescue in July 1680, Father Hennepin published an account of his adventures in *Description de la Louisiane* (Paris, 1683). John Gilmary Shea translated the book into English: *A Description of Louisiana by Father Louis Hennepin*. (New York: John Gilmary Shea, 1880).

14. In a note above the names, Stegner identifies "Harry" as "Harlan" and "Samuel" as "Seymore."

15. Stegner's note in the space above this sentence reads "Moses & Harlan still living 10/19/35."

16. In 1849, Alexander Ramsey (1815–1903) became the first governor of the Minnesota Territory. Negotiator for the Sioux land cessions in 1851, Ramsey was elected governor in 1859. Later he became a U.S. senator and secretary of war under President Rutherford B. Hayes.

17. Eastman became a director of the Foundation, which Mrs. Florence Brooks-Aten established to foster good relations between English-speaking people in American and Great Britain. Among the other directors were the presidents of Yale University and the University of Virginia and Rear Admiral William S. Simms, U.S. Navy retired (Wilson 184–85).

Yellow Women and Leslie Marmon Silko's Feminism

LOUISE BARNETT

Mary Crow Dog in her memoir *Lakota Woman* admires in passing the lifestyle of the Pueblo Indians, who, unlike her own people, the Lakota Sioux, had not been uprooted and herded onto reservations. She writes, "I could not help noticing the great role women played in Pueblo society. Women owned the houses and actually built them. Children often got their mother's last name, not their father's. Some joined their mothers' clans" (106). This picture of female eminence is confirmed in Leslie Marmon Silko's essay "Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit," where she describes the building of houses Crow Dog refers to:

One of my most vivid preschool memories is of the crew of Laguna women, in their forties and fifties, who came to cover our house with adobe plaster. They handled the ladders with great ease, and while two women ground the mud on stones and added straw, another woman loaded the hod with mud and passed it up to the two women on ladders, who were smoothing the plaster on the walls with their hands. Since women owned the houses, they did the plastering. (*Yellow Woman* 66)¹

Silko concludes this passage with the assertion that "because the Creator is female, there is no stigma on being female; gender is not used to control behavior. No job was a man's job or a woman's job; the most able person did the work" (*Yellow Woman* 66). She notes that she never heard the expression "women's work" until she left her Pueblo com-

munity for college. On the contrary, Silko remembers her Grandma Lily always fixing broken lamps and appliances.

In Silko's description a liberating fluidity of identity seems to have characterized the pre-Columbian Pueblo people and to have continued to some extent into her own twentieth-century experience. Rigidity of gender categorization arrived with the Christian missionaries, ending an Edenic era in which "a man could dress as a woman and work with the women and even marry a man," while "a woman was free to dress like a man, to hunt and go to war with the men, and to marry a woman. . . . Marriage did not mean an end to sex with people other than your spouse" (*Yellow Woman* 67). Nor did paternity matter since "children belonged to the mother and her clan, and women owned and bequeathed the houses and farmland" (*Yellow Woman* 68).²

Since the clan was a close-knit group, united by blood and community, children might be redistributed within it from women who had unplanned pregnancies to women who were barren. As in European peasant societies, women in Pueblo cultures were prized more for their ability to cope with a strenuous life than for physical beauty. But more than this, Pueblo women had always had one of the freedoms that Euroamerican feminism sought, that of abolishing gender as a qualification for occupation. The nineteenth-century American feminist Margaret Fuller proclaimed that "we would have every path laid open to woman as freely as to man" (260), a goal that remained central to twentieth-century feminism.

If Silko's own experience growing up in a twentieth-century pueblo provided an egalitarian view of gender as a matter of course, Pueblo religion reinforced the idea of a female creative principle that actively contributed to the well-being of the people through such female deities as Thought Woman, Spider Woman, Corn Mother, and others. Not surprisingly, given the shaping attitudes of Pueblo culture toward gender, the mythic female figure of Kochininako, Yellow Woman, is Silko's professed favorite.³ Yellow Woman in old Pueblo tales is both heroic and sexual, that is, she protects the Pueblos with her heroism and also with her uninhibited sexuality, which affirms the life force of nature. Like Maxine Hong Kingston's woman warrior,

Yellow Woman often assumes a role traditionally associated with men, exhibiting courage in the wider world reserved for male action. At the same time she embodies an aggressive sexuality, also considered male, but with a traditional object of female desire—"a strong, sexy man" (*Yellow Woman* 70). The Yellow Women tales, which generally have these two components, are female fantasies in which the wider sphere of male activity and the admired qualities related to it are appropriated by the woman and her desire for sexual freedom given voice. In the Yellow Woman tale told in Silko's essay, Yellow Woman saves the Pueblos from starving and acquires the "strong, sexy man" as her mate. She becomes the fearless, triumphant woman, an ideal mixture of male and female qualities. She is also the perfect representation of feminism in Silko's texts, the union of personal independence, sexual freedom, and heroic endeavor for the community at large.

Silko admits that as a girl she identified with Yellow Woman and "depended" on her in moments of discouragement. In the Pueblo spirit of creating stories to help oneself (and others) be strong, Silko has written of Yellow Woman again and again. Many of her positive women characters are recognizable as versions of Yellow Woman—a woman courageous in the service of her people and usually achieving success through sexuality rather than destruction.⁴ She adopts the male role of protecting the community but does so through her female nature.

Silko's essay on Yellow Woman may be considered an after-the-fact summation of ideas about a character who had already received embodiment in her fiction and poetry. Early on Silko seems to have tried out different versions of Yellow Woman, some mythic and others contemporary—all indicating her fascination with the permutations of the Yellow Woman role. *Storyteller* contains texts openly based on popular Keresan myths and texts in which some germ of mythic content is transformed into a modern experience.⁵ The common denominator of the Yellow Woman retellings seems to be escape from the narrow life of the feminine domestic world. In "Cottonwood *Part One: Story of Sun House*," the woman who leaves

walked past white corn
 hung in low rows from roof beams
 the dry husks rattled in a thin autumn wind. (*Storyteller* 64)

In the season of winter this crop, so central and symbolic in Pueblo life, seems to press down on her from the roof, not as an image of abundance and nurturance but of the very lack of these qualities, inscribed in “dry” and “thin.” To rejoin Sun she is willing to leave everything behind—home, clan, family. The speaker of the poem intimates that this is a story “about drastic things which / must be done / for the world / to continue” (65), yet at the same time the protagonist’s choice does not appear to be a sacrifice: Yellow Woman wants to be with Sun. Satisfying her desire for someone other than her husband turns out to be beneficial to the world and to have no negative consequences.

The more complicated narrative of the companion poem, “Cottonwood *Part Two: Buffalo Story*,” establishes the conjunction of heroic action, transgressive sexuality, and death. Instead of experiencing mere seasonal change, the country is stricken by drought. Yellow Woman begins as the familiar domestic figure, a wife and mother seeking water for her family—a quest that carries her far from home into the land of the buffalos. Here she meets the “very beautiful” Buffalo Man and, half-willingly, accompanies him back to his people. Her husband’s journey to bring her back and subsequent killing of the Buffalo People is a story designed to explain how Pueblo hunters first went to the plains to get buffalo meat. Yellow Woman has made this possible: her affair is a means of renewing the community through a “liaison with outside forces” (Ruoff 73), but because she has committed herself to the stranger, her husband kills her—in keeping with several Yellow Woman tales. Here and in the poem about Yellow Woman’s encounter with the giant, or *Estrucuyu*, Silko’s narrative follows a well-known story.⁶

The first verse of *Storytelling*, a series of partial stories on the Yellow Woman theme, begins with a statement that links past and present, myth and reality:

You should understand
 the way it was
 back then,
 because it is the same
 even now. (94)

This assertion may cast doubt back onto the past as much as it provides a pattern for present-day action. In each brief example it would seem that the protagonist is a poor storyteller, unable to successfully link her experience to the high plane of Yellow Woman. Perhaps at the time they evolved, the Yellow Women myths had the same suspect origins as the contemporary stories.

Silko is drawn to an exercise of sexuality on the part of Yellow Woman that plays out as comedy more than tragedy. *Storytelling* is a collection of narratives on the theme of liberating female sexuality, the first of which might be thought of as a mythic epigraph establishing the primal scene of encounter between a woman and a mysterious stranger. It goes no further than Yellow Woman's act of leaving with Buffalo Man, who uses no coercion on her.⁷ Her question to Buffalo Man, "But where shall I put my water jar?" can be construed as asking him how to extricate herself from her domestic identity. In abandoning her water jar she willingly renounces her responsibilities as a wife and member of the community. The decision may seem impulsive, but the careful placement of the jar manifests a valuing of the identity it symbolizes.

The remaining sections of the poem are fragments of modern stories that all concern some act of sexual transgression. The strongest story, the one with the best chance of satisfying an outraged husband, would require that the woman had been kidnapped or forced, but this would also deprive her of the agency that Silko has found so appealing in the Yellow Woman myths. Mothers and husbands want such stories, stories that minimize deviancy and restore the errant woman to the community. The media, on the other hand, prefers sensationalism, multiplying the number of women and casting them as abductors of men. The woman who says "it's always happening to me" (Silko, *Storyteller* 97) encourages the men from Cubero, while the

speaker of the final section makes up a poor story to explain her absence. If she is the wife of the man who demands a "damn good story" earlier in the poem, her excuse that the roads were impassable for the entire ten months she has been gone is not believable—as she herself knows. The feeble story may be an intentional act rather than just a clumsy performance, the threat of the "tall good-looking" Navajo to kill her merely a device to preserve her husband's pride. The speaker's lack of regret, coupled with her ineffective story, reveals that she is unwilling to disavow her experience and resume her old life.

Silko's story "Yellow Woman" is still another and more elaborate rendering of the mythic figure as primarily a transgressive wife. As Lavonne Ruoff observes, "One of the themes of the story is the power which physical sensations and desire have to blot out thought of home, family, and responsibility" (75). But however compelling the sensuous texture of the prose, the narrative is curiously different from the inspiring myths that Silko loved as a child. In Helen Jaskoski's words, "*Yellow Woman* has elements of a romantic idyll, yet even within its erotic escape there may be unpleasant contact, full of misunderstanding and the potential for violence" ("To Tell a Good Story" 96). The woman has an adventure, but like the figures in *Storytelling* she may merely be a wife who runs off with a stranger, one who may be a thief and a murderer. Her relation to Yellow Woman, as Silva's to the katsina, is ambiguous.⁸ During the episode she is dominated by him, and afterward, she returns to a domestic life that is comforting but humdrum. Without enthusiasm she will reinsert herself in this world, but she knows that it could get along without her: her mother and grandmother raising the baby, her husband finding someone new, her absence satisfactorily explained by a story. Instead of the Yellow Woman myth, which she embraces, she will substitute for her family something banal and naturalistic—Navajo kidnapping. This false story deprives her of volition and transforms the positive experience of her time with Silva into an unlooked for ordeal. Yet the world in which she lived with Silva was problematic, its positive qualities of sexual satisfaction and freedom undercut by its transience and Silva's strangeness.

Was this, as the woman imagines, a true Yellow Woman story? The

narrative leaves it unresolved, but one possibility is that, as in the scenarios of *Storytelling*, the myth is a convenient label for the woman to impose upon an otherwise reprehensible adventure. The appeal of Yellow Woman, Silva suggests to the speaker, is to be a larger-than-life character in a mythic story as opposed to the real protagonist of a mundane occurrence—the account of her disappearance that would be constructed if she failed to return. The most important part of the mythic Yellow Woman story, the part that Ruoff observes transformed sexual transgression into heroism (73), has been lost in the modern context. This may explain the protagonist's desire to give greater meaning to her adventure by attaching it to the Yellow Woman story. In *Almanac of the Dead* and *Gardens in the Dunes* the mature Silko will condemn this kind of narcissistic freedom, cut off from larger significance, as characteristic of the dominant culture.

Though diminished to an impulsive sexual liaison, Yellow Woman has that quality of female independence that Silko extols in Pueblo culture in contrast to the mores of middle-class America. The woman is perturbed neither about her sexual adventure nor about the lie she intends to tell when she returns home. Here and in the poem *Storytelling*, the insistence on a link with the past may be the protagonist's self-serving attempt to ennoble her action, or more generously, an effort to create meaning.

The cluster of Yellow Woman narratives in *Storyteller* reflect Silko's youth as a writer. As she told some interviewers, her teenage wish was to encounter unexpectedly "some beautiful man" around a bend of the river near her home: "Later on I realized that these kinds of things that I was doing when I was fifteen are exactly the kinds of things out of which stories like the Yellow Woman story [came]. I finally put the two together: the adolescent longings and the old stories" (qtd. in Evers and Carr 29). But what she emphasized at first in her contemporary adaptations of the Yellow Woman myth, as opposed to her retellings of them as myths, was only a part of the story, the "adolescent longings" embodied in the idea of sexual freedom.

The Yellow Woman in Silko's 1977 novel *Ceremony* is the more complex figure of the complete myth, who combines sexual freedom with heroic action. Where the protagonist of the story "Yellow Woman" is a

passive adjunct to Silva's actions, Ts'eh, *Ceremony's* Yellow Woman, plays an active role. She has corralled Tayo's cattle and will take good care of them while he goes to get a truck to transport them. But when he returns, she is gone. Tayo will find Ts'eh again in the summer, and only then does she tell him her name. She claims to have siblings in the area, but he has never heard of her family. Later, after they have spent the summer together, immersed in the world of nature in which she collects medicinal plants, Tayo realizes something about her identity that is not explicitly stated: "He could feel where she had come from, and he understood where she would always be" (230).

Ts'eh is in fact not only Yellow Woman but also the author stepping into the narrative and revealing the general shape of the novel's conclusion. She alerts Tayo to the competing forces that are attempting to control the story: "They were coming to end it their way" (235). She tells him, "They want it to end here, the way all their stories end, encircling slowly to choke the life away. The violence of the struggle excites them, and the killing soothes them" (231–32). Emo and his followers are coming for Tayo, to destroy him, but they are only tools of the white world, unconscious incarnations of the Indian scouts and police who chose the white side in the nineteenth century. Ts'eh is given the long speech explaining to Tayo what has been scripted by the dominant culture: "They would end this story right here, with you fighting to your death alone in these hills" (232).

Thus, Yellow Woman has not only physically aided Tayo by saving his cattle and emotionally aided him by breaking down his isolation with her passionate lovemaking, her intellectual grasp of things has also saved his life by explaining the situation he is in, both microcosmic and macrocosmic. She prepares him for the final confrontation with evil in which, with the understanding she has given him, he will write a new ending to the story, one of survival rather than death. Because of Ts'eh's help, Tayo does survive, and with him the hope of his community's generation of young people. When it was over, Tayo "thought of her then; she had always loved him, she had never left him; she had always been there" (255). The reference isn't clear. It seems to be Ts'eh, but he has just been thinking about nature: "We came out of this land," he thinks, "and we are hers" (255). Ts'eh and

nature have become indistinguishable. Living away from any community and in tune with the natural world, she represents the traditional harmony between human beings and their physical environment.

The Yellow Woman of *Ceremony* is a modern reshaping of the mythic figure. It is as if Silko acknowledges on the more ambitious terrain of the novel that for our time the heroic woman will use intellectual resources rather than arrows to save her people. This version of Yellow Woman is more like the powerful mythic figure than the limited Yellow Woman of "Yellow Woman" and *Storytelling*. In those texts sexuality is the major issue, the fantasy of escaping marital routine with an attractive stranger.

In her later novels Silko has continued to create versions of Yellow Woman like Ts'eh that reflect her own concept of feminism—the combination of female strength, independence, and sexuality. Her idea of Yellow Woman as a fictive character seems to have evolved from the early figures in *Storyteller*, who emphasize sexuality, to Ts'eh, who is both mistress and guide, to Tayo and on to those women of *Almanac of the Dead* and *Gardens in the Dunes* who foreground heroic action in contrast to the white women in these texts.

Almanac is too large to discuss comprehensively as part of this spectrum, but since it is the most overtly political of Silko's novels, it is not surprising that it contains Indian women committed to revolution who are reminiscent of Yellow Woman. Angelita, La Escapia, is the most militant, the top graduate of her class at the Marxist school and utterly devoted to the restoration of Indian ownership of the Americas. She both affirms her sexual independence and downplays it: "What about her and that white man, Bartolomeo? To questions about her sexual conduct, Angelita was quick to laugh and make jokes. Sex with the Cuban was no big thing" (317). More than "no big thing," it completely lacks the sensuous description of sex between Ts'eh and Tayo in *Ceremony*. Angelita commodifies Bartolomeo both sexually and politically, then willingly condemns him to death for crimes against tribal histories.

The sexual relationship between the Indian leader El Feo and Angelita is unique in the novel because his attraction to her is based

on her power. She openly claims the role of revolutionary leader, a Yellow Woman with a clear sense of communal purpose. "Luckily," Silko writes, "El Feo had never been jealous" (523). He can accept Angelita on her own sexual terms. And like Ts'eh, she is also identified with the earth: "He imagined the warmth of the darkest, deepest forest in an early-summer rain; he imagined he was burying himself deeper and deeper into the core of the earth" (522).

Angelita's combination of Yellow Woman qualities—untrammelled sexuality, earth-centeredness, and heroic action—provides an antitype to the white women of *Almanac*, all mired in an artificial, sterile, and narcissistic culture, corrupted and corrupting.

In *Gardens in the Dunes*, Silko extols the same qualities of Indian culture described in her essays. She writes that

the old-time Sand Lizard people believed sex with strangers was advantageous because it created a happy atmosphere to benefit commerce and exchange with strangers. . . . Any babies born from these unions were named "friend," "peace," and "unity"; they loved these babies just as fiercely as they loved all their Sand Lizard babies. (220)

Sister Salt, one of the Sand Lizard Indians, "took her choice of the men willing to pay a dime for fun in the tall grass along the river." Like El Feo, her African American boyfriend doesn't mind. Silko describes his rather unlikely attitude in this way: "Her body belonged to her—it was none of his business" (220).

Although Sister Salt does not know who the father of her unborn baby is, in keeping with Silko's representation of Pueblo society, she is unperturbed. Regardless of his paternity, the baby will be a Sand Lizard, assimilated into his mother's culture. It might seem that Sister Salt is merely another version of the woman in *Storytelling* whose liberation has been reduced to promiscuity, but she is actually a more subtle form of Yellow Woman heroine: under the difficult conditions of life for the Indians, her survival and reproduction are both willed and heroic. Unlike Angelita, she does not arrive at the truth through intellectualizing; she acts instinctively in keeping with traditional imperatives. Moreover, when she steps forward and spits in the face of a

white man, her action is invested with symbolic meaning. This man's unwitting presence has brought the police to disrupt a gathering of Indians who are performing the Ghost Dance. In choosing the in-offensive, liberal Mr. Abbott as the recipient of this gesture of contempt, rather than some stronger or more negative figure of white authority, Silko emphasizes that all whites, however beneficent and well intentioned, are disruptive to the Indian world.

Gardens contrasts the practical feminism of Sister Salt, who reproduces and returns to her ancestral lands, with the cerebral and ultimately futile independence of Hattie, the white protagonist. When she is first introduced, Hattie is studying the male discipline of theology at Harvard, which she has scandalized by asserting that Jesus had women disciples and Mary Magdalene wrote a gospel suppressed by the church. Her thesis is unanimously rejected by her committee, and in the aftermath of disappointment and aimlessness she marries Edward Palmer. While Sister Salt and the other Indian women bend their efforts toward survival and sexual pleasure without depending upon or subordinating themselves to men, Hattie lives a stifling and sexless existence as Edward's wife; her husband's energies are devoted to acquisition. Kind and caring as Hattie is, she is out of place and hence superfluous. After her husband's death, Hattie wishes to remain near Indigo, the young Sand Lizard girl she has befriended, but she is robbed and nearly killed. In her desire to help the Indians she has only made things worse: the white community that has united to protect the real assailant blames "some Indian" for the attack on Hattie. In a gesture reminiscent of Henry James exiling his transgressive characters to America, Silko exiles Hattie *from* America. Her intellectual feminism, such as it was, is neither useful nor valuable, to herself or to others.⁹

Hattie means well, but she lacks a program to actualize her liberal ideas beyond circumscribed individual initiatives. When her research on Mary Magdalene, which might have led to a more overtly feminist stance, is invalidated by the patriarchal establishment, she is left adrift. Because the dominant culture has no mythic roots in North America, and the self-indulgence its materialism promotes deprives sexual behavior of meaning, white women lack the qualities that have

attracted Silko to Yellow Woman over the course of her career: the strong will and daring imagination that can overcome convention to produce a powerful gesture of individual sexual assertion or heroic action for the community. Yellow Woman as a mythic being is exceptional in these respects, yet the very name, as Paula Gunn Allen observes, "is in some sense a name that means Woman-Woman because among the Keres, yellow is the color for women" (226).¹⁰ Yellow Woman, then, represents a female potential that, when actualized, creates the practical feminist values of personal and societal achievement.

While Silko is didactic politically in her novels, she has not been interested in preaching in her fiction about feminism. Nevertheless, *Gardens in the Dunes* illustrates a complete paradigm of Silko's idea of feminism. Although *Ceremony* contains a full and thoughtfully evolved figure of Yellow Woman, exemplary of feminist principles in her behavior, only *Gardens* systematically poses such an Indian character against a white woman in order to show the superiority of a social organization grounded in the female role. This is the same way of life admired so much by Mary Austin early in the twentieth century, a world that had "no institutionalized orphans, no mothers of dependent children penalized by their widowhood, no one pining for a mate, who wished to be married" (244). Austin concludes, "Over all the inestimable treasure of their culture lie our ignorance and self-conceit as a gray dust" (244-45). In her last novel Silko has dramatized this very contrast.

NOTES

1. Babcock reproduces an Edward S. Curtis photo of women replastering a house at Laguna in 1925 (Parsons, *Pueblo Mothers* 68).

2. A number of historical and anthropological sources generally support Silko's description of Pueblo culture and gender behavior. See in particular Gutiérrez, who cites early Spanish sources; Jacobs; and Eggan. With varying attitudes, most observers have been struck by the greater power of women in the Pueblo culture than in Western patriarchal societies.

3. Kochininako is Silko's spelling of the Keresan name. The Yellow

Woman tales have been collected in numerous places, notably in Boas and in Parsons, *Pueblo Indian Religion*. Allen (222–44) and Ruoff have illuminating analyses of the genre. My view of Silko's relation to these tales is the same as Per Seyersted's, namely, that Silko does not rely on anthropological accounts but on her own experience of these tales growing up in Laguna. Moreover, "she is an artist who wants to apply her imagination to the telling of tales" (Seyersted 16).

4. In *Almanac of the Dead* Angelita participates in liberated sex and violence, an indication that the warrior dimension of the myth is necessary to women in the late-twentieth-century world.

5. In her later novels Silko has moved away from the overt introduction of mythic material into the narrative that occurs in *Ceremony*.

6. In Boas (127–30), Yellow Woman's opponent is a giantess. Silko's giant is similar to "the predatory, cannibalistic, cave-dwelling giant . . . [whose] footprints were left in the rocks" (Parsons, *Pueblo Indian Religion* 2: 1122n).

7. Hirsch describes *Storytelling* as "six brief vignettes based on the abduction motif of the traditional Yellow Woman stories" (163). But Silko suggests that abduction is a convenient fiction for her protagonists rather than the truth.

8. Jaskoski links Silva with the mythic figures of the "Cottonwood" poems, Sun and Arrow-Boy, but concedes that no identification can be definitively established—or ruled out (*Leslie Marmon Silko* 35).

9. Other than Hattie, Silko has not created white characters who are identifiable as feminists.

10. Cf. Boas, who observes that "generically the girl heroes of all stories are called Yellow-Woman" (259).

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The Queen Writes Back

Lili‘uokalani’s *Hawaii’s Story by Hawaii’s Queen*

LYDIA KUALAPAI

Minamina ka leo o ke ali‘i i ka hā‘ule i ka pūweuweu.

A pity to allow the words of the chief to fall among the clumps of grass.

Mary Kawena Pukui, *‘Ōlelo No‘eau*

In January 1898, six months prior to the U.S. annexation of the Hawaiian Islands, Queen Lili‘uokalani (1838–1917) published *Hawaii’s Story by Hawaii’s Queen* and thus emerged from the period’s turmoil as a remarkable literary figure and a farsighted political strategist. Through her memoir, the queen writes back to her critics, to her political enemies, and to the scores of U.S. missionaries and missionary descendants who had denigrated Native Hawaiians throughout the nineteenth century. Visually, the book’s design challenges the U.S. cultural imagination and its colonial construction of the Hawaiian nation. Rhetorically, the narrative opens a discursive space wherein Hawaiian subject formation reflects an ongoing response to ancestral tradition and contemporary catalysts. Politically, the text preserves the ancestral link fundamental to Hawaiian identity and denounces the colonial attempt to appropriate and reconstitute “Hawaiian” subjectivity. Moreover, the queen’s narrative affirms Hawaiian sovereignty, denounces U.S. colonialism, and condemns annexation as a violent assault on the principles of self-government. Examined through its own cultural, material, and political frame of production, *Hawaii’s Story by Hawaii’s*

Queen comes forward not only as the historical foundation for the 1993 U.S. congressional apology to the Hawaiian people but as a timely and constructive strategy for a newly restored Hawaiian nation.

As an *ali'i nui* (high chief), Lili'u Kamaka'eha Pākī's life was shaped by the political influences of the day. Designated heir apparent in 1877 by her brother, King David Kalākaua, and renamed "Princess Liliuokalani," the future queen readily assumed the private and public obligations of office and embraced the daily responsibilities of court life. She officiated as regent in Kalākaua's absence, directed the Hawaiian entourage at Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee, initiated programs to improve Native Hawaiian healthcare and education, and served as the king's liaison with visiting international dignitaries. When Kalākaua died in January 1891, Lili'uokalani inherited a crown already severely undermined by a select group of U.S. missionary descendants, denizen industrialists, and sugar investors. In 1887 this "missionary party," threatened by Kalākaua's popularity and frustrated by his increasing political influence in the Pacific, staged a violent legislative coup, forcing the king to accept a constitution diverting power from the crown to the party-controlled cabinet.¹ Moreover, by attaching property qualifications to voting privileges and reducing the qualifying "resident" definition to three years, the new constitution shifted political dominance from Native Hawaiians to U.S., British, and German colonists, a group that amounted to less than 5 percent of Hawai'i's total population. This "Bayonet Constitution" was still in place when Lili'uokalani took the oath of office on January 29. Two years later, on January 17, 1893, having learned that the queen planned to promulgate a new constitution restoring Native Hawaiian political control, the same anti-royalist colonials who had earlier crippled Kalākaua's court deposed the queen, abrogated the monarchy, and proclaimed themselves the "Provisional Government of the Hawaiian Islands." The singular objective for this interim administration was U.S. annexation. A detailed look at the overthrow and the subsequent events leading to the publication of *Hawaii's Story* is essential in understanding the queen's political goals in writing and publishing her memoir.

FEARFUL SYMMETRY: CONTEXTUALIZING THE FRAME OF
PRODUCTION

On January 14, 1893, John L. Stevens, the U.S. foreign minister to Hawai'i—an outspoken expansionist and anti-royalist—conspired with the missionary party to depose the queen and overthrow the monarchy. Two days later, in a breach of his diplomatic authority and in violation of international law, he authorized Capt. Gilbert C. Wiltse, commander of the battleship USS *Boston*, “to land marines and sailors . . . to secure the safety of American life and property,” that is, to secure the safety of American citizens in their overthrow of the Hawaiian government (S. Rept. 2169).² The following day, January 17, the *Boston's* battalion stood by while insurgents proclaimed the establishment of the Provisional Government, deposed the queen, and began the task of politically dismantling the kingdom.³ The insurgents, distracted by their immediate need to establish military control over Honolulu's government buildings, underestimated Lili'uokalani's political resolve and resourcefulness. Avoiding what she believed would be a futile military engagement against the *Boston's* battalion, and averting any reckless response that might legitimize the overthrow, the queen yielded under protest not to the counterfeit “Provisional Government” but to the “superior force of the United States of America.” Inasmuch as the United States had recognized Hawai'i's independence since 1826, Lili'uokalani felt confident that the kingdom's ally would promptly “undo . . . the action of its representative” and reinstate her “as the constitutional sovereign of the Hawaiian Islands” (S. Rept. 1040–41). This first protest, along with subsequent protest letters to both President Benjamin Harrison and President-elect Grover Cleveland, seriously undermined the Provisional Government's reception in Washington. More importantly, the queen's protests checked the momentum of the so-called Hawaiian Revolution. For Lili'uokalani, discourse thus became a practice in resistance.⁴

The early months following the overthrow were pivotal both to the political status of the monarchy and to the frame of production from which *Hawaii's Story* emerged. On January 18, one day after the overthrow, the Provisional Government's annexation commissioners

sailed for San Francisco, en route to Washington, DC, aboard the chartered *Claudine*, a steamer owned by Hawai'i shipping magnate William C. Wilder. Wilder, along with Lorrin A. Thurston, William R. Castle, Charles L. Carter, and Joseph Marsden formed the five-member commission. In his January 19 dispatch to Secretary of State John W. Foster, Stevens noted with pride that the "commissioners represent a large preponderating proportion of the property holders and commercial interests of these islands" (S. Rept. 1028). With the exception of Marsden, they also represent the most powerful missionary families in Hawai'i. By chartering the *Claudine*, the only ship leaving Hawai'i for the next two weeks, and denying passage to the queen's envoys, the annexation commission reached Washington on February 3, two weeks earlier than the queen's agents. In those two weeks, the commissioners and U.S. Secretary of State John W. Foster wrote a treaty of annexation, signed it, and submitted it to the Senate for ratification on February 15.⁵ Had everything proceeded according to the commission's plan, the Senate would have approved the treaty before the queen's envoys—and the queen's version of the "revolution"—reached Washington. But the Senate, despite President Harrison's urging, was not about to pass the treaty prior to a full investigation of U.S. involvement in the overthrow. When Lili'uokalani's representatives, attorney Paul Neumann and Prince David Kawanakakoa, arrived in Washington on February 17, the treaty was stalled. The arrival of the queen's agents proved pivotal in generating popular support for the queen's cause and raising critical questions concerning the role Minister Stevens had played in overthrowing the peaceful government of a U.S. ally. By the end of February, time had run out on President Harrison's term in office, and congressional interest in a quick treaty was dead.

President Cleveland was in office less than a week when he withdrew the annexation treaty from the Senate and, on the advice of Secretary of State Walter Q. Gresham, dispatched Georgia Congressman James H. Blount to Honolulu to investigate "the present status of affairs in that country." More specifically, Blount's instructions authorized him to investigate three points of U.S. interest: "the causes of the revolution by which the queen's Government was overthrown,

the sentiment of the people toward existing authority, and, in general, all that can fully enlighten the President" (S. Rept. 1275). The final point refers obliquely to Minister Stevens's role in the overthrow and his unauthorized deployment of U.S. troops.

Blount arrived in Honolulu on March 29; for the next five months he interviewed both royalists and reformers (that is, supporters of the Provisional Government); recorded their testimonies and received their affidavits; researched the social, political, and economic affairs of the Hawaiian Islands; and monitored the political climate. He responded to the three points of inquiry in his July 17, 1893, letter of summation to Gresham (S. Rept. 1375–81). As to the cause of the revolution, Blount's findings refute the reformers' superficial claims of bad government and expose the underlying "racial controversy [that] had reached striking proportions and powerfully acted in the evolution of grave political events culminating in the present status" (S. Rept. 1381). The reformers' ambition had for some time, according to Blount, been firmly seated in an emphatic, racist dictum: "The native is unfit for government and his power must be curtailed" (S. Rept. 1382). As to the second point of inquiry, Blount's conclusions are indisputable: if annexation were submitted to a popular vote in the Hawaiian Islands it would be soundly defeated. He further adds that the "undoubted sentiment of the people is for the queen, against the Provisional Government and against annexation." "A majority of the whites," he adds, "are for annexation" (S. Rept. 1407). As for Minister Stevens, Blount held him responsible for causing the U.S. to violate the sovereignty of the Hawaiian nation: "The leaders of the revolutionary movement would not have undertaken it but for Mr. Stevens's promise to protect them against any danger from the [Hawaiian] Government. . . . Had the troops not been landed, no measures for the organization of a new Government would have been taken." He concludes that the "American minister and the revolutionary leaders had determined on annexation to the United States, and had agreed on the part each was to act to the very end" (S. Rept. 1402).

On October 18, in response to Blount's investigation, Gresham recommended to Cleveland that the "abuse of the authority of the United States be undone by restoring the legitimate government."

“Anything short of that,” he advised, “will not satisfy the demands of justice” (S. Rept. 1271). The same day, Gresham commissioned Albert S. Willis to relieve Blount at Honolulu and to negotiate the restoration. Two months later, at a critical point in the mission, Cleveland’s message to Congress exposed the administration’s dangerously naive understanding of the situation:

I instructed Minister Willis to advise the Queen and her supporters of my desire to aid in the restoration of the status existing before the lawless landing of the United States forces at Honolulu on the 16th of January last, if such restoration could be effected upon terms providing for . . . general amnesty to those concerned in setting up the provisional government and a recognition of all its *bona fide* acts and obligations. In short, they require that the past should be buried, and that the restored Government should reassume its authority as if its continuity had not been interrupted. (S. Rept. 1266)

The past, of course, cannot be buried. The overthrow had changed the social and political environment in the Islands, and Cleveland’s failure to deal effectively with those changes resulted in a diplomatic disaster at Honolulu.

Unlike Blount, Willis was neither a skilled nor perceptive diplomat; on the other hand, he was charged with an impossible task. To remedy the wrong, he must nullify the Provisional Government and restore the queen without the use of force. More specifically, he must convince the queen to exempt the traitors from prosecution, and he must convince the Provisional Government and its supporters to give up their ruling authority, their international recognition, and all the honors, appointments, and privileges that their brief tenure had conferred.

In the first case, it was not easy to persuade Lili‘uokalani to accept a general amnesty. She informed Willis during their first meeting (November 13) that treason was a capital offense punishable by death and confiscation of property.⁶ By the end of this meeting, according to Willis’s November 16 letter to Gresham, the queen was willing to consider banishment as an alternative to capital punishment; more-

over, she had made it clear that she had no legal authority to issue a “royal proclamation” of general amnesty (S. Rept. 2088). In the month that followed, rather than cultivating the ground gained, Willis avoided the queen and her representatives, which, as it turns out, was a crucial lapse in judgment. Gresham, in the meantime, grew frustrated with Willis’s ineffectiveness and reprimanded the minister for the “brevity and uncertainty” of his “embarrassing” telegrams. “You will,” Gresham admonished him by telegram dated November 24, “insist upon amnesty and recognition of obligations of the Provisional Government as essential conditions of restoration. All interests will be promoted by *prompt action*” (S. Rept. 1999; emphasis added). Despite Gresham’s censure, which Willis had received by December 5, the minister did not schedule a second conference with the queen until December 16. At this meeting, Lili‘uokalani rescinded her position on the death penalty but stood firm on permanent banishment and confiscation of property (S. Rept. 2110). Two days later, at the queen’s behest, not Willis’s, the discussion continued at Washington Place, her private residence. Little was accomplished during this morning session; the queen remained firm in her judgment that “peace and good government can not prevail” so long as the conspirators remained in the country. Moreover, she would not reaccept the Bayonet Constitution but would replace it with one “more suited to the future” (S. Rept. 2113). Before he left the meeting the minister repeated his instructions: unless the queen met the president’s non-negotiable terms, the administration would “cease interference in her behalf” (S. Rept. 2114).⁷ In the early evening of the same day, Willis received a formal letter from the queen agreeing to President Cleveland’s terms: if restored as the constitutional sovereign of the Hawaiian Islands, she would grant complete amnesty, reinstate the Bayonet Constitution, and assume the accumulated debt of the Provisional Government (S. Rept. 2115–16). The first step toward restoration was thus accomplished, but the minister had taken far too long in securing the queen’s guarantees. His inability to communicate persuasively the diplomatic objectives to the queen and his unwillingness to mediate her initial—and predictable—response were costly and avoidable mistakes. Willis, for reasons unknown, was content to operate within

the most narrowly defined limits of his instructions. As such, he failed to follow Gresham's overriding paradigm: to be guided largely by his own good judgment.

The next step, convincing the Provisional Government to resign its authority, was fatally compromised by Willis's failure to negotiate early and openly with its leaders. When he arrived in Honolulu on November 4, he was determined to avoid diplomatic discussion with the Provisional Government until he had secured the queen's guarantee of amnesty. During the one-month lag between Willis's first and second meeting with the queen, Gresham's October 18, 1893, letter to Cleveland advising restoration had appeared in U.S. newspapers; when it reached Honolulu newspapers on November 24, the reformers realized for the first time that Willis was working to dissolve their government and to restore the queen. The Provisional Government and its supporters were outraged. A mass protest meeting staged the following night in Honolulu was attended by more than twelve hundred men with "feelings strung up to the highest pitch of excitement." The meeting's political rhetoric reflects more than simply a visceral response to the recent news: it lays bare the imperialist ideology fueling the overthrow and the push for annexation. Francis M. Hatch, president of the Annexation Club and the opening speaker, reminded his "fellow citizens" that "Liliuokalani had violated the constitution; had thrown it to the dogs, and had put herself beyond the pale and protection of the law" (S. Rept. 2095); William R. Castle, annexation commissioner, first-generation missionary descendant, and member of the Provisional Government's advisory council, spoke of a distant future when "the native population of Hawaii . . . will thank God that there were people willing to risk their lives, their property, their all to establish in Hawaii true liberty" (S. Rept. 2095); Col. Zephaniah S. Spalding, former U.S. consul to Honolulu and a leading sugar planter, proclaimed that the United States, by the "precepts of her missionaries [and] the rainfall of her financial benefits . . . has enabled us to change the barren hillsides into productive fields" (S. Rept. 2098); and Albert F. Judd, chief justice of the Supreme Court and first-generation missionary descendant, staked a deep colonial claim: "I am a Hawaiian. . . . I was born in this country. I love this country. It is my

country, and it is the ‘garden of the gods’” (S. Rept. 2099). Before the evening was over, William G. Smith, editor of the annexationist *Honolulu Star* newspaper and a self-professed “newcomer” to the Islands, advocated militant resistance: “if we are dispossessed, . . . it must be by the armed forces of the United States” (S. Rept. 2100); and Peter Cushman Jones, an executive council member, settled any doubt as to the government’s position: “Grover Cleveland stands impeached before the American colony of Hawaii . . .” (S. Rept. 2101).

Privately, the executive council was split on just how far the government should go in resisting the United States in its attempt to restore the queen. The conservative members advocated increased fortifications but would not authorize an armed engagement against U.S. troops; the radicals, including the Citizen Guards militia, clamored for a full-scale military engagement (Russ 240–42). Cleveland and Gresham had seriously misjudged the temperament of the Provisional Government. Their plan to restore the queen through peaceful negotiation was doomed to failure.

Three weeks later, on the afternoon of December 19, Willis finally delivered to Sanford Dole and the Provisional Government ministers a memorandum summarizing President Cleveland’s expectation that they would “promptly relinquish to [Lili‘uokalani] her constitutional authority” (S. Rept. 2121). At midnight, December 23, Willis received Dole’s lengthy response declaring that “the Provisional Government of the Hawaiian Islands respectfully and unhesitatingly declines to entertain the proposition of the President of the United States. . . . We can not betray the sacred trust . . . of Christian civilization” (S. Rept. 2128). Under no circumstances would the new regime voluntarily relinquish its illegitimate administration. As far as Willis was concerned, the response marked both the beginning and the end of his diplomatic negotiations with the Provisional Government.

Notably, colonial, white, paradigmatic history has since attributed the Willis fiasco to Lili‘uokalani’s personal failure, rather than to Willis’s dithering or the intransigent ambition of the Provisional Government. Charles H. Hunter, who wrote the final fifty pages of Ralph S. Kuykendall’s *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, charges that the queen “lost whatever hope she might have had to be restored to the throne”

through her “unyielding attitude” with Willis during their initial meeting (641). In 1984 A. Grove Day recorded in *History Makers of Hawaii* that Willis’s diplomatic mission ended when he “failed to get [Lili‘uokalani] to allow clemency for those who had accomplished the bloodless revolution” (129). By constructing Lili‘uokalani as a despot, these historians absolve Willis and the Provisional Government of any responsibility for the failed mission and, in the process, vindicate the overthrow as a necessary stand against tyranny.

Cleveland and Gresham, sensing disaster early on, had already begun to distance themselves from diplomatic responsibility. On December 18, Cleveland put Blount’s report, Willis’s instructions, and the entire affair into the hands of Congress. At that point Senator John T. Morgan, an ardent annexationist and chair of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, took up the Provisional Government’s cause. For the next two months, his committee investigated Blount’s findings, interviewed Provisional Government supporters, and received the affidavits of those supporters unable to appear at Washington in person.⁸ The result, an 809-page manifesto for the annexation of Hawai‘i, does nothing to unseat the conclusions of Blount’s report. On May 31, 1894, the Senate voted unanimously to pass the Turpie Resolution, a “hands-off” measure ruling out any further attempts either to restore the queen or to move toward annexation.⁹ Having failed to convince Congress to annex Hawai‘i, the Provisional Government determined to wait for a change in White House administration. In the meantime, the regime devised a new constitution and on July 4, 1894 declared itself the “Republic of Hawaii.” The oligarchy, embracing the principles of Social Darwinism and modeling its code of law on Mississippi’s 1891 constitution, precluded both Native Hawaiian and Asian immigrant participation in the political process (Coffman 156, 161). Remarkably, the Republic of Hawaii was created and controlled by a select circle drawn principally from the Islands’ U.S. colony—a group representing less than 3 percent of the total population of the Islands.¹⁰

In response to the Republic’s constitution, royalists staged an armed counterrevolution in January 1895. The abortive rebellion resulted in 355 arrests, including that of Lili‘uokalani, who was charged

with misprision of treason against the Republic. Tried and convicted, the queen received the maximum sentence of five years imprisonment at hard labor and a \$5,000 fine; two weeks later the sentence was reduced to five years imprisonment. After serving eight months in a sparsely furnished apartment on the second floor of 'Iolani Palace, her former center of administration, Lili'uokalani was removed to Washington Place, where she remained under house arrest until February 6, 1896, at which time she was granted restricted movement within the island of O'ahu. Eight months later, having served twenty-one months of the five-year sentence, Lili'uokalani received a full pardon from the Republic's executive council. By January 1897 the queen had surreptitiously moved to Washington, DC, where she launched a significant anti-annexation campaign. Her strategy was two-fold. Publicly, she worked vigorously against annexation; privately, she authored *Hawaii's Story by Hawaii's Queen*.

THE QUEEN'S COUNTER-DISCOURSE STRATEGY: RECLAIMING RHETORICAL CONTROL

Published in February 1898, at the height of renewed annexation debate, *Hawaii's Story* is the only Native Hawaiian chronicle of the overthrow published in the United States during the period and one of the few histories of the Hawaiian monarchy written from a Native Hawaiian perspective. Its singularity in this respect was not lost on contemporary reviewers. The *Book Buyer* noted that the queen presents the reader with political and historical information "not likely to be accessible elsewhere" ("Hawaii's Story" 437); the *Overland Monthly* review endorsed the memoir as "the most important contribution to the history of the Hawaiian Revolution and the causes leading up to it, which has been presented to the American people" (285); and *Public Opinion* commended the timeliness of the publication as a "valuable contribution to a subject . . . much befogged by the efforts of those whose interests would be best subserved by misleading public opinion" ("Hawaii's Story" 216). But not all the reviews were supportive. Charles Kofoed, writing for the *Dial*, concluded that *Hawaii's Story*, "owing to its warped and partial statements," has little value as

reliable history (229). Instead, Kofoid endorses Hawai'i's canon of colonial historians, William Ellis, James J. Jarves, and William DeWitt Alexander.¹¹ The endorsement reflects the fundamental power of colonial discourse to usurp the (Native) historical narrative. Kofoid maintains that

by reason of [Lili'uokalani's] deep personal interest in the events narrated, the book cannot be trusted to give a complete and impartial account of . . . the long struggle between . . . the reactionary influences of the recent dynasty and the progressive tendencies of Anglo-Saxon civilization represented by the element variously known as the American, missionary, and reform party." (229)

Nonetheless, he defers to Alexander—an annexation commissioner, a key political advisor to both the Provisional Government and subsequent Republic, a brother-in-law to Provisional and Republic advisory counsel member Samuel M. Damon, and a first-generation missionary son married to a first-generation missionary daughter. Kofoid's deferral to Alexander is not based on Alexander's disinterestedness but on his reputation as an "eloquent orator," a colonial figure defined by Eric Cheyfitz as the prime agent in the imperial mission to translate the "other" into the terms of empire (112). In January 1894, "Professor Alexander," as he was generally known, testified before the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations that Hawaiians were "not quite the equal of the white race" in terms of physical stature, strength, and development (S. Rept. 268); as for character, he declared, they are improvident, unstable, fickle, duplicitous, indolent, and utterly incapable of succeeding in business. Accordingly, "[t]hey need to be cared for like children" (311).

In his review, Kofoid discredits Lili'uokalani by comparing her description of the Hale Naua, a "Temple of Science" devoted to ancient Hawaiian history and Polynesian research, with Alexander's charge that the organization was founded by Kalākaua "partly as an agency for the revival of heathenism, partly to pander to vice, and indirectly to serve as a political machine" (229).¹² In referring to "civilized" hallmarks such as science, history, and research to describe a purely "na-

tive" institution, Lili'uokalani had manipulated language and concepts that the colonial usurpers claimed as theirs alone. As such, she had violated colonial rules of decorum. Conversely, Alexander's discourse links Natives with heathenism and deceit and thus coincides with Kofoid's colonial expectations. Accordingly, the reviewer *re*-translates the Hale Naua as "a secret organization of Kahunas or medicine men, whose ritual is a travesty of Masonry mingled with pagan rites" (229). Regardless of her status within Hawaiian cultural norms, Lili'uokalani, a Native woman, cannot, from Kofoid's perspective, be allowed to use language that the reviewer concedes only to the distinguished, Yale-educated professor. In this instance, the reviewer introduced the eloquent orator into the text as the Native writer's foil, but as the next review demonstrates, the eloquent orator is as much an idea as it is a person.

Appearing in Boston's *Literary World* on April 2, 1898, a brief review of *Hawaii's Story* introduced the charge that Lili'uokalani did not write her memoir:

If Queen Liliuokalani were really the author of her *Hawaii's Story*, she would deserve a high mark of literary credit; for it is a well-written and interesting narrative. . . . Of course between the lines upon the title-page we are to read the name of some dexterous secretary and man of letters, who is really responsible for what by courtesy is the ex-Queen's performance." ("Queen Liliuokalani's Story" 103)

The charge that *Hawaii's Story* was ghost-written by Boston journalist Julius A. Palmer Jr. was further cultivated in 1936 by the former annexation commissioner and strategist Lorrin A. Thurston. Citing the queen's cryptic diary entries, Thurston declared that "Liliuokalani personally was incapable of using such clear-cut English" as demonstrated in *Hawaii's Story* (180). In this case, the specter of the "eloquent orator" is raised not to refute the book's argument but to reassign authorship from the Native woman writer to the white "man of letters." The transfer of ownership is accommodated by the colonial politics of language and its rules of decorum, as well as a long European and American tradition of devaluing women's authorship.

Lili‘uokalani authored what both the reviewer and Thurston acknowledged as a well-written narrative, but as Cheyfitz points out, “mastery of the master’s language does not allow the native speaker to assume the position of the eloquent orator” (126). In this case, where eloquence is obviously evident, Native ownership is accordingly repudiated. Notably, authorship remained in doubt—from a colonial perspective—until 1995 when Miriam Fuchs’s close study of the queen’s extant diaries demonstrated that Lili‘uokalani “not only wrote her own book but also was someone for whom writing was imperative” (40). The fact that authorship was questioned for nearly a century speaks to the lingering influence of colonial discourse and the double bind it places on the Native writer. The colonized Native may be elevated in status according to how well she or he wields the master’s language, but mastery of the master’s language will necessarily be disavowed (Cheyfitz 125–26).

Motivated by political necessity, Lili‘uokalani was by no means naive regarding the risks she undertook in writing *Hawaii’s Story*. Following the 1893 overthrow, she had been largely disparaged by the U.S. press as, among other things, “a study in superstition” (Nichols 526) and “a portly, chocolate-colored lady” (“People Talked About” 3). A rare and notable exception is Harriet Prescott Spofford’s *Harper’s Bazar* article wherein she declares that Lili‘uokalani “has lived a spotless life as child, woman, and wife; it was not till she was fifty years old that scandal assailed her, and then only in furtherance of the plans for the overthrow” (401). The most vicious public attack came from Rev. Sereno E. Bishop, a first-generation missionary son and a regular correspondent to the *Independent*. In his July 6, 1893, article, “A Royal Palace Democratized,” Bishop alluded to “disgusting orgies that [had] polluted [‘Iolani] palace” since the days of Kalākaua’s reign. He further declared that Kalākaua and “ex-queen” Lili‘uokalani had no “real hereditary royalty” but were instead the illegitimate children of a mulatto shoemaker, which, he said, explains the “slight African trace in the hair.” This being the case, “white Hawaii loathes them, and native Hawaii has no respect for them” (905). Designed to attract the political sympathy of his (white) U.S. readers, Bishop’s charge and its unstated ideological assumptions inadvertently reveal a fundamen-

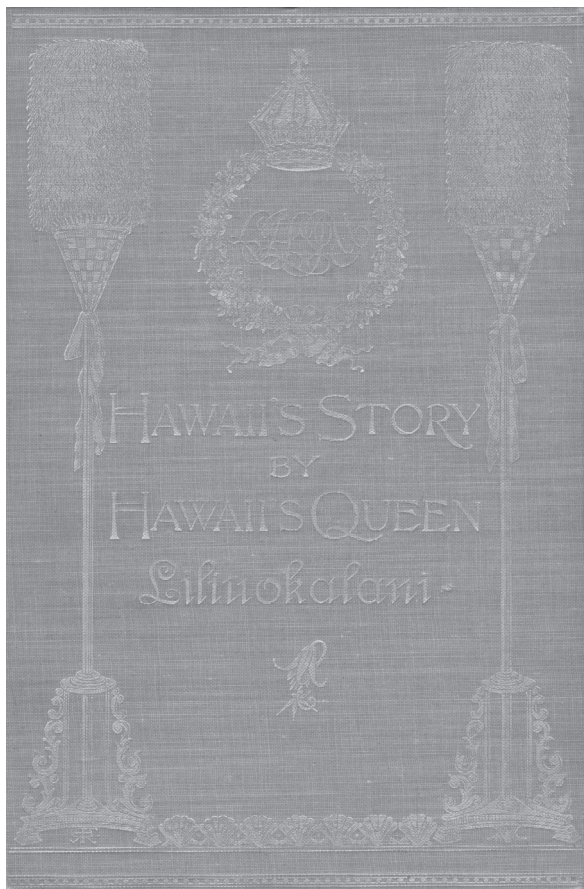
tal distinction between “white Hawaii” and “native Hawaii” regarding race at the end of the nineteenth century. “Loathing” surfaces as a racist response reflecting the white colony’s horror of being subject to a “Negro” monarchy. Diminished respect, on the other hand, speaks to the Hawaiian intellectual perspective on genealogies and the importance of maintaining an *accurate* genealogical history. For Hawaiians, genealogy is not a race-based discipline but a narrative account of ancestral experiences and exploits. Historian Lilikalā Kame‘eleihiwa points out that genealogies, as the history of the Hawaiian people, offer “historical answers for present-day dilemmas” (21–22). Bishop’s gossip mongering backfires in that it reveals far more about “white Hawaii” than it does about Native Hawaiians. Notably, this is the same man who just two years earlier wrote an article for the *Review of Reviews* praising the queen’s “noble and becoming” manner and remarking on her “having deeply at heart the moral welfare of her people” (“Hawaiian Queen” 147–48).

When Lili‘uokalani wrote *Hawaii’s Story*, she was writing back not only to her critics in the U.S. press but also to the witnesses and affidavit writers who had maligned her and the Hawaiian nation in Senate Report 227. She was, in fact, reading the report in the winter of 1897 while she was in Washington, DC, writing *Hawaii’s Story*. In response to the report, she rebukes Senator Morgan for failing to consider her early protest to President Harrison, for ignoring the pro-monarchy petitions sent to Washington by the Native Hawaiian patriotic leagues, and for excluding witnesses and affidavits in her support (*Hawaii’s Story* 257). Yet her comments denote more than well-deserved criticism of Morgan’s methods and findings. She in fact uses Senate Report 227 and the evidence therein to launch a public education campaign against the illegitimate Republic of Hawaii. “All the evidence,” she tells her readers, “can be reviewed by any person who may wish to do so, and a judgment formed of the men who caused this revolution, as it has been bound in volumes, and can be seen at the Library of Congress in the Capitol at Washington” (236). By referring her readers to the congressional record, Lili‘uokalani invites active participation in Hawai‘i’s political crisis. Furthermore, by directing her readers to the source of the evidence rather than to the popular partisan

press, she facilitates independent analysis and political praxis. Considering how the queen has subsequently been constructed in U.S. histories of Hawai'i as both the cause of the overthrow and the obstruction to restoration, and considering how the overthrow and annexation have been constructed ideologically as the triumph of good government, revisiting the source is an indispensable counter-discursive strategy for modern readers.

In writing *Hawaii's Story*, the queen was challenged rhetorically to construct an anti-imperialist argument that would not compromise her Hawaiian identity. Secondly, presenting a counter-discursive argument to a generally uninformed audience meant risking the reinscription of the arguments against which she was working. The queen mitigated both risks by structuring her book as a memoir, a familiar genre that would appeal to her U.S. audience and, significantly, would allow her to filter the political events of the day through her own (Hawaiian) experience and worldview. In the process she could construct a first-person, counter-discursive challenge to annexation and recoup rhetorical control over Native Hawaiian constructions. The overall success of the project would depend in large part on how well she controlled the means of publication and how effectively she manipulated the genre.

An examination of the 1898 first edition reveals a provocative correlation between Lili'uokalani's rhetorical goals and the book's graphic design, suggesting that she played a large role in the publication plan.¹³ In his article "On the Importance of Judging Books by Their Covers," Gregg Camfield points out that a book's physical presentation often reflects authorial intention as well as the social and economic conditions that gave rise to the material artifact; presentation, moreover, can disclose how the text is intended to be read (44–45). This is clearly the case with *Hawaii's Story*. Here, the cover's symbols and carefully constructed design reflect an unmistakably Hawaiian monarchical perspective (see fig. 1). The two *kāhili* (plumed staff of state) flanking the title and the queen's name signify Hawaiian royalty. To prevent the foreign reader from missing the political significance, the queen defines the *kāhili* in the annotated List of Illustrations as "emblems of royalty and nobility," a definition repeated in



Cover. *Hawaii's Story by Hawaii's Queen* (1898).

various forms throughout the book (viii). The presence of the *kāhili* thus marks the book as the queen's textual surrogate.

The most compelling mark of personal input is the queen's birth name, "Liliu," encircled by the crowned flower lei above the title. The motif, an adaptation of her royal insignia, speaks back to the U.S. press and its common use of the diminutive "Queen Lil"—an appellation she despised. Furthermore, it is significant that the queen in-

corporate “Liliu” in the cover design, rather than “Lydia,” the more familiar baptismal name given to her by U.S. missionaries. The fact that the name “Lydia” appears nowhere in the memoir signifies a calculated rejection of the missionary renaming. Altogether, the cover fuses the personal and the political into an interpretive restoration of monarchy, focuses the reader rhetorically into a particular mode of interpretation, and gives notice that the author is not the “ex-queen” but “Hawaii’s Queen Liliuokalani.” Unfortunately, redesigned modern facsimile editions of *Hawaii’s Story* have erased the historical and political significance of the original cover layout.

Liliuokalani’s personal input is also evident in the selection of twenty-one full-page half-tone illustrations. Whereas nearly every book published about Hawai‘i at the end of the nineteenth century depicts “hula-hula girls,” “grass huts,” and seminude Natives pounding *poi*, the queen’s illustrations offer a considerably more complex construction of Hawai‘i. Here, stock iconographic depictions are replaced by Lunalilo’s Home for the Poor, Washington Place, ‘Iolani Palace, modern streets, and contemporary architecture. Furthermore, the queen stresses the continuity and dignity of modern Hawaiian monarchy through formal portraits of the late King Kalākaua, dowager Queen Kapi‘olani, and the heir apparent, Princess Ka‘iulani. Notably, the frontispiece, a full-length portrait of “Her Majesty Queen Liliuokalani” stands in stark contrast to popular lampooned depictions of “Queen Lil” (see fig. 2).¹⁴ By focusing the visual elements of the text on the nation’s civic concerns and the ruling family, the queen presents the Hawaiian monarchy as a stable, autonomous government capably managing the affairs and problems of a flourishing nation. Under such conditions, the reader should realize, annexation becomes politically indefensible.

Appropriating the western memoir and forcing it to accommodate Hawaiian culture and experience is central to the queen’s rhetorical strategy. In this respect, *Hawaii’s Story* draws on what theorists newly define as “postcolonial strategies” but what for the queen were also language constructions and manipulations she had practiced since childhood. Kame‘eleihiwa writes that in traditional times, “the telling of any Hawaiian history began properly with traditional be-



Frontispiece. *Hawaii's Story by Hawaii's Queen* (1898).

ginnings”; together, place of birth and genealogy become “a map that guides each Hawaiian’s relationship with the world” (1–2). Accordingly, the queen uses the narrative’s opening paragraph to mark her distinct genealogical relationship with the earth. First, she locates her physical connection to the land: “The extinct crater or mountain which forms the background to the city of Honolulu is known as the

Punch-Bowl. . . . Very near to its site, on Sept. 2, 1838, I was born" (1). She then briefly delineates her ancestry and refers the reader to the volume's appendices where she provides detailed genealogies documenting her descent "from the highest chiefs of ancient days" (2). While she structures her book on Hawaiian concepts, she also engages issues of cultural translation. In explaining her family organization, she is keenly aware that the deepest Hawaiian cultural concepts and practices—in this case, the traditional practice of *hānai*—cannot be carried by English language:

I was destined to grow up away from the house of my parents. Immediately after my birth I was wrapped in the finest soft tapa cloth, and taken to the house of another chief, by whom I was adopted. Konia, my foster-mother, was a granddaughter of Kamehameha I., and was married to Paki, also a high chief In speaking of our [family] relationship, I have adopted the term customarily used in the English language, but there was no such modification recognized in my native land. I knew no other father or mother than my foster-parents. . . . This was, and indeed is, in accordance with Hawaiian customs. It is not easy to explain its origin to those alien to our national life, but it seems perfectly natural to us. As intelligible a reason as can be given is that this alliance by adoption cemented the ties of friendship between the chiefs. (4)

Lili'uokalani thus establishes a complex rhetorical relationship with her audience. First, she makes it clear that the memoir will be narrated through a Hawaiian point of view; second, she marks a rhetorical gap separating her "alien" audience from the possessive Hawaiian narrator signified in "*our* national life"; third, she establishes the fact that culturally she knows her audience far better than her audience knows her; last, she acknowledges that her aim as a transcultural writer is to render cultural differences as "intelligible" as possible, knowing of course that some concepts will defy translation. The effectiveness of the memoir ultimately rests on how carefully the queen manages the cultural gap, how well she predicts audience response, and how skillfully she conveys the untranslatable.

In negotiating cultural distance, the queen displaces static colonial constructions of Native Hawaiians and constructs instead a national Hawaiian identity incorporating the historical changes that impel ongoing identity formation. As a result, she is equally comfortable describing both the luxury of her family's Honolulu mansion and the practical comfort and spaciousness of "grass house" accommodations in Hilo. On the other hand, her effort to balance traditional Hawaiian spiritual beliefs with seventy years of Christian influence is precarious at best. At the beginning of the memoir, for instance, she notes that it was her great-grandaunt, Queen Kapi'olani (c. 1781–1841), an early Christian convert, who ceremoniously defied the volcano goddess at Kilauea and thus "broke forever the power of Pele . . . over the hearts of her people" (1–2). Lili'uokalani revises her declaration in a subsequent chapter wherein she notes that Pele continues to be "reverenced by the Hawaiian people" with acts of propitiation that should be understood not as worship but as "harmless sport . . . much like the custom of hurling old shoes at the bride's carriage, or sending off the newly wedded couple with showers of rice; usages which form a pleasant diversion in the most highly cultivated and educated communities" (72). A politically motivated strategy to neutralize what might otherwise be perceived by her U.S. audience as pagan ritual, the queen's construction falls short of accounting for Pele's ongoing influence in the newly Christianized nation. Nonetheless, she succeeds overall in presenting Hawai'i's richly complex social organization and avoiding an overt hierarchical valuation of its seemingly disparate parts. At the same time, she readily critiques certain elements of cultural change. She criticizes, for instance, the blatant disrespect for sacred antiquities evident in the removal of stones from the ancient altar of 'Umi; and she laments the fact that her childhood home had been converted into a tourist hotel (40, 110). Above all, the fact that the narrative is *written*—and written in English—reveals a recognition of historical interchange and political necessity. Lili'uokalani had been educated in the "proper use" of English since age three when she was sent to the High Chiefs' Children's School, a missionary boarding school designed to anglicize Hawai'i's future leaders through both formal education in English and forced separation

from their adult families. Nevertheless, the queen's first language, both privately and publicly, remained Hawaiian. In using English to write *Hawaii's Story*, the queen not only recognized the impact of historical and cultural interchange, she manipulated it to devise wholly new applications for her second language.

As tempting as it might be to analyze the queen's English as a strategy abrogating and appropriating the language of the colonial center, the application is limited or at least redefined by the fact that English, as the privileged colonial language, had not (yet) superseded Hawaiian, at least not in practical terms. Still, because the queen is ostensibly writing to a colonial center prepared to eclipse Hawaiian nationalism through annexation, certain principles of abrogation and appropriation apply. On the surface, Lili'uokalani's frequent use of Hawaiian vocabulary creates a partially hybridized "english," although the general applications of glossing and italicizing limit any vital abrogation of English. But on those few occasions when she leaves Hawaiian words undefined, she sometimes creates a second level of meaning discernable only by readers familiar with Hawaiian language, that is, her readers in Hawai'i. The following passage, for instance, would mean very little to U.S. readers:

I remember that when G. P. Judd, W. Richards, and R. Armstrong were cabinet ministers, a deficiency so inexplicable occurred that the cabinet was required to resign immediately, and to one of the retiring members the popular appellation "*kauka-kope-kala*" subsequently adhered pretty tenaciously. I refrain from translating, as the title is not one of honor; but it still clings to the family as an heirloom. (233)

Depending on their political persuasion, readers in Hawai'i would be either amused or abused by the passage. In a private letter to her editor, William Lee, dated January 2, 1898, the queen explained the allusion: "It means 'the doctor who scraped all the money in the Treasury.' Doctor Judd—the father of chief Justice [Albert F.] Judd—and Richard Armstrong were sent out from Park Street Church as missionaries to Hawaii. Every body in Honolulu knows of that instance—." Lili'uokalani indicts Dr. Gerrit Judd as both a thief and a

missionary, and by recording the allusion in her memoir she does in fact create an “heirloom.”¹⁵ She no doubt enjoyed directing a bit of rhetorical retaliation at the Judd dynasty, but the passage also speaks to her keen appreciation for the printed word and its historical and political usefulness. Unlike her shortsighted enemies who would put anything into print to further their short-term goals, the queen understood that nothing adheres more tenaciously than the published word. The significance of this strategy is underscored by the fact that while she was completing *Hawaii's Story* Lili'uokalani placed her English translation of the *Kumulipo* (the two-thousand-line chant of Hawaiian cosmogonic genealogy) and a specially prepared volume of her musical compositions in the Congressional Library for historical safeguarding. Furthermore, the passage forces a reconsideration of the queen's audience and her rhetorical goals: in addition to her primary U.S. audience and her secondary audience in Hawai'i, Lili'uokalani was consciously aware of the generational audience to come.

Finally, the queen creates a third level of meaning wherein she manipulates English into the Hawaiian language practice known as *kaona*. Used extensively in Hawaiian poetry and song, including the queen's compositions, *kaona* denotes veiled or indirect meaning. Hawaiian historian and linguist Mary Kawena Pukui explains that there are but two meanings in Hawaiian composition: the literal, which is like the body, and the *kaona*, which is like the spirit (“Songs” 247). In the following passage, for instance, Lili'uokalani, having been released from house arrest but confined to the island of O'ahu, celebrates her conditional freedom with friends at her Waialua country house. The “body” meaning is transparent:

Some days later, in company with Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Hele-hule, I took a drive out to my residence at Waialua, where we spent two very delightful weeks. . . . We had a quiet little celebration all to ourselves, fishing and riding, and the time sped by so pleasantly that we forgot to count the hours. While there we received a visit from Hon. Samuel Parker; Mr. Boyd, Secretary of American Legation; Mr. [Lane?] . . . Mr. J. S. Walker, the

younger; and others,—who spent a pleasant day with us on the beach. We caught fish, and placed them immediately on hot coals, supplementing our picnic with bread and butter, and our native *poi*. Then, a week or so later, I went to my residence at Waikiki; and in this, my ocean retreat, I lived until my recent visit to the United States, only now and then, for a change, making a trip to my estates at Kahala. (298–99)

Critiqued at the literal level, the names and details in this passage might seem gratuitous, even a bit self-indulgent. But at the *kaona* level, the passage suggests a veiled description of an anti-annexation strategy session. The guests at Waialua are in fact political activists, in some cases radically so. Moreover, Joseph Helehule did accompany the queen to Washington. The detail of the cooked fish suggests a precept conveyed by the Hawaiian proverb “Ua ahu ka imu, e lāwalu ka i’a” (“The oven is ready, let the fish wrapped in ti leaves be cooked”), that is, “All preparations have been made; let us proceed with the work” (Pukui, *‘Ōlelo No’eau* no. 2768). The passage suggests that plans for Lili’uokalani’s trip to Washington were underway months before she received the full pardon. If that is the case, the names and details in this passage suggest new inferences and advance new questions. Textual interpretation at the *kaona* level is necessarily conjectural. Unlike western figurative language that rests on specific tropic and literal correspondences, the Hawaiian *kaona* speaks to textual operations beyond the literal. The point here is to raise the probability that *Hawaii’s Story* registers on a politically significant level as yet unexplored.

While the queen’s political design is rarely transparent, her political tenacity is unmistakable in her response to white colonists who called themselves “Hawaiian.” One of the earliest public attempts to appropriate and recast Hawaiian identity was made by Dr. Judd’s son, Associate Justice Albert F. Judd. On September 27, 1880, a mass meeting was held to protest the controversial appointment of an all-white cabinet; when a resolution was introduced to appoint “true Hawaiians” (that is, Native Hawaiians) to the king’s ministry, Judd retaliated with a new (colonial) definition of “true Hawaiian”:

A wrong impression has obtained that only those born here of the aboriginal Hawaiian stock are true Hawaiians. A man born here of white parents who spends his talents and energies for the benefit of Hawaii is as true a Hawaiian as if his parents were all red, or one red and the other white. Those who benefit this country by their good character and example and life are the true Hawaiians. (qtd. in Kuykendall 224)¹⁶

Judd, the same man noted previously for his “garden of the gods” allusion, is not alone in his attempt to recast “Hawaiian” identity. The rhetoric of Senate Report 227 reveals that by 1893, if not sooner, the term “Hawaiian” had been appropriated and redefined among white colonists, missionary descendants, and annexationists to mean “Hawaiians of American descent.”¹⁷ Such a radical and pervasive shift would be impossible without first redefining “Native Hawaiian.” After all, the new (white) “Hawaiians” were not appropriating an ethnic group or a culture: they were claiming a geographical territory, that is, a nation, and they expected to make an unencumbered claim. They were assisted in that purpose by Senator Morgan, who, through reiteration in Senate Report 227, redefined Native Hawaiians as “Kanakas.”¹⁸ Within the congressional setting, the designation was legitimized. By the time the Committee on Foreign Relations ended its hearings, the Senators had absorbed the discourse and recast the word “Hawaiian” in geographical, rather than cultural, terms. The term “kanaka” subsequently became so pervasive in the colonial discourse that historian William Adam Russ Jr., writing in 1959, could still use it to the exclusion of all other possible terms in referring to Native Hawaiians. Russ legitimizes his language by noting that “Kanaka” is “the native word for people” and then adding that “Kanaka,” “native,” and “Royalist,” are “practically synonymous” (3). The displacement might be that simple from Russ’s point of view, but from a Hawaiian perspective, the white appropriation of the term created a derisive racial marker comparable to the sociocultural violence in the word “nigger” (Blaisdell 182). Notably, despite its general usage among white colonists at the turn of the century, the word “kanaka” does *not* appear in *Hawaii’s Story*. Furthermore, the queen

denounces the “aliens” who call themselves “Hawaiians”: “They are not and never were Hawaiians.” When she speaks of “Hawaiian people” she refers to “the children of the soil,—the native inhabitants of the Hawaiian islands and their descendants” (325). Throughout her memoir, Lili‘uokalani makes it clear that “Hawaiian” is neither a racial marker nor a geographical locator but a word signifying a particular ancestry. When colonial appropriation and redefinition threatened the terms of self-identification, Lili‘uokalani stood firm both publicly and rhetorically.

The fact that the United States annexed Hawai‘i must not overshadow the political effectiveness of *Hawaii’s Story*. The threat of annexation shaped the memoir’s frame of production, but when the legal maneuvers were done, the momentary frame dissolved. At that point time became the overriding factor. A century later it is clear that Lili‘uokalani managed the cultural gap extremely well. She educated her primary readers, she invited their political participation, and she did so without compromising her identity as a Hawaiian monarch. In projecting audience response, she no doubt underestimated the U.S. republic’s intolerance for monarchy, especially when sovereignty is embodied in a Native Hawaiian woman. Her ability to convey the untranslatable was no doubt diminished by her readers’ general resistance to cultural differences.

Nevertheless, the queen was also writing for subsequent generations, and for these readers time has created a new frame of interpretation. In the concluding pages of *Hawaii’s Story*, Lili‘uokalani asks the U.S. Congress to reexamine annexation, not as a legal issue but as a set of moral and ethical considerations:

[Will it be] thought strange that education and knowledge of the world have enabled us to perceive that as a race we have some special mental and physical requirements not shared by the other races which have come among us? That certain habits and modes of living are better for our health and happiness than others? And that a separate nationality, and a particular form of government, as well as special laws, are, at least for the present, best for us? (368)

The queen's plea was ignored in 1898. However, in 1993 the U.S. Congress passed a joint resolution "to offer an apology to Native Hawaiians on behalf of the United States for the overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawaii." Signed into public law on November 23, 1993, the apology's concise account of the overthrow mirrors Lili'uokalani's interpretation of events. Second, in considering the determination of Native Hawaiians to exercise self-government, the apology notes—as did Lili'uokalani—that "Native Hawaiian people are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territory, and their cultural identity in accordance with their own spiritual and traditional beliefs, customs, practices, language, and social institutions" (1512–13). Moreover, the apology defines "Native Hawaiian" on the same ancestral premise embraced by Lili'uokalani: "As used in this Joint Resolution, the term 'Native Hawaiian' means any individual who is a descendent of the aboriginal people who, prior to 1778, occupied and exercised sovereignty in the area that now constitutes the State of Hawaii" (1513). What effect the apology will have on the ongoing movement for Native Hawaiian sovereignty remains to be seen. For now, Lili'uokalani's *Hawaii's Story by Hawaii's Queen* stands not as a backward look into a kingdom's monarchical history but a timely and constructive strategy for a newly restored Hawaiian Nation.

NOTES

1. Known interchangeably as the "downtown party," the "reform party," and the "missionary party," the latter most accurately describes the dominant power structure within the faction. U.S. historians all too often attempt to defuse the pejorative label by pointing out the relatively small number of U.S. missionaries and missionary descendants actually involved in the overthrow, a strategy that overlooks party alliances based on business and marriage ties to the missionary community. Once these secondary alliances are evaluated, the term "missionary party" reflects the political provocation precisely.

2. Printed in February 1894, Senate Report 227 is a document warehouse for material relevant to the U.S. overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy. Nonetheless, the 2,287-page report can be unwieldy and difficult to use. Volume 1 is taken up entirely by what has become known as the Morgan Report. Volume 2

includes House Executive Document 47 (a.k.a. the Blount Report, originally printed December 18, 1893); Senate Executive Documents 13, 45, 46, 57, 76, and 77; and House Executive Documents 70, 76, 79, 95, 112, and 140. Hereafter, references to documents found in Senate Report 227 (S. Rept.) will be reduced to parenthetical page citations in the text. I will return shortly to Lili'uokalani's assessment of these volumes.

3. The *Boston's* landing battalion included 154 men armed and equipped with double belts of cartridges, 60 to 80 rounds each; the caisson was stocked with 14,000 rounds of .45 caliber for the rifles and Gatling gun, 1,200 rounds of .38 caliber for the revolvers, and 174 explosive shells for the 37-millimeter revolving cannon (S. Rept. 335).

4. The queen's protest letters are reprinted in *Hawaii's Story*, appendix B (387–90); they are also included in Senate Report 227 (1674–76). For a compelling study of widespread Native Hawaiian resistance to annexation, see Noenoe K. Silva, *Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism* (Duke UP, 2004).

5. The full treaty is reprinted in Senate Executive Document 76 (S. Rept. 1010–13).

6. In his November 16 dispatch to Gresham, Willis claimed that Lili'uokalani replied that the traitors, according to law, should be beheaded (S. Rept. 2088). The queen subsequently denied using the word “beheaded”; she defends herself against the charge in *Hawaii's Story* (244–49). Notably, the diplomatic record of the queen's interview with Willis is incomplete. Nonetheless, once Willis's dispatch became a matter of public record, the annexationist press used the word “beheaded” to construct the queen as a ruthless tyrant.

7. Privately, Willis acknowledged that the queen's position on amnesty and the 1887 Bayonet Constitution was justified. In a confidential letter dated December 9, 1893, Willis told Gresham that restoration under Cleveland's conditions would certainly be followed by another revolution; he further noted that “[a]n examination of the Constitution of 1887 will disclose how this Colony so small numerically has ruled the islands” (qtd. in Russ, *Hawaiian Revolution* 256). Willis's letter, archived at the Library of Congress (Grover Cleveland MSS), was not included in the Congressional record.

8. Although Morgan made his Senate proposal for an investigative committee on December 20, 1893, fourteen affidavits from Hawai'i were notarized (in Honolulu) two weeks earlier. In other words, while Willis was in the middle of negotiations with the queen, the key members and supporters of the Provisional Government were preparing testimony for a Senate committee that presumably (or at least publicly) did not yet exist.

9. For an insightful analysis of the period's U.S. congressional debates on the "annexation question," see Thomas J. Osborne's *Annexation Hawaii* (Island Style Press, 1998).

10. In 1890, according to the official census, the total population of the Hawaiian Islands was 89,990. Of this number, 1,928 were American colonials and 1,617 were "Hawaiian-born white foreigners," a classification combining American, British, German, French, and Norwegian citizens born in Hawai'i. European nationals (British, German, French, Portuguese, and Norwegian) numbered 11,277. The Chinese and Japanese, all of whom were barred from voting privileges, numbered 15,301 and 12,360 respectively. The Native Hawaiian population in 1890 was 40,622 (S. Rept. 1348, 1350, 1354, and 1064).

11. In terms of nineteenth-century public discourse, the dominant (colonial) histories of Hawai'i are William Ellis, *Narrative of a Tour through Hawaii* (London, 1826); James J. Jarves, *The History of the Hawaiian or Sandwich Islands* (Boston, 1843); and William DeWitt Alexander, *A Brief History of the Hawaiian People* (New York, 1891). Ellis, Jarves, and Alexander are, respectively, a missionary, a mission associate, and a missionary descendent.

12. Although he doesn't acknowledge the source, Kofoid is quoting from a prepared statement Alexander gave to Senator Blount, which was subsequently printed in Senate Report 227 (1453–71). The same essay was later published as a four-page pamphlet titled "Kalakaua's Reign: A Sketch of Hawaiian History" (Honolulu, 1894) and then reprinted in Alexander's *History of the Later Years of the Hawaiian Monarchy and Revolution of 1893* (1896). To appreciate the lasting influence of Alexander's "historical" assessment, note that A. Grove Day used the same quotation to describe the Hale Naua in his 1973 introduction to *Travels in Hawaii: Robert Louis Stevenson* (xx).

13. To what extent the queen participated in the book design remains unclear, but evidence suggests that she exercised considerable editorial leverage. After delivering the manuscript to her publishers, she wrote at least four letters to "Cousin William" (i.e., William Lee of Lee and Shepard) regarding editorial problems, marketing strategies, and copyright concerns. The letters are preserved at the Huntington Library.

14. John Musick used a cropped version of the photo portrait in *Hawaii, Our New Possessions*. His caption, "From her latest Photograph by Prince, of Washington" (348), suggests that the queen posed for the photographic portrait shortly before publishing *Hawaii's Story*.

15. For a full discussion of Gerrit Judd's political machinations, see Michael Dougherty, *To Steal a Kingdom* (Island Style Press, 1992), 97–117.

16. Four days later, Judd wrote the introduction for his late mother's mis-

sionary narrative, wherein he boasted that the Hawaiian kingdom was “the only instance of a nation lifted from the darkness of heathenism to the light of Christian civilization without the destruction of the native Government” (iv). Judd’s inconsistent rhetoric speaks to the duplicity of the missionary party throughout the period.

17. An early public use of the phrase “Hawaiians of American descent” is found in William G. Smith’s speech given at the November 25, 1893, mass protest meeting (S. Rept. 2100). In correspondence dated December 18, 1893, Willis described J. O. Carter as “native Hawaiian, but of American parentage,” indicating his recognition of the missionary party’s vernacular (2108). Additional evidence pointing to the general appropriation of the word “Hawaiian” within the missionary party is found in the testimony of Francis R. Day (741–42), Fred Wundenberg (1367), and Crister Bolte (1535–36).

18. See, for example, Senate Reports 194, 251, 304, 358, 386, 551, 561, and 648.

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“The literature of this nation”

LaVonne Ruoff and the Redefinition of American Literary
Studies

DAVID L. MOORE

LaVonne neither asks for nor needs adulation in this volume, and whatever words I may provide could hardly add luster to her already luminous reputation in the history of Native American literary studies. I don't even feel that she would want us to claim that she, as much as or more than any other scholar, helped to establish the field. Native voices established the field. “The literature of this nation originated with the native peoples,” as she wrote in the opening of her landmark work, *American Indian Literatures: An Introduction, Bibliographic Review, and Selected Bibliography*. They called for readers, and a global readership responded—with her tutorship. That's what I'd like to address here briefly. LaVonne's immense service to Indian country and to the non-Indian world, in bibliography, in editing and publishing, in institution-building, and in community-building, has been to listen to Indian voices, directing others how and where to listen as well.

How and where or who to listen to—those are fundamental questions of native literary studies to which LaVonne has devoted her life's work. I'd like to put those questions into perspective from my personal experience that links to the work of this profession. My master's degree from the University of South Dakota (USD) served well as an entrée for teaching English in higher education for American Indian students at USD, then at the University of Montana, and eventually at Salish Kootenai College (SKC) on the Flathead Reservation. That work brought me further into Indian communities where the stories that are Native American literature live. In the 1980s at SKC as I began to read early native literary studies to strengthen my teaching, studies by schol-

ars such as LaVonne Ruoff, Kathryn (Vangen) Shanley, Arnold Krupat, and others. I felt challenged by what I read that did and did not make that link between the literature and the communities I was a part of.

So I thought about doctoral work, and because my godfather (in the self-proclaimed Church of the Lesser Known Saints), Thomas Parkinson, was a professor of English at Berkeley, I sought him out for advice on returning to graduate school. Sitting in his living room in the Berkeley hills, he fixed me with his earnest and ironic stare, looming from above his beard and his six-foot-nine-inch frame, and he pronounced the following dictum: "You have to understand, David, that the heart of this profession is *bibliography!*"

I think he was trying to dissuade me. Indeed, it gave me pause. At the time, it sounded terribly dry. I was full of questions about native literature and native communities, and he wanted me to think of dusty libraries and archives as where the action is. Certainly, my love for libraries and books themselves carried me on his grim advice into an exciting crossroads between text and context, story and community. But it was LaVonne who made me really understand the significance of Tom's words.

Bibliography, simply listing books, is indeed the scholar's fundamental service to both readers and writers. Everything textual spins from that scholarly act across the generations. How many lost or neglected writers, how many lost manuscripts, how many lost voices have been brought to light by devotion to bibliography? (LaVonne herself, working from Daniel Littlefield's and James Parins's 1981 bibliography and Annette Van Dyke's 1992 recovery article in *SAIL*, is largely responsible for, among many other firsts, editing and bringing (back) to light the 1891 first novel by an American Indian, *Wynema: A Child of the Forest*, by the Creek writer S. Alice Callahan.) Stories in the blood may be resurrected from stories on the shelves.

On a less dramatic level, the dissemination of collected bibliographic information in classrooms and journals serves the basic tasks of both defining and redefining whole categories of reading and research. Further, the entire critical enterprise becomes an extension of the scholarly enterprise of bibliography. The list of *what* to read becomes the exercise of criticism in discussing *how* and even *why* to

read. LaVonne has shifted American literary studies to no longer eclipse Native American literatures.

If LaVonne is a grande dame of Native American literary studies, of a nexus of academic activities linking native literatures and native lives, she holds sway in the mode of an oxymoron: a remarkable modesty. The mark of bibliography itself may be accessibility, making texts accessible, and LaVonne embodies such accessibility in her person as well. Her personal accessibility is perhaps an expression of that beneficent modesty. Those of us in the community of Native American literary studies know where to go for an elusive phone number or email address. She is always there at the other end of the phone line or the email link connecting us with a vital network. I first met LaVonne in her 1989 NEH summer workshop at UIC, a scholarly boost to launching my second career through doctoral studies, and she was generous as always in agreeing to be on my dissertation committee.

To add to the thanks I extend to her, I figure she might most appreciate any small effort to strengthen Native American bibliography, any way to make native voices more accessible to native readers, to native communities, and to others as well. Thus follows a short list of archives that can provide more than a life's work for future writers and scholars in the field. There are many more collections than this sampling offers (another larger bibliographic project), but I hope this short index will help to stimulate the interest and excitement in archival and bibliographic research that LaVonne's example gives us all. Behind these listings is arrayed a legion of archivists and bibliographers who know already the value of this kind of work.

(I gathered this small sampling with the help of the ASAIL listserve as well as other contacts. Many thanks especially to James Ruppert, Susan Gardner, Dan Littlefield, and, as always, A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff, for suggestions to this list.)

A SMALL SAMPLING OF ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS IN NATIVE AMERICAN LITERARY AND CULTURAL STUDIES

Beinecke Library, Yale University

Papers of Joe Bruchac, Leslie Silko, Gerald Vizenor (material from

about 1970 on; earlier Vizenor papers at Minnesota Historical Society), and James Welch

Dakota Indian Foundation, Chamberlain, South Dakota

Papers of Ella Deloria; Ella C. Deloria Project

Dartmouth College Library

Papers of Michael Dorris and Louise Erdrich

The Library of Congress, Washington, DC

General collections and manuscript division are full of items, from Sarah Winnemucca's correspondence with Senator Henry Dawes to personal papers of many in the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Congressional committees, etc.

McMaster University Library, Hamilton, Ontario

E. Pauline Johnson Collection

Minnesota Historical Society, Minneapolis

Papers of Gerald Vizenor (early papers; see Beinecke Library for Vizenor papers from about 1970)

The National Archives, Washington, DC, and its more than a dozen research archives around the country

The Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois

An excellent resource on material up to 1939

Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City

Sequoyah Research Center/American Native Press Archives, Little Rock, Arkansas

The American Native Press Archives is devoted to the preservation and dissemination of the written words of native peoples. It began in 1983 as a clearinghouse for information on American Indian and Alaska Native newspapers and periodicals. In the ensuing years it has evolved as a joint effort of the Department of English and the Ottenheimer Library at the University of Arkansas—Little Rock, and its mission has changed to collecting and archiving the products of the native press and materials related to native press history, collecting and

documenting the works of native writers, and constructing bibliographic guides to native writing and publishing. It stands today as one of the world's largest repositories of native thought.

SRC/ANPA boasts the following:

The world's largest bibliography of native writing and the largest repository of native thought, including the papers of Robert Warrior, Carol Lee Sanchez, and many others; there are files on about 5,000 native writers

A partnership with the University of Virginia's digital text project, <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/>

A yearly symposium at which writers appear, thus videos of the presentations of writers such as Kimberly Blaeser, Jim Northrup, and others, with such rare items as a video of the first readers' theater performance of Blaeser's play *Museum at White Earth*, a film of Northrup's *Shinnob Jep*, and a film of the debut of Frederick White's *Higher Education*

Extensive runs of more than 2,100 different native newspapers and periodicals

The archives for the Native American Journalists Association
Collections from contemporary native communities

An American Indian art collection with more than 1,100 pieces in it, primarily paintings

Daniel F. Littlefield Jr. adds: "If anyone in the academy wants to know what we have at the Sequoyah Research Center, they should come and visit us. We will do everything in our power to help them."

Rasmuson Library, Oral History Collection, University of Alaska—Fairbanks

This archive contains thousands of hours of tapes interviews with Alaska Native elders. Some of the collection is key word indexed, but much of it is not. Subjects discussed range from subsistence and education to religion and oral narratives. The collection is a treasure that is relatively untapped.

Richard J. Daley Library, University of Illinois at Chicago

The Irwin T. and Shirley Holtzman collection of American Indian

literature, formerly housed at Michigan State Library. The collection includes much written by American Indian authors and by scholars on American Indian literatures, including the papers of A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff, plus multiple editions of individual works, literary periodicals, short magazines, fine-print books, broad sheets, and some manuscripts and recordings. Annual additions keep the collection current.

University of Oklahoma, Western History Collection, Norman

University of Oregon Library

Papers of Paula Gunn Allen papers

Washington State University Archives, Pullman, Washington

Mourning Dove-McWhorter correspondence in the papers of Lucullus V. McWhorter

Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin

Papers of Carlos Montezuma, including Zitkala-Ša's correspondence with Montezuma

ELLA C. DELORIA MATERIALS

And for inspiration, here is a sampling of findings and directions from Susan Gardner in her seven years of research on Ella C. Deloria.

National Headquarters of the YWCA, New York, New York

American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia

Papers of Franz Boas

Barnard College Archives, Columbia University, New York, New York

Especially 1915 yearbook

Center for Western Studies, Augustana College, Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Includes archives of the Episcopal Diocese of South Dakota, as well as materials donated by Vine V. Deloria Jr.

The Dakota Indian Foundation, Chamberlain, South Dakota

Repository of Ella C. Deloria's mostly unpublished, and considerable, personal and professional papers (currently being digitized under the direction of Raymond DeMallie at the University of Indiana, Bloomington). Includes a draft of the community pageant she produced for the Indians of Robeson County, North Carolina, in 1940 and 1941; plus two of Deloria's elementary mission school assignments, one a composition about birds in springtime, the other a small essay about her then-favorite foreign country—Holland. The collection also includes letters between Miss Deloria and the Bishop of South Dakota, Hugh L. Burleson, concerning various crises in her sister's life, and with Virginia Dorsey Lightfoot, daughter of anthropologist James Owen Dorsey. Additionally, one of the curators, Agnes Picotte (Lakota), collected materials concerning the YWCA Indian Bureau at the time Ella Deloria worked as a "national field representative" from 1919 to 1925, under the direction of Miss Edith M. Dabb. The latter's tiny pocket diaries—several dozen—give the time, and often the purpose, of every time she met with Ella or with her sister, Susan Mabel Deloria. Miss Dabb worked with several daughters of Indian missionaries and with Ruth Muskrat Bronson (a Cherokee contemporary of Deloria's at the Haskell boarding school who became an officer in the "Indian Service"). Scrapbooks include photographs of Miss Deloria in the 1920s, as well as a painting that she had posed for, for use in YWCA advertising.

The Indian Rights Association, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia

From 1882 to 1904 (and after), closely linked with its founder, philanthropist Herbert Welsh, the Association was one of the few non-governmental organizations to which American Indians could address their concerns. Ella Deloria's father, the Rev. Philip J. Deloria, and her brother, the Venerable Vine V. Deloria, wrote to Welsh and his successor, Matthew K. Sniffen, over several decades spanning the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, investigating conditions on reservations at the Association's request. They also provided interpretations and perspectives of their own, with candor. The inventory, a treasure in itself, is not available electronically but may be photocop-

ied. It includes letters from many Indian activists and advocates: Gertrude Bonnin (Zitkala-Ša), Ruth Muskrat Bronson, George Fire Thunder, Arthur C. Parker, Susan La Flesche Picotte, George Sword, Rev. Luke Walker, as well as from Eastern “Friends of the Indian.”

The Library of Congress, Washington, DC

Papers of Margaret Mead. After Boas’s and Ruth Fulton Benedict’s deaths, Mead became Deloria’s mentor, particularly in attempts to publish *Waterlily* and the still unpublished ethnography “Camp Circle Society.” Particularly insightful are the two autobiographical reminiscences that Deloria wrote to assist Mead in preparing an introduction to the latter.

The National Archives, Washington, DC, and its field office in St. Louis, Missouri

Includes correspondence among John Collier, Deloria, and the Federal Farm Security Administration; it was the FSA that sponsored Deloria’s work in Robeson County, North Carolina. Her civilian personnel file at St. Louis provides fascinating insight as to how “the Indian office” regarded Deloria as an “assistant ethnologist (temporary),” as well as how federal agencies perceived the amalgamated remnant Indians of Robeson County.

Vassar College Special Collections

Papers of Ruth Fulton Benedict. The letters between Deloria and Benedict give a virtually month-by-month description of the textual history of Deloria’s novel *Waterlily* and an invaluable glimpse into what the original manuscript of the novel was to contain. Other correspondence between Benedict and her secretary provides revealing details about Deloria’s tenacity in obtaining sponsorship and funding.

Grateful for the Push

A Tribute to LaVonne Ruoff

CHADWICK ALLEN

It goes without saying that LaVonne Ruoff has been a guiding force in developing and promoting the study of American Indian literatures. For many of us, she has been much more than that: a welcoming mentor into the field, a personal champion, and, at times—when she felt we were holding back on our potential—a firm push into the more public roles of professional responsibility and leadership. Many MLA delegates and many of the ASAIL officers of the last decade—including the current editor of *SAIL*—were first “encouraged” to attend meetings and later “persuaded” to take on various responsibilities by the force that is LaVonne Ruoff. She coached us to become innovative teachers and scholars; as important, she demonstrated for us how to be savvy academics within our institutions while remaining compassionate members of our communities.

My own first encounter with LaVonne was through her scholarship. When I entered my Ph.D. program at the University of Arizona in 1991, eager to get to the business of analyzing native novels and poems, Larry Evers told me that, before anything else, I needed to read LaVonne’s *American Indian Literatures: An Introduction, Bibliographic Review, and Select Bibliography*, which had been published by the MLA in 1990. I remember that Larry made a point of saying that I would want to study LaVonne’s book carefully—and return to it often. He was right: indeed, I did, and I did *want* to. My copy of *American Indian Literatures* is well thumbed and heavily marked by a decade and more of use. It helped me to write a dissertation and a book of my own. LaVonne’s example of careful reading and contextualiza-

tion and her dedication to bibliographic research, especially to the recovery of native texts that have been lost to the inattention of mainstream scholarship, continues to challenge and inspire.

I did not actually meet LaVonne until I began to attend meetings of the MLA. In 1996, the year I was on the job market, I was fortunate to be part of an ASAIL-sponsored panel on the topic of American Indian oratory that was chaired by Malea Powell and included a paper by Ginny Carney. We were all graduate students, and LaVonne was there in our audience, which was terrifying but extremely pleasing. Over the next several years, all three of us became caught up in LaVonne's ongoing mission to bolster the presence of American Indian literary studies at the MLA by supporting the work of new scholars. Encouraged by LaVonne and others, I attended my first ASAIL business meeting at the 1997 MLA, where I successfully proposed a panel for the next year. The three provocative papers on that panel, titled "Indigenous Texts in Colonial and Post-Colonial Contexts," attracted a large audience at the 1998 conference and generated a lively discussion. Afterward, LaVonne told me that I *would* attend the business meeting again that year. The next thing I knew, I was nominated to run for ASAIL vice president. LaVonne had gently pushed, and, quite suddenly it seemed, I was in the thick of things.

LaVonne has a long association with the Newberry Library in Chicago, which houses what is probably the best collection of materials on nineteenth-century American Indian history in the United States. I was swept up again by LaVonne's energy and intention when she encouraged me to apply to the 2001 Lannan Summer Institute on American Indian history, which was held at the Newberry. Although LaVonne wrote a letter of support for my application—which I considered extremely generous, since I had never worked with her as a student—I was not accepted. Given the specific topic, only historians had been invited into the small seminar. LaVonne was not pleased. She made a point of contacting me personally to explain what had happened; she also made a point of saying that I *would* apply again the next year. The 2002 seminar was led by Kate Shanley, and it focused on American Indian autobiography; I have no doubt that

LaVonne had a hand in Kate's selection. When I was accepted into this seminar, it was LaVonne who offered the first congratulations.

As part of her work with the Newberry, LaVonne has been a guiding voice in the creation of the CIC American Indian Studies Consortium, which has brought together American Indian studies faculty and graduate students from the schools of the Big Ten and the University of Chicago since 2000. The Consortium offers faculty and graduate student fellowships; holds an annual national symposium at the Newberry and sponsors an annual graduate student conference; and offers graduate student workshops and seminars that are taught by CIC faculty. As always, LaVonne has been a tireless advocate for literature within the interdisciplinary field of American Indian studies. At the first CIC symposium, I found myself repeatedly cornered by various members of the Consortium's Executive Committee: each came to "encourage" me to apply to teach the next graduate workshop. The first workshop had been taught by a historian, and the committee members all said that it would be good for the second workshop to focus on literature. It all sounded a bit scripted. LaVonne was behind these serial invitations, of course, and toward the end of the day she told me herself that I *would* apply to teach the workshop. That was that. No matter that I felt over-extended and a little out of my league; refusal wasn't an option. And LaVonne's instincts were spot on: teaching the workshop was incredibly rewarding.

Many others know LaVonne Ruoff much better than I do—the founding generation of scholars in American Indian literary studies, for example, or staff and fellows at the Newberry Library or members of the Chicago native community—and they all can list in detail her many accomplishments and eloquently describe her no-nonsense drive, determination, and devotion. But LaVonne's influence has spread far beyond those who know her well personally. When she was honored a few years ago at the MLA, Daniel Littlefield remarked that LaVonne has done more than anyone else to encourage the next generation of scholars of American Indian literatures, to spark their interest in research, to open doors for them. I am grateful for having

been one of those young scholars guided to and occasionally pushed through such doors by LaVonne. Hers is an example of scholarship, teaching, and mentoring—above all, of a generous spirit—that I try to follow. Although I do not always succeed, I know that it is worth the effort to try; generosity of spirit is LaVonne's most important legacy, and it is the one that matters most for our future as a discipline and as a community.

Tribute to LaVonne Brown Ruoff

GRETCHEN M. BATAILLE

When I think of the contributions LaVonne Brown Ruoff has made to the field of Native American literature, the simplest response is “thank you.” But it’s more complicated than that. She and Gene have opened their home to countless scholars—for evenings during MLA meetings in Chicago and for temporary housing. She has mentored young university faculty, and she has spent countless hours directing NEH seminars to expand the number of scholars and to increase the breadth of scholarship. LaVonne is the model of a university faculty member who has contributed to the teaching, the research, and the outreach and engagement expectations that define our profession, and she has done all of it with the zeal of a missionary, the intelligence of a true scholar, and the heart and caring of a mother.

LaVonne’s scholarship has ranged from providing the bibliographical work so needed for early forays into this field to ensuring that out-of-print texts are made available again to publishing critical interpretations of contemporary work. She serves on the committees and editorial boards that make decisions about expanding the canon and recognizing the diversity of American literature by ensuring that the “most American” of this literature be included in the conversations and in the academy. Her contributions have influenced how Native American literature is viewed in the United States as well as internationally, and she is known by scholars throughout the world.

Lest LaVonne be viewed as a sober saint, I have sent in my favorite photo of her. Riding the carousel at the Eiffel Tower in Paris, LaVonne

is joyful, full of fun, and a wonderful friend and companion. For all of her contributions as a scholar and a friend, we owe LaVonne a heart-felt “thank you.”



Footnotes on a Friendship, February 2005

KIMBERLY BLAESER

Sometime in February of 1985 I took my first public transportation in Chicago. For a native of the little village of Mahanomen, Minnesota, it was a hellish day. I knew the train I boarded was supposed to take me within walking distance of the Chicago Circle campus, but it could have left me in Skokie, or Greenland for that matter, and I would not have been the wiser. I had been warned—repeatedly—not to talk to anyone. This talking to, smiling at, acknowledging people had already gotten me into several uncomfortable spots. The thrill of my city sojourn at the Newberry Library had begun to wear off. The all-night traffic beneath my Chestnut Street apartment, my inability to keep “wheels” handy because of the astronomical parking fees, the anonymity of all the faces, and my hunger for open spaces all left me feeling tense, stranded, homesick.

But the gnawing in my stomach on this particular day came mostly from nervousness. I was this little imposter nobody, presuming the role of an academic. I had taken the audacious and irretrievable step of announcing that I was going to write my dissertation on the work of Gerald Vizenor. Now here I was on my way to meet the woman who was *the* Vizenor expert, the scholar who had read all his work, had compiled a long, detailed bibliography, and had written an analysis of everything from his haiku to his trickster fiction. I don't remember what reassuring chant I must have repeated under my breath to keep myself moving toward her office that day. Maybe it was *rent stipend, rent stipend, rent stipend*.

I do remember that any intelligent conversation I had planned dissolved the minute her door opened. There she was, Professor A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff, at least a neck and head taller than me and dressed like, well so *dressed*. Maybe she wore some richly colored scarf or a lush fabric. I don't remember, except it all said something *sophisticated*. Meanwhile, I stood there in my dripping black snow boots, praying I wouldn't begin to just weep with the hopelessness of it all.

Flash forward to June of 1997. Today I am taking a short cruise on the Thames, visiting the street markets and famous art galleries of Paris. My companion, a tall, dark-haired woman buys a basket of ripe cherries, so large and sweet I am still looking for their equal. We spend a wonderful relaxed day, the conversation interspersed with laughter and stories of our literary and academic friends, our writing projects, our teaching. Would you be surprised to learn it is the same woman I met on that fateful day in 1985?

Perhaps, you think, I was attacked on my return trip that afternoon and am now pleasantly delusional from the head injury. But wait, if you eavesdrop just a little, you will understand what has taken place. Today she is talking to me about presses and my working with the board for the American Indian Lives series at Nebraska. For years she has offered me precise and practical tidbits of advice, introduced me to a long list of the "who's who" of native studies, and presented me with a myriad of opportunities. As a mentor, this woman is what the French might call *formidable*.

I don't claim that LaVonne Ruoff single-handedly transformed little Pygmalion me or any of the many others who have happily been gathered under her wing. But she certainly sparked the process. She helped establish much of the SAIL and MLA infrastructure that is part of today's native literary studies. She has published, compiled, edited, sponsored, organized, coerced, presented, defended, and she has mentored tirelessly over the years. But all this might not have had the fruitful outcome it has if she did not also tease, story, indulge, host, shop, travel, advise, argue, comfort, and connect so humanly and humorously with us her grateful friends and colleagues.

As indebted as I am to her scholarly work, I leave it to someone else to list her academic accomplishments and honors. Instead I

would like to visit again the January in 1985, when I left her office, my head buzzing with ideas, my arms weighted with copies of what would help me launch my research, and the *imposter* self at least temporarily held at bay. For the other gift I carried out the door into the intimidating Chicago streets was affirmation. Somehow then and in the years that have ensued, this acknowledged matron of native studies finds even in the most naive of proposals the seeds of work that needs to be done. And like all who lead well, she helps equip others to accomplish their share. Sometimes she does this so well that the recipient of her good will may not immediately realize what she has been given. Sometimes it takes two score years.

Appreciations

JOANNA BROOKS

As a scholar based in early American studies, I would like to honor the impact of LaVonne Ruoff's work on my home field. Her scholarship has made it possible to think about early American literature in entirely new ways. Her recovery and republication of the Mohegan writer Samson Occom's *Sermon at the Execution of Moses Paul* served as a clarion call to early Americanists to begin thinking about Native Americans in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as sophisticated and authoritative readers and writers, not just objects of literary representation. Now, a rising generation of early Americanists is trying to continue her work by recovering more texts and more textual traces of Native American authority from the colonial-era archives so that we can all better appreciate the longevity and power of American Indian intellectual traditions.

Offering, in Return

CARI M. CARPENTER

I still recall my profound awe when my graduate advisor Betty Louise Bell invited me and other graduate students to meet with Dr. Ruoff (I was in no sense on first-name basis with her at that point) when she visited the University of Michigan years ago. Although I was new to Native American studies, I was aware even then of the magnitude of this meeting. And yet her grace and down-to-earth attitude soon put me at ease, and I quickly came to know her as LaVonne.

It was at the Newberry Library a couple of years later, however, that I had the opportunity to understand exactly why LaVonne is so important to this field. After inviting me to lunch with her and Bernd Peyer—an hour in which I sat marveling over my companions' collective knowledge of French food and native literature—LaVonne offered me her notes on the Canadian Mohawk writer E. Pauline Johnson. I eagerly accepted, even if “notes” conjured up a few papers from here and there. The notes were, in fact, something else indeed: a foot or more of work she had collected and written over her career. I sat in her office wondering how I would manage to look through it all in the few moments I had when she told me to take it with me. Feeling guilty, even with her blessings, I passed through the guarded vault of the Newberry and headed to Kinko's. The work she had collected, much of which was Johnson's writing from collections across North America, proved invaluable in my dissertation and later research. I still marvel at the generosity with which she turned over her lifelong work to a graduate student. Yet it's a generosity that no one who

knows LaVonne will find surprising. In addition to the countless other things she has taught us, she models the collegiality and collective spirit to which we should each aspire.

Dear LaVonne

SUSAN ROSE DOMINGUEZ

February 5, 2005

Dear LaVonne,

I'm writing this to say thank you for being one of my teachers, even years before we met in person. Thank you also for all your personal encouragement of my work over the past five years. The dissertation project is now being polished, and I look forward to moving on to learning more and sharing my knowledge as well.

I feel truly privileged to know you over email, lunch, and dinner and buying batteries for your palm pilot and your fiftieth watch. As part of the second generation of scholars you have mentored, I hope I will make you as proud as those American Indian scholars before me have done.

Fondly,

Susan Rose

A Fair Voice

P. JANE HAFEN

I am not sure when I first met LaVonne Brown Ruoff in person. I think it was at the Newberry Library in conjunction with the D'Arcy McNickle Center for the History of the American Indian. Like any student of American Indian literatures, I found her writing among the first thoughtful critical approaches. I devoured *Redefining American Literary History* (1990). I felt meeting her was an honor, and I could immediately feel her good spirit.

However, I do remember my first intense conversation with LaVonne. In 1997, shortly after Michael Dorris took his life, the Minneapolis newspaper ran an "investigative" story about Dorris and Louise Erdrich. The story seemed like acid poured on open wounds. LaVonne boldly stepped up and wrote a letter to the editor that corrected some of the story's information and noted the cruelty of the approach. In our conversation about the newspaper piece, I thanked her for her courage. I had the sense that she would have done the same wherever and whenever she felt that kind of injustice.

LaVonne has generously encouraged my work with Zitkala-Ša (Gertrude Simmons Bonnin). She was among the first scholars to look at the era when Zitkala-Ša, Pauline Johnson, George Copway, Alice Callahan, and others were writing. Her work with the Modern Language Association helped to legitimize institutionally the study of American Indian literatures and to reintroduce some overlooked writers.

Whether in the halls of academia, the real life defense of inequity, entertaining guests, or hauling around a hoard of people in her van, LaVonne is gracious, witty, and giving.

To LaVonne—With Good Thoughts

GEARY HOBSON

I have very good thoughts of LaVonne Ruoff and all that she has accomplished within the field of Native American literary studies as we view it today. Almost thirty years ago, when I went to the MLA conference for the first time, I remember being turned off by the condescension and “brush-offs,” as I saw them at the time, by most of the non-Indian scholars there in the Indian lit sessions, toward me. And as I remember that time in 1976, there were no other Indians at the gathering, and all the academics who were there seemed more hung up on “identity” issues than the Indian writers I knew. I was bothered also by the surety (as it seemed then) that the only Indian literature around was either from the trinity of Momaday, Welch, and Silko or a version or rehashing of the old Schoolcraft renditions.

I very naively had a paper to present (it was my “Rise of the White Shaman” paper, which brought me some degree of fame and infamy a little later on), but imagine my surprise when I learned that not only had no one read it beforehand, but also that I was only to give a five-minute summary of it, after which there were no questions about it all. No one seemed at all interested in the issues I felt I had raised.

LaVonne Ruoff was the one exception among the crowd. She was extremely gracious and pleasant and very interested in hearing about “that whole bunch of *other* Indian writers who were around the University of New Mexico (Simon Ortiz, Bill Oandasan, Joy Harjo, Luci Tapahonso, etc.),” where I was coming from at the time. Afterward, she tried very hard to involve me in future MLA Indian lit matters. I

have nothing but praise for her and her continual efforts to bring in the Indian writers and scholars.

Always able to see beyond the very narrow definitions, LaVonne has been a very welcomed presence in the area of Native American literary studies. May her contributions continue.

First Impressions of A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff as an Author

PATRICE HOLLRAH

In January 1996 I enrolled in my first course in American Indian literatures. As a neophyte in the field, I searched for texts that could help me with the new concepts I was learning, ideas that would enhance my understanding of native authors and their works. One of the first books I purchased was *American Indian Literatures: An Introduction, Bibliographic Review, and Selected Bibliography*, by A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff (1990). A blurb on the back cover by *SAIL* summarizes my first impressions of the book, which I read from cover to cover, underlining, highlighting, and annotating: "The first thing likely to strike the reader upon opening LaVonne Ruoff's new volume is the range, variety, and richness of American Indian Literatures. . . . Well conceived and well executed, [the book] will be welcomed by students and teachers who are approaching the subject for the first time." As both student and teacher, I appreciated the comprehensive introduction that Ruoff provides in this work. For someone who was at the beginning of the learning curve, the book was a welcome resource. In fact, I kept hoping that she would eventually publish a new edition of this work, bringing it up to date with the wealth of publications that have followed since its first appearance.

When I attended the MLA Convention in San Francisco in 1998, a colleague pointed out Ruoff at one of the sessions sponsored by the Association for the Study of American Indian Literatures. I must admit that I was surprised the first time I saw her because I was not expecting a non-native woman to be the author of a text that held so much information about American Indian literatures. Devon Abbott

Mihesuah (Oklahoma Choctaw) writes, “I do not agree with the concept of essentialism—that only Natives ‘know’ about Natives—nor do I believe that only members of a tribe can write accurately about that tribe. Many non-Natives write perfectly acceptable works about Natives because they know and understand their subjects.”¹ In my naive essentialist assumptions, I incorrectly reasoned that knowing so much about American Indian literatures would require a native scholar. That mistake helped me learn that non-natives could write acceptable works about American Indian literatures if they did their research and understood their subjects. I applaud Ruoff’s scholarship and dedication in American Indian literatures, and I would hope that her example will be a model for others in the field to emulate.

NOTES

1. Devon Abbott Mihesuah, *Indigenous American Women: Decolonization, Empowerment, Activism* (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2003), 17.

An Appreciation

HELEN JASKOSKI

A special issue of *SAIL* honoring LaVonne Ruoff offers a fitting opportunity to reflect on her many gifts to the profession and to so many of us personally. When the ASAIL e-discussion group sent a call for contributors, I embraced it as both fortuitous and appropriate. Personally, I owe much to LaVonne, beginning with her 1979 NEH seminar, which initiated much of my research, and continuing over the years as I have benefited from her counsel, resources, recommendations, and much more. Now, my recent retirement suggests the symmetry so beloved by us literature appreciators, a perfect time to look back from end to beginning to see the continuity of her contribution in light of recent honors—notably Lifetime Scholarly Achievement awards from the MLA and the Before Columbus Foundation, and the two awards for Writer of the Year from the Wordcraft Circle of Native Writers and Storytellers.

Not surprisingly, as I sifted through testimonials, bibliographies, and news reports, larger issues emerged. In 1986 I wrote a short piece outlining some of LaVonne's achievements recognized that year by the MELUS Award for Distinguished Contributions to Ethnic Studies. One thing LaVonne said about the item was that she "got a chuckle" from the reference in my comment that her "godmothering" of research and study is, I think, one of LaVonne's most important contributions to better scholarship in American ethnic literatures." Only when I went back to that article in order to begin this one did it dawn on me that my use of "godmother" might have suggested a popular movie title. Of course, I meant the "godparent" sense of

mentoring, guiding, and supporting: what Willie Mays was to Barry Bonds, let's say, and nothing to do with any movie star. The men who played ball with him say about Mays that he knew the truth about two things: he knew the game better than anyone, and he knew as well as anyone that it was, after all, a game. Much the same applies to LaVonne (with the tacit understanding that one's protégés in scholarship as in baseball may take unanticipated paths). Moreover, I find the correspondence pleasing as well as apt, having just learned that LaVonne's father was a part-time baseball player who for a brief period in the early twentieth century managed a Native American baseball team in western North Dakota. In one of our emails about this article LaVonne mentions that "Because he lived forty miles from the nearest town, most of his contacts were with Indian families. As a child, I was fascinated by the pictures of these families and his stories about North Dakota." The baseball comparison is personal; so are the reflections about the ways in which LaVonne has shaped the study of American Indian literatures that follow, but I believe and hope that my appreciation of her work is shared by others.

Any account of LaVonne Ruoff's publications must begin with the one book that all of us could never live without: *American Indian Literatures: An Introduction, Bibliographic Review, and Selected Bibliography*. Before the complete volume appeared she shared some individual author bibliographies in *SAIL*, in those early issues of the first series produced by Karl Kroeber on mimeographed and hand-stapled folios. If she had published nothing besides *American Indian Literatures*, we would be forever in her debt. Happily, she has published much more. Critical works include *Redefining American Literary History*, the essay collection LaVonne co-edited with Jerry Ward, and the many pieces in journals, collections, and reference works, including many introductions and forewords to others' publications. An exhaustive summary is beyond the scope of this article, but I want to single out the essay on Leslie Silko's fiction, "Ritual and Renewal," first published in *MELUS* and subsequently revised and reprinted in several collections, as one of the earliest discussions of ways in which traditional themes and structures can inform contemporary written texts. We take it for granted now that this approach is a standard, in fact a necessary, foundation for

analysis of texts by American Indian authors writing today, and we may forget how revolutionary were those early critiques by LaVonne and the few other scholars breaking ground in this field. Indeed, when Silko incorporated “Yellow Woman” into *Storyteller* she took pains to embed it within versions of traditional tales like the ones LaVonne had earlier used to analyze the short story, underscoring the importance of this kind of contextualization.

LaVonne’s other major publication effort has been the editions of important early writers. As with critical approaches, we now may take for granted the place of writers like Matthews, Oskison, Ridge, Eastman, or Mourning Dove, but in 1979, when I participated in LaVonne’s first NEH seminar, the earliest writer in print was D’Arcy McNickle, only recently recovered from oblivion. If you wanted to order books for a class you had some contemporary poetry and fiction, a handful of anthologies of translated texts mined from BAE publications, and *Black Elk Speaks*—that was all of literature written before 1965 that was available to teachers, students, or readers in general outside elite repositories of rare materials. While Larry Evers began working with traditional producers of song and story texts in the Southwest to create film and anthology versions of traditional verbal arts, LaVonne was mining archives and special collections to locate works by the earliest authors publishing in English. The profound importance of both projects was the motive to support native students’ ability (in and out of classrooms) to transmit and enrich their family and national traditions.

In newspaper interviews LaVonne has noted that one reason she began her research in early American Indian writings was to find models for students in “special composition sections for American Indian students, who had considerable trouble in getting through the courses.” She diverged from her original scholarly path devoted to Walter Savage Landor, and as a result we now have the reprints of E. Pauline Johnson’s short fiction, Sophia Alice Callahan’s novel *Wynema*, the three volumes of autobiography and essays by Charles Eastman and George Copway, and Samson Occum’s *Sermon*. I think it is important to see this erudite scholarship growing from and being reclaimed by native communities, beginning with those relocated

and later-generation urban Indian students seeking to negotiate academic demands, whose predicament initially motivated her researches. As in other areas, LaVonne's work showed the way, not just for those of us who study American Indian literatures but also as an essential *cui bono* that I believe will enhance any literary study.

To the recovery of primary texts that LaVonne has brought back into print should be added mentoring and facilitating of other work on early writers, as with her advisement on Dexter Fisher's dissertation on Zitkala-Ša and Mourning Dove, resulting in the eventual reprinting of writings by these pioneering women authors. This is the kind of "god-mothering" I have in mind when thinking of the gifts LaVonne's work has given us. Can anyone imagine teaching or scholarship without the University of Nebraska Press series? That venture has produced biographical studies of authors that many of us regularly teach: works on John Rollin Ridge by James Parins, on Alexander Posey by Daniel Littlefield, on D'Arcy McNickle by Dorothy Ragon Parker, on Sarah Winnemucca by Sally Zanjani. The Wordcraft Circle of Native Writers and Storytellers acknowledged her contribution to bibliographical studies in 2003 with the designation Writer of the Year for Series Editing for this American Indian Lives series, as it had previously recognized her contribution to bibliography in 1997 with the award for Writer of the Year for Annotation/Bibliography. LaVonne's emphasis on making good editions and studies of primary sources available has also informed consulting and advising, as in her work on the groundbreaking *Heath Anthology of American Literature*.

The retrieval of forgotten texts has other and deeper implications for literary study. This is a conversation I began years ago with LaVonne, and one she had earlier helped initiate at the seminal NEH "Flagstaff" seminar in 1977—another of those professional origin myths in which she plays a part. We who rejoice in the reprints of early writings have encountered the questions of colleagues (or friends or strangers on a plane): Why should we read Sophia Alice Callahan? What exactly will students learn about literature or writing, or art in general, from being required to study George Copway? Again in our correspondence LaVonne recollects a relevant anecdote, reflecting on one of the early reprints,

when Dexter Fisher's proposal to do an edition of Mourning Dove's *Cogewea* was being considered by University of Nebraska Press. [One of the editors] wrote that staff members felt that the book lacked sufficient literary merit to be republished, although she felt it should be back in print. I responded that Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* lacked literary merit as well but had been in print for over a hundred years. Far more important than whether *Cogewea* met the criterion for *belles lettres* was that it was one of the first (at that time I thought it was the first) novels written by an Indian woman and that it contained important information about Salish life, culture, and history. To their credit, the press not only approved the edition but have kept the book in print ever since.

The issue of literary value is worth raising for any text, for it goes to the heart of what we do, resting on the real questions: What is literature? Is it important? And if it is, what makes it so? I don't suppose anyone ponders this stuff all the time; we may be too busy with the day-to-day. But it is important to be reminded, especially to be reminded that the questions themselves are more important than any of the more ephemeral answers that may emerge.

Impressed as I am with her scholarship, it is LaVonne's savvy as a professional that in my experience is unique. In the baseball metaphor, she knows the game like no one else. I recall one incident that illustrates for me her virtuosity in organizing. We were scheduled on different panels at the California State University Symposium on American Literature (later to become the ALA) meeting in San Diego. LaVonne caught me in a hallway to say she would like to convene an ad hoc "rump meeting" at lunch so that ASAIL members could discuss plans for a forthcoming conference. Yes, I thought, she never ever misses a beat. Others have their own stories testifying to that ability to negotiate the arcane channels of MLA, NEH, and so many other bureaucratic labyrinths. Anyone who has participated in or who has attended an MLA panel organized by the Division of Native American Literature or by its predecessor, the Discussion Group on Native American Literature, or by the Committee on the Languages

and Literatures of America has LaVonne to thank for the availability of that opportunity. She paved the way for the work done by ASAIL officers to gain Affiliated Organization status with MLA for ASAIL. The list of conferences, lectures, keynote speeches, and important meetings could be extended for pages; here I note her essential participation in organizing major conferences involving the Newberry Library, NEH, and MELUS.

None of these endeavors has been exactly uncontroversial. Notwithstanding the celebratory mode in this article, it is important, I think, to look at what has been overcome. There is, after all, the obvious fact that recovery of neglected works was necessary precisely because they were ignored, neglected, suppressed, denigrated. A while ago, sometime in the mid-1980s, a certain conservative newspaper columnist wrote a piece deploring the deterioration of higher education and its abandonment of whatever great classics he had in mind. His example of the inferior offerings of education emphasizing diversity was a course in literature by American Indian women. This particular incident stuck in my mind because I was during that very semester teaching such a course, and we had a lively discussion in class about the article and its assumptions in light of Louise Erdrich's receiving, that same month, the National Book Award for *Love Medicine*. The remarkable thing was the staggering racism of his premises: the inconceivability of writing by American Indian women was as self-evident to him as morning traffic. The continuing transformation of the scholarly world is taking place not because gaping holes in the discourse spontaneously presented themselves thirty-five years ago but because in the face of congealed opposition LaVonne and others have worked as energetically as they have to show us how impoverished was that white guys club that used to be the MLA (which in turn stood for "the academy").

The successes and honors that LaVonne has enjoyed testify to a rare diplomacy and, in my favorite phrase from Gerry Vizenor, good humor in accomplishing so much. It is not surprising that LaVonne is one of only three persons to be recognized by the MLA with its Lifetime Scholarly Achievement Award, presented to her in 2002. Willie Mays always knew that baseball was a game, and in the end it was the

industry that served the game and not the other way around. So this is why LaVonne's tributes from the MLA and all the other many academic and civic institutions that have rightly honored her are best seen in the context of those freshman students at the University of Illinois, who got a chance to play the game, and of all of us who have been able to do our jobs better because she has made our profession—our industry—able to give us a better game.

It is work well begun but hardly finished. Turning from past accomplishments to the future and its challenges reminds me that above all I think of LaVonne as a dedicated teacher. She is a baccalaureate in education, and her publications, professional accomplishments, and mentoring of scholars have always been integrated with her commitment to pedagogy. In fact, her first publication addressing American Indian issues was an article on "Freshman Composition and the Urban Native American" that appeared in the 1973 *ADE Bulletin*, sharing with other teachers the insights she gained in the special composition sections she taught at the University of Illinois. It is a deeply personal commitment. I remember asking LaVonne back in 1979, during that first NEH seminar, what had inspired her dedication to American Indian literature, and she reminded me of that conversation in a recent email: "The strongest influence on why I became involved with UIC's Native American Support Program and with the field of American Indian literature stems from marriage to Milford Prasher, a Menominee, for thirteen and a half years and raising and caring for an Ojibwe daughter, Sharon (b. 1959; d. 2002)." The idea of family resonates as I try to connect the past with aspirations for the future. When I used to teach texts by native authors, I often tried to open for students the possibility of alternative world views by contrasting the rhetoric of "humanity against the world" in their familiar discourse—frequently a language of conquest, enmity and alienation—with the rhetoric in the traditional texts we studied, in which the relationships of humans to the outside world are often figured as family connections. Thinking about where I would like to see LaVonne's work take us brings me back to this trope of family. This is where her work has been leading me, a good path to follow.

Honoring LaVonne Ruoff

ARNOLD KRUPAT

From the 1970s to the present moment, LaVonne Ruoff was and still is the absolutely essential positivist, if I can put it this way, in a field that had (and sometimes still has) too many vague idealists and wild fantasists. There's much to celebrate in LaVonne's long and ongoing career in Native American studies, but I want to focus on her early seminal contribution to laying out the field *bibliographically*, to making as clear as possible to any of us who wished to work in this field the full extent of what was available and exactly where to find it.

Of course, by now we also have LaVonne's *American Indian Literatures* published for the MLA in 1990 and since revised, her 1991 *Literatures of the American Indian*, along with other bibliographic contributions by a number of people. I am concentrating most particularly on LaVonne's earliest contributions, on the one hand because a little history is always useful and, on the other, because it may be hard for some of the younger scholars in this currently mature and developing field of Native American literary studies to imagine just how little solid bibliographic resource material actually existed twenty, almost thirty years ago.

It was, for example, in 1977 that Karl Kroeber, editor of what was then called the ASAIL "Newsletter," announced the newsletter would henceforth contain a bibliography section, and, of course, the bibliographer was LaVonne. The following year Jack W. Marken published a bibliography called *The American Indian: Language and Literature*, which was reviewed in the spring 1980 issue of SAIL by LaVonne—who laconically pointed out the authors Marken had omitted and the

publications he had missed by authors he had included. These omissions she filled in systematically. My favorite moment in that review is a simple parenthesis in which LaVonne points out that the correct name of one of the authors mentioned is “(Gertrude, not Ethel Bonnin)”! In 1983 LaVonne and Karl collaborated on the publication of *American Indian Literatures in the United States: A Basic Bibliography for Teachers*, and in the same year LaVonne published, in *SAIL*, “American Indian Literatures: A Guide to Anthologies, Texts, and Research.” These were enormously helpful to those of us new to or newly seeking to enter this field.

My first book publication in 1985 dealt with Native American autobiography. But LaVonne had already for many years been championing George Copway and John Joseph Matthews, and she was one of the first to take William Apes—in those days we spelled his name with one s—seriously. She also drew attention to Simon Pokagon, who did not, it seems to me, begin to get the critical attention he deserves until very recently.

I suspect others will be writing about LaVonne’s work with the MLA, important work that led to her being honored in 2002 with the MLA’s Lifetime Scholarly Achievement Award. Still others will also, no doubt, refer to her many critical publications and speak of the unheralded ways in which she never failed to respond to the many individuals who wrote her and asked for help. These contributions to the field I too would honor. But for me what shines brightest is the grounding she provided and continues to provide by her archival work and wide-ranging research (I’m thinking in particular of the very fine edition of S. Alice Callahan’s *Wynema: A Child of the Forest* [1997]) by her archival work and wide-ranging research, leading to the production of bibliographical resources without which, in the past, a great many of us would simply have been stymied and, in the present, a great many of us have been saved an enormous amount of time and worry. Thanks, Lavonne.

The Archive

ROBERT DALE PARKER

LaVonne Ruoff has devoted her career to promoting the study of American Indian literature intellectually, professionally, and personally. Intellectually, she sets the highest standards for other critics, as anyone who has ever heard her serve as a respondent at a panel will know. She expects us to do our work both culturally and in the library. She has a patient understanding of the obstacles we face in developing a new field, but she still holds us to the most rigorous standards of research, of respect for Indian people and cultures, and of feminist good sense. Professionally, LaVonne's *American Indian Literatures: An Introduction, Bibliographic Review, and Selected Bibliography* sets the paradigm for introducing the field. When people ask where they can learn what's out there in Native American literature and literary studies, I send them to *American Indian Literatures*. Indeed, LaVonne is the archive. She knows the books, and she knows the people. Yet, even though she seems to know all the novelists, poets, playwrights, essayists, and critics from our own time, LaVonne's intellectual and historicist curiosity have led her to challenge the preoccupation with the contemporary in American Indian literary studies and to call attention to the history and tradition that upholds what we study, not only through her comprehensive and multidisciplinary bibliographical leadership but also through her invaluable editions of earlier, under-read writers: her edited collections of E. Pauline Johnson's stories and of George Copway's (Kahgegahbowh's) *Life, Letters, and Speeches*, and her recovery of S. Alice Callahan's overlooked novel *Wynema: A Child of the Forest*. Personally, the stories are

legion of LaVonne's tough-minded, tireless efforts to help other scholars, particularly women and native scholars, launch their intellectual projects in an often unwelcoming environment. At the very moment that I started to write this tribute, I received an awestruck, delighted note from a graduate student who had that moment gotten an email from LaVonne encouraging her research. When I think of LaVonne's personal role in the field, I also think of her infectious, hearty laugh. At a conference, when you hear that laugh around the corner, you know that LaVonne is at it again, inspiring others to the intellectual, professional, and personal challenge, pleasure, and collegiality of American Indian literary studies.

Rough Ruoff, Pirate Fighter

WILLIS REGIER

Her prominence in university circles has eclipsed LaVonne's distinguished prior career. She is notoriously modest, and doesn't bring it up any longer, but people who care about her need to know her as I do, when we were in the navy together. It was many years ago, when we were young, ambitious, and eager to see the world. I was an ensign doing submarine reconnaissance; she was the captain of the USS frigate *Destiny* and was leading the campaign to clear the Mississippi of river pirates. We met at a tattoo parlor in Biloxi. I was crossing my *t*'s and dotting my *i*'s; she was getting a dagger on her shoulder for sinking yet another scurvy pirate boat. I couldn't help noticing all those daggers. I made some joke about a knife in her back, and she turned to me with that cool look of hers and said I should see where she packed her pistols. We became instant friends. For the next month I used my connections in underwater surveillance to help her get the jump on those dirty pirates, and she kept getting more daggers. When she had served her time and ran out of room for daggers, the navy was desperate to keep her and offered her an eye patch and extra rum, but she said no and walked away, toward the career now better known and no less perilous. You can toast her for her scholarship and celebrate what she's done to mentor the young; you can salute her for her courage and praise her stamina, but I'll tell you, the river pirates remember Rough Ruoff for her dead-eye aim with a depth charge and her flawless verb-subject agreement. I remember her dunking pirates like dumplings, saying, "You can tell they're done when the skin starts to flake." What a woman. They don't make 'em like LaVonne any more.

The Multi-Missionary Eleanor Roosevelt of American Indian Literatures

KENNETH M. ROEMER

THE BIBLE-TOTING BIBLIOGRAPHY DISPENSE

Although I first met LaVonne Ruoff in 1977 at the Flagstaff NEH/MLA Summer Seminar on American Indian Literatures, one of my strongest early memories of her is from 1982 at the Yale Institute on Reconstructing American Literature. She appeared as an expert on American Indian literatures backed by her bibliographies and a dog-eared copy of Jack W. Marken's *The American Indian: Language and Literature* (1978), which she held aloft and called "her bible." Less than ten years later anyone who was serious about promoting American Indian literatures was toting around a dog-eared copy of LaVonne's *American Indian Literatures* (1990). For these converts that book was their bible.

That bible, along with her co-edited *Redefining American Literary History* (1990), played a key role in transforming the American literary canon. American literary histories and encyclopedias have mentioned Native American authors at least since Samson Oocom's entry in Evert A. and George L. Duyckinck's *Cyclopaedia of American Literature* (1855). But as I was compiling a Web site of tables of contents of American literature anthologies (www.uta.edu/english/roemer/ctt), I was surprised to discover that, despite all the Native American literary scholarship of the 1970s and 1980s, it really wasn't until the early 1990s (beginning with the *Heath Anthology of American Literature* [1990]) that American Indian literature entries appeared regularly in Early American, nineteenth-century, and twentieth-century sections.¹ LaVonne's bibliographic work had a significant impact on

the Heath (the Yale Institute was the communal beginning of that collection) and on other major anthologies.

Editorial boards of established anthologies move slowly. They need to be convinced that a “new” literature exists in sufficient quantity and quality before they assign precious space to it. LaVonne’s work, with its Modern Language Association imprimatur, in combination with Momaday’s Pulitzer, the attention paid to the native “renaissance” writers of the 1970s, and Erdrich’s stunning arrival in the 1980s obviously convinced even the most established editorial boards, including the Norton Anthology of American Literature.

THE ON-STAGE MISSIONARY

If all LaVonne had written and edited were her bibliographies and *Redefining American Literary History*, she still would have deserved the Lifetime Scholarly Achievement Award (2002), a form of high recognition rarely bestowed by the MLA. After all, how many scholars can claim that their bibliographic work was one of, if not the primary driving force behind changing the American literary canon and the creation of a new field of literary study? But in my opinion her major achievement has been her commitment to moving on many public and hidden fronts to help to bring about canon and academic disciplinary changes.

The most visible face of her multi-front crusade appears in scholarly book chapters and journal articles and in papers and lectures. The publications appear in the best general Americanist journals (e.g., *American Literature*, *American Quarterly*), the best ethnic studies journals (e.g., *MELUS*), and the best native studies journals (e.g., *SAIL*, *AIQ*, and *AICRJ*). She’s delivered papers internationally and at prestigious national conferences but also in Illinois at Naperville North High School and Oak Park elementary schools.

Another quality of LaVonne’s public multi-front effort is her persistent call to avoid premature closure of the American Indian literary canon. When writing about Momaday and Silko seemed to dominate academic discussions, she reminded critics of the significance of Welch and Vizenor. When written literature after 1968 was center

(and middle- and back-) stage, she stressed the importance of written literature from 1772 to 1968. When most scholars focused on modern male authors, she (re)discovered Callahan and championed Schoolcraft, Winnemucca, Johnson, and Zitkala-Ša. When 90 percent of classroom time and scholarly space examined fiction and poetry, she featured oral literatures, historical writing (e.g., Copway), and especially life narratives (e.g., Eastman and the University of Nebraska Press's *American Indian Lives* series, for which she is general editor). In other words, one of LaVonne's great missionary contributions is her ability to nag convincingly. Over and over we hear her saying, "That's fine, but don't overlook . . ."

THE BEHIND-THE-SCENES MISSIONARY

It may seem strange to end this brief appreciation by emphasizing LaVonne's least public persona, but her role as the Eleanor Roosevelt of Native American Literature is at least as important as her bibliographies, articles, and presentations. Why the Roosevelt comparison? Mrs. Roosevelt was once asked, "How can you stand to be on all those boring committees?" She responded, "If you want to save one baby, you become a good parent. If you want to save millions of babies you serve on lots and lots of boring committees."²

LaVonne has done an enormous amount of committee and administrative work to ensure that the infant American Indian studies discipline was saved and would thrive. At a crucial time she stepped in as interim director of the D'Arcy McNickle Center for American Indian History at the Newberry Library. She was president of ASAIL and the prime mover in gaining Discussion Group and Division status for American Indian Literatures in the MLA. LaVonne then continued to promote American Indian literatures as a member (twice) of the committee that at present is entitled the Committee on the Literatures of People of Color and now as a member of the Delegate Assembly Organizing Committee and the MLA's most powerful committee, the Executive Council.

She has served on Indian community committees and has made major contributions to fostering the teaching of native literatures by

writing grants, directing NEH seminars for university faculty (including tribal college faculty), giving papers at NCTE conventions, and making presentations to potential teachers of American Indian literatures at universities, community colleges, high schools, elementary schools, and the Native American Educational Services in Chicago.³ She also helped to establish the American Indian Studies Consortium of the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (which comprises the Big Ten plus the University of Chicago and her university, the University of Illinois at Chicago).

Even further behind the scenes she has been an official consultant, reviewer, and board member on everything from learned journals like *American Literature* to children's literature programs to NEH grants. She has even volunteered to serve on doctoral dissertation committees of students at universities other than her own. For the past two decades the results of this beyond-the-call service have often been scholars who went on to impact the field, for example, Dexter Fisher, David Moore, Roberta Hill, and Ginny Carney.

Then there is the backstage missionary, the informal consultant, generous almost to a fault with her time and her advice—which is always informed and often emphatic. (She emphatically called me to the carpet for omitting Simon Ortiz from the major authors section of a prospectus for the *Cambridge Companion to Native American Literature* [2005]). We don't always have to agree with LaVonne (in the previous case I did and added Simon). But anyone who is about to embark on a major project in American Indian literatures would be wise to (or rather, would be a fool not to) consult with LaVonne. After all, she wrote one bible and is in the process of revising and expanding even that. Soon we'll have to retire our weathered copies of the first edition of *American Indian Literatures* and get ready to dog-ear another welcome missionary volume.

NOTES

1. There were other major anthologies that included more women and "ethnic" authors earlier than 1990, especially *The Harper American Literature*

(1987). But Heath was the first to include American Indian literatures throughout their volumes.

2. The source of this paraphrase of Mrs. Roosevelt's words is Abraham Maslow, as filmed in the educational movie *Maslow and Self Actualization*.

3. Another significant contribution to informing middle and high school students is her *Literatures of the American Indian* published by Chelsea House.

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Thank You, LaVonne

SIOBHAN SENIER

I'm sitting here, sort of paralyzed, trying to think of words to "honor" LaVonne. Surely there is nothing I can say that everyone doesn't already know—that *she* doesn't already know. But then, why should any of us withhold our gratitude out of fear she's heard it all? Thank you, LaVonne, for making so much of our scholarship and reading possible, for working so indefatigably to reprint, republish, recirculate, and re-cherish so many brilliant Native American authors. Thank you for giving us critical paradigms for thinking about those authors. Thank you for all of the precious institutions—McNickle, ASAIL—that you've supported, even helped build. And thank you, maybe most of all, for your patient, constant mentoring, for always being accessible and down-to-earth and incisive to even the most junior scholars. For always being there. Thank you.

In Praise of Old Friendships

KATHRYN W. SHANLEY

They say a true friend is a great gift, and that an old friend makes the best mirror. LaVonne Ruoff is both to me—we have known one another for over twenty years. What more could one want from a friend but someone who belongs to you in a kinship way, and at the same time knows how to hold up a mirror when you need to look upon yourself through someone else's eyes. LaVonne is the person to whom I have turned what seems like a million times for a kind word, for help, for letters of support, for a textual reference, for news, even for a phone number (I swear she has everyone's phone number!). I must say that LaVonne has mentored, in one way or another, every up-and-coming scholar in our field. She has always spoken with great enthusiasm as she has seen new scholars finishing up their work in graduate studies. I cannot imagine a more generous scholar, mentor, or friend—she is all those things to and for us all. And she relates to others with the sort of kindness that only comes from great wisdom.

Despite the valuable role she has played in so many people's lives, LaVonne remains humble about her service to individuals and to the field of Native American literature. As the recipient of the Modern Language Association's Lifetime Achievement Award, LaVonne rightly stands tallest, heads and shoulders above the rest of us, as someone who has devoted her career to doing the next thing that needs doing to assure that native voices will be heard. She will long be known as the person who kept banging her drum slowly until Native American literature and literary study became institutionalized in MLA and recognized and respected as on a par with other literatures

and literary studies. Along with others in her generation such as Karl Kroeber, Dan Littlefield, and James Parins, LaVonne set about to document all that could be found, to foster growth in the critical examination of those early works, and to develop institutional homes, such as ASAIL and the MLA Division of American Indian Literatures.

LaVonne has done more to recover American Indian texts, to reinterpret old texts, to promote the growth of an American Indian professoriate, to support all scholars in the field of American Indian literatures, to institutionalize the field, and to foster a new generation of scholars in American Indian studies at the Newberry Library than anyone else. (I have elsewhere referred to her as the Willie Nelson of native literary study—she's sung with anyone, because she loves the song [the literature] so much!) I would dare to say that there is no one in the field who does not possess a copy of *American Indian Literatures: An Introduction, Bibliographic Review, and Selected Bibliography*. That text has become the veritable bible of American Indian literary study. I always recommend it as the first text new teachers of native literature ought to own. LaVonne's work on Charles Eastman, Alice Callahan, George Copway, and Pauline Johnson creates the foundation we all need for more deeply understanding those authors' lives, times, and works. Her work enables us to pick up such authors with authority, knowing the information we use to introduce those works to students will be sound and deep. The editing role LaVonne has played also enhances greatly the books available to us for our work; I am particularly grateful for the Life Studies series LaVonne edits with the University of Nebraska Press, because those books are essential to the study of American Indian autobiography.

I stand in awe of LaVonne for all that she has accomplished, yet I'm also so very fond of her, because she gives to her friends from her heart. She has offered true friendship to me over the years, even when I was so ornery it's a wonder anyone could put up with me—I love her crackling laugh and all those wonderful times we've shared. What more can I say, but that she's a gift to us all.

Those Treasured Purple-Inked Pages

MARTHA VIEHMANN

It was sometime in 1979 when Lavonne Ruoff had a visiting appointment at Dartmouth College that I had the opportunity to meet her. Late last year at MLA, she recalled her visiting appointment with a smile, but there was no time to ask more about it. Twenty-five years ago, I was just starting out at college, and I remember feeling intimidated as I walked into the dining room of the Hanover Inn by the grandeur of the setting and the strangeness of having been asked to join a group of faculty. At the table with Lavonne and Andy Wiget on a dark winter or fall evening, I'm sure I mostly listened. I remember little of the conversation; it was probably over my head, but I do recall receiving an early mimeographed version of Lavonne's bibliography, then in its infant stages. I've moved a dozen or more times since I first saw those purple-inked pages, and I've taken to talking more than I should. I haven't come across the bibliography in my house in Ohio, but I have faith that it is still in one of my unpacked boxes of papers, crumbling but legible, a wealth of information to me in my undergraduate and graduate studies days. It was a resource of first resort to locate titles, and it gave me a sense of promise that a generation of scholars was so generously building a foundation for youngsters like me to stand on. Even standing on those foundations, I doubt I can ever stand as tall as Lavonne Ruoff, Andy Wiget, and others do for me still.

Contributor Biographies

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