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EDITORS

JAMES H. COX, University of Texas at Austin

DANIEL HEATH JUSTICE, University of Toronto

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Ellen L. Arnold
1247 Stoneybrook Lane
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FROM THE EDITORS

This issue of *SAIL* marks the completion of the first volume year shepherded through the publication process by the new editorial team, and it seems fitting that so much of the issue's content is reflective. The critical essays by Eric Wolfe and Caroline Wigginton offer nuanced analyses of our field's historical archive, drawing compelling understandings from two of the earliest Native writers in English, William Apess and Samson Occom. Whether asking new and important questions of one of Apess's more familiar texts or bringing Occom's least-studied writings to an engaged critical awareness, these scholars highlight the significance of these early writers to both the aesthetic and intellectual genealogies of Native literary expression.

Similarly, the two tributes included in this issue are a reminder that our field is one with a rich textual heritage that, while developed and maintained by a growing community of thoughtfully committed scholars, also has its paradigm-shifting figures without whom the field would be much poorer in both imaginative scope and actual production. On the fortieth anniversary of the publication of *House Made of Dawn*, Jace Weaver reminds us that the contributions N. Scott Momaday has made to Native literature and American letters go well beyond this Pulitzer Prize-winning novel; if anything, Momaday's far greater significance has been in the subsequent years, especially in the increasing attention he has given to the mysterious power of words to manifest possibility.

Not all reflections are prompted by happy occasions; some

arise from sad events. Our field lost a great mind and even greater heart this year when Paula Gunn Allen passed into the spirit world. Provocative, controversial, inspirational, and passionately committed to the dignity and liberation of Indigenous peoples and other minoritized groups, this Laguna elder worked to make our studies more attentive not only to the literary work of critical analysis but also to the cultural and political work of critical intellectual engagement, as Annette Van Dyke's tribute reminds us.

Yet in looking back, we also look to the present and future of the study of Native literatures to have a better understanding of why we do this work and how we might do it better. In addition to our book review section, we include in this final issue of volume 20 a commentary by Sam McKegney arguing for a particularly engaged ethical approach to Native literature by non-Native scholars. It's a piece intended to elicit response, conversation, and argument, and we welcome readers to do so in a forthcoming issue. We'd like to have an ongoing reader's feedback section in every issue, but to do so, we'll need you to write to us. Share your thoughts on what you've read, what we're missing, what issues need to be taken up more (or less) in the field.

Our commitment in each issue is to offer the best critical and creative voices *in dialogue* with each other and with the broader scholarly and political issues of significance to the field. We hope you'll join the conversation. Drop us an e-mail (with "Reader's Forum" in the subject line) at sail@chass.utoronto.ca, or write to our mailing address posted at the front of this issue.

On behalf of book review editor Jane Hafen, current editorial assistants Kirby Brown and Kyle Wyatt, and the members of the editorial board, we'd like to extend our thanks to all our readers for joining us on these first steps of *SAIL*'s current editorial journey. We invite you to continue our travels together in what we anticipate to be an even more compelling and thought-provoking critical landscape.

Daniel Heath Justice and James H. Cox

Mourning, Melancholia, and Rhetorical Sovereignty in William Apess's *Eulogy on King Philip*

ERIC A. WOLFE

William Apess, the Pequot activist and writer, first delivered his *Eulogy on King Philip* at the Odeon in Boston on January 8, 1836.¹ In this lecture Apess took the life of King Philip—the name the Puritans gave the Wampanoag leader Metacomet—as an occasion for a critical rewriting of the history of Indian and Euroamerican relations.² Though Apess had, by this time, already produced an impressive body of writing and had successfully assisted the Mashpee Indians in their efforts to secure self-governance and to protect their lands against Euroamerican encroachments, it is the *Eulogy*, in the words of Robert Allen Warrior, that stands as “the pinnacle of Apess’s intellectual career” (“Eulogy” 1). Apess’s *Eulogy* critiques the standard retellings of U.S. history; he reconstructs this past from a Native perspective, working from within and behind the pages of Euroamerican-authored texts. The *Eulogy* is remarkable for its rhetorical power, but it is also remarkable that his lecture was performed at all. As Warrior notes, Apess’s work was “essentially self-published without the benefits of institutional or programmatic support on the margins of the Native world” (*People* 46).³ Apess, it appears, was responsible not only for his text but also for the staging of his own performance: presumably renting the Odeon Theater, placing advertisements in the newspapers, and arranging for local ticket sales.⁴

In emphasizing the singularity of Apess’s achievements as a writer and lecturer, I do not mean to place him in a tradition of individual talent. Rather, it is clear that throughout the *Eulogy*

Apress is writing as an *Indian* intellectual. He is writing, that is, from the perspective of a community that was defined in 1836—and, for many, has continued to define itself—as politically separate from the United States.⁵ The *Eulogy* thus stands as a notable early example of the effort to secure what Scott Lyons has called “rhetorical sovereignty,” which “requires above all the presence of an Indian voice, speaking or writing in an ongoing context of colonization and setting at least some of the terms of debate” (462).⁶ Rhetorical sovereignty cannot, of course, be disassociated from political sovereignty, and it has been the struggle to achieve political sovereignty that has been the goal of so much Native writing and speaking; to emphasize *rhetorical* sovereignty, as Lyons does, is to recognize that much of the battle for Indian sovereignty has “taken place at what we might call the colonized scene of writing: a site of contact-zone rhetoric in its fullest sense” (453). Lyons goes on to argue that “One way of approaching this site is to find in American legal, political, and cultural discourses recurrent, yet ambivalent, assaults on Native sovereignty answered by recurrent, yet subordinate, defenses and redefinitions of the same by Indians” (453).

One such American cultural discourse, which performed perhaps the most sustained and effective assault on Native sovereignty in Apress’s time, was the myth of Indians as the “Vanishing American.” This cultural discourse posits Indians, in Brian W. Dippie’s succinct summary, as “a vanishing race; they have been wasting away since the day the white man arrived, diminishing in vitality and numbers until, in some not too distant future, no red men will be left on the face of the earth” (xi). Since this narrative predicts the inevitable disappearance of Indian peoples, questions regarding Native sovereignty become, at best, irrelevant. And since this narrative figures the causality of that disappearance as residing in the forces of history, in the somewhat mysterious—yet undeniable—manifestation of Indians’ underlying *racial* identity, it also distanced the Euroamerican producers of “legal, political, and cultural discourses” from any responsibility for the dwindling Indian populations.⁷ More specifically, it allowed Euroamerican writers, politicians, and policymakers to take the seemingly sym-

pathetic stance of mourning the tragedy of this purportedly inevitable Indian “vanishing.” The Euroamerican culture, in turn, valorized and idealized the figure of the mourning Indian lamenting the passing of his or her own people. To recognize this context is to measure some of the risks of Apress’s performance: in choosing to memorialize King Philip 160 years after Philip’s death, Apress was presenting himself in the too-familiar guise of the mourning Indian. To occupy that rhetorical position, then, was to hazard reconfirming for the Euroamerican culture its picture of Native American cultures as inevitably—if also tragically—doomed. How does Apress retell the story of loss in a way that does not reify that loss and that does not enable the Euroamerican culture’s easy (and perversely pleasurable) consumption of the narrative of Native disappearance? Following scholars who have recently returned to Sigmund Freud’s discussion of mourning and melancholia as a productive way to understand the cultural discourses of race in the United States, I argue that Apress resists the Euroamerican desire to mourn the Indian and redefines his relationship with Philip as melancholia. In the framework within which I am working here, melancholia is a more politically active stance than mourning, insisting upon the significance of past losses and upon the connections between present and past. The effect of Apress’s *Eulogy*, then, is to return us to a productive relationship with history, one that reopens the past to point toward a potentially different future.

In the imaginations of his Euroamerican listeners—who would have been the majority of the audience who came to hear the *Eulogy* in Boston—Apress’s self-identification as Pequot might have already transformed him into a ghostly presence that disrupted the Euroamerican fantasy of Indian “vanishing.” Most Euroamerican histories of that day declared the Pequot tribe extinct, wiped out as a result of the Pequot War of 1637; yet two hundred years later, Apress stood in the Odeon Theater to testify to the survivance of his people. By borrowing this term from Gerald Vizenor, I want to emphasize the *action* demonstrated by Apress’s performance of a continuing Native presence. If mere survival can be passive,

survivance, according to Vizenor, “is an active sense of presence, the continuance of native stories, not a mere reaction, or a survivable name. Native survivance stories are renunciations of dominance, tragedy, and victimry” (vii).⁸ Indeed, Apess’s text is littered with images of graves, burials, and ghosts.⁹ These images are, on one level, a literal measure of Indian loss: loss of life, loss of land, and loss of political independence. Yet set in the context of the Euroamerican discourse of Native disappearance, these images also signify a powerful rhetorical resistance. Placed against a tradition of Euroamerican writing that was too willing to erase Indians from its conception of the future, Apess’s insistence on the continuing *presence* of Indians and their experience of loss forms a counternarrative that opposes the myth of Native disappearance. Transmuting passive Euroamerican mourning into active Indian melancholia, Apess defies the cultural narrative that imagines American Indians disappearing quietly into the past.

The context in which Apess performed his *Eulogy* was suffused with Euroamerican narratives of Native disappearance. Indeed, the ubiquity of the cultural discourse of the “Vanishing American” in Euroamerican writings about Indians in the early nineteenth century is astounding, and the words “mourning” and “melancholy” are scattered through nearly all of the repetitions of this mythic narrative. For example, speaking in 1828 to commemorate the founding of Salem, Massachusetts, Supreme Court Justice Joseph Story briefly summarized the fate of Salem’s Indigenous inhabitants:

What can be more melancholy than their history? By a law of their nature, they seem destined to a slow, but sure extinction. Everywhere, at the approach of the white man, they fade away. We hear the rustling of their footsteps, like that of the withered leaves of autumn, and they are gone forever. They pass mournfully by us, and they return no more. (qtd. in Dippie 1)

These representations of Indians allowed Euroamerican writers to lament the passing of Indigenous cultures even as they worked to reduce Indian power and influence. In presenting the Indians as

responsible for their own disappearance—the result of “a law of *their* nature”—Story’s narrative suppresses a long history of violence, turning conquest into peaceful expansion. To see Indians as “Vanishing Americans” not only justifies the political existence of the United States; it also sanctions continued expansion into Native-held territories. President Andrew Jackson’s “Second Annual Message” to Congress, delivered in 1830, is an even clearer example of the political implications of this cultural narrative, since its purpose was to provide a rhetorical framework to support the national policy of the United States:

Humanity has often wept over the fate of the aborigines of this country, and Philanthropy has been long busily employed in devising means to avert it, but its progress has never for a moment been arrested, and one by one have many powerful tribes disappeared from the earth. To follow to the tomb the last of his race and to tread on the graves of extinct nations excite melancholy reflections. But true Philanthropy reconciles the mind to these vicissitudes as it does to the extinction of one generation to make room for another. (qtd. in Pearce 57)

Both these passages position Euroamericans as mourning the “extinction” of Native peoples, and that emotional stance has several important implications. First, and most obviously, positioning themselves as mourners distances both writers from the events they describe; mourning these events suggests that Euroamericans would prefer to prevent the disappearance of aboriginal people, a claim that Jackson makes overtly. Second, while both passages posit this extinction as literally still-to-come, rhetorically they treat it as though it has already occurred; that is, they mourn an event that has not yet happened. This strange, inverted temporality is at the heart of the denial of Native sovereignty, since it positions present-day Indians as always-already anachronistic. Making Indians objects in a fantasy of national mourning for Euroamerica, the narrative of Native disappearance evacuates the possibility of Indian agency in the present. Jackson’s “Message,” especially, is

significant in this regard: the narrative of Native disappearance allows him to justify the negation of Indian sovereignty implicit in the Indian Removal Act of 1830, while his mourning stance allows him to avoid responsibility for that act of colonial expansion.

In the context of the political implications effected by the Euroamerican myth of the “Vanishing American,” Apess’s reclamation of agency becomes all the more significant. Playing with the images of death and mourning that suffuse the contemporary Euroamerican representation of Native Americans, Apess revises the meaning of those images in the opening paragraphs of the *Eulogy*. Presenting King Philip’s story as one that has yet to be properly written, despite the Euroamerican histories that purported to do so, Apess writes, “those purer virtues remain untold. Those noble traits that marked the wild man’s course lie *buried* in the shades of night” (277; emphasis added). He speaks, he says, on behalf of “those few remaining descendants who now remain as the monument of the cruelty of those who came to improve our race and correct our errors” and for whom King Philip “yet lives in their hearts” (277). Refusing to stay buried, Apess thus figures his project as a kind of exhuming of the grave that has been prepared for Philip and, by extension, for all Indian peoples. More importantly, the relationship Apess establishes with Philip—while still making use of the language of mourning and melancholia—is radically different than Euroamerican mourning exemplified by writers like Story and Jackson. What Apess highlights is the dramatic difference between the white and the Indian perspective. If both Apess and the Euroamerican writers present themselves as mourning the dead Indian, the Euroamerican imagines a disassociation between the mourners and the dead and therefore a complete rupture between past and present. Apess, in contrast, constructs that loss from the perspective of those who “remain.” For these “few remaining descendents,” King Philip “yet lives in their hearts.” That is, Apess imagines his relationship with the past as continuous rather than disjunctive, and he understands the political situation of the present as having been formed by the patterns (and losses) of history.

What I am suggesting here is that Apress constructs an openly melancholic relationship to Philip, one that internalizes Philip's loss as a way of keeping him alive and that refuses to justify the losses of the past. To put this in a psychoanalytic register, what Apress engineers is a shift from "mourning" to "melancholia." We can understand the theoretical work done by Apress's rereading of King Philip's history in the *Eulogy* by placing it in the context of recent rereadings of Freud's theorizations of mourning and melancholia, which focus on socially constructed categories like gender and race in order to create a framework for understanding the work of mourning—more typically understood as an individual, psychological act or attitude—in a political register.¹⁰ In "Mourning and Melancholia" (1917), Freud describes two possible responses to the loss of a beloved object (whether this be a person or, as Freud suggests, "some abstraction [. . .] such as fatherland, liberty, an ideal, and so on" [164]). For Freud, mourning represents the normal response to loss: after a period of intense grief, the object is eventually rejected, forgotten, and the subject is able to move beyond that loss. As Freud puts it, "the ego becomes free and uninhibited again" (165). Melancholia, in contrast, is pathological, characterized by an inability to let go of the object. The subject's attachment to the object cannot be dissolved; instead, the object is absorbed by the subject in the form of identification, and the intense feeling associated with the loss of the object is sustained. This introjection of the object is explained by Freud as a way of holding on, of keeping the object alive in the psyche; yet, perversely, the object is kept alive *as lost*. The connection with the object is therefore maintained only through exclusion and disavowal.

Yet, as many commentators—most notably Judith Butler—have argued, Freud is finally unable to maintain this binary distinction between mourning and melancholy. Indeed, as Butler points out, by the time he writes *The Ego and the Id*, Freud is suggesting that identity itself—in Freud's terms, the ego—is a melancholic structure. As Freud writes there, "the character of the ego is a precipitate of abandoned object-cathexes and [. . .] it contains the history of those object choices" (29; qtd. in Butler, *Psychic* 133). The lost object

is internalized, and it is only through the action of that melancholic incorporation that anything like an identity can come into existence for the self. Given Freud's own emphases and Butler's predominant interests, her rereading of Freud focuses largely on the categories of sex and gender, yet Butler also suggests that racial identity may be explained through a similar dynamic. Butler's suggestions in this direction have been carried further by Anne Anlin Cheng's recent work on racial melancholy. Cheng argues that "Dominant white identity in America operates melancholically—as an elaborate identificatory system based on psychical and social consumption-and-denial" (11). That is, Euroamerican white identity is established and secured through the introjection of its racial others. Importantly, according to the dynamic of melancholy established by Freud, the lost object—here the racial other—must be kept alive *as lost*; further, any overt recognition of this melancholy formation must be repressed. The relationship between Euroamerica and its racial others is therefore deeply ambivalent. That "dominant white identity" is dependent upon its racial others, yet any such dependency must be disavowed. As Cheng comments, this understanding of racial melancholia "offers a powerful critical tool precisely because it theoretically *accounts* for the guilt and the denial of guilt, the blending of shame and omnipotence in the racist imaginary" (12). Given the importance of melancholic attachments for identity formation, we might say that "normal" mourning does not exist; instead, "mourning" names a melancholic structure that is repressed. What I have been calling Euroamerican *mourning* can therefore be better understood as disguised *melancholy*, and the ambivalence of this discourse of mourning results from the effort to keep the knowledge of this melancholic attachment hidden.

To return to the dynamic of white racial melancholy exemplified in the speeches of Justice Story and President Jackson I cited earlier, this rereading of Freud helps explain both the persistence and the peculiar logic of the cultural discourse of the "Vanishing American." If this cultural discourse depends upon a melancholic structure that is formative of white identity, then that identity can only be sustained if the "lost object" of the Indian is kept on the

verge of disappearing, and only if the importance of that object is denied in any explicit way. In this way, both the strange temporality and the peculiar distance of Story's and Jackson's figurations of Euroamerican mourning are explained. While much of the work that has been done to date focuses on the role of African American or Asian American objects in the construction of American racial melancholic identity, my rereading of Euroamerican representations of Native Americans in the early United States suggests that the Indian other may play an even more central role as the quintessential lost object for white identity.¹¹ Crucial here, too, is the nationalist frame of Justice Story's and President Jackson's narratives: Story is reconstructing and memorializing an account of Salem's founding as a synecdoche for the national (Euroamerican) experience; Jackson, in his address to Congress, is both justifying and arguing for the national territorial expansion of the United States. In both narratives, Indians play a significant role as absent other. By refusing that role of absent other, Apess therefore disrupts the nationalist arguments of writers like Story and Jackson. Because the drama of Euroamerican identity sketched out by Butler and Cheng rests on a central disavowal of its own melancholic structure, Apess's insistence upon openly acknowledged melancholia can be seen as a strategy for cultural survival and political resistance. By refusing the move "beyond" history signified by "successful" mourning, and by insisting on the value of reinterpreting past losses from an Indian perspective, Apess works to destabilize the cultural discourse of the "Vanishing American" that has underwritten the limitations on Indian sovereignty.

That the cultural discourse of Euroamerican mourning was intimately connected with the issue of Indian sovereignty can be illustrated by looking closely at the rhetoric of *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* (1831), which, as Scott Lyons notes, "constituted the United States' first major, unilateral reinterpretation of Indian sovereignty" (451). In 1827 the Cherokees, who by federal treaty occupied lands within the borders of Georgia, drafted the Constitution of the Cherokee Nation and a series of laws in order to formalize their self-governance in terms modeled on the United States itself.

The state of Georgia, threatened by this overt statement of political independence, declared all Cherokee laws void. In an effort to preserve their sovereignty, the Cherokee Nation brought suit against Georgia. In his majority opinion, Chief Justice John Marshall positions the U.S. Supreme Court as mourners, framing the decision in terms that repeat the narrative of the “Vanishing American”:

If courts were permitted to indulge their sympathies, a case better calculated to excite them can scarcely be imagined. A people once numerous, powerful, and truly independent, found by our ancestors in the quiet and uncontrolled possession of an ample domain, gradually sinking between our superior policy, our arts and our arms, have yielded their lands by successive treaties, each of which contains a solemn guarantee of the residue, until they retain no more of their formerly extensive territory than is deemed necessary to their comfortable subsistence. To preserve this remnant, the present application is made. (Washburn 2554–55)

Though Marshall pauses here at the liminal moment before declaring the final disappearance of the Cherokees, the direction of his narrative is clear. Defining the Cherokees as “domestic dependent nations” (Washburn 2556), Marshall’s opinion decided that the Supreme Court did not hold jurisdiction in the case and thus had no authority by which to halt this escalating dispossession. And indeed, in the final lines of his opinion, Marshall again gestures toward the seemingly inevitable completion of this narrative: “If it be true that the Cherokee nation have rights, this is not the tribunal in which those rights are to be asserted. If it be true that wrongs have been inflicted, and that still greater are to be apprehended, this is not the tribunal which can redress the past or prevent the future” (Washburn 2558).

Those final lines also suggest the cultural prominence of the Euroamerican narrative representation of Indians as “Vanishing Americans” in 1831. Marshall’s repeated formulation—“If it be true that the Cherokee nation have rights [. . .] If it be true that wrongs have been inflicted”—suggests an affirmative answer. In *Worcester*

v. Georgia—decided in the following year—Marshall found Georgia's attempt to claim sovereignty over Cherokee territory to be in violation of the Constitution. Yet in the *Cherokee Nation* case, Marshall's opinion begins by repeating this cultural trope, which functions to justify the denial of Indian rights by imagining their eventual disappearance. Though the narrative of disappearance is given in compressed form, the most significant elements of that ideological construct are present: (1) the implicit representation of Euroamerican peoples as more "civilized" and advanced ("our superior policy, our arts and our arms"); (2) the voluntarism of the Indians' decline ("yielded their lands by successive treaties"); and, of course, (3) the powerful emotions associated with the stance of mourning toward the Indians' demise ("a case [. . .] calculated" to "excite" "sympathies"). What is particularly striking is the obligatory character of the entire opening: it informs none of the substantive legal reasoning of Marshall's decision, which focuses on the possible constitutional construction of the idea of a "foreign state." Indeed, Marshall's starting point is to acknowledge the irrelevance of what follows: "If courts were permitted to indulge their sympathies." The implication is, of course, that courts are *not* permitted this luxury. Admittedly extralegal, the framing invocation of the cultural discourse of the "Vanishing American" nonetheless signals the deep ambivalence of the *Cherokee Nation* decision. Mourning attempts to lay the past to rest. As Marshall's closing suggests, however, in so doing it also negates any relationship to the future. The court, he writes, can neither "redress the past" nor "prevent the future." Mourning is therefore a cultural discourse that is politically quietist: it suggests a vantage point outside of history, distanced from both the past and the future.

William Apess delivered his *Eulogy* only five years after the *Cherokee Nation* case. Maureen Konkle has recently documented Apess's involvement in the effort to defend the Cherokees' sovereignty: in April 1832, following the *Worcester* decision, Apess spoke in support of the Cherokees alongside Cherokee activists John Ridge and Elias Boudinot and Massachusetts Congressman Edward Everett. And as Apess's efforts to assist the Mashpee in

defending their sovereignty—documented in his own *Indian Nullification of the Unconstitutional Laws of Massachusetts Relative to the Marshpee Tribe* (1835)—also indicate, he was committed to defending the political rights of all Indian nations. In the *Eulogy on King Philip*, Apess's strategy is to link his reinterpretation of the cultural discourse of mourning and melancholia with questions of sovereignty. In the third paragraph of the *Eulogy*, Apess moves to frame his rereading of the cultural discourses of mourning in the context of the political struggle over Native sovereignty and land rights: Apess explains that his "aim" in recounting the history of King Philip for a Euroamerican audience is to "melt the prejudice that exists in the hearts of those who are in the possession of his soil, and only by the right of conquest" (277). Central to Apess's emphasis on conquest is the violence that suffuses the *Eulogy*—not only the detail in which King Philip's War itself is recounted but also numerous other historical examples of murders, massacres, and a host of other "depredations" (279). Yet Apess also wishes to go beyond physical conquest to suggest the myriad other ways in which Native sovereignty has been subverted. This strategy helps explain why Apess spends significant effort in the *Eulogy* to document very specific land transactions between King Philip and the Euroamerican settlers (290–91). As Maureen Konkle argues, Apess uses the history of these legal transactions to establish the initial Euroamerican recognition of Wampanoag sovereignty (142–43). Like treaties between the United States and Indian nations, which "presumed a sense of sovereignty on the part of Indian groups" (Lyons 451), these early land deals are presented as contracts that establish the political equality and independence of the Wampanoag nation.¹² The eventual violation of these contracts and the failure of the "poor unfortunate Indians to find justice" in the "Pilgrims' court" (291) indicate for Apess the manner in which Euroamerican expansion has been served by the partiality of the colonial and U.S. legal system that refuses to recognize Indian sovereignty and that cannot see, as Apess puts it, "that Indians had rights, and those rights were as near and dear to them, as your stores and farms and firesides are to the whites" (288).

Throughout the *Eulogy*, the loss of Indian lands is shown to be the direct result of Euroamerican action—"conquest," rather than voluntary evacuation or inevitable disappearance. Implicit in Apess's recounting of past wrongs is that any Euroamerican sympathy for Indians is generated only by the discourse of mourning; that is, sympathy is directed toward Indians only insofar as they are represented as dead, dying, or disappearing.¹³ Retelling the story of an Indian in Kennebunk, Apess notes that "common prejudice against Indians prevented any sympathy with him" (289). When the death of the Indian's child meets with no assistance from the white community, Apess writes, "He gave up his farm, dug up the body of his child, and carried it 200 miles, through the wilderness, to join the Canadian Indians" (291). Here Apess reverses the causality and affect associated with the Indian move westward. Rather than white America expressing its sympathy for the inevitable disappearance of Indian populations, Apess suggests that this disappearance arises from a failure of sympathy. Juxtaposed against the kinds of narratives offered by Justice Story or President Jackson, Apess's *Eulogy* argues that feelings of sympathy directed toward the shadowy image of the noble, but disappearing, savage are withheld from individual, embodied Indians.¹⁴

Despite his engagement with the cultural discourses of mourning and melancholia, and despite his recounting of a litany of Indian losses, Apess is careful to avoid fitting too easily the familiar figure of the mourning Indian. Euroamerican writers were only too willing to represent Indians themselves as mourners, in a way that validated the Euroamerican constructions of the "Vanishing American." To represent Indians as lamenting their own disappearance would seemingly confirm the historical inevitability of this mythic narrative; it would also sanction the appropriateness of Euroamerican mourning. Once again, Apess invokes those conventions only to defy them. Near the very end of the *Eulogy*, Apess refers to "the speech of Logan" (309), which was almost certainly the most popular example of Native oratory—and perhaps any form of purported Indian self-representation—in Euroamerican culture. As Edward Seeber documents, this speech had become a

prominent subject in American literature and culture since it first appeared in newspapers and magazines in 1775. It was reprinted by Thomas Jefferson in his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, and it was used as the climax to Joseph Doddridge's play *Logan: The Last of the Race of Shikellimus, Chief of the Cayuga Nation* (1823). There were also many other literary representations that borrowed from Logan's speech, one of which was a play specifically about King Philip, John Augustus Stone's *Metamora; or, the Last of the Wampanoags* (1829).¹⁵ Reworked into poetry, translated into drama, Logan's speech also became part of the educational apparatus by the 1850s and 1860s, when it was incorporated into the popular McGuffey's reader. Since the memorization and performance of oratory was such a prominent part of education in the antebellum United States, by midcentury, according to Seeber, "many a schoolboy orator" learned this speech by heart (130). Supposedly delivered as an explanation of why Logan refused to assent to a 1774 peace treaty, the speech recounts Logan's initial friendship to whites, the subsequent murder of his family, and Logan's turn to revenge. The speech's final lines gesture toward Native disappearance and mourning: "There runs not a drop of my blood in the veins of any living creature. [. . .] Who is there to mourn for Logan?—Not one!" (qtd. in Apess 309n28). The speech's popularity is at least partially explained because it encapsulated, in the words of Anthony F. C. Wallace, a "succinct expression of an apocalyptic view of Indian history" (1). It presents perhaps not an entire tribal group but at least a family line, poised on the verge of extinction, and therefore it endorses the historical construct of the "Vanishing American." It also allowed—perhaps even invited—the Euroamerican culture that read, reprinted, and rewrote the speech the opportunity to take up the position of mourner that is vacated in the speech's final line.

Apess resists and rewrites the Euroamerican appropriation of Logan's speech. Certainly aware of the continued popularity of Logan's speech, Apess notes that it "is no doubt fresh in your memory," despite being delivered more than sixty years prior. Yet rather than treating it reverentially, as the highest example of Indian ora-

tory, Apess seems to deflate the undue prominence given to the speech by Euroamerican culture; he follows a brief description of the events with the flatly factual comment, "This circumstance is but one in a thousand" (309). Instead, Apess quickly segues into a discussion of another massacre of Indians at the hands of what he calls "white warriors" in 1757. Returning to the same kind of language he used in his opening paragraphs, Apess writes,

What sad tales are these for us to look upon the massacre of our dear fathers, mothers, brother, and sisters. [. . .] Our affections for each other are the same as yours; we think as much of ourselves as you do of yourselves. When our children are sick, we do all we can for them; they lie buried deep in our affections; if they die, we remember it long and mourn in after years. (309)

Rejecting the Euroamerican construction of Logan, the mourning Indian, Apess once more suggests a melancholic relation to loss. Lost children are incorporated, buried within. Importantly, Apess's vision is informed by the survivance of Indian communities. Unlike Logan's "apocalyptic" history, in which no one remains to mourn, for Apess the relationship to loss signifies the continuity of communal traditions.

While Apess insists on a sustained melancholy that refuses to let go of the losses of the past, he also links this with the political project of reclaiming Indian sovereignty in the future. Once again, he does so by rewriting the texts of Euroamerican mourning as Indian melancholy. Edward Everett's "An Address Delivered at Bloody-Brook" was published in Boston in December 1835, just weeks before Apess's first performance of the *Eulogy*. Like the *Eulogy*, Everett's "Address" takes the events of King Philip's War—in this case, a battle in which significant English losses were sustained—as the ground for a political narrative. For Everett, telling the story of the United States means justifying that nation's expansion by endorsing the cultural discourse of the "Vanishing American" and "the melancholy fate of the New England Indians" (640). Everett presents the expansion of Euroamerican culture as "the purpose of

Providence" (636) and the displacement of Indians as "an unavoidable consequence" (637): "of the tribes that inhabited New England, not an individual of unmixed blood, and speaking the languages of his fathers, remains" (637). At one point in Everett's "Address," he paints a romanticized picture of Philip on the verge of war:

As Philip looked down from his seat on Mount Hope, that glorious eminence, [. . .] as he looked down and beheld the lovely scene which spread beneath, at a summer sunset, the distant hill-tops glittering as with fire, the slanting beams streaming along the waters, the broad plains, the island groups, the majestic forest,—could he be blamed if his heart burned within him as he beheld it all passing, by no tardy process, from beneath his control into the hands of the stranger? (661)

Everett then follows this by fictionalizing a speech from Philip that begins, "White man, there is eternal war between me and thee!," using that phrase as a refrain that runs throughout his "Address" (662–63). As with Logan's speech, Everett's imagined Indian oration reifies the struggle between Indian and "white man" as a war of racial elimination ("Stranger! There is not room for us both" [662]). Further, Everett's narrative is constructed in such a way to suggest the inevitability of the outcome: inverting the chronology of events, he imagines King Philip's speech only after he has already narrated Philip's death at the end of the war. Everett's mourning stance once again separates past and present—at least where the Indian is concerned. Not surprisingly—given the popularity of Logan's speech among Euroamerican audiences—Everett's oration was well received, and the section containing the imagined speech of Philip was singled out as a "beautiful extract" and quoted at length in the "Critical Notices" of the *New England Magazine* in December 1835 (466).¹⁶ The speech he imagined for King Philip had a popularity that ran beyond that of the "Address at Bloody-Brook," since Philip's speech was reprinted as a stand-alone oration in textbooks. Much like Logan's speech, Everett's fictionalized oration for Philip would have been memorized by, to borrow Seeber's phrasing, "many a schoolboy orator."¹⁷

Though it is impossible to know for sure, it is likely that Apess—who was involved with the book trade and had connections among Boston's booksellers—knew Everett's "Address," and it is tempting to see him in the *Eulogy* specifically rewriting Everett's mourning portrait of Philip.¹⁸ Apess begins one section of the *Eulogy* imagining Philip, as in Everett's "Address," perched on high, surveying the extent of Wampanoag territory with the foreknowledge that it was quickly disappearing: "How deep, then, was the thought of Philip, when he could look from Maine to Georgia, and from the ocean to the lakes, and view with one look all his brethren withering before the more enlightened to come" (306).¹⁹ Yet, though this opening passage appears to evoke the cultural discourse of the "Vanishing American," Apess quickly moves to emphasize that these losses are not inevitable, nor are they the manifestation of racist destiny. Rather, they come only as the result of a sustained political assault on Native sovereignty:

Our groves and hunting grounds are gone, our dead are dug up, our council fires are put out, and a foundation was laid in the first Legislature to enslave our people, by taking from them all rights, which has been strictly adhered to ever since. Look at the disgraceful laws, disenfranchising us as citizens. Look at the treaties made by Congress, all broken. (306)

The loss of land ("Our groves and hunting grounds are gone"), of tradition and historical continuity ("our dead are dug up"), and of community and self-government ("our council fires are put out") are all made the effect of political and legal policies. Apess's key terms—rights, laws, citizenship, treaties—are all drawn from the language of political sovereignty. The grammatical shift to the present tense here also signals the significance of Apess's melancholic stance. Since the losses of the past are not left behind but remain, Apess can connect past and present, moving seamlessly from the history of King Philip to the present-day political challenges of Indian life.

Like Everett, Apess follows this section with an imagined oration. Rather than staying with King Philip, however, Apess pro-

duces a parody of the rhetoric of Jacksonian Indian removal from the mouth of “the president of the United States” himself (307).²⁰ “It is as if,” Apess writes, “he had said to [the Indians],”

We want your land for our use to speculate upon; it aids us in paying off our national debt and supporting us in Congress to drive you off.

You see, my red children, that our fathers carried on this scheme of getting your lands for our use, and we have now become rich and powerful; and we have a right to do with you just as we please; we claim to be your fathers. And we think we shall do you a great favor, my dear sons and daughters, to drive you out of the reach of our civilized people, who are cheating you, for we have no law to reach them, we cannot protect you although you be our children. So it is no use, you need not cry, you must go, even if the lions devour you, for we promised the land you have to somebody else long ago. (307)

Here is a powerful critique of the paternalist stance of the U.S. government, of self-interest masquerading as benevolence. Apess strips the mask of sympathetic mourning from Jackson to reveal the emptiness of the Euroamerican myth of Native “vanishing.” He also uses this critique of the present to move toward the future. Noting that the Jacksonian “spirit” continues in the wars that rage along the “frontiers” of Euroamerican expansion, Apess offers a simple, yet powerful, solution: “Give the Indian his rights, and you may be assured war will cease” (307). The answer, that is, is for the United States to give full recognition to Indian sovereignty. Yet such a stance also means acknowledging loss: to recognize Indian rights is also to recognize that those rights have been violated.

Apess’s insistence upon Indian sovereignty suggests the larger political implications of his critique of the Euroamerican cultural discourse of mourning. Euroamerican mourning situates Indians irretrievably in the past. Apess’s Indian melancholia gestures toward the future. As David L. Eng and David Kazanjian argue, “While mourning abandons lost objects by laying their histo-

ries to rest, melancholia's continued and open relationship to the past finally allows us to gain new perspectives on and new understandings of lost objects" (4). By constructing his relationship with the "lost object" of King Philip as one of melancholia rather than mourning, Apess returns to the haunted past and to the figure of King Philip, "who yet lives in [the] hearts" of his descendants (277), not to lay that past to rest but to reopen it to the future. The Euroamerican stance of mourning and its endorsement of the myth of the "Vanishing American" was one of those cultural discourses that performed "recurrent, yet ambivalent, assaults on Native sovereignty"; Apess's insistence upon a melancholic connection with the past is therefore one of those "recurrent, yet subordinate, defenses and redefinitions of the same by Indians" (Lyons 453). Rewriting the past of King Philip, the ultimate direction of the *Eulogy* is toward the future. Apess reopens a dialogue with loss, the past, and history in order to imagine a different relationship to and within the present. For Apess in the *Eulogy*, that future clearly lies in the direction of a revived Indian sovereignty.

NOTES

1. He delivered a shortened version of the *Eulogy* on January 26 at Boylston Hall. For the most detailed accounting of the circumstances of both speeches, see Konkle (131–35).

2. Apess uses "King Philip" throughout the *Eulogy*, so I will follow his usage here in order to avoid confusion.

3. Warrior argues further that "Apess's ad hoc method of cobbling together the parameters of his work, even as he addressed the needs and situations of Native people, establishes an important methodological precedent in Native letters" (*People* 46).

4. Apess's contemporary editor, Barry O'Connell, comments about the *Eulogy* that "there is no indication of any sponsorship of the first address" (Apess 275), nor has Konkle, in more recent research, turned up any evidence of such sponsorship.

5. I would suggest, too, that in the *Eulogy* this political position is defined as pan-Indian and that Apess is using his reading of the history of "King Philip's War" synecdochically, in order to suggest a pattern that

describes a broader history of Indian and Euroamerican relations. Apess was certainly capable of writing from a tribal—or local—perspective, as his books *The Experiences of Five Christian Indians of the Pequot Tribe* and *Indian Nullification of the Unconstitutional Laws of Massachusetts Relative to the Marshpee Tribe* suggest; even here, however, I would argue that Apess gives precedence to the category of the political. In other words, Apess understands cultural survival as at least in part a question of political sovereignty.

6. In its ideal form, Lyons defines rhetorical sovereignty as “the inherent right and ability of *peoples* to determine their own communicative needs and desires in this pursuit [of sovereignty], to decide for themselves the goals, modes, styles, and languages of public discourse” (449–50).

7. As Dippie comments, “The belief in the Vanishing American has had far-reaching ramifications. Based on what was thought to be irrefutable evidence, it became self-perpetuating. It was prophecy, self-fulfilling prophecy, and its underlying assumptions were truisms requiring no justification apart from periodic reiteration” (xii).

8. For a powerful and productive adaptation of Vizenor’s ideas, see Malea Powell’s “Rhetorics of Survivance: How American Indians *Use* Writing.” In her listenings to Sarah Winnemucca and Charles Eastman, Powell explains how their rhetorics of survivance, their *use* of writing, “transforms their object-status within colonial discourse into a subject-status, a presence instead of an absence” (400).

9. Renée L. Bergland reads Apess with a special emphasis on the function of “Indian Ghosts.”

10. In addition to work by Butler and Cheng, see the essays collected by David L. Eng and David Kazanjian in *Loss: The Politics of Mourning*.

11. Judith Butler (in *Bodies that Matter*), Anne Anlin Cheng, and the writers collected in Eng and Kazanjian’s *Loss* explore mourning and melancholia with reference to a variety of racial identities, yet American Indian subjects are notably absent from these texts.

12. Konkle suggests that Apess may have borrowed the documentation of King Philip’s land sales from the Euroamerican writer Samuel Gardner Drake’s *Book of the Indians*. Konkle also provides an interesting comparison, which further emphasizes the effects of Apess’s reframing: she argues that Drake recounts those land transactions in order to suggest that “Indians voluntarily sold off their lands,” while Apess uses those transactions to provide “evidence of Philip’s political authority and its violation by settlers” (142).

13. In *Love Medicine*, Louise Erdrich's Nector Kashpaw suggests the extent to which this dynamic continues into the twentieth century. After a brief movie career, in which "Death was the extent of Indian acting" (123), and an experience posing for a portrait that would be titled *Plunge of the Brave*—and which pictures him "jumping off a cliff, naked of course, down into a rocky river" (124)—Kashpaw comments, "Remember Custer's saying? The only good Indian is a dead Indian? Well from my dealings with whites I would add to that quote: 'The only interesting Indian is dead, or dying by falling backwards off a horse'" (124).

14. Laura L. Mielke argues that "Apess reveals how white America would consume the Indian as circumscribed by stereotype but would not sympathize with the actual Christian Native American" (255).

15. Perhaps not coincidentally, *Metamora* was revised and revived in 1836, the year Apess's *Eulogy* was first delivered and published.

16. Konkle also cites this review (137).

17. See, for example, John D. Philbrick's *The American Union Speaker* (1865) and Elson and Keck's *Elson Grammar School Literature, Book 4* (1912). Nathaniel Parker Willis also reproduces Everett's speech of King Philip in his *American Scenery; or Land, Lake, And River: Illustrations of Transatlantic Nature* (1840). That the speech was still being reprinted into the twentieth century suggests its long-lasting popularity in Euroamerican culture.

18. Konkle argues that "it seems plausible that Everett is a target in the *Eulogy*" (133).

19. Apess has so thoroughly interrogated the notion of Euroamerican superiority by this point in the *Eulogy* that any use of words like "enlightened" must be read ironically.

20. Apess does elsewhere repeat a speech from Philip, which is interesting to compare to Everett's imagined oration. Rather than addressing the "white man," as in Everett's version, Philip's speech in the *Eulogy* is to his own "chiefs, counselors, and warriors" (295). And rather than portraying the conflict as a war of racial elimination, Philip emphasizes—as I have been arguing Apess does throughout the *Eulogy*—the encroachments on Indian sovereignty: "the treaties made by our fathers and us are broken" (295). Interestingly, Patricia Bizzell provides evidence that Apess's version of Philip's speech may indeed be authentic, handed down as part of the oral traditions of New England Indians (55–56).

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Extending Root and Branch

Community Regeneration in the Petitions of Samson Occom

CAROLINE WIGGINTON

On March 7, 1994, the Mohegan tribe of Connecticut gained U.S. federal recognition of their tribal status after an almost twenty-year legal battle. As part of the recognition process, the Mohegan tribe needed to demonstrate continuous political influence or authority over its members.¹ Until the 1700s, the Mohegan tribe was governed by a sachem who was advised by other tribal members. However, prompted by colonists' corruption of the sachemship during this period, the tribe transitioned to a less vulnerable, informal authority, one not clearly embodied by a governing group or individual. In articles and legal documents, Mohegan tribal historian Melissa Fawcett-Sayet refers to this authority as sociocultural. This authority became vested in a long lineage of tribal Medicine Women who helped the Mohegans transmit history and culture as well as govern their community.

In order to demonstrate continuous political influence or authority, the Mohegan tribe needed to prove a link between the easily substantiated sachemship and the more subtle sociocultural leadership. The Mohegan Samson Occom (1723–92) partially fulfilled this link. Occom was both a member of the outlawed Mohegan Leadership Council and a Christian missionary. He served his community and other Indian tribes politically and culturally, and therefore he embodies—for legal purposes—the transition from one leadership form to the other. As a writer of letters, hymns, prose, diaries, anthropological essays, sermons, and petitions, Occom left a large, tangible archive of his political and

sociocultural leadership, documents that became evidence in the legal case two hundred years later.

Today Occom is known in scholarly communities principally for a sermon published in 1772 and a more recently recovered autobiographical narrative from 1768. Though many scholars consider him to be the first Native author to publish in the English language, his petitions have remained relatively unstudied. In addition to being part of the legal presence of the 1990s, these petitions also performed political and sociocultural work on behalf of the Mohegans and other tribes in the coastal area of New York and Connecticut during the 1700s. Through these petitions, Occom expresses Native determination to survive as nations. He articulates the ways in which Indigenous nations have chosen to continue as communities under the pressure of colonialism. With these petitions, he placed his literacy at the service of his fellow Indians to regenerate community. This regeneration occurs through the process of the petitions' construction and through embodying the process after the fact, thereby healing rifts within and between communities and extending tribal networks. In the devastation of the colonial world, the petitions create an Indian world out of the past and present, a patchwork of traditions, adaptations, and simulations that becomes real during the very act of writing.

Occom's petitions include internal records that document tribal decisions and external records that communicate requests to the colonial governments. Though legal petitions are a nontraditional genre for literary studies, these petitions are more than historical or even legal documents; they are concrete moments of intellectual sovereignty. Beyond the ostensibly clear-cut requests of the documents, petitions crafted by Occom in conjunction with Native communities provide a rich site for cultural and literary analysis. Occom's knowledge of his own community, other tribes, Native traditions, Christianity, and white culture converge to create many layers of meaning. The colonial world placed strong emphasis upon the power of written language, a fact repeatedly underscored by whites' reliance upon treaties and documents to enforce encroachment and other acts of colonization. At the same

time, Mohegan language had ritualistic power.² The act of speaking can make things happen.³ Since they use written language to perform decisions made by Indian communities through oral language, the petitions merge these two effects of language. By doing so, they demonstrate intellectual sovereignty, claim literacy's power as their own, and infuse Native ritual into white and Native archives. In other words, Ocom's petitions are written utterances of self-determining communities and enactments of their perseverance. Significantly, these documents continue to demand and execute sovereignty because they resonate beyond their moment of creation into the future and continue to establish a self-governing community for the Mohegan tribe, perhaps most tangibly in the legal process of tribal recognition.

The power that Native communities claim through petitions did not reverse colonists' dominance. These documents did not force the whites to acknowledge the Mohegan Leadership Council or pay them pasturage rents or give the Brotherton tribe a grist mill, all requests in Ocom's petitions. Even when the petitions resulted in gaining some concession from whites, the request was almost always practical and demonstrated some Native adaptation to the colonial world's material existence. Instead, the petitions claimed and continue to claim the power of survival plus resistance, what Gerald Vizenor calls "survivance." For Vizenor, survivance is "more than survival, more than endurance or mere response; the stories of survivance are an active presence" (*Fugitive Poses* 15). Through these petitions, Natives assert their active presence. They assert the existence of community governance bodies that make decisions. They assert their continued occupation of the land and their desire to participate as sovereign nations in the economy. They assert their physical needs. They assert their own relationship to traditional religion and a Christianity that is not mediated by white missionaries. They assert their intellectual right to tell their own stories. They assert their ability to construct their own versions of history.⁴

In focusing on survivance within the petitions instead of the results of the petitions, I believe we must not treat them as literal

snapshots of the communities. Survivance involves “simulations” that “contravene the absence of the real with theatrical performances; the theater of tribal consciousness is the recreation of the real, not the absence of the real in the simulations of dominance” (Vizenor, *Manifest Manners* 5). We cannot judge the petitions on how well they confirm our personal or collective understanding of authentic “Indianness.” Doing so reinforces the myth of the vanishing Indian since, as James Clifford writes, authenticity forces Indians to remain “tied to traditional pasts, inherited structures that either resist or yield to the new but cannot produce it” (5). The simulations of survivance involve “strategic accommodations” (9) in which peoples “invent local futures” (5). Even the word “assimilation” resembles “simulation,” its accommodations potentially containing the trickiness and creative power of survivance.

A search for cultural authenticity is particularly destructive to an analysis of petitions written by Ocom, a Christian missionary. He crafted the language and selected the images, thereby exposing the petitions to the same criticism leveled at Ocom himself. Though they are community documents and extensions of the nations upon whose behalf they were written, they are also distinct manifestations of Ocom’s authorial consciousness. His voice becomes increasingly strong throughout his years as petition writer and community leader, sometimes overpowering the tribal voice. Even if we focus less on the language and more on tribal ownership, we can still imagine Ocom greatly influencing the decisions made by the tribes and their subsequent interactions with whites. They would have built upon Ocom’s familiarity with Euroamericans and their culture.

The tight linkage between the petitions and Ocom’s identity requires a focus on survivance instead of resistance when studying the texts in order to ensure a nuanced analysis. Resistance would focus on the results of the petitions and view Ocom as a failure, a Christian missionary who surrendered to Euroamerican culture and persuaded others to do the same. The petitions would be sad reminders of that failure, either elegies to some last pure-but-frail moment or insidious extensions of the spread of assimilation.

Survivance recognizes the intellectual right of Occom and other Natives to convert to Christianity and to combine Native traditions with Christianity without diminishing their cultural sovereignty. Survivance recognizes the beauty of their practicality. These recognitions do not erase the fact that some of Occom's decisions were destructive to traditional modes of life or that other Natives' decisions required different adaptations or that some Natives refused to adapt at all. Acknowledging sovereignty also acknowledges that we may personally condemn the sacrifices that Occom made to Christianity. This essay analyzes *how* Occom worked with tribal communities to envision Indianness and *how* they enacted that vision in order to regenerate communities and networks that were crumbling under the stress of colonialism. In doing so, I will show that these petitions use written English to regenerate Native communities, and I will outline the types of community Occom and his fellow Natives imagined through these petitions. Fortunately, the choices made by Occom were conducive to producing an archive. They give scholars a chance to analyze one route of survivance and, more importantly, provide the Mohegan tribe with documents to assist in maintaining cultural continuity and gaining federal recognition.

Though the focus of this article is upon survivance performed and documented by Occom's petitions, I have the parallel purpose of extending our understanding of Occom as a writer. Occom used language to materially affect and serve his community. His service through literacy did not stop with petitions; it also included his sermons, hymns, letters, and other prose. In *That the People Might Live: Native American Literatures and Native American Community*, Jace Weaver argues that Occom as well as other Native authors perform "communitism," a term he forms by combining "the words 'community' and 'activism'" (xiii). He believes that the promotion of "communitist values means to participate in the healing of the grief and sense of exile felt by Native communities and the pained individuals in them" (xiii).

Examining Occom's petitions expands our understanding of how Occom used writing to perform communitism. For Weaver,

writing is Occom's only available tool for "promoting communitist values" (46). Because Occom's work has been mostly unpublished and only available in scattered archives, Weaver limits his analysis to the two published works and some letter fragments included within other scholars' publications.⁵ The published form of the autobiographical narrative that Weaver used lacked a crucial introductory statement by Occom about the circumstances of its writing. Weaver's focus on this small portion of Occom's writing leads him to conclude that Occom's writing promotes communitism mostly by "critiquing the White power structure of his day" and that Occom was a "marginal figure" within that structure (46).

Expanding the analysis to include petitions reveals a larger intent than critique. First, the documents are specifically directed toward materially changing the Indian world, typically by either appealing for a desired response from white audiences or by textually inscribing concerns and beliefs. Second, by physically writing the petitions, Occom used the increasing importance of documents to prolong sovereignty in an emerging print culture and placed even his "marginal" critiques within a broader context. Third, communitism occurred in the very act of creating the petitions. In concert with these tribes, Occom helped heal communities by binding over the wounds of colonialism as best he could. Weaver believes that Occom "could not hope to reach a wide Native audience," though the petitions' audience works differently than the audiences for his sermon, autobiographical narrative, and letters (49). The Native audience *after* production may not have been wide, but the petitions are a result of *preproduction* community discussions and decisions. The moment and circumstances of generation must be imagined in order to reveal that the writing itself is communitism.

Occom's education and experiences as a Christian missionary provided him with many of the tools with which he served his tribe and larger Indian community.⁶ His youth was spent in a context of tribal factionalism and land loss, largely the result of rifts caused by colonial corruption of the sachemship. In order to fight encroachment upon its land and sovereignty, the Mohegan tribe found itself reliant upon whites to act on its behalf within the

colonial courts. As a well-educated Christian missionary, literate in both the English language and white colonial culture, Occom could alleviate tribal dependency on non-Mohegans, thus beginning to heal deeper rifts within the tribal structure. His missionary work also trained him as a leader and helped to reaffirm the tribal networks that had weakened under colonialism. Bernd Peyer points out that many of Occom's duties performed within other tribal communities (helping with planting and harvesting, advising) were those "normally ascribed to sachems" and made it "quite natural for him to resume the responsibilities of a councilor upon his return to Mohegan" (66, 72). As a missionary, Occom traveled among various tribes and frequently returned home to Mohegan land. Lisa Brooks asserts that Occom gained a "reputation as a stirring preacher amongst the [coastal tribal community] network's inhabitants [and . . .] as a leader who strengthened the relationships between them" (101). Both Brooks and Peyer suggest that missionary work was an extension of Mohegan traditions for Occom, a modern way to serve Indian communities as a leader in a world in which Christianity and education were tools frequently necessary for survival.

In *American Lazarus: Religion and the Rise of African-American and Native American Literatures*, Joanna Brooks addresses how African Americans and Natives used Christianity to variously transform their communities during this period, greatly influenced by the period's religious revivals. The "pioneering contributions" of Occom and other writers of color answer "the alienating and mortifying effects of slavery, colonialism, and racial oppression" with the "religious formulas such as conversion, revival, and resurrection" (9). Rejecting the "assimilationist, syncretist, [and] hybridity models" for viewing his conversion and focusing on his "self-determination," Brooks analyzes Occom's Christianity generally and his hymnody specifically (56). Critics looking for evidence of resistance in Occom's religious conversion sometimes misinterpret his Christianity and regard it at best as a way of hiding continuing Native religion and at worst as a betrayal of his fellow Indians.⁷ Occom's faith was deep and sincere, not a guise for traditional reli-

gion. Occom's newfound faith merged with his faith in tribal communities. As I will show, Christianity was how Occom chose to perform communitism, not how he assimilated himself and other Natives to whiteness. To that end, his interpretation of Christianity both incorporated traditional Native elements and developed an increasingly Native-centric understanding of salvation.

OCCOM'S EARLY PETITIONS

Occom's first efforts at petition writing were on behalf of his own tribe. In 1764 Occom inscribed a petition from the Mohegan Tribe to Sir William Johnson. In 1763–64 members of Ben's Town and John's Town came together in response to sachem Ben III's abuse of tribal lands and resources.⁸ They determined to govern the Mohegans through a council consisting of various heads of the tribe. In this 1764 petition, the council informs Johnson, the British superintendent of Indian affairs for North America and also a "trusted friend and advisor" of Occom (Occom 141), about various grievances against Ben III and of their right to remove Ben III as sachem. This petition, written in Occom's hand and signed by the Mohegan tribe, declares sovereignty and unity as well as acts as a performative utterance. Up until this time, Occom had aligned himself with the Ben III faction of the tribe. In writing a petition in his own hand, Occom can no longer deny his new allegiance. He received criticism for his involvement with the new council from Ben III and various colonials, including his employers.

By both writing and signing the "Mohegan Tribe to Sir William Johnson" petition, Occom recognizes his leadership role. It is a personal and public declaration in a medium recognized by his Euroamerican mentors and employers. Even though Occom took on a sachemlike role through his missionary work, here he writes on behalf of the Mohegan tribe and not on behalf of himself or a sachem. This difference is an acknowledgment that the old way of leadership by an individual no longer works for the tribe since the colonial government took advantage of that method of governance. As Melissa Fawcett-Sayet points out in her essay titled "Sociocul-

tural Authority: The Mohegan Case,” “non-Indian governing bodies” manipulate and silence “political rulers” (52). Thus, sociocultural leaders are more able to “persevere” under colonialism (52). Though Occom sat on the Leadership Council, he is a link within the sociocultural chain through also being a minister to the Mohegan people as well as an author of hymns. Further, retaining power within the hands of a single leader would leave both the leader himself and the tribe as a whole vulnerable to concerted efforts by the whites to steal Native land and demolish tribal structures.⁹

Within the petition, Occom writes in the style and language of the traditional humble petition writer. He opens with a section acknowledging the position and power of his addressee before turning to the body and requests of the petition. Throughout the petition, but especially in the opening section, he uses the trope of the “poor Indian.” As Joanna Brooks notes in her introduction to the petitions, opening postures of “supplication” can be read as “strategic appeals to Euro-American rhetorical customs, or as manipulations of the trope of the poor Indian that was a mainstay of Anglo-American colonial discourse” (144). Occom does both.

Occom’s use of humility in personal letters to his mentor and former teacher, Eleazar Wheelock, demonstrates his use of simulation in order to create a real presence. In these letters, even at his angriest, Occom continues to sign in the conventional humble manner, giving lip service to the poor Indian trope and obeying eighteenth-century letter-writing customs. In a 1771 letter in which he angrily censures Wheelock for moving his Connecticut “alma Mater” of Moor’s Indian Charity School to New Hampshire, where it “will be too alba mater to Suckle the Tawnees, for She is already aDorn’d up too much like the Popish Virgin Mary” (98), Occom still closes by signing “your most unworthy Servt, Samson Occom” (100). As in this example, Occom’s epistolary closing flatteries and self-deprecations contrast with and highlight his anger, thus revealing the “poor Indian” type to be mere simulation. He replaces it with a sovereign Indian antitype who has control over himself. Instead of showing obeisance, these moments are individual declarations of sovereignty.

As the product of a younger and less disillusioned Occom, the petition's humble opening does similar work, although the contrast between the opening and the body, where the petition declares the Mohegan right to remove sachems who are acting unlawfully, is less crisp and dramatic than in Occom's private letters to Wheelock. Yet despite the humble tone, the petition does not ask permission to remove Ben III. Instead, it declares the right of the Mohegans to do so by Mohegan "Law" and "Custom" (145). By combining "humility" with a "sense of grievance," Occom produces what David Murray refers to as the "sting in the tail" (53). However, since Johnson was Occom's friend, he would have been more likely to hear the irony embedded in the deferential tone and language. Using the "poor Indian" trope stages two simulations that are dependent upon the white audience's reception. Either the whites would take the humility at face value and be manipulated by Occom's deft handling of Euroamerican rhetorical expectations, or the whites would experience the contrast between the tone and actual declaration of rights. In either case, the Indian voice of the petition defies white expectations even as it acknowledges them.

Murray points out that "[i]rony is notoriously difficult to pin down, of course, and for that reason profoundly subversive of any attempt at controlling the play of meanings in any discourse" (53). In his letters and autobiography, Occom frequently "moves himself in and out of the stereotype of the poor Indian" (54). Here Occom moves the petition's voice in and out of that stereotype as well, allowing the words to act as rhetorical pricks that irk but that cannot be punished since acknowledging them would be a recognition of intellectual sovereignty. When read unironically and combined with frequent references to whites' paternal duties to their Indian children, the humility potentially maneuvers the audience into a sense of responsibility and guilt. These Indians know the expected format of a petition, they use that format, but they do not undercut their key message even as they proffer the necessary humility. Whether or not Johnson and the colonial government respected the Mohegans' assertion of sovereignty, the careful use of language, its razorlike precision, embodies the energy of survivance.

Occom's editorial insertion of the phrase "the Miserable Nations of the Land" builds upon the humble tone (144). The phrase further combines a double meaning of miserable—subordinate and oppressed—with a reminder of both sovereignty and sheer numbers through the use of "Nations." The phrase itself enacts a transformation from performing the "poor Indian" to declaring strength. After all, as Astrid Wind points out, the colonists were continually aware of the possibility of a large pan-Indian uprising; the various tribes had over 35,000 warriors at their potential disposal east of the Mississippi (45). Though the colonial government certainly felt more secure after successfully winning the Pequot War and putting down Pontiac's Rebellion in 1763, continually fighting wars was expensive.

By declaring overwhelming presence, this reminder of numbers denies the myth of the vanishing Indian. Occom repeatedly emphasizes the Mohegans' active presence in the territory through other imagery as well. For example, in the main body of the petition, Occom accuses the colonial overseers of desiring "to root us out of our land ^root & Branch^" (7).¹⁰ Even as the image accuses, it reasserts Native persistence. Occom supplants the first "root" of removal by repeating the word but using an alternate meaning. The second "root" is a noun, unlike the first "root," which is a verb, and thus the part of speech being used is no longer an action and is instead something unmoving and embedded, just as the image implies that the Mohegan people are more deeply embedded than the colonial invaders. The fixedness of the community is then further present through its branches, visible above the ground and extending outwards. Lisa Brooks sees this image as a crafted denial of the "developing mythology of the vanishing Indian" that replaces that myth with a vision of a "living and growing community" (111).

The image itself is a performative utterance because it linguistically connects the document to the Mohegan community. Mohegan tribal historian Melissa Jayne Fawcett notes that the "Sacred Tree, or Tree of Life is the spiritual entity that connects one generation to the next. With root deeply embedded in the earth and the bod-

ies of the ancestors, its branches reach towards the sky and future generations” (37). According to Fawcett, Medicine Woman Gladys Tantaquidgeon and Tribal Council Member Jayne Fawcett believe that the Sacred Tree and other oral traditions “serve to confirm the existence of a religious symbolic art tradition” (38). Occom’s use of that imagery adds symbolic depth to the petition and underscores the petition’s importance not only within the colonial legal system but also within the Mohegan tradition, making the petition a physical embodiment of community regeneration both in terms of describing that regeneration and in terms of manifesting that regeneration.¹¹

Occom had also recently returned from a missionary assignment to Oneida territory. While there he was likely exposed to the complex and rich tradition of Iroquois diplomacy. In their guide to *The History and Culture of Iroquois Diplomacy*, Francis Jennings et al. provide a glossary of treaty symbolism. The tree is “an important symbol of peace and protection. The celestial tree stood at the center of the earth and extended its branches and roots everywhere” (122). The root and branch image therefore connects Occom and the Mohegan tribe pantribally, a historic tactic of strength for Native communities, both before and after contact.¹²

Finally, the root and branch metaphor, occurring frequently in the Old and New Testaments, also has biblical underpinnings. As a Christian missionary, Occom had been educated in biblical scholarship while at Moor’s and continued to use specific stories to craft his sermons.¹³ For the particular use found in this petition, a possible reference is Malachi 4:1, where the prophet states that “all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.” Malachi writes to reassure the Israelites who have returned to Judea after captivity but continue to live a harsh existence. In referring to this image, Occom associates Mohegan territorial sovereignty with religious rights: Mohegan territory is their promised land, not the colonists’. Mohegans have more right to the land through both genealogy and spirituality.

By combining Mohegan religious symbolism with Iroquois diplomacy and Christian metaphor, Occom performs a powerful act of communitism just within this single image. Not only do the words establish Mohegan tribal history and presence, but they also create a particularly Mohegan form of Christianity, one that Occom clearly envisions as a healing path for his community and other tribes. By traveling and serving other tribes as a missionary, Occom also spreads this Native Christianity, again as a healing path. While the colonial imposition of Christianity on Native peoples certainly led to cultural destruction for Indigenous communities, a process within which Occom is implicated, Occom spread an Indigenous Christianity instead of simply colonialism in religious form.

The many layers of the root and branch image would not have been transparent to Johnson. But the purpose of the document is not simply to communicate with Johnson. After long years of factionalism, including the geographic splitting into two towns, the convergence of historically opposing parties under the goal of survivance asserts a new, singular Mohegan identity. The crafting of language within the petition has the feel of ritual and underscores the momentousness of this convergence. The sense of ritualistic language, most of which would only be visible to someone deeply familiar with the Mohegan cultural and oral tradition, further appears when Occom writes of wanting to “render us as Cyphers in our own land” (145). Though the ostensible meaning of “Cyphers” within this context charges the colonists with making the Mohegans worth nothing, the word “Cypher” has a second meaning and points to Mohegan code language within the petition. Though the Mohegans perform humility, the petition as a whole is an encoded act of survivance, one that is transparent to the community but not to the white audience. Additionally, this word implies that the whites cannot understand Mohegan language even translated to English. The petition asserts a cultural identity that is more intelligent, more rhetorically savvy, than its audience and that is the product of a single community.

These individual linguistic components combined with the

message of the petition itself work in concert to produce a healing of the tribal rift begun with the split under different sachems. Though holdouts remained, the act of writing the petition brought the community together. The petition remains as an embodiment of its regenerative purpose.

In tandem with the 1764 petition to Sir William Johnson, two petitions written by Occom on behalf of the Tribal Council in the following decade provide an internally directed approach to using petitions as performative utterances for enacting communitism and survivance. These petitions document council agreements. They are “Mohegan Tribe Standing Agreements” (1773) and “Mohegan Tribe on Rents” (1778). Though found among Occom’s papers and written in his handwriting, the documents are not signed by Occom or by anyone else. The absence of his signature places them within the Native political tradition of seeking consensus and shows the emerging understanding that leadership spread over a group is less easily undermined by colonial governments. The petitions announce a cohesiveness of leadership and community that denies the history of tribal factionalism. They frequently refer to unanimous decisions and make clear that the decisions and principles are on behalf of the entire Mohegan community, “one Family,” acting to textually heal rifts (141).

For example, “Mohegan Tribe Standing Agreements” delineates six principles for governing community grazing lands:

1. Unanimously Agreed, that none of us as individuals Shall ever take any English Creatures into our Common Pastures or into the general Fields, for the Future, If we Take in any, it Shall be for the Whole Tribe, and the owners of the Creatures, Shall pay the Tribe in Making Stone Walls around the general Fields

The Reasons—If We Shoud let individuals Take in Creatures, every one will take in as many as they please, Squaws and all, and our Fields and Pastures woud be Crouding^ed^ full every Year and We Shoud never have feed for our own Creatures—

2. Any one may let out his or her Planting or Mowing Ground upon Shares or other Wise, for a ^Summer^ Season, but not take in Creatures to feed it, in the fall,—

3. Any one may hire out his own House and inclosed Lots, Provided the Tenant keeps within his Limitts,—
4. that as there will be always some [page torn]ing Timber and Saw Mill Logs, Such Tops will be for the Whole Tribe, they may Cut them for their own fires, or Cut them into Cordwood to Sell to the White People, allowing the Tribe one Shilling for every Cord they Sell—None Shall Sell any Wood, without any Liberty from ~~any Wood~~ the Tribe and the Overseers
5. if any one is Short of Winder Fod[d]er, and is obligd to put ^out^ his Cattle to the White People to be kept, he may pay in Summer feed in our Common Pastures, but if he falls Short, by Selling his foder, he Shant be allowd to take in Creatuers into our Common Pastures, he must pay other Wise—
6. If any one or a number fence in a bit of ground in any of our Common Pastures to Plant or Sowe, he or they Shall make good Fence, and if any Damage is done by our Creatures in them they Shall recover no Damages,—(146)

Occom wrote this petition on behalf of the “Heads of the Tribe” who continued to meet and decide tribal affairs even though Connecticut would not recognize a nontribally chosen sachem, Zachary Johnson (146). This petition enacts Mohegan sovereignty by repeatedly asserting tribal cohesiveness both as a decision-making body and as a body occupying land as a community. It participates in a continuous confirmation of the community regeneration enacted within the 1764 petition to Johnson.

In contrast to the humility of the 1764 petition, this petition opens with a straightforward statement: “The Heads of the Tribe met to Consult our Mohegan affairs” (146). In using the word “Heads,” Occom and his fellow Mohegans are reaffirming and legitimating a group leadership, a sovereign right as well as a transformation of past leadership strategies that had most recently enabled colonial manipulation and usurpation. By using “Tribe” instead of “Mohegans,” the opening line also indicates that there is one community. This linguistic statement of unity is echoed through the remainder of the petition. The heads affirm that the rules are

“Unanimously Agreed” and repeatedly refer to the “Whole Tribe,” thus further indicating that they are disclaiming factionalism and unifying the tribe (146).

Mohegan sovereignty and survival depend upon the ability to retain and control land. This petition unquestioningly asserts the right to control Mohegan grazing lands and places Mohegan interests and access over both individual Mohegan and white desires, a particularly Native view of land. This petition further requires Mohegans to charge whites for usage of grazing lands or timber and to return some of that money to the tribe. In the past, wampum had been used to establish and maintain trade networks among the various coastal tribes. By requiring whites to pay for usage, the petition attempts to force whites to act within a trade network whereby Mohegans are a tribe, a unity. The petition is part of a process of continually reestablishing Mohegan tribal identity and attempting to require whites to interact with the tribe as a community. It is also a recognition of a changing world, one in which agriculture, though perhaps not traditionally done by men and perhaps not the traditional foundation of the tribe, was also recognized by the colonial government and the rhetoric of Christian civilization as a sign of sovereign right to the land. Putting in place methods for governing agricultural commerce, especially commerce with whites, is a practical manifestation of survivance. This practicality further appears in the petitioners’ writing down of these rules and creation of a physical archive and evidence of tribal identity. After all, as undeniably learned in a decades-long land-restoration case against Connecticut during the 1700s, white courts often require documents as evidence. By writing down the rules, the tribe can use the document in getting reparations from whites who use tribal lands without appropriately compensating the community.

OCCOM’S LATER PETITIONS

By 1785 Occom had become increasingly disillusioned with the white communities with which he negotiated and interacted. Occom and several other Algonquian missionaries educated at Moor’s had

connections to Oneida from past missionary work. They chose to lead converted Algonquians to Oneida territory in order to create a separatist community of Christian Indians. Though delayed by the American Revolution, the new community of Brotherton finally began in 1783 when a small number of Algonquians removed. Occom relocated his family to Brotherton in 1789. According to Hilary E. Wyss, “there were about 280 Stockbridge Indians and 250 Brotherton Indians living near Oneida” by 1791 (124).

During this period Occom continued to write petitions on behalf of the Mohegan, Brotherton, Niantic, Stockbridge, Mahican, Shinnecock, and Montaukett tribes. Even as Occom and his fellow separatists were “powerfully committed to [Brotherton’s] value as a distinct community,” he continued to recognize the worth of the larger Indian community and use his literacy to work on its behalf (Wyss 152). The petitions inscribed by him demonstrate his increasing disillusionment with the promises of his white benefactors and the colonial government and his desire for an Indian world, one with interconnected nations. For Occom personally, the foundation of his vision was built substantially on his view of Christianity as a tool of survivance that would tie the Brotherton community together as one and that was cognizant of Native tradition. This vision was an outgrowth of his missionary education at Moor’s, which “fostered a strong sense of common identity” for his fellow non-Mohegan students (Sweet 140). Occom’s and other Indian missionaries’ travels helped establish “Christian networks” that “prompted native peoples in New England to recognize a shared identity as ‘Indian’ even with pagan peoples who lived hundreds of miles away, led dramatically different styles of life, and did not even share a common language” (Sweet 141). This sense of Native community reestablished through Christianity and the belief that they had no “viable future within the United States” were the foundation of Occom’s separatist vision (Sweet 314).

His sermons show an increasing disillusionment with his fellow Indians as well, a disillusionment that becomes manifest in his final petition, “Brotherton Tribe to the New York State Assembly” (1791), only one year before his death. Though he continued to work

on their behalf, he clearly felt that unconverted Indians were vulnerable to the evils of white society, especially alcohol and greed. In moving to Brotherton, he hoped to separate not only from whites but also from the temptations and ruinous effects of proximity to Euroamericans, thereby in many ways purifying the community.

The first petition inscribed by Occom after the establishment of Brotherton, “Mohegan and Niantic Tribes to the Connecticut Assembly” (1785), asserts Native fishing rights on the Thames River of Connecticut. The state of Connecticut had determined that the Mohegans and the Niantics would share fishing rights within the region, a negotiation that the two tribes had performed historically as a part of their lives in a coastal region and that was focused more on territory than upon quantity. However, the Connecticut Assembly granted the two tribes only one large fishing net (called a seine) worth of fish between them per year, again ignoring their long-standing rights within the region as well as their physical need for more than that small amount of fish. The small allotment demonstrates how the state government legally enforced the myth of the vanishing Indian.

Together the two tribes petitioned the assembly a second time for recognition of their sovereign right to fish their territory as they chose. The petition firmly states that fishing in the region is one of their “Natural Priveledges” and that they require protection of these privileges so that “none may forbid, hinder, or restrain us from fishing in any of the places where we used to fish heretofore”:

Your Excellency may well remember, that we sent a Memorial to the General Assembly, held at New Haven last October, requesting, not a Priviledge, which we never had before, but a Protection in our Natural Priveledges, which the King of Heaven gave to our Fathers and to their Children forever. When we received an answer or grant to our petition, we were all amazed and astonished beyond measure. What? Only half a sein allowed to Monooyauhegunnewuck [Mohegan], from the best friends to the best friends? We are ready to conclude, that the meaning must be, that in time to come we must not have only one canoe, one bow, one hook and line, among two

tribes, and we must have taxes imposed upon us also, &c., &c. Whilst the King of England had authority over here they order no such things upon us. Alas, where are we? If we were slaves under tyrants, we must submit; if we were captives, we must be silent, and if we were strangers, we must be contented; or if we had forfeited our priviledges at your hands by any of our agreements we should have nothing to say. Whenever we went to war against your and our enemies, one bow, and one hatchet would not do for two tribes— (148)

The petition distinguishes between the “Natural Priviledges” given by the “King of Heaven” to their “Fathers and to their Children forever” from a “Priviledge” that might be given, denied, or revoked by the Connecticut Assembly.

One of Occom’s most distinct rhetorical developments is the precise use of references to familial and interpersonal relationships. This rhetoric contrasts with the humility of the 1764 petition to Johnson. Though the first petition does refer to “true Friendship,” it significantly appeals to the duties of “a tender Parent” to “‘helpless’ Children” (144). In this 1785 petition, Occom reminds the Connecticut Assembly that they are “steady, close and faithful friends” instead of establishing the Mohegans as children looking to their father (147). Between the first petition and this petition, Occom had built upon relationships established while he was a missionary in the eastern woodlands. He had participated in negotiations with the Oneidas for territory to establish Brotherton and therefore had experienced firsthand at least a portion of the Iroquois treaty process. This process includes very specifically delineated familial roles that defined “duties and obligations” that were typically “misunderstood” by Europeans (Jennings et al. 11). Whether or not Occom himself understood the finer aspects of the Iroquois kinship system and its centrality to treaty-making is unknown. However, he certainly became aware of the potential power embedded within these terms, a power that would have been further defined for him by his knowledge of the Bible and its stories of fathers, sons, mothers, and brothers. Wyss further notes that “the language of family makes use of Algonquian social

and diplomatic customs” as well (135). By saying that the privilege was given to their “Fathers” and then referring to the Connecticut Assembly as “best friends,” the petition asserts Mohegan/Niantic rights to the region and removes the whites from that genealogy, relegating them to the category of friend and establishing an equal relationship. By demoting the whites from parents to friends, the language also dispenses with the “series of interlocking obligations” traditionally embedded in Algonquian kinship (Wyss 135). The petition prepares the audience for this distinction in the opening when Occom writes, “Your steady, close and faithful friends the tribe of Mohegan, and the tribe of Nahantick sendeth greeting. Sincere friends and brethren may talk freely together without offence. Such we concluded, the English of Connecticut and Mohegans, and Nahanticks are” (147–48). These lines clarify the difference in the relationship between Native nations and between Natives and whites, placing a tighter bond between Indigenous communities. The language further removes the English from the intertribal connection by having the two tribes “sendeth” greeting to the Connecticut Assembly, the formal-sounding suffix distancing and defamiliarizing them. The fact that fishing privileges were conferred upon their fathers further strengthens their intertribal ties and distances the white government by establishing a history and tradition of familial bonds from which the whites are excluded.

The petition is an important statement of pantribal unity and kinship. However, Occom is also careful to maintain the two tribes as separate nations. Though the syntax is somewhat confusing, he feigns disbelief that the Connecticut Assembly would presume that “only one canoe, one bow, one hook and line” would be sufficient for “two tribes” (148). The tribes appeal together within the bounds of kinship, but they remain separate communities with separate needs and economic systems. The transition back to the repeated use of “we” again unifies the tribes. Occom then separates them again when he notes that “one bow, and one hatchet would not do for two tribes” during wartime when they allied with the colonists, both against fellow tribes and against the British crown.

While the two tribes partner in petitioning, their vision of survivance includes remaining distinct nations, both from each other and from the new American government. While they may not be able to enact their vision upon their ancestral soil, they can write petitions that enact these careful divisions within the written language and within the archives of the white government.

Pan-Indian sovereignty also appears in the structured communication of an ongoing sense of grievance. In a crescendo of negative comparisons of tribal members first to “slaves under tyrants,” then to “captives,” and finally to “strangers,” the petition linguistically distances the two tribes from the whites under a shared sense of angry grievance (148). This language also mirrors the colonists’ own rhetoric in their rebellion against England. After bringing the idea of revolution to mind, Occom underscores tribal anger through his reference to war and hatchets, which contains a veiled threat even as it reminds the Connecticut Assembly of past alliances between the different groups.

This sequence climaxes when Occom asks, “And what will the various tribes of Indians, of this boundless continent say, when they hear of this restraint of fishing upon us? Will they not all cry out, *mmauk*, *mmauk*, these are the good that the Mohegans ever gloried and boasted of” (148).¹⁴ In examining other Occom works, Dana D. Nelson argues that, although “Occom refuses to hide his language [. . .] he cannot escape knowing that his Indian language, like his Indian appearance, confirms his inferiority within the logic of the dominant community” (57–58). However, the pointed use of the Mohegan word “*mmauk*” in this petition shows that the retention and display of the Mohegan language fits within the overall process of survivance. It remains as a reminder of the strangeness of Indians, their untranslatability to Euroamerican culture even as they have trappings of white society including Christianity, literacy, and legal knowledge. Occom stabs the reminder into the audience by repeating “*mmauk*.” The alienness that the word performs for whites asserts the Mohegans’ lack of desire to assimilate to whiteness and the pride the Mohegans have in their unique tribal identity and language.

The continuing presence of the Mohegan language itself further refutes the vanishing Indian myth, as does the physical requirement expressed by the petition for more than “one canoe, one bow, one hook and line, among two tribes” (148). Occom and his co-petitioners, both Mohegan and Niantic, shout their presence to the whites, to other tribes, and to their own tribal members. By doing so, they assert survivance as well, since survivance focuses on presence instead of absence.

Rhetorical sovereignty appears in the continuing use of irony and sarcasm, the subversive and illusive element somewhat tentatively placed within the 1764 petition to Johnson. After sharing grievances and anger, Occom concludes the petition with a return to a calm tone: “We conclude your excellencies must have mistaken our request. And therefore we earnestly pray again, that the honorable Assembly would protect us in our Natural Priveledges, that none may forbid, hinder, or restrain us from fishing in any of the places where we used to fish heretofore” (148). The “excellencies” suggests sarcasm, and the “honorable” ironically reminds the whites of past dishonor toward their Indian allies. Here sarcasm and irony perform a sovereign identity since the language dares. It dares the white audience to punish the tribes for their audacity, and it dares them to acknowledge their dishonor and criminality. It dares to refute the idea of the poor, humble Indian, and it dares to insult.

The message of interconnected, pan-Indian sovereignty and survivance continues in a series of three petitions written by Occom on behalf of three different tribal communities. Tentatively dated 1785, the petitions are “Brotherton Tribe to United States Congress,” “Montaukett Tribe to the State of New York,” and “Shinnecock Tribe to the State of New York.” The three petitions each follow a similar structure. In them Occom first flatteringly addresses the petitions’ audiences. Next he provides a general history of each region’s natural resources and each tribe’s relationship to those resources. In these sections he includes the process by which the resources were lost and describes the current state of encroachment. He places blame both on past Native leaders who

were ignorant of English property rights and land value and on the colonists who shamefully took advantage of them. Finally, he includes a specific request. Occom also includes a reference to the American Revolution and its success in each petition, but the location of that reference varies: the Brotherton petition places the reference in the midst of the history, and the other two petitions place the reference before beginning the history.

Knowing that Occom worked with multiple tribes writing multiple petitions during this period provides a glimpse into the pan-Indian communitism that Occom performed. Through these petitions, Occom uses his literacy and knowledge of whites to serve various tribes, not only helping these tribes as a scribe, but also reaffirming and extending networks present before contact. Though Mohegan policy and survival tactics established under the first sachem, Uncas, focused on cooperation with whites, Occom demonstrates that cooperation with whites does not necessarily exclude cooperation with other tribes as well. In fact, as numbers decreased and as the tribe became increasingly impoverished due to encroachment and other effects of colonization, maintaining the strength of other tribes would help establish a common pot of strength, as discussed by Lisa Brooks throughout her chapter "The Mohegan Narrative of Native Rights" (58–128).

Yet Occom predicated his own communitist vision upon the establishment of Brotherton, a new tribe for Christian Indians and a place for him to continue his ministry. Through the petitions' language, he linguistically translates his old world upon the coast to his new future in Oneida territory. For him, survivance is built upon Native Christianity, the language of which permeates these petitions. In Brotherton he and his fellow founders imagine "the community as a single living, functioning being" that "produces the community's collective history as its autobiography or more properly its autoethnography" (Wyss 126). Though he wrote these petitions on behalf of different tribes, the Brotherton vision plays out in the petitions, especially through the creation stories and histories he repeats in each version. In order for Brotherton to work, the disparate tribes needed to come together as one under a

Christian story. By molding Native history for all tribes and incorporating both traditional cosmology and Christianity, Occom merges the tribes together under one autoethnography and enables the establishment of a cohesive community.

In the tribal histories, Occom repeatedly refers to the creation of the world by the “Great” or “Supreme” “Spirit above” (149, 151, 152), a title that refers ambiguously to both the Indian Creator and the Christian God.¹⁵ The histories that follow these references are rife with Edenic images in which the precontact world is innocent and abundant, as in this version from the petition on behalf of the Montaukett tribe:

The Great and good Spirit above, Saw fit in his good pleasure, to plant our Fore-Fathers in this great Wilderness but when and how, none knows but himself,—and he that works all things According to his own Mind, Saw it good to give us this great Continent & he fill’d this Indian World, with verietie, and a Prodigious Number of four footed Beasts, Fowl without number and Fish of all kinds great and Small, fill’d our Seas, Rivers, Brooks, and Ponds every where,—and it was the Pleasure of him, Who orders all things according to his good Will, he that maketh Rich, and maketh poor, he that kills, and that maketh alive, he that raiseth up whom he will, and pulleth down ^{^whom^} he will; Saw fit, to keep us in Porverty, Only to live upon the Provisions he hath made already at our Hands—Thus we livd, till it pleased the great and good Governor of the World, to Send your Fathers into these goings down of the Sun, and found us Naked and very poor Destitute of every thing, that your Fathers enjoyd, only this that we had good and a Large Country to live in, and well furnished with Natural Provisions, and there was not a Letter known amongst them all in this Boundless Continent. (151)

By comparing the Indian world to Eden, Occom works within a Christian cosmology in which the Native inhabitants are religiously chosen to occupy the land. The biblical feel of the passage builds upon the language of abundance and the use of antiquated

verb forms such as “maketh” and “pulleth” that echo the 1603 King James Bible.

The whites’ arrival brings the loss of innocence and ejection from the garden, just as the serpent’s arrival does in the biblical creation story. In Occom’s version, aligning past leaders such as Uncas with Eve and the whites with Satan, the Indians “are undone” “by our Fore Fathers Ignorance and Your Fathers great Knowledge” (151). This version of creation and lost Eden echoes a similar story told to his fellow Indians in a 1784 sermon. Like these petitions, the sermon refers to the “Great ^good^ Supream and Indepentant Spirit above” as the Creator and provides a Native Christianity that incorporates elements of Native traditions (196). Though Occom does not align the whites explicitly with the serpent during the sermon, he describes the loss of Eden as becoming like the devil himself:

Now their Eyes were opened only to See their Misery, to know good and Evil to their Sorrow, and they now see and know, that they have lost all, they have lost the Blessed Image and Likeness of God, they have lost their Beauty, Excellence, Holiness, and glory, they have lost the Sweet Fellowship, Communion and Enjoyment of God, and Contracted the Image of the Devil and all his Likeness,—^and in Stead of being Gods they are Devils^—and have lost all this World, and the fullness thereof, they have lost the garden that god made for them Yea they are broke and become Bankrupts, and are fugitives and Vagabonds in the Earth, and are now liable to all maner of Miseries in this Life, liable to every Disease, Sickneses, and Accidents, and is now Danger and Fear on every Side, and is liable to Death Continually, and as God told him that in the Day thou eatest thereof thou Shall Surely Die, and he is now Spiritually Dead, Dead in Trespasses and in Sins thus they have ruined themselves and all their Posterity with them[.] (197)

While Christianity was brought to “this World” by whites, Occom and his fellow converts view Christianity as an intracommunity

through which they can regenerate their ties and claim a new country, separate from whites and their corrupting influence. Occom desires to return to the “Blessed Image and Likeness of God,” not spread “the Image of the Devil and all his Likeness” (197). Resistance-oriented interpretations may judge Occom harshly for his missionary work and his conversion of his fellow Indians away from their Native religious culture, but in his view that culture had become corrupted, and the only way to survive and flourish was to build those remnants into a new future. By using this Christian version of Indian history in the petitions, Occom simulates a different Genesis story. Writing down the story enacts that version, the simulation made manifest. The petitions build upon Occom’s experience as a Christian minister whose job included writing and speaking sermons. In sermons, preachers manipulate language and symbols to create meaning and reveal truths as well as to stir the listeners of both the faithful and reluctant variety.

The incorporation of Christian imagery also helps counteract ever-growing myths about the vanishing Indian. Indians had a reputation as great orators during this period, as indicated by the roughly contemporaneous popularity of Thomas Jefferson’s memorialization of “Logan’s Lament” in *Notes on the State of Virginia*, first published in 1784. Jefferson’s and other early Americans’ attraction to the “Lament” demonstrates their desire to have a romantic, but dying image of the Indian that would enable Americans to claim the romantic heritage for their own and to legitimate both their presence in America and their separateness from England. As Wind notes, “Celebrating eloquence as the supreme achievement of primitive American peoples became an expression of confidence in the destiny of the new nation” (41), and it worked hand-in-hand with “the need to perceive the Indian as a soon-to-be-extinct species” (45). Murray explains the “appetite” for printed Indian speeches “whose *content* offered an often devastating criticism of white actions” by noting that the “nobility and eloquence” of the complaints confirmed the “inevitability of their disappearance” (36; emphasis original). Occom plays with the desire to hear a great Indian speech when he introduces all three histories with

the request to the whites to “hear us” (149, 151, 152). Yet the words he uses are frequently biblical and therefore imply that the Indians are not vanishing and that they are educated in colonial culture. By claiming at least some connection to Christianity, the petitions also claim continuing presence and argue for the respect of God’s other Christian worshippers.

At the same time, Occom rejects the equation of Christianity with Euroamerican cultivation, an equation used to justify colonial encroachment upon Indian land. In undermining this justification, his history indicates that extensive precontact cultivation was unnecessary since the land provided “Spontaneous Product” (149). The petitions present the postcontact increase in agricultural cultivation and some Native men’s new agricultural responsibilities as a result of the loss of God’s favor, not a positive indication of conversion to Christian civilization.

The petitions conclude with specific requests for items such as “a grist mill and a Saw Mill” (150), “all manner of Husbandry Tools” (150), “150 head of Cattle” (152), “Horses” (152), and “Hogs” (153). The mundane necessity of these requests further shatters the vanishing Indian image. The requests assert continuing presence and a community with commonplace needs. Though these moments may not contain the rhetorical and oratory aesthetics of the histories, they demonstrate the tactical nature of the remainder of the petitions. The petitions both philosophically and legally affirm Native sovereignty as well as acknowledge the very material requirements for survival. Perhaps the most moving moment occurs at the end of “Brotherton Tribe to United States Congress.” The final request is for “a little Library, for we would have our Children have some Learning,—our Young People are much inclined to learn” (150). Along with requests for tools and mills for the production of food and housing, this final appeal shows that literacy is as important for ongoing tribal existence and recognizes the place of literacy and education in the transformed Indian world.

I do not wish to imply that the incorporation of Native Christianity and the philosophy of Christian separatism within these post-Brotherton documents was the best strategy for resistance.

Undoubtedly, Occom's vision destroyed pieces of culture and community even as it built others. After all, as Wyss points out in her analysis of Brotherton, "the Native founders of Brotherton rejected the authority of White missionaries to speak for them, and in the process they reconceptualized the meaning of Native community along deeply masculinist lines" (126), a strategy that resulted in the "disempowerment of Native women" (139). This marginalization of women's traditional authority is just one of the ways in which Native culture changed under Occom's and other Indian missionaries' spread of Christianity. For exactly this reason, survivance is the key to interpreting Occom's petitions. Occom and the communities he wrote on behalf of were seeking ways to survive, not nobly vanish. While other choices existed and the majority of Mohegans who remained behind in Connecticut made some of them, these are the ones chosen by the petitions' communities and the ways in which Occom helped craft, influence, and perform them. Instead of condemning Occom, we can understand his choices and how he enacted them. We can also acknowledge the fact that many other choices will remain unstudied and even unknown since it is Occom's literacy and Christianity that provided an archive for modern scholars.

In this light, I return to 1994 and the Mohegan case for tribal recognition. As noted earlier, Occom was an important link in establishing "continuous authority" in this case (Fawcett-Sayet 52). Fawcett-Sayet places Occom within the chain of Mohegans who maintained "sociocultural lifeways" and uses his leadership during a "difficult transitional era" to demonstrate the "usher[ing] in [of] an era in which the sociocultural leader would reign supreme" (52). Occom's importance resides in his connection of formal political leadership to cultural leadership, for him specifically in terms of acting as scribe and in his sachemlike Christian ministry. Occom's life work, which includes these documents, was a crucial component in obtaining federal recognition of the Mohegan tribe along with seven hundred acres of reclaimed Mohegan land. The documents of eighteenth-century survivance not only demonstrate the dynamic process by which Indians determine and assert commu-

nal identity but also exemplify the ways in which those moments resonate into the future.

NOTES

Thank you to Joanna Brooks for providing me with a manuscript copy of *The Collected Writings of Samson Occom, Mohegan*. Thank you to James Cox and Lisa Moore for all their invaluable feedback on early drafts.

1. See the Mohegan tribal Web site for a listing of the 1994 criteria: <http://www.mohegan.nsn.us/government/criteria.aspx>. For a longer discussion of the tribal recognition process and sociocultural authority, see Fawcett-Sayet. For a history of sociocultural leaders and their specific contributions, see Fawcett.

2. The Mohegan language is currently undergoing recovery. See the Mohegan tribal Web site for details: <http://www.mohegan.nsn.us/heritage/preservations.aspx?p=language>.

3. In using language to make things happen, the petitions build upon English linguistic power as well. J. L. Austin writes of performative utterances, describing them as utterances “in which to *say* something is to *do* something” (12; emphasis original). Austin distinguishes these utterances from those describing something that has happened, that is happening, or that will happen. He provides examples such as saying “I do” at a wedding or saying “I bet you sixpence it will rain tomorrow” (5). The act occurs within and through the utterance itself.

4. Maureen Konkle views Native writers as being “keenly aware of the problems they faced, of the power of EuroAmerican representation [in writing] and the necessity of establishing authority for their own knowledge” by the early nineteenth century (39). By examining a nontraditional literary genre such as legal petitions, we can see that Native authors in the 1700s were already working to establish that epistemological authority as well as control their land and sovereignty through writing.

5. Occom’s complete works were published only recently in *The Collected Writings of Samson Occom, Mohegan: Leadership and Literature in Eighteenth-Century Native America*.

6. Occom received his missionary education at Moor’s Indian Charity School in Lebanon, Connecticut, under the tutelage of Eleazar Wheelock. After completing his training, Occom preached to various coastal Indian communities such as the Montaukett Tribe of Long Island. His mission-

ary work lasted for several decades and included time spent among the Iroquois and a fundraising trip to Europe on behalf of Wheelock and his school. For more biographical information on Occom, see Peyer and Lisa Brooks.

7. In his chapter “Identity in Mashpee,” Clifford points out the real consequences of seeing Christian conversion as being incapable of coexisting with Native “cultural wholeness” (337). The Mashpees were unable to prove in court that they constituted a continuous Indian tribe. The jurors even ruled that they were not a tribe at the time of the trial (335).

8. Ben III was the son of Ben II and the grandson of Major Ben Uncas. Against Mohegan tradition, colonists had helped Major Ben Uncas to the sachemship in 1723. For more extensive histories of the Mohegan tribe, see Peyer and Lisa Brooks. Occom grew up in Ben’s Town among supporters of Major Ben Uncas and his heirs. The other faction resided mainly in John’s Town, originally supporting Mahomet as the rightful sachem instead of Major Ben Uncas.

9. Fawcett-Sayet notes that this lack of continuous formal individual leadership initially undermined the Mohegan tribal recognition case in the 1980s, placing the Mohegans in a historical catch-22 (52).

10. In her edition of Occom’s writings, Joanna Brooks retains Occom’s editorial notations, and they appear in this essay as well, usually in the form of insertion symbols (^) or strikethroughs.

11. Lisa Brooks further identifies Occom’s use of root and branch imagery as an echo of his “forebear Appagese,” who used the same imagery in another document (111).

12. According to Lisa Brooks, the introductory flattery toward Johnson also suggests that Occom’s travels to the Iroquois taught him “literacy in the language of Iroquois diplomacy” (110). The language of humility is therefore a declaration of pan-Indian community and identity in addition to being an expression and manipulation of petition rhetoric. More work needs to be done in tracing the influence of Iroquois diplomacy upon Occom’s writings and leadership. The root and branch image and the flattery are just two examples within this single document.

13. Examples of biblical stories and images used by Occom as main themes for his sermons include creation and the Garden of Eden in Genesis 1:1–3:24, the story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25–37, Matthew 22:42, Ezekiel 33:11, 1 Timothy 6:12, and 2 Corinthians 5:17. Within many of his sermons, Occom performs careful close readings of the biblical passages in order to both exhort his audience to a Christian life and to con-

demn Christians in name only (see Occom 166–229). His interpretations often envision a specifically Native Christianity.

14. According to a note, the meaning of “mmauk” in English may be “fish” or “our fish” (148n7).

15. Fawcett cites a 1930 Lenni Lenape creation story told to Medicine Woman Gladys Tantaguideon as the “first Mohegan story” (7). In the story, the Creator is named “Great Manitou” or *Gunche Mundu* (7).

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Strategies for Ethical Engagement

An Open Letter Concerning Non-Native Scholars
of Native Literatures

SAM MCKEGNEY

Reacting to violence perpetrated against Indigenous texts by decades of literary criticism dominated by non-Native academics wielding analytical strategies developed outside Native communities, much recent criticism of Indigenous literatures has been intensely self-reflexive about the position of the critic, whether non-Native or otherwise. Declaration of ties to particular Indigenous communities or, perhaps more crucially, confession of lack of community ties and non-Native status have become near obligatory elements of contemporary Indigenous literary criticism, and rightly so given the general desire of such criticism to intervene in and destabilize unequal power relations and the basic truth that non-Native members of the academy tend to enjoy positions of privilege, authority, and power. The current critical climate thus encourages a healthy skepticism about claims made by non-Native critics while suggesting (at times implicitly, at others explicitly) the intellectual and political value of attending to Indigenous voices within the critical arena.¹ Helen Hoy, herself non-Native, worries adroitly about “unfortunate occasions either for absolute, irreducible distance or for presumptuous familiarity” (11), which emerge for the outsider critic by virtue of cultural naivety. Lack of cultural immersion leaves many non-Native critics unaware of the symbolic archives, historical and cultural backdrops, generic categories, and even languages relied upon by specific Native authors, all of which conspire to render interpretations by such critics suspect, if not dangerous. Hoy elaborates that “too-easy identification by

the non-Native reader, ignorance of historical or cultural allusion, obliviousness to the presence or properties of Native genres, and the application of irrelevant aesthetic standards are all means of domesticating difference, assimilating Native narratives into the mainstream" (9).

Although I agree with insistence on self-reflexivity and acknowledgment of limited cultural understandings, I would argue that lack of cultural initiation and knowledge is actually a secondary reason for privileging the work of Native critics (as well as a bit of a generalization). Knowledge can be attained. Neither unproblematically, of course, nor completely, and certainly not with the depth of a lifetime of experiential learning through simple academic study, but those non-Native critics willing to put in the time and effort in terms of research, dialogue, social interaction, and community involvement can approach valid cultural understandings. (In fact, to my mind, it is our responsibility to do so if we desire our work to be relevant.) Furthermore, given colonial intervention, not all Native individuals have inherited full understandings of their tribal cultures and histories, let alone those of other Native nations. In the aftermath of attempted genocide, requisite cultural knowledge can be taken as a given by neither Natives nor non-Natives.² The primary reason for privileging the work of Indigenous scholars is rather what Craig Womack calls the "intrinsic and extrinsic relationship" between Native communities and Native writing (11) and what Jace Weaver calls the "dialogic" nature of Native texts, which "both reflect and shape Native identity and community" (41). Native literature grows out of Native communities and in turn affects Native communities. In analyzing, contextualizing, grappling with, and elucidating Native texts, literary criticism seeks to intervene in this reciprocal process (most often to serve as catalyst). To borrow from Julie Cruikshank, criticism of Native literature generally seeks to participate in the social lives of stories. Stories influence the extratextual world, not straightforwardly and not transparently, but stories and critical discourses about stories do influence people's lives. And in the field of Native studies, the stories under analysis, quite frankly, affect certain lives far more

profoundly than others. As much as intellectual empathy and ethical commitment can pervade the work of a scholar with neither biological nor immediate social connection to Indigenous communities, the consequences of that individual's work cannot be experienced personally with the same intensity as one whose day-to-day lived experience is being Indigenous. Although I endeavor to be as sensitive and respectful as I am able, as a non-Native critic I simply do not stand to inherit the adverse social impact my critical work might engender, and this, it seems to me, impacts the way my work functions and is something about which I must remain critically conscious.

Such critical consciousness, while absolutely necessary for ethically appropriate critical and political interactions with Indigenous literatures, has produced tremendous anxiety among non-Native scholars working in the field over the past several years, leading to a series of critical reactions to which I wish to respond in this methodological discussion. I have become increasingly concerned recently that the dominant strategies adopted by non-Native critics to avoid doing damage to Indigenous texts have had unintended inverse (and adverse) effects of obfuscating Indigenous voices and stagnating the critical field. My goal in these brief remarks is to explain what I see as the ironically disabling impact of some critical postures characterized by careful, self-reflexive distance undertaken by non-Native critics and then suggest a possible alternative direction for future critical interventions. The following are the most popular among what I will refer to as strategies of ethical disengagement by non-Native scholars.

STRATEGIES OF ETHICAL DISENGAGEMENT

Retreat into Silence

Faced with the conundrum of either misunderstanding (and therefore misrepresenting) indigeneity or recolonizing the Indigenous literary artist by "submit[ting] him or her to a dominative discourse" (Krupat 30), many non-Native former critics of Native literature have simply moved on to other areas of study. A popu-

lar site of migration has been white representations of indigeneity, which can be critiqued in terms of racism, colonial myths, and semiotic imprisonment without the fear of appropriating Native voice. This strategy has two benefits: it protects the Indigenous text against assault by the culturally uninitiated, and it opens up the field for Indigenous scholars.³ However, this alternative of focusing even more attention on the cultural creations of the dominant society seems at the same time perplexingly contrary to the goals of respecting Native voices and forwarding the social and political objectives embedded in texts; it again takes focus away, willingly failing to heed the creative voices of those adversely affected by the legacy of colonial oppression.

Focus Inward

Intense self-reflexivity is far from uncommon in the age of post-modern literary analysis, but contemporary analyses of Native literary productions by non-Natives at times take this to a new level in which the actions of the critic become the primary site of inquiry rather than a cautionary apparatus designed to render the primary analysis more fertile. Given the dangers of appropriation and misrepresentation, the analytical process itself presents a safe site where the critic can be confident she or he is not committing violence against Native voice because the voice under scrutiny becomes her or his own. An example of this in process—although one that needs to be contextualized as an analysis of collaborative autobiography—would be Kathleen Sands’s focus in *Telling a Good One* on a “narrative-ethnography methodology, in which the reader is made privy to the [non-Native] collector’s self-conscious participation [in the autobiographical project] and doubly self-conscious hindsight” (50). In an effort to avoid corrupting the voice of Theodore Rios, the Native subject of the autobiography, Sands makes her own involvement in the collaborative process as much the focus of her inquiry as Rios’s words.

While to a certain extent necessary, the “Focus Inward” has always seemed to me slightly masturbatory. The idea that the best

way to ensure that Native voice is not stifled or misunderstood is to study another voice altogether is counterintuitive. It is kind of like the backhanded paternalism of saying, “you might get hurt in the ring, so please stay on the sidelines while I shadow box myself.” In the effort to protect the oppressed, one disregards her or his decision-making authority. Yes, scholars need to be aware of their own limitations, and yes, they must be self-reflexive, but no, they do not need to make themselves the stars of their studies, especially to the ongoing neglect of Indigenous voices.

Deal in the Purviews of Non-Natives

Although only one among many, Arnold Krupat presents the foremost example of this type of reaction. Krupat’s attachment to a social-scientific approach to Native literature is undoubtedly informed by awareness of his outsider status; however, his defense against producing an exploitative critical discourse is to retreat from Native narratives themselves and deal in the domains of other non-Native scholars—anthropologists, sociologists, historians, literary theorists, philosophers—which is why his 1992 book *Ethnocriticism* is, by its author’s own admission, “very little concerned with specifically literary texts” (31). It deduces textual meaning predominantly through analyses of material production and cultural collision, thereby implying a deterministic relationship that obscures the possibility of enduring Indigenous agency. It suggests that the work of Native authors is determined by forces outside themselves, be they cultural, economic, or political.

To play with my earlier analogy a bit, “Dealing in the Purviews of Non-Natives” is somewhat like saying, “you may get hurt on the field, so please stay on the sidelines and watch the rest of us play.” The non-Native critic examines the work of other non-Native scholars, critics, and theorists in order to explain away the textual product without having to engage much at all with the ideas of the text. “Unwilling to speak *for* the Indian,” writes Krupat, “and unable to speak as an Indian [. . .], the danger *I* run as an ethnocritic is the danger of leaving the Indian silent entirely in my discourse” (30).

Krupat identifies a mighty risk, one that seems far more threatening to Indigenous empowerment than the alternative of engaging Native literature directly, despite the possibility of misinterpretation. Non-Native critics must indeed be ever conscious of the limitations of their experiential knowledge, but this awareness cannot lead them to ignore Native voices without compromising the critical and political validity of their work. Although contextual information from a variety of sources is clearly crucial to knowledgeable engagements with any literature, such information must never replace the literary analysis, particularly among literatures that have been heretofore marginalized. The priority in Native literary studies, it seems to me, must be Native voices as evidenced by the writing of the Native author. This is not a dogmatic claim about what constitutes Native identity but rather an obvious conclusion about what it is the job of the literary critic to do. The function of literary criticism, in the Indigenous context as elsewhere, is to engage in the understanding and elucidation of specific literary texts, not to bury those texts beneath mountains of anthropological and historical data.

*Present only Tentative, Qualified,
and Provisional Critical Statements*

From the all-too-frequent "Please let me know if I'm saying this wrong, because I don't speak Anishinabe" prefaces at Native studies conferences, to the two-paragraph qualifications at the beginning or end of articles tracing the author's complex subject position and her or his capacity to make only a particular type of reticent truth claim regarding these distant literatures, many non-Native critics flirt with this technique. Renate Eigenbrod, for example, is careful to "problematize [her] subjectivity, the situatedness of [her] knowledge, and the *context* of [her] subject position in order to underscore partiality and de-emphasize assumptions about the expert" (xv). Hoy similarly strives in her work to "keep to the forefront the assumptions, needs, and ignorance that [she] bring[s] to [her] readings, the culture-specific positioning from

which [she] engage[s] with the writing.” “[B]y making explicit various sources of [her] responses,” Hoy endeavors to “render the readings more clearly local, partial, and accountable, relinquishing the authority that clings to detached pronouncements” (18). Both Hoy and Eigenbrod take action against the power imbalance between Indigenous community and non-Native academy by forsaking access to positions of “authority” and calling into question the validity of their own readings.

Politically, this is astute, admirable, and ethical, but it does lead to questions about the point of reading work that professes to be inadequate throughout.⁴ Also, when taken to an extreme, this process can potentially lead to critical license. By qualifying their statements with admissions of lack of cultural knowledge, critics can consider themselves freed from attempting to gain that knowledge, which inevitably will lead to weaker criticism. The wise person may well recognize that she or he knows nothing, but the wiser person takes this as incentive to learn.

Furthermore, remaining cognizant of limitations must not prevent the outsider critic from saying anything of note, from making the interpretive claims that are the earmarks of engaged scholarship. Critical interventions, even when they are flawed, can forward others’ thinking by inciting reactions in which new avenues of investigation and new methods of inquiry might be developed. If an interpretation is flawed, then why is it so, and how can another critic in dialogue remedy the errors? According to Womack, critics of Native literatures need to “interrogate each other’s work as much as celebrate it. [. . .] The backslapping that has characterized our discipline has not gotten us very far” (Weaver, Womack, and Warrior 169). Warrior agrees, arguing in *Tribal Secrets* that “the tendency to find in the work of other American Indian writers something worthy [. . .] of unmitigated praise [. . .] stands in the way of sincere disagreement and engagement” (xviii). Although non-Native critics can never and should never claim “big A” Authority in their discussion of Native texts, the need for endless qualification is mitigated by the dialogic nature of critical discourse. All claims unleashed upon the critical arena are offered up for debate,

and those that are inept or, worse, communally damaging need to be countered with astute, powerful, and ethical responses. I apologize for any weaknesses that might emerge in my own analysis, but I do not apologize for analyzing. And I expect and desire other critics (especially those with connections to the communities for whom the issues embedded in the texts I analyze are lived concerns) to engage with some of the things I have said and to disagree with them where necessary. This is how the critical field will grow; this is how I will get better as a critic and hopefully produce more empowering and communally generative work in the future.

STRATEGIES FOR ETHICAL ENGAGEMENT

In short, I reject the reigning strategies for ethical disengagement in order to seek out strategies for ethical engagement. To respect the creative work of Native writers, the intellectual work of Native critics, and the activist work of Native community members, one must engage—listen, learn, dialogue, and debate. The critical posture I endeavor to occupy as a non-Native critic of Native literatures, therefore, is that of the ally. Weaver states:

We need simpatico and knowledgeable Amer-European critical allies. [. . .] We want non-Natives to read, engage, and study Native literature. The survival of Native authors, if not Native people in general, depends on it. But we do not need modern literary colonizers. We only ask that non-Natives who study and write about Native peoples do so with respect and a sense of responsibility to Native community. (Weaver, Womack, and Warrior 11)

An ally, in my understanding, is one who acknowledges the limits of her or his knowledge, but neither cowers beneath those limits nor uses them as a crutch. An ally recognizes the responsibility to gain knowledge about the cultures and communities whose artistic creations she or he analyzes before entering the critical fray and offering public interpretations. An ally privileges the work of Native scholars, writers, and community members—not as a political ges-

ture, but as a sincere attempt to produce the most effective criticism—yet she or he does not accept their work uncritically; she or he recognizes that healthy skepticism and critical debate are signs of engagement and respect, not dismissal. Further, an ally appreciates that multilayered and ultimately valid understandings of cultures, communities, and histories can never emerge solely from book research and that the ongoing vitality of Indigenous communities must serve to augment and correct what Jana Sequoya calls “the alienated forms of archive material” (458). Most importantly, the non-Native ally acts out of a sense of responsibility to Indigenous communities in general and most pointedly to those whose creative work is under analysis. Cherokee author, academic, and activist Daniel Heath Justice argues that “to be a thoughtful participant in the decolonization of Indigenous peoples is to necessarily enter into an ethical relationship that requires respect, attentiveness, intellectual rigor, and no small amount of moral courage” (9). Allied critical endeavors, it seems to me, aspire to such participation.⁵

NOTES

This piece consists of a revised excerpt from the author’s recent book *Magic Weapons: Aboriginal Writers Remaking Community after Residential School*, published by University of Manitoba Press in 2007.

1. In two of the most significant critical interventions of the last decade or so, *Tribal Secrets* (1995) and *Red on Red* (1999), Osage critic Robert Warrior and Muskogee Creek critic Craig S. Womack argue respectively (in distinct but interpenetrating ways) for analytical strategies in Native literary studies that emerge from Native people and Native communities. Warrior “explores the extent to which, after more than two centuries of impressive literary and critical production, critical interpretation of [Native] writings can proceed primarily from Indian sources” (xvi), and Womack explores the extent to which “Native literature, and the criticism that surrounds it,” can be engaged through the lens of “tribally specific concerns” (1). Both critics focus on the work of other Native writers, critics, community members, and activists, not solely in response to the domination of “the ‘mental means of production’ in regards to analyzing

Indian cultures [. . .] by non-Indians” (Womack 5), but also as a reasoned argumentative position regarding what generates the most effective interpretations of the literature. Reacting to “an unfortunate prejudice among scholars against American Indian critical, as opposed to fictional, poetic, oral, or autobiographical, writings,” Warrior calls for “bibliograph[ies] dominated by [. . .] the criticism of American Indian writers” and critical discourse in which “native writers [are] taken seriously as critics as well as producers of literature and culture” (xv–xvi). Womack similarly seeks out “Native perspectives” by “prioritizing Native voices” within his work and by “allowing Indian people to speak for themselves” (4).

The need for what Cherokee critic Jace Weaver calls a “Native American literary criticism”—as opposed to “criticism of Native American literature”—that resides “in the hands of Native critics to define and articulate, from the resources [*they*] choose” (Weaver, Womack, and Warrior 17) is paramount. Since the initial challenges of Womack, Warrior, and Weaver in the 1990s, the critical movement of Indigenous literary nationalism has endeavored to address this need while building ethically responsible critical methodologies that remain committed to the endurance and well-being of Native communities and individuals. Among the most significant products of this movement is the recent collaborative collection *Reasoning Together: The Native Critics Collective*.

2. As Métis author Kim Anderson writes, “Native experience” is complicated “because, unfortunately, part of our experience as Native peoples includes being relocated, dispossessed of our ways of life, adopted into white families, and so on” (27).

3. All scholars of Native literatures need to facilitate the development of new Native scholars through involvement in graduate courses, symposia, conferences, edited collections, and journal special issues, thereby contributing to conditions of possibility for the inevitable and necessary predominance of the critical field by Natives. To clarify, this does not mean a power-laden dynamic in which non-Native paternalist scholars “give Natives a chance” by *editing* their work, *organizing* their conferences, and *teaching* their grad courses. By contrast, it is a recognition that all of us, Native and non-Native, need to be involved in expanding the field and growing the discipline so that there are multiple sites for engagement by the next generation of Native scholars who increasingly will guide the study of Native literatures in the years to come. However, we need to continue to respect and examine Indigenous creative work as a front line to Native empowerment and agency. If we indeed desire to

expand the field—something desperately needed, particularly in Canada, where I study—scholars need to welcome new insights, new critical strategies, and new critical minds (particularly those emerging from Native communities), while not ceasing to engage with Native artistic creation. The two need not be mutually exclusive.

4. I consider this to be far more of a difficulty in Hoy's work, which, to be fair, did come earlier and provide a necessary intervention in the field, than in Eigenbrod's. While Hoy's discussions in *How Should I Read These?* (2001)—note the interrogative nature of the title—often deconstruct themselves or stop short of forwarding solid critical claims by virtue of the author's reticence, Eigenbrod's *Travelling Knowledges* (2005) still posits well-researched interpretations while maintaining a high level of self-reflexivity. *Travelling Knowledges* thus provides more substance to the critical reader. Also, although I would level the following critique at the work of neither Eigenbrod nor Hoy, both of whom I respect a great deal and have learned from extensively, I do worry that qualifications like those mentioned above might, at times, be disingenuous, presented as protocol rather than sincere reservation. I am concerned that many non-Native critics believe their work to be valid, intelligent, and effective—after all, why else would they try to publish it?—and yet feel compelled to pay lip service to their unworthiness in order to appease the current critical climate.

5. I have prepared this essay to be intentionally provocative, and I desire it to stir up some discussion. Please feel free to contact me with comments, arguments, disagreements, thoughts: sam.mckegney@queensu.ca.

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A Tribute to Paula Gunn Allen (1939–2008)

ANNETTE VAN DYKE

Out of her own body she pushed
silver thread, light, air
and carried it carefully on the dark, flying
where nothing moved.

Out of her body she extruded
shining wire, life, and wove the light
on the void.

From beyond time,
beyond oak trees and bright clear water flow,
she was given the work of weaving the strands
of her body, her pain, her vision
into creation, and the gift of having created,
to disappear.

After her,
the women and the men weave blankets into tales of life,
memories of light and ladders,
infinity-eyes, and rain.
After her I sit on my laddered rain-bearing rug
and mend the tear with string.

Paula Gunn Allen, "Grandmother"

So goes one of Paula Gunn Allen's early published poems. "Grandmother" not only introduces the reader to Allen's particular Laguna Pueblo idea of the sacred but also defines her approach to her work as a scholar, poet, novelist, theorist, political activist, and professor: "After her I sit on my laddered rain-bearing rug / and mend the tear with string." In the tradition of *The Grandmother/Spider Woman/Thought Woman*, Allen attempts to repair what has gone awry in her Native American culture while acknowledging that she is inadequate to the task.

Nevertheless, Allen is rightly considered one of the founders of women's/Native American spirituality as an academic discipline, and, indeed, spirituality is central to her work. Her early scholarly work, her dissertation "Sipapu: A Cultural Perspective" (1975), became the exceedingly influential *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions* (1986). This text contains her 1975 germinal essay, "The Sacred Hoop: A Contemporary Perspective," which was one of the first to detail the ritual function of Native American literatures as opposed to Euroamerican literatures. *The Sacred Hoop* is considered a foundation for the study not only of Native American gender but also of culture. Drawing upon Allen's own experience as a Laguna Pueblo woman, it calls attention to her belief in the power of the oral tradition now embodied in contemporary Native American literature to effect healing, survival, and continuance.¹ Further, Allen's work discusses the importance of women not only in her own society but also across the Native American panorama and through time.

Allen wrote from the perspective of a Laguna Pueblo woman from a culture in which the women are held in high respect. The descent is matrilineal—women owned the houses, and the primary deities are female. A major theme of Allen's work is delineation and restoration of this woman-centered culture. Elaborating on the roles and power of Native American women, Allen's "Who is Your Mother: Red Roots of White Feminism" came out in *Sinister Wisdom* in 1984. In this startling article, Allen articulated Native American contributions to democracy and feminism, countering a popular idea that a society in which women's power was equal to men's never existed.

She also has been a major champion to restore the place of gay and lesbian Native Americans, explaining their power as spiritual to be used for the good of the community. These ideas were first published in a groundbreaking essay in *Conditions*, "Beloved Women: Lesbians in American Indian Cultures" (1981), and then reworked for the *Sacred Hoop*.

Allen's work abounds with the mythic dimensions of women's relationship to the sacred, as well as with the struggles of contemporary Native American women, many of whom have lost the respect formerly accorded to them because of the incursions of Euroamerican culture. Allen was born in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and grew up in Cubero, New Mexico, a Spanish-Mexican land-grant village abutting the Laguna and Acoma reservations and the Cibola National Forest. She referred to herself as a "multi-cultural event," recalling her Pueblo, Lakota, and Scottish ancestry from her mother, Ethel Haines Francis, and her Lebanese heritage from her father, Elias Lee Francis, a former lieutenant governor of New Mexico. These influences account for her ability to bridge perspectives and offer understandings across cultures, religions, and worldviews.

She attended mission schools in Cubero and San Fidel, but she was sent to a Sisters of Charity boarding school in Albuquerque from which she graduated in 1957. Her novel *The Woman Who Owned the Shadows* (1983) and some of her poetry draw from this experience of being raised Catholic. However, Allen was well aware of the conflict that her background of being exposed to Catholic, Native American, Protestant, Jewish, and Marionite influences created. In an interview with Joseph Bruchac, Allen says: "Sometimes I get in a dialogue between what the Church taught me, the nuns taught me, and what my mother taught me, what my experience growing up where I grew up taught me. Often you can't reconcile them" (5).

Besides loss of respect, her main character in *The Woman Who Owned the Shadows* must sort out the various influences that having a mixed ancestry brought in order to reclaim a Native American woman's spiritual tradition. On her journey, Allen's protagonist uses traditional Laguna Pueblo healing ceremonies, as well as psy-

chotherapy, the Iroquois story of Sky Woman, and the aid of a psychic Euroamerican woman. *The Woman Who Owned the Shadows* is one of the first contemporary novels to have a complex Native American female as its central character.

Allen received a bachelor's degree in English (1966) and a master of fine arts in creative writing (1968) from the University of Oregon. In 1975 she received her doctorate in American studies with an emphasis on Native American literature from the University of New Mexico. However, Allen's personal and professional life was often difficult. She had three marriages and five children before coming out as a lesbian. She had difficulties with editors and professors who wanted her to fit conventional Western literary standards and to disregard her Native American aesthetics. A comment by Thomas Wortham, former chair of the English Department at the University of California, Los Angeles, where Allen was a professor of English, creative writing, and American Indian studies, is telling. In the obituary put out by UCLA, he says:

When Paula arrived at UCLA she was sublimely misfitted to be a professor in this particular department of English, and it was for this reason that I came to value her. [. . .] She grounded us (or was it that she sky-ed us), at least those of us who could reach down (or up) in our imaginations. (Marquez)

Besides her degree from the University of New Mexico that focused upon American Indian literature (1975), one of the earliest to do so, Allen had been teaching and involved with Native American literature for almost a quarter of a century before she retired. Before arriving at UCLA, Allen taught at Fort Lewis College in Colorado; the College of San Mateo; San Diego State University; San Francisco State University; and the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque. Allen was present at the 1977 Flagstaff conference that led to the formation of the Association for the Study of American Indian Literatures. In 1983 she edited the pioneering *Studies in American Indian Literature: Critical Essays and Course Designs*. This text was the first to address how one might teach a course

in Native American literature and is considered foundational to the discipline. In an interview with John Purdy, Allen says that she “started doing criticism because nobody could read her work. Nobody could read Momaday’s or anybody’s, and so I started writing about it because there was no other way to get a readership” (6). Just before she retired, she noted that she felt “completely comfortable” (Marquez) with passing on her role working in the literary field to others because the field had come so far. There is no doubt that Allen was a major force in making this happen.

Besides her course designs and her essays collected in *The Sacred Hoop*, Allen also promoted Native American writing in her collections of stories: *Song of the Turtle: American Indian Literature, 1974–1995* (1996); *Voice of the Turtle: American Indian Literature, 1900–1970* (1994); and *Spider Woman’s Granddaughters: Traditional Tales and Contemporary Writing by Native American Women* (1989). She was particularly pleased with the reception of this last book that attempted to correct the lack of stories by or about Native women in the literature collections. She won the American Book Award for it from the Before Columbus Foundation in 1990. She also won the 1990 Native Prize for Literature. In *Grandmother of the Light: A Medicine Woman’s Sourcebook* (1991), Allen expanded her interest in the ritual experience of women as exhibited in the traditional stories. She traces the stages in a woman’s spiritual path using Native American stories as models for walking in the sacred way.

In 2003 Allen’s biography *Pocahontas: Medicine Woman, Spy, Entrepreneur, Diplomat* was published. Drawing upon her own Native background and her years of research, Allen continued her work on the centrality of women to Native cultures. She portrayed Pocahontas as a Beloved Woman who is in training to aid her Algonquin tribe with diplomacy dealing with the English settlers, demonstrating how the historical event of the “saving” of John Smith might be seen from a Native point of view. Even after her long writing career, when she might have been expected to slow down and reflect upon her accomplishments, Allen continued to astonish with her ability to make connections and bring new perspectives to her readers.

Allen was the author of numerous volumes of poetry—four chapbooks and four volumes of poetry, with a fifth, *America the Beautiful*, due out from West End Press. Because of her multicultural background, Allen could draw upon varying poetic rhythms and structures that emanate from such sources as country music, Pueblo corn dances, Catholic masses, Mozart, Italian opera, and Arabic chanting. Her poetry resonates with a finely detailed sense of place that includes landscapes from the city, the reservation, and the interior. Her work has been widely anthologized.

Allen became interested in writing in high school when she discovered Gertrude Stein, whom she read extensively and tried to copy. Other influences were Euroamerican writers such as William Carlos Williams, Robert Creeley, Charles Olson, Allen Ginsberg, Denise Levertov, Adrienne Rich, Patricia Clark Smith (her dissertation director and friend), and E. A. Mares. It was not until she was finishing her MFA in Oregon that she had any exposure to Native American writers. Feeling isolated and suicidal, Allen says that the presence of a Santee Sioux friend and the discovery of N. Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* were what helped her to continue. As if to make up for this lack of importance attached to Native American literature in the academy, Allen dedicated her life not only to authoring various texts but also to studying, interpreting, and promoting the literature.

Allen's book of poetry, *Shadow Country* (1982), received an Honorable Mention from the National Book Award Before Columbus Foundation. Allen used the theme of shadows—the not dark and not light—to bridge her experience of mixed heritage as she attempted to respond to the world in its variety. Allen's poetry has an infusion of spirits common to Native American literature, but it represents not only her Native American heritage but also her multicultural heritage. She also used her poetry to respond to personal events in her life such as the death of one of her twin sons ("On the Street: Monument," in *Shadow Country*) and her mother's suffering with lupus ("Dear World," in *Skins and Bones*). In addition, lesbian themes appear in her poetry. Poems such as "Beloved Women" (in *Conditions*) address Native American lesbian themes, while "Some

Like Indians Endure” (in *Life is a Fatal Disease*) compares the society’s treatment of Native Americans to that of lesbians. In an interview with Joseph Bruchac, Allen says, “My poetry has a haunted sense to it [. . .] a sorrow and grievingness in it that comes directly from being split, not in two but in twenty, and never being able to reconcile all the places that I am” (18).

In addition to being one of the foremost scholars of Native American literature as well as a talented poet, novelist, and essayist, Allen was also an activist involved with the antinuclear and antiwar, gay and lesbian, and feminist movements. She is especially well known on the West Coast for her participation in gay and lesbian communities.

Further, Allen was the recipient of numerous awards besides the ones mentioned previously. In 1978 she received an NEA Fellowship for Writing, and in 1984–85 she was awarded a postdoctoral fellowship grant from the Ford Foundation–National Research Council. She also served as associate fellow at the Stanford Humanities Institute in the mid-1980s, coordinating the Gynosophic Gathering, a woman-identified worship service in Berkeley, and giving weekly talks—“haggles”—at them.² In addition, Allen won the Susan Koppleman Award from the Popular and American Culture associations (1990), the Vesta Award for Essay Writing (1991), the Southern California Women for Understanding Award for Literature (1992), and an honorary Doctor of Humanities degree from Mills College (1995). In 1999 she won the Hubbell Medal for Lifetime Achievement in American Literary Studies from the Modern Language Association. In 2007 Allen won a Lannan Literary Writing Fellowship that honors writers of exceptional quality—a fine tribute to her long writing career.

Through her poetry, fiction, essays, and activism, Allen has made an enduring contribution to Native American literary studies, women’s studies, gay and lesbian studies, and American literature. She has sat on her “laddered rain-bearing rug” and done more than “mend the tear with string.” She has used her daring, original thinking to “invent” a whole new field of study, and she will be remembered as a grandmother who has passed on her legacy to the rest of us who follow.

NOTES

1. Some of this material has appeared in my entry about Allen in *Notable Native Americans*.
2. Three of these were published in *Trivia: A Journal of Ideas* 8 (Winter 1986): 61–73.

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The Mystery of Language

N. Scott Momaday, An Appreciation

JACE WEAVER

There is an American Indian saying: In the beginning was the word, and it was spoken.

N. Scott Momaday

At the end of John Ford's classic western *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*, a newspaper editor tells James Stewart's Ransom Stoddard (a beloved politician who has just confessed that his role in the event that catapulted him to fame is, in fact, a lie), "This is the West, sir. When the legend becomes fact, print the legend." Two years later a young N. Scott Momaday, writing not about stalwart Euroamerican pioneers' views of themselves but of the nation's relationship to its indigenes, would echo the sentiment. In his essay "The Morality of Indian Hating" (itself an evocation of Herman Melville's "The Metaphysics of Indian-hating," a chapter in his novel *The Confidence Man*), published in the magazine *Ramparts* in 1964, he wrote, "The Indian has been for a long time generalized in the imagination of the white man. Denied the acknowledgment of individuality and change, he has been made to become in theory what he could not become in fact, a synthesis of himself" (30). Both of these analyses of mythmaking could be applied to what has happened to Momaday in the collective imagination—both Native and non-Native—in the forty years since the publication of *House Made of Dawn*.

Scott Momaday was not the first Native American to produce a novel, as some reviewers ignorantly averred at the time of *House*

Made of Dawn's publication. Nor is he the *sine qua non* of what scholar Kenneth Lincoln labeled the Native American Renaissance. In the first half of the twentieth century alone, Mourning Dove, John Joseph Mathews, and D'Arcy McNickle all produced novels that enjoyed periods of popularity. And had Momaday not written *House Made of Dawn*, someone else would have broken through. Yet the fact that it remains the first and only novel by a Native person to win the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction attests to the power and importance of that work.

Certainly its impact would have been hard to predict at the time of its publication in 1968. Writer William James Smith reviewed it together with *Love and Work* by Reynolds Price for *Commonweal*. He wrote, "Mr. Momaday's is perhaps the lesser disappointment if only because it is a first novel and we do not have previous successes to raise our expectations." He continued:

Momaday writes in a lyric vein that borrows heavily from some of the slacker rhythms of the King James Bible, with echoes of those mannerisms that Hemingway indulged to convey the manly and the sincere: "You can hear the drums a long way on the land at night and you don't know where they are until you see the fires, because the drums are all around on the land, going on and on for miles, and then come over a hill and there they are, the fires and the drums, and still they sound far away." Like the example of Mr. Momaday's style that the publishers offer on the jacket, it makes you itch for a blue pencil to knock out the interstitial words that maintain the soporific flow. It is a style that gets in the way of content. Mr. Momaday observes and renders accurately, but the material seems to have sunken slightly beneath the surface of the beautiful prose.

Mr. Momaday's characters, too, are all bemisted by words, although they seem interesting when they occasionally shine through. His hero does not come through at all. (636)

Western author and historian Marshall Sprague, reviewing the same book for the *New York Times* three months earlier, was far

more generous. He termed it “superb” and “as subtly wrought as a piece of Navajo silverware.” He could not, however, resist one uninformed tumble in the gymnastics of authenticity. He wrote that the book was “the work of a young Kiowa Indian who teaches English at the University of California in Santa Barbara. That creates a difficulty for a reviewer right away. American Indians do not write novels and poetry as a rule, or teach English in top-ranking universities either. But we cannot be patronizing.”

Smith’s response, especially, in an odd way reminds me of a candidate who interviewed for a position in contemporary American literature while I was at Yale. Her job talk was fine but highly theoretical. During the questions and answers, a conservative member of our program asked her how she might apply her theory to another novel, “say, Norman Mailer’s *The Naked and the Dead*.” I watched any possibilities the young woman had of joining the Yale faculty trickle down the drain as she replied, “I’m sorry. Norman who? The Naked and the What?” It is one thing to say that you have not read it (I have not), but to admit as a candidate in contemporary American lit that you have never heard of one of the most acclaimed novels and novelists of the post–World War II generation is astounding. One can almost imagine Smith sitting in his apartment in obscurity, wearing a tee shirt reading, “Scott Momaday Won a Pulitzer Prize, and All I Have is One Snarky Review.”

“Bemisted by words.” Though Smith was clearly not captured by the lyricism of Momaday’s prose, he equally obviously missed the point. Language is all. Words are everything. Story is all there is.

In my book *That the People Might Live*, I write, “The importance of story for Natives cannot be overestimated. [. . .] Language and narrative have tremendous power to create community. Indeed, it may be that the People cannot have life outside of stories, their existence contingent upon the telling and hearing of communal stories” (40). Six years later, in his well-received 2003 Massey Lectures that became his book *The Truth About Stories*, Cherokee writer Thomas King states flatly, “The truth about stories is that that’s all we are.” He continues,

The Okanagan storyteller Jeanette Armstrong tells us that “Through my language I understand I am being spoken to, I’m not the one speaking. The words are coming from many tongues and mouths of Okanagan people and the land around them. I am a listener to the language’s stories, and when my words form I am merely retelling the same stories in different patterns.” (2)

Both Tom King and I, each in our own way, are feebly echoing Scott Momaday (Tom more effectively than I, I must admit).

Two years after the publication of *House Made of Dawn*, in March 1970 at Princeton University, Momaday spoke at the First Convocation of American Indian Scholars. Organized by Rupert Costo, the event brought together over two hundred Native scholars, professionals, students, and community traditionals. It is widely considered to be a foundational moment in modern Native American studies. Among the many persons there, now household names in the field, were Vine Deloria Jr., D’Arcy McNickle, Bea Medicine, Alfonso Ortiz, Simon Ortiz, Fritz Scholder, and Rick West.

Momaday’s assembly presentation was “The Man Made of Words.” In a much-discussed section, he tells the story of a Kiowa arrowmaker. Robert Warrior, in *The People and the Word*, writes, “The arrowmaker has become central to the Momaday canon, a necessary stopping place in situating his relationship to language, literature, and the natural world” (171). In the story, a Kiowa man sits in his tipi with his wife, making an arrow, straightening it with his teeth. As he works, he sees a figure outside the lodge. He speaks casually to it in Kiowa, saying that if the stranger understands his language he will respond with his name. When the figure remains silent, the Kiowa nocks the arrow he has just made and, drawing his bow, moves it from side to side, testing its trueness. Finally, he lets the arrow fly and kills the intruder with a single shot. Ken Lincoln, in *Native American Renaissance*, writes, “Language defines a people. Words are as penetrant as arrows, the finest shafts bearing the marks of the mouths that shape them. The craft, ceremony, power, and defense of the tribal family depend on them. A well-chosen word, like a well-made arrow, pierces the heart” (44).

Twenty-four years later Momaday delivered the Charter Lecture at the University of Georgia, speaking on “The Mystery of Language.” He would later publish a brief revised version of the talk in the *Georgia Review* under the title “A Divine Blindness.”

Momaday began his lecture by discussing the work of Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges, saying, “He gave us to understand that our human experience, however intense it may be, is truly valid only in proportion as it is expressed in words.” Momaday elaborated, “Communication is inferior to expression.” He then moved from the level of language to that of literature, saying, “It occurs to me that we have our best existence in the element of language, and the book is a concentration of that element.”

If Sprague, in reviewing *House Made of Dawn*, likened the book to a piece of Navajo silver, one might easily shift the metaphor and say that in his oral performance, Momaday wove as skillfully as the best blanket maker. In that 1994 talk, he praised the book as a thing of limitless possibilities, saying that there is nothing that cannot be contained in books. He then slipped from the book to an even larger level, talking about Borges’s imagining of paradise as a library. He then slid deftly from written literature to orature, noting that poet Alistair Reid, who has translated both Borges and Pablo Neruda, has written that Borges believed

literature at its highest point generates awe, the disquieting astonishment that arises from a poem, a deep image, a crucial paragraph—what he calls either *asombro* or *sagrada horror* (“holy dread”). This *asombro*, this *sagrada horror*, this awe and disquieting astonishment is at the heart of the oral tradition.¹

Having moved from the word to language to the book to libraries and the oral equivalent thereof, he moved his shuttle back between the warp and weft to the most basic unit, saying, “If words are the intricate bones of language, and if the spoken word is the first part of this ancient design, this construction that makes of us a family, a tribe, a civilization, we had better strive to understand how and why—and perhaps first of all *that*—we exist in the element of language.”

William James Smith, writing in 1968, can be forgiven for not having understood Scott Momaday and his project. *House Made of Dawn* was doubtless the only thing he had ever read by the author. Today anyone who knows Momaday knows that he is obsessed with words—their tone, their sonorosity, their rhythm, how they feel in the mouth. He is ensorcelled by them—“enchanted,” he says in *The Man Made of Words* (1). He also understands their power. Momaday is a believer in the performative utterance. He states in “The Mystery of Language,” “Language is a creator of reality.” And “It is the miracle of language that enables us.”

In *House Made of Dawn*, Momaday wove oral tradition—myth, prayer, song, story—together with novelistic forms in a way no other American Indian writer quite had before. According to Susan Scarberry-Garcia, he

saw that American Indian fiction could be “deepened” to tell culturally meaningful stories from Native points of view by using indigenous modes of expression. Recognizing the novel as inherently flexible enough to accommodate portions of old stories from oral tradition—what I call “storysherds”—Momaday let these mythic “fragments” bleed into the fictional matrix of the text, becoming its lifeblood. (465)

As masterful as *House Made of Dawn* is, however, as Chad Allen points out in his entry on Momaday in *The Cambridge Companion to Native American Literature*, “Momaday’s position in the so-called American Indian literary renaissance is also the result of timing and circumstance” (208). The publication of that first novel and its winning of the Pulitzer coincided with the rise of Native radical activism—the occupation of Alcatraz, the emergence of the American Indian Movement, fish-ins, and the publication of Vine Deloria Jr.’s manifesto *Custer Died for Your Sins*. The first decade of Momaday’s most active writing career coincided, as Allen points out, with these years of political action, what Warrior calls “Momaday in the Movement Years” (143). The book came along just as what Paula Gunn Allen called “the bland and blindingly white cocoon of the 1950s” was being ruptured by the

civil rights movement, the War on Poverty, the antiwar movement, and Native protests (qtd. in Weaver 121). The time was ripe for an Indian writer to break through.

This is not meant to diminish Scott Momaday or demean his accomplishment with *House Made of Dawn*. Any successful literary creation captures the *zeitgeist* of its time. Every work is a marriage of author and moment.

In *American Indian Literary Nationalism* (which I cowrote with Craig Womack and Robert Warrior), I write that “Abel was running” from *House Made of Dawn* was one of the great lines of Native literature, which, no pun intended, sets the novel in motion (52). The ethno poetics movement was forged in the 1960s by non-Native poets like Jerome Rothenberg and Dennis Tedlock. It is defined by Tedlock as “a decentered poetics, an attempt to hear and read the poetries of distant others, outside the Western tradition as we know it now” (n. pag.). It includes other practitioners like Gary Snyder and William Bright. All of them, in an attempt to capture the essence of the oral tradition, have misguidedly translated and arranged Native oral performances as poetry, in works like Rothenberg’s *Shaking the Pumpkin* and Brian Swann’s *Coming to Light*. But Momaday’s words in *House Made of Dawn* tumble over each other in a ferocious poeticism.

Given Scott Momaday’s protean interests, it is hardly surprising that he has refused to be confined to prose as his means of artistic expression. He has written poetry, drama, and children’s books. He has produced a fine and influential memoir. He paints. And he has succeeded at all of them.

Scott Momaday loves words, but he also loves his paintings. On the wall opposite me as I write this is an original Momaday, chalk and charcoal on rice paper, done in 1975. It is a portrait of an ethereal-looking southwestern woman and her child. Yet even here, he did not stray far from words. The work’s title is “The Wind Tells Stories of Their People.” Surrounding the pair, enveloping them, are small, abstract, textured swirls and squiggles that in the mind’s eye come to resemble some unknown alphabet. In 1998 I invited him to keynote a conference I organized at Yale. He agreed, but

on a condition: that I arrange to have his drawing displayed in the Beinecke Library during the conference, so that he could visit it.

Momaday followed *House Made of Dawn* with *The Way to Rainy Mountain* and *The Names*, two volumes of verse appearing between them. He published another novel, *The Ancient Child*, in 1989. *In the Presence of the Sun*, a collection of short stories and poems, with illustrations by the author, came out in 1992. The anthology, a kind of Momaday reader, *The Man Made of Words: Essays, Stories, Passages* followed five years later, *In the Bear's House* two years after that.

When *House Made of Dawn* was first published in 1968, few would have guessed where it would take N. Scott Momaday, let alone Native American literature. Even when it won the Pulitzer, few could have known. Certainly, not every Pulitzer winner has been transformative of literature. William Faulkner, Cormac McCarthy, Eudora Welty, Philip Roth, and Toni Morrison all won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, but so did Allen Drury and James Gould Cozzens, the first Pulitzer winner, who in a 1957 interview with *Time* famously said, "I can't read ten pages of Steinbeck without throwing up," and called his work "proletarian crap" (qtd. in "The Hermit" n. pag.). Roger Rosenblatt cleverly, but perhaps predictably, called it "sour grapes of wrath" (n. pag.).

I am hardly alone in observing that Scott Momaday's impact is difficult to assess. First, his influence has been so pervasive. As I observe in *That the People Might Live*, after Momaday won the Pulitzer in 1969, "it was as if floodgates had been opened, and through them poured a steady stream of books" (121). Many of these bear the imprint of N. Scott Momaday. And unlike the publication boomlet of the 1930s that produced Lynn Riggs, John Joseph Mathews, and D'Arcy McNickle, this one did not subside but persists to the present day. *House Made of Dawn* is now influencing a third generation of Native writers.

It is not, however, simply Native creative writing that has felt the book's influence. Momaday and his first novel have done more to spur and shape criticism of Native American literature than any other single author or work. Alan Velie, who was the first college

professor to teach courses in Native literature, included a selection from *House* in his early anthology, *American Indian Literature* (1979), a year after Charles Larson wrote the first book-length study, *American Indian Fiction* (Velie 315). And in 1982 Momaday was one of the figures discussed in Velie's *Four American Indian Literary Masters*. The following year, Ken Lincoln announced the Native American literary renaissance, and publication of *House Made of Dawn* was the originative moment.

One of those Native writers who was affected by Momaday was Paula Gunn Allen, who contended that reading *House Made of Dawn* when it first appeared saved her life: "It told me that I was sane—or if I was crazy at least fifty thousand people out there were just as nutty in exactly the same way I was, so it was okay. I was not all alone [. . .] it brought my land back to me" (qtd. in "Hubbell Medal"). In 1977 Allen directed the first curriculum development seminar in Native literature, sponsored by the Modern Language Association and funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. The event led to her important volume *Studies in American Indian Literature: Essays and Course Designs*, published the same year as Lincoln's monograph.

Momaday and *House Made of Dawn* were prominently featured in two early critical bibliographies: Tom Colonnese and Louis Owens's *American Indian Novelists: An Annotated Critical Bibliography* (1985) and *American Indian Literatures: An Introduction, Bibliographic Review, and Selected Bibliography* by A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff (1990). Momaday again took a place of prominence in Owens's influential monograph *Other Destinies: Understanding the American Indian Novel* (1992).

What does it say about our field of Native American literary studies that 1992 qualifies as early? The works cited and discussed above are only the beginning. In his University of Georgia Charter Lecture, Momaday talks about Borges's reverie of the library. To date, enough books and articles analyzing and critiquing Momaday and his work have been produced to fill the shelves of a fair-sized library on their own.

Another reason that it is still hard to assess Momaday is that he

refuses to stand still. Now in his mid-seventies, he remains very much active. As of this writing, his latest book is *Three Plays*, published in 2007. When he was named poet laureate of Oklahoma in the summer of 2007, he declared:

Writing is not a matter of choice. Writers have to write. It is somehow in their temperament, in the blood, in tradition.

And so, I think very few writers choose their vocation of writing. It is thrust upon them. It is in their genes. And they have to be true to that. (qtd. in Hoberock A11)

In Barry Lopez's lovely children's book *Crow and Weasel*, a fable written in a Native idiom, Badger tells the eponymous protagonists,

I would ask you remember only this one thing. [. . .] The stories people tell have a way of taking care of them. If stories come to you, care for them. And learn to give them away where they are needed. Sometimes a person needs a story more than food to stay alive. That is why we put stories in each other's memory. This is how people care for themselves. One day you will be good storytellers. Never forget these obligations. (48)

Forty years ago N. Scott Momaday gave us a story that has taken care of us ever since. He has also given us many more. Like any good Kiowa, he has never forgotten his obligations.

NOTE

1. Borges actually refers to *horror sagrado*.

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Book Reviews

Karen L. Kilcup, ed. *A Cherokee Woman's America: Memoirs of Narcissa Owen, 1831–1907*. Gainesville: UP of Florida, 2005. ISBN: 0-8130-2866-3. 155 pp.

Rose Stremmlau, *University of North Carolina at Pembroke*

In this edited memoir, Karen L. Kilcup, a professor of English at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, argues that Narcissa Owen's narrative enriches our understanding of both Native American and American women's writing at the turn of the twentieth century. This assertion of Owen's relevance across literary fields is fitting because Owen's life traversed boundaries. The daughter of a member of the "Old Settler" faction of Cherokees, Owen grew up in the Cherokee Nation immediately following the Trail of Tears. As a young woman, she was educated both inside and outside of the Cherokee Nation before supporting herself by teaching music. In 1853 she married Robert Latham Owen, a non-Indian surveyor and later president of the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad, and she moved to Virginia, where, after her husband passed away in 1873, she returned to teaching to put her two sons through college. In 1880 she moved back to the Cherokee Nation, where she worked at the Cherokee Female Seminary while her son, Robert Jr., launched his political career. Following Robert's election to the U.S. Senate, Owen moved with him to Washington, DC. She reinvented herself there as a socialite and artist. She wrote her memoir in 1907, four years prior to her death in 1911.

As Kilcup points out, Owen's memoir is not notable for its accurate account of Cherokee history. In fact, Owen fabricated some details to emphasize her family's prestige and to impress her readers. Although her father's kin, like a significant minority of Cherokees, owned slaves and were relatively well-off, Owen suggested that his family, the Chisholms, were hereditary royalty, a title the egalitarian Cherokee did not recognize. Likewise, Owen's memoir does not provide a thick description of Cherokee culture. Rather, Owen tells but a few anecdotes about life in the Cherokee Nation that seem carefully selected to cultivate a particular image of refinement and to dispel readers' stereotypes about Native people.

In her introductory essay, "The art spirit remains in me to this day': Contexts, Contemporaries, and Narcissa Owen's Political Aesthetics," Kilcup asserts, however, that it is not the details of Owen's story but the method of its telling that makes her account both rich and noteworthy. Kilcup suggests that Owen straddled a transition between tribal methods of expression rooted in orality and the literary styles that Native people were adopting from non-Indians and adapting to their own purposes. Kilcup calls Owen a "cultural mediator" who would "ventriloquize a white editor, either consciously or unconsciously, for the purposes of creating a narrative bridge between themselves and their white audiences—in effect a kind of translation." (20) In this sense, Owen told her life story and shared intimate details while nonetheless attempting to give voice to a larger community, albeit one to which she was only marginally tied. Kilcup argues that Owen thus speaks to both Native and women's literature.

Kilcup notes that Owen's work presents problems for modern readers who seek to categorize Native authors as either assimilated or traditional. Clearly, Owen, who was raised by her Euroamerican mother and educated at boarding schools, does not speak for Cherokee traditionalists, who participated in a cultural and spiritual resurgence during the turn of the twentieth century. At the same time, Owen was writing in defense of the Cherokees with whom she identified and critiqued non-Indians by asserting her people's superiority and characterizing the tribal

nation of her birth as a people of the law and of their word. In particular, Kilcup emphasizes Owen's account of her family's experience on the Trail of Tears as a way to both personalize that well-known tragedy and validate her tribal identity. In her introductory essay, Kilcup skillfully makes the case for Owen's usefulness and comparability to her better-known literary peers, such as Sarah Winnemucca.

What is unclear from the essay and memoir, however, is to what extent Owen was involved in or aware of the mudslinging surrounding the demise of the tribal nation she claimed to champion. Owen clearly was invested in the political fortunes of Robert Jr., and he emerged in the late nineteenth century as a leading advocate of the allotment, or dissolution, of the Cherokee Nation. For this opinion and the favor he earned from non-Indians eager to open the Indian Territory to development, Robert garnered the animosity of the elected officials of the Cherokee Nation. Although claiming to speak as a Cherokee, Robert was not raised in the nation, and his ties to the communities there were tenuous. The majority of Cherokee leaders and the general population opposed the policies that Robert championed, and while his political career blossomed with the creation of the state of Oklahoma in 1907, many Cherokees found themselves impoverished and politically marginalized. Certainly his mother, sharing his household and his successes, was aware of the criticism of her son, and the opportunity to relocate to Washington, DC, may have been an opportunity to enjoy calm after the political storm of the allotment years in Indian Territory. In other words, perhaps Owen reinvented herself in Washington, DC, as an Indian Princess in response to criticism of her family from Cherokees rather than solely in response to the ignorance of non-Indians? Behind its rosy veneer, then, Owen's memoir may reveal more about the politics of Native identity than it initially appears.

D. L. Birchfield. *Black Silk Handkerchief: A Hom-Astubby Mystery*. Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 2006. ISBN: 0-8061-3751-7. 368 pp.

Barbara K. Robbins, *University of Nebraska at Omaha*

D. L. Birchfield has written a very funny book. This murder mystery offers nods to classic examples of the genre and manages to have a lot more going on than the unfortunate death and subsequent investigation of which our protagonist is a crucial part. Hom-Astubby, also known as William Mallory, is an outdoor photographer of Choctaw heritage. Within the first chapter, we learn of his bumpy career working as a photojournalist for, and being fired from, a string of small western newspapers. His "casual" book-keeping as a freelancer led to harassment by the IRS, which in turn propelled him into law school. However, having a new law degree in hand causes him so much anxiety that he can't bring himself to actually practice law. Instead, Hom-Astubby travels the world with field-and-stream types photographing their adventures for various magazines and publishing photography how-to textbooks on the side. His unique way of making life choices brings Hom-Astubby remarkably good luck and equally unfathomable degrees of anxiety requiring a perpetual search for some equilibrium in his life. As Birchfield writes, "He didn't want to go through life never having a moment of peace, not knowing for sure whether he had settled in for a leisurely stroll along Easy Street or might be headed for a long stretch in a federal penitentiary" (11).

Birchfield judiciously presents Choctaw culture and tribal history. Excerpts from the 1802 and 1803 U.S. treaties with the Choctaw appear in the foreword citing a list of goods given in exchange for Choctaw land; among the paltry terms is one black silk handkerchief, an item symbolic to Hom-Astubby for his family's involvement in the negotiations. Elsewhere, Choctaw social structure gets some review via Hom-Astubby's personal ruminations on his social interactions with the descendents of European immigrants. Hom-Astubby is not one to live in either a romanticized or bitter past. He enjoys his job and does what he can to avoid the stress that seems to go along with contemporary urban society. A regu-

lar guy, he still gets caught up in forces that he can't fail but notice are very similar to those that dispossessed his family and tribe two hundred years earlier. Among them are power brokers in public offices who often fail to protect the rights of the less powerful and a paparazzi approach to journalism that serves up gossip in place of usable information.

Hom-Astubby has plenty of back story, including hitting a progressive jackpot at a New Mexico Indian casino for eight million dollars and then buying a horse ranch from eccentric billionaire Arlington Billington just weeks before the man dies. Fear of the IRS and his own blood-sucking lawyers sends Hom-Astubby fleeing to another outdoor assignment, where his sharp (photographer's) eye for detail drops him right into the middle of this book's adventure. He discovers the half-naked body of a beautiful woman and can't resist making a few photographs of her and her playful companion, a huge Newfoundland dog. Hom-Astubby reports his discovery to local Sheriff Klewlusz (whose amiable, attentive nature contradicts Birchfield's choice of name), and events soon get spun into full-fledged media circus. Suspicion and fear circulates around Nelson Towers, a developer and multinational corporate overlord who is creating a personal estate of royal proportions by buying up private land and cutting off access to surrounding public lands. It comes as no surprise when Hom-Astubby realizes Towers is the man responsible for the series of newspaper buyouts that repeatedly left him without a job. While still a photojournalist, Hom-Astubby pursued an investigation into Towers's business practices and made himself an enemy in the process. But Towers isn't the only one trying to use the mountains as a hideout. Birchfield offers plenty of twists and parallel plots to keep outcomes unforeseen until the final chapter.

Key to the personality of this novel is Birchfield's fantastic but malleable proportions accorded select objects in Hom-Astubby's environment. Everything is huge here, from the dog, to the horse ranch, to the dueling "mine-is-bigger-than-yours" gate towers built by Billington and Towers. (Arlington Billington shares his surname with the late Ray Allen Billington, the historian credited with pursuing theories of frontier settlement originated by

Frederick Jackson Turner—coincidence?) Hom-Astubby's custom crimson-and-cream pickup truck is worthy of a paragraph in and of itself, particularly in the way in which its physical space expands and contracts to suit Hom-Astubby's situation. Birchfield's imagery is not to be confused with magical realism. Instead, Birchfield is a subtle trickster teasing Hom-Astubby and amusing the attentive reader. This is when the book shines. Tricksteresque qualities emerge in Hom-Astubby, making him at once wildly lucky, incredibly foolish, completely infatuated with beautiful women, wracked with the consequences of his bravado, but still managing to charm, cajole, and work wonders.

There are a few less shiny spots. Birchfield belabors exposition by including too much of Hom-Astubby's multiple conversations with his contacts, many of them old girlfriends. And while a clearly developed sense of place is valued, Birchfield tends to torture readers with the nearly mile-by-mile detail of each tangled route Hom-Astubby drives to avoid detection by suspicious characters or to simply to ease his raging anxieties and paranoia. In many respects, Birchfield's Hom-Astubby novel is reminiscent of Rudolfo Anaya's Sonny Baca mysteries, which should bode well for the success of this proposed series. Like Sonny, Hom-Astubby is required to learn something about himself while working through the details of a case, lessons that reveal a deeper level of commitment between the self, a community, and a nurturing but threatened environment. Birchfield's equivalent to Anaya's Albuquerque barrio is a small town in rural Colorado whose residents are hoping to find an economic and spiritual balancing act. Above-it-all corporate bandits pose significant but often unseen threats. Hom-Astubby eventually sees his problems as emblematic of his era, a continuation of the struggle with power run amok that his ancestors fought with midlevel bureaucrats serving as beards for the land-grabbers of another century. This is a thoughtful *and* very funny book. I'm already looking forward to the next Hom-Astubby mystery.

Michael E. Harkin and David Rich Lewis, eds. *Native Americans and the Environment: Perspectives on the Ecological Indian*. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2007. ISBN: 978-0-8032-7361-0. 367 pp.

Rinda West. *Out of the Shadow: Ecopsychology, Story, and Encounters with the Land*. Under the Sign of Nature: Exploration in Ecocriticism Ser. Charlottesville: U of Virginia P, 2007. ISBN: 978-0-8139-2656-8. 247 pp.

William Huggins, *University of Nevada, Las Vegas*

In the world of literary theory, ecological criticism can still claim the title of new kid on the block. The same could be said for modern Native American literature. In the seminal work of ecocriticism compiled by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm in 1996, *The Ecocriticism Reader*, Native American intellectual luminaries such as Paula Gunn Allen and Leslie Marmon Silko feature prominently with strong essays, implying that Native American literature meshed well with the emerging theory. Joni Adamson's 2001 book *American Indian Literature, Environmental Justice, and Ecocriticism: The Middle Place* carried the theme a bit deeper, focusing on specific writers rather than the broader strokes of Allen's essay. Two recent works that focus specifically on Native Americans and their relationship with the land provide new avenues for looking at Native American literature.

The most controversial of the two books, *Native Americans and the Environment*, is a collection of essays gathered and edited by Michael Harkin, a professor of anthropology at the University of Wyoming, and David Rich Lewis, a professor of history at Utah State University. The book has eighteen contributors and is a first edition, with a foreword, preface, introduction, and afterword. The book purports to navigate the rough waters created by Shepherd Krech's 1999 work, *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History*. A conference was held in Laramie, Wyoming, in 2002 to consider Krech's book and the strong feelings surrounding it, and the essay collection is the result of that conference.

Native Americans and the Environment covers a large span of

time, and it essentially reconsiders the historical record with regard to Native Americans and their mythic status as excellent stewards of the land—the original ecologists, in short. In order not to allow the idea of ecology to carry too much anachronistic baggage, the editors in their introduction offer an inspiring compromise, offering three types of ecology: one, the fact that all people in all ages are linked with the world, technological or no; two, troubles with sustainability issues; and three, the modern ecological idea specific to a technological, industrial society. This clever interweaving of definitions allows all the contributors to use the ecological label but to pick from one, two, three, or a combination of the three, to define on which era their work focuses.

The many essays that follow either support or attack Krech from a variety of standpoints, revealing the various biases of each individual contributor. Styles vary as much as points of view, though the overriding tone is one of academic detachment. Among the most passionate essays are Krech's first chapter and afterword, reconsidering the effects of the book that set the entire project into motion. Perhaps ironically, Krech notes "the harshest and most unforgiving critics happen [. . .] to be either environmentalists or American Indians" (5). Such a reaction should not be so surprising, however, as history has proven when anyone has attempted to actually examine a sacred cow. The image of the ecological Indian comes under serious challenge not only from Krech but also from Robert Kelly, Mary M. Prasciunas, Michael Harkin, and Dan Flores, all of whom point to possible Native American involvement in animal extinctions. Essays by Darren J. Ranco, member of the Penobscot Indian Nation, and Judith Antell, member of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, stake out lines of defense. If anything, the book is a poignant example of the many facets of ecological awareness and the wide range of perspectives on the practices of people who live close to the land.

There are too many essays covering too much ground to focus on each specifically, but one deserves specific mention, related to the buffalo. First, Sebastian F. Braun focuses on the mythical relationship between Native Americans and the bison. Braun has spe-

cific hands-on experience with western tribes and buffalo management and uses that experience to craft an interesting and complex chapter on the importance of the herds historically as well as in today's pressurized business climate. One glaring flaw of the essay comes when Braun writes, "Plains Indian nations are alive here and now, and as such, if they chose or were allowed to have voices, they could intervene with that supposed authenticity. What is missing [. . .] in the interpenetration are the voices of those who are being interpreted" (199). Braun's essay is one of the few that specifically refers to literature, but he uses a Euroamerican writer, Richard Wheeler, and his 1998 novel *The Buffalo Commons*. It seems to me that there are plenty of voices speaking for Plains tribes, Native authors giving voice to their characters rather than Euroamerican writers giving them that voice. It should not have been too hard for Braun to find a few Native authors who may have shed some light on buffalo for him, perhaps beginning with James Welch.

The main problem with *Native Americans and the Environment*, from an ecocritical standpoint, is that it has little to do with literature. The misapplication of Wheeler's novel in Braun's essay proves the point. While the anachronism of the ecological label is dealt with well, the book is an anthropological work, not literary criticism. One would have to search deeply for any relation to Native American literature today. One possible example might come from Dan Flores's essay, "Wars Over Buffalo." He writes, "That bison did sometimes disappear confirmed [Lakota] belief (and it was a general one across the plains) that bison had their origins underground" (158). In this context, such information illuminates the vision of the title character in *The Heartsong of Charging Elk* that the buffalo had fled into caves in the Black Hills. But these and other correlations are difficult to make in a book packed with so much information and speculation.

Rinda West's *Out of the Shadow* comes from a completely different direction. A professor emeritus at Oakton Community College, West also specializes in landscape design for city gardens, with an emphasis on plants native to their regions. West looks at Native American authors and their relationship to the land. Her book

comes from a personal spot—though also scholarly—as she states in her thesis:

Thus, the three strands of this study have braided me for over a decade: natural areas restoration and a growing commitment to what Aldo Leopold articulated as land ethic; an interrogation of the varieties of representation of nature in stories; and an exploration of Jungian theory and practice, particularly the ideas of shadow and individuation (xi).

Thus West's common passions of environmental commitment, practicing Jungian analysis, and wide-ranging reading come together to create a unique piece of scholarship. One of the more amazing parts of West's book, for example, is the twenty-page notes section at the end. Her observations are astute as well as copious, and they offer glimpses into her active mind.

Much about *Out of the Shadow* is laudable. There is a long and noteworthy discussion of wilderness and its relationship to literature and psychology. West also works with a wide assortment of Native authors, many of whom have been considered by ecocritics in the past (Leslie Marmon Silko, N. Scott Momaday) and some who have not been considered by ecocritics (most notably James Welch). With Welch, West's linkage of Jungian concepts plays well, too, especially with the dream sequences of *Fools Crow*. Like ecological duties, dreams place "grave responsibilities on humans to keep the world in balance" (70). Jung's writings on trickster characters also fit well into consideration of Native literatures, connecting Welch to Louise Erdrich.

The Erdrich chapter is easily the best in the book, bringing together all of West's themes, as the subtitle to the chapter suggests, "Trickster and Restoration." Erdrich's Turtle Mountain novels form the basis of an emerging Native American literary canon, and West plays across them very well. Previous ecological criticism of Erdrich's works has focused mostly on one or two of her novels, with a great deal written primarily about *Tracks*. West is the first person to look at the entire Chippewa sequence from a purely ecocritical standpoint: "I look at the Anishinaabe novels of

Louse Erdrich as a performance of the restoration of culture and land [. . .] the likenesses among restoring natural areas, restoring culture, and individuation” (160). The chapter is the longest in the book outside of the opening, and it considers all of Erdrich’s major themes: characters such as Nanapush and Fleur, the Manitous, comparisons between narrative constructions and the complex ecology of Ojibwe culture, and the overriding, complicated role of the trickster character. Usually personified by Nanapush, probably the most entertaining character in the Turtle Mountain cycle, the trickster restores balance by reconfiguring pain—often his own—for the good of the community, because “by bringing memory to consciousness, Nanapush makes it possible to absorb the grief that would otherwise be lodged in shadow” (179). West also makes trickster connections between Gerry Nanapush and Lipsha Morrissey, which also tightens the ecological connections in a novel like *The Bingo Palace*.

One problem with West’s otherwise excellent book is the curious omission of poets. This is not a fault of hers alone; most critics somehow manage to miss the poetic potential for ecocriticism. Perhaps another criticism could extend to the omission of certain other authors who may or may not fit into a wider ecocritical reading, such as Gordon Henry Jr. or Sherman Alexie. Though no study can cover all facets of any literature, it may be time for ecocritics to admit that the theory—great potential that it has—does not fit into every niche.

In the long haul, Rinda West’s book is probably the more valuable of the two. Native American literature may well be the freshest and most interesting writing to emerge in recent memory. It would only be natural that environmental criticism, as it moves through its adolescence, would see the possibilities in a literature as tied to the land as the modern ecological impulse. Krech and his critics might inadvertently assist this endeavor with their assertions that history, like literature, is always open to new interpretations.

Birgit Däwes. *Native North American Theater in a Global Age: Sites of Identity Construction and Transdifference*. American Studies Ser. 147. Heidelberg, Ger.: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2007. ISBN: 978-3-8253-5277-6. 478 pp.

Katherine Evans, *University of Texas at Austin*

To call Birgit Däwes's almost five-hundred-page study of contemporary Native theater "comprehensive" is to understate the encyclopedic nature of this book. It comes as a welcome addition to a field still working to establish and frame a scholarly conversation in Native American performance studies. Däwes fills gaps in the field with this monograph derived from her 2006 dissertation and provides enough thought-provoking material to fuel several different incarnations of such a conversation. The overarching focus of the book is on identity construction and the "transdifferent" stances taken by Indigenous playwrights and actors as they negotiate "globalized times of shifting national and international borderlines" (7). Defined by scholars at the University of Erlangen at the start of this decade, the concept of "transdifference" seeks to transcend the binary systems that determine identity and acknowledge how individuals often occupy "self-reflexive strategic positions" that combine sometimes contradictory alliances into a multilayered web (9). As Däwes points out, such a concept applies nicely to Native artists and intellectuals who, even before contact with Europeans, "syncretically mix[ed] traditional, locally specific cultural heritage with pan-tribal" or intertribal elements (10).

Native North American Theater in a Global Age starts with reviews of current debates over terminology and methodology. By positing an expansive definition of Native theater tied to authorship and a play's provenance, Däwes makes room in her study for all "performance events [. . .] authorized—regardless of their themes—by a Native American or First Nations individual or group" (88). Such a definition embraces multiple styles (from performance art to opera), audiences, and purposes, as well as helps us to move beyond the circular question of "authenticity." Moreover, it includes performances from the past that might not match more

rigid definitions of drama, such as Te Ata's storytelling and Emily Pauline Johnson's solo performance poetry. Highlighting such a lineage reinforces the persistence and continuation of Native dramatists, providing a counterhistory to both the vanishing Indian myth and the belief that Native theater first began in the late twentieth century.

After her extensive review of terminology, secondary source material, and the postcolonial and poststructuralist roots of her approach, Däwes turns to her readings of twenty-five plays from the last forty years. Even though all of these plays have been performed publicly and their scripts are readily available, many have not received significant critical attention. Structurally, Däwes organizes her analyses in the form of a web so that she might trace "widening layers of identity constructs" (11). Beginning with the human body, Däwes then travels outward through layers of family and kinship, intra- and intertribal communities, and physical and metaphysical topographies to highlight how the dialogue, characters, and setting for these plays exhibit the multiple subject positions of transdifference. Däwes does not use the same plays to explore each layer of identity, but instead she selects three to five plays as examples for each. What results is a well-researched and insightful, but necessarily brief, view of each play.

One of the most successful moves that Däwes repeats is outlining two conflicting positions that could apply to how each play constructs identity and then negotiating a nonbinary resolution. For instance, in analyzing Spiderwoman Theater's *Sun Moon and Feather* (1981), Däwes recognizes the larger political and social communities that have influenced Gloria Miguel, Lisa Mayo, and Muriel Miguel's irreverent brand of activist theater. Because their early work was born in the crucible of the experimental Lower East Side art scene of the 1970s and 1980s, *Sun* delivers a "radically dialogic, transnational stance" that challenges an audience's desire for easy categories of identity (221). At the same time, Däwes identifies indigeneity in the sisters' references to "the timeless, mythical, and playfully humorous backgrounds of their individual [Kuna and Rappahannock] heritage" and in their creative process of "story-

weaving" (221). As a result, *Sun* is neither a tribally specific nor a nontribal play; it combines "the deconstruction of tribal ties with a gender-oriented community" (222) to underscore "the structural limits and opportunities of collective identity" (223).

The very nature of urban, late-twentieth-century performance art necessitates acknowledging intertribal, pantribal, and non-Native influences. Moreover, recognizing Spiderwoman Theater's movement across identity categories helps to destabilize the static images of Indians in Euroamerican pop culture. But because of the focus of Däwes's reading on the multiple non-Native communities contributing to *Sun Moon and Feather*, the reader does not receive a complete view of the Indigenous roots of the piece before they are "deconstruct[ed]." Spiderwoman Theater's extratribal affiliations do not preclude a strong sense of tribal belonging, as evidenced by the sisters' multiple trips to Panama and the San Blas Islands, home to their Kuna relatives on their father's side. At times, Däwes's eagerness to undermine essentialist notions of Indigenous identity, a fruitful and necessary endeavor, results in what Native studies scholars might see as a neglect of an equally necessary cultural specificity.

In the last half of the book, Däwes takes up the question of how Native playwrights in the last four decades imagine Native-centered worlds more readily. She uses the subchapter on physical and spiritual landscapes to discuss Native drama's engagement with place and space, both tribal and theatrical. A more general Indigenous mythic awareness is favored over specific tribal spiritualities, with the exception of a discussion of the Cherokee story of Ahw'uste as used in Diane Glancy's *The Woman Who Was Red Deer Dressed For the Deer Dance* (1995). Yet Däwes succeeds in emphasizing the central role of myth and storytelling to Native drama and how "spiritual affiliations are a central component of indigenous identity construction on stage" (311).

Däwes's final focus is on how Native playwrights wrangle with notions of essentialism and stereotypical Indian images through trickster representation. In her rendering, tricksterism strikes similar notes to transdifference: it "explores and inhabits liminal

spaces, integrates opposite poles, and synthesizes disparities" (315). While Däwes recognizes the potential overuse of the trickster figure by non-Native critics and scholars, she nevertheless finds it a helpful tool for analyzing the shifting semiotics of Native North American theater. The hermeneutics of a "trickster theater" are practical as well: as a "genre of exploration and renewal, it is predominantly marked by dynamic changes, political involvement, and—most importantly—an ethics of inter- and transcultural respect" (389).

Because of the short length and great number of Däwes's readings, students of Native drama might find *Native North American Theater in a Global Age* more constructive as a starting point or quick reference guide to significant theatrical works from the last forty years. Moreover, the focus on transdifference, geared more toward an audience of postcolonial and American studies scholars, may not prove as useful to those looking to approach Native American theater from a consciously tribal or intertribal framework. However, what results from this application of this theory here is recognition of the complexity, vitality, and relevance of Native-authored drama. Däwes's work should stimulate other scholars of Native American performance texts to keep building this new and exciting field.

Ellen L. Arnold, ed. *The Salt Companion to Carter Revard*.

Cambridge: Salt Publishing, 2007. ISBN: 978-1-84471-090-4. 247 pp.

Bryan Russell, *University of Texas at Austin*

In *The Salt Companion to Carter Revard*, Ellen L. Arnold has collected a series of insightful essays that engage readers in a wide breadth of topics that inform the study of this prolific Osage poet. In addition to examining Revard's work through subjects such as history, translation, and science, the essays in this collection thoroughly explore the poet's familial, cultural, and academic backgrounds, situating readers who are new to Revard into a place where they can examine the biographical connections between

the writer and his poetry and offering new insights into the same works for readers who are already familiar with Revard's work.

Arnold begins the essay collection with an informative and well-written introduction about Carter Revard. Revard was born in 1931 in Pawhuska, Oklahoma, and is of Osage, Ponca, Irish, and Scotch-Irish heritage. After a childhood of working as a janitor and a field hand while gaining his primary education in a one-room schoolhouse, Revard won a radio quiz scholarship to attend the University of Tulsa. After graduating with a BA in 1952, Revard became one of the first American Indian Rhodes Scholars, which led to an MA from Oxford followed by a PhD from Yale and a teaching career that spanned almost four decades, during which he taught courses in medieval English literature and linguistics. Political events of the 1970s such as the Trail of Broken Treaties and the Wounded Knee occupation of 1973 inspired him to return to his roots and teach courses in American Indian literature and culture.

All the while Revard developed his craft, publishing essay collections and poetry chapbooks such as *Family Matters*, *Tribal Affairs*, *Ponca War Dancers*, and *Cowboys and Indians, Christmas Shopping*. Revard explores topics such as one's place in the natural world, mixed-blood identity, and the literal and figurative returns to an Indian home.

The thirteen essays in this collection examine Revard's work from a variety of disciplines and perspectives, but they also appear to be divided into three larger thematic categories, each encompassing three or more of the essays. The first four essays offer analyses of Revard's work within the scope of the poet's personal experience, establishing Revard's biography as the framework through which to explore the poems. The topics within this category include Revard's connection to Osage/Ponca traditions, including a "star legacy," an extension of the Osage creation story that describes the people's descent from the heavens. Topics in this section also include Revard's engaging of Western representations of the Native individual and how notions of home inform a substantial portion of his body of work. This thematic section concludes with an essay that examines the presence of singing birds in Revard's poetry and

Revard's relationship to the "music instinct" that is shared between birds and poets.

The second subsection of the collection deals with the communal Osage experience and focuses on the presence in Revard's work of Osage myth, the history of Osage/Ponca survival and the Third Space experience and identity that exists within the contact zones between Natives and Euroamericans. Finally, the last three essays examine Revard's work from a cross-cultural framework. One essay details a scholar's struggle and ultimate joy in translating Revard's and the Osage community's experiences into Spanish for South American students of North American Indigenous literatures. The final two essays explore Revard's place as a Native scholar of medieval literature and demonstrate how Revard succeeds in establishing a relationship between what would appear to be two disparate passions.

One of the collection's many strengths is the quality of the writing itself. Each essay is well written, clear, and informative. The variety of topics with which the authors approach Revard's work also keeps the collection moving along and makes it a stimulating read, which would make the collection accessible to an undergraduate audience. The academic prose of the essays is also periodically broken up by the authors' inclusion of snippets of candid conversation and correspondence with Revard, lending a personal, human quality to the collection that is typically absent in traditional academic publications. The inclusion of Revard's insights gives readers the sense that while they are reading a companion collection to the poet's work, Revard himself is the readers' companion, guiding them through the essays' examination of his work.

The collection will also appeal to Native-literature instructors in that it offers several ways to examine Revard's work and could serve as a jumping-off point to engage students in discussion. This collection coupled with a few of Revard's essays and poems could easily make up a unit in Native poetry that would be a fresh alternative to Sherman Alexie and Louise Erdrich, thus introducing students to a poet who deserves as much praise and notoriety as the more ubiquitous poets taught in introductory Native-literature courses.

One minor weakness in the collection is the repetitiveness with which biographical information appears in some of the essays. Because Arnold's introduction so succinctly establishes Revard's biography, the addition of these details in the beginning of some of the essays seems redundant and does not scratch the surface of what Arnold already offers the readers in the introduction. To be fair, this redundancy is only apparent if one reads the collection as a whole in a couple of sittings. This minor flaw is not apparent when the reader examines single essays, in which case the biographical details could be helpful.

The collection's major contribution, however, is simply the presence of the collection itself. In their devotion of a collection of essays to a single Native author and the close study of his work, Arnold and Salt Publishing have established a precedent that must be carried further. This kind of critical treatment is typically limited to those poets whose surnames are Chaucer, Milton, or Shakespeare and is still more rare for a Native writer. This kind of critical offering of Revard and his work, if applied to other Native authors in the future, could be the start of a library of criticism that is on par with Norton editions of more canonized texts, establishing another foothold in the development of Native literary studies.

Hershman R. John (Sun Tracks). *I Swallow Turquoise for Courage*. Tucson: U of Arizona P, 2007. ISBN: 978-0-8165-2592-8. 103 pp.

Robin Riley Fast, *Emerson College*

Hershman R. John's first book is infused with Navajo history and culture. At the same time his engagement with non-Native cultures is also clear, in allusions to, among others, Basho, Anne Sexton, Langston Hughes, the Statue of Liberty, and Midas. Grandmothers and Coyote figure prominently, as do references to the Navajo creation story, turquoise, and weaving.

In a book of great formal variety, the use of juxtaposition is particularly noteworthy as a structural principle and a mode for creating meaning and tone. "A Sheep Dog Locked in Photograph"

and “Coyote’s Ad Infinitum” offer very different examples. The book exemplifies some of the traits of contemporary Navajo poetics described by Luci Tapahonso: “symbolism, concrete diction, and imagery. [. . .] rich, connotative allusions to time, surrounding physical conditions, and historical as well as spiritual imagery” (25). Further, “The combination of [traditional Navajo genres and poetics with ‘written literary techniques’] results in poetry [. . .] that is innovative in terms of format, use of space [. . .] and, most important, a tonal quality that is at once historical, literal, and spiritual” (33). John’s book also reflects saad:

our way of seeing the world and of relating to all things [. . .] sustained [the Navajo people] [. . .] and thus the acquisition of knowledge or saad remains important today. Saad [. . .] is the essence of what we were taught: that as long as we recognize our responsibilities to each other and the world we will go on. (Tapahonso 35)

With this book, Hershman John joins a strong company of contemporary Navajo writers, only a few of whom I will mention, to suggest how *I Swallow Turquoise* might be located in relation to this larger body of work. Perhaps the most recognized of these writers is Tapahonso herself. While she does not avoid painful subjects, her poems and stories tend to point toward grounds for hope. With a grounding as solidly Navajo as Tapahonso’s, John’s poems more commonly suggest persistent sadness or tensions. The traditional “mythological” elements on which the two writers most explicitly draw also differ, and it may be that, by alluding most directly to early parts of the creation story (the first two worlds), John creates a context not only in which uncertainty and screwups, danger, and pain are likely (as they also are in Tapahonso’s work) but in which outcomes are uncertain.

The elusiveness of resolutions is also characteristic of the work of Laura Tohe and Sherwin Bitsui. Tohe’s dominant focus on boarding school and its aftermath is the source of her book’s predominant bleakness, anger, and implied questions about the future. The immediate sources of pain in John’s poetry differ: deaths, children’s alienation from elders, radiation poisoning, and

the destruction of the buffalo are among the causes of the griefs he probes, and though some poems promise love or solidarity (e.g., "A Postcard from Van Gogh," "Grandmother Moon"), ambiguity or outright dread or sorrow are more common in his poems. Examples include "Gambling a Good Night Away," "Four Days, Four Nights," "Buffalo Head Nickel," "Spider Woman's Children," and "Refusing to Be Blessed." Finally, Sherwin Bitsui's recurrent references to conquest, exploitation, and violence create a tone that often approaches the apocalyptic, with images that fuse the surreal with the recognizable real, and often nightmarish, effects. Throughout, Bitsui suggests the presence of resistant energy, but his poems afford practically no hope until the final pages, and even here that hope seems tenuous.

Grief, painful knowledge of history, and resistance are variously evident in all of these writers' works; tonally, Hershman John's poetry stands between the relative serenity of Tapahonso's, on the one hand, and, on the other, the furious bleakness of Tohe's and the difficult, driven energies of Bitsui's.

Meditating on mortality, locatedness, and the necessity of stories, "The Dark World" exemplifies many of this book's strengths. The creation story, begun by Grandmother Spider, is continued by "Altsé Hastiin, First Man," speaking from a jail cell that becomes the "First World" when a tribal police officer commands "Lights Out!" The speaker's words simultaneously evoke stories passed down for generations and his own immediate experience: "I touched the cold wall and tried to scratch my way through, / Into the next world, the Blue World, like Locust did" (49). Remembering the warnings of "Grandma Spider Woman" ("a person without a story isn't a person at all. / He is lost" [50]), he grasps a story, reclaiming his personhood, but with troubled ambiguity. He recollects the hope of "the beings emerg[ing] from the First World," but the second-world event he remembers is Coyote's creation of death, and rather than comment on the necessity of death for the survival of life, he emphasizes resentment: "each ripple shook the beings' anger. / The people were mad because of Coyote's words" (50). Here we see both the importance of *saad* and the frailty of memory, on which it depends. Like this poem, many of the book's

most interesting pieces use juxtaposition, allusion, repetition, surprising imagery, and humor to create complex effects.

Among other noteworthy poems, "Coyote's Eyes" intertwines with deceptive simplicity a Navajo Marine's war-games misadventures and a typical tale of Coyote's irrepressible desires leading to his comeuppance; "A '49 Love Chant" is a multigenre sestina infused with subtle transformations. "Theory of Light" takes as its epigraph lines from Tapahonso's sweetly beautiful "A Song for the Direction of North," and with allusions and startlingly juxtaposed images it evokes varied theories of light and energy. Everything converges in

The sun's core
 . . . made from turquoise and the moon's mass . . . made
 from radiant
 White shell lighting the metallic half-life in susurrations
 Across the Navajo-Hopi reservations. (84)

Then "It all ends— / In one pyroclastic flower engulfing clouds and light." Strikingly different, with predominantly realistic details and an underlying narrative framework, "Post-Modernity in Kayenta" ("After Elizabeth Bishop") quietly revises Bishop's investigations of what it means to enter unfamiliar landscapes and view unfamiliar people through the assumptions and imagery of commerce, mass culture, and the perhaps misremembered lessons of white-dominated education.

I Swallow Turquoise for Courage draws attention to realities that demand courage of those who seek purposefully to confront them. Hershman John's courage, sure grounding in his world, and formal and linguistic skill make this an impressive first book.

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Eric Gansworth, ed. *Sovereign Bones: New Native American Writing*. New York: Nation Books, 2007. ISBN: 1-56858-357-5. 331 pp.

Amy Ware, *University of Texas at Austin*

Guided by editor Eric Gansworth, whose work includes poetry, prose, and visual art, *Sovereign Bones* focuses on the variety of artistic weapons contributors wield to combat the threat of cultural assimilation. Through these self-reflective pieces, *Sovereign Bones* represents an important contribution to the central (and increasingly recognized) role of nonfiction in articulating American Indian intellectual traditions. The strength of this collection of nonfiction essays by more than thirty authors, multimedia artists, photographers, and actors lies in its ability to bridge many traditionally accepted divides. The collection would be an excellent companion for courses in American Indian nonfiction writing as well as broad-based American Indian studies classes focused on film, art, or literature.

The book is organized into four conceptually based sections, each offering essays by writers and visual artists at varying levels of renown. The first, "Repatriating Ourselves," contains essays relating not to the repatriation of material and skeletal remains but to the methods that Indigenous artists employ to balance older tribal traditions with newer interpretations of those traditions. As Salt River Pima photographer Annabel Wong puts it in her essay, "The reclamation of tribal culture and religion in contemporary society is not only remembering the past and maintaining traditions but also creating a new meaning of what it is to be Native in the world today" (24).

The book's second section, "Speaking through Our Nations' Teeth," focuses on the reclamation and retention of Native languages. While the reprint of Louise Erdrich's 2000 *New York Times* piece on Ojibwe is powerful, it is Simon Ortiz, unsurprisingly, whose contribution is most impressive. In "Indigenous Language Consciousness: Being, Place, and Sovereignty," Ortiz eloquently ties language to place and, ultimately, to tribal sovereignty: "without the Indigenous sovereignty held and contained in the core val-

ues and lifeways expressed by Indigenous language, they (we) will not have Existence” (147).

Native artists’ attempts to reclaim their representation in popular culture through various artistic media is the focus of *Sovereign Bones*’s third section. It is here that the book’s most diverse range of artists speak, including actors (Steve Elm and Gary Farmer), writers (Sherman Alexie, Diane Glancy, Susan Powers), photographers (Pena Bonita and Richard Hill Sr.), a painter (Jaune Quick-to-See Smith), and a film director (Diane Fraher). Given the range of experiences represented, this collection is the strongest in the monograph. Steve Elm (Oneida) succinctly sums up the subsection’s theme in his essay on working as a Native actor: “I did not go to acting school to learn to be an ‘Indian actor.’ I trained to become an actor who would someday be known as an actor who happened to be an Indian” (189).

The concluding section of the book is entitled “Rolling Those Sovereign Bones.” Gansworth defines the section broadly as reflective of artists’ use of “tools of the oppressors,” and its contents, a hodgepodge of essays that would have more aptly been placed in the preceding sections, are equally vague (8). Still, the section contains several innovative essays, including Akwesasne Mohawk James Thomas Stevens’s contribution “E-Socials: Cultural Collaboration in the Age of the Electronic Inter-Tribal” and Joy Harjo’s piece, which weaves selections from her blog with some journalistic columns for the *Muscogee Nation News*.

By defining art broadly, the book exemplifies the strengths of a holistic approach to Indigenous creativity, one that challenges Western-imposed segregation among artistic media. Further, both an intra- and intertribal community are built through the common sentiments expressed throughout. Thematic trends in the essays—the struggle for self-representation and the difficulties inherent in balancing the old and new—exemplify common ground found across tribal lines. At the same time, familial connections give the collection an intimate feel: father and daughter Simon and Sara Ortiz, sisters Louise and Heid Erdrich, and other familial relations offer independent yet intimately connected reflections on their

work. These fluctuations between distinct traditions and artistic form are also reflected in the mixture of both recognized and promising artists in the collection, who implicitly speak to each other throughout the book.

The book's strong points far outweigh its weaknesses. Still, the book does have its limitations. In terms of the book's organization, Gansworth's poetic introductions to each section leave their scope vague, requiring readers to return to the book's broader introduction for clarification. For example, Gansworth's poem beginning section two (focused on language survival), begins:

When you see me
for the first time
at a powwow or social
across the circle
we dance
in which language and worldview
do you form your first
impression. (93)

Though such introductory pieces are intriguing, their indirectness is frustrating. A straightforward prose introduction (much like MariJo Moore's in the first of this series, *Genocide of the Mind*) would have offered readers more effective guidance through a section's theme than do these artistic interpretations. And while the book's content is strong, the omission of contributors' tribal affiliations in either the table of contents or at the start of their respective essays is surprising. The brief biographies of the contributors at the book's close do foreground tribal nationality, but the exclusion of this information in the remainder of the text is regrettable, especially given that the range of tribal nations represented by these artists is impressive.

These criticisms are slight, however, and do not overshadow the monograph's innovative convergence of new and established artists; its assertion that Native artists of all types speak to each other; its insistence that modern interpretations of old traditions be respected by outsiders and insiders alike; and its attempts to forge

intertribal conversations. *Sovereign Bones* complements the artistic work of its contributors and testifies to the larger struggles that Native artists face in developing art that accurately and adequately distinguishes both its creator and her or his tribal nation.

Kevin Bruyneel. *The Third Space of Sovereignty: The Postcolonial Politics of U.S.-Indigenous Relations*. Indigenous Americans Ser. Robert Warrior and Jace Weaver, ser. eds. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2007. ISBN: 978-0-8166-4988-4. 313 pp.

Julie A. Pelletier, *University of Minnesota, Morris*

I read Kevin Bruyneel's book from the perspective of an anthropologist who works in the multidisciplinary world of American Indian and Indigenous studies; I was understandably interested in evaluating the political scientist's self-described multidisciplinary approach while exploring what he means by "the third space of sovereignty." Bruyneel succeeds in drawing from historical, political, cultural, and literary analyses to set out and argue for what he sees as "a precise concept as well as a vocabulary that can pin down the alternatives represented in this 'postcolonial arrangement' and/or 'rethinking of the sovereign state'" (218). This "precise concept" and vocabulary is represented by the third space of sovereignty, a concept he has "derived [. . .] from the work of Homi Bhabha, who defined and seeks out the 'third space of enunciation'" (xviii). Bruyneel defines the third space of sovereignty:

[I]ndigenous political actors work across American spatial and temporal boundaries, demanding rights and resources from the liberal democratic settler-state while also challenging the imposition of colonial rule on their lives. This resistance engenders what I call a "third space of sovereignty" that resides neither simply inside nor outside the American political system but rather exists on these very boundaries, exposing both the practices and the contingencies of American colonial rule. (xvii)

Bruyneel's multidisciplinary approach is ambitious but necessary for an innovative and powerful approach to understanding and talking about sovereignty.

In addition to Bhabha, Bruyneel draws from postcolonial theorists Gayatri Spivak, Gayan Prakash, and Bill Ashcroft. Other influences include Vine Deloria Jr.—he does a close reading of Deloria's *Custer Died For Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* in the chapter titled “Between Civil Rights and Decolonization: The Claim for Postcolonial Nationhood.” According to Bruyneel, Deloria saw tribal self-determination as “sovereignty without the mechanisms of statehood” (152); Deloria's argument for recolonization was “an inherently postcolonial claim [. . .] which would require reclaiming boundaries as active sites of indigenous political agency and autonomy and undermining the presumptive American national claim to belonging in political time and political space” (160).

Bruyneel's attention to boundaries and borders as sites of resistance and maneuvering—as liminal spaces that allow for appropriation and challenges by Indigenous actors—reveals these as third spaces of sovereignty. His analysis of temporal and spatial placement reveals the imperial binary (Bill Ashcroft's term)—domestic versus foreign, in versus out, sovereign versus dependent—contained in U.S. Indian policy and exposes the nonbinaristic responses and strategies of Indigenous groups and individuals who recognize the imperial binary as a “false choice” (Julie Cassidy qtd. in Bruyneel 218). The author reveals the “colonial ambivalence” of the United States as a settler-state, an ambivalence that can trap Indians in a paradox. For example, Bruyneel describes how Indian tribes are imagined and described before the recent gaming economic success of some tribes. They were “out of time”—situated in a mythical past, inexorably damaged by colonization and their own savagery—and therefore they were too weak to govern themselves and so they must be governed by the settler-state for their own good. More recently, successful gaming tribes are also seen as “out of time”—they have stepped too far from their Noble Savage essence—and therefore they are too strong and must be governed and controlled for their own good. The nation-building project in

which the United States is still engaged surfaces as a critical factor in Indigenous relations, as the United States acts to define itself and its borders and citizens, while “putting indigenous sovereignty and political life in a seemingly impossible colonial bind that has positioned indigenous tribes as ‘domestic to the United States in a foreign sense’” (220).

Bruyneel has arranged the chapters chronologically, as a historian might, an approach that may seem conventional but is innovative in that the reader may follow his historio-political analysis chapter by chapter or may choose to turn to a particular moment—the post-Civil War period, for example—that is of specific interest. I can see this arrangement as a useful teaching tool, and I plan to incorporate individual chapters of *Third Space* into different courses. Bruyneel describes the revival of colonial anti-tribalism, formerly prevalent during the allotment and termination eras, in response to Indian economic success through gaming, and tribal resistance to being categorized as simply another special interest group. The reader can compare definitions and understandings of Indians from the treaty-making period to the present day; Bruyneel has provided the historical contextualization as well as a fresh political analysis to support his proposed third space of sovereignty.

Bruyneel was keenly aware of the need to provide what he terms “guideposts” or background to readers unfamiliar with U.S.-Indigenous politics—my opinion is that he succeeded in doing this, but a reader less familiar with the field may be better placed to evaluate this claim. Bruyneel illustrates key moments with cases drawn from one tribe or a tribal confederacy, such as the Five Civilized Tribes, or the writings of specific key players, such as Tuscarora Chief Clinton Rickard. He is careful to note that these cases or opinions do not necessarily reflect the experiences of all tribes or Indigenous individuals.

In the conclusion, Bruyneel situates his text thus:

While this study of U.S.-indigenous relations speaks most directly to those interested in indigenous people’s politics, it has also been a study of American political development

and race and ethnicity politics in the United States as well as an application of postcolonial theory to the analysis of the contemporary colonialist-anticolonialist struggles in settler societies. (225–26)

I concur. In the end, was I convinced of the need for and effectiveness of the third space of sovereignty as an analytical concept? Yes. I was challenged to disrupt and reexamine my understandings of the postcolonial, the anticolonial, and the decolonial, as well as being reawakened to the analytical importance of borders and boundaries. Kevin Bruyneel adds to our vocabulary with his “precise concept,” enabling us to better discuss, describe, and imagine the complex relationships between Indigenous peoples and settler-states.

Contributor Biographies

KATHERINE EVANS is a doctoral candidate in English at the University of Texas at Austin. Her work focuses on late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century performance texts by Native American dramatists.

ROBIN RILEY FAST grew up in southeast Alaska and teaches literature at Emerson College in Boston. She has written *The Heart as a Drum: Continuance and Resistance in American Indian Poetry* and numerous essays on Native poetry and prose, and she has coedited *Approaches to Teaching Dickinson's Poetry* with Christine Mack Gordon.

WILLIAM HUGGINS is pursuing graduate studies at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and reads compulsively. A southwesterner by birth, he is also deeply enmeshed in wilderness and conservation work in several states.

SAM MCKEGNEY is a teacher and scholar of Indigenous and Canadian literatures at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, Canada. He is the author of *Magic Weapons: Aboriginal Writers Remaking Community after Residential School* and several articles on Indigenous issues in Canadian and American journals. His research interests include Indigenous governance and its pursuit through art, multiculturalism as an ideal and in practice, hockey culture, masculinity theory, and literary activism.

JULIE A. PELLETIER teaches at the University of Minnesota, Morris, a liberal arts college that, because of its history as an Indian boarding school, offers an Indian tuition waiver. Her research and applied interests include Indigenous identity, Indian gaming, research ethics and methodologies,

and the pedagogies of anthropology and American Indian studies. She is Métis of French, Maliseet, and Mi'kmaq descent, with dual citizenship in the United States and Canada.

BARBARA K. ROBBINS is an associate professor at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. She teaches courses in Native American literature for the Department of English and Native American Studies Program. She has published on the works of Sherman Alexie, Leslie Marmon Silko, Louise Erdrich, Michael Dorris, and Geary Hobson. Her research focus is healing trauma with art, and she has a forthcoming article on the totem art of Jewell James in *The International Journal of the Humanities*.

BRYAN RUSSELL is of Cherokee, Choctaw, Czech, and German heritage. He is presently working on a dissertation dealing with mixed-blood discourse and blood identity in Cherokee and Choctaw literature. His interests also include Cherokee and Choctaw language.

ROSE STREMLAU is an assistant professor in the Department of History at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke, the oldest historically American Indian state university in the United States. She has published on Native communities' experiences of sexual violence, and she currently is writing about gender and family in the Cherokee Nation.

ANNETTE VAN DYKE is a professor of English and interdisciplinary studies at the University of Illinois at Springfield and a long-time admirer of Paula Gunn Allen, whom she first met in the 1980s.

AMY WARE is a doctoral candidate in American studies at the University of Texas at Austin. Her dissertation, "The Cherokee Kid: Will Rogers and the Tribal Genealogies of American Indian Celebrity," details Will Rogers's connections to the Cherokee Nation.

JACE WEAVER is professor of Native American studies and director of the Institute of Native American Studies at the University of Georgia. He specializes in Native literature and culture and federal Indian law. He has ten books and numerous articles to his credit. He is the coauthor of *American Indian Literary Nationalism* (with Craig Womack and Robert Warrior). His most recent book is the forthcoming *Notes from a Miner's Canary: Messages from the Underground of Redboy*.

CAROLINE WIGGINTON is a doctoral candidate in the Department of English at the University of Texas at Austin. Her dissertation, entitled “Imagined Intimacies: Women’s Writing, Community, and Affiliation in Eighteenth-Century Colonial America,” considers questions of race and gender during the period. Her essay, “In a Red Petticoat: Interpreting Coosaponakeesa’s Performance of Creek Sovereignty in Colonial Georgia,” is forthcoming in *Native Acts: Indian Performance in Early North America*, edited by Joshua David Bellin and Laura Mielke.

ERIC A. WOLFE is associate professor and director of graduate studies in the Department of English at the University of North Dakota.

Major Tribal Nations and Bands Mentioned in This Issue

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

We make every effort to provide the most accurate and up-to-date tribal contact information available, a task that is sometimes quite complicated. Please send any corrections or suggestions to *SAIL* Editorial Assistant, *Studies in American Indian Literatures*, Department of English, 1 University Station, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX 78712, or send an e-mail to klbrown@mail.utexas.edu.

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PO Box 948
Tahlequah, OK 74465
Phone: 918-453-5000
Web site: <http://www.cherokee.org>

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
PO Drawer 1210
Durant, OK 74702-1210
Phone: 800-522-6170
Web site: <http://www.choctawnation.com>

Gay Head Wampanoag (Aquinnah)
20 Black Brook Road
Aquinnah, MA 02535-1546
Phone: 508-645-9265
Web site: <http://www.wampanoagtribe.net>

Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma
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Phone: 580-654-2300
Web site: <http://kiowaok.com>

Mashpee Wampanoag
PO Box 1048
Mashpee, MA 02649
Phone: 508-477-0208
Web site: <http://mashpeewampanoagtribe.com>

Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation
110 Pequot Trail
PO Box 3180
Mashantucket, CT 06338-3180
Phone: 800-411-9671
Web site:
<http://www.foxwoods.com/TheMashantucketPequots/Home>

Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians
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Choctaw, MS 39350
Phone: 601-656-5251
Web site: <http://www.choctaw.org>

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Phone: 860-862-6100
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Web site: <http://www.osage tribe.com>

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Ponca City, OK 74601
Phone: 580-762-8104
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PO Box 194
Laguna, NM 87026
Phone: 505-552-6654

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PO Box 5006

Southampton, NY 11969

Phone: 631-283-6143

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PO Box 70

Bowler, WI 54416

Phone: 715-793-4111

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CHARLES A. BRAITHWAITE, EDITOR
E-mail: cbraithwaite2@unl.edu

Gwen Bedient, Editorial Assistant
E-mail: gpq@unl.edu

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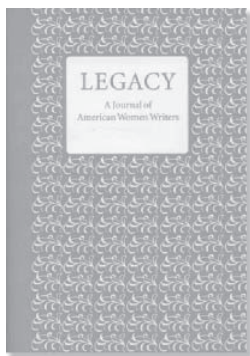
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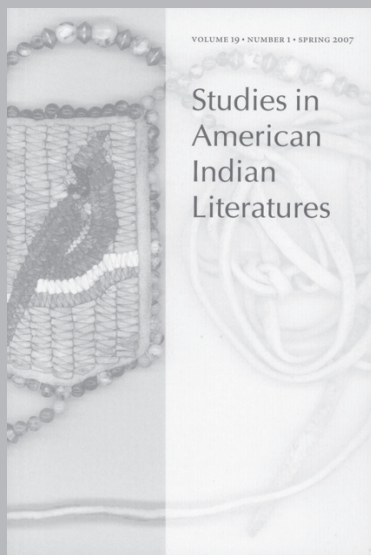


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