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FROM THE EDITORS

We enjoyed visiting with many of you at the NAISA annual meeting in Tucson, and in several instances we heard papers that we hope will soon be published in *SAIL*. Under the leadership of the NAISA council and the first president, Robert Warrior, the organization is thriving. This year, 768 members registered for the meeting, and just under 700 participated. We were especially inspired and deeply moved by the testimony against Arizona's anti-immigration and anti-ethnic studies legislation by Tucson city councilwoman Regina Romero, the three young activists who had recently graduated from high school in Tucson, and the director of Indigenous Alliance Without Borders, the Yaqui activist Jose Matus.

The journal, like NAISA, is also currently thriving. We already have articles for the rest of volume 22 and almost all of the four issues of volume 23. Several exciting special issues are also currently under consideration. In this issue, Christopher Taylor proposes a critical method that remedies what he sees as a polarization of nationalist and cosmopolitan theoretical modes of inquiry in Indigenous literary studies. This method, Taylor explains, "sees North America as a field of overlapping sovereignties." Taylor uses Sherman Alexie's *Reservation Blues* to demonstrate this approach.

While Alexie tends to be omnipresent in our conversations, Indigenous as-told-to life narratives have fallen out of favor in the field. Linda Warley revisits this genre in her study of *The Days of Augusta*, the life narrative of Secwepemc (Shuswap) elder Mary Augusta Tap-page Evans as told to Jean E. Speare. Warley focuses on and indeed

recovers both the literariness of the narrative and “the primary and immediate presence” of Augusta in it. Her article encourages a reconsideration of the place of as-told-to life narratives in American Indian literary histories.

This issue’s third essay follows Robert Dale Parker’s essay review of contemporary American Indian poetry in the last issue, including Cheryl Savageau’s *Mother/Land*. Siobhan Senier situates Savageau’s poetry in a long history of Abenaki writing and establishes the foundation for much more consistent and vigorous attention to Savageau as well as other Abenaki and Native New England writers.

Savageau was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize for *Dirt Road Home* (1995). She was joined recently as a Pulitzer Prize nominee by Cherokee poet Ralph Salisbury, who earned a nomination for *Light from a Bullet Hole: New and Selected Poems, 1950–2008* (2009). On behalf of *SAIL*, we’d like to offer our most sincere congratulations to Salisbury and encourage you to revisit Arnold Krupat’s expanded introduction to *Light from a Bullet Hole* in *SAIL* 21.1.

James H. Cox and Daniel Heath Justice

“All This / Is Abenaki Country”

Cheryl Savageau's Poetic *Awikhighanak*

SIOBHAN SENIER

Abenaki poet Cheryl Savageau has received considerable critical acclaim for her work. She published her first book, *Home Country*, with Alice James Books in 1992. Her 1995 volume, *Dirt Road Home*, was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize and was a finalist for the prestigious Poetry Prize. Individual poems have appeared in such literary magazines as *The Boston Review* and in anthologies including those widely circulated among Native-studies teachers, Carolyn Dunn and Carol Comfort's *Through the Eye of the Deer* and Joseph Bruchac's *Returning the Gift*. Savageau's newest book, *Mother/Land*, appeared in 2006 in Salt Publishing's Earthworks series, edited by Janet McAdams; this will put her even more visibly in the company of such esteemed poets as Carter Revard, Diane Glancy, and Heid Erdrich.

This is, then, a good time for a scholarly and pedagogical consideration of Savageau's work, which, to date, it has not received. The marginalization of Savageau's poetry is part and parcel of the marginalization of Indigenous New England writers within Native American literary studies as a whole—and therefore in the broader field of American literature. Two other northeastern writers—the late-eighteenth-century Mohegan minister Samson Occom and the early-nineteenth-century Pequot minister William Apess—have achieved more visibility, thanks to LaVonne Ruoff, Barry O'Connell, and the popular *Heath* anthology of American Literature (edited by Paul Lauter et al.). And thanks largely to his own voluminous output, many people have at least heard of Joseph Bruchac's poetry and

fiction, although, like Savageau and many other talented Abenaki writers, he receives next to no scholarly attention.¹

But the Occom-Apess-Bruchac triumvirate still leaves a gaping, nearly two-centuries-long hole in literary history that, in turn, replicates some common misconceptions about Indigenous people in New England—namely, that they vanished from the region early on (either outright, as the result of disease and warfare, or more inexorably, through assimilation) and that, when they are visible nowadays, they are somehow “reconstituting” themselves after a long dormancy. As the Missisquoi band of Abenakis in Vermont know all too well, having been continually frustrated in their efforts to gain federal recognition, the United States has a vested interest in maintaining definitions of Indian-ness predicated on particular phenotypes, land bases confined to reservations, and governance structures (such as those organized around unified tribal councils, tribal courts, and tribal police) that are politically registered—and manageable—by U.S. federal and state governments.²

Abenaki writers, of whom Joseph Bruchac and Cheryl Savageau are only two, unsettle those definitions. As I will illustrate below, Savageau’s poetry comes out of a long line of Abenaki writing traceable all the way back to the precontact birchbark maps called *awikhighanak*. Thus her poetry challenges readers to see all of New England as fundamentally Indigenous space, and it furthers an ongoing, nation-building literary project.

LOOKING FOR INDIANS . . .

WHO ARE THERE IN PLAIN SIGHT

Anglo-New Englanders have religiously (in multiple senses of that word) installed themselves as the “first” Americans, as the originators of the nation. The myth of the Puritan “errand into the wilderness” has always been underwritten by the myth of Native disappearance. Colonial administrators began institutionalizing this myth early on—outlawing, for instance, the very name of the Pequots in 1638.³ Meanwhile, a range of literary, artistic, and historical genres rehearsed King Philip’s War (1675–76) as the official

"end" of Indigenous presence in New England—whether representing that end as the workings of Divine Providence, as in Mary Rowlandson's famous captivity narrative (1682), or as a gruesome spectacle to be mourned, as in John Augustus Stone's popular melodrama *Metamora* (1819). Non-Native local historians, for their part, favored what Ojibwe historian Jean O'Brien calls "the 'Last of the _____' genre." Racing to eulogize particular "full-blood" or "pure Indian" individuals (while neatly sidestepping the continued presence of these individuals' sons and daughters), these writers ironically "reveal[ed] a New England thickly populated by 'last' Indians throughout the nineteenth century" (419).

The Abenakis, whose lands cover all of New Hampshire, most of Vermont, much of northern Massachusetts, western Maine, and southern Quebec, have been subjected to particular historical erasures. They have two reserves in Canada—at Odanak (St. Francis) and Wolinak (Becancour). South of the border, though, they never officially ceded title to their lands through treaties with the U.S. government; in America, therefore, the Abenakis do not have the reservations that, in painful paradox, make many groups more visible and intelligible to non-Natives, while permanently dispossessing Indigenous peoples of their larger land bases. Moreover, while Abenaki people are still very much present in Vermont, Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts, a particular story about Abenaki flight has taken hold in the United States: that they fled for Canada, en masse, during the wars and epidemics of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Some did retreat to St. Francis, but many returned, as well, and most stayed. Enough stayed, in fact, to be targeted by a Vermont state eugenics program in the 1930s.⁴

All of this history left them, in the words of one Abenaki historian, Marge Bruchac, "hiding in plain sight"—living in communities of people who recognized each other as Abenaki and who continued traditional practices, but who seldom broadcast their tribal identity openly. Joseph Bruchac (her brother) describes one such community vividly in his memoir, *Bowman's Store*. In his homage to his grandfather, who lived in upstate New York, he writes,

Jesse Bowman was a dark-skinned man who tried to hide his Abenaki Indian ancestry. I know now that he did this because of the prejudice against Indians that his family and many other Native families in the Northeast had experienced. Though his looks and demeanor were those of a Native person, he always referred to himself not as Indian but as French. (3)

“To be French,” Bruchac explains, “was a way of surviving. Surviving not only the stereotypes and the deeply-held prejudice against Indians in the Northeast, but physically surviving, not being killed as an Indian—an easy target” (29). Passing as French, or Gypsy, or white, many Abenaki families and entire communities have quietly and privately continued their lives as Abenaki. Jesse Bowman may not have told the world he was Abenaki, but as Bruchac describes it, he knew who he was, and he gently taught his grandson traditional values—respect for family, for community, and for the land. He took young Joseph fishing, showed him how to identify different kinds of trees, and taught him to honor himself and others.

Bruchac represents a very different way of being Indian than most people in the United States are willing to recognize. American people and indeed American policy define Indigeneity by such criteria as bounded reservations, restrictive blood quanta, and centralized tribal governments; they demand that Indigenous people prove what Mi’kmaq scholar Bonita Lawrence calls “primordiality, a state of existence in contradistinction to modernity, whereby language, ways of living, and cultural knowledge as manifested by distinct beliefs, traits, and practices, transmitted in relatively unbroken lines from a distant past, and generally combined with ‘racial’ purity, have defined membership in a specific tribal group” (1). And yet what Bruchac represents is actually much closer to traditional Abenaki practice than the primordial construction. Ethnohistorian John Moody describes it thus:

All Abenaki terms for political structure including “nation” are derived from the word “family.” The land of the ancestors, the subsistence grounds, and the living family were the three basic pillars on which Abenaki government stood. Each fam-

ily independently carried the Nation and the history of the people from ancient times to the present. This flexible governance sustained Abenaki community life while many of their Algonquin and Iroquoian neighbors were forced into appointed governments on reservations outside their original homelands. (6)

Even—or perhaps especially—"hiding in plain sight," Abenaki people thus continue as Abenaki. But the cultural obsession with primordiality takes a notorious toll on many Native families and communities. In "Looking for Indians," Cheryl Savageau recalls her own childhood obsession:

My head filled with tv images
of cowboys, warbonnets and renegades,
I ask my father
what kind of Indian are we, anyway.
I want to hear Cheyenne, Apache, Sioux,
words I know from television
but he says instead
Abenaki. . . .

One night
my father brings in a book.
See, he says, Abenaki,
and shows me the map
here and here and here
he says, all this
is Abenaki country.
I remember asking him
what did they do
these grandparents
and my disappointment
when he said no buffalo
roamed the thick new england forest
they hunted deer in winter
sometimes moose, but mostly

they were farmers
and fishermen.

I didn't want to talk about it.
Each night my father
came home from the factory
to plant and gather,
to cast the line out
over the dark evening pond,
with me, walking behind him,
looking for Indians. (*Dirt Road Home* 19–20)

Savageau's poetry is deeply concerned with this "looking," with learning to see the Indian right in front of one's face. It teaches readers to peel back the stereotypes and Euroamerican constructs (robbed, in this poem, of their power through the lowercasing of "tv" and "new england") to reveal how contemporary Abenaki people continue to live their lives, as Abenaki: working in their gardens, fishing in their ponds, even going to work in factories. Untethering her Abenaki identity from the static images of television westerns, from bounded geographic reservation spaces, her father's pedagogical practices—tracing an Abenaki space that traverses the map's state and national borders and *walking* that space with his daughter—teach the young Savageau, and her contemporary readers, to read the northeastern landscape, and thus Indigenous identity, entirely differently. They thus remap New England altogether.

It is no accident that her father uses an atlas—a book—to teach her about her homeland. Abenaki people have a long history of writing about and mapping their land, their language, and their families. In *The Common Pot*, Abenaki literary historian Lisa Brooks delineates a national literary tradition beginning with *awikhiganak*, ancient Abenaki writings on birchbark:

They were used for making messages, remembering songs, and recording stories and communal history. Hunters would commonly post pictographic "message maps" on trees to inform each other of the location of game and the routes they would

travel. . . . *Awikhighanak* conveyed knowledge from one person or place to another across the system of waterways that connected them. (9)

Almost immediately, these pictographic messages turned into notes tacked to trees and English forts. Brooks analyzes one such text, posted on an English fort in 1747, in which the Abenaki writers cannily and caustically congratulate themselves for "this good service that we have done the province" in "killing & taking captive the people & driving them off & firing their fortifications" (14). A similar example appears in Jill Lepore's history of King Philip's War (the event that effectively erased Indigenous people from the New England imaginary): a 1676 note tacked to a tree in Medfield, Massachusetts, has Native people threatening to fight the settlers who have "provoked" them (94). In adapting their own longstanding writing practices to imported genres like petitions, Native people not only talked back to the colonizers but also effectively remapped the land as Indigenous.

Moreover, those birchbark maps and early petitions formed the heart of an enduring Abenaki literary tradition. Brooks points out that, for Abenaki people, the word *awikhighan* "came to encompass books and letters" (xxi). Thus, when the Odanak minister Pierre Paul Osunkhirhine (or Wzokhilain), published his first book in Abenaki in 1830, he appropriately titled it (using an older variant of the spelling) *Wobanaki Kimzowi Awighigan*. His student, Joseph Laurent, a several-time Odanak chief, followed with *New Familiar Abenakis and English Dialogues*, an extensive vocabulary that he hoped would illustrate "that truly admirable language of those Aborigines called Abenakis" (6). As these scholars wrote, they explicitly connected their writing to the older tradition of birchbark *awikhighanak*. Here is Laurent's opening vocabulary list:

<i>Miguen.</i>	A pen.
<i>Awighiganebi.</i>	Some ink.
<i>Pilaskw.</i>	Some paper.
<i>Awighiganal.</i>	Some books. (91)

The use of the word *awighig* to describe ink, books, and, elsewhere, letters (*awighigan*) and the act of writing (*awighozilk*) suggests that for the Abenakis, alphabetic literacy was far from a displacement of traditional modes of communication and cultural transmission. Rather, it was—and is—a direct continuation of those modes: Abenaki people use writing to maintain oral traditions, to expand the circulation of orally based forms of knowledge, and thereby to sustain and even increase the practice of oral transmission. Too often, literary historians tend to assume that literacy supplants orality—or, at sad best, that Native American writing somehow memorializes a lost oral tradition. But Abenaki literature creates powerful relays between the literate and the oral, the alphabetic and the cartographic, past and present.

Brooks demonstrates how this can work in an incisive explication of Joseph Laurent's catalog of place names: she finds that "it reads like a journey map through Wabanaki space," beginning from a city near Odanak—Montreal—and then moving north, west, south, east, and back into the interior, to places that, "[a]lthough not fully documented by historians . . . are well known in Abenaki family traditions as areas where families gathered during the nineteenth century" (276).⁵ I am suggesting that Cheryl Savageau's poems function in much the same way—that they are contemporary *awikhiganak*. In "Trees," for instance, she further explores her father's ways of seeing and teaching:

You taught me the land so well
 that all through my childhood
 I never saw the highway,
 the truckstops, lumberyards,
 the asphalt works,
 but instead saw the hills,
 the trees, the ponds on the south end
 of Quinsigamond that twined
 through the tangled underbrush
 where old cars rusted back to earth,
 and rubber tires made homes for fish.

Driving down the dirt road home,
 it was the trees you saw first,
 all new england a forest.
 I have seen you get out of a car,
 breathe in the sky, the green
 of summer maples, listen for the talk
 of birds and squirrels, the murmur
 of earthworms beneath your feet.
 When you looked toward the house,
 you had to shift focus,
 as if it were something
 difficult to see. (*Dirt Road Home* 17)

This poem constructs a radically Abenaki way of seeing the land and home. From this description alone, a reader could not know that Lake Quinsigamond, in Worcester, Massachusetts, where Savageau grew up, is 772 acres large, with a four-lane divided highway, numerous boating clubs, beaches, and a mall. Until the 1960s, it had two amusement parks, one of which, ironically enough, was called White City. But these human structures, in Savageau's vision, are ultimately ephemeral and unimportant. Quinsigamond appears as an active agent, reclaiming itself, incorporating rusty abandoned vehicles and other human detritus back into its own ecology.

It is perhaps fitting, within an Abenaki literary tradition in which maps, texts, oral tradition, and alphabetic literacy all mutually inform one another, that Savageau is a visual artist as well as a poet. One of her most splendid quilts works as a powerful companion to "Trees" (fig. 1). It is designed so that the vivid figures of white birch draw the eye first, followed by the lush green patches of the background. Only on subsequent looks does the viewer tend to see what many New Englanders today like to represent as a primary and "traditional" visual marker of their landscape—the old stone walls dividing family farms. In an earlier version of this quilt, Savageau attached pieces of the "stone wall" fabric to the quilt's surface using only safety pins, to highlight their secondariness or ephemerality. Made to hang on a wall (and exhibited at the Abbe Museum in Bar Harbor, Maine, from

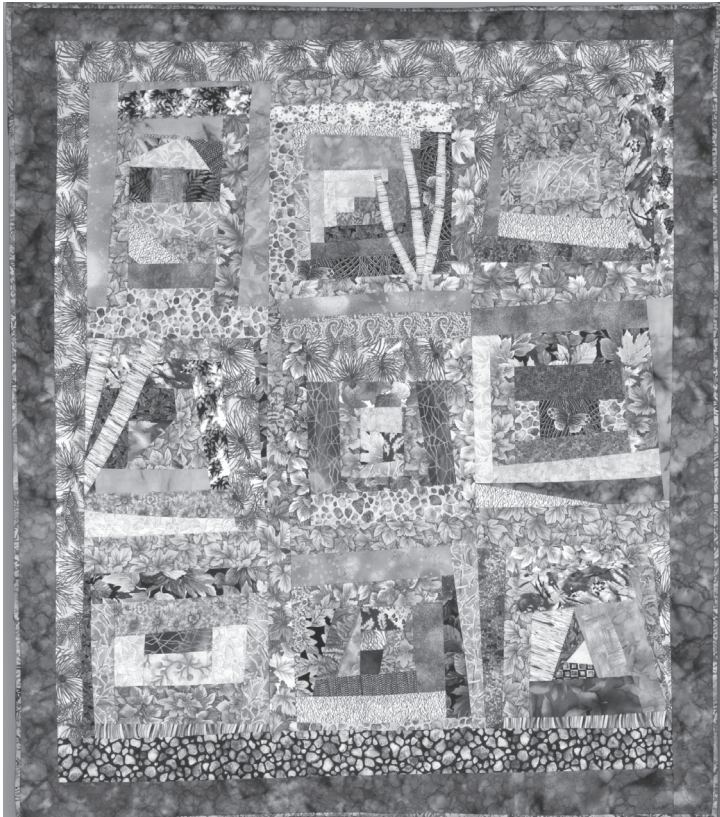


Fig. 1. *The Illusion of Ownership* by Cheryl Savageau, Birchbark Studio. Savageau's quilts can also be seen at <http://www.neculture.org/exhibits/savageau.html>.

2009–2010), the quilt functions not unlike an old pictographic map or petition, reclaiming the representation of the Northeast from an Abenaki perspective.

THE WATERWAYS THAT CONNECT THEM:
MAPPING PLACE

In New Hampshire, where Cheryl Savageau and many other Abenaki people have lived in recent years, tourist trails teem with memorials

to the "vanished" race, from the placard atop Mt. Chocorua that celebrates the apocryphal chief who plunged to his death while cursing The White Man, to the grisly statue of Hannah Dustan in the Merrimack River, which has her holding up the scalps of her Abenaki captors.⁶ The Kancamagus Highway, much beloved by visitors who drive through the state to admire the October foliage, is named for the famous Penacook chief who, it is said, worked nobly to prevent conflicts between white settlers and Native inhabitants, until he and his people were finally forced to withdraw. But in "Swift River—Kancamagus," Savageau challenges the story of an Abenaki exodus:

we pull off the road
 to this place
 where in summer
 swimmers
 loll on the rocks
 like otters
 grandmothers
 and grandbabies
 wade in the icy
 shallows where
 sand has been pounded
 soft and teenagers
 dive into deeper
 pools and come
 out shining
 beaded with water

today it is just us
 and we walk out
 over the boulders
 find one mid-river
 and sit, back-to-back

we have just driven
 down the Kancamagus
 from the high spot
 that separates

the watersheds
 one flowing east,
 the other west and south
 the directions of her
 people and mine

we laugh to realize
 she is facing west
 I am facing east
 we've done this without
 thinking
 someday someone will
 find two women in rock
 back to back
 on this mountain
 facing sunset, facing dawn (*Mother/Land* 22–23)

The image of two women preserved in stone expresses quiet confidence in Abenaki persistence. No wooden memorial, they laugh at this vignette, underscoring the naturalness of their action (“we’ve done this without / thinking”), as well as its joyful futurity (“without / thinking / someday someone will / find” them). This poem holds together—in deep relation at one moment in time and in one space—the speaker, her companion, their ancestors, and their successors. Like the river itself, the poem provides a profoundly Indigenous place where Abenaki people come together to connect with their pasts, with their futures, with each other, and with others (those “shining” and “beaded” generations who may or may not be Abenaki as well).

Swift River, like Lake Quinsigamond in “Trees,” appears as an active agent in this poem, restoring and cleansing. It is important to remember that a primary function of *awikhiganak* is, as Brooks says, to map that “system of waterways that connect[s]” Abenaki people and places. Savageau’s literary forebears showed the same concern for writing and mapping these routes. Henry Lorne Masta, like Joseph Laurent a chief from Odanak, is one example. His 1932 *Abenaki Indian Legends, Grammar and Place Names*, set up as a

series of dialogues, turns heavily on discussions of the meanings of place names, as in the following exchange:

WANA: My friend M8ladakw as you are habitually traveling here and there you are perhaps well acquainted with Koatekwok?

MOL: Koatekwok is the river which is called Coaticook by the Whites. I indeed know it well. It has its source in Vermont and falls into our river Alsigontekwok (St. Francis River). There are many rapids and falls in its course beginning at about one mile from the city of the same name.

WANA: But why was it called Koatekwok?

MOL: Because there must have been a large quantity of pine trees there and there are some even now. (21)

Indigenous place names, as anthropologist Keith Basso has observed, are often much more than mere references for particular locales: they preserve the actual speech of the ancestors, and they recall entire narratives about the ancestors' initial responses to land as well as about how the land has changed. In Masta's dialogue, the Abenaki name *Koatekwok*, or *Pine River*, values the trees that remain there while recalling and retaining the even greater richness of forestation before encroachment and environmental degradation. In like fashion, Savageau's "Swift River" subtly registers the difference between past and present uses of the river (while retaining those past uses—connecting "her / people and mine"). And it situates the speaker and her community in close relation to that space.

Similarly, her "Pemigewasset" traces another river that flows out of New Hampshire's White Mountains, for centuries an important part of Abenaki homeland. "Pemigewasset," or Pemijoasek in Abenaki, means "swift current." In this poem, two Abenaki women stand gazing at the river: "everywhere / water / is moving." Around them, tourists rush frantically by in search of the next "attraction," prompting one of the women to comment, "that's because they / are in a state park, / and we are at the center / of the world" (*Mother/Land* 70). Mapping Indigenous homeland in nonreservation space, poems like this connect Abenaki people resolutely to what has always been theirs.

Masta and Laurent both commented on the differences between Abenaki and non-Native place names; Laurent lamented that Abenaki place names were “so much disfigured by the whites” (205). Abenaki place names hold very special histories; they maintain special relationships with the land. Another Abenaki poet, Carol Willette Bachofner, remembers her eighth-grade epiphany upon being required to memorize the names of Maine’s rivers, lakes, and towns. In language almost identical to that of Joseph Bruchac, she tells of “how my own family was ashamed to be what they are: Abenakis. I know this denial was for survival, to keep away insults and disrespect. . . . We were told that we shouldn’t tell people we had any Indian blood, we should just say we’re French Canadian” (“Don’t Talk” 141). But as she practices place names in school, she begins to hear the Abenaki language of her grandmother: “It sounded wonderful in my ears . . . now I was hearing lots of Abenaki words in the names of the ponds, lakes, rivers, streams, towns: Piscataqua, Androscoggin, Norridgewock, Mosselukumeguntuk, Khatadin” (144). She resolved to learn more, and she integrates Abenaki into her poetry: “One word at a time I keep my people alive, and I honor my grandmother. I honor the land, Ndakinna” (147). In this, she distinctly recalls John Moody’s characterization of the Abenaki nation as something preserved and carried forward independently by individual families.

Savageau, too, takes great pleasure in the rediscovery of Abenaki place names, including “Ndakinna.” Joseph Laurent defined “Kdakinna” as “our earth, our globe,” explaining that the *K* is inclusive of those spoken to, whereas *N* indicates an exclusive “we.” Abenaki people thus use “Ndakinna” politically, to construct and demarcate this land as Abenaki land. In “To Human Skin,” again for her father, Savageau writes:

His heart was green and growing
 as if he’d lived for centuries,
 an old forest tree man
 rooted in the rocky soil
 now called new england,
 as if Gluscabe’s arrow

had just pierced the bark
and turned it to human skin.

Ndakinna, I want to tell him now.
Ndakinna. There is a name
for this place you call in English
the home country. (*Dirt Road Home* 87)

In once again lowercasing "new england," while elevating and repeating "Ndakinna," "To Human Skin" is able to re-place a crucial place name that allows Abenaki people to understand where they came from and where they belong. Abenaki place names (oral) and *awikhiganak* (written maps) were part of a unified system—what Brooks calls "an indigenous writing system that was based on 'cartographic principles'" (12)—a system that, to this day, enables Savageau and her family to see New England from an Abenaki perspective, to map it and understand it for Abenaki purposes.

The word *Ndakinna* is cherished among contemporary Abenaki writers and underscores the connection between modern writing forms and early *awikhiganak*. In his own poem of that title, for instance, Joseph Bruchac emphasizes how "the rivers and streams / link like sinew through a leather garment / sewed strong to hold our people" (*Ndakinna* 48). Carol Bachofner also evokes the term, and images of rivers, in an unpublished poem, "Abazenoda, An Abenaki Basket Tale":

Long before this crooked time, the Owner
Creator walked around
the Dawn Land, the place he made,
Ndakinna. It overflowed
like a river, with good things. Streams tumbled
their banks with fresh water and fish.

Rivers and writing are intimately connected in much Abenaki literature. In a recent e-mail exchange, Savageau observed that the word for ink, *awikhiganebi*, contains the word for water, *nebi*; she added, "I love that, the water of awikhigan (of letters, books, maps). The flow-
ingness of that, rather than the separateness of letters is what strikes

me, and makes me glad.” She has also stressed the importance of the word *nebizon*, which refers both to “the healing waters that come out of the earth” and to “all the currents of knowledge, experience, and power that come to us in our lifetime, including stories.” When she presents her poem “What I Save” (*Dirt Road Home* 61) in public readings, she often begins by saying this entire poem was an effort to express the word *nebizon*, a word she did not yet know when she wrote the poem. It concludes, “I save the water flowing through me / that cannot be contained.”

MOTHER/LAND

Savageau’s newest book, *Mother/Land*, conjoins poems about Indigenous New England and elegies to her French-Canadian mother. In *Dirt Road Home*, and even in some poems in this newest book, her mother sometimes appears oppositionally to Savageau’s Abenaki father. While her father loves and sees the forest, her mother cuts down his beloved trees to make way for azalea bushes; she brushes her daughter’s hair hard, painfully, to free it from burrs, chastising her, “stay out of the woods” (*Mother/Land* 78). She denies the Abenaki side of the family, burying her in-laws, “whose skin was brown, she said, / from age” (*Dirt Road Home* 89).

But this cultural displacement is never simple or unidirectional, not simply a matter of intrafamily racism by “white” against “Indian.” Savageau explores the challenges that French-Canadian women themselves faced in “French Girls are Fast,” which playfully appropriates and inverts stereotypes (*Dirt Road Home* 37–38), and in “Daughters of the King” (*Mother/Land*), which explores the history of the *Filles du Roi*, young women exported from France in the seventeenth century to marry French emigrants:

French men are marrying Indian women. It will have to be stopped. Wives will have to be found. French wives for French men. And so the call goes out to all the unfortunates in France. Women without homes, without family, poor women, women alone. Women with no dowries to buy a husband. Become a

Fille du Roi, a Daughter of the King. Each woman considers her options. . . . Women come from Ile de France, from Normandy, 800 women in ten years . . .

The Daughters of the King become wives. But French and Indian keep marrying. Their descendants will say, "Scratch a Frenchman, find an Indian." (*Mother/Land* 35)

Exhuming these buried histories, Savageau compassionately examines how it comes to be that her family came to cross the lines from racism, to self-loathing, to interethnic cooperation; these are people who have not only fought each other but lived together, loved together, shared blankets, language, and apple pies. And they are people who have struggled, hopelessly it seems, to identify themselves against others, when those "others" have been within them all along. It is thus, perhaps, that Savageau can explore the many layers in her Abenaki grandmother's own hostility to her French daughter-in-law, as she imagines a photograph "my grandmother wants / for the group on her chiffoniere," with the mother cut out:

In this photo never taken
my mother will be imagined away
invisible as the Indians
my grandmother has expunged
from the family memory (*Dirt Road Home* 55)

The trick is that the grandmother has not "expunged" much; the family may stop speaking its language, hide its identity from others, but it remains fundamentally Abenaki.

After her mother's death in 2001, Savageau began writing poems exploring her mother's jewelry box. She reasserts the importance, for herself as an Abenaki woman, of reading her past and kin: "my mother hated books / she left me a library of jewels / I am a reader so I read them" (*Mother/Land* 84). Lovingly, Savageau examines her mother's first diamond, rosary beads, a silver snake-shaped bracelet, the braided ring her father welded from gunmetal while on military duty, a horribly tacky disco-ball necklace her sons lovingly bestowed on her one holiday. In these, Savageau reads and re-reads her mother's quirks, dreams, and loves.

She also reads Indigeneity in them, lovingly incorporating her mother into the Abenaki family. A pink marcasite reveals, alternately, a spider spinning a web and “two women dancing / carrying between them / a drum a pink moon” (*Mother/Land* 69). A small emerald turtle is described in the same language that described Savageau’s father: “its heart is green” (*Mother/Land* 4). The importance of trees in Savageau’s poetry and family life is no mere metaphor; Abenaki creation stories have it that the people came from trees.⁷

Mother, father, daughter, and trees come together in the haunting concrete poem “Amber Necklace”:

inspired by ants
 I tasted the sap
 that oozed in great drops
 from the bark of the pine
 it tasted like its needles smelled
 like winter like mountains or early morning
 too strong for more than just a taste too sticky
 to roll into the ball I wanted to carry in my hands like
 a golden marble. I worried for the tree
 was it hurt? I asked no just leaking my father told me
 it’s made so much extra food
 he told me how even in the deepest winter
 you will not starve in a pine grove
 how there is always food within
 how the sweet globules turned over millions of years
 hard as stone how the insects were caught inside preserved forever
 it is not the insects I want but the sweetness they signify
 I am caught in the sweet amber
 of my mother’s hair
 nourished
 by the light and dark of her
 yes and the sticky
 the too hard to manage
 the I can’t get it
 off my hands

I want it now
 those moments
 of petrified love
 where we first find ourselves
 caught
 before we know
 what will preserve us (*Mother/Land* 3)

This concrete poem palpably reenacts notes tacked to trees, notes made from the skins of trees. It shows the way to the past—to old practices preserved in oral tradition and old forms of life preserved in amber—as well as the way to the future, when the speaker and her kin will be preserved, held in the “sweetness” of familial love. As Savageau has remarked herself in a personal communication, the poem “makes my mother part of Abenaki land—she is a white pine, a healing tree.”

“Mother” and “Land,” the latter with its deep Indigenous history, converge again in one of the collection’s most painful and powerful poems, “Smallpox.” In this poem and “Indian Blood,” about her father’s pride at being a blood donor, Savageau notes that many northeastern Native people have type O blood, a type that gives some resistance to smallpox, those who have type O blood thus representing the survivors. As a child, she did not know this, and recalls,

I have measles
 for the second time
 it is because I am
 Indian I know
 though no one
 will say so
 Indians don’t have
 immunity I read it
 somewhere lot of them
 died will I die
 I ask my mother
 sleep now

she answers
 there is a dark cloth
 over the lamp
 the light still
 hurts my eyes
 I am sleeping in her bed (*Mother/Land* 58)

It would seem that revisiting and reconciling this love for her mother gives Savageau more freedom to explore the painful Indigenous past of New England, even more so than in *Dirt Road Home*. “Smallpox” explores all facets of the story, from colonialism to Abenaki survival:

x.

It is after
 the bostoniak
 doctors learn
 to inoculate
 it is after
 the bostoniak
 doctors learn
 to vaccinate
 it is after
 they know how
 to prevent it
 that they give
 the blankets
 that will cause it

.....

xii.

some of us
 don't die
 some of us
 don't
 some of us
 don't die (*Mother/Land* 71)

Like an *awikhigan* tacked to an English fort, the present-tense poem speaks powerfully to the failed colonial experiment. It challenges the historical attempt at genocide as well as the historiographic erasure. Finishing with the collective pronoun, Savageau ensures that there is no "last of the Abenaki" to be read here.

My essay has been—can only be—a tentative foray into a critical conversation about Cheryl Savageau's poetry. Her work is far richer than I have been able to suggest here; she writes of a wide range of topics (Barbie, working-class life, two-spirit erotica) and from a wide range of subject positions (Abenaki, French-Canadian, feminist, daughter, sister) that make her work appealing, I have found, to a wide range of university students. Further, Savageau understands all these positions not as "hybrid" but as gracefully accommodated by her Abenaki identity. She and Lisa Brooks playfully call this accommodation "Wab-ification"—that is, "made Wabanaki," after the Wabanaki Confederacy, of which the Abenaki are a key constituent.

Like Muscogee scholar Craig Womack, whose groundbreaking book *Red on Red* called for critics to read Native American literature with an eye to how that literature can serve Indigenous sovereignty, Savageau and many other Abenaki writers seem themselves as explicitly engaged in a project of nation-building. A further critical conversation therefore needs to begin on Abenaki literary tradition. There are many more Abenaki writers than I have been able to discuss here, all of whom could be read for their relation to the tradition of *awikhigan*, as well as to other Abenaki national traditions and a variety of literary traditions. Other contemporary poets include Suzanne Rancourt, whose *Billboard in the Clouds* also traces the migratory movements of Abenaki people, this time through western Maine, and Abena Songbird, who writes of

this land
 unlike a map
 is not stagnant unmoving
 not fixed flat on a page
 a frozen terrain
 new rivers may be
 carved daily (54)

Abenaki people have written in many other genres, as well. Robert Tahamont, who graduated from the Carlisle School in 1911, wrote several short pieces for the *Carlisle Arrow*. Numerous Abenaki people today are writing (and rewriting and unwriting) history, including Trudie Ann Parker, Frederick Matthew Wiseman, and Tsonakwa. In addition to her own historical writings, Marge Bruchac has written a one-woman play, “Molly Has Her Say,” and Chrestien Charlebois has also begun experimenting with drama. All of this activity does appear to fulfill Tsonakwa’s prophecy:

Our people have been like a great Bear sleeping in winter. Our old ways, our images and traditions have been locked in dim dreams beneath the winter snow. Even in that long deathly sleep, the ancient power of that dormant Bear survived, slowly now awakening to the warmth of the waxing sun of a new springtime in ancient Great Aben. Soon, the bear will come joyfully dancing out of the Earth and all the people will follow. (109)

NOTES

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1. An exception is Ron Welburn’s excellent chapter on Bruchac in *Roanoke and Wampum*.

2. In June 2007 the Bureau of Indian Affairs concluded that the Abenakis had failed to demonstrate to the bureau’s satisfaction that they have existed continuously as a community with political authority. For a lucid introduction to (and compelling critique of) the United States’ legislation of Native American identities, from blood quantum to federal recognition requirements, read Cherokee sociologist Eva Garrouette’s *Real Indians*.

3. For more on the Pequot massacre at Mystic and the Treaty of Hartford, see Amy Den Ouden, *Beyond Conquest*.

4. See Nancy Gallagher, *Breeding Better Vermonters*.

5. Wabanaki is the name of the confederacy (including the Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, Mi’kmaq, and Maliseet) to which the Abenaki belong.

6. Hannah Dustan's story, written by Cotton Mather, can be found in *Puritans among the Indians*, edited by Alden Vaughan and Edward Clark.

7. Savageau, *Mother/Land*, n. 1. Carol Bachofner's "Abazanoda" also tells of the Creator shooting an "arrow straight into the belly / of the brown ash" to produce human beings.

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North America as Contact Zone

Native American Literary Nationalism
and the Cross-Cultural Dilemma

CHRISTOPHER TAYLOR

In Native American literary studies today there is a gap between the variety of criticism being produced and the metacritical debate about what Native literary criticism should look like. A review of recent issues of *Studies in American Indian Literatures*, for example, will discover a wide variety of approaches, some relating literary works to tribally specific contexts, others demonstrating the utility of pan-Indian or pan-Indigenous approaches, and others suggesting a variety of ways in which Native literatures might be simultaneously related to both Native and non-Native contexts—or, indeed, suggesting that these contexts are themselves deeply connected. All of these approaches are, of course, joined by still other modes of criticism that make no overt claim about the relationship between a text and the cultures that produced it. At the same time, however, the metacritical debate about what Native literary study *should* look like has become polarized between theorists favoring an inward-facing nationalism and those insisting on an outward-facing cosmopolitanism. My aim in this article is to survey this polarization of the theoretical debate and, in so doing, to suggest a route toward a middle ground. Finding a theoretical justification for such a middle ground will help to provide a firmer grounding for criticism that sees modern Native and non-Native cultures as both distinguishable and historically entangled and that therefore rejects the unnecessary polarity of much of the metacritical debate in recent years. As I suggest through a reading of Sherman Alexie's *Reservation Blues* (1995), a critical approach that sees North America as a field of overlapping sovereignties rep-

resents the best method of connecting Native American literary texts to the cultural contexts from which they emerge.

In some respects, the state of Native American literary theory today can be traced back to the identity politics of the early 1990s. In his 1992 presidential address to the Mid-America American Studies Association (later published in *American Studies*), Daniel Littlefield Jr. offered a tentative but largely positive evaluation of what he saw as a variety of movements seeking to restrict outside access to Native American cultural artifacts and to promote the training of Indigenous scholars (Littlefield 99). For Littlefield, this burgeoning nationalism posed obstacles for those studying Native cultures, but it also signaled a growth in the vitality of scholarship on and by Native peoples. In the following year's volume of *American Studies*, Arnold Krupat responded to Littlefield, denouncing most restrictions on free inquiry and arguing that a scholar's race and ethnicity have no bearing on the quality of her work. In prose that is at times quite heated, Krupat insists that Littlefield's division of those studying Native literature into Native and non-Native groups represents an unnecessary and potentially harmful distraction from the ultimate goal of producing insightful work.

Much of Littlefield and Krupat's exchange focuses on the use of the pronouns *we*, *us*, and *them*, and to this extent the debate seems somewhat dated, marked by the identity politics of its time. This is not to suggest that the issues of race, identity, and culture they raise have been solved. However, in the years since this exchange was published, the terms of the debate have shifted from identity to methodology. The metacritical debate in Native American literary studies today does not focus so much on *who* is doing the studying as on the methods and skills that person brings to the study. Thus, for example, a Native American literary nationalist like Craig Womack is unlikely to declare that only Creek people should be allowed to study Creek culture; he is likely, however, to argue that a person studying Creek culture should take the time to learn the Creek language, and this requirement may impose a *de facto* barrier to non-Creek participation in Creek literature. Nonetheless, the emphasis in the debate has shifted away from identity and toward methods.

These methodological disputes are apparent in several recent attempts to map the field of Native American literary criticism. In *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism* (1999), Womack divides Native literary criticism into two categories: nationalists, who privilege the tribal contexts in which Native literature is produced, and hybridists, who use poststructuralist theory to question the stability and integrity of tribal identities. For Womack, the latter category is complicit with imperialism insofar as it denies the continuity and coherence of Native communities. In *Red Matters* (2002), Krupat complicates and reverses Womack's organizing principles. For Krupat, current criticism is divided between three perspectives: "nationalist, indigenist, and cosmopolitan. The nationalist and indigenist positions sometimes overlap, and both nationalists and indigenists tend to see themselves as apart from and in opposition to the cosmopolitan" (1). While both Womack and Krupat acknowledge the need for a variety of criticisms, Krupat favors cosmopolitanism over Womack's nationalism. In *Toward a Native American Critical Theory* (2003), Elvira Pulitano leans further away from Womack's nationalism, positing a poststructuralist anti-essentialism as the ideal form of Native American criticism and taking Womack to task for what she sees as his naturalizing of racial categories (2). Consequently she creates something of a linear ranking system in which a critic's quality is assessed by his or her anti-essentialism (12–15). Womack found this insistence on the relevance of poststructuralism so offensive that he included a ninety-page rebuttal in his 2005 anthology, *American Indian Literary Nationalism*, and continues this attack on Pulitano at various points throughout his contributions to *Reasoning Together* (2008).

At the root of each of these organizing systems is a basically metacritical question: should the critic be concerned with the relationship between Native American culture and the settler culture, or should the critic focus on issues internal to First Nations people? As Sean Teuton puts it in a 2006 review article, "Whether one views this concern with [intercultural] relationship as a necessary scholarly pursuit or as a distraction from more pressing issues facing Indian people and their literature" likely determines the crit-

ic's orientation (152). For Womack, scholars' weak understanding of Native languages and tribal cultures necessitates an urgent turn inward toward study of individual First Nations and their histories. For Krupat and Pulitano, on the other hand, the dangers of nationalism and essentialism should push critics to develop better models of cosmopolitanism, hybridity, and multiculturalism. Thus the field can be broadly divided into two groups: those looking outward and trying to establish an understanding of how Native cultures interact with non-Native cultures and those looking inward, establishing the relationship between Native literatures and the tribal contexts from which they emerge.

In his most recent work, Krupat has moved toward acknowledging the validity of nationalist critics' aims. In a 2007 article published in *Critical Inquiry*, he describes the film *Atanarjuat* as "quite uncompromisingly Inuit: a film in Inuktitut that, as I've said, is most immediately directed to a specific Native community and affirms narratively who these people were and are" (630); though his primary interest is in the film's reception by southern, non-Inuit audiences, this description of the film's goals is very much in keeping with nationalist criticism. In a recent review article, Krupat stops short of overtly agreeing with nationalist criticism, but he does take David Treuer to task for ignoring the important political and cultural issues raised by nationalist critics ("Culturalism" 133–34).

For their part, nationalist critics often mention the need for various forms of criticism in addition to their own. In her essay "At the Gathering Place," Lisa Brooks concludes by inviting all critics "to make their way to the kitchen table, to come to the gathering place" (246). In "A Single Decade: Book-Length Native Literary Criticism between 1986 and 1997," his introduction to *Reasoning Together*, Womack goes out of his way to acknowledge the value of the connections Alan Velie finds between Native and non-Native literatures: "Pointing to these intersections between European literatures and Indian ones is a worthwhile endeavor" (16).

In addition to this willingness to acknowledge the opposite side of the debate, there are, of course, theorists who have always avoided the simple distinction between inward- and outward-facing criti-

cism. Most notable among these is Robert Allen Warrior. In *Tribal Secrets* (1995), Warrior traces a history of Native American intellectual cooperation, dividing the twentieth century into periods in which Native writers worked closely together to build a pan-Indian intellectual community and periods in which this community was lost. Warrior also demonstrates the connections between Native writers and non-Native political and cultural movements, drawing connections between the American Indian Movement and radical black activists and suggesting links between the post-Wounded Knee generation of Native reformers and the Progressive movement. Thus Warrior provides a more complicated model than either Krupat's cosmopolitanism or Womack's nationalism. For Warrior, communities converge and diverge over time, and the careful critic needs to be attentive to the changing historical circumstances of Native literary production.

Despite the strength of Warrior's work, however, his position remains a minority one. At least in the last decade, the tendency among those who theorize about Native literary criticism has been to stake out a strong position for or against some form of literary nationalism. This trend is clear in *SAIL*'s thirtieth-anniversary retrospective, in which Kelli Lyon Johnson's denunciation of hybridity as a European concept with the potential to erase Native voices (307) appears alongside Ron Carpenter's insistence that literary nationalism poses almost insurmountable problems in the classroom and that "Anglo, African, Russian, and European cultures constitute a vital part of any Native American context in the past two centuries" (215). An even clearer example of this split is found in Womack's recent return to an emphasis on a specifically identity-based form of nationalist criticism: "If one uses all Native texts to teach a course on nineteenth-century Indian history . . . the course is going to be different from a nineteenth-century Indian history class in the history department. But shouldn't it be? Isn't that the point? Surely this is a happy separatism" ("Theorizing" 407).

When phrased as a simple choice between outward-facing and inward-facing theorists, the inward-facing, nationalist criticism would seem to be the more promising method. As a matter of his-

torical accuracy, Womack's vision of North America as a place in which First Nations have maintained coherent, knowable cultures and histories strikes me as correct. However destructive European colonialism has been, it remains true that Native nations exist on this continent and that, through the assertion of treaty rights and the negotiation of land claims, they have successfully defended meaningful (if not wholly satisfactory) forms of sovereignty. Moreover, the vast majority of political work by First Nations people has relied on the existence of coherent First Nations insofar as it has turned to treaty rights and land claims as the mechanisms to assert independence from colonizing governments.

Even where the legal standing of First Nations is unclear, the possibility of their recognition has been a source of hope; as Warrior argues, "Sovereignty continues to be powerful because of its potential as much as its reality" ("Organizing" 1689). At the very least, we can safely say that the nation has been a more effective anticolonial tool than have concepts such as hybridity and cosmopolitanism. Thus Womack would seem to be correct when he argues in *Red on Red* that "whatever we might say about the inherent problems concerning what constitutes an Indian viewpoint, we can still reasonably assert that such a viewpoint exists and has been silenced throughout U.S. history" (6). Critics interested in hybridity and cosmopolitanism are often too quick to overlook the existence of First Nations as coherent cultural, political, and legal bodies. In their rush to destabilize identity, they risk erasing First Nations survival in and contributions to North American history.

The notions of hybridity and cosmopolitanism also fail to account for the world described in much contemporary Native American literature. As Teuton argues, very few characters in Native fiction "actually understand themselves as syncretic cultural subjects." Rather, even those characters that are in some sense biologically hybrid are more often described as "Indians with ancestors who intermarried with white settlers" (156). Thus it seems to me that the correct emphasis in Native American literary studies ought to be on the continuing existence of discernibly Indian cultures rather than on their hybridity or contamination.

All of that said, Womack's call for an inward-looking criticism raises issues of its own. If hybridity theory fails to account for First Nations sovereignty and the cultural integrity of Native groups, Womack's nationalism leaves us without an explanation of how national literatures fit together. From *Red on Red*, for example, one gets the impression that a Creek text can be fully understood by analyzing its relationship to Creek culture alone. This is clearly not the case, particularly when one is dealing with novels written in English. More recently, Womack has argued that the nationalist methodology can allow for cross-cultural concerns: "Since sovereignty, by definition, has to do with government-to-government relations, it has everything to do with intersection and exchange between inside and outside worlds" ("Integrity" 111). This is undoubtedly true; U.S. sovereignty does not preclude a relationship with France. However, beyond that basic point, Womack remains extremely vague. It is true that nations relate to other nations; however, these relations vary widely depending on time, place, and the power of the nations involved. Without working out the specific nature of a given cultural interaction, the simple fact that nations do interact with each other is not that helpful in analyzing a particular text.

Given the shortcomings of both inward- and outward-looking Native American literary criticism, then, the task is not simply to pick one to the exclusion of the other. Rather, the goal must be to develop a vision of North American cultural history that maintains the national histories of Native peoples without imagining that these national histories are entirely insular. Among current Native literary theory, there are three models that move in this direction.

One possible model for such a history can be found in Robert Warrior's notion of "intellectual trade routes" (*People* 181). As Warrior describes them, these trade routes "have existed in America since the first pathways linking people emerged. . . . Those pathways became trails and then networks that crisscrossed the single land-mass that is America" (*People* 182). One can imagine a history of the continent's cultures as a history of these intellectual trade routes as they shift and expand with the introduction of new ideas and new messengers. That said, what Warrior's model gains in historical pre-

cision, it loses in breadth. Warrior's work is focused on nonfiction writing, a mode that "allow[s] Native authors to speak more directly to the situations and conditions Native people face than fiction or poetry" (*People* xx–xxi). Warrior also tends to focus on situations in which there are demonstrable personal connections between intellectuals, be they among the members of the Society of American Indians (*Tribal Secrets* 4–44), between Edward Said and himself ("Native Critics" 179–220), or in his call for "a new scholarly association for Native American and Indigenous studies" ("Organizing" 1690). Thus his work does not account for the broader and more amorphous connections between various cultures and the creative writers who are more or less a part of them.

A second model can be found in David Treuer's *Native American Fiction* (2006). Treuer argues that Native novels represent not contemporary cultures as they actually exist but rather a longing for intact Native cultures that no longer exist. The characters in Louise Erdrich's *Love Medicine*, for example, fetishize the Ojibwe language because Ojibwe culture "is an idea that the characters don't possess but want to possess" (65). Treuer does not develop this idea much further. However, his notion that Native American fiction embodies a desire for an intact culture, rather than an intact culture itself, suggests a way of thinking about contemporary Native novels as acts of recovery. In Treuer's view, Native cultures exist today in the form of debris left behind after colonialism passed through; Native writers piece this debris together in the hopes of convincing us that we can still see a complete whole. Thus Treuer suggests a method of thinking about Native fiction that allows for both Native and non-Native influences.

The problem with Treuer's argument is that its approach to cultural origins is entirely negative. He is correct that there is no such thing as a hermetically sealed Native American culture from which a novel could draw all of its source material. However, from that point Treuer leaps to the conclusion that all criticism interested in cultural origins is flawed. Moreover, he can conceive of contemporary Native culture only as absence; his focus is on how much Erdrich owes European literature, but surely there is something left

of Ojibwe culture in her novels. A model that accounts for the full range of cultural influence must acknowledge the destructive power of Euroamerican colonialism without jumping to the conclusion that all Native cultures have been so violently torn asunder as to provide no meaningful context for the production of literature.

Third, and most promising, is Lisa Brooks's notion of "the common pot." Brooks traces the various ways in which Native nations developed "a vast web of familial, political, and geographical relationships" (*Common Pot* xli) across the Northeast, sometimes in opposition to colonialism and sometimes in cautious alliance with it. For example, Brooks shows how early treaties represent "the interaction between indigenous council protocol and European political discourse" rather than the simple imposition of European legal documents on Native oral traditions (*Common Pot* 229). By tracing the cultural histories of treaties and other texts, Brooks shows how Native cultures developed in relation to each other and in relation to European colonization. In so doing, she makes a compelling argument that writing is not an external imposition on Native cultures but a tool adapted by First Nations communities to meet their own needs.

Despite the many strengths of Brooks's work, her examples of cultural negotiation between Native and European sources tend to be restricted to the purely textual: letters, petitions, maps, treaties, and journals. When Brooks describes nontextual aspects of culture, her metaphor of "the common pot" becomes more antagonistic: "The call for Indian union to oppose the destructiveness of colonial division . . . [became] one of the resounding themes of the common pot" (61). The "common pot" here becomes a purely Native worldview under attack from acquisitive European colonists. Euroamericans are seen as capable of destroying the common pot but not of entering into a dialogue with it. This antagonism is undoubtedly historically accurate in many cases. However, it prevents Brooks's model from accounting for the full range of cultural interactions between Native and European worlds. A model is needed that extends Brooks's arguments about Native American textuality into more concrete historical and social realms. In order to develop such a model, we must turn to some recent problems in North Ameri-

can historiography and to the systems of land tenure that determine ownership in North America.

It is generally a good policy to be wary of any absolute distinctions between the cultures of East and West, colonizer and colonized, or any other simple binary division of the world's people. Scholars of North American history, however, have been too quick to make just such distinctions between Native and settler cultures. In its contemporary form, this distinction is often based in an assertion of fundamental differences between Native American and European concepts of land ownership. Often working out of an entirely laudable desire to promote noncapitalist and ecologically responsible economic models, scholars in various fields, as well as popular commentators, assert that precontact Native Americans had no concept of private property, while European culture was entirely beholden to it. For example, in the "The (Post)Colonial Construction of Indian Country" (2006), Eric Cheyfitz argues that the underlying conflict between Euroamerican governments and First Nations is "not only that the Euro-Americas are built on stolen Native land but also that the traditional Native relation to that land has always constituted a set of practices based in values radically opposed to what was emerging in sixteenth-century Europe as a capitalist relation to land" (8). There is, Cheyfitz argues, no Native concept of private property; in traditional Native economies, "land was not marketable or alienable. . . . Native land, therefore, is not what the West understands as property . . . but is as a traditional value the antithesis of property" (9). Thus Cheyfitz establishes a stark opposition between Euroamerican and Native legal regimes, the former based on private, fee-simple land tenure and the latter based on a view of the land as the inalienable property of the community as a whole.

This opposition too easily accepts one particular mode of European land tenure as demonstrative of all European and Euroamerican property relations. In *The American Empire and the Fourth World* (2003), Anthony Hall tells a more nuanced story of the relation between imperial Europe and land tenure. For Hall, European colonization of North America is not a monolithic phenomenon. Rather,

it is marked by a philosophical split within British imperialism that pits revolutionaries and conservatives against each other in a struggle that would define the nature of sovereignty in the “New World.”

On one side of this conflict were the American revolutionaries who would form the first postcolonial nation in 1776. This side of British imperialism accepted a particular form of Enlightenment thought in which “society must be organized to allow maximum latitude to individuals to acquire and hold private property. . . . From the very moment the American people announced to the world their existence in their legendary founding scripture, the right to possess property was treated as one of the most vital expressions of human rights” (122–23). In this American version of sovereignty, the Enlightenment’s antimonarchism and desire for individual freedom would result in the apotheosis of private property as the essential condition of all individual rights. Thus what Hall calls “the American Empire of private property” (106) was marked by a desire to push the boundaries of private property first in a literal westward expansion and then into the realms of animal and human biology, patenting genes and creating new organisms that are owned outright by corporations.

This version of the European relation to property is the one Cheyfitz sees as defining all of European culture. Part of Hall’s project, however, is a reassessment of the conservative sides of both the European Enlightenment and the American Revolution. He traces a second strain in European colonialism stemming from the Royal Proclamation of 1763, which affirmed that aboriginal title existed and that the terms of its extinguishment or continuance needed to be negotiated through the British Crown. In contrast to the American revolutionary vision of individual property rights, the Royal Proclamation retained all land for the Crown and insisted that its use be negotiated between the British monarch and aboriginal nations. The Royal Proclamation is not an unambiguous affirmation of the dignity of First Nations. However, it insists on the need to make treaties with Native nations, allowing the possibility of different, negotiated versions of sovereignty.

Thus the European Enlightenment bequeathed two versions of

land tenure. On the one hand, the American empire affirms a notion of sovereignty in which the government guarantees the right of citizens to own private property and to sell that property to each other. In this model, the forms sovereignty can take are narrowly circumscribed by the demand that individual property rights define the relationship between citizens and the government. In the second, conservative version of sovereignty, all land is negotiated, in the end, in the name of the Crown. Various entities can assert overlapping versions of sovereignty as long as all parties to the negotiations are willing to allow it. There is no need to assume that individual private property will be the *a priori* condition of all legal frameworks. By introducing these two versions of European land tenure, Hall complicates Cheyfitz's binary opposition of European and Native American legal regimes; the existence of a third vision of land tenure creates the possibility of cross-cultural negotiation.

Hall's rethinking of North American history is in some ways an overly optimistic one. He overemphasizes those occasions on which negotiations between the Crown and First Nations have taken precedence over conquest in order to affirm the hope that such negotiations can lead to peace and justice in the future. For Hall, aboriginal knowledge can be the foundation of antiglobalization activism, and the British Crown's traditional antipathy toward American capitalism provides an opening for this aboriginal activism to find a voice. Hall labels the utopian glimmer he sees from the past and the hope he sees for the future "the Indian Country of Canada":

For much of its history, Canada was perceived, organized, and defended essentially as a vast North American Indian Country. The primary element in this formula was the fur trade, one of the few vehicles of interaction that fostered some degree of cooperation, alliance, and reciprocity between Indigenous peoples and European newcomers—rather than the more usual cycles of conquest, dispossession, and genocide. (296)

North American history, for Hall, is always rooted in the vast western territory behind the thirteen colonies that the Crown reserved for Indian peoples.

In several respects, Hall's concept of "the Indian Country of Canada" represents a utopian version of Mary Louise Pratt's concept of the "contact zone." Pratt defines "contact zones" as "social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination" (7): "[The contact zone is] the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict" (8). For Pratt, the contact zone cannot be analyzed in terms of fixed structures or static social relations. Rather, "the term 'contact' foregrounds the interactive, improvisational dimensions of imperial encounters so easily ignored or suppressed by accounts of conquest and domination told from the invader's perspective" (8).

Pratt's concept of the contact zone makes three important contributions to writing North American history with an eye to Native American nationalism. First, it allows for a model of cultural interaction that does not erase the existence of one or more cultures in the process; that is, while the contact zone is always structured by relations of power, Pratt's model does not immediately relegate one party to the extreme margins of the usurper's culture. Second, Pratt's model stresses the possibility of negotiation between cultures rather than establishing absolute differences between colonizer and Native. Third, Pratt's definition of contact zone stresses the ongoing nature of cultural negotiation. The contact zone does not disappear when the colonizers declare their conquest complete; colonized people continue to exert their influence on the colonizing culture and to negotiate what compromises they can, given the unequal distribution of power. All three benefits of the contact zone model are present in Hall's conception of North American history as an ongoing negotiation on the border of Indian Country. To this day, every debate about the boundaries of private property or the allocation of natural resources in North America draws on the long tradition of negotiations between colonizer and colonized.

In promoting the utility of the contact zone model as a tool for writing North American cultural history, I am directly contradict-

ing Louis Owens's argument that, contra Pratt, the term *frontier* better suggests Native American political possibilities than does contact zone:

"Frontier" stands . . . in neat opposition to "territory" as territory is imagined and given form by the colonial enterprise of America. Whereas frontier is always unstable, multidirectional, hybridized, characterized by heteroglossia, and indeterminate, territory is clearly mapped, fully imagined as a place of containment, invented to control and subdue dangerous potentialities of imagined Indians. (26)

I take Owens's point that we would not want to imagine North America as a place of fixed borders reifying Euroamerican domination. However, his emphasis on continuous flux suggests a zone that is almost unknowable in any precise historical way. Pratt's contact zone and Hall's Indian Country of Canada, on the other hand, allow for both the ongoing nature of intercultural negotiation and the determination of the concrete historical processes that have led to the current state of North American culture.

Thus Hall and Pratt grant us a way of reconciling Native American nationalist criticism with the realities of North American multiculturalism. By suggesting that North America exists as a zone of negotiation between settler and aboriginal nations, the notions of the contact zone and of the Indian Country of Canada allow us to maintain a sense of the meaningful national/tribal contexts in which Native literature is produced without denying that those tribal contexts are in dialogue with other cultures. Consequently, these models allow us to account more fully for Native American texts without denying the validity of the nationalist vision of North American history.

The addition of a cross-cultural perspective to the nationalist one is necessary for a full account of many Native American novels, but this is especially true of one of the most popular, Sherman Alexie's *Reservation Blues*. *Reservation Blues* is the story of five young Native Americans, three from the Spokane Indian Reservation in Washington and two from the Flathead Indian Reservation in Montana, who

form a rock band, gain a modest amount of fame, and then return to the reservation following a disastrous audition in New York.

Criticism of the novel would undoubtedly benefit from the nationalist criticism Womack advocates. Many of the novel's mystical elements involve a character named Big Mom whose relationship to Spokane national mythology needs to be explicated by someone with a detailed knowledge of that national culture. Native characters in the novel speak with verbal patterns (for example, finishing sentences with the interrogative *enit*) that need to be explained in relationship to Spokane and Flathead languages and to Native dialects of English. A fuller interpretation of the novel would also benefit from a detailed understanding of Spokane music as it relates to rock and roll and from specific knowledge of Spokane sports traditions as they relate to basketball (another central issue in the novel). I am not qualified to deal with any of these issues, and it seems that none of the extant criticism on the novel comes from an author who is. Thus, there is ample evidence here that increased education in tribal languages and tribally specific traditions would add much to contemporary criticism.

A purely nationalist reading of *Reservation Blues*, however, would miss much of the novel's thematic thrust. The novel's epigraphs are by Robert Johnson and Charles Mingus (a blues guitarist and jazz bassist, respectively), and from this point on the novel is largely about negotiating cultural identity in a multicultural North America. Coyote Springs, the rock band at the center of the novel, is formed after its members come into possession of a magical guitar, endowed with special powers by a devil figure called "the Gentleman." Both the guitar and the presence of Robert Johnson in the novel establish links between Native America and African American musical lore. Big Mom claims to have tutored innumerable rock musicians, white and black, and Thomas Builds-the-Fire's father claims that "*Hank Williams is a goddamned Spokane Indian!*" (91). Most importantly, the band's career is largely the story of an unsuccessful attempt to negotiate an Indian identity in an industry run by powerful white men. Thus the novel is a story of identity being challenged in a multicultural world. The characters largely live and

die based on their ability to make accommodations to the needs of a shifting racial landscape.

To overstress cultural hybridity or the inevitable fluidity of identity, however, would be to misread the novel. The Native characters in the novel do not lose their Native identities by venturing into rock music. Rather, rock music seems to go through a process of indigenization as the novel proceeds; Thomas Builds-the-Fire's lyrics turn rock patterns to Native concerns, and the novel's assertion that Indians invented the blues one day before Columbus arrived (157) suggests that rock music has, in fact, become more suited to Native American themes than to white or African American ones. Throughout the novel, the reservation remains a safe place to which characters can return for emotional and spiritual (though not economic) solace, and there is no hint that any character feels any inclination toward assimilating to white culture. Most importantly, the novel's main characters never doubt that there is a coherent Indian identity and that it ought to be affirmed; for example, after imagining the pain that a half-white child will experience, one character declares, "Let's have lots of brown babies. I want my babies to look up and see two brown faces. That's the best thing we can give them, enit?" (284). Whatever we think of the politics of this assertion (and its racialist overtones are troubling), it speaks to the reality of Native nationalisms that need to be accounted for in any reading of Native American literature.

As this last quotation suggests, *Reservation Blues* adds another layer of complexity to the question of cultural relationship, suggesting not only the problems raised by characters that move between white and Native worlds but also those raised by characters that move between different First Nations. For Womack, the literary nationalist ought to elucidate *tribally* specific aspects of a work, not racially specific ones. Thus the Creek poet Alexander Posey is first and foremost a Creek poet, not an Indian poet, and Womack devotes a great deal of time to showing how an understanding of the specifically Creek elements of Posey's poems would not be available to someone with knowledge only of Navajo or Inuit culture. *Reservation Blues*, however, points quite overtly to a pan-Indian politics. The above quotation does not demand that Spokane babies have

Spokane parents, but that Indian babies have Indian parents. (Or, as a student of mine once argued, “brown” may function here to mean simply someone who is not white; in that case the demand would be that minority babies have minority parents.) It is through this pan-Indian politics that *Reservation Blues* makes its most important contributions to current debates in Native literary studies. Because the book combines tribal backgrounds and suggests the existence of a unified Indian identity, it demands that we make the cross-cultural connections that Hall’s history of North America make possible. In order to read *Reservation Blues* in full, we must have a literary strategy that sees North America as a field of overlapping sovereignties, both Native and otherwise, an approach that allows not just for the collision of colonizer and colonized but for the negotiation of Euroamerican, African American, Spokane, and Flathead cultures in one text.

In order to read a novel like *Reservation Blues*, then, a dialogue between cultures must be established without denying the meaningful existence of Native nations. Hall and Pratt grant us a model in which independent nations meet in North America and negotiate cultural settlements within the shared boundaries of the continent. This perspective does not overlook the radical power disparities that structure these negotiations, but it does allow Native people a seat at the bargaining table and accounts for the continued existence of aboriginal national structures.

What the contact zone and the Indian Country of Canada do not answer is Teuton’s original question as to whether focusing on multicultural interactions rather than internal ones is a waste of valuable critical resources. There can, of course, be no clear answer to that question. It probably makes sense for social workers, educators, and others on the front lines of colonial consequences to deal with internal national problems first. Scholars, however, have a slightly different calling. Part of Womack’s argument against hybridity theory is that such theories may have unwelcome political consequences; in their refusal to acknowledge the legitimacy of Native identity, theories of hybridity are complicit with colonialism and thus “the wrong political move” (6). In some ways this stress on political efficacy is not misplaced. Postcolonial and First Nations criticism have always been rooted in a political impulse, and this political edge accounts

for much of their appeal and much of their usefulness as rebuttals to formalist and linguistic modes of criticism. However, it would be a mistake to turn too directly to this impulse, making immediate political demands the sole compass of critical work. Whatever we have learned about the naiveté of searching for Truth, in the end scholarship is ostensibly committed to telling the truth rather than advancing political programs. With this in mind, it makes little sense to demand that scholars focus only on nationalist concerns. If we are to develop a fuller understanding of how Native American literature works, we must account for both the internal, national aspects of Native texts and the multicultural milieu that has affected North American cultures so profoundly. To deny either aspect would be to turn from criticism to politics, losing the interplay between the two that gives force to the best cultural criticism.

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The Reception of Indigenous Life Stories

The Case of *The Days of Augusta*

LINDA WARLEY

In part, this is the story of my long, sometimes fraught, and ultimately stimulating relationship with a book. Sometime in the mid-1990s, I was browsing in the Native-studies section of my local bookstore when I saw, on the very bottom shelf, a slim volume called *The Days of Augusta*. I pulled it out, looked at the front cover, which showed a compelling black-and-white photograph of an elderly Native woman, and saw that this was a life story. I was conducting research on Indigenous life writing (as I still do), so I bought the book, took it home, read it almost immediately and in one sitting, and then I put it aside. I felt that *The Days of Augusta* would be a welcome addition to my library, but I also assumed that I would not write about it.

Why did I shelve *The Days of Augusta*? Because it was one of those “as-told-to” life narratives, undertaken (I assumed) out of anthropological interest, and not a self-authored book, which was the only kind of Indigenous life-writing text I was then interested in studying further. I had learned to be suspicious of this particular kind of book, for it raised so many troubling issues that had to do with a history of Native and non-Native collaborations that are inevitably underwritten by unequal relationships of power. There were so many questions to which I had no ready answers. How close was the book I held in my hands to what the storyteller, Mary Augusta Tappage Evans, actually told or wanted to tell?¹ How heavy-handed was the intervention of the white woman recorder, transcriber, and editor of the story, Jean E. Speare? What editorial and design fea-

tures had the publisher determined? What unexamined assumptions shaped the many photographs included in the book, which were taken by the white photographer Robert Keziere?² This might be a book about Tappage's life, and it certainly records some of her personal experiences, among other topics, but as far as I was concerned in some crucial ways it was not Tappage's book: most of the shaping and making of it had been done by others. The book felt tainted by a publishing industry that serves up this kind of book in order to satisfy a non-Native audience's appetite for romanticized Native Canadiana.

And yet I could not leave the book alone. The following year I pulled it off my shelf and read it again. I was preparing to teach a graduate course on Native literatures in Canada, and I was reviewing books to put on the syllabus. All of a sudden *The Days of Augusta* became a very teachable book. I could use it to raise all of the ethical, political, and aesthetic issues that surround the collecting, transcribing, arranging, editing, and publishing of Indigenous life stories. It would be the problem text that others could be set against.

However, my students (mostly non-Native, but not exclusively) did not respond to the book in the way I had anticipated. Many of them said that they loved *The Days of Augusta*. They had been moved by their encounter with the words and, no doubt, by the visual images of Tappage. They responded to the persona the text presented. They admired her strength and resilience: she had endured residential school, as well as the loss of both her husband and three of her four children. She was clearly a respected elder, and she cared for and educated children, including those not her own. She knew things: how to deliver babies, how to make a fishing net, how to make useful baskets. She had lived through significant events that had shaped the place in which she and her people lived. She seemed wise and kind. She was poor (the photos of her in her home certainly reveal her meager circumstances), but she had great poise and dignity. And she was sometimes ironic and funny. Apart from the content of the book and the persona it presented, we also began to pay attention to Tappage's language, considering, for example, the cadence and rhythm of the narratives, her use of different kinds of

repetition, and the easy way in which stories slipped between genres such as personal story, “how-to” lesson, myth, or history. Several students chose to present seminars or write papers about *The Days of Augusta*. To be sure, our enthusiasm was partly about wanting to believe in the authenticity of the text and in the authenticity of the storyteller, even though we were all self-conscious of falling prey to that particular liberal fantasy. Nevertheless, as a group we responded to a generically diverse, textually complicated, compelling work of literature narrated in the voice of a highly engaging storyteller. The book mattered to us. And this response made me rethink my initial decision not to write about it.

This article emerges, then, out of my more-than-ten-year-long relationship with *The Days of Augusta*. It is about my own initial unease with this particular book and the larger “as-told-to” Indigenous life-story genre to which it belongs. Here I discuss the critical reception of *The Days of Augusta* and its place in Native literary studies, and I consider why it has not yet received much scholarly attention, even by critics who focus on Native life writing. Finally, I offer a close analysis of various aspects of *The Days of Augusta* in order to demonstrate its textual intricacies. Recently Stephanie McKenzie, in her study of Native literary production in Canada in the 1960s and 1970s, conducted a close analysis of one story, “The Holdup.” McKenzie notes that the editor recorded “the repetitious (perhaps oral) quality infused through all of Tappage’s stories, suggestive of an older and highly refined art form” (91). And in a parenthetical remark, she says “it would be worthwhile for a scholar to dedicate undivided attention to Tappage” (92). I have long shared that view. Indeed, it seems to me that literary critics have a particular responsibility to analyze with care and precision books such as *The Days of Augusta*, books that might initially appear to be compromised by the mediating involvement of non-Native editors, photographers, and publishers, for literary critics are best trained to parse the subtleties of language and can situate such books in broader Indigenous literary and intellectual traditions.

That *The Days of Augusta* has been more-or-less overlooked by critics of Native life writing is somewhat puzzling when one con-

siders that its date of publication coincides with the publication of what has become *the* canonical work of Indigenous autobiography in Canada: Maria Campbell's *Halfbreed*. Both were published in 1973, Campbell's book by McClelland and Stewart (one of Canada's largest publishers) and *The Days of Augusta* by Vancouver publisher J. J. Douglas. McKenzie notes that many autobiographical works by Indigenous authors were published in the 1970s, including those by "elders and chiefs" (40). In this period, then, there was interest in (and presumably a market for) autobiographical books by Indigenous people. But while Campbell's book is widely regarded as the breakthrough text that marked the so-called renaissance of Native literature in Canada and has remained in print to this day, Tappage's book and others like it sank out of view.³ The smaller distribution network of a regional publisher is surely one reason, but I suspect that the particular genre to which *The Days of Augusta* belongs, the "as-told-to" autobiography that Arnold Krupat famously described in terms of the "principle of *original bicultural composite composition*" (31), also had something to do with it.⁴ Campbell *wrote* whereas Tappage *spoke*. *Halfbreed* is considered a work of literature, whereas *The Days of Augusta* is more likely seen as a work of ethnographic nonfiction.

These distinctions between the oral and the written, between the literary and the nonliterary, are largely irrelevant to the ways in which Indigenous writers, critics, and readers view works of Native literature, but they have, nevertheless, had lasting impact. Many Indigenous critics have made the point that contemporary writing by Native authors is informed by the tradition of oral storytelling, but more than this, oral storytelling continues to be a significant contemporary literary practice. It is not that the "oral tradition" is part of the past; rather, orally told stories have always been and continue to be a vital art form.⁵ And these include autobiographical life narratives, a point that critics such as Jo-Ann Epineskew and Robert Warrior remind us of. Focusing her attention on the ability of personal narratives to heal the psychological wounds of colonialism both in their authors (through narrating personal experience) and in their readers (through identification with the narrator and

by being implicated in the text as a receiver of the story), Epineskew argues, “Indigenous autobiography goes beyond catharsis. It is an act of imagination that inspires social regeneration by providing eyewitness testimony to historical injustices. As such, it is intensely political” (75). Autobiographies also provide testimonies of Indigenous experiences that define a people and ensure their survival. Autobiography touches the real. It documents what is known, what is experienced, and what is remembered. Warrior argues convincingly that nonfiction, including autobiography, is a central element of a Native intellectual tradition. While scholars have tended to pay greater attention to novels and works of poetry, Warrior aims to shift that focus:

Nonfiction writers have brought us impassioned pleas on behalf of Native peoples, accounts of crucial moments in Native history, profiles of people in contemporary Native communities, and explorations of dysfunctions, like substance abuse, in the Native world. The Native nonfiction tradition, thus, is vibrant, complex, and worthy, in and of itself, of serious critical attention. This tradition of writing is the oldest and most robust type of modern writing that Native people in North America have produced as they have sought literate means through which to engage themselves and others in a discourse of possibilities of a Native future. (xx)

Tappage’s “everyday stories,” as Speare called them in an e-mail interview with me, belong to this nonfictional intellectual and literary tradition. The significance of *The Days of Augusta* was recognized by early readers and reviewers, but over the more than three decades since its original publication, literary scholars have largely not examined its promises nor taken up its challenges. Before I proceed to do just that, here is the story of the conception, creation, and publication of *The Days of Augusta*, as far as I know it.

As readers learn from the preface that Speare wrote at the request of the publisher (Speare, interview by DeHaan), Mary Augusta Tappage was a Shuswap elder from Soda Creek, in the Cariboo region of central British Columbia, where she was born and where she lived

all of her life, from 1888 to 1978.⁶ She was the daughter of Mary Ann Longshem and Christopher (Alex) Tappage. Her maternal grandfather, William Longshem, was the hereditary chief of the Soda Creek Indians. Her paternal grandfather was a Red River Métis who moved west after the Riel Resistance. She was a fluent speaker of Shuswap, a notably difficult language that did not have a written orthography and that was dying out in her own time (though is now undergoing a revival). She was also fluent in spoken and written English, having attended St. Joseph's Mission School, the Catholic Indian residential school at nearby Williams Lake, until the age of thirteen. In 1903 she met and married George Evans, and the two established a small farm. The couple had four children, two boys and two girls; both girls died at birth, and the oldest son died as an adult from a riding accident. Tappage was also predeceased by her husband. She died at the age of ninety, five years after the publication of *The Days of Augusta*.

Tappage probably did not think of herself as an author, but she would certainly have understood herself as a storyteller. In her interview with me, Speare comments: "I am sure Augusta did not even think of having any involvement with her words as belonging in a manuscript. She just loved to tell of her experiences. That was her part. And she had found someone who would listen to them." Presumably, though, Speare was not the only person interested in hearing Tappage's stories. Through stories, elders such as Tappage teach the next generation about their collective past, about traditional knowledge, and about themselves as Indigenous people. They also help people deal with pressures exerted by outside forces. Writing in the context of West Coast tribal traditions, William White and Philip Cook state that "[i]t is the role of the traditionally trained elder to help young people and the community in general cope with change and understand the place of fear as one of many ways to cope with change. The old people, by virtue of their training, are the direct links to the ancestors, particularly in the roles of guiding and comforting" (331). While we do not know much about Tappage's specific training, we can assume that she understood her role in the tribal community to include passing on stories that are important to the people. And given her lineage as the granddaughter of a chief

and her status as a fluent speaker of Shuswap, she likely experienced a heightened sense of responsibility to share her stories. Moreover, we know from Speare's interview with me that "[Augusta] cared for many children in her time, either on the ranches where she found lots of work, or in her own home as foster children," as well as, of course, her own children and grandchildren. Surely there would have been many occasions when she was their storyteller. Certainly Tappage was aware of passing along stories that she herself had been told by others. For example, the first story in the collection, "The Holdup," about a stagecoach heist during the gold rush, a period that had profound impact on Shuswap territory and the people's lives, was told to her by her aunt (11–12), a fact she mentions five times in a story only a few paragraphs long.

Tappage also recognized that she had specific tribal skills and knowledge that others may not have and that she had a responsibility to impart these. She did not put it in quite this way, however; Speare quotes Tappage in the preface:

"What I could never understand, we weren't allowed to speak our languages [in residential school]. If we were heard speaking Shuswap, we were punished. We were made to write on the board one hundred times, 'I will not speak Indian any more.'" Augusta shrugged and gave a little laugh. "And now we are supposed to remember our language and our skills because they are almost lost. Well, they're going to be hard to get back because the new generations are not that interested." (n.p.)

This book can be understood, then, as Tappage taking on that challenge and fulfilling the traditional role as elder and educator perhaps especially *because* "the new generations are not that interested"—or at least they did not appear to be then.

By working with Speare in making *The Days of Augusta*, Tappage also reached a wider audience, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. The genesis of the book was partly motivated by Tappage's desire to record stories and some Shuswap words so that these vital cultural aspects are retained, but it was also, of course, initiated by Speare who was personally interested in Tappage and her stories.

Speare also, crucially, had access to the publishing world. A writer of children's stories, plays, and works of journalism, Speare is also something of a local historian, deeply interested in the people, the places, and the events of the interior regions of British Columbia. According to Elizabeth Furniss in a review of *The Days of Augusta*, Tappage and Speare were "unlikely friends" (147).⁷ As Speare tells the story, the two women met in Williams Lake during Stampede week over a Native-arts display. Speare saw immediately that Tappage was very knowledgeable about the objects displayed. She struck up a conversation with her and eventually asked if she could visit Tappage so that they could talk about Tappage's life. Tappage was very welcoming, and what followed was a series of visits during which Speare tape recorded Tappage's stories and then later transcribed them on a typewriter. She sent a few stories to Vancouver-based publisher Jim Douglas, who "right away he said that he wanted them" (Speare, interview by Warley). In his history of Canadian publishing, Roy MacSkimming notes that Douglas considered *The Days of Augusta* to be his "favourite" of all the books the press produced (227). The photographer, Robert Keziere, became part of the project later. Keziere was hired on the advice of Scott McIntyre, then a silent partner in J. J. Douglas, according to MacSkimming, but who would eventually become co-owner of the publishing company Douglas and McIntyre. Keziere took photographs of Tappage "as she went about her daily routines" (MacSkimming 227). The first edition of *The Days of Augusta* was published by J. J. Douglas in 1973; an American edition, published by Madrona Publishers of Seattle, Washington, came out in 1977; in 1992 Douglas and McIntyre republished the book, but it is now out of print.⁸ In an interview with Cara DeHaan, Speare confirms that Tappage and Speare split the royalties, and upon her death Tappage wanted the money go to her grandchildren. However, in the 1973 first edition, the text copyright is credited to Speare alone, whereas in the 1992 reprint this has been amended, attributing copyright ownership of both the 1973 and the 1992 editions to Augusta Evans and Jean E. Speare. In more enlightened times, Tappage is given more credit as author and copyright holder.⁹

In the interview with DeHaan, Speare emphasizes that she saw Tappage as the author of the book. Yet her silence in the actual published volume (all three editions) about the specific decisions and procedures that informed the recording, transcribing, editing, and publishing of Tappage's stories could easily have been construed by critics as a problematic lack of self-consciousness about the unequal power dynamics that generally exist between a Native storyteller and a white editor, a critique that is familiar in academic circles. Many consider Julie Cruikshank's work to be a paradigm of best practices, for Cruikshank set a new standard for establishing ethically aware and politically respectful research and writing methods in her collaboration with three Yukon women elders. In *Life Lived Like a Story*, Cruikshank carefully details her method of taping, transcribing, and arranging oral stories told to her by the three women (17–20). She explains that each woman was given the opportunity to make changes or corrections to the transcripts. She describes what decisions she made regarding grammar and punctuation (for example, in Athapaskan languages, as in many Indigenous languages, gendered pronouns are irrelevant, but editors often make those distinctions clear for English readers). And she notes that she was instructed by each woman how to arrange the individual narratives in an order that was most correct to them. Moreover, the four authors of *Life Lived Like a Story* share copyright and give all of the royalties earned back to the people in the form of scholarships available to Yukon Indigenous students who wish to study Indigenous oral history at the postsecondary level (xii). Not only was Cruikshank careful to involve the women whose stories she heard in the making of the final text, but she was also careful to situate herself as a researcher. But Cruikshank is a professional anthropologist, professor emerita at the University of British Columbia, whereas Speare is a writer, local historian, and friend. Speare's lack of self-consciousness about the problems with a relationship between a Native informant and a white editor is, to be sure, open to critique. However, hyperawareness of that critique can also distort or diminish the life narrative that is being told.

Scholars who focus on Indigenous life writing have long been

aware of the complicated relationships between the Indigenous person who tells the stories and the non-Indigenous listener who receives and then uses them. Kathleen Mullen Sands, for example, examines her own role in her work with Theodore Rios, a Tohono O'odham man, and she writes thoughtfully about how critics have viewed such relationships. Although she acknowledges that the collecting, editing, and transcribing of Native life narratives can be a continuation of colonialism, she argues that to focus only on the white editor is to ignore the power held by the Native storyteller: "Native narrators resist the conventions and language of Euro-American autobiography. Their Indian voices persist even in the most oppressive collaborative works" (Sands 4).¹⁰ Nevertheless, in the book about her collaboration with Rios that is eventually published, *Telling a Good One*, arguably Sands's detailed discussion of her anxieties about being an "intrusive mediator" (41) overwhelms Rios's stories. She recognizes that she is "sacrificing Ted's narrative to the examination of process" and that her decision to do so is "ethically dubious" (45). One wonders, though, whether Ted Rios is as concerned about the ethical and political problems of the collaborative process as non-Indigenous academics seem to be. Sands herself argued in her earlier essay that "what our emphasis on the collector/editor has not done is adequately focus on the negotiation of text by *two* people in a collaborative partnership" (6). This is an important point. Native life narrators have their own stories to tell, and they tell them in their own way, as Cruikshank and other leading scholars in this field—one thinks of Greg Sarris's work in particular—have written about.

I find the primary and immediate presence of Mary Augusta Tappage Evans in *The Days of Augusta* to be refreshing and powerful. The reader is aware of the presence of Speare in the storytelling moment, but Speare does not overtly intrude. Tappage's words, her voice, her "self" are present and strong, not overshadowed. For the most part, Speare does not gloss or retell the stories that Tappage tells. In a way, her unobtrusive silence gives more respect not just to the storyteller but also to the receiver of those stories. Readers are left to encounter Tappage's words and engage with her in what at least feels like a direct way.

This was certainly how reviewers tended to respond. Although one could hardly claim that *The Days of Augusta* garnered a lot of attention, those who did review the book found it to be an important work, especially for its contribution to Shuswap history and as a significant example of Indigenous oral literature. In the first review (or at least the first that I have been able to find), published in *Books in Canada*, Glennis Zilm characterizes Tappage as a “poet” and notes that Speare “captured Augusta’s lilting phrases” (23). David Watmough, reviewing for *Saturday Night*, was pleasantly surprised by how much he liked the book. Admitting to “a personal loathing of patronizing attitudes by liberal whites towards Canadian Indians, and an indifference towards glossy, coffeetable [*sic*] books,” he writes that he approached *The Days of Augusta* “gingerly.” However, he found the book “charming,” which he qualifies as “in the sense of beguilement over both the text and the illustrations of this book and not in any sense of sticky sentimentality” (38). Watmough gives due attention to the representation of Tappage as a knowledgeable Indigenous woman, an elder, who “in her own way is an historian,” and he notes the “piquant and fresh use of language that the eighty-six-year-old Augusta from the Cariboo Country uses in this rather random collection of personal memories, Indian legends, and reflections on the present” (38). The anonymous reviewer who writes for *The Indian Historian* finds the book “beautiful” and comments that “Augusta’s life comes through bright and shining, her experiences both happy and unhappy are handled with love and respect by the editor” (“An Indian Woman” 51). Bennett Schiff, associate editor of *Smithsonian*, claims that the book “achieves the stature of a contemporary classic of oral literature” and that it presents “A small epic of human dimension” (37). Elizabeth Furniss, reviewing the 1992 edition for the academic journal *Canadian Folklore*, praises Speare’s skill as transcriber and editor: “As a writer and visual artist, Speare displayed a strong aesthetic appreciation for the cadence of Augusta’s narratives as verbal art, a quality that Speare successfully preserved in the written texts” (147). Furniss concludes, “With its republication, *The Days of Augusta* will continue to stand as an important reference for Shuswap history and a testament to the poetics of aboriginal oral narratives” (148).

Notable in the book reviews are the reviewers' attempts to say something about the artistry of Tappage's language and the way in which Speare has managed to capture the particular cadences of her speech. These readers viewed the book not just as a record of history or even simply as an autobiographical work about one woman's life; they considered it to be a work of literature. Yet it is precisely this—the *literariness* of *The Days of Augusta*—that has been mostly forgotten or underplayed in the decades since its initial publication. Instead, the book has been primarily valued either for its anthropological content—a common approach to life narratives by Indigenous people—or for its pedagogical value. For example, in *Maps of Experience*, Andie Diane Palmer references *The Days of Augusta* numerous times as a source of social and historical information. *The Days of Augusta* is also referenced in works of history, specifically British Columbia history: it is a (minor) source text in John Sutton Lutz's *Makúk*, and it is also mentioned in Mary-Ellen Kelm's *Colonizing Bodies*. These scholars are not literary scholars, and, understandably, their approaches to the text are shaped by their own academic disciplines. But what about those scholars of literature who are trained to analyze precisely how and why Tappage's stories are "a testament to aboriginal oral poetics" (Furniss, "Rev." 148) and why one might think of Tappage as a "poet" (Zilm 23)?

There is no question that other literary authors, critics, and anthologists have included *The Days of Augusta* in their treatments of the tradition of Indigenous writing in Canada. Selected stories were chosen by David Day and Marilyn Bowering for the anthology *Many Voices*, published in 1977. Selections were also anthologized in both the first and second editions of *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English* (1992, 1998), edited by Daniel David Moses and Terry Goldie. *The Days of Augusta* appears in the bibliography of Barbara Godard's important early study of Native women's oral texts, *Talking About Ourselves* (1985), though it is not a text Godard chooses to analyze, and Penny Petrone briefly describes the book in her 1990 survey, *Native Literature in Canada*. *The Days of Augusta* appears in several bibliographies, including in an essay about Native children's education (White and Cook) and Gretchen

M. Bataille and Kathleen Mullen Sands's 1984 study of Native women's life narratives, *American Indian Women, Telling Their Lives*. Tappage herself is mentioned in Mona Holmlund and Gail Youngberg's *Inspiring Women* (2003) and also in Gretchen M. Bataille and Laurie Lisa's *Native American Women* (2001). So Tappage and her book have a presence in Native studies, including literary studies. This article, then, is not a recovery project: Tappage and her book are visible. And yet, as McKenzie also suggests, the text invites further study as an aesthetic literary work.

The generic and formal diversity of the text is part of its richness, for there is no distinction made by the storyteller as to which stories are "real" and which are "myth," which are "personal" and which are "communal," which are "poems" and which are "prose." I call it a work of life writing because *every* story that Tappage tells relates to who Tappage is as a Shuswap woman. The stories that might be called by some "folklore" or "myth" are as central to her identity as those that address her personal past or her family relationships.

The structure of the text reinforces this point. There is a vague chronology to the text, with personal stories about Tappage's life experiences moving from childhood to old age. And yet this personal narrative is interspersed throughout with other kinds of narratives, stories about events in the past or stories that are timeless and that belong to the tribal cultural and literary tradition, such as "The Captive Girl" or "The Woman Who Was Prisoner of the Bear." As Speare indicated in an interview with me, she made up titles for the stories, and the publisher determined their order, though apparently they were pretty much ordered and arranged on the page as Speare sent them. The book begins and ends with stories about the upheaval and change that white settlement meant to the Shuswap—"The Holdup" previously mentioned and the final story, "It Never Should Have Happened," which focuses on the violence that ensued when "Those little barrels of whiskey [make] all that trouble, yes" (75).

Tappage's style is to be economical with her words and somewhat indirect in her meaning. She does not dwell on either glorifying the past before colonialism or vilifying white people for their impact (often negative) on the Shuswap and their land. On the contrary,

Tappage's stories, taken as a whole, affirm the survival and resilience of her own identity as a Shuswap woman and demonstrate her ability to adapt to radical social and cultural change. Specific difficulties brought about by colonial structures are addressed, but indirectly. For instance, Tappage's marriage to George Evans resulted in her losing Indian status, as at that time a Native woman who married a non-Native man (Evans also had no status because his Shuswap mother had married a Welshman) became legally "non-Indian" (of course, only in the eyes of the Canadian government). Tappage's children were also, by law, non-Indian, and therefore they were not allowed to attend the Indian residential school. Since there was no other school nearby, Tappage taught her children herself. Perhaps surprisingly, Tappage presents a balanced view of her own time at residential school. "It was fun, once you got used to it," she remarks: "It was nice there at the Mission school. I liked it but I think now I didn't learn enough" (18–19). Such positive statements about a residential school—mitigated though they certainly are by other comments about being punished or not being allowed home very often—are not that unusual in stories told by Native people of Tappage's generation. Indeed, it is important to remember that in the 1970s there was little public discourse in Canada about residential schools; that discourse really began in 1991 with then Assembly of First Nations Grand Chief Phil Fontaine's disclosure of his own experience of abuse at residential school. Subsequently, critics have tended to be more interested in stories that excoriate the residential-school system and all those who participated in it, whereas Tappage's brief accounts are muted in tone and are not entirely focused on the negative.¹¹ She tells what she remembers, and she avoids lecturing her audience. In fact, Tappage's narratives display a quality common to oral stories: the receiver of the story is trusted with the ability to get the point without it having to be explicitly explained. If Tappage says that things were not too bad at the mission school, it is up to the reader to put that together with what she says in a later story, "Thoughts of the Mission School":

When I came home from school I didn't like the way things were. I didn't like what I saw among my people.

So I read. I had books. I had newspapers. My father used to buy the paper—the *Sun* or the *Province*. Yes, he used to get it and make us read. He used to make us read.

He used to make us not to forget what we had learned. He used to make us not to forget how to figure—to figure out his grain when he sells them. (23)

Here, in a few words, Tappage evokes one of the most insidious outcomes of the residential school—the internalized sense of inferiority Native children learned. However, if she “didn’t like the way things were with my people,” in the very next breath she affirms the importance of her father (and, by extension, other older family members and tribal elders) as her teacher. “He used to make us not to forget what we had learned,” which one assumes, would include not forgetting who she is as a Shuswap person. With remarkable economy and nuance, Tappage brings together multiple ambivalent meanings that speak to the complexity of her own life experiences and her interpretation of them.

That storytellers assume that their listeners or readers are smart enough to get the meaning, or that when they need it the meaning will come, is a central tenet of Native literature, oral and written. This is why possible interventions by Speare are easy to spot. One story, “The Big Tree and the Little Tree,” is subtitled “Children’s Story, modernized—a recent version.” The story recounts the life cycle of two evergreen trees in a forest, with the older tree gradually dying and being surpassed by a younger, stronger tree. The allegory is not hard to discern: elders take care of the young until it is time for the young to take care of their elders. Each has a role to play, and each respects the other. The story ends with a somewhat redundant explanation of the moral of the story. This particular story was later published separately as an illustrated children’s book. In *A Broken Flute*, a work in which Native readers review children’s literature that deals with Native people, Pam Martell also finds this explanation to be “unnecessary and a disappointment to me.” She continues:

I read this book to my eight-year-old nephew and nine-year-old niece and stopped reading before the summary lesson.

They got the message just fine. I would suggest reading this book in this manner in situations where you want the listeners to think though the wonderful values portrayed in the book itself. I wonder if Mary Augusta Tappage chose to tell the story with the lesson so defined, or if Jean Speare modified the telling to conform to a more non-native style. (400)

Careful and informed readers of works of Native literature are attentive to such differences between “a more non-native style” and a Native one. Analyzing an edited book such as *The Days of Augusta* requires this kind of careful scrutiny, but the presence of the non-Native listener-editor and the editing decisions he or she potentially made become part of the work of closely analyzing the text; they do not automatically negate or diminish its value.

We are reminded again that these books are a collaborative act. Tappage sometimes seems to be directly addressing Speare or answering a specific question. One of several examples occurs in “The Sick Woman,” where Tappage offers (in part) an explanation of how “the old folks used to make their fire between two rocks with one of those black flints. They used to turn it like that, yes, between their hands; turn it like that and it would fire” (13). In this example, we can “see” Tappage making the gesture of how one would turn the flint, and we can “hear” Speare making some comment or asking a question that elicited the explanation in the first place. On another occasion, Tappage directly addresses Speare as “you.” “The Captive Girl” begins thus: “It was a long time ago, but they used to steal women then. Yes, I’ll tell you about it. I’ll tell you about one woman who was taken. My grandmother told me this and it’s true” (39). Again, this technique of directly addressing the listener is quite common in oral storytelling, and it functions to implicate the listener (and reader) in the story. We are literally situated in the story, along with Speare, and we are invited to receive and reflect on what follows.

Speare comments that Tappage was very keen to tell her stories. Tappage took over the microphone once she had been shown how it worked, and she seems to have been very much in control of the numerous storytelling occasions. Important in terms of an oral storytelling event, we also get some sense of the setting and

context—often in Tappage’s kitchen but also outside—and we can see her body in the many photographs that intersperse the texts.¹² While Speare admitted in her interviews with DeHaan and me that she might have interjected a question here or there or might have deleted some words irrelevant to the story underway, Speare also states in her interview with DeHaan that she “kept pretty much to the cadence that she [Tappage] had. People said to me how did you rewrite it? I said, ‘well, to tell you the truth, I didn’t have to rewrite it.’ There was very little that I rewrote. It was exactly as it came off the page. It was amazing.” Although it is possible to see where the editor did in fact intervene—as I am suggesting—Speare asserts that “nowhere did I or the publisher make *any* changes to her grammar or syntax. Her repetition of several phrases, even in one piece, were not deleted since that repetition gave strength to her memories, at the same time adding emphasis.” In her interview with me, Speare also comments on Tappage’s voice: “She had a strange clucking noise that she made almost continuously at the back of her throat—a noise that is evident in their [Shuswap people’s?] speech to a lesser degree—sort of a ‘klu-klu-klu’ to some words.”

Rendering the idiosyncrasies of the sound of a specific voice would be very difficult in a written text; representing the rhythm and cadence of storytelling, however, can be achieved by manipulating spacing, layout, and format. Some stories, especially longer ones, are written as blocks of narrative prose, while others are written in a form that resembles lyric poetry. In her interview with me, Speare offers more information about her choice of form:

I felt that the words I used for the “poetry” lent themselves to that medium because they seemed to belong intrinsically to Augusta herself; they were of her experiences; they were from her heart. On the other hand, the words spoken for the stories, (nine of them), were delivered as if she were telling “long-ago, handed-down” stories to children around a campfire, stories to which she had listened as her elders told them to her, and so did not have the same very personal meaning to her.

Although it is rather misleading to call those more personal stories “poems,” there is something of the subjective voice of the lyric in

them. For example, stories that recount the deaths of her husband and her son, or the stories about the removal of a foster child from her care, are narrated briefly and in a contemplative tone.

In a story about Tappage's work as a midwife, the use of line breaks, a stanzalike structure, and repetition evoke what it feels like to attend a birth. Speed of movement, a feeling of repressed fear, and quick decision making are all conveyed:

I made up my mind that if she needs help,
I will help her. I'm not scared.
You've got to be awfully quick. There's two lives there.
The baby and the mother.

Yes, two lives, and what you got to do it with
Those days? You've got to be quick
To cut the cord, keep the bed clean, take out
The afterbirth, discard it, burn it.

Yes, you've got to be quick, fix the baby,
Tie its navel so it will not bleed
To death—cut it about that long.
When it heals there's nothing left, you know. (28)

In these and other stories, Speare employs a transcription technique that others have employed before and after her. To give just two recent examples, it is similar to the method Wendy Wickwire employed in transcribing and editing Okanagan storyteller Harry Robinson's stories (now in three volumes). And it is a strategy employed also by Indigenous transcribers of others' orally told stories. Métis author Maria Campbell uses short line lengths and manipulates textual spaces—as well as using nonstandard English and a language that she refers to as “the dialect and rhythm of my village and my father's generation” (2)—in *Stories of the Road Allowance People*. Interestingly, Campbell refers to herself as “translator” of the stories told to her by older Métis men, and this is perhaps the best way to see Speare's role as well. Each act of transcription of oral story to written text is necessarily also an act of translation.

In the DeHaan interview, Speare reveals that she sometimes added

additional lines of repetition for emphasis. One example is in “The Lillooets,” where the line “up by Barkerville” completes six of the seven sections and the seventh ends “but they go up by Barkerville.” The story is about the Lillooet Indians travelling north to work the gold fields, and Barkerville was at the center of the gold rush. Tappage remembers their passing through her territory in this way:

That was a big cloud of dust ‘way down
to the south in the spring, yes.
It was the Lillooet Indians coming north,
coming north to the goldfields
up by Barkerville.

They go north into that country to work,
to work all the time, hard,
horses and wagons, women and children,
and dogs, hiyu dogs, all going
up by Barkerville. (15)

The way Tappage tells it, the emphasis is on three elements: the massiveness of the Lillooet migration to Barkerville (metaphorically represented as “a big cloud of dust”); the fact that they worked very hard from spring to fall and were successful (“lots of money, lots of fish”); and that they are a different people who speak a different language. While “Barkerville” is central, the fact that the story emphasizes the movement *north* is likely more important to Tappage and her Shuswap listeners. The Lillooets occupy a different part of the territory; their movement into the mountainous areas of the region is opportunistic and unusual. Contact between the Shuswap and Lillooets would have been hindered by language differences. I would guess that Tappage remembers and narrates this story because it was unusual; it marked a change in the way life had always been lived by these two peoples. The repetition that Speare adds seems almost forced, yet it is likely that Tappage did mention the phrase “up by Barkerville” more than once, since the *location* of specific stories in time and place is so central to Indigenous ways of recalling and transmitting historical knowledge. Does Speare’s addition of lines diminish the importance of the story? No. It just makes the reader

aware of how subtle and meaningful the use of repetition can be in oral storytelling. When it is not subtle, we can ask questions about editorial alterations.

Spere also recalls in the interview with DeHaan that she “stylized that last verse” of the first section in “The Basket.” The story is worth quoting at length:

I.

And that’s how they make a basket—

With saskatoon wood,
Spruce roots
And thin cherry bark.

The saskatoon wood makes it strong.
The spruce roots make the weave.
The cherry bark is design

The saskatoon,
The spruce
And the chokecherry tree.

II.

It’s made of birchbark, this one.
We use them for picking berries.
They’re good for berry baskets.

First we cut the birchbark from the tree.
Don’t just take any kind.
By the feel of it, yes, how thick—
You’ve got to pick it out.

Don’t just cut it anyway.
You cut it toward the sun this way.
And old man told me “cut toward the sun.”

See the dark brown bark lines how short they are.
Is good. The long lines tear.
The short are strong, just as God made them.

Don't just sew with anything.
 Use the spruce root where it strings out
 Just below the ground.

Take it up with gloves
 and peel them and split them—
 It's easy when the sap is running.

And make it strong with saskatoon wood
 Bent around the brim.
 And put a handle on of buckskin.

And there you have a berry basket—
 A birchbark berry basket,
 Layer on layer, just as God made it. (65–66)

While Speare added the repetition to provide a tidy, lilting cadence to the end of the first section, other examples of repetition and structured cadence are more subtle and, ultimately, more meaningful. For instance, Speare's intervention puts the focus on the three materials—saskatoon wood, spruce root, and chokecherry bark. In this first section, there is also repetition of sentence structure, with half of the lines beginning with the indefinite article *the* followed by a noun that names the trees that are the natural resource from which baskets are made. In English rhetoric we would call this anaphora. The effect is of accumulation: one needs these three things to make a basket. The anaphoric repetition also acts as a mnemonic device, helping the listener to remember which specific woods and roots are important. Notice too the use of present-tense verbs, indeed the same verb: “that’s how they *make* a basket,” “The saskatoon wood *makes* it strong,” “The spruce roots *make* the weave.” As this is a “how-to” story through which Tappage passes on a particular skill, it follows that the emphasis is on *making*. But, importantly, her use of present-tense verbs also suggests that this is not a lost art from the past but an explanation of a material practice that is still relevant.

The second section reinforces this main theme—our people still make these baskets, and here is how you do it—by giving more

detailed instructions and by maintaining the use of present-tense verbs: “First we *cut*,” “You *cut* it toward the sun this way,” “Use the spruce root,” and so on. Notice too the shift in pronouns from “we” to “you,” and even the use of the imperative mood in the line “Use the spruce root.” The old people made baskets this way in the past, but *you*—listener—can and perhaps should make baskets this way today. This story functions as so many stories do in Indigenous cultures: Tappage passes on to the next generation knowledge that an elder—in this case, “an old man”—passed on to her. The story connects the past with the present; it also bridges to the future—young people reading or hearing this story will also acquire the knowledge of how to make a functional and beautiful item with the resources provided by the creator—or, as Tappage puts it, “just as God made it.” We can imagine that while she is telling the story, Tappage is holding a basket, demonstrating its features, explaining why she cuts the bark in a certain way. The object, then, is almost visually present in the story as well. And while Speare is the immediate audience for the story, the younger generation of Shuswap people is likely its intended audience, the very generation whom Tappage fears in the 1970s are “not that interested.” The next generation may even adapt the old one’s methods or materials. The brief story that follows “The Basket” is called “Mend a Basket.” It tells of Tappage’s grandson Sammy using the basket to pick berries. When the buckskin handle breaks, *he* mends it with a wire one: “He said ‘That won’t break now, Granny.’” / “I said, ‘No, that will be good’” (66). Wire replaces buckskin. Continuity and change. Resilience and adaptation. Ultimately this is the overall theme of *The Days of Augusta*.

Editorial changes were certainly made to this book, but to make this the governing fact of *The Days of Augusta* would be to undervalue what is there: the voice of Mary Augusta Tappage Evans, the themes of her stories, the lessons to be learned from them, and the delight to be experienced from listening to or reading them. Tappage is a storyteller, an artist, and an intellectual, and it is my view that *The Days of Augusta* is precisely the kind of text that Robert Warrior would place at the heart of a Native literary tradition. More precisely, it is a foundational text of a Shuswap/Secwepemc literary

tradition. Mary Augusta Tappage Evans is the literary ancestor of the Shuswap/Secwepemc students who contributed to the anthology *Coyote U* based on a project undertaken at the Secwepemc Education Institute, a postsecondary education institute that is a partnership between the Secwepemc Cultural Education Society and Simon Fraser University (see Murphy, Nicholas, and Ignace). She is the literary progenitor of contemporary Shuswap/Secwepemc poets such as Garry Gottfriedson. *The Days of Augusta*, including the almost poetic use of form, structure, and line, provides a model (if unacknowledged) for Shuswap scholar Meeka Morgan when she records and analyzes for her master's thesis stories told to her by people in her community. Rather than being peripheral to a literary corpus that tends to prefer works of fiction, drama, and poetry, works of Indigenous life writing are central.

Critics of Indigenous literatures too often ignore or undervalue works of life writing, especially texts that have been edited and shaped by non-Indigenous editors, fearing, as I certainly did, that the interference of the editor contaminates the text and thereby disqualifies it from serious study. What I hope to have shown is that the editing, even when not explicitly discussed by the editor, can be discerned and critiqued. Yet the editing is not the most important aspect of the text; the stories the narrator tells are. In *The Days of Augusta*, Tappage's words are powerful, intelligent, sophisticated, and often beautiful. The book is replete with stories that matter. So that others, especially Secwepemc youth, can experience this important text, one can only hope that it will soon be republished.

NOTES

1. Evans is Mary Augusta Tappage's married name. Most critics and reviewers use her family name, Tappage. And many refer to her by her first name, Augusta. I will refer to her as Tappage throughout.

2. Through research undertaken by Cara DeHaan (to whom I am very grateful), many of these questions have now been answered. DeHaan conducted telephone interviews with both Jean E. Speare (the editor) and Robert Keziere (the photographer), and I conducted a further e-mail interview with Speare. The precise nature of the collaboration between Speare,

Keziere, and Tappage was not written about in any edition of *The Days of Augusta*, so it is only through interviews conducted many decades later that we can know some of the details. Even so, it is only Speare and Keziere whom we can ask, as Tappage passed on in 1978.

3. Also in 1973, New Press in Toronto published another work of Indigenous autobiography: Jane Willis's *Geniesh: An Indian Girlhood*. Maria Campbell's *Halfbreed* remains in print, although not with McClelland and Stewart but with Halifax-based Goodread, "a low-priced reprint series of Canadian biographies in paperback" (MacSkimming 212).

4. Krupat makes a distinction between "autobiographies-by-Indians" (i.e., written by them alone) and "Indian autobiographies" (i.e., life narratives produced with the involvement of a white person). I had learned to make this distinction as well, partly through reading Krupat's study. Later scholarship, however, especially that produced by Indigenous critics (see, e.g., Epineskew), has problematized the implicit hierarchy of authenticity that such a distinction sets up.

5. See, for example, Greg Young-Ing for a clear statement of this point (240).

6. *Shuswap* is an anglicized version of the correct tribal name *Secwepemc*; I retain it here because that is the term Tappage uses in the text. When I discuss the people other than Tappage or her book I use both. For detailed information about the Secwepemc First Nations, visit the Web site of the Secwepemc Cultural Education Society, <http://www.secwepemc.org/>. For additional information about the Soda Creek First Nation, properly called the Xat'súll, go here: <http://www.xatsull.com/>.

7. Elizabeth Furniss is an anthropologist and academic who has written extensively on the First Nations of the Cariboo region. She was employed by the Cariboo Tribal Council to produce two books on the history and culture of Dakelh people (*Changing Ways* and *Dakelh Keyoh*). She is also the author of *Victims of Benevolence* and *The Burden of History*.

8. In previous years when I have taught this book, I have had to rely on photocopies, a poor substitute for the original. The University of Waterloo's courseware services department obtained permission to reproduce the book, and a copyright fee was added to the price. Today used copies can be found on-line through booksellers such as Alibris or Amazon.

9. Keziere holds copyright to the photographs.

10. See also Alison Ravenscroft, who views her role as white editor working with two Australian Aboriginal women, Rita and Jackie Huggins, in recording their life stories as being a continuation of colonialism.

11. Sam McKegney analyzes what he calls an "affirmatist" or positive rep-

resentation of residential-school experience, specifically in the memoir and poetry written by Mi'kmaq author Rita Joe. McKegney argues that such approaches are evidence of a conscious act of personal agency on the part of the author and testament to the importance of Native literary works in our understanding of the full spectrum of Native people's experiences of residential schools.

12. For a full discussion of the photographs, see DeHaan, "Re-si(gh)ting the Storyteller in Textualized Orature."

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Book Reviews

Matthew L. M. Fletcher. *American Indian Education: Counternarratives in Racism, Struggle, and the Law*. New York: Routledge, 2008. ISBN: 978-0-415-95735-9. 223 pp.

Ruth Spack, *Bentley University*

American Indian Education: Counternarratives in Racism, Struggle, and the Law is the inaugural volume in Routledge's series on critical race theory in education. Matthew Fletcher, a law professor, examines the legal underpinnings of contemporary American Indian education by telling stories about a fictional Michigan tribe, "loosely based" on his own community: the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians (6). Most of the chapters address issues of ethics and fairness and follow specific, often recurring, characters as they negotiate emotionally charged social settings and legal or semi-legal proceedings dominated by the non-Indian population. For readers who are well versed in the history of American Indian education (which Fletcher touches on only briefly in his introduction) and who therefore understand the truth of the fictionalized events, the book is a unique and useful addition to the literature.

Chapter 1, "Commodifying Indian Students and Sports Mascots: The Lake Matchimanitou Warriors," introduces an activist named Parker Roberts, who appears before the school board to protest rules that disadvantage an all-Indian high school football team and to call for the elimination of stereotypical names, war cries, plastic tomahawks, and other offenses at the games. Chapter 2, "Burying

Indian Histories in the Curriculum: The American History Teacher,” follows Parker as she attempts to change the school curriculum to include histories of Michigan Indians. Chapter 3, “Criminal Injustice and Demonizing Indian Students: The American Indian Student,” focuses on the treatment of high school Indian students, who are forced to sign “affidavits” and are turned over to the local police for actions that non-Indian students enact with impunity. The participation of a tribal lawyer at the school board hearings significantly affects the outcome.

Chapter 4, “Intergenerational Character of Indian Experiences in Education: Niko Roberts on the Ice,” which Fletcher describes as “an interlude” (9), provides the larger sociopolitical and familial context in which American Indian students attain an education. The most dramatically rendered chapter in the book, it links Parker’s personal experiences with her son’s and describes a harrowing accident involving heroism in the face of tragedy.

Chapter 5, “Indian Academic Fraud: The Terrible Tribe,” revolves around a secret society supported by the university that Parker’s son, Niko, attends in Ann Arbor. Founded more than one hundred years earlier by “children of wealthy and powerful members of the Great Lakes shipping elite” (96), the society comprises members who conduct themselves according to their version of authentic Native American teachings and traditions. Their practices offend Indian students on campus. Niko’s petition to end the university’s support of the society engenders heated and sometimes thoughtful discussion at the Board of Regents Student Affairs Committee. Chapter 6, “Indian Literary Fraud: Vann Logan’s Novel,” exposes the deceptive posing of a non-Indian as an Indian writer, causing Niko and other students to consider such issues as who has “authority to speak on behalf of or about Indian people” and what constitutes American Indian literature (134). Chapter 7, “Indian Cultural Restoration: Toledo Marks’ Return,” involves a lawsuit that leads Niko, now a lawyer, to represent his grandfather, a traditional pipe carrier, against an accusation that he violated the First Amendment when he spoke to schoolchildren about the pipe ceremony.

Chapter 8, “Indian Political Resurgence and Affirmative Action:

The Lake Matchimanitou Indian School,” has a satiric, futuristic bent. It describes how a tribal community establishes a private school designed exclusively for Indigenous people and humorously imagines a future U.S. Supreme Court case challenging the constitutionality of “the Indianization of American education” (175). This chapter serves as a literary expression of Fletcher’s point that “American Indian education continues to be in crisis and perhaps always will be until American Indian people have the necessary resources and take the full responsibility for education their own” (3).

One of the most successful features of Fletcher’s book is the range of educational experiences covered, from elementary through law school. The choice to fictionalize the characters and their stories works quite well, for example, in the flashbacks that provide insight into earlier events, both in and out of school. Readers are drawn into the narrative by compelling portrayals that show how ignorant, bigoted, or fraudulent behavior is introduced and reinforced among young learners and carried into the sphere of higher education, assaulting Native American identity and producing damaging effects that reverberate down through the generations.

Robert J. Conley. *Cherokee Thoughts, Honest and Uncensored*.

Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 2008. ISBN: 978-0-8061-3943-2. 208 pp.

Joshua B. Nelson, *University of Oklahoma*

Sequoyah had scarcely completed his syllabary of the Cherokee language before authors began broadcasting their opinions with it. For a people renowned for their emphasis on social harmony, Cherokees have long hauled their dirty laundry right out in public, many going so far as to make a profession of airing it. Cherokee writers have elaborated traditional practices of dissent in modern contexts and made polemic a favored genre. Into this mix enters Robert Conley with his timely collection of twenty-eight essays on a wealth of topics historical and contemporary. Conley, currently professor of Cherokee studies at Western Carolina University, is by some accounts the most prolific Cherokee author in history, out-paging

even Will Rogers with his eighty-plus historical and western novels, a Cherokee Nation-sanctioned history, and other nonfiction. Writing to broad audiences in both Indian country and academia, he offers his views on literature, freedmen, outlaws, and more in essays by turns personal, provocative, and contentious.

Cherokee Thoughts makes a significant contribution to American Indian cultural and political discourse in its manifest dissent from the party line. As even tribally specific criticism leans toward structuralist accounts of peoples' worldviews, Conley refreshingly upholds the ongoing tradition of diverse dissension. He splashes directly into troubled waters in an early essay reexamining the life of Stand Watie, a divisive figure in Cherokee history from his signing of the homeland-ceding Treaty of New Echota through his alliance with the Confederacy in the Civil War. Reflecting on Watie's support of the South that resulted in the punishing terms of the Cherokee Reconstruction Treaty of 1866, Conley lays many of the consequences, such as the mandated citizenship of the freedmen, at his feet.

The Cherokee Nation's recent move to disenfranchise the freedmen occasions several pointed critiques. In his effective characteristic style, Conley sketches the relevant historical context, highlighting affluent Cherokees' embrace of slavery and the ensuing racist thinking that yet endures and has engendered some opposition to the freedmen. The Cherokee Nation disputes the legality of their inclusion, asserting that it has the sovereign right to determine its own membership, a claim Conley rejects as disingenuous given the nation's forced reliance on the corrupt Dawes Commission rolls to determine citizenship eligibility. He excoriates the rhetoric of independence: "If the Cherokee Nation is really serious about exercising its sovereignty and determining its own membership, then why the hell does it continue to use the Dawes Commission Roll, which was put together by the U.S. government and then closed by the U.S. government?" (143).

According to Conley, another of the 1866 treaty's stipulations calculated by the United States suggested the eventual dissolution of tribal government, effected some forty years later with allotment, the land runs, and Oklahoma statehood. Notwithstanding his deep

Oklahoma roots, Conley spares no rancor lambasting the gun-jumping “Sooners” mascot and decrying this historical moment characterized by unfettered land graft, writing, “I think there is no state in the United States that shows more pride in its crooked, self-serving, cheating, and corrupt founding fathers than Oklahoma” (68). With both condemnation and nostalgia, he points to the jurisdictional gap over Indian Territory near the turn of the twentieth century as both cause and epistemic effect of the proliferation of outlaws, a topic of fascination for him. Combining it with his Cherokee interests, he argues intriguingly that many prominent Cherokee outlaws like Ned Christie were in fact rebranded traditionalist patriots targeted by the federal government for their recalcitrance. Readers familiar with Conley’s historical fiction will find interesting discussion of source material on such characters.

Conley’s interest in history is rivaled only by that in literature. Essays on Cherokee authors pepper the collection, covering in various depths writers well known like Will Rogers, recently recovered like John Oskison, and practically unknown like DeWitt Clinton Duncan. While Conley offers neither detailed biographies nor close readings, he does make a compelling case for understanding American Indian contributions to ostensibly untraditional areas both as Indian and as categorically apt, claiming, for instance, English as an Indian language, Indian orature as literature, and stories told by Indians as American Indian literature regardless of content. Such expansive claims, of course, invite scrutiny of authorial identity, a matter of personal concern to Conley at several points.

Here his subjective position might have been clearer earlier. Aware of the difficulties in identifying the essential differences of Indian identity, he does not attempt a definition so much as a know-it-when-he-sees-it approach. Such assumptions lead him implicitly to sanction some practices or characteristics as Indian or traditionalist. Of these he writes approvingly, developing a sympathy that when not carefully detailed then authorizes his viewpoints on the basis of their traditionalism. He does complicate this apparent traditionalist privilege in the penultimate autobiographical essay recalling his geographical and cultural distances from Cherokee country in his

early years. If this essay appeared at the book's outset, much that seems gruffly self-assured would read as more reflexively tempered.

The collection's format presents occasional difficulties. Some information repeats, which is forgivable given that the essays can stand alone, and some spots beg for citation. Here, too, however, it is worth recalling the genre in which he is writing, which is general nonfiction, not scholarly treatise. Even so, more arguments might have been less pithily and more thoroughly made. Concerning the freedmen, for instance, while Conley persuasively challenges the extent to which citizenship is truly self-determined, he does not propose what measures or values should attend conversations about independence, much less what a Cherokee Nation at capricious liberty to incorporate or disenfranchise might look like.

In the classroom, many of these issues would doubtlessly become strengths, especially insofar as Conley accessibly introduces a range of subjects without pedantry or foreclosure on possibilities. Bearing in mind his caveat "that I do not pretend to speak for the Cherokees. No one can do that. I speak for one Cherokee—me" (3), the volume innovatively and persuasively combines historical, cultural, and modern sensibilities, profitably diversifying the ideas and identities Cherokees and Indians are thought to have.

Mark Rifkin. *Manifesting America: The Imperial Construction of U.S. National Space*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2009. ISBN: 0-19-538717-1. 288 pp.

Tol Foster, *University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill*

"To the Victors go the spoils!" seethed a family acquaintance after I detailed to him the legal and U.S. Constitutional roots of Indian gaming as located in the continuance of legible Native sovereignty "within" the boundaries of *our* United States, *his* Oklahoma, and *my* Indian Territory. Faced with such articulations of U.S. imperialism within a seemingly inevitable genealogy and modus operandi of world empires, it is all too easy, as I did in this instance, to accept the narrative that the West was won, so to speak, at the barrel of a gun.

Not so, of course. As the historian Patricia Limerick has pointed out, the West was won for U.S. hegemony largely by lawyers, not gunslingers.

How it was that alternative nations, territories, and peoples came to be understood as within the “domestic” sphere of the United States is the focus of Mark Rifkin’s sweeping book, which through four regionally focused case-study chapters articulates the various specific ways in which non-U.S. space, jurisdiction, and regional/tribal identity was contested within and outside the margins of U.S. imperialism not so much through violence as through rhetorical battles over what would count or not count as jurisdiction over a given space. The most exciting element of this book is its focus on the regional framework in exploring this issue. Rifkin traces distinct geographical spaces (the South, the Upper Midwest, Texas, and California) as those spaces change jurisdiction from Cherokee territory to Georgian; from the Great Lakes region of numerous tribal nations such as the Sauk and Ho-Chunk as well as the British empire to the northern and middle border of a country engaged in a project of “Manifest Destiny”; from southern Comancheria and the Northern Mexico of Tejano citizens to the republic and later state of Texas; and from the homeland of numerous Indigenous California tribal nations such as the Cupeño and Cahuilla and the Alta California Hispanic Mexican citizens to the United States, which both legally protected and confiscated their property through the administration of the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. The book literally covers a lot of ground.

By focusing on the regional and specific rather than on the tribal, national, or individual as the framework of his study, Rifkin extends “a certain geopolitical grammar” (49) for discussing these very distinct “imperialially interpellated peoples” (26), whether they be rich or poor Cherokees and Tejanos, culturally accommodationist or resistant Sauk leaders, or Californio landholders or the Indigenous tribal peoples whose land claims those landholders ignored and aggregated to themselves under Mexican imperialism. The regional framework is far more messy than studies that focus on U.S. minority populations or Indigenous nations to the exclusion of each other, and yet

in Rifkin's precise monograph we get a work attendant to the necessarily complicated issues of who exactly constitutes "us" and "them" and who must be left out, or actively rejected, in order to sustain those rhetorical communities.

Different rhetorical formulations of empire all too often lead to resistance along the lines set up by empire itself. Thus in resisting U.S. and Georgian hegemony, the Cherokee elite chose to elide other competing forms of authority within the greater Cherokee community itself, a process that in rhetorically challenging imperial constructions outside, particularly the powerful rhetoric of "civilized" and "savage" others, ended up "becoming a vehicle for reordering indigenous socio-spatiality and the relations among" the Cherokees themselves (74). As Rifkin uses Cherokee memorials, history, and governing documents as rhetorical remainders of these internal and external strategies, the inherent complexity of Indigenous polity emerges up and against the broad narrative of elite Cherokee life as somehow the historical totality of Cherokee life and perspective, as the Cherokee elites re-created Cherokee authority around themselves. Indeed, Rifkin finds in the Cherokee Constitution itself, based on a convention to be convened in the Cherokee Nation on July 4, 1827, a document "less . . . an offensive against U.S. federal and state policies than a strategic attempt to discipline campaigns of subaltern insurgency that had been building for several years" within the Cherokee Nation itself (67). And if Cherokees deserve to be seen as autonomous because of their relative civilization, other Native groups working in intertribal regional frameworks in which the United States was considered tertiary, such as Black Hawk's Sauks (96–97) or moving across a broad mobile and flexible homeland such as Buffalo Hump's Comanches, can be implicitly and explicitly relegated as both uncivilized and unworthy of claims of jurisdiction, homelands, or historical standing (134).

Thus the danger of engaging a hegemonic threat—here, the United States—through its own simplistic and totalizing language games even as its recourse to power and violence renders mute other strategies of resistance and empties resistance of meanings counter to its own making. Herein lies the dominant thread of Rifkin's argu-

ment that “the project of domestication depended (and depends) on the state’s monopoly over the process of defining what constitutes political legitimacy, subjectivity, and land tenure” and thus, even as U.S. “imperial formulations and strategies differed from region to region,” the “U.S. territorial imaginary . . . disallowed the possibility of engaging in sustained and substantive way with the socio-spatial formations of already resident peoples” (195). Regardless of the particularities of the people or region under absorption, the United States extended legal and territorial hegemony over them not only through violence but also through rhetorical modes of delegitimization. As Rifkin shows, whether the prior claim to resources and jurisdiction was via Indigenous land tenure, ways of making place, or even preexistent European or Mexican republican formulation, the United States always and ultimately fell back on the principle that within its projected “domestic” sphere of influence, no legitimacy outside its own making was valid, a principle that Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg articulated in a 2005 opinion when she wrote that the reterritorialization of the Oneida Nation’s land base by way of purchase from non-Native owners defied a nebulous and new “impossibility doctrine” in which the emergence of an autonomous presence within domestic space cannot be possible to the majoritarian settlers and their jurisdictional framework (3–4).

Even as groups as distinct as the Comanches and Californios and leaders such as Sauk Black Hawk and Tejano aristocrat Juan Seguin strained, as Rifkin notes, “to make alternative socio-political formations intelligible within U.S. legal norms while contesting the authority arrogated by the United States to serve as the ultimate arbiter of what constitutes a viable geopolitical claim or identity,” they found within the U.S. imperial imagination “no place in U.S. mappings” for their own (195–96). Thus, as Rifkin sees it, “self-determination . . . lies in breaking the United States’ stranglehold on the allocation and adjudication of sovereignty ‘within’ its borders,” which “may allow for . . . a substantive dialogue whose terms are not always-already set beforehand” by only one of the interlocutors (196).

Meticulously researched and sweeping in scope, Rifkin’s book points us toward the many rewards not only of reading critically

nonfictional texts within their communities but also of reading their communities within a richly complicated and cosmopolitan regional framework that unbounds Native American and literary studies in order to enter a dynamic and piercing engagement with allied areas of inquiry. Fiercely comparative and far-ranging, this book will sharpen debates in graduate seminars and conference panels across the discipline as we more fully integrate literary and nonliterary scholarly projects.

Penelope Myrtle Kelsey. *Tribal Theory in Native American Literature: Dakota and Haudenosaunee Writing and Indigenous Worldviews*. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2008.
ISBN: 978-0-8032-2771-2. 175 pp.

Lucy Maddox, *Georgetown University*

In the last few years, some important but difficult challenges have been issued to readers and critics of American Indian literature, most notably by Robert Allen Warrior, Jace Weaver, and Craig Womack. Warrior has written of the need for critics to recognize and honor autonomous Native intellectual traditions; Weaver has called for a criticism that finds its basis and its objectives in the needs of Native communities; and Womack has argued for an Indigenous criticism that brings tribal ways of knowing to the reading of texts by Native authors. All of their work has attracted serious attention, but it has taken a while—understandably, given that the challenges *are* difficult—for critics to begin to produce book-length studies that respond to these calls by grounding their analyses in the kinds of theoretical, historical, and social knowledge that Warrior, Weaver, and Womack find essential to a responsible Native criticism and thus to the securing of Native intellectual sovereignty.

Penelope Myrtle Kelsey's *Tribal Theory in Native American Literature* takes up the challenges proffered by these critics directly, arguing for a reading of Native texts that begins by recognizing their specific tribal referents, traditions, and methodologies. While unquestionably able to stand on its own intellectual merits, Kelsey's study owes

a strong debt to the earlier scholarship and its articulation of the need for, and the shape of, an Indigenous criticism. Kelsey defines her purposes in this book as demonstrating how “Native American epistemologies and worldviews” (8) constitute a legitimate theoretical grounding for reading Native texts in culturally appropriate ways; establishing a “substantive connection between community perspectives and knowledges and critical practice” (9); and consequently contributing to the freeing of Native texts from their colonization by non-Native readers and critics.

Most of the writers Kelsey examines are Dakotas: Marie McLaughlin, Luther Standing Bear, Charles Eastman, Zitkala-Ša, and Ella Deloria. Her attention to McLaughlin as a Dakota writer and not just the wife of a more famous (white) husband, the agent James McLaughlin, is especially interesting and welcome. In each case, Kelsey focuses on the writer’s use of a textual or thematic element derived from tribal intellectual or social traditions, such as pictographs; definitions of gender roles and the traditional stories that support these definitions; the significance of the camp historian; and the conventions governing such genres as naming narratives, education narratives, and honorific speech. Underlying all of these uses, Kelsey argues, is the fundamental concern of the Dakota writer for the stability and cultural continuity of the Dakota *tiošpaye*, as each writer understands it. Kelsey then concludes her study by looking at two contemporary Dakota writers, Philip Red Eagle and Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, and the contemporary Haudenosaunee poet, Maurice Kenny, to explore the ways in which their writing continues to rely as heavily on tribal coordinates as did the work of the earlier writers. In examining their work, Kelsey demonstrates how various elements of the texts, including the motives and behaviors of fictional characters, are responsive to deeply embedded tribal ways of knowing and understanding.

Kelsey’s analyses are insightful and intelligent, and her familiarity with Dakota language and culture provides a significant and very helpful grounding for her readings of the texts. Taken together, her chapters make a forceful case for the importance, especially to the critic of Native literature, of locating Native texts within their

specific tribal contexts. Readings like hers can also be invaluable to teachers of Native literatures, who will certainly welcome her thoughtful and informed introductions to Dakota epistemologies and aesthetics. One hopes that others will provide similar studies of other tribal or regional literatures and extend the range of Indigenous readings that value tribal knowledge, in the way that Kelsey does, as a source of theoretical strategy, and that they will do so as conscientiously and knowledgeably as Kelsey has done.

The book does raise some issues—perhaps inadvertently, and probably inescapably—that are not addressed directly and that suggest some of the practical and philosophical hurdles that remain for the critic of Native texts. Kelsey wishes to contribute to the process of decolonizing Native literature and freeing it from the constraints of Eurowestern literary-critical conventions; her vehicle is a book published by a university press that is reliant on the language of academic discourse, even if it is not the language of high theory. This aim and the process of achieving it are still, it seems to me, in an uneasy and unsettled relationship to each other. Literary criticism's life has been so tied to the academy—for better or worse—and so defined by a rarified vocabulary—for the worse, surely—that to relocate it or to alter its basic DNA is a labor that may take much more work, especially since it is the academy and not the community on which the professional lives of scholars ultimately depend.¹ *Tribal Theory in Native American Literature* is, finally, aimed primarily at an academic audience, and it is hard to imagine how it could be otherwise.

Kelsey defends Charles Eastman's language, which has often been taken as a sign of his acculturation, defining it instead as his use of the discourse that was most readily available to him, including "the racial discourse of his era" (59). She also describes Eastman as engaging with "the colonial idiom" (61) in order to foster his own ultimately resistant agenda. This is a very reasonable argument for a way of reading Eastman; it also suggests the continuing force of dominant languages and discourses, especially in public venues such as published texts (Eastman's or the contemporary critic's), and the huge difficulties attending the project of decolonizing language and breaking down generic conventions.

At the beginning of her study, Kelsey offers an appropriate and insightful acknowledgment of the problem Native scholars have had thus far in finding “a vocabulary with which to articulate Native epistemologies in recognized ways [and] an audience ready to listen” (4). That problem is real and continuing, and the ongoing process of working through it promises to be truly invigorating.

NOTE

1. Craig Womack’s *Art as Performance, Story as Criticism* (2009) addresses this issue of the inaccessibility of most literary criticism by, as its title suggests, calling attention to the possibilities of story as a form of criticism.

Brandy Nalani McDougall. *The Salt-Wind, Ka Makani Pa‘akai*. Honolulu: Kuleana ‘Oiwī P, 2008. ISBN: 978-0-9668220-5-2. 88 pp.

Craig Santos Perez, *University of California, Berkeley*

In her first poetry collection, *The Salt-Wind, Ka Makani Pa‘akai*, Brandy Nalani McDougall grounds themes of family, culture, land, and politics in Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian) mythology. In addition, she wrestles with historical and contemporary colonialism in her homeland through the themes of language, education, and exoticism. Just as the salt wind of Oceania is “spun fine by time” (11), McDougall spins her diverse range of subjects through an impressive array of poetic forms: along with free-verse, collage, personae, and prose-narrative poems, there are a villanelle, a sestina, and a sonnet sequence. While many of the poems are tightly constructed single-page poems, McDougall also shows her skill at managing the waves of serial poems (each section of the serial poems remain as tightly constructed as the single-page poems). Finally, McDougall seamlessly weaves together Hawaiian language and English to create a complex, bilingual texture. To contextualize this emerging poet within the tradition of contemporary Kanaka Maoli poetry in English, we might say that she has inherited Haunani-Kay Trask’s decolonial poetics, Dana Naone Hall’s memorable imagery, Joe Balaz’s

intimate tones, Mahealani Perez-Wendt's political lyricism, and Wayne Kaumualii Westlake's subtle humor. What sets McDougall apart, in my opinion, is her complex narrativity and formal skill.

The Salt-Wind, Ka Makani Paʻakai begins with a section titled "Po" (the creative source of the Hawaiian world): "the dark before the light" (6). The first poem of the same title begins:

Before the land was tamed by industry,
the oceanside resorts and pineapple plantations,
before the cane knife's rust, the dark time of sickness,
the coming of cannons, the bitter waters drunk,
before the metallic salt of blood

McDougall alludes to the colonial history of Hawaii—from the establishment of tourism and sugar and pineapple plantations to the violent overthrow of the Hawaiian kingdom. McDougall grounds her collection in the time *before* history, when "[t]here was darkness without breath and Po, / pressing the entirety of a universe into a shell" (3). As a poet fluent in Hawaiian history, language, and mythology, McDougall suggests that the poem itself is a kind of shell, providing us with breath within the presence of Po. In various poems throughout, McDougall invokes the gods—Po, Kane, Lono, Kanaloa, Ku, Hina, Papahānaumoku, Wakea, Haumea, Pele, Hiʻiaka, Maui—to "stir the darkness" and "bring forth the light" (6). In addition, she invokes her *kupuna*, or ancestors, who "are all around us now, / caressing the grasses, the leaves / on each branch—they won't let go, / just yet" (7). The undeniable hold of memory, mythology, and the past is engraved powerfully in a sonnet titled "The Petroglyphs at Olowalu":

The highway to Lahaina, newly paved
and lined in paint, curves against the mountain,

its ridges, cutting black against the gray.
Draped in dry grass, windward slopes descend

from a cloudless sky toward Olowalu,
whose pali is sharp, abrupt. Here, the waves

carve tunnels, caves. They've outlived the hands who
pressed the lines of ghosts into the cliff-face:

stiff triangular figures, broad-shouldered
men and women, the ancestors who climb

or fall against the pali wall, buffered
by ocean wind, the salt spun fine by time.

Tracing the lines those before me began—
their words I ask for, the old work of hands. (11)

McDougall creates a compelling nexus of time: the ancient petroglyphs at Olowalu, Maui, carved onto lava rock; the profound aftermath of the massacre at Olowalu that occurred in the eighteenth century; the ever-changing grass, sky, waves, and cliff comprising the site; the contemporary “newly paved” highway that inscribes the landscape; and the poet herself, in the present moment, “tracing the lines.” This sonnet contains much of what is great about *The Salt-Wind*, *Ka Makani Paʻakai*: the winding syntax, sharp imagery, subtle lyricism, and perceptive receptiveness. McDougall seems to suggest that the work “those before [her] began” continues in the lines of the poem. The poet, then, must ask for their words, guidance, and inspiration to continue “the old work of hands”—a kind of pre-Western literacy—with the new work of printed, Hawaiian poetry.

The second section, “Kumuhonua” (the first man in Hawaiian mythology), revolves around the destruction of the speaker’s family. These poems highlight McDougall’s ability to narrate difficult memories:

It is 1981 in Kula,
and my father, cloudy and high on booze
and pakalolo, for all his love songs
of rain and mountain mist, is unable
to stay (24)

This poem, titled “How I Learned to Write My Name,” heartbreakingly captures the scene of the father taking money from the mother’s purse while she showers and while the speaker—as a child—

practices writing her name. This poem, like much of McDougall's work, is precise both in its narrative and emotional trajectory:

I worked, writing through the door's dull thud
behind him when he left, right through the wash
of swallowed tears behind the bathroom walls.
There was only this thrilled, measured motion:
my young hand threading dots into letters,
the fullness of my name, its shape, shouting. (25)

Just as the petroglyphs at Olowalu remain etched in stone, the mother's tears and the father's departure become carved onto the fullness of words—their shapes, their shouting. In the next poem, "Emma, 1993," the mother leaves and the speaker learns that "blood was not enough to hold her" (26). With the same eye for emotional and narrative detail, McDougall writes:

And though I tried to call her name, to keep
close behind, the only replies I heard
were the fading tap of her footsteps on
the porch, the metal click of her bracelets,
and the swish of her dress like a rushed gust
of wind before her bedroom door closed. (26)

Names are an important theme throughout *The Salt-Wind, Ka Makani Pa'akai*: the speaker invokes the names of the gods, writes her own name to shout, and helplessly tries to call her mother's name. Even the mother's bracelets—"gold Hawaiian bracelets with / her name in black"—echo on the wind. Besides the resonating names, the wind itself echoes. In "The Salt-Wind of Waihe'e," we glimpse the family life of the speaker after all the leaving:

In Waihe'e the salt-wind left nothing
of your house but rusted nails, withered wood,
the howl of the ocean and the sun sinking.

For years, you kept up with the repairing,
replaced boards and glass, as you thought you should
in Waihe'e, with its salt-wind. Nothing

could stop you from such rebuilding, nor bring
 you in from outside, where you felt your blood
 in the ocean's howl, in the light of the sun sinking

beneath the waves. Your daughters were watching
 through a window, glass hazed by salt. We stood
 out of the Waihe'e wind and felt nothing

near love, the erosion for a windy sea
 that kept you, offering only driftwood
 in return. For all the ocean's howling,

we could not understand the urgency
 of what stung your eyes, grayed your skin, and flooded
 you with the Waihe'e wind, leaving nothing
 but our father's howl, your head slowly sinking. (28)

This poem not only captures the raw emotion of daughters and distant fathers, but it does so in the complex villanelle form. The variable repetition of the form embodies the repairing and replacing as well as the inevitability of the wind shifting the form of the house. Metaphorically, the sun sinking becoming the father's head "slowly sinking" illustrates the absolute sadness of the family's inability to feel "nothing / near love."

The third section, "Papahanaumoku" (creation goddess), adopts the theme of family from the previous section—particularly of the absent, ineffectual father figure. The many poems about the speaker's family accrue emotional weight, showing us how the relationship between the father, mother, and daughters change (and perhaps heal) over time. An interesting chronotope that develops across these poems is the time/space of "the Kula house"—the speaker's childhood home in Maui. The Kula house appears throughout *The Salt-Wind*, *Ka Makani Pa'akai* in various (often tragic) incarnations. In one of the most beautiful and heartbreaking poems in this collection, "Return to the Kula House," McDougall crafts a sestina to capture the thorny memories of childhood trauma, embodied in the sestina's end words: *Kula*, *moon*, *shadows*, *wire*, *remember*, and *windows*. The sestina form creates an illusory order to the disorderly

childhood experience and emphasizes the spinning of memory: “shadows” changes to “shaded”; “wire” shifts to become “barbed-wire,” “wiry,” and “unwired.” The poem ends:

Crying, my father woke me, the cold moon
in his voice: *Hurry. Now.* And I ran, wiry
from sleep, saw my mother by the window,
pressing a knife to her chest. I remember
her, ashamed and hollow, the shadows
under her eyes. The knife thrown to the Kula
night, the moon as I ran out the door. I remember
falling on barbed-wire, and behind me, two shadows,
boarding up empty windows and mourning our lost Kula. (47)

Just as *The Salt-Wind, Ka Makani Pa‘akai* carries the ancestors and gods into the present, McDougall’s poetry carries these barbed memories across the cruel distances of time and space. This theme resonates in a serial poem titled “Kukui,” the Hawaiian name for the nuts of the candlenut tree, Hawaii’s state tree. The first part of the poem begins: “You hold within your heart / enough to fire-stir the night” (55), which refers to how the kukui nuts were burned to create light. In the second part, the speaker sits beneath the kukui tree and thinks how easy “it could be to let go of words like that, / to harvest the dark-shelled secrets / that have bent me under their weight” (56). The poem confesses that this is the first time the speaker writes about being molested as a child by a doctor—a crime that remains unpunished because of the statute of limitations. The refrain of the poem tears the heart: “Sometimes there is no justice.” The poem ends, however, on a note of hope:

And because, as you teach us, there is more
to this life than survival, you offer your nut
to be worn in lei, to be eaten, to heal us
after you have let it go. It is the sweet relish
of all that feeds us in these dark times,
when sometimes there is no justice,
but every day, there is fire and light. (58)

This poem speaks to many of the poems in *The Salt-Wind, Ka Makani Pa‘akai*: the “dark-shelled secrets” pressing heavily on the speaker’s memories of childhood trauma; the desire to “let go of words” and break silences; and the possibility that words are offered to heal when there is no other justice offered. This theme also resonates in other poems where McDougall addresses issues of colonial assimilation, Western eroticism of the Native female body, the legacy of Captain Cook, and the stereotypes of Native peoples. Yes, there has been no justice for Native Hawaiians, yet the poet suggests that words—like the kukui nuts—offer us the hope of fire and light in these continuing dark times.

“Haloo Naka” (long trembling stem), the final section of *The Salt-Wind, Ka Makani Pa‘akai*, refers to the first son of Wakea and Papa, who was stillborn. Buried in the mud outside the house, he grew and became the first taro plant. Haloo Naka could care for, protect, and feed itself; in turn, Haloo Naka could heal and feed its people. The poem “Haloo Naka” describes the taro’s sacrifice “so that we may live knowing love / and ‘ohana, our bright belonging” (71). Love, family, and healing are the major themes in this final section of the book. To me, the most powerful poem is “Ka ‘Olelo,” a series of five sonnets that explores native-language loss and acquisition. The first sonnet reads:

Think of all the lost words, still unspoken,
 waiting to be given use again, claimed,
 or for newly born words to unburden
 them of their meanings. There are winds and rains
 who have lost their names, descending the slopes
 of every mountain, each lush valley’s mouth,
 and the songs of birds and mo‘o, that cope
 with our years of slow unknowing, somehow.
 It was not long ago that ‘olelo
 was silenced, along with its *dying race*,
 who lived, then thrived, reverting to the old
 knowing words. English could never replace
 the land’s unfolding song, nor the ocean’s
 ancient oli, giving us use again. (66)

The lost 'olelo (language) is still felt in the wind and rains that cope with their loss and wait for the reclamation of their names. The "land's unfolding song" and the ocean's continuing chant compel the poet to tongue the "lost words" of her native language. The final rhyme, "ocean" and "again," subtly suggests that these words will return again as they still exist in the full ocean currents. The series continues to document how the speaker's great-grandfather's Hawaiian words are lashed out of existence by "the teacher's stick" and English-only laws, which lasted until 1986, forcing "three generations of family" to swallow their "'olelo like pohaku" (67). McDougall captures the intergenerational struggle this language loss causes when she describes how the speaker's grandfather "remembers his father's voice, / and regrets not asking him to speak more / Hawaiian, so that he may have the choice / to offer words in his inheritance, / knowing his 'oha will not be silenced" (68). The speaker, as oha (offspring), begins to learn her 'olelo as the secret navigations of language circle during her "wa'a's slow turn inward," steering her tongue "through each new word learned" (69). The final sonnet ends with the speaker learning from a language CD and speaking with her grandfather:

My unripe tongue taps my palate, my teeth,
 like a blind ko'e that must feel its way
 through the liquids, mutes and aspirates of speech,
 the threading of breath and blood into lei:
 "E aloha. 'O wai kou inoa?"
 I ask, after the language CD's voice.
 "'O Kekauoha ko'u inoa,"
 my grandfather answers, "Pehea 'oe?"
 So, we slowly begin, with what 'olelo
 we know; E ho'oulu ana kakou.

This passage, one of the most beautiful in *The Salt-Wind, Ka Makani Pa'akai*, strikingly describes the speaker's "unripe tongue" as a "blind ko'e" (blind worm) that struggles through speech yet manages to thread "breath and blood into lei." We see this threading throughout McDougall's work, as once-lost Hawaiian words claim their place in

the poem, fully blossoming in the shape and shout of their original names. The tender moment between grandfather and granddaughter reminds us that native-language revitalization is full of slow, bright beginnings.

The Salt-Wind, Ka Makani Paʻakai ends (though the poems intimate that the salt-wind never ends) in an awakening of “the lost beginnings” of blood. The last poem, “Waiting for the Sunrise at Haleakala,” traces the speaker’s predawn huakaʻi (journey) to Maui’s highest peak. She drives surrounded by tourists in their “Hertz convey”; when the sun rises, the tourists applaud, photograph, and return to their cars. The sunrays light the speaker’s tears as she contemplates the natural beauty of her homeland and the horrors that tourism has caused. As the tourists leave, the poet remains to witness the opening fire of “five hundred red flowers, each a sun / offering light from Haleakala” (87). Like the kukui nuts, the trembling blossom of Haloa Naka, the red flowers of Haleakala (note the blossoming caesura between “flowers” and “each a sun”), and the kaona of words themselves, each poem in *The Salt-Wind, Ka Makani Paʻakai* offers us fire, light, and healing. McDougall guides us across oceans of silence into her “wide island of words.” Along the way, we sift through the “metallic salt of blood” (3), the “salt-swept waves” (6), “the salt / of tears, of bone” (12), and the tide’s “lei of salted steam” (13). McDougall traces the shadows of familial and cultural memory without losing awareness of her native ecology and mythology. She knows that she has to “remember for all of us” (31) and that “I ka olelo no ke ola, i ka olelo no ka make. In words, there is death, but there is also life” (20).

Contributor Biographies

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CRAIG SANTOS PEREZ, a native Chamorro from the Pacific island of Guahan (Guam), is the cofounder of Achiote Press and author of two poetry collections: *from unincorporated territory [hacha]* and *from unincorporated territory [saina]*. He received his MFA from the University of San Francisco and is currently working toward a PhD in ethnic studies at the University of California, Berkeley.

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Major Tribal Nations and Bands

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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Cherokee Nation
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Web site: <http://www.cherokee.org>

Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians
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Peshawbestown, MI 49682-9275
Phone: 866-534-7750
Web site: <http://gtbindians.org>

Muskogee/Creek Nation
PO Box 580
Okmulgee, OK 74447
Phone: 918-732-7700
Web site: <http://themuscogeeecreeknation.com>

Shuswap Nation (Secwepemc Bands)
311-355 Yellowhead Highway
Kamloops, BC V2H 1H1
Phone: 250-828-9779
Web site: <http://www.secwepemc.org>

Spokane Tribe of Indians
PO Box 100
Wellpinit, WA 99040
Phone: 509-458-6500
Web site: <http://www.spokanetribe.com>

Standing Rock Sioux Tribe
Standing Rock Ave. Building 1
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Fort Yates, ND 58538
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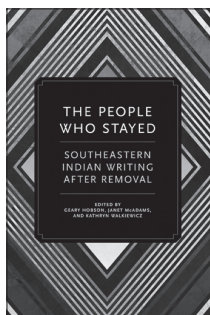
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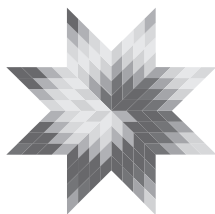
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