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FROM THE EDITORS

We are very excited to have as the first special issue of our tenure as coeditors this groundbreaking set of articles on digital technology and American Indian literary studies. The issue represents a homecoming of sorts for us and *SAIL*. As Carol Zitzer-Comfort explains in her introduction, Malea Powell inspired both the MLA panel “Digital NDNs” and this special issue. Malea, of course, preceded us as editor of *SAIL* but was also with us from the beginning of our careers as a member of our dissertation committees and an invaluable adviser and friend. It is wonderful to have you back in these pages, Malea, especially as we approach the imminent transfer of the journal to new editorial hands at the end of this volume.

James H. Cox and Daniel Heath Justice

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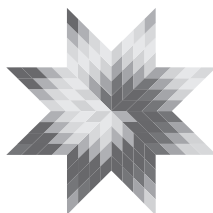
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U N I V E R S I T Y O F
NEBRASKA P R E S S 

INTRODUCTION

It seems impossible that three years have passed since Malea Powell chaired a session titled “Digital NDNs” at the 2008 MLA convention; however, here we are in 2011 sharing work that began in that thought-provoking, engaging session. As always, Malea created a session that was timely and innovative. First, Rick Mott presented an intriguing and visually fascinating overview of his use of digital literacy and technology in teaching Leslie Silko’s *Ceremony*. Second, Nancy Strow Sheley and I discussed using digital technology to bridge and connect classrooms in Long Beach, California, and in Nicosia, Cyprus, as our students in these different locales shared readings and commentary on American Indian literature.

After the presentations, the room broke out in lively discussion. It was obvious that many people in the session, particularly Margaret Noori, were doing fascinating, cutting-edge work involving digital technology in their teaching of American Indian literatures and languages. This MLA session was just a beginning glimpse into the world of “digital NDNs.”

Coming away from the session, I couldn’t stop thinking about the excitement generated by this timely topic. Even during the session, several of us discussed the possibility that *SAIL* might be interested in publishing a special issue on the joining of digital technologies and American Indian literature; thus, the seeds for this volume germinated. This issue could never have come to fruition without the patient assistance and guidance of editors James Cox and Daniel Heath Justice and, of course, the vision of Malea Powell.

The contributors present the ways in which twenty-first-century technology can be used to augment our teaching in meaningful, authentic ways.

Margaret Noori, who is well known to all *SAIL* readers, presents an overview of how she uses technology to teach Anishinaabemowin. It was largely Meg's excitement and innovation that compelled me to pursue the publication of this issue. Her essay focuses primarily on the development of the site *Noongwa e-Anishinaabemjig: People Who Speak Anishinaabemowin Today*, which is hosted by a server at the University of Michigan. This site continues to expand with the ever-changing world of language and technology and is an exciting space where scholars and students join together to teach and preserve Anishinaabemowin. As Noori points out:

To see and save language, people have always relied on technology. At first it may have been the fire that kept the storyteller and audience together after dark or warmed the women singing beneath the moon. Today, technology is a myriad of tools and systems allowing language to transfer concepts of identity, complex instructions about the universe, arching narratives, whispers of love, or plans for war. Language is still, and has always been, united with technology.

Rick Mott presents the development of groundbreaking, digitally motivated teaching in his paper, "*Ceremony Earth: Digitizing Silko's Novel for Students of the Twenty-first Century.*" Like many of us teaching American Indian literature, Mott faces students who lack the background knowledge and context necessary to develop a full reading of many texts that we teach. As Mott notes:

Many students I have taught, especially those who are non-Native, get frustrated when they read Leslie Silko's canonical Native American novel, *Ceremony*. Not only do they struggle with Silko's disruptions of linear temporality and her collapsing of binary oppositions, they also struggle with the novel's geographic and cultural location, which is wholly unfamiliar to most of them.

Mott has created a wealth of resources to provide his students with ways to better situate and contextualize Silko's work. His essay "provide[s] background and context for this location-based, multimedia project, including reasons why digital literary artifacts attached to specific geographic points on geobrowsers are so appropriate for teaching *Ceremony*."

Gabriel Estrada presents a wholly different way of infusing the latest digital technology into his teaching of American Indian literature. Estrada's article, captivantly titled "Native Avatars, Online Hubs, and Urban Indian Literature," draws upon and expands the earlier work of Susan Lobo and Jennifer Ladino. In his introduction, Estrada notes that what his "essay adds to Lobo's and Ladino's sentiment is a sense of how teaching American Indian literature in a face-to-face classroom blended with online technologies can add to Native urban hubs. John Purdy and Blake M. Hausman note past limitations in blended classes. They observe for writers and readers of American Indian literatures, the digital revolution has often been engaged as a means of storing information." Estrada builds upon multiple insights and suggestions regarding blended pedagogies that can enhance the formation of urban Indian hubs and the appreciation of American Indian literature. Estrada further explains the ways in which *NativeWiki*, *Second Life*, author e-mails, American Indian Nations web pages, and other online resources form Native online hubs that can help students to better evaluate urban Indian literatures such as *Flight* and *Throwing Fire at the Sun*, *Water at the Moon* as well as to reflect upon their own relationship with American Indian identities.

Nancy Strow Sheley and I provide an explanation and analysis of our use of digital technology as we collaborated across oceans to join our respective classrooms in Long Beach, California, and the University of Cyprus in a shared unit on American Indian literature. In this project, university students enrolled in our respective courses at California State University, Long Beach, and the University of Cyprus participated in a cross-cultural e-learning project studying American Indian literature and history. Students followed the same six-week syllabus, which included shared readings and films. The

students' online interactions and reactions with course materials brought to light the many guises of historical and contemporary cultural conflict and suffering: dominant groups marking Indigenous peoples for extinction, film and literature depicting such groups as prematurely "extinct," religious factions often being responsible for past and present horrors, and societies and institutions perpetuating hatred through focusing on skewed histories. Sheley and I utilized available technologies to join our classes on discussion boards to create learning spaces that bridged our geographical differences and enabled students who were separated by time and space to discuss American Indian readings and films that were unfamiliar to both groups of students.

This volume provides only a glimpse into the possibilities that our newest technologies offer us for expanding our pedagogies. Just as it was evident at the 2008 MLA convention, these essays provide further proof of the ways in which the production, the creation, and the teaching of American Indian literature continue to evolve, to create new spaces, and to introduce Indigenous literature to peoples and places across the world.

Carol Zitzer-Comfort

Special Issue
Digital Technologies and Native Literature

EDITED BY CAROL ZITZER-COMFORT

Waasechibiiwaabikoonsing Nd'anami'aami, "Praying through a Wired Window"

Using Technology to Teach Anishinaabemowin

MARGARET NOORI

Imagine a trickster on life support, a mythic, transformative being made up of equal parts humanity and the unknown, wired, tired, and waiting . . . on the edge of life. This is the language of Anishinaabemowin today. Because the patient is a trickster, we don't know yet if we are witness to a death or magnificent birth. So we watch the monitors, we try new medicines, we form a network of prayers: Prayers made of wire, glass, and light. Prayers made of digital, full-spectrum sound waves. Prayers of stories recorded in color and contrast that is fed through lenses and transformed into a binary code of *bezhig* (1), *kaa gego* (0), *bezhig* (1), *kaa gego* (0). Prayers hosted on servers and posted in clouds of computing. Prayers of work and prayers of play. Prayers of convergence, continuance, and collaboration. Prayers that connect the orality of the ancestors to the app-jumping multiplayer community yet to come. Teaching an endangered language today requires extreme measures, and there is no guarantee of success. But the situation is dire and demands adaptive, creative survivance.

Anishinaabemowin is one of twenty-seven Algonquian languages, the ancestral birthright of more than two hundred communities in the United States and Canada. Now used as a single term to refer to several closely related dialects, Anishinaabemowin is the language of the Three Fires Confederacy Tribes, the Odawa, Potawatomi, and Ojibwe. Approximately 80 percent of its speakers are over sixty, and no one learns Anishinaabemowin as a first or only language anymore. Many understand that the language is dying, but

first attempts at resuscitation were local, oral, and often without historical and political context. The first lesson needs to be a history. In a 2009 essay on language revitalization, I noted that we must acknowledge why the language was lost if we are to face honestly the challenge of bringing it back (Noori 20). It is simply not enough to preserve linguistic artifacts as one facet of identity. To properly care for a living language, we must understand the trajectory of decline and recognize its position in the present era.

A quick review of translation relations shows how the position of Native languages has shifted from one of necessary understanding to erasure and replacement. Algonquian colonization began as early as 1650, when the French traders and Jesuits arrived in what became known as the “pays d’en haut,” the largely Algonquian world west of the Iroquois nations (White 24). In order to possess furs and souls, the immigrants arriving were forced to learn the language of the natives. However, as immigration continued and warfare raged, the tables were turned. By 1776 more than five hundred distinct Native nations were described, in English, in the Declaration of Independence, merely as “the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare, is undisputed destruction.” It is interesting to note that at the time the lingua franca of politics was French. Yet the linguistic hubris of the young nation was evident, as John Adams predicted in 1780: “English is destined to be in the next and succeeding centuries more generally the language of the world than Latin was in the last or French is in the present age” (qtd. in Armitage 71). The need and desire to speak the language of the natives had dwindled. It is essential to see language as yet another colonial commodity sacrificed to hierarchical goals of dominance. Linguistic diversity was in no way desired by the young nation being formed and had not been desired for many centuries in the countries from which it fought for independence.

As the United States grew in land base, treasury, and military power, it also grew in linguistic dominance. Although Native Americans were granted citizenship in 1924, and the right to govern themselves in 1936, these rights were offered in English. As hideous as the erasure of culture and community through the slave trade, as thorough as Hitler’s ethnic cleansing, America’s relationship with Native

Americans is one of denial and restriction of identity through numerous tactics intended to result in execution, extinction, or assimilation. Blood, land, and language can be viewed as mediums of continued warfare. As early as 1819, the Civilization Fund Act provided money to societies who would “educate” Indian students. The goal was to “civilize” Indians by eradicating their traditions and customs and teaching them to read and write English (Levy). In 1871, Captain Richard Pratt, notable for his success during the Indian Wars, coined the battle cry of assimilation, “kill the Indian to save the man,” and in 1879 he was given responsibility for Indian education in the United States. Considered a forward-thinking educator willing to give Native students a chance (if they abandoned all traces of their roots), Pratt opened the doors of Carlisle Boarding School to continue the work begun by early French, German, and Spanish missionaries.

Blood, land, and language remain inextricably connected. In 1887, under the General Allotment Act (also known as the Dawes Act), Congress adopted a blood quantum standard of one-half or more Indian blood. As Nora Livesay reminds us:

This meant that if an Indian could document that he (women were excluded) was one-half or more Indian blood, then he could receive 160 acres of tribal land. All other Indians were excluded regardless of their standing within the tribe. After all the “blooded” Indians were parceled out land, the rest of tribal lands were declared “surplus” and opened up for non-Indian settlement. (1)

This rigid definition of ethnic identity without community control over citizenship was actually a policy of extermination. As Livesay concludes:

Ultimately, tribal enrollment policies will influence the future of tribal governments and the future of Indian nations. At the very least, Indians need to educate themselves about their own constitutions and unique set of circumstances. Becoming informed is the first step toward thoughtful community discussions and avoiding the failures of past policies.

Her words apply to the recovery of all aspects of identity, including language. The very notion of reduction of blood by quantum definition, removal from the land, and erasure of identity through the loss of language places Natives in a position of nonbeing. While the descendants of slaves, along with women of all ethnic backgrounds, fight to be free and equal Americans, Native Americans continue to fight invisibility. This is why it is not enough to teach the language. We must undo the unseeing. We must make the language visible in order for it to become speakable.

To see and save language, people have always relied on technology. At first it may have been the fire that kept the storyteller and audience together after dark, or warmed the women singing beneath the moon. Eventually it became the ability to carve and paint representations of ideas that could enter the mind of another—intact and laden with meaning. Today, technology is a myriad of tools and systems allowing language to transfer concepts of identity, complex instructions about the universe, arching narratives, whispers of love, or plans for war. Language is still, and has always been, united with technology.

The machinery of technology, the parts used to communicate, has always been associated with theories of use, or methods of communication. Some say the best method for teaching language is immersion, allowing students to learn sound and meaning as it is learned by children. Many Native educators advocate working first with children.¹ Generations ago, this was the dominant form of instruction. Some say the language should be written and delivered on the page today with explanations of the underlying systems. Both are right. *Debwemigad kina*. Both approaches have value. If the goal is to render Anishinaabemowin visible to children who will become bilingual, then Anishinaabemowin words must appear in every place, and in every way, that English words appear—in person, on the page, through sight, sound, and interactive connection to ideas. We must use the same methods and resources used by instructors of the dominant competitor. If our children type, text, process their English words, and place them in a wireless web environment, then we must do the same with Anishinaabemowin. E-learning is the

subject of considerable research, and several models exist that can be easily adapted to the instruction and maintenance of an endangered language. Most importantly, any model must be a combination of individuals, information, cultural practice, social interaction, and documentation, a blend close to the pedagogical model proposed by Conole, Oliver, and Seale.

This essay focuses primarily on the site *Noongwa e-Anishinaabemjig: People Who Speak Anishinaabemowin Today*. The site is hosted by a server in the University of Michigan School of Information. Content is created primarily by Howard Kimewon and Margaret Noori, the Ojibwe language instructors in the Department of American Culture, and is altered regularly by Stacie Sheldon, an information architect with extensive experience in “sitemaps, wireframes, metadata, e-commerce and SYNC websites” (Sheldon). Other sites and postings are mentioned as they connect to *Noongwa*, creating what would now be termed a “cloud of computing.”

Noongwa is only one of several sites dedicated specifically to the Anishinaabe language. However, it is one of the largest, with a range of multimedia input, and is regularly updated. As a case study, it offers useful information about what students and teachers want to share as they work to save an endangered language. The site was started in 2007 and, as stated on the “About Us” page, “is evidence that Anishinaabemowin is alive and well.” An introduction explains: “We have created this cyber space so that the ancient sounds are not lost and can be connected to anyone willing to listen, learn, and labor with us in the effort to maintain Anishinaabemowin. We are humbled by our teachers and those who have preceded us in this work. Rather than reinvent the wheel, we’d like to show you all the wheels we’ve found and how they have been put to use.” As of May 15, 2011, the site had 235,824 page views during 48,121 visits made by 4,758 absolutely unique visitors. The United States is home to 74 percent of the visitors, 20 percent are in Canada, and the remaining 6 percent are in other countries, including Russia, Germany, England, and France. Among the visitors are 2,442 *Facebook* fans and 171 *Twitter* followers.²

The basic divisions are simple and are designed to respond to

the interests of visitors who visit the home page most, followed, in order, by pages of “Songs,” “Lessons,” “Stories,” and “Resources.” As an instructor, I am tempted to encourage readers to start with Lessons and always include Resources, but as a site creator it is important to simply allow the data to speak for itself and provide what the students becoming speakers are most eager to read and hear. To date, the story with the highest number of “like” votes on *Facebook* is “Weweni wii Naakanigewag: They Will Make Careful Decisions.” This update was posted on October 15, 2009, when a statement was made about the human remains held by the University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology:

Kchikinomaagegamig Michigan Ogimaaens Enendamobi-
igewin Stephen Forrest,

University of Michigan Vice President of Research Stephen
Forrest

gii kigo “n’ga bagosendami weweni chiezhichigeaba gondag.”
said, “we hope to carefully do the right thing for them.”

Gaye gowetigo maanda bezhig da mebidootosii ezhiwebag
Nothing will be decided by any one person
miinwaa kina NAGPRA nakinigewinan geyabi tenon noongwa
and all of the NAGPRA regulations remain in place.

Noongwa maamwinokiiwag kinomaagazojig, kinomaagejig,
They will work together now the students, the faculty,
kinomaagegamignokijig miinwaa Anishinaabeg
the administrators and the Anishinaabe people
miinwaa gaye wii kaa gaa nenmaasiinanig gaa bi iyaajig.
and they will not forget the ones who were here before.³

The home page is subtitled “Wenesh Ezhiwebag? What’s Happening?” and is the page that most directly addresses the historical and political position of the Anishinaabeg people. Through these postings, readers come to understand important political matters through their original language. In the story “Stewart Bennett miinwaa Kyle Abitong gii ba aayaawag,” readers find out how Howard

Kimewon and Stewart Bennett were treated during their elementary years and hear, in the words of survivors, how the language was lost. Careful readers also notice that the usual terms “boarding school” (used in the United States) and “residential school” (used in Canada) are simply conveyed by “enji ganawenjigaazyang” (“a place where we were locked up”), which more poignantly reflects the perspective of the students rather than the teachers.

Zhaazhagwa gaa enji ganawenjigaazyang.

A long time ago we went to boarding school.

Jibwa maaji kinomaagooyaang, kina g’gii Anishinaabemi eta
gwa.

Before going to school, we spoke Anishinaabemowin only.

Gaawiin n’gii bgidnigoosiimi wii Anishinaabemyang kino-
maagegamigong miinwa

We weren’t allowed to speak Anishinaabemowin while at
school or

gojing ba nakamigaziiyaang.

outside while we were playing.

Miidash pii ba ganagwaayaang neyab kinomaagegamigong
miidash gii pashazhegwayaang.

Then when we were let back in school we were strapped.

N’gii windamawaa n’goos gaa zhewebsiiyaanh miidash gii
tkwedwed

I did tell my father what happened to me then he answered

“kaa gego ge ezhi naadamawinaamdaa.”

“[there is] no way that I can help you.”⁴

A picture of Stewart with some of the students makes clear how close and yet how far apart the generations can be. As the years passed, English took over and people whose first language was Anishinaabemowin found they had raised children who could not speak the language because corporal punishment taught them to fear both

their own language and the entire educational system. Anishinaabe writer Jim Northrup remembers that “when I came home in the summers and would try to use Ojibwe words and phrases I would be told. . . . Awww, you sound like a white man. And only drunks would speak Ojibwe to us, if we could decipher the words out of the false starts, coughing jags and repetitions.” Clearly, chasms were formed in communities. Professor Shirley Williams explains why boarding school survivors are still treated much like veterans in Native communities today. “I did not join an army but joined young girls and boys who went to an institution to be taught to deny their language and culture—to be assimilated! But I fought hard to keep my language and culture and today I teach the language and culture at a university level” (6).

To sum up the situation, Howard Kimewon confirms that these survivors need to become teachers:

E-shkimaadzijig nda'kinoomawaananig zaam

The young people are being taught by us because

gondag ge-shkiitoojig geyabi wii giigidoowaad epiichi

jaaganewag igo giinwa.

those who are able still to speak now are dying off.⁵

These are the lessons that can be learned through technology, over e-mails, reading *Facebook* posts, and visiting sites established for the exchanges essential to understand the history of language loss. This is the text not in the textbooks. This is the reality of Native American history that extends past Native American Month and stories of the First Thanksgiving. The Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 and the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 changed the face of Indian Education. Today, Native children, like many non-Native children, still attend boarding schools, but those schools are chosen by parents and students and are required to comply with much higher standards. Most tribally operated schools are not boarding schools, and children are allowed to live at home. Additionally, the much smaller number of schools, Flandreau Indian School, for example, employ many Native teachers

and often offer classes in Native language and literature.⁶ However, the government is still involved in education. In 2009 the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) funded 183 elementary and secondary schools and residential programs located on 64 reservations in 23 states serving approximately 42,000 American Indian and Alaska Native students. According to a 2009 report, “The BIE also provides resources and technical assistance to 124 tribally administered schools and 26 tribal colleges and universities, and directly operates two post secondary institutions: Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kans., and the Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute in Albuquerque, N.M.” (Darling 2). The boarding schools never closed, but forms of education have changed considerably. The government no longer aims for assimilation but remains involved in Indian education in a more productive manner.

A second prominent page on the *Noongwa* site is “Lessons,” which archives the curricula used in the University of Michigan classes. Units are organized under the heading “G’wiindamaage’in Waa Ezhi-kidoyin Ikidowinan,” which translates as “telling how words are used.” One recently added techno-feature many students enjoy is the fact that all of the lessons (and the entire site) can be downloaded as MP3 audio files for use on an iPod or other listening device. Many of the lessons still take place as teachers speak, holding chalk while writing on a blackboard. One posted image of a chalkboard shows a translation of Obama’s Spanish speech, “Un Mensaje de Barack Obama.” In an interesting twist of technology, this speech was posted on *dotSUB*, a site for translations, and then the students at the University of Michigan worked to translate the Spanish audio file into a draft of written Anishinaabemowin. Ideas moved fluidly from the site, to the blackboard, back to the site as subtitles. And now anyone can visit the site and select “Ojibwa” from the other thirty-three translations of this iconic election-year speech. Obviously, American ideals are shifting from dominance to diversity.

Noongwa also contains many other cross-referencing links like the one to the Obama translation. In an age of information, it is not finding information that is most important, but knowing which information to use and how to use it. Language learners

need to know how to sift through the many mentions of Anishinaabemowin, Chippewa, Ojibwe, and so forth. The “Resources” are designed to help students, teachers, linguists, and historians see the community of speakers clearly as a divergent group of people using a living language. This is where most of the pedagogy can be found. As you read the excerpted lists below, visualize the network of information that continues to build around the subject of linguistic diversity, language education, and Indigenous languages.

Links to various national and international sources for information:

- Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition, USA
- Society for the Study of the Indigenous Language of the Americas, USA
- American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, USA
- National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages
- National Geographic Enduring Voices project, USA
- National Capital Language Resource Center, USA
- Michigan Department of Education, Lansing, USA
- Ciimaan Language Initiative in Toronto, Ontario, Canada
- Anishinaabemowin-Teg, Wikwemikong Unceded First Nation
- Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Maori: Maori Language Commission, Wellington, New Zealand
- Aha Punana Leo: Hawaiian Language Programs, Hilo, Hawaii

And links to important related publications:

- Annual Stabilizing Indigenous Languages Symposium
- Papers of the Annual Algonquian Conferences
- *Studies in American Indian Literatures*
- Modern Language Association

Clearly, to save a language it takes much more than a village: it takes interdisciplinary support at local, national, and international levels. It is important to recognize that scholars and students in the field of endangered languages are also usually teaching and promoting the

language in which they wish to create. This is like asking the director of the first-year writing program to be the expert in postcolonial literary criticism, Native American literature, and creative writing—simultaneously and in their second language. Additionally, the most fluent teachers I have worked with were and are first-language speakers or boarding school survivors, and likely to have had the least-productive education possible. For many of them, time in school was more like time in prison. Bridges must be built between all of these players in all of these places—and quickly. This is why the “Resources” page also includes links to as many Anishinaabe First Nations as possible.

Lastly, the site has “Community” and “Student Projects” pages. The “Community” page is one where speakers and students can connect language to tradition. The calendar and prayers posted on the site are ones commonly used at public gatherings. For those who want more traditional knowledge, contact information is provided. This balance of respect for both the old and new ways is important. There are no sweats or feathers for sale, no easy ways to appropriate or commodify the language. It is clear the rate of exchange is fluency based upon hours of study. The “Student Projects” page supports the idea that the home of this particular site is within an educational institution. The University of Michigan was founded on land that was a gift from local Native nations. The school has been home to the study of Algonquian languages since 1938, when the Society of America Linguistic Institute hosted a course in field methods, taught by Leonard Bloomfield, that focused on the transcription of stories by Anishinaabe elder Andrew Medler. Since 1973 the language has been offered as one of the many options for study on the campus, and the annual student-run powwow will celebrate its fortieth anniversary in 2012. There is a time for study and a time for spirituality. The history of how these two concepts became related can be traced back to laws that outlawed both religion and language. In 1974 the Native American Religious Freedom Act set the spirit free, and in 1991 the Native American Languages Act allowed the language to follow. For many, they are similar pursuits, and prayers are one of the most-requested texts to the *Noongwa* e-mail box; in

reality, however, the language is only partial preparation for journeys of the spirit.

As noted earlier, the technical components that have taken many shapes over the years are essentially sound and image. Consider the sound and shape of the following phrase: “Chizhaazhaago n’gii zhaabwitoomin zhigiizhewin pii zhibiige yaang.” The soft friction of the “zh” dances in and around a phrase which means, “long ago we saved our language when we wrote.” This phrase should *zhooshkonige* (slide) through the Anishinaabe imagination with the words *zhooniya* (shiny coin), *zhiibii* (to stretch), *zhoobizi* (to be tempted), *zhigwa* (now), *zheba* (this morning), *zhawenim* (to bless), *zhigweyaabi* (to aim), and others. To recognize, repeat, and perpetuate these patterns of sound and meaning requires a living language, both heard and seen, both recorded and written. Not all of the words are related, but some are, and those relationships are lost if the language is not fully understood.

Today, recording is the first and most essential part of language work. Writing can always be done later, but getting the audio files is incredibly important. Digital, full-spectrum recordings are the standard now, but always there is a need to be aware of data migration. No archive of sound can be left untended. The wax cylinders of the 1880s were replaced with vinyl records, and microphones and electronic amplifiers arrived in the 1940s. Sound recordings became electronic and magnetic in the 1950s, and with the arrival of the computer in the 1960s, rapid change proceeded to give users an increasing amount of control—and an increasing amount of responsibility. Today I would recommend a Marantz digital recorder to be edited on a MacBook using Dreamweaver, Final Cut, and AdobePro, but those names will change. There is not much that can be said that won’t be out of date in days or months, but the admonition to take time to keep up with audio standards will always be current.

Beyond the sound is the written record, which offers a silent alternative for learning. In recent years orality has been privileged, even exoticized, yet still often treated as a less-than-literary artifact that can only be provided by an authentic first-language speaker.

Oral narratives are not taught in the Classics department, despite being similar in age and endurance, and the gift of oral storytelling, if undocumented in print, would not be considered worthy of tenure. The currency of academia for centuries has been print and publication. For this reason, more speakers of Indigenous languages need to live in both the world of sound and the world of sight. Sounds must be transcribed, print resources must be created, and Anishinaabemowin should move into the literate vernacular of e-mail, blogs, and texts. This of course leads to debates about orthography, which are too extensive to recount here. For a complete summary of spelling options and opinions from more than one hundred communities, visit the *Noongwa* “Resource” page and read Pat Ningewance’s posted bilingual conference notes of “Naasaab Izhi-anishinaabebii”igeng: A Conference to find a Common Anishinaabemowin Writing System.” In the end, communities agreed to move in the direction preferred by students while still retaining some dialect variation. Some still say standardization leads to a loss in individuality. However, lack of production or conflicting resources leads to a loss of language. Instruction is more efficient when students know what to expect. At the University of Michigan, several students who relied heavily on standards early in the learning cycle adapted to regional dialects quickly after becoming proficient.

Language is transfer—thoughts into words, words into conversation, and students into teachers. If this cycle is broken, the language falters, begins to skip generations, loses relevance, lacks accuracy or complexity, and is only rarely revived. The exchange of information created through the use of technology has a beneficial impact on the outcome. Victoria Rau, an instructor of the endangered Austronesian language Yami, confirms that language teachers who integrate e-learning in their classrooms “have relinquished some of their power and authority, not to the computer, but to the students themselves” (Rau and Yang 14).

Through the use of technology, knowledge moves from one place to another as easily as speech. Old jokes about the “moccasin telephone” were told to demonstrate that some things about talk-

ing never change regardless of the tools we use to record sound and produce writing. But for the Anishinaabeg, some things did change. A public language became private. It was guarded and shared in the kitchen, at ceremonies, and in the laughter of old men and old women. There were words for telephone, Americans, and car, but these words, and their lack of evolution, tell us something about when the language began to atrophy. The word for telephone is still *giigido biiapkonse* (talking wire), and Americans are *chimookimanag* (long knives). Today's children need a way to say *nd'zhibiige giigido-nigansing* (I am writing on the talking tool), and the same children might not want to call a peer, or perhaps one of their own parents a *chimook*. In July 2009, a working session at the Minnesota Humanities Center produced the *Ojibwe Vocabulary Project* because "a language lives when it can be used for everything in life, not just certain parts of life" (Treuer and Papp 5). While there may still be a need for more words, this 125-page list is a start and represents a collaborative community effort to look to the future.

To keep up with changes in vocabulary and rhetoric, we need to keep talking and stay connected. *Noongwa* is connected to an interactive *Facebook* page, and through these mediums fluent speakers find reasons to standardize spelling and students can ask questions or watch as debates unfold over a series of posts. I once offhandedly remarked in a *Facebook* status update "n'gii izhaa Wisconsin." To my delight, a day later I found a reply from James Shawana, an elder from the largest reserve on Manitoulin Island. He shared his definition of the word *Wisconsin*, saying, "pii gego weta naandek, mii-dash aasaabziiyin, wiisaconde kidok" ("when something looks like it's wet, they say 'wisconde'").⁷ A month later, he gifted readers by sharing a short, untranslated poem, "Mino Gizhebaawin."

Nongo, kizheb, aabiji mino kizhebaawin.

Jiigbiig daa'aa.

Noondwaa Pichi.

Noondaan biish.

Noogkaamgaa zhishki.

Mishomis, Giizis, waase'waachge.⁸

Facebook connects the most unlikely and the most alike individuals, who often chime in from far-distant places to share a lesson, idea, or a thought for the day. We often use a literal name for *Facebook*, calling it “Dengwe-mazinaigan,” but perhaps it would be more correct if we simply called it “Boochiwe-ankwat,” “The Chat Cloud.” With shifts to cloud computing, where networked servers save data in space no longer limited to individual hard drives, it might be best to use a word that more accurately explains what we do. It may seem like idle chatter, and even that would be valuable practice, but these exchanges are often much more.

Sometimes direct dialogue can shatter long-held linguistic stereotypes, as happened when two speakers, who thought they might not understand each other, posted online. Their realization that two previously assumed separate dialects of Potawatomi were incredibly close was later presented by Michael Zimmerman Jr. at a conference on identity and technology.

Naanoomaya, ingo Nishnaabe ezhinkaazod Justin Neely,
anake (maage)

A little while ago, a man named Justin Neely, or

Zaagenibi, gii bi zhibii'amaw'id miinwaa gii objitood

“Bode'wadmimowe'n” eta. Pii gii

“ouside of water,” wrote to me and was using Potawatomi
language only. When

vnakom'ag, gii objitooyaan “Ojibwemowin” miinwaa geyabi
nsostaw'id.

I responded to him, I used Ojibwe language and still he
understood me.

Noongwa, gd'ayaanan kchi-nendamo makakonsan miinwaa
objitoonayaang nindan

Today, all of us have computers and we use them

ensa giizhigag, aanind gegagwa gabe giizhigad objitoon-
awaad, debwemigad sa.

each day, some almost all day, truth be told

... noongwa gd'aayaanaa Dengwe-Mazinigan miinwaa
 ... today we have Facebook and

ensa giizhigad, niibina bimaadizijig objitoowaad maanda
 Anishinaabemowin.

each day, many people use this Nishnaabe language. (Zimmerman 2)

Much remains to be done, and this is where technology can be almost mythically effective for those willing to work hard and keep learning. As computational powers of transcription and compilation increase, so does the ability to teach more information to more people in a more efficient manner. Right now, curriculum can be placed in files, archived on a site like Dropbox, and all the others who use the same pages are alerted to new material, updates, or changes. There is no longer a need for teachers to spend precious time creating introductory material. Several teachers in Michigan are using this technology now to bring more thoroughly tested material to students all over the state. To understand students today, consider becoming one of the 3,530,689 viewers of "A Vision of Students Today," which explains exactly how much time students spend online and in class—in fact, often both at the same time (Wesch). The video, which was prepared by more than two hundred college undergraduates, challenges teachers to teach differently. Suddenly the word "interdisciplinary" is no longer enough.

If Nanabozhoo were among us (and he might be) working to keep the language alive, he would be a hacker, a gamer, a half-human, half shape-shifting avatar. And he would be interested in collective intelligence, game theory, and digital media. The Anishinaabe word for "illness" is *akozi*, to be out of balance, which is a reminder that in life, and in the study of language, there is a time to take things apart and a time to put them back together. Cognitive science and game theory are two ways scholars are working to understand the multiple simultaneous levels of learning. According to Professor Thomas J. Malone, director of the Center for Collective Intelligence at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, "new technologies are now making it possible to organize groups in very

new ways, in ways that have never been possible before in the history of humanity . . . better ways to organize businesses, to conduct science, to run governments, and—perhaps most importantly—to help solve the problems we face as society and as a planet.” The problem faced by more than two hundred Anishinaabe nations is language. Theories of collective intelligence and gaming provide new ways for students to co-create a new community of speakers. As game theorist Jane McGonigal notes, “games, with their iterative real-time redesign, are perfectly structured to provide scaffolding challenges—a key aspect to mastering new modes of problem-solving and cultural participation.”

While this may sound futuristic, numerous projects that apply these ideas are currently under way. The University of Michigan recently funded “Anishinaabemoyaang Kchi-Saabakiing: Anishinaabe on the Big Net,” a project to reprogram the interactive, online multi-player game *Neverwinter Nights* to run a version based on Anne Dunn’s story “Snowbird and the Wiindigo” (Dunn 30). Stripping the landscape of barons, knights, and medieval taverns; programming characters to speak Anishinaabemowin; and finding ways for characters to shift shapes was postcolonial socioacupuncture by all definitions. In a similar act of undoing the Western and making the Indigenous visible, the *Gibagadinamaagoom* website works to revitalize the language and “empower future generations” by featuring *chi-aayaayag* (wisdom keepers) telling stories and teaching their own history, in their own language, and on their own cultural terms.⁹ *Ojibwemodaa* is an immersion software program that uses contextual video conversations and engaging multimedia games to immerse the user in the language. Grammar, vocabulary, reading, listening, and pronunciation skills are emphasized through activities that provide opportunities for language investigation, skill building, and role-play.¹⁰

Not every project provides lesson in the language. Some do the work of healing and bringing the community of learners together. One such exchange is a blog created for the Shingwauk Project. Shingwauk Hall opened as a residential school in 1873. In 1970 it closed and became Algoma University. In 2002 a “talking circle” was created

online so that “the public, may become more aware of the vast history and tradition represented by the Shingwauk buildings and site.” Site creators say, “We hope that this Web Site will contribute to public enlightenment and will enhance awareness of the trials First Nations Peoples have faced in their struggle to maintain their cultural, philosophic, and spiritual identities.”¹¹ Visitors to the site find pictures, political manifestos, poems, legal details—all the information a witness might need to understand what happened in the boarding schools. Yet, it is one short note between a young girl and older woman that best demonstrates the power of a vernacular exchange:

SHKIKWESENS: I am in grade 7, I’m in this computer class and Ms. Van is making the whole class look up residential schools, I heard all these rumors about Shingwauk, was it dat bad? anyways peace.

MINDIMOYE: I am a survivor of 3 Indian Residential Schools which I attended from the age of 8–15 from 1946 to 1954. There are so many feelings of sadness, anger, guilt, and regret of the wasted years that no one could ever imagine except for those of us who experienced abuse at the hands of staff, and older students who became abusers themselves as a result of abuse they received from staff members. My great-grand parents, grandparents, and parents were all residential school survivors. My children attended an orphanage as a result of my alcoholism and drug abuse. So, my family of residential school abuse is intergenerational. I wonder how my children, and grandchildren can be compensated because I only recently began my healing journey after 49 years of living in pure hell while keeping those secrets of abuse for all those years.

No textbook or teacher can replace the honesty of an elder, and the exchange of language is out of our control.

Linguist Walter Ong has said “technology can enrich the human psyche, enlarge the human spirit, set it free, intensify its interior life” (29). Teaching endangered languages through technology could even provide a rebuttal to some of Ong’s early work by demonstrating that

literacy and orality have an equal capacity to provide consciously interpretive data. We need to teach the language at a level of fluency that allows students to become scholars who can respond to, and reshape, the critical arguments of our time. Perhaps the young girl in Ms. Van's class will become a teacher, a poet, or a mother who speaks Anishinaabemowin with her children. To balance the views of a linguist, consider the words of Acoma poet and scholar Simon Ortiz:

When you regard the sacred nature of language, then you realize that you are part of it and it is a part of you, and you are not necessarily in control of it, and that if you do control some of it, it is not in your exclusive control. Upon this realization, I think there are all possibilities of expression and perception which become available. (80)

We are not in control, and every possibility exists. Languages live and languages die. Words, stories, patterns of understanding, and fragile arcs of collective memory rise and set like the sun and moon. There is no magic sword; no *mookiman* is *chi* enough to do the work of the human mind. The weaponry of knowledge is always only a shadow of the imagination. Long knives, long wires, even wireless branches of data only slash forward making space, leaving the real work to the human mind. Cognitive scientists can tell us about complex adaptive systems of language learning. Gerald Vizenor can give us words like *survivance* and *socioacupuncture*.¹² Jim Northrup can be a US Marine and the keeper of the Kiiwenz Campgrounds, where we hope language classes will be held, regularly as rice camp, with the changing of the seasons. The question remaining is whether we can, as students, master the technical detail needed to keep the language alive. Some say we are losing elders too quickly, yet those who take time to look are finding them, and becoming them, in unexpected ways.

NOTES

1. Two of the most popular summary sourcebooks for language revitalization are Reyhner's *Education and Language Restoration* and Hinton

and Hale's *The Green Book of Language Revitalization*. Both include many quotes and case studies describing programs aimed at preliterate children.

2. Sheldon, personal e-mail, May 15, 2011.

3. <http://www.umich.edu/~ojibwe/news/repatriation/repatriation.html>.

4. <http://www.umich.edu/~ojibwe/news/bennett/bennett.html>.

5. <http://www.umich.edu/~ojibwe/news/alumni/alumni.html>.

6. For Flandreau Indian School see <http://www.fis.bia.edu/>.

7. Shawana, *Facebook* post, June 9, 2008.

8. Shawana, *Facebook* post, July 15, 2008.

9. See <http://gibagadinamaagoom.info/>.

10. See <http://www.ojibwemovies.com/index.html>.

11. See <http://www.shingwauk.auc.ca>.

12. Vizenor's term *survivance* is found in the title of his book *Manifest Manners: Postindian Warriors of Survivance*; the term *socioacupuncture* is from the title to his essay "Socioacupuncture: Mythic Reversals and the Striptease in Four Scenes."

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Ceremony Earth

Digitizing Silko's Novel for Students
of the Twenty-first Century

RICK MOTT

You pointed out a very important dimension of the land and the Pueblo people's relation to the land when you said it was as if the land was telling the stories in the novel. That is it exactly, but it is so difficult to convey this relationship without sounding like Margaret Fuller or some other Transcendentalist. When I was writing *Ceremony* I was so terribly devastated by being away from the Laguna country that the writing was my way of re-making the place, the Laguna country, for myself.

Leslie Marmon Silko, *The Delicacy and Strength of Lace*

Many students I have taught, especially those who are non-Native, get frustrated when they read Leslie Silko's canonical Native American novel, *Ceremony*. Not only do they struggle with Silko's disruptions of linear temporality and her collapsing of binary oppositions, but they also struggle with the novel's geographic and cultural location, which is wholly unfamiliar to most of them; because the novel takes place on the Laguna Pueblo in west-central New Mexico, students have trouble understanding the unfamiliar landscape, cosmology, and social conventions integral to the narrative. To help students better understand the novel, I offer them a variety of multimedia artifacts, including video, audio, static images, 360-degree panoramas, and traditional texts. Because *Ceremony* is so integrally connected with landscape and location, I use Keyhole Markup Language (KML) to attach these artifacts to specific geographic loca-

tions—using longitude and latitude—that correspond to places and events in *Ceremony*. Students open these files—which I have collectively called *Ceremony Earth*—in any geobrowser, the most popular of which is *Google Earth*.¹ Students then either follow a predefined tour or navigate to a specific geographic point, open the digital contextual material located there, and read, watch, listen to, experience, and interpret the background information designed to help them better understand the whole of Silko's story.

In this essay I will provide background and context for this location-based multimedia project, including reasons why digital literary artifacts attached to specific geographic points on geobrowsers are so appropriate for teaching *Ceremony*. In doing so, I will investigate the Puebloan webs of meaning inherent in *Ceremony*'s spatial organization, all of which originate in the location-based discourse of Laguna cultural conventions. I will try to always stay aware of my position as a non-Native academic with largely northern European roots, and the inevitable concomitant postcolonial exigencies that go with my positionality.

Treating digital pedagogy as a mash-up (a mix of different elements), I will also discuss students' development of a secondary literacy as they learn about the protagonist, Tayo—a returning World War II POW who painfully survived the Bataan Death March and suffers from what we now call Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)—and his reconnection with the landscape, which plays an essential role in his process of healing. After describing the purpose and function of geobrowsers in general and *Google Earth* in particular, I will lay down some of the structural building blocks upon which *Ceremony Earth* has been designed and constructed, including an overview of KML. Finally, in order to give readers an idea of how *Google Earth* can be used as a pedagogical tool for a literature class, I will provide an overview of the materials available on *Ceremony Earth*.

WEBS OF CONNECTION

Beyond the fact that *Ceremony* is a difficult novel set in an unfamiliar culture, why should we choose it as the subject of a critically con-

structed, multimedia set of pedagogical materials? After all, students and scholars read many difficult, unfamiliar novels. Why is this one more important? As it turns out, *Ceremony* lends itself well to Internet application because of the structure and style of Silko's writing. From her use of prose, poetry, and photography in *Storyteller* (1981)—in which the arrangement of the photographs suggests the circular design of oral tradition (Hirsch 2)—to her nonlinear construction of temporality and characterization in *Ceremony* (Bell 47), Silko constantly tries to transgress the limitations of paper-based materials. As James Ruppert notes, Silko successfully constructs a transcendent *Ceremony* “approximat[ing] a holistic vision close to the Laguna experience of the world and oral tradition” (81). Since Silko recognizes the value of holistic interpretation, apart from the limited understanding granted through linear analysis, her works provide abundant opportunities for inter-, extra-, hyper-, and contextual exploration.

Ceremony also serves as an appropriate subject of digital exploration, because Silko's explanations of Pueblo storytelling perfectly forecast in 1981 the then-unknown structure and function of the Internet. To cite the most obvious parallel, she uses the metaphor of the spiderweb to characterize the construction and organization of Laguna stories. Rather than narrating events and descriptions along a linear timeline emphasizing cause-and-effect relationships, Laguna storytellers, including Silko, weave together seemingly disparate elements while jumping back and forth in place and time. Laguna stories, like contemporary North American digital culture, act like mash-ups because they integrate materials from many different sources, constructing a narrative that lies beyond many of the linear constraints of time and space.

Consequently, geobrowsers and the Internet provide the perfect medium for a nonlinear, location-based, multimedia critical analysis of *Ceremony* because, as Silko notes when explaining Pueblo storytelling, “as with the [spider's] web, the structure will emerge as it is made, and you must simply listen and trust, as the Pueblo people do, that meaning will be made” (“Language” 2). Indeed, when Silko calls a member of her audience for *Ceremony* a “listener-reader”

(Coltelli 141), she asks her readers to employ the same sort of interactive agency they enjoy as they navigate a geobrowser; as in the case of an oral performance, the *text* changes with each reading—depending on the context and interpretation—and meaning and structure emerge as the visitor negotiates the geobrowser landscape and accesses the digital contextual materials.

THE VALUE OF MULTIMEDIA PEDAGOGICAL TOOLS

Those digital contextual materials offer students the ability to synthesize widely divergent data across multiple datasets. In their collection titled *The Dialogic Classroom: Teachers Integrating Computer Technology, Pedagogy, and Research*, Jeffrey Galin and Joan Latchaw explore the advantages of using web-based, multimedia educational tools. Because the web transcends many of the constraints of traditional classroom materials, the authors contend, it encourages holistic problem solving because it “cuts across traditional boundaries, merging, for instance, the library, classroom, and movie theater by providing an ideal environment for associating disparate bits of information, a skill that often eludes students” (49). Reinforcing the advantages of synthesis, Andy Hoffman of *Education Week* claimed in November 2008 that the convergence of pedagogical possibilities realized on the Internet presages education in the future: “Digital education is a Google ‘mash-up,’ combining data from more than one source into a single integrated tool. . . . Educational mash-ups will define the classroom of the future, and right now, people are wiring a colossal learning mash-up.”

Similarly, Joan Huntley and Joan Latchaw believe that the Internet fosters students’ critical-thinking skills because digital tools in these nonlinear, exploratory environments “encourage students to find their own answers, construct further questions, and offer new insights. Thus a particular type of critical thinking (analogical, relational) is being promoted.” Not only does the linking function of geobrowsers and the Internet allow students to navigate through diverse multimedia materials, various points of view, and divergent nodes of thought, but the geobrowser usually *requires* students to

make successive interactive navigational choices;² in other words, students control their own explorations for meaning.

Because students explore at their own pace and follow their own path, they eventually develop what Stuart Moulthrop calls a secondary literacy. This secondary literacy—as compared to the primary literacies of listening, speaking, reading, and writing—requires a more sophisticated and creative recognition of hermeneutics, the study of interpretation: “Hypertext rhetoric must take into account more than just the ordering of language into structures and genres inherited from orality or print literacy. It must also address a more complicated meta-management in which the user modifies ordering processes themselves . . . a secondary literacy” (qtd. in Rosenberg 9).

When given the opportunity, students can begin to understand the patterns and relationships inherent in any web of information. As they learn to recognize the connections within and between these patterns and relationships—as they learn to synthesize the incoming information—students begin to formulate creative, complex ideas; seek their own answers; and share unconventional skill sets. As Galin and Latchaw point out, the web provides the best medium yet for encouraging such a positive and effective educational experience: “With its multiple cross-links and references, hypertext is an ideal environment for preventing cognitive overload, supporting student-centered learning, and encouraging associative thinking” (49). In effect, hypertext in the medium of a geobrowser *requires* students to make interactive navigational choices—students control their own explorations for meaning. Consequently, as students refine their skills in secondary literacy they learn about the novel in a manner unattainable through traditional textual materials.

CYCLIC DESIGNS AND CONTINUUM

Most readers of *Ceremony*, having grown up outside of New Mexico and thus unfamiliar with the novel's temporal, spatial, and epistemological representations, may not understand Silko's innumerable references to Indigenous culture. However, because hundreds of critical articles on the novel have been published in academic jour-

nals since the publication of *Ceremony* in 1977, students and scholars have long had a variety of topics, styles, and methods of analysis from which to choose when exploring Silko's work. Although I offer *Ceremony Earth* as a source of supplementary information to the wide body of extant Silko material, *Ceremony Earth* does offer spatial, visual, and audial information that traditional text cannot replicate.

As an example of an important thread within Silko criticism that also ties in directly with my motivation to employ geobrowsers as pedagogical tools, Silko's non-Western timeline, as well as her hybridized spiritual, emotional, and geographical landscapes, fundamentally underlie many misunderstandings about the novel; in fact, when I teach *Ceremony* my students often comment on their difficulty with the narrative because of the confusing jumps and gaps in time and space. Because Silko's incorporation of nonlinear time and space into the narrative of *Ceremony* confuses readers, many critics have attempted to clarify her spatiotemporal motivation and method. When Silko explains to the non-Native audience that "the structure of Pueblo expression resembles something like a spider's web—with many little threads radiating from a center, crisscrossing each other" ("Language" 52), she offers a reason why a character's geographical location may suddenly change in mid-thought by thousands of miles (e.g., Tayo's sudden transference to the Bataan Death March after he has already returned to the Laguna Pueblo). The metaphor of the spiderweb might also explain why a character's temporal orientation can unexpectedly shift by many years (e.g., Tayo's frequent postwar flashbacks to prewar scenes with Uncle Josiah). Paula Gunn Allen calls this nonlinear movement "ceremonial time," in which "events are structured in a way that emphasizes the motion inherent in the interplay of person and event" (148).

The time shifts Silko employs disorient many first-time readers of *Ceremony* who are more accustomed to linear timelines that include a past, present, and future all moving along in one direction. Moreover, while Silko is disrupting our temporal understanding of Tayo's story, she simultaneously distorts our spatial under-

standing. Because Silko challenges our preconceived notions of time and space, geobrowsers, which transcend these traditional temporal and spatial limitations and allow the user to navigate to any portion of the globe in seconds, offer a useful tool for understanding Tayo's confusing narrative.

Robert C. Bell, who published the "first important examination of the novel's symbolic circular pattern and tripartite structure" (DiNome 240) in the *American Indian Quarterly* symposium issue of 1979, focuses on the hoop transformation rite at the midpoint of the story. Emphasizing the repetitive, cyclical patterns of Tayo's journey to health with its concurrent reiterations of myth and ritual, Bell explores Silko's nonlinear representation of events: "Through repetition and recapitulation, the novel itself describes a circular design going into and out of the hoop ceremony at the center of the book. . . . This figural design breaks down the very notion of past, present, and future" (49).

Other critics have also investigated the relationship between the nonlinear nature of Silko's narrative and Laguna representations of cyclical time. While ranging wider than Bell in topic and territory, Louis Owens identifies the spatiotemporal significance of the hoop ceremony and claims that "with the circle of the hoop, Silko suggests the continuum, the cosmos, the Native American of time and space and wholeness" (176–77). Owens uses the physical and textual example of the hoop—a visual, literal circle representing the infinite interconnection of all things, including time—to illustrate his notion of *Ceremony* as a "remembering, a putting together of past, present, and future into a coherent fabric of timeless identity" (167).

EXPLORING AND EXPLOITING THE LAGUNA LANDSCAPE

Laurie Piper makes this move beyond linearity explicit when she emphasizes the importance of landscape and spatiality in the novel: "*Ceremony* necessitates the reader's reorientation from a text-based reading to a spatially organized reading" (487). As Piper sees it, those who approach the novel from a geographical and spatial

understanding will better understand the underlying story. Reinforcing Piper's notions of spatial understanding, Robert Nelson, former editor of *Studies in American Indian Literatures* and a well-known Silko critic, points to the importance of comprehending the landscape of the Laguna: "We do not have to know, in advance of reading the novel, the special patterns of thought that characterize Laguna thinking; it is enough to know only how the land itself is configured in order to gain access into the world of the novel" (13).

Indeed, the land itself is integral to the story of Tayo and his ceremony of healing. Because, as Gunn Allen points out, "Tayo's illness is a result of separation from the ancient unity of person with land, and his healing is a result of a recognition of this oneness" (234), those who read the novel will better understand its messages if they have some understanding of the Laguna landscape.

Despite the unique opportunity, however, that *Ceremony* and *Ceremony Earth* offer for thematically oriented explorations of the Laguna landscape, readers and users must understand and engage critically with the exploitation that has long occurred on those sacred lands. From the tragedy of the Jackpile uranium mine, located a few miles north of Old Laguna on the way to Pagate, to the less tragic—but no less destructive—mining, logging, and other uses of the land that take place elsewhere in the novel and in real life, readers should understand the power dynamics that happen outside our purview. As Sharon Holm reminds us, we must be always already vigilant of historical socioeconomic realities, competing and contradictory ideologies, and their cumulative effects upon Native sovereignty:

While critics assert the undeniable and resilient spiritual relationship that the Laguna enjoy with their land as well as their unbroken physical proximity to it, irrevocable socioeconomic and geophysical changes determined by the emerging ideologies of late capitalism in the form of mining and logging operations in the novel are the tensions that both underpin and unsettle the view of the land and Silko's visions of Native sovereignty in the text. (246)

Remaining respectful of differing cultural mores and expectations, those who read *Ceremony* can seek more complex answers to humans' relationship with the land than the simple "one with nature" paradigm that offers an illusory solution to the intractable problems that confront people today. As I will explore in the next section, while *Ceremony Earth* may help readers better understand the Laguna landscape, these digital tools can be misused and ultimately damaging. Consequently, I have been careful to remain respectful of Laguna privacy and Laguna sovereignty: the photographs and videos I offer on *Ceremony Earth* have either been previously published and are publicly available (e.g., through the US Library of Congress), or those materials have been recorded off pueblo lands.

GEOBROWSERS AND GOOGLE EARTH

Now that I have provided an overview of how and why students can, in theory, benefit from exploring spatially oriented pedagogical materials for Silko's *Ceremony*—keeping in mind the always already danger of exploitation and colonialism inherent in any presentation of Native beliefs by an outsider such as myself—I will next explain geobrowsers in general using *Google Earth* as one example. Finally, I demonstrate the potential of *Ceremony Earth*, pointing to specific applications of regular and panoramic photography, videos, historical maps, textual explanations, and recorded tours.

Within the last several years, a number of new applications, generally called geobrowsers, have appeared. These geobrowsers, including *Google Earth*, *Google Maps*, *Bing Maps* (formerly *Microsoft Virtual Earth*), *NASA World Wind*, and *ArcGIS Explorer* access satellite and aerial imagery and represent that imagery on two- and three-dimensional depictions of the globe. Because geobrowsers display georeferenced³ materials in two- or three-dimensional environments, because they are free, and because they can be embedded in other web applications (like traditional web browsers), geobrowsers "have attracted millions of users amongst the general public, who are seduced by the ease with which they can zoom from space right down to street level" (Sandvik 4).

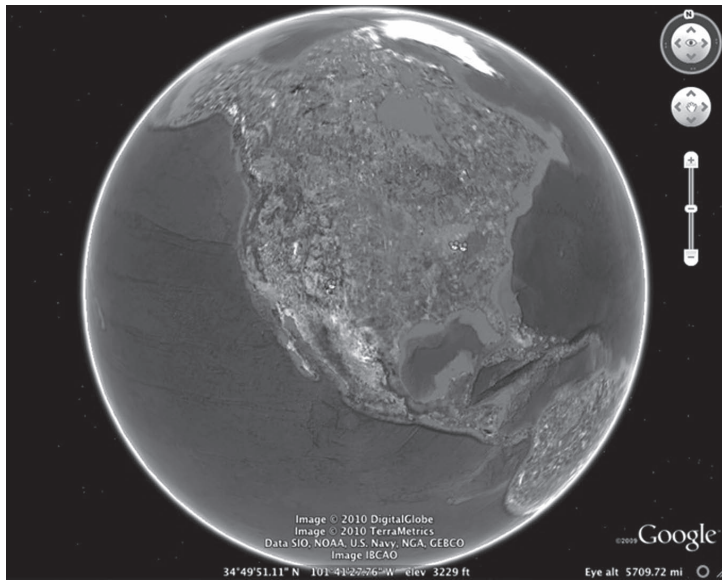


Fig. 1. Overview of North America as seen on *Google Earth*. Image copyright © 2010 DigitalGlobe. Image copyright © 2010 TerraMetrics. Data SIO, NOAA, US Navy, NGA, GEBCO. Image IBCAO.

Because *Google Earth* (see fig. 1), one of the more popular and widely used geobrowsers, is described as a “virtual globe, map and geographic information program” (“Google”) that offers users the opportunity to navigate spatially in 2D and 3D computer environments, it presents a geospatial platform from which to carry out a number of multimedia, spatially oriented tasks. Because users can attach digital data to specific geographic points, *Google Earth* provides a unique teaching tool for students reading novels set in unfamiliar locations or cultures. Beyond a simple textual description or photograph, *Google Earth* “maps the Earth by the superimposition of images obtained from satellite imagery, aerial photography and GIS 3D globe” (“Google”). Upon this geospatial platform, *Google Earth* then permits users to attach their own photos, videos, audio, and other digital data using KML.

In addition to allowing users to attach their own materials to specific geographic points, *Google Earth* allows users to record and share guided tours. Using the "Record Tour" function in *Google Earth*, users can record their "flights" across the landscape as well as their access to various digital contextual materials, such as photos, movies, and recordings. By including voice-over commentary in their tours, users can construct a narrative—which might provide a compelling reason for exploring the materials—by describing the relevance and details of each place and each component.

KEYHOLE MARKUP LANGUAGE

Although most functions of *Google Earth* that would be needed by those teaching a novel—including embedding photographs, videos, audio, text, and recorded tours—are relatively easily performed by clicking a few icons in the free version of the *Google Earth* application, users and designers would benefit from understanding KML, the markup language that manipulates *Google Earth* and other standards-compliant geobrowsers. Originally developed by Keyhole, Inc.⁴ and named after the military reconnaissance satellite system originally launched in 1976 ("Marble"), KML is a schema designed "for expressing geographic annotation and visualization" (Wilson); an international standard of the Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC); an XML-based language; open-source; and designed to work with "existing and future web-based online and mobile maps (2d) and earth browsers (3d)" (Wilson), including *Google Earth*.

In short, "KML encodes what to show in a [geo]browser, and how to show it" (Wilson). When users click the icons on the user interface of *Google Earth*, KML is the code that the application writes. To ensure adequate distribution, KML documents and their related images "may be compressed using the ZIP format into KMZ archives [that can be] shared by e-mail, hosted locally for sharing within a private Internet, or hosted on a web server" (Wilson). Because KML can be so easily compressed and distributed, and because *Google Earth* and KML can be embedded in other web applications—including traditional web browsers—a large poten-

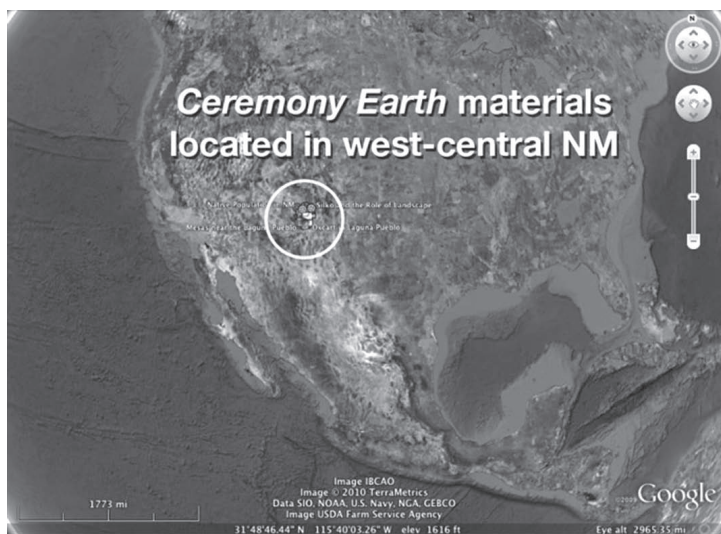


Fig. 2. Graphic showing where *Ceremony Earth* materials are located within North America. The large, white labels do not appear in *Ceremony Earth*; they were later added in Adobe *Photoshop* for the purposes of this paper. Image IBCAO. Image copyright © 2010 TerraMetrics. Data SIO, NOAA, US Navy, NGA, GEBCO. Image USDA Farm Service Agency.

tial audience exists who might want to participate in spatially oriented explorations of literature and related topics.

To their credit, Google offers a plethora of educational materials for learning KML, most in a variety of multimedia formats.⁵ Moreover, similar to HTML, with which many people are familiar, “KML uses a tag-based structure with nested elements and attributes” (Wilson). Unlike HTML, however, KML is based on the XML standard, which means that developers can attach robust metadata to their materials. That metadata can include anything from defining the subject of the materials—in terms of who, what, when, where, why, and how—to identifying who recorded the data—also in terms of who, what, when, where, why, and how—thus providing more usable information for users.



Fig. 3. A look at some of the embedded digital literary tools available in *Ceremony Earth*. This screen shot was taken from forty-six miles above the Laguna Pueblo in west-central New Mexico; large labels are added. Image NMRGIS. Copyright © 2010 Google. Image US Geological Survey. Image copyright © 2010 DigitalGlobe.



Fig. 4. A closer look at the digital literary tools available in Budville and Cubero. Image NMRGIS. Image copyright © 2011 DigitalGlobe. Copyright © 2011 Google.

CEREMONY EARTH

Having explored the potential of geobrowsers and the basics of KML, we now turn to a brief overview of *Ceremony Earth*, which is written in KML and includes embedded videos, photographs, maps, graphics, and text. Once users open the *Ceremony Earth* KML file in *Google Earth*, they generally have three choices.⁶ To begin to explore the embedded materials, users can (1) click on any of the choices in the *Places* window, (2) open up a tour (which I describe below), or (3) zoom in to the west-central part of New Mexico and click on an embedded icon (see fig. 2).

As users fly in from space and zoom closer to ground level, additional *Ceremony Earth* icons continue to become visible. From an altitude of forty-six miles, users can discern groupings of embedded icons around the Laguna Pueblo (see the bottom middle of fig. 3), the towns of Cubero and Budville, and Tse'pina. As users continue to zoom into the area around Budville and Cubero, New Mexico, they discover a series of embedded photographs and maps all relating in some way to that particular area (see fig. 4). From Tayo's drinking escapades to his encounters with Night Swan, from his talks with Josiah to his memories of the distant but oncoming thunder, Cubero holds an important place for Tayo in the spiderweb of the novel, and some of those associations are manifested in the digital materials available on *Ceremony Earth*.

Figure 4 also provides a convenient opportunity to point out the power of prerecorded tours in *Ceremony Earth*. The Budville/Cubero tour could begin with a visit to high-resolution photographs of the Budville Trading Company on Route 66 and the Dixie Tavern next door (see fig. 5) with a discussion of Tayo's drinking escapades while going "up the line" to visit the bars along old Route 66. The next stop on the tour could be photographs depicting some of the street and house scenes in Cubero, which is just a mile or so up the road from Budville, to discuss the importance of Night Swan, the presence of Lalo's Bar, and the progression of Tayo's healing ceremony in the narrative.

In his mythical quest, Tayo not only associates the spotted cattle



Fig. 5. The Dixie Tavern in Budville with Tse'pina in the background.
Copyright © 2010 Google.

with Cubero but returns yet again to Cubero after one of his drinking sprees with Harley. Although he had been making his way to Lalo's, he finds the bar closed and sits and leans against the wall instead. Staring at the building where Night Swan used to live, Tayo notices how the building and the landscape are merging together to become one and the same, with the adobe bricks "beginning to lose their square shape, taking on the softer contours of the mesas and hills" (108). Tayo begins to feel more comfortable and calm as he feels himself and Cubero begin to merge with the land (Nelson 292).

From the street scenes in Cubero, our tour could take us to look at the scanned images of an old Spanish map of the area (see fig. 9) while the narrator talks about Night Swan's and Cubero's important connections to Mexico and Old Spain, and the affirming hybridity of Tayo's spotted cattle and their association with the direction south. Finally, the tour could take us to the photos of the extinct volcanic cone on the edge of town—while the narrative refers to



Fig. 6. A view of Tse'pina from Cubero. Copyright © 2010 Google.

Tse'pina's active volcanic history and her sacred associations for at least four Indigenous tribes—Laguna, Acoma, Zuni, and Navajo—and we could finish the tour by viewing the photograph of a blue-tinted Tse'pina as taken from Cubero, just as Tayo would have seen her in the novel as he listens to the fertile thunder rumbling in the distance, signaling the end of the spiritually destructive drought.

In the photograph of the Dixie Tavern (see fig. 5) you can see Tse'pina in the background, neatly lining up with the actual silhouette of the mountain on the horizon of the satellite imagery. *Google Earth* allows users to “fly into” these 3D, high-resolution photographs and explore the landscape in far more detail.

Figure 6 offers users an idea of what Tse'pina looked like to Tayo when he gazed at the mountain from Cubero. While the blue tint associated with Tse'pina may be difficult to detect in this photograph, users can see how well the mountain aligns with the underlying satellite imagery, and, more importantly, why the mountain is referred to as “Woman Veiled in Clouds” among the Laguna people.

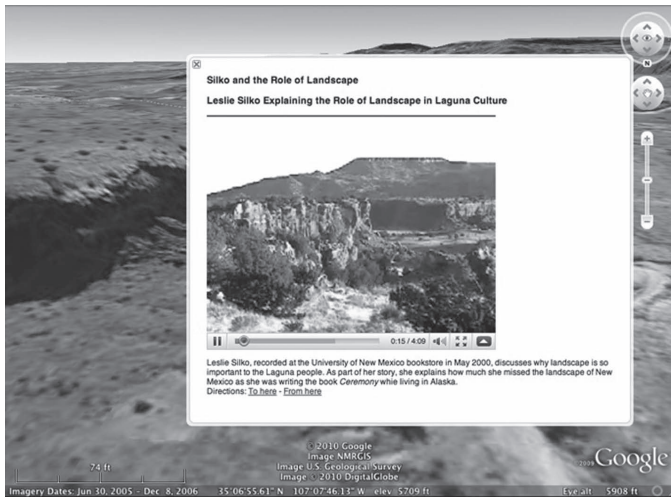


Fig. 7. An embedded video clip of the area around Tse'pina with audio of Leslie Silko explaining the role of landscape in Laguna culture. Copyright © 2010 Google. Image NMRGIS. Image US Geological Survey. Image copyright © 2010 DigitalGlobe.

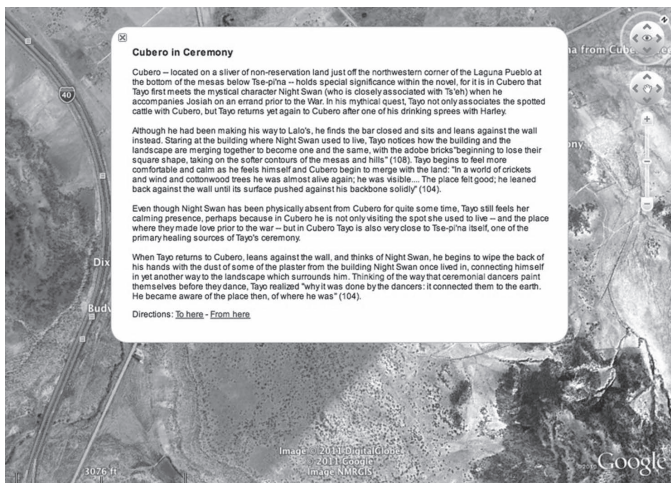


Fig. 8. An example of text embedded in *Ceremony Earth*. Image © 2011 DigitalGlobe. Copyright © 2011 Google. Image NMRGIS.

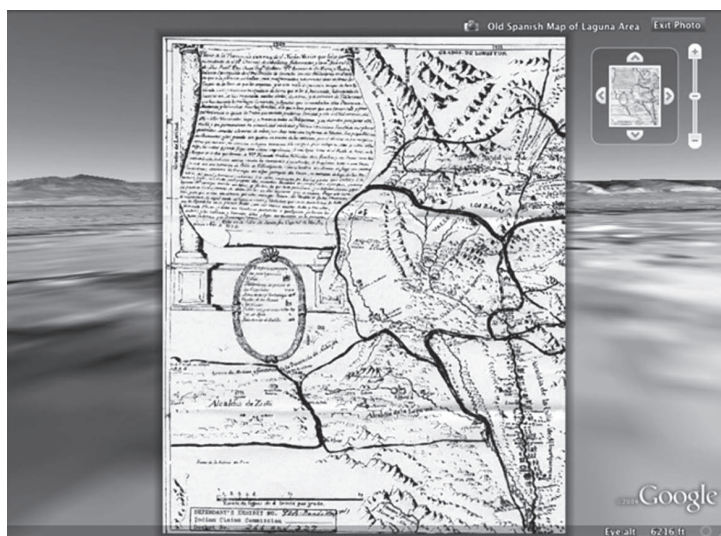


Fig. 9. An old, Spanish map of west-central New Mexico including the Laguna Pueblo. Copyright © 2010 Google.

Figure 7 shows an embedded video clip available in *Ceremony Earth*. The video was recorded in the area around Tse'pina, and the accompanying audio track is Leslie Silko recorded at the University of New Mexico bookstore in May 2000, explaining the role of landscape in *Ceremony* and in Laguna culture. Figure 8 demonstrates *Ceremony Earth*'s ability to represent traditional text. While the description box in this screenshot does not include any images, KML and *Google Earth* can interpret valid HTML, so designers can include not only graphics but also links, tables, and creative formatting styles as part of their textual descriptions. Figure 9 offers yet another embedded graphic, but this time it's an old Spanish map, retrieved and scanned from the archives of the Center for Southwest Research at the University of New Mexico. As I explain above, Cubero's and Laguna's connections to traditional Hispanic culture are replete within the novel.

Rather than sharing photographs, video, or audio I recorded or



Fig. 10. An example of a publicly available historical image of the Laguna Pueblo. Copyright © 2010 Google.

sharing images I have scanned from public archives, Figure 10 provides an example of material in the public domain that I have gathered and offer for consumption on *Ceremony Earth*. The particular photograph in Figure 10, titled “The old carreta, Pueblo of Laguna, N.M.,” was recorded by William Henry Jackson (1843–1942) in 1890. Housed at the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C., the photograph is part of the Detroit Publishing Company Photograph Collection and can be found online at <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/pp/pphome.html> using the keywords “laguna pueblo.”

Finally, Figure 11 provides an example of the high-resolution panoramic photographs added to *Ceremony Earth*. Stitched together from a series of smaller images, these panoramas—many of which present 360-degree views—will offer users a finely detailed exploration of the landscape, once again permitting them to “fly into” the image as they search for meaning and understanding.



Fig. 11. An example of a panoramic photo of Tse'pina that will be available in *Ceremony Earth*.

Beyond the specific materials I outline above, to this point I have successfully recorded, organized, and begun identifying more than a thousand digital photographs of Tse'pina and the areas around (but not on) the Laguna Pueblo; created more than thirty-five high-resolution panorama photographs from those files; constructed more than ten Flash slideshows; edited three digital videos of that same area; embedded video in *Ceremony Earth*; embedded numerous photo overlays in *Ceremony Earth*; and recorded several tours in *Ceremony Earth*.

CONCLUSION

Ceremony Earth resides in the digitally contemporary realm of the Internet; it provides users with critical, contextual material on a timely basis in an environment in which they feel comfortable, and it provides this information in a wide variety of media formats that permit sophisticated critical analyses.

The nonlinear timeline integral to Silko's narrative requires students to have access to teaching tools that offer help beyond the conventional orientation of traditional textual materials. Conveniently, then, as users fly through the landscape of Tse'pina in west-central New Mexico and interact with the digital contextual materials of *Ceremony Earth*, they will learn more about Tayo's story as organized through the spatial perspective of geography than they would if they had engaged with the materials simply via the temporally linear perspective of text.

Moreover, because digital literary tools help users uncover larger patterns of symbols, sounds, text, interpretation, and theory, stu-



dents and scholars can construct more sophisticated metadiscourses of creative works. If literature scholars want a better perspective on the text they are investigating, they must be able to approach that material from within and without the medium of the text, thereby permitting some objective distance as well as the conceptual abstraction necessary for such work. Digital tools permit users to approach the work from a variety of perspectives and formats unavailable to scholars prior to the 1990s.

Because geobrowsers offer conceptual abstraction concurrently with practical data, they have helped shape, and in turn have been shaped by, contemporary students who grew up with personal computers in the 1980s, the Internet in the 1990s, and the location-based technologies in the 2000s. Successful students, those who have learned how to become “capably self-reliant, fiercely independent, curious, interactive, and ‘multi-tasking’” (Dresang and McClelland 162), can exploit these digital tools to explore the foundational information necessary to understand new areas of investigation. These students do not want teachers to fill them with seemingly meaningless information; they want instead to discover for themselves the questions, the answers, and the parameters of the investigation. While working in the dialectical atmosphere of a geobrowser, students learn how to make important contextual decisions, how to grapple with abstract concepts, and how to conduct more sophisticated analyses of the materials.

NOTES

1. *Google Earth*, which can be downloaded for free at earth.google.com, is currently the best-known and most widely available geobrowser, but *Cer-*

emony *Earth* will work in any Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC) standards-compliant, location-based, 2D or 3D browser.

2. Users can choose to make fewer navigational choices by following a predefined tour.

3. To *georeference* is to connect data to a specific geographic location (Hill 2006).

4. Keyhole, Inc. was purchased by Google in 2004 ("Marble")

5. Although teaching KML is beyond the scope of this paper, you can visit <http://code.google.com/apis/kml/documentation/> to begin learning KML.

6. Although *Ceremony Earth* is currently available only to students in my classes at Eastern Kentucky University, I hope to make it publicly available when I locate adequate server space and finalize copyright issues.

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Native Avatars, Online Hubs, and Urban Indian Literature

GABRIEL S. ESTRADA

Teaching American Indian literature with online resources can help diverse urban Indian and multicultural students connect with American Indian cultures, histories, and Nations.¹ This online-enriched pedagogy adopts Susan Lobo's sense of the city as an "urban hub," or activist community center, an urban area linked to reservations in which Native American peoples adapt their cultures in ways that resist mere cultural assimilation into US metropolitan society. Building upon Lobo's ideas of the urban hub, Jennifer Ladino finds that urban Indian literature can reinforce "a fluidly defined community" that "can emerge to combat alienation and provide emotional and material support" (45). Ladino argues that urban hubs are especially important given that the two-thirds of the total US Native American population reside in cities (36). What this essay adds to Lobo's and Ladino's sentiment is a sense of how teaching American Indian literature in a face-to-face classroom blended with online technologies can add to Native urban hubs. Hausman and Purdy note past limitations in blended classes, observing that "for writers and readers of American Indian literatures, the digital revolution has often been engaged as a means of storing information." However, they also explore Native-language acquisition, tribal Internet pages, author e-mails, and online publications, among other examples of a more dynamic Internet interfaces that can aide teaching American Indian literature (27). This essay builds upon multiple insights and suggestions regarding blended pedagogies that can enhance the appreciation of American Indian literature.

NativeWeb is an example of an online Native cultural hub with literary links. Given Leslie Marmon Silko's Laguna Pueblo recounting of Spider Woman, "Tse'itsi'nako, Thought Woman . . . the spider," who names "things into creation" and helps protagonists to fulfill their quests across time, borders, and urban areas in the web of her design (125), I see no accident that *NativeWeb* is named as such. It is like an electronic extension of Spider Woman's knowledge on the World Wide Web where all perception is interrelated and rapidly evolving beyond our comprehension. Silko reminds readers that "human identity, imagination and storytelling were inextricably linked to the land, to Mother Earth, just as strands of the spider's web radiate from the center of a spider's web" (21). In referencing American Indian websites as enhancing tools in teaching American Indian literatures, I am conscious that I am utilizing what I call Spider Woman's World Wide Web, which links back to American Indian oral traditions, lands, and contemporary Nations.

Silko's Pueblo understandings of creative thought as a web intersects with Barr's and Tagg's learning-centered paradigm, which holistically facilitates teaching "knowledge web construction." For Barr and Tagg, the student's previous knowledge, embodied experiences, goals and culture remain central as she or he creates relationships with new knowledge (*Revolution in Higher Education*). Wittrock also suggests a web-like educational process that replicates the generative formation of interconnected neurological networks in the brain and allows for a more integrated and long-term learning process. He finds that students learn better when they are able to connect their old and new experiences and concepts because of the neurological manner in which memory and learning occurs as a building of new networks upon old ones (531). Because students are ever more enmeshed in a culture of video games, cell phones, web communications, and technologies in classrooms, it makes sense for a course to build upon the technologies they already know and incorporate them into new teaching practices. In analogous ways, "the web" is an interrelated creative process grounded in a physical reality within ancient American Indian oral traditions and within contemporary neurologically inflected educational theory. As physi-

cal land is the locus of human consciousness for Silko, so the physical brain is the locus of human knowledge, creativity, and learning for Wittrock.

My experience regarding how the World Wide Web supports American Indian literary pedagogies has continued to evolve in the new millennium. In 2000, at the University of Arizona, Tucson, I asked my American Indian pupils to compose web pages and narratives on the Nations in which they were enrolled. In 2004, I co-wrote a \$10,000 grant to fund teaching Luiseño students computer skills in their own language.² In 2008, at California State University, Long Beach (CSULB), I continued to utilize Internet pedagogies with a multicultural student population that often identified as urban in addition to claiming American Indian or Latin American Indigenous nationality or ancestry. I taught my “American Indian Literatures” class with online aides as a way to debate the value of mixed-blooded, urban stories within American Indian literary criticism. Sherman Alexie’s *Flight: A Novel* is one of many texts integrated in that class. I also developed an online-enriched class, “Contemporary Indigenous Peoples of Aztlán and Latin America,” that engages the historical land battles, migrations and the contemporary American Indian international borderlands. In that class, *Throwing Fire at the Sun, Water at the Moon* by urban Yaqui Anita Endrezze and various Southwest American Indian literatures offer models by which students can investigate their own closest relationship to American Indian or world Indigenous peoples. In this essay I will discuss the ways in which *NativeWiki*, *Second Life*, author e-mails, American Indian Nations web pages, and other online resources form Native online hubs that can help students to better evaluate urban Indian literatures such as *Flight* and *Throwing Fire at the Sun, Water at the Moon* and American Indian activist oral traditions.

In the “American Indian Literatures” class, students evaluate literary criticisms in order to evolve a more informed appreciation of American Indian written and oral expression. In order to teach the most current American Indian intellectual essays and cut down on reader costs, I instruct students to utilize the online versions of the *Wicazo Sa Review*, *American Indian Quarterly*, and *Studies in*

American Indian Literatures. These are available through the *Project MUSE* database, where we research scholarly reviews of class texts. The beauty of *Project MUSE* is that it allows one to word-search the newer articles of all three high-quality journals. We also search with databases such as *American Indian Experience*, which has genre, author, and gender categories, and *JSTOR*, in order to find critical writings on the literatures we read in class.

Two opposing articles that students find through online databases help to frame a debate around the validity of urban Indian and mixed-blooded literatures. On one hand is Elizabeth Cook-Lynn's "American Indian Intellectualism and the New Indian Story," which thoroughly discredits "mix-blooded" urban literature as being whiny and alienated from the traditions and politics of American Indian Nations (68). I explain that Cook-Lynn is being nationalistic and not racist in condemning "mixed-blooded" identity; people of some non-Native ancestry can also highly identify by their official citizenship in their American Indian Nation. I also emphasize that her Crow-Creek-Sioux views are foundational in an American Indian studies engaged in struggles to protect Nation-to-Nation treaty rights. In contrast, Elizabeth Archuleta's "Refiguring Indian Blood through Poetry, Photography, and Performance Art" embraces the truths that urban, mixed-blooded literature can offer, often from non-nationalistic perspectives. Archuleta affirms mixed-blooded criticisms of popular racism and supports their struggles to survive culturally in contemporary urban contexts (4). Students use both authors' perspectives and online Native hubs to formulate their own criteria for assessing Native American literature in relation to nationalism, traditionalism, anti-racism, or other aesthetic and cultural values. They may choose from Alan Velie's *Native American Literature: An Anthology*, Margaret Dubin's *The Dirt Is Red Here: Art and Poetry from Native California*, Alexie's *Flight*, and M. Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* as they contrast evaluations of urban and reservation American Indian literatures. While many students focus wholly upon the California Indian poems, prose, and images often local to CSULB, the most popular text is

Alexie's *Flight*, perhaps because of its ironic humor that embraces urban, mixed-blooded realities.

In *Flight*, Alexie consciously foregrounds an un-enrolled urban Indian orphan who knows neither his estranged Native American Nation nor his alcoholic father. The protagonist, Zits, moves from one sexually or emotionally abusive foster home to another until he finally breaks down and takes his anger out by randomly shooting people in a bank. At the bank, he is shot in the back of the head, but instead of dying, he is transported into various Indian and non-Indian historical bodies facing racialized wars, emotional brutality, and ethical issues regarding violence itself. At the end of the book, Zits finds himself in the body of his own father, who lives as a drunk, homeless beggar in Seattle's streets. Zits flashes back to a moment in his father's childhood when Zits's grandfather makes him repeat self-defeating chants in an emotionally abusive household. The protagonist later understands that Zits's father abandoned Zits at birth as a result of these kinds of abuses, which did not allow for the development of parenting skills. This realization helps Zits to break the violent cycle, turn himself in to the police, and finally allow himself to be adopted by a white family who will genuinely care for him. *Flight* not only presents the perspectives of Native Americans who are historically fighting to keep their land, but also, controversially, shows how Native American historical military losses ultimately compromise contemporary Native ethics, nations, health, and sobriety.

NativeWiki is a Native online literary and cultural wiki that can contextualize Alexie and American Indian literature. For example, *NativeWiki* helps to inform Alexie's focus on an urban mixed-blooded child who struggles with identity in the charged absence of his sole Indian parent, an alcoholic father. On the site, linked to the page "Sherman Alexie" is an online audio interview and transcript with Alexie regarding *Flight*. The link is one of many interviews and reviews found on *NativeWiki* that allow linked searches for other top Native American writers. In the audio and transcribed interview, Tavis Smiley gives Alexie a chance to respond to critics who feel that Alexie engages in perpetuating stereotypes of alco-

holic Indians. This interview emphasizes Alexie's humanistic rejection of random or internalized violence as a means to heal the roots of injustice. Alexie situates *Flight* within a pattern of high school shooting rampages, the Iraq War, and alcoholism. Smiley asks Alexie if he is "buying into the stereotype of Native Americans" by portraying alcoholism. Alexie responds that he is merely writing about his experience, which reflects the alcoholic realities of his family and Spokane reservation upbringing. He lists current drinkers in his family:

I'm an alcoholic. I've been sober since 1991. My father was an alcoholic who never sobered up. My mother was an alcoholic until seventeen years ago. My older brother and my little sister are currently alcoholics. When you talk about my aunts, uncles, cousins, first, second and third, grandparents, you're talking about five people who are currently not drinking.

The fact that Alexie's family does drink allows students to debate the ethics of honoring artistic expression when it is based upon experience. Alexie notes that "alcoholism is a symptom of poverty, desperation, loneliness, and it's a way to medicate pain." The PBS website also features an updated interview with Alexie regarding his 2009 novel, *War Dances*, and 2009 poetry book, *Face*. In the interview, he reads poetry about his father's alcoholism and death as the major motivation for all of his writings.

Although a mix of face-to-face and online author presentations is ideal in a blended classroom, in-class author visits may not always be practical owing to considerations of time, money, and distance. Although I did host Alexie in one of my classes in a previous year, his success fuels a speaking fee that is probably outside of many classroom budgets. Online materials offer many pedagogical benefits beyond practicality. Both the Smiley interview and the PBS interviews feature written, aural, and visual information that can allow students to better understand Alexie's motivations for writing about alcoholism and *Flight*. Multimedia can help particular students who will tend to learn better through a variety of kinetic, written, aural, and visual methods (Felder). Sometimes the timbre

of Alexie's voice or the look in his eyes will help students to better appreciate his perspectives. In demonstrating a visual or aural interview, I can ask students "Does Alexie sound or look believable?" to ensure that they are responding to the media in use. Just as writing can help extend the oral traditions central to Native cultures, so can online voice recordings and visual interviews complement the oral tradition that underlies Native American literature.

Links to Alexie's own website, *FallsApart*, help to contextualize issues of heterosexist male alcoholism featured in *Flight* and Alexie's other books and films. In class we review *FallsApart*, which features several positive reviews of *Flight* in which reviewers note the protagonist's clear movement away from mass murder and alcoholism. The reviewers are not American Indians, and they do not explore the outrage that is often evident when American Indian critics like Cook-Lynn condemn Alexie's work. I also show clips from Alexie's films *The Business of Fancydancing* and *Smoke Signals* which depict alcoholism and an urban disdain for the reservation. Both films center on the death of an Indian alcoholic man and help students reconsider the impact of Alexie's drunken men on American Indian representations. In an online *Native Networks* interview, Alexie's Salish film star, Evan Adams, notes the positive feedback he receives from other American Indians who think Alexie's films are really funny. Part of Alexie's appeal stems from his use of Indian humor, popular culture, and themes of alienation that a broad audiences and Native viewers can grasp. For better or for worse, Alexie's images and critiques of alcoholic men resonate in the popular culture of many American Indians and non-Natives alike.

Although Alexie's homoerotic tendencies draw far less criticism than his disavowal of American Indian nationalism, it is worthy of commentary. Alexie's films and literature develop isolated sissy or gay characters who provide an alternative to the violence and alcoholism that the heterosexual men tend to exude (Estrada 114). In *Flight*, as Zits contemplates the beauty of another boy, he uses homophobic logic to joke, "Maybe I'm a fag," though he never really pursues that momentary attraction (21). *Flight* only allows sexual violation between Zits and adult males through abusive pedophilic

situations in foster homes (28). While pedophilic homosexual abuse is a reality, it is also a negative stereotype about homoeroticism that heterosexism helps to uphold. I alert students to the existence of *NativeOut*, an urban online hub that promotes multimedia Native lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community empowerment in order to break out of the alienation that Alexie's characters voice as they experience or contemplate homoeroticism. *NativeOut's* director, Louva Hartwell (Diné), affirms *NativeOut's* goal "to support people and organizations in outreach to indigenous LGBT/Two-Spirit people and their communities" (Hartwell). While I welcome Alexie as a married heterosexual ally, Native LGBT or Two-Spirit people need to avoid the alienation he depicts. *NativeOut's* online community network is aimed at helping LGBT Natives to develop supportive relationships, maintain sobriety and health, and live free from abusive environments. These Two-Spirit concerns will become more central as I teach an "American Indian Genders and Sexuality" literature course in 2012.

When students take their positions on the validity of urban Indian literatures with the help of online resources and virtual worlds, I emphasize that they are free to voice their opinion as long as they can account for the opposite view as well and fully support their assertions with examples from both urban and non-urban Indian literatures. We read Silko's *Ceremony* or N. Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* as alternative ways of representing and healing alcoholism from a traditionalist and reservation perspective. Both authors detail the harsh racism and wars that motivate American Indian men to drink. Unlike Alexie, these writers explore how reservation landscapes, ceremony, and oral tradition can heal the cultural traumas that lead to drinking in urban contexts (Miller 441). In the fall of 2010, I assigned Momaday's book, which reinforces the centrality of Native American and Kiowa oral traditions. I also invited Ben Lucero Wolf to speak to my class regarding Kiowa oral and dancing traditions. Mr. Wolf is a relative of Momaday's and keeps in contact with his Kiowa Nation where he was raised in Oklahoma. He is an excellent representative of our local Long Beach American Indian community that honors its traditions. Mr. Wolf also provides

a counterbalance to Alexie's representations of people of American Indian ancestries in urban areas who do not maintain a strong link back to their Nations. These kinds of face-to-face class presentations are more interactive and closer to ancient oral traditions, even if they are restricted by time and the formality of a classroom place. Of course, the same online hubs of the Smithsonian's *Native Networks*, *NativeWiki*, and online databases that inform the study of Alexie's work facilitate a better understanding of Momaday, who is no stranger to technology. In fact, Momaday co-wrote the screenplay for the 1972 film *House Made of Dawn*, which I screen in class. Regardless of how students feel about *Flight* or *House Made of Dawn*, after experiencing face-to-face and online learning methods they are better able to understand why some American Indians choose traditional modes of healing and identity and why others do not.

The CSULB American Indian Studies emphasis on honoring local American Indian sacred ground and activism demands that I use the Internet to connect students to the local activist oral traditions. Our recently adopted program vision statement informs:

California State University, Long Beach has the unique distinction of being located at Puvungna, an ancient Tongva/Gabrielino township known as "The Gathering Place" and "The Place From which All Stems," where the Creator, Wiyot, is said to have come down to dance with the Tongva People and where Chinigchinich, the great "Lawgiver and God," was born. For the Tongva, Puvungna is their holiest of holy sites and is also a Sacred Site to other California Indians. The American Indian Studies Program at CSULB respectfully acknowledges the historical and mythological importance of Puvungna and is honored to be a part of its legacy.

The mission emphasizes a commitment to teaching about "social awareness," "conflict," and contemporary American Indian and California Indian community needs and perspectives.

In the light of this directive, I am asking Louis Robles Jr. to speak to my classes at Puvungna itself. Robles Jr. is a storyteller and a cultural bearer of the Juaneño Band of Mission Indians/Acjachemen

Nation of San Juan Capistrano. Along with his two older sisters, Rhonda Robles and Rebecca Robles, and his father, Louis Robles Sr., Robles Jr. carries on the activist legacy of his mother, Lillian Robles, at Puvungna. He also chairs on the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation committee on campus that works to solve long-standing issues with the return of California Indian remains and items. Robles Jr. may share stories of coyote, his mother's activism and the importance of Puvungna to the Acjachemen Nation. In preparation, I am having students analyze the ironic Coyote drawings of Acjachemen artist L. Frank Manriquez in *The Dirt Is Red Here* and read sections of the *Juaneño Band of Mission Indians, Acjachemen Nation* website. Most CSLUB students who are unaware of the cultural significance of the campus grounds find an incredibly transformational moment in visiting the sacred grounds that California Indian activism has kept free from university development plans to date. My literature students need to understand that oral activist traditions do not end with the reprinted words that Red Jacket and Tecumseh said long ago and far away. They need to understand that activist oral traditions operate right now and under their very feet on campus and on California Indian land. Louis Robles Jr. espouses an activism to retain roots in an urban setting that contrasts with *Flight's* narrative of utter urban cultural alienation.

While the previous web sources help to contextualize issues of alcoholism and urban alienation in American Indian literatures like *Flight*, I am more cautious as I formulate a study plan that involves student immersion in a 3D virtual space call *Second Life*. Julie Rak critiques Linden Lab's *Second Life* spaces, noting how they make "connections to the offline world's dominant economic system, capitalism, and to the most mainstream way to represent the self in the offline world, liberal subjectivity" (149). I am reminded of Hopkins's critique of such virtual realities in her 1996 essay "Aboriginal Narratives in Cyberspace." While Candice Hopkins notes Todd's concern about the online loss of the "symbiotic" and interrelated nature of human mind, body, and natural existence on earth, Hopkins concludes that cyberspace is not necessarily a Eurocentric, capitalistic

space meant to further colonize Native peoples through inculcating an aversion to nature. After ten years of online research, Hopkins finds that “nearly every site created by a native artist reflects back to real people and to stories,” such as the site *CyberPowWow*, which offers online galleries and functioned as tribal gathering place from 1997 to 2004 (343).

Can *Second Life* also “reflect back” to American Indian communities and Nations, as Hopkins and many American Indians would wish? Virtual American Indian items “made” online do not yet have to be made by enrolled American Indians, as they do in real life, despite being advertised as “authentic.” According to enrolled Cherokee activist Nancy McDonald, *Second Life* can serve American Indians with more work and input from Native Americans. There are hopeful signs. Barnabe Geisweiller notes that “Memorial University’s Distance Education and Learning Technologies in Newfoundland, Canada, recently launched Second Life Muinji’j Island in partnership with the Miawpukek First Nation of Conne River.” Their *Second Life* page teaches oral Miawpukek oral literature and could serve as model for American Indian Nations as well. However, like the Internet as a whole, *Second Life* content varies considerably and even contains adult regions known for sexual or explicit material that would not be appropriate for younger users. Because the CSULB region is rated mature due to the nature of college work, it may not be appropriate for children or adolescent students.

Another difficulty with *Second Life* is that the avatars used in the virtual world do not necessarily lead back to “real people.” Many residents of *Second Life* areas enjoy their ability to change their ethnic, sexual, ability and economic markers at will. As I was choosing a name for my avatar, I found that I could choose a first name but had to accept a last name from a list offered. While I chose Huitziltemiqui, my Nahuatl name, as a first name, I only chose the last name “Rainfall” as a generic last name with Native-like overtones. Apparently, one can pay for the name of his or her choice, but I don’t want the project to be that kind of economic burden on my students or myself. I was able to choose a generic brown-skinned, black-haired avatar that is somewhat like a younger version of my

own body, but I also found that creating an individualized avatar could be time-consuming and even costly. Other *Second Life* residents actually sell custom clothing and bodies using a virtual currency that one can buy with real-world dollars. Would students find the choice in phenotypes liberating or disturbing? As I pondered the sexual identify shifts within my own LGBT/Two-Spirit communities, I wondered if choosing a desired gendered body could be at all liberating from the Eurocentric gender dualism that colonialism has forced upon many. Could a virtual world in which exteriors are more obviously contrived open up discussions based upon deeper levels of identity than what phenotypes portray? Would students find worlds in which non-Natives donned Native bodies and “costumes,” quasi-religious practices, and Native identities as offensive as Native mascots, hokey New Age shamans, or Halloween representations? As one Mescalero Apache reported of *Second Life*, “There are even a few cases in which role play groups are blatantly racist. . . . There is actually a group of role players who call themselves the ‘Red Savages’” (Geisweiller). Some *Second Life* participants have complained bitterly about American Indian protests to such stereotypical representations, naming Nancy McDonald, aka “Nany Kayo,” in particular, as “moralistic and xenophobic” in her relentless activism to stop stereotypes from proliferating in *Second Life* space rented out by Linden Labs (Snook). Given Cook-Lynn’s call for favorable representations of Native Americans, I am asking Nany Kayo to do a presentation to my class from her *Virtual Native Lands* region of *Second Life*. As an enrolled member of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma and virtual artist, she can provide insights into the debates regarding nationalistic and non-nationalistic representations of Native Americans. Students can either individually join her on laptops in her region or we can display her and hear her from a single projected image without being in *Second Life* ourselves. As an activist, Nany Kayo can give insights into debates surrounding Native representation online.

For the “Indigenous Peoples of Aztlán and Latin America” class, I direct students to utilize our *American Indian Student Council* (AISC) web page to connect our literary discussion of Mother

Earth from Yaqui and Pueblo perspectives with on-campus activism. For example, not only do we read Silko's Laguna Pueblo oral tradition regarding the sanctity of Mother Earth, we refer to the AISC web page for updates on activism that defends the sanctity of beliefs in Mother Earth as practiced in the American Indian Student Council's annual Pow Wow. In the spring of 2011, a controversial article was written in our campus *Union Weekly* paper that denigrated the Pow Wow culture, food, and practice of offering gifts to the earth. *American Indian Student Council* documented this outrageous attack on American Indian culture and the American Indian community response to it. I let my students research the AISC postings and took them to the protest against the *Union Weekly* that occurred during class time. Students were able to hear oral statements from California Indian activists, the American Indian Student Council representatives, and the American Indian Movement activists' demands that the paper lose its funding from Associated Students Incorporated. More than a thousand local, national, and international letters of protest funneled into CSULB in response to the *Union Weekly* article. Again, students in this class write a research paper about their closest relationship to an American Indian or Indigenous culture. Based upon the American Indian Studies Vision and Mission Statement, allowing students to participate in these kinds of protests is necessary so that they can make the connections between oral traditions and activist oral traditions of protecting beliefs in Mother Earth. *American Indian Student Council* will continue to provide updates that my students will find useful as they write about their connection to American Indian people and literature.

I was also inspired to pursue an e-mailing possibility once I read Hausman and Purdy's article outlining how they e-mailed class group questions to a writer of Choctaw-Cherokee-Irish ancestry, Louis Owens, regarding his novel *Wolfsong*. The authors affirm that through "the Internet . . . bringing the author's voice directly into the conversation . . . deflects attention away from the teacher as the source of 'definitive' or 'authentic' ideas about the text" (30).

They develop this idea by noting how the teacher's national and ethnic background can differ from that of the writer and thus skew or "recolonize" a reading of a Native-themed text (31). They also recommend "engaging the author in direct discourse" in order to "personalize the texts" (34). Both authors affirm that "Students feel more connected to an interview process if it is driven by them, and likewise they feel more investment when they respond to, interpret, or critique the ideas such an interview raises" with the author (75). Part of what I realized in sharing some of the ideas of this article with Yaqui author Anita Endrezze is the extent to which my own experience colors my reading of her texts in ways she may or may not share. For example, I was interested to learn that Endrezze did not feel bitter about being abandoned by her alcoholic father, as I once felt about my own father's alcohol-inspired absence. Through e-mail communication, Endrezze agreed to allow students in my class to e-mail her group questions regarding her research and book. We can send and post our e-mails to Endrezze on the CSULB Beachboard online class site in order to clarify our understanding of her works and creative process. As a non-Yaqui who wishes my students to experience a personal connection with Endrezze, I look forward to any answers she may supply to the questions that students will send her as they read her book and complete their own personal American Indian and Indigenous research.

Endrezze's initial responses to group student questions are already facilitating a better understanding of her cultural symbolism, writing, and methods for writing. After explaining a Yaqui meaning for butterflies, Endrezze suggests a series of methods for students to improve their own creative writing. I have implemented some of these suggestions and look forward to doing more of the creative writing exercises with music and examination of the natural world around us. Surely an important step in understanding American Indian literature is for students to apply the writing methods of American Indian authors into their own creative composition and drawing that Endrezze models so well in her book and online presence. The questions and responses follow:

STUDENT GROUP A QUESTION: WHY ARE
BUTTERFLIES SACRED TO YAQUIS?

ANITA: I think butterflies are sacred/revered in many cultures because of their beauty & the way they change forms. Among Yaquis, white butterflies represent the spirits of the dead flying to heaven. My new book of short stories, *Butterfly Moon*, will be coming out in 2012 from U of AZ press.

STUDENT GROUP B QUESTION: ANY RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE INTERESTED IN WRITING?

ANITA: I say read everything interesting! Find some subject outside of the realm of writing, like botany, and teach yourself. Don't limit your learning to books, either. Go out and look at those plants, collect, identify, learn about their stories, the culture of the plants (myths, uses, etc.). For writing: do above. You'll be amazed at how enriched your work will be the more you learn and study. And don't stop diversifying your studies. I learned more after I was out of the university than I did when I was in. And don't imagine yourself above others. Writing is a gift, a talent, and comes from Beyond. Keep yourself open and healthy. Say Yes to Life. Be kind. Your friends and family are more important than your art. Don't worry about writing every day, or about publishing Big Time. When you're young, you need to live life and find your Voice. Be an interesting person and you'll write better. Gain wisdom with age and experience. Nuts and Bolts: write clearly. If you're not writing clearly, it means your thinking is muddled. Let the writing direct you and then go back and edit. Revise. Revision. Release. Read great books, great authors. Read for fun, too. Read popular fiction. Learn from them. Learn from other forms of art, too. Write to music, all kinds, not just what you like. Write after you see visual art, or a play or ballet. Try to do other forms of art yourself. You'll be a more rounded, deeper person for it. Painting aids in your writing more visually, for example. Music can help with sounds and cadences of words. (Endrezze, personal communication)

Although I encourage students to begin their research into their closest relationship with Americans with family interviews, as Endrezze does, I also suggest a critical use of the Internet in order to complement the central oral traditions that families give. I am fascinated by the way in which basing this project in the student's family oral traditions and then branching into research allows students to build upon what they know personally in a web-like process. Even families knowledgeable about their relationship to American Indian cultures may not be familiar with the scholarly research that informs an academic sense of that culture's history and contemporary status. As students research their cultures online, I caution them about the dangers of accepting all claims that people make about American Indian and Indigenous peoples. I ask students to consult verifiable American Indian Nation and scholarly web pages in order to secure more reliable information. Through reliance on tribal web pages, students who are unfamiliar with web research will be more wary of the New Age distortions of American Indian Nations, which are quite prevalent, as well as the virtual "Chief Red Feathers," who promises friendship and knowledge for a small fee. The Cherokee Nation online video "What Is a Real Tribe? What Is a Fake Tribe?" confirms that only three federally recognized Cherokees Nations exist out of the hundreds of online Cherokee entities that falsely claim legal authenticity and even "sell" memberships into their "nations." *NativeWeb's* American Indian Nations index filters out the more obvious New Age simulacra.

I refer students to the website *Pascua Yaqui Tribe* to give Endrezze's work cultural and national context and to emphasize how online hubs can help connect reservation and urban realities. Part of the goal of teaching American Indian literature is to explain to students how written oral traditions relate back to their non-written origins. Endrezze recounts multiple "poetic embellishments" on the "basic story" regarding how the *surem* were small, pre-Yaqui beings who made an ancient choice to stay in the wilderness world or to grow into taller human Yaqui form and fight Spanish colonization (9). *Pascua Yaqui Tribe* is a reliable source that confirms *surem* origins in Yaqui oral tradition. I note how the site's "History and Culture" page

is very careful to give a name of the person who retells the *surem* story, stating, “This is the history of the Yaqui as told by Ernesto Quiroga Sandoval, Historian, Pascua Yaqui Tribe.” When poets and artists like Endrezze draw upon oral traditions and lose the names of those who tell the stories, we can assume that the stories change and cannot represent a one-to-one correlation with the oral stories of origin. A class visit to *Pascua Yaqui Tribe* helps to emphasize the differences between traditional oral literatures and literatures inspired by that same oral literature. For example, the website makes no reference to a pre-*surem* creation story, whereas Endrezze recounts a female deity, Enchanted Bee, who creates all beings (18). Kathleen Sands reports that “Yaqui do not have a cohesive and comprehensive body of lore concerning their origins and identity” (qtd. in Erickson 499), which partially explains why some aspects of Endrezze’s work are not mirrored in the *Pascua Yaqui* home page, which does not attempt to document the myriad, sometimes contradicting oral traditions that exist.

Perhaps delving so far into online spaces motivates me to physically reconnect back to real-life nature and Father Sun in my pedagogy. Endrezze recounts Yaqui deer dances and the Yaqui notion of a Father Sun that I help contextualize with reliable online sources. Larry Evers and Felipe Molina wrote *Maaso Bikwam: Yaqui Deer Songs* and created a video and accompanying text that demonstrate and explain aspects of the deer dance (Evers). The film transcript that accompanies the video includes English translations of the songs, which are sung in Yaqui. For students who are unfamiliar with the Sonoran desert, the video speaks volumes to the beauty of the desert and its Yaqui dancing and singing traditions. While *YouTube* offers many versions of the Yaqui deer dance, none are so in-depth and scholarly as the Evers and Molina video. I believe it is important to use those images that the community has already sanctioned, especially since *YouTube* dancers may not even be aware that their deer dancer images are being filmed and “stolen” without their consent. The *Pascua Yaqui Tribe* site also recounts the centrality of the Yaqui concept of Father Sun, Achai Taa’a, which is involved in the dances shown in the video. Molina explains how the Yaqui

cross on some masks represents “Itom Achai Taa’a (Our Father the Sun). This symbol is painted on the forehead and the chin. The sun makes life possible.” These crosses are visible during the online dances that he and his community perform. Molina’s ability to fluently sing in his language and to interpret the songs for a multicultural English-speaking audience is an incredible gift that is rarely paralleled online.

Octaviana Trujillo, the Indigenous Studies chair at North University of Arizona and former Pascua Yaqui chair, adds online statements about teaching “traditional knowledge” and reinforcing the importance of nature that I utilize during some lectures (“Traditional Knowledge”). Gregory Cajete also suggests teaching traditional knowledge through relating “personal experience” to larger communities within a “nature centered philosophy” (21). In the light of their nature-centered pedagogies, I sometimes end classes by asking students to consider how Yaquis could traditionally relate to the sun as father by leading them through an exercise outside the physical classroom. Once outside in a comfortable area, I ask students to state what emotion they experience as a result of sitting in full or filtered sunlight. I then ask them to think about how they usually relate to their own fathers, and then to compare the two feelings. I’ve noticed that students’ feelings toward the sun and nature in general are often more positive than those they have for their human fathers. I sometimes conclude with the following personal statement:

When I was boy, my father was also an alcoholic. After my parents divorced, my father recovered, in part, with the help of a medicine man from Mexico. I grew up talking with the Sun, often when my father was not around. I think what Endrezze is trying to show us is how the spirit of nature will compensate for our losses in the human world. While we may lose contact with a father who drinks or is absent, we can never lose contact with the sun and our best relationship to the sun as a father. Our heavenly father, the sun, can guide our behavior even when our earthly father cannot.

I explain that I reflect ancestral Rarámuri and Caxcan oral traditions that I've heard regarding Father Sun in making these connections. In moving students to the grass outside the classroom, I hope to reinforce kinetic and experiential learning that can inform Indigenous pedagogy (Cajete 31).

Through challenging students to experience the sun as father, as Endrezze and Molina suggest, I hope that their experiences of traditional Indigenous beliefs don't simply end at the page or at the door of a school building. In my literary classes, student learning extends into the cyberspace of American Indian Nations and back to the reality of nature that sustains us all. I encourage students to keep on delving into their gendered relationship with the sun and nature throughout the class. Of course, as many of my Native American students already know as they reconnect with their American Indian Nations' literatures, the cultural limitations of literature and online information are considerable. Ceremonial participation in traditions that honor the sun as father or mother, the changing of seasons, or various oral traditions is often limited to the Nations' established members and cannot be understood in depth by online representations or class activities. Part of what the essay and *Second Life* assignments are meant to do is to allow students to learn about their American Indian and Indigenous connections and the limitations of writing, research, and online worlds. Students must ultimately return to the American Indian Nations in real space in order to understand ceremonial connections and culture. It is my hope that, through studying American Indian and urban Indian literatures, they find urban hubs on campus, online, and in the community that help facilitate connecting to American Indian or Indigenous Nations while in the city.

CONCLUSION

Online Native hubs such as *NativeWiki*, *NativeWeb*, and even the virtual reality of *Second Life* can help students better appreciate, relate to, and reflect upon American Indian literatures. While Endrezze and Alexie reflect divergent views on the role that traditional Ameri-

can Indian culture plays in healing the wounds of absent alcoholic fathers, their work is enmeshed in larger online discourses, controversies, and communities that students and teachers can find useful. Alexie's novel *Flight* inspires cultural critique linked to *JSTOR*, *Project MUSE*, and *NativeWiki* as well as many favorable analyses, some of which he provides on his own website, *FallsApart*. These interviews and reviews allow students to contemplate the extent to which Alexie's alcoholic fathers are either stereotypes or characters who raise awareness about difficult survival of contemporary urban American Indians. If students evaluate Alexie, they are able to contrast his writings with more traditional literature from Momaday, California Indian writers, or other Native American authors.

When I teach Endrezze's text, the web is a resource to link activism, traditional Yaqui ceremony, art, and writings. Through the *American Indian Student Council*, students can educate themselves on how the literary ideals of Mother Earth and culture are applied locally in American Indian activism. Online resources can provide the visual and musical Yaqui context that defines the most traditional sense of being Yaqui, including a central concept of the sun as father. These resources support the basis of Endrezze's writing but also contrast in their dedication to more traditional forms of oral literature. Endrezze's page on *NativeWiki* discusses how she recovered from her father's alcoholic absence by drawing from Yaqui and Native visual creativity and traditional stories. Ideally, class e-mails to Endrezze will help to personalize her imaginative spark, her enchanting tales of Yaqui origins, and her people's survival up to modern times in urban Los Angeles. I envision that the e-mails will help inspire students to utilize family interviews and *NativeWeb* research to create their own Indigenous histories and representations. Like written literature itself, online and virtual capacities can evolve to serve American Indian narratives, identities and literatures even when they were not originally designed to do so. Online and virtual resources can support an understanding of urban American Indian literature and can also play an evolving role in the formation of the web-like relationships that comprise real-world and online Native urban hubs.

NOTES

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1. In this essay I will use the terms *American Indian* and *Native American* interchangeably to refer to US Indigenous peoples. I will specify non-US aboriginal peoples of other world regions as Indigenous. While I refer to urban Indians as those who live in non-reservation cities and identify with Indian communities, ancestries, and/or US state or federally recognized Nations, a variety of other evolving definitions could be suitable for any of these terms based upon different legal, geographical, or cultural criteria. This essay focuses on writings by authors who identify themselves as urban Indians.

2. *Tribal Digital Village* supported the grant and has worked hard to lessen the digital divide in Cahuilla, Cupeño, Luiseño, and Kumeyaay reservations of San Diego County. Their previous American Indian-controlled efforts are only partially outlined at their website. Participating California Indian Nations exercise a right to restrict public access to their updated online information regarding language, ceremony, and other aspects of culture.

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Expand and Contract

E-Learning Shapes the World in Cyprus and in California

NANCY STROW SHELEY AND
CAROL ZITZER-COMFORT

In the spring of 2008, university students enrolled in courses at California State University, Long Beach (CSULB), and the University of Cyprus (UCY) participated in a cross-cultural e-learning project in which they studied American Indian literature and history. All students followed the same six-week syllabus, which included shared readings and films. These common texts became the basis for dialogue via online discussion boards as students struggled to explain causes of prejudice, ethnic conflict, racial hatred, and genocidal acts. Their interactions and reactions with these materials brought to light the many guises of historical and contemporary cultural conflict and suffering: dominant groups marking Indigenous peoples for extinction, film and literature depicting such groups as prematurely “extinct,” religious factions often being responsible for past and present horrors, and societies and institutions perpetuating hatred through focusing on skewed histories.

For American students, stories of American Indians and genocide deepened implications of their country’s history and exposed untold truths. Students in California, whose knowledge of American Indian history was nearly as nonexistent as that of their Cypriot peers, were appalled at the historical facts of forced sterilization of Native women, of Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) boarding schools, of extermination by smallpox, and of the US policies of “Kill the Indian, Save the Man”—all of these issues illustrated in reading materials and in the documentary *The Canary Effect* (2007). For stu-

dents in Cyprus, studying US policies that led to the persecution of American Indians not only gave them a more enlightened view of American history but also illuminated their own country's past acts of genocide. In their analyses of these same materials, the Cypriots began to compare the historical mistreatment of American Indians to their own country's "problem"—a thirty-five-year division between cultures, marred by wars, isolationist politics, prejudice, and fear—known worldwide as "the Cyprus Problem." This project thus facilitated the expanding of students' learning as their learning crossed national boundaries while encouraging them to also focus on their own country's lesser-known histories.

BACKGROUND

This international classroom and subject exchange project was developed after Professor Nancy Strow Sheley received a Fulbright Award to teach American Studies at UCY in Nicosia, Cyprus, in the spring of 2008. Her proposed course was titled "The Conflicted American Dream: Multiple Perspectives, Critical Views." Also that spring, Professor Carol Zitzer-Comfort was scheduled to teach "American Ethnic Writers" at CSULB and planned to emphasize protest literature. We developed a six-week shared unit, digitally connecting UCY students with those at CSULB, in order to have students read the same materials, respond to the same prompts, watch the same visual media, and correspond online, via the Discussion Board (Black Board). As the project planning evolved, the following guiding questions emerged to frame teaching and research:

- How can American Indian literature (film, popular culture, ideas) be used to examine cultural conflict and how such conflicts are maintained? How does protest literature focus on the issues, and when does it become effective in addressing conflict?
- What similarities can be found among (a) the cultural divisions in America that result in the "conflicted" American dream, (b) the treatment of American Indian peoples past and present in

America, and (c) the social, cultural, political, and ethnic divides that currently exist in Cyprus?

- How does digital technology inform pedagogical choices for this project?
- How will two different cultural groups respond to the historical genocide and subsequent “survance” of American Indian groups?
- Does proximity to the issues of Native Americans, among students in the United States and Cyprus, suggest more empathy for the human situation, or can students a world apart find examples closer to home to relate to human suffering caused by political decisions?
- Specifically, will Cyprus students allude to “the Cyprus Problem” and the divided country in their responses about cultural injustices, prejudice, and alienation?
- How will the analyses of the issues surrounding Native American genocide and subjugation relate to major themes in the course: How is history written as “truth,” who writes it, and what are the processes of racism and prejudice, of moving from subject to object to hatred?
- Or, more specifically to the e-learning exchange: How does e-learning, that is, the Discussion Board, affect and effect learning opportunities and increased use of Internet resources?
- What are the difficulties in conducting a global e-learning experience in two countries at such distances in time and space?
- And, finally, what are the recommendations for similar e-learning projects in the future?

METHODOLOGY

To ascertain background knowledge regarding American Indian literature and history, we distributed a pre-unit questionnaire developed by Zitzer-Comfort and first published in *Pedagogy* in 2008 to measure background knowledge; additionally, at the end of the

six weeks, students submitted post-unit instruments to determine instructional success (or lack thereof) in both courses. The Discussion Board postings of content and in-class reflections on the e-learning process were collected and analyzed, as were individual responses received after the completion of the course.

TEACHING AND LEARNING TOGETHER IN CYBERSPACE

The classes were composed of twenty-two undergraduate students at UCY in “The Conflicted American Dream: Multiple Perspectives, Critical Views” and twenty-five undergraduate students at CSULB in “American Ethnic Writers.” Students read, viewed, discussed, and responded to the same course materials, discussion questions, and student- or faculty-generated comments. Both professors selected and prepared course materials, and all students had access to the same Discussion Board site, sponsored by CSULB. This was the first time students in either class had been digitally connected, internationally or otherwise, to another classroom.

Before the collaborative project began, UCY students examined the “conflicted American dream.” To understand “conflict,” they discussed texts by Albert Memmi, Zillah Eisenstein, and Eleanor Stein; they examined essays and images that provided various definitions of the American dream, both past and present, including St. John de Crèvecoeur’s definition of “an American” and Horatio Alger’s stories of success through “luck and pluck.” Conflicts caused by immigration, religion, race, and class, as well as westward expansion and the disregard for Indigenous peoples, led students to generate the following list of possible reasons why the American dream is conflicted:

- Not available to everyone
- Reasons: race, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual persuasion, class, age
- Marginalized groups
- Financial economic/class gaps growing

- Nature of violence, prejudice, white privilege, historical precedents
- Media images
- Wars
- Changing worldviews

Similarly, CSULB students, within the frame of protest literature and in specific response to the unit on American Indian literature, suggested the following ways protest literature is defined and read:

- Protest/ethnic literature not acknowledged as valid by everyone
- Reasons: race, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, class, age
- Speaks for marginalized groups
- Demonstrates economic disparities/class gaps growing
- Audience reactions based in nature of violence, prejudice, white privilege, historical precedents
- Influenced by media images and wars

RATIONALE FOR SHARED SIX-WEEK UNIT IN CYPRUS

Comparing cultural, political, literary and historical issues of American Indians living within the US borders to the conflict between cultures in Cyprus was justified because of the latter's long history of internal conflict, its known efforts at ethnic cleansing, and its current status as a country divided along ethnic lines (Muslim and Greek Orthodox religions, Turkish and Greek languages and cultures). Further, the failure of Cyprus to create workable treaties and the isolation of its citizens in two separate regions marked by a United Nations-manned Green Zone demonstrate that long-term conflicts can be devastating to progress.

Even before the UN Green Zone was imposed between the countries, communities of Turkish Cypriots were isolated within Greek Cypriot regions and vice versa. While not exactly relegated to "reservations," the ethnic groups were physically, politically, and culturally

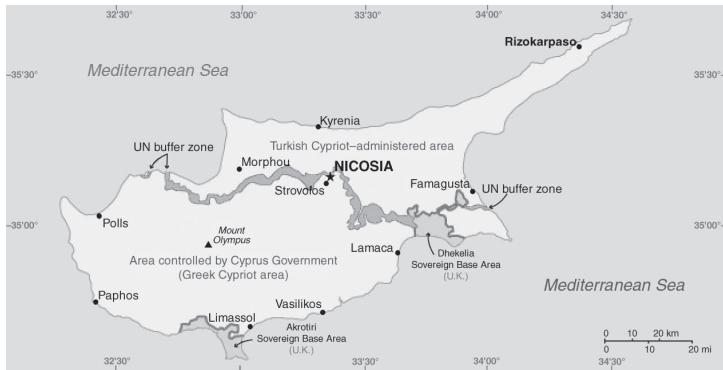


Fig. 1. Map of Cyprus created by the US Central Intelligence Agency. Reproduced from the University of Texas Libraries (http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/cia10/cyprus_sm_2010.gif).

separated from each other. In the decades leading up to the divisive war and genocidal acts in the 1970s, Cypriots were victims of atrocities. Hundreds of Turkish Cypriots were killed, and similar numbers of Greek Cypriots were also victims. In a three-day war in 1974, Turkey invaded the island with claims to protect the Turkish Cypriots. The Turkish military claimed nearly one-third of the island's population in that war. Greek Cypriots living in that region fled for their lives, leaving homes, businesses, and histories behind. In the south, Turkish Cypriots, too, abandoned their existing lives to flee north to safety within the established Turkish communities. Most Cypriot refugees have never returned to their homeland. For almost forty years, the two groups have lived with walls real and imagined between them. Hatred, often unexplained, still dictates isolationist behaviors. Still separated from each other by learned suspicions and ignorance, the two communities fear compromise. While there are a number of differences between the histories of Cypriot refugees and those of hundreds of Indigenous groups in the Americas, there are also many parallels. Students drew from the works they read and the films they viewed to discover, respond to, and analyze these parallels.

WHAT WAS TAUGHT AND HOW STUDENTS RESPONDED

Both classes viewed *The Canary Effect*, a 2007 documentary detailing the historical atrocities committed against Indigenous peoples in the Americas (random slaughtering of early peoples, military violence, forced sterilization, BIA boarding schools, forced marches, termination and relocation policies, etc.). The students read several common texts: excerpts from an anthology of American Indian women writers' works titled *Through the Eye of the Deer*, including Deborah Miranda's poem "Deer" and Beth Brant's "Coyote Learns a New Trick"; Leslie Silko's "The Man to Send Rain Clouds"; Zitkala-Ša's autobiographical writings; Luther Standing Bear's "Land of the Spotted Eagle"; James Welch's "Plea to Those Who Matter"; and Sherman Alexie's *The Long Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*.

Before beginning the readings, students at both CSULB and UCY completed the pre-unit questionnaire, assessing the students' background knowledge of American Indian history and literature. Ironically, students at CSULB, a diverse campus in southern California, the home of several American Indian nations, had no more knowledge of Indigenous peoples' literature or history than did the students in Cyprus. In response to the survey, students discussed stereotypes they have heard of or been taught about American Indians. As a few students pointed out, they drew these stereotypical ideas from film and television: "Native Americans are presented as being aggressive against whites. They can't live peaceably, know nothing of technology, can't accept Western culture, have different system of gods, believe in nature, wear few clothes, and have a sense of community. Sometimes they do the rain dance, are masculine, muscular, wild men with long hair." When asked about American Indian literature, students on both campuses demonstrated very little knowledge of American Indian writers. At UCY only five students recognized names of American Indian writers, identifying only a few Native American writers by name: N. Scott Momaday or Leslie Marmon Silko. A few CSULB students noted that they had heard of Sherman Alexie or read his books.

Upon discussion of the pre-unit questionnaire, one CSULB student posted the following comment on the Discussion Board: “Cyprus students expect us to know more about Native Americans, and it is a little embarrassing to feel we’re learning a lot of things with them. It’s a reflection of our society as being ignorant when college students in the US are just now being made aware of the Native American issues.” Many CSULB students noted that they “felt cheated” because they had never been taught the history or literature of Native peoples.

THE CSULB-UCY CYBER CONNECTION

The initial setup for the cyber connection was a bit complicated and time-consuming; moreover, it required cooperation from both universities in the form of ongoing technical assistance. To access the CSULB Beach Board website and Discussion Board, UCY students had to be “enrolled” in Zitzer-Comfort’s “American Ethnic Writers” course, given CSULB identification numbers, and assigned passwords. Students in both courses were asked to post to the Discussion Board weekly. Nearly 50 percent of UCY students participated regularly (a few posted only once or twice, and one or two never did); however, 100 percent of CSULB students posted weekly. This disparity was due to the fact that most of the Cypriot students did not have computer access at home and relied on university computer labs. However, several students from both universities found their niche in the online environment, engaging in more discussion online than they ever did in class.

The number of initial responses was impressive, and we were convinced that this international exchange would be beneficial for our students and for us. By 1:20 p.m. on Sunday, February 17, 2009, in Cyprus, the first day of the Discussion Board project, there were over sixty posts in response to the following prompts:

- Introduce yourself in a couple of sentences.
- You might respond to the following picture:
- This is an image taken in Kourion, near Limissol, Cyprus, which



Fig. 2. Kourion, near Limissol, Cyprus. Photo by N. Sheley 2008.

is the site of Greek and Roman ruins with the Mediterranean Sea in the background.

- You might respond to the film *Crash* or to Gloria Anzaldúa's poem "Borderlands."
- You might ask the students at our partner institution questions about the university life in their country or their lives in California/Cyprus. Be sure to give your name at the end of the post.

One particularly erudite CSULB student posted the following as way of introduction:

Greetings, fellow earth travelers, from 34 degrees west latitude, i.e., southernmost Los Angeles, and, more specifically, the San Pedro escarpment—112' above sea level and @ 16 miles, or 3 busses and some bicycling (occasionally inject a cab ride) away from CSULB—I don't own a car. My name is Darryl and I am impressed with your beautiful island. It has several geo-

graphic characteristics similar to Southern California (isn't the Internet amazing!). I'm an outlier with respect to mean student age—I turned 60 last December. I'm curious if anyone in your group personally relates with violent conflict? I served in the US Army from 1968 to 1970—Vietnam was part of that tour—and am currently in my 5th University semester moving toward teaching. Are you familiar with the Diaspora re. American Indians?

Another CSULB student pointed out problems with the representation of areas surrounding Cyprus in American media:

I was surprised to find out that Lebanon, Syria, Israel, Egypt, and Turkey surround all of Cyprus and that Lebanon and others have been in the news for violence. The American media makes many of those countries seem quite dangerous to travel around freely. We recognize conflicts between the public and the media, and thus cannot always rely on the media to “show” us the world. Does anyone think that resolving conflict between/amongst various groups is a realistic expectation, or is that goal simply wheels spinning without traction? What do you see as some of the greatest issues that confound global or interethnic coexistence?

In these introductory posts, students commented on a number of topics: pop culture, films, music, dance, history, geography, military service, Britney Spears, recreation, political elections, and coffee shops. They also asked questions: Is Cyprus an island near Italy? Is Orange County like the TV show *The O.C.*? Do you watch *Desperate Housewives*? Do all California houses have swimming pools? There was also a little matchmaking going on as the first personal photo was posted . . . and some serious attempts at international flirting. Several students commented, “Meet me off-line on Facebook,” thus extending their academic discussion to a more personal venue. Overall, students indicated favorite authors, texts, and ideas—and shared photos of beaches, campuses, mountains, and monuments. Three weeks into the shared unit, the discussion board

scored over 16,060 hits. Posting gained momentum among the twenty-five CSULB students and twenty-two UCY students as they became more engaged with the materials and more comfortable in their shared online environment. The core materials in the courses elicited thoughtful responses and reflected students' desire to know about the varied histories, stories, cultures, and beliefs of American Indians. After viewing *The Canary Effect*, we posted six questions, including the following:

Most students in the United States have heard some facts about the government's mistreatment of Native Americans. However, this film lists in "horrendous and unrelenting detail" the abuses toward the Indigenous people of North America. What is your reaction to the film's graphic display of the horrors that are documented here? Which actions did you find most surprising; that is, which actions were you familiar with before viewing the film and which ones were unfamiliar?

From Hitler's Germany to Rwanda in 1994 to Bosnia to Darfur today, WHY do we, as a world of human beings, continuously debate the definition of the term "genocide"? Isn't murder and destruction of a group of people evidence enough that crimes have occurred? Why does the label of "genocide" matter? Why hasn't the United States used the word *genocide* to describe what happened to native peoples of North America?

Explain the significance of the title and place it in a more complete historical context than given in the opening image of the film. The subtitle is also important: "Kill the Indian, Save the Man." Explore the historical and contemporary significance of the subtitle as well.

The following is a message to the directors of *The Canary Effect* posted on the film's *Myspace* page:

Hi, my name is Kandis. I'm Klamath and Creek Indian. I want to thank you for making such an important film. It was hard not to cry throughout most of it as it

is a sad story. I believe that every American should be required to see your film as it isn't about Native American history but American history! I have written everyone I know urging them to see your film or at least read about it. It is crucial that we all know the truth. (<http://profile.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=user.viewprofile&friendID=59480289>)

Respond to Kandis's post. Do you agree that every American (only Americans?) should view this film? Is this film "the truth," and if so, why does Kandis think people will benefit from viewing it? Whose truth does this film represent? Review other comments on the web site and add your own if you'd like to do so.

There was an immediate storm of responses. Six questions prompted ninety-three comments, two of which follow:

FROM UCY: I must admit that the film was extremely shocking. After seeing *The Canary Effect*, I was overwhelmed by feelings of sadness, anger and frustration and I left the class with all I had seen and heard aching my mind and thoughts. I was completely ignorant concerning all the deploring and humiliating maltreatment of Native Americans and I really can't understand how certain human beings can be so unreasonably prejudiced and how they can attack their fellow human beings with such violence and with such an intense desire for blood and destruction. The scenes filled me with horror and wrath and I could not bear the image of children killing themselves in order to liberate themselves from a life that equals death, a living hell. I realized that we take some things for granted and that these people were actually suffocating in a cruel and abusing world of prejudice and brutality. History slaps us in the face again and again but we remain passive simply waiting for the next slap! Prejudices, discriminations, violence, blood, wars, death, wounded children . . . all these have been filling the pages of our history books . . . but it

seems that history does not belong to the past but extends to this present day, even future.

FROM CSULB: Today was the first time that I had heard of and viewed *The Canary Effect*. I agree with the post from Kandis in that I had to bite my lip at times to refrain from crying. The story evokes sadness as well as horror. It is absolutely horrifying to relive what the American Indians went through when the US government was attempting to colonize or moreover eradicate and exterminate the American Indians. It is even more horrifying to see how the American Indians are being treated today. This movie shocked and angered me. It is insane that people do not recognize this treatment as genocide; it is insane to continue to let American Indians be treated unfairly and most importantly inhumanely. Something must be done to make Americans, as a whole, aware and offended by the unfair treatment of American Indians. I believe that movies like *The Canary Effect* can do just that. I not only agree that every American should see this film, but I believe that everyone should see this film. I believe that the film should be shown in any and every American history class, because it is the truthful history; it captures the realistic truth of the past and the present. I am offended that as a student of United States education system I was not shown this truth until now.

While providing historical context and background information for the literature students were reading was important, it was equally important for students to recognize that the very act of making documentaries like *The Canary Effect* is a testimony to the fact that American Indians have not and are not “vanishing” and are, in exciting ways, thriving as they tell their own stories. In addition to the chilling documentary discussed above, the syllabus included works that showcase the humor and survivance found in much of American Indian literature. Lynda Martinez Foley’s “Earthshaking Laughter” elicited much appreciation and discussion among the students. In response to “Earthshaking Laughter,” one UCY student posted the following question: “Foley’s story begins with the sen-

tence ‘*The Gods* laughed long and hard’ and ends, similarly, with the sentences, ‘The Gods laughed long and hard. And I laughed with them.’ Could laughter be a symbol of knowledge and wisdom in the text? Discuss.” CSULB students responded with the following:

I think you’re on to something here, Georgia. In an engaging 1998 interview, Sherman Alexie said, in reference to the humor he employed in his film *Smoke Signals*, “I think humor is the most effective political tool out there, because people will listen to anything if they’re laughing. I always want to be on the edge of *offending somebody*, of challenging one notion or another, and never being comfortable not only with myself, or with my own politics or my character’s politics, or their lives, but with everybody else’s. Humor is really just about questioning the status quo, that’s all it is.”

I definitely think that the laughter of the Gods is a symbol of knowledge as well as symbol of ironic trickery that the Gods love to disguise. The laughter that is present throughout the story works as a nagging, almost annoying taunt that follows Benito. To Benito, unaware of the Gods’ clever plan, it seems that the Gods are simply mocking his existence, and by ignoring their lessons Benito’s defiance tantalizes them even more. The Gods persistently invade Benito’s space; they haunt his dreams, taunting him with the healing of his leg as well as cause inconvenience to his everyday life (being a drunk). The earthquake also comes in the form of laughter in his dream, shaking him physically as well as emotionally out of his dwindling existence. The laughter is what shakes him into reality, brings him back to life, and gives him another chance. I think that this idea of laughter displays knowledge as well as it eases the pain of real life. Sometimes pain, like the pain eating away at Benito which causes him to turn to alcohol, can be so horrendous that the only way to break free, no matter how ironic it may seem, is to laugh. Laughter, as proven by the Gods, is so powerful that it can shake the bad memories as well as the pain overwhelming the body. Laughter can free the soul, and

while Benito was “ignoring” the lessons of the Gods, he was actually tricked by their ironic cure: laughter.

It was exhilarating to follow the online discussion among the students and to witness the ways in which they were engaged not only with the readings but also with one another. Students were posting thoughtful questions, responding to one another often without prompting, and developing insightful ways of reading and discussing American Indian literature, which is what we hoped for when planning this project.

POST-STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE

At the end of the unit, students completed a follow-up questionnaire, similar to the pre-course survey. For the Cypriot students, an additional question asked them to compare the “experiences of American Indians to the conflicts between Turkish and Greek Cypriots.” Upon reviewing students’ responses, the results indicated that both groups of students demonstrated an increased awareness and understanding of the histories of American Indians as well as a significant increase in their knowledge of American Indian writers. Several CSULB students noted that they were angry that their earlier school experiences did not provide an accurate history of Indigenous peoples. UCY students also expressed surprise and shock at the treatment of Indigenous peoples in America. A few Cypriot students acknowledged mistreatment and prejudice within their country based on ethnic differences and minority status; however, not surprisingly, students were more comfortable discussing the issues across the ocean than at home.

BENEFITS AND LIMITS OF THE PROJECT

This project, while a first for the English departments at both universities, is a model with much potential. Using existing technology to join students across campuses was relatively easy after the initial setup. Ultimately, this project produced unexpected learning oppor-

tunities for both our students and for us. Because not all students shared the same access to computers and the Internet, some students' level of participation was limited; yet none of the students felt that this was cause for avoiding similar projects in future courses.

In an e-mail to Dr. Sheley, two UCY students, E—— and Rozalina, reflected on the course and its significance:

In the midst of a technologically dominated society, two classrooms break the boundaries of time and space and meet half-way in a virtual conference room to exchange viewpoints. Just a few years ago, this would be unimaginable, but now it is just another part of a bigger framework introduced to enhance learning; or is it perhaps seeking to replace the confines of a concrete space—the classroom—with a seemingly unlimited space of free expression?

They further noted that the Internet, “with the uncountable choices and opportunities that go along with it, is a self-motivated quest towards knowledge, which would therefore entail a better grip and absorption rate on the material encountered.” They added, “There would be no other way, after all, to establish instant communication (despite the time difference) between classes in Cyprus and California, opening up pathways in order to give students a chance to interact, and exchange not only readings and interpretations, but cultural information about each other's place of residence.” They noted similarities between the two groups of students in their reactions to the materials; they also noted that, because of the number of responses to each question, the responses were sometimes repetitive. However, they recognized that “what was at stake went beyond the merely academic side of the connection.”

E—— and Rozalina acknowledged that with the two diverse groups, the real conflict was with perception: “Since American culture is widely represented through the media, students coming from Cyprus were far more curious to check whether what they saw in movies and TV series bore any resemblance to reality; whereas, the ones from California, most of them never having heard of Cyprus before, were ready to shape their representations with what infor-

mation they got from their Cypriot counterparts.” Astutely, E—and Rozalina pointed out that the “problems with representations” arise from a variety of voices, “which may or may not be representative of an entire people.” And, they added, the voices heard through the Internet “are filtered through a medium that removes real image, sound, movement—elements that bring life to any communicative attempt and turn it into an experience.” They noted the major disadvantage with this exchange: “Communicating through the Internet is fine when there is no alternative; but what makes learning truly memorable is face-to-face human interaction, and this is what will always be missing from faceless discussion boards.” As a final note, they referenced the fact that some students “tried to put an image to the text and suggested Facebook as an alternative ‘meeting place’—maybe, in a reversal of Barthes’ essay, to revive the authors of a multiplicity of texts into flesh and blood.” In all, they admitted, studying literature and film of American Indians was a major educational event, a “lasting lesson about humanity and inhumanity.”

CONCLUSIONS

Framing a joint e-learning study around American Indian literatures and histories in order to provide a collaborative learning experience for two disparate classrooms proved to be more successful than we imagined in the planning stages. Not only did the two groups discover common ground for discussions, but they shared similar reactions to the material, cogently discussed their differences, and, even in six short weeks, developed more sophisticated ways of reading and discussing American Indian literature.

The electronic and digitalized forums allowed for connections between the two universities, and the ten-hour time difference was not a factor, as the Discussion Board did not depend upon a real-time interface. Language was not an issue either, as the Cypriot students were fluent in English. However, some differences were noted in the seriousness with which the Cypriot students approached their assignments (they wrote more, researched more, and in some cases seemed to read the materials more carefully). Both CSULB and UCY

students felt the experience, overall, was beneficial. This attitude was expressed in a final posting from a Cypriot student: “Hi! I would just like to say that indeed we are impressed from what we have learned and also that it is always the case that we learn the truth too late.” Cypriot students made the connection between injustices in American Indian histories and their own, as Olga in Nicosia explains:

Unfortunately, here in Cyprus as well there are things we don’t learn at school. History books are one-sided and anything but subjective. What we have learned, as far as the issue with the Turkish invasion of the northern part of the island is that we were right and they were wrong. This is why a solution to the problem has not been found yet. We have learned that “they” are the “enemies,” the bad ones, and we are the good ones. It is a pity that we don’t get to admit our mistakes and learn the truth before it is too late. I hope things will change in the future though. Thank you for so much! Olga.

Because the project relied on so much technical assistance in the beginning, Dr. Leslie Kennedy, CSULB’s technology administrator, followed the students’ progress and postings. In the end, she commented, “This was a powerfully engaging experience for students in both locations. I am fortunate to have been able to assist with enhancing students’ learning experiences while using technology.”

The most rewarding part of this project for all involved was the engagement with the lives and stories of American Indians, past and present. For both groups of students, the world expanded as they read new materials, learned new histories, shared responses with peers across the globe; yet, their worlds also contracted as their conversations about the materials they read and viewed helped to bridge the geographical and cultural gaps between students at UCY and those at CSULB.

As a final Black Board post, Cypriot student Philipos Philliou wrote a poem titled “Green Lines” about Cyprus, divided cultures, and a search for peace. It is reprinted here with the poet’s permission:

Green lines weave in and out of my dreams,
 Drawn and redrawn endlessly by hands I cannot see,
 Dividing the world into binary oppositions
 And other oxymorons.
 I thrust my hands deep in the breast of this old earth
 That stretches all the way to sleeping mountains
 Of hypnotic blues and purples,
 And reach for the memories that are kept buried
 So that I may at least understand the meaning
 Of all this.
 Dust is carried by the winds, images of otherness
 And submerged empires,
 Dust thick with messages and apocryphal warnings
 And the winds howl, and the winds weep,
 And they carry the burden of the ages upon their backs,
 And they tell of what has not been told by history.
 I open my mouth and I breathe in the cobwebs,
 Silver strands of sorrow spun by silent spiders,
 And I am emptied of the yearning
 To return.

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Book Reviews

Pat Harrigan and Noah Wardrip-Fruin, eds. *First Person: New Media as Story, Performance, and Game*. Cambridge: MIT P, 2004.

———. *Second Person: Role-Playing and Story in Games and Playable Media*. Cambridge: MIT P, 2007.

———. *Third Person: Authoring and Exploring Vast Narratives*. Cambridge: MIT P, 2009.

Margaret Noori, *University of Michigan, Ann Arbor*

Why pay attention to games, game theory, and the technology that surrounds both today? One incredibly good reason is the reframing of literary ideas that can be found in such surprising arenas. The three volumes edited by Pat Harrigan and Noah Wardrip-Fruin acknowledge the newness of the field of gaming, but they also serve to connect it to literature and the way in which it is produced. New media, role-playing, and vast narratives involve the same texts, words, and characters that have always been a part of storytelling. Every discipline has ideas that overlap with others. While scholars of American Indian literature debate nationalism, identity, and cultural heritage, game theorists argue about “ludology” versus “narratology.” Much like literary critics, digital media experts are concerned about the difference between structure versus story. Literary metaphors and quotes begin to overlap when ludology is compared to Wallace Stevens’s precise “mind of winter,” while narratology in gaming looks more like Harold Bloom’s “maps of misreading” which

focus on content. Balance and imbalance are forward forces in many disciplines, and occasionally it is refreshing to look beyond our own borders, to explore other worlds. Conversations about socially constructed identities, interactive narratives, and virtual worlds align with the concerns of American Indian literature in very interesting ways. As more stories are created in digital environments, it is worth exploring narrative from another angle, one so far-flung into the future that it in just might be less linear, more interactive, and more familiar to Indigenous practitioners of ancient literary arts.

Published in 2004, 2007, and 2009, the edited volumes, *First Person*, *Second Person*, and *Third Person*, include the voices of more than one hundred authors working in the field. Contributions range across subjects and are often juxtaposed to create dialogues between voices. For scholars in the field they are quickly dated, but serve as an intellectual archive. For readers from other disciplines, these volumes are an excellent introduction to how gaming and literature collide. Their clever titles reference more than pronouns and are actually intended to bring readers into the game environment by asking readers to think first as the player, then as the partner or opponent, and finally as one or more of the “others” who serve as audience, background members, and sometime collaborators.

First Person focuses on the primary actor or main themes of stories embedded in games. The collection brings together essays on cyberdramas, critical simulation, game theories, hypertexts, and other media and formats. It is an introduction to and exploration of the field. Several authors do the work of making interdisciplinary connections. Brenda Laurel and Michael Mateas place interactive drama in an Aristotelian context. Espen Arseth considers narratology and genre. One of the most interesting essays is Janet Murray’s brief description of the landscape of cybernarrative, in which she notes that “the human brain, the map of the earth, the protocols of human relationships, are all elements in an improvised collective story-game, an aggregation of overlapping, conflicting, constantly morphing structures that make up the rules by which we act and interpret our experiences” (3). With this, she slides into ethnography, anthropology, and other areas that work to describe human

behavior and culture. Her conclusion, however, is highly specific about the fact that “the digital medium is the appropriate locus for enacting and exploring the contests and puzzles of the new global community and the postmodern inner life” (3).

Second Person considers the task of authorship more closely. It also looks at the history of games and how they create fictions through play. Several authors discuss the intermingling of rules and random behavior in narrative construction. James Wallis offers an elegant testimony to the way infinite alternate retellings provide complexity to even the most simple tales. His argument could be applied to many of the oral stories I have encountered in language revitalization. Although they are sometimes considered less sophisticated, with fewer characters, twists of plot, literary flourishes, and extended dialogues, oral tales exist, like games, in an environment that expects interaction. With each retelling there is an expectation that new connections will be made to time, place, and audience. Beautiful connection—I can’t wait to read these texts.

One of the most interesting articles in *Second Person* is D. Fox Harrell’s discussion of “A Computational Narrative Generation System.” No, this is not monkeys at a keyboard. It is a sophisticated attempt to describe the process of developing computational techniques for representing an author’s (or culture’s) intended subjective meaning and expression using principles of linguistics and rhetoric. Harrell acknowledges cognitive complexity and the reality that a machine does not have a mind of its own, but his description of attempting to create computer-generated poetry teaches a great deal about how poems are made. Best of all, his situation of choice reflects the voice of a culture not privileged as the majority. The poetic system he describes is “The Girl with Skin of Haints and Seraphs,” a prose poem about a girl with the skin of angels set in the African diaspora. The intent was to “evoke the idea that identity is not based on static categories and classifications, but is dynamic and contingent upon social situations” (180). The project explored the artistic traditions that speakers, especially storytellers, use to negotiate the disjunction between self-identity and social identity.

Adopting this analytical approach, we could superimpose a new

map over the writing of many authors. For instance, the work of Louise Erdrich is constantly scrutinized on many levels, including scales of authenticity and identity. My own doctoral dissertation traced the influx of Ojibwe words in her fiction.¹ However, gaming offers a new mode of analysis. Perhaps we should ask, “How similar are Fleur Pillager and Lara Croft?” Imagine a game where the task was to create a monologue for any one of the many scenes of destruction wrought by either woman. The careful accounting for themes, domain, phrasing, syntax, metaphor, and narrative structure would reveal much about the culture of the character and the author. How do minds sort the symbols of society, and how do the assumptions and identities of the reader and critic influence the interpretation of any text? Now imagine inviting a class of undergraduates to become Lara or Fleur in a *Second Life* space where they would fight loggers and representatives of the capitalist industrial machine. How much about Indian identity would become relevant and memorable in an interactive narrative based on alternative literary analysis? I am teaching *Tracks* now—wouldn’t a game like this be amazing for our students? I want to play!

Third Person represents the inclusion of the other, both singular and plural. It is an eclectic volume intended to gather the expansive nature of games. The essays focus more on narrative than on the process of play, and several authors explore the connections between image and story represented by comics and graphic novels. The main topic is the construction of vast ongoing epics and multiplayer environments in virtual worlds. Central to all of the worlds is the concept of a “sandbox,” a place where individuals can explore their identity and consider how they fit into society. Many of the authors use literary metaphors to explain this concept, most notably Richard Bartle, who describes Alice, Dorothy, and Wendy worlds referring to the quests and adventures in Wonderland, Oz, and Neverland (105). Making comparisons to just one national Native literature, I would say these narratives are very like the stories of Nanaboozhoo and his brothers as described by many Anishinaabe authors, including Lois Beardslee, Anne Dunn, Louise Erdrich, and Basil Johnston, to name only a few. The differences between the

characters and perspectives they represent lies on a scale of destiny versus participation. For Dorothy, and for Nanaboozhoo's oldest brother, life is a series of possibly preordained adventures, a quest or challenge one can accept or deny while loitering in an alternate reality. The most popular gaming version of this now is *World of Warcraft*. For Wendy, and Nanaboozhoo's middle brothers, life is an extension of one's own imagination where anything is possible and every act is an interaction in a complex social network. The most popular computer versions of this are such online social environments as *Facebook* and *Second Life*. The rare, and arguably most powerful position, is that of *Alice in Wonderland* and Nanaboozhoo in the woodlands, whose lives balance inherited scripts with individual interpretation.

Game theory offers a new model of trickster narratives, one that pays attention to the multi-author tradition of interactive storytelling and balances historical precedent with alternative interpretations. When Anne Dunn recounts the history of the first Anishinaabe storyteller, there is no single message; rather, there is a hero, on a journey in the context of his community, who is starving and badly in need of "wonder and magic."² Within the virtual world of Anishinaabe literature, where stones are animate, a boulder gifts a young man with the power to help his people forget their pain and hunger by telling tales, actually creating for them virtual worlds in which the troubles of everyday life are forgotten. This is not literature intended to reflect real life, but rather to deflect real life or refract reality into new images. The boulder who spoke to the boy and the boy who told the first story were every bit as sophisticated as game developer Tamiko Thiel, who says, "In my site-specific interactive virtual worlds I embed layers of cultural, social, and political references into a dramatic first-person encounter . . . to create a more personal, emotional relationship to the subject matter, making it more memorable and meaningful" (*Third Person* 153). This is why Nanaboozhoo's turning into a rabbit to steal fire from the shores of a lake situated in the sky is no surprise to either traditional Anishinaabe storytellers or the game developers of today. This is also why computational construction techniques are useful tools for literary

analysis. The study of American Indian literature can benefit from looking at the pieces, parts, and intentions from more than a single-author perspective with narrative meaning intentionally problematized by the identity of the interpreters.

A brief review cannot do justice to these three volumes of intertextual inquiry. Essays, published simultaneously with responses, invite readers to enter a digital landscape where texts are open to new interpretations. For those schooled in postcolonial literary and cultural studies, this new avenue provides an infinitely interesting contrast. For scholars who enter the field as “digital natives” there is an opportunity to leverage the ability to think simultaneously across multiple channels, to include multiple voices and histories in ways that can inform cultural debates. Whether you are a “digital native” or a “digital immigrant,” Harrigan and Wardrip-Fruin have gathered considerable material to explore.³

NOTES

1. Margaret Noori, “Native American Literature in Tribal Context: Anishinaabe Aadisokaanag Noongom” (University of Minnesota, 2001).

2. Anne Dunn, coll. and ed., *Winter Thunder: Retold Tales* (Duluth: Holy Cow Press, 2001), 17.

3. The terms “digital native” and “digital immigrant” have been used to differentiate between those who grew up online and networked compared to those who adopted a high use of technology later in life. For a clear explanation of these terms, see Marc Prensky, “Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants,” from *On the Horizon* (MCB University Press, vol. 9, no. 5, October 2001), at www.marcprensky.com/writing.

Damian Baca. *Mestiz@ Scripts, Digital Migrations, and the Territories of Writing*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

ISBN: 978-0-230-60515-2. 210 pp.

Margaret Noori, *University of Michigan, Ann Arbor*

Damian Baca begins *Mestiz@ Scripts, Digital Migrations, and the Territories of Writing* by reminding readers that “Writing systems do not

‘evolve’ so much as they shift and migrate across territories, technologies, and digital cultures” (7). The “digital” culture Baca explores is one of Indigenous ingenuity and narrative manipulation across geographies of space and culture. By providing a study in composition and rhetoric written from a Mesoamerican and Mexican American historical perspective, he examines the various storytelling systems and the technical details of narrative production in highly sophisticated, but underrepresented cultures. We think of murals as contemporary; he tells us of sacred scripts found in murals five hundred years old. We think of the lengthy folds of a codex existing in the past; he tells us of twentieth-century codex collaborations. Baca describes the “immense plurality that remains obscured on American Indian land” in both the present and the past (xviii).

In a move both political and rhetorical, Baca begins with a “Pronunciation Guide and Brief Chronology.” Rather than allow readers to filter unfamiliar consonant combinations through the lens of their first language, he requires them to slow down and experience new sounds and learn new rules. Similarly, he begins the conversation of composition in 50,000 BCE, when pictographs began to represent thought and narrative in Piaui, Brazil. Gradually, he brings readers through time past the establishment of Mayan urban culture in 1000 BCE; past the creation of Epi-Olmec writing in 300 BCE; past the establishment of the Aztec imperial city, Tenochtitlan, in 1325; to the year 1491, a moment in time when an estimated 40 million people lived in Mesoamerica. This is the point when the existing Indigenous population experienced a 90 percent decline. However, as this book demonstrates, the continent remains connected to the scripts and practices of a culture that utilized a series of new techniques to move from the past into the present. Technology is merely the newest technique, and we are reminded that the modern Western world was once schooled by impressive ancient artistry. The wonder is not that ancient civilizations produced complex systems of understanding but that these systems were able to survive despite the onslaught of colonization.

Another asset of this text is the expansion of Mestiz@ identity, which Baca defines as “the fusion of bloodlines between American

Indians and Spanish Iberian conquerors under colonial situations” (2). What this actually refers to is a continuum of identity from those who understand their individual and communal identity as Indigenous to those who view themselves primarily as Spanish. Stories are composed across a spectrum of identity. Lived experiences are compared across time and across borders. For instance, there are ways the story is the same in the United States and Mexico, and ways in which it is vastly different. The scripts Baca cites work to problematize linguistic and literary differences. He explains: “There is no singular Mestiz@ or Mexican, Mexican-American or Chicano culture. Mestiz@s and their communities are interacting and connecting with each other and with the larger world around them, forming intricate cultural networks of persons and communities” (61). Furthermore, “as an umbrella term, Mesoamerica is employed not to suggest a sweeping generalization, but in recognition of long processes of interrelated yet diverse cultures in a constant state of transformation” (34). One of the book’s primary lessons is that identity and technology are interrelated concepts dependent upon the shifting goals of communities constantly adapting.

Baca grounds his own theories in a network of scholarship about Mestiz@ rhetoric and writing. He of course includes references to cultural critic Gloria Anzaldúa, who wrote, “let’s all stop importing Greek myths and the Western Cartesian split point of view and root ourselves in the mythological soil and soul of this continent.”¹ But Baca also crosses disciplines to include the thinking of art historians Donald Robertson and Elizabeth Boone Hill, whose work provides historical context for the production of texts in the midst of colonization. By including the theories of a wide range of scholars, Baca is able to show how the production of texts can be viewed as a form of resistance, survival, and self-reinvention. He shows how Mestiz@ rhetoric revises the dominant narrative of assimilation by recasting the savages as artists engaged in autobiography and documentation. Rhetoric and the production of texts, scripts, and images are confirmed as “a mediating, identity-forming activity” (8).

Codex rhetorics promote a new dialectic, a new strategy of inventing writing between worlds. Baca interprets pictorial codex

as a Mestiz@ cultural symbol and sees it as a “resistance rhetoric” that serves to revise and displace the dominant historical narrative of cultural assimilation through continuous symbolic play with pairs, doubles, corresponding expressions, and twins in pictography. The discussion of divine pairs and a dual God who is neither gender calls to mind futuristic images of infinitely intelligent androids able to understand any code. As he explores how languages are structured, Baca connects multiple cultures. The Olmec civilization developed a script with syntax and morphemes so complicated it has not yet been fully decoded. The Inca, who followed the Olmec, used the khipu cords with knots of meaning that are now sometimes compared to the binary code of computer languages. Baca makes brilliant connections between ancient Indigenous ideas and the trajectory of technology today. A primary example of this is the *Codex Espangliensis*, published in 2001 and subtitled “From Columbus to the Border Patrol.” Three artists known for their manipulation of traditional script, performance, and digital ability created a single document, folded like the original codices. Baca describes this work as a “new translations of literacy” that provides a view of Mestiz@ writing which “is responsive not only to the plurality of other historically non-Western cultures across the Americas and beyond, but also to current trends in visual and digital rhetoric, trends that belatedly call for increased attention to multigenre and multimedia composition practices” (91). More than the act of inclusion, entwining the discontinuity between pictographs, alphabetic worlds, and multimedia presentations works to revise the hierarchical frame of identity.

What does this mean for the instruction of writing in a space where writing and writing instruction have been formalized and frequently aligned with national establishments? When writing is controlled by the majority, the practice and perspective of the minority become the “other,” yet in these times of shifting modes of representation and production, how has the notion of the text and the technical production of texts been recast, or how could it be? Baca offers alternate models of composition instruction that broaden notions of territory, period, and nation. He proposes “a shift from

‘talking about’ rhetoric and writing from the perspective of those in the imperial center and their followers to ‘inventing and writing from’ the conceptual Mestiz@ borderlands” resulting in new discursive configurations. His proposal is not to discard Western contributions, or to merely add contributions of others, but to reread all contributions from multiple perspectives using multiple mediums and scaffolds of understanding.

NOTE

1. Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Books, 2007), 24.

Leonard F. Chana, Susan Lobo, and Barbara Chana. *The Sweet Smell of Home: The Life and Art of Leonard F. Chana*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2009. ISBN: 978-0-8165-2819-6. 176 pp.

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The Sweet Smell of Home is a much-needed addition to the literature on O’odham art and culture, most of which has been focused on basket-making. While the aesthetics of O’odham basket design are evident in Leonard F. Chana’s images, the Tohono O’odham artist’s work is beyond the limitations of ethnographic illustration. Chana is not only knowledgeable about the O’odham Himdag (the O’odham Way) but also an eyewitness to social and community events, which consistently inspired his images. At the same time, Chana understands intimately the hardships that have beset generations of O’odham, which he recounts throughout the book, but which is especially poignant in his own personal struggle with alcohol abuse. In fact, Chana devotes a chapter to this difficult stage of his life titled “So I Was Tired of Drinking Anyways.” The chapter is brief, as are all twelve chapters, yet layered with the emotional truth that can only come from knowing the desolation of the spirit firsthand. However, Chana neither preaches nor howls about his struggles and the lessons learned. Rather, his storytelling steadily main-

tains a pleasant tone, which seems to be due to his connection with the O'odham values and beliefs that subtend his growth as an artist from boyhood to the end of his life.

Arranged and edited by Susan Lobo, a cultural anthropologist currently at the University of Arizona as a Distinguished Visiting Scholar, and Barbara Chana, Leonard's widow and a licensed abuse therapist serving the American Indian community, *The Sweet Smell of Home* is a transcript of Leonard's life-story growing up on the Tohono O'odham reservation in southern Arizona and how his life as an artist emerged organically from this environment. Each chapter is illustrated with the various acrylic and pen-and-ink images that Chana created over his career as a self-taught artist, much of which was done in the form of stippling, which is a way of building an image out of small dots or specks. Chana did this with his pen-and-ink drawings. His acrylic paintings, on the other hand, were made with conventional brushstrokes, coloring, and shading. What emerged is a body of work that is clearly devoted to the customs and values, not to mention the people, that made up the Indigenous world in which Chana lived and worked. In this way Chana is part of a commonplace tradition in modern Indigenous art. In the case of the O'odham, Chana is a peer to Michael Chiago, another artist who is working on tribally specific themes in southern Arizona. Chiago, like Chana, regularly sells work through Silverbell Trading, which has since moved from its original location next to Li'l Abner's Steakhouse to its current site on Oracle Road in Tucson.

Despite growing recognition as an artist, Chana never sought the fame or notoriety that is characteristic of the contemporary art world. As Barbara Chana recalls about her husband:

It took some time before he accepted the title [of artist] and then only after people challenged him to value his gift. Leonard stated his inspiration came from his heart, which moved his hands to express his thoughts and feelings, which usually included others—viewing art as more than him. This belief, in my opinion, helped downgrade the false pride and ego that can so easily beset an artist. He had a greater insight of needing to paint and ink a story than the need for recognition. (xvii–xviii)

One can argue that it is precisely because Chana did not go to art school that his work is bereft of any cynicism. However, it would be unfair to characterize his work as naive. On the contrary, Chana is abundantly aware of the problems and negative forces that threaten the well-being of his community, namely, substance abuse and (especially cultural) poverty. Yet, face after face in Chana's pictures is smiling, laughing, and enjoying life. Although Chana is by no means a political artist, his respect for cultural values that go back to the creation story are no less significant than modern assertions of sovereignty and self-determination. As Angelo Joaquin Jr., cofounder and director of the Waila Festival, remembers his friend: "Whenever I'd see him, his handshake and smile would act to rejuvenate my spirit. Similarly, his images contain details so familiar to O'odham . . . that one is instantly drawn into them. In depicting the values and beliefs so cherished by O'odham, Leonard's artwork provides us with a strengthened sense of identity to, and connection with, our Ancestors" (ix–x).

As for the book, it should be noted that *The Sweet Smell of Home* is not a work of art history or art criticism. Lobo provides a brief but meaningful introduction, in which she recounts her experience interviewing Chana and the problems they resolved together in making the finished work accessible to O'odham and non-O'odham alike. Still, there is very little analysis of Chana's images, be it in terms of style, composition, or contemporary trends in American Indian art. With regard to the latter concerns, the authors leave that to a short preface by Rebecca J. Dobkins, curator at the Hallie Ford Museum of Art, Willamette University, Salem, Oregon, where she is also an associate professor of anthropology. About Chana's place in American Indian art history, Dobkins writes: "He belongs in the ranks of other important self-taught Native artists who focused upon the everyday and are often referred to as 'narrative genre' painters . . . such as Ernest Spybuck . . . Jesse Cornplanter . . . Frank Day . . . and Dalbert Castro" (xiii). Chana's work complements the poetic imagery of Danny Lopez, not to mention Ofelia Zepeda. Furthermore, as an autobiography, *The Sweet Smell of Home* can stand alongside the canonical works of O'odham literature, such as

A Pima Remembers by George Webb, *A Pima Past* by Anna Moore Shaw, *A Papago Traveler* by James McCarthy, and *Papago Woman* by Maria Chona (recorded by Ruth Underhill).

Amy Lonetree and Amanda J. Cobb, eds. *The National Museum of the American Indian: Critical Conversations*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008. ISBN: 978-0-8032-1111-7. 474 pp.

Rebecca Bales, *California State University Monterey Bay*

In *The National Museum of the American Indian: Critical Conversations*, Amy Lonetree and Amanda J. Cobb have collected essays focusing on the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) and the ongoing dialogue between Native peoples, museum experts, the media, and scholars. This volume consists of four “critical conversations” that include seventeen essays, and span the historical development of Smithsonian Institution, the creation and development of the NMAI, and responses to these. Common themes in the essays include how to treat Native communities with sensitivity, the historical distrust Natives have of the academy and museums, and questions of scholarly museum work and who is qualified to do this work.

In Conversation 1, Ira Jacknis, Patricia Pierce Erikson, and Judith Osrowitz outline the NMAI in the context of the Smithsonian’s history. According to this conversation, the misperception of American Indians and how the museum depicts them must change, and Native voices must be central to the dialogue between all stakeholders in museum development. To change these misconceptions, a different approach to the museum and its organization must challenge the norm. Erikson addresses the complexity of defying the norm in museum development, stating, “the inclusion of Native Americans in the planning, curation, interpretation, and representation process disrupts conventional notions of what a scholar is and who gets to constitute the consciousness of the visitor” (80). The connection between this conversation and the other three becomes obvious through the issue of reinterpretation. Conversation 3 further

explores this through museums' typical treatment of Native peoples as timeless and ahistoric.

In Conversation 2, Paul Chaat Smith, Cynthia Chavez Lamar, and Beverly R. Singer focus on the collaborative efforts between Native communities, individuals, and the museum, while providing a context for these factions' interpretation of different aspects of the museum. Smith addresses Indian involvement in and the media's response to the museum, the struggles with labeling exhibits, and mainstream viewers' reactions to them. Lamar stresses the importance of Native community involvement. For the *Our Lives* exhibit, eight communities worked collaboratively with museum staff, and Lamar concludes that "most of the content of the community exhibits resulted in forward-looking concepts. It was a team effort based on consensus, and most groups worked toward achieving balance between history, cultural traditions, and pride" (149). The last essay in this section focuses on the making of the film *Who We Are* and outlines the process of effectively and appropriately portraying the communities filmed. This conversation readjusts commonly held ideas of the process of creating a museum and challenges the history behind the norms mentioned in Conversation 1.

Conversation 3 includes essays by Elizabeth Archuleta, Aldona Jonaitis and Janet Catherine Berlo, Gwyneira Isaac, Sonya Atalay, Myla Vincente Carpio, and Amy Lonetree and is rich in analysis of the historic relationship between Indians and museums, the NMAI in particular. Archuleta explains that museums, like literature, portray certain images to teach mainstream America. She responds to media criticisms (the *Washington Post's* Marc Fisher and Paul Richard) of wanting Indians to be the same archetypes represented in the American conscience and psyche (185). According to Archuleta, visitors must "listen" to the stories told throughout the museum and understand the interaction between visitors and those stories. Jonaitis and Berlo continue this criticism by addressing the negative reviews in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* that did not reflect the authors' actual experiences in the museum. These two authors claim, "No longer can a museum succeed simply by placing beautiful things on its walls; visitors must have some way of person-

ally having a meaningful encounter with all those things” (216). They criticize criticism, claiming that the museum in its entirety—from the café to the stores to the exhibits themselves—is the experience.

Isaac frames her essay in the concept of “genres of expectancy.” She wanted to “explore how the stories museums tell us are not just presented in the exhibits; their social meanings are created by the intersection of curators, audiences, media, and scholars who publicize, frame, and ultimately layer varied interpretations of the exhibits” (242). While Isaac seeks to understand the complexity of genre, audience, and scholarship through interaction, Lonetree and Carpio focus more on the historical issues emerging throughout. Carpio questions the portrayal of Indian history and the lingering effect of colonization clearly exhibited. Lonetree criticizes the exhibits by informing the reader that they do not necessarily convey American Indians’ actual experiences because the audience may not understand the different approaches in this particular museum.

Conversation 3 creates a dialogue, not only between museumgoers and the museum itself, but between readers of this volume and the “idea” of the museum. Both challenge the reader to reconcile the efforts of museums and Native American communities to collaborate without excluding the history of colonization and tragedy these interactions address. The combination of these first three conversations rightly brings into question how Native communities maintain agency in their own history and in putting together representations of their people and communities in museums.

Conversation 4 brings all the conversations together through assessing the impact of the museum on Native communities. Amanda J. Cobb, Pauline Wakeham, Robin Maria Delugan, Ruth B. Philips, and Mario A. Caro interlink the museum’s goals and holdings to “questions of Nation and Identity.” All authors in this conversation address the meaning of museums in reinforcing American Indian identity, sovereignty, and cultures.

Critical Conversations illuminates the continuing conflict between Indigenous communities, scholars, and the museum world. Bridging the gap between these factions is never easy. This book allows us to see the complicated process of trying to be as collab-

orative as possible and allowing for critical examination of process and final product. Every aspiring scholar who wishes to enter into museum studies or to be a curator of collections should read this compilation. It provides insights into how to include voices once silenced in the past, and the process of establishing collections and spaces that reflect these voices accurately. The struggle to include Natives in the processes to create an authentic representation of their histories and their societies reflects the struggle to have Native voices heard in mainstream thought, academia, and history.

Museum experts and museumgoers should read this volume. In the complexity of views contained within, it dispels any preconceived expectations one might bring into a visit to the museum; how could it not with such a variety of perspectives? The vast amount of information in this volume can be overwhelming at times and may cause the reader to wonder about the museum's efficacy if it is so highly contested. However, the wealth of information contained within it will encourage those interested in and curious about the placement and holdings of this public museum to visit, because Natives now claim a place in this discussion and in one of the most important public spaces of this country—the National Mall.

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Association for the Study of American Indian Literatures announces the ASAIL Emerging Scholars Professional Development Fellowship, which provides travel assistance honoraria of \$300 (US) for graduate students and advanced undergraduates to attend and present at professional conferences. Applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis. Applicants must provide the following information: a cover letter, CV, and acceptance letter confirming acceptance to present at a professional conference on a topic relating to the study of Indigenous literatures and/or languages. Awards will be distributed at the discretion of the ASAIL President and Treasurer based on funding availability. Send applications and queries to the current ASAIL President, Patrice Hollrah, at patrice.hollrah@unlv.edu.

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MARGARET NOORI (Giiwedinoodin; Anishinaabe heritage, waabzheshiinh doodem) received an MFA in creative writing and a PhD in English and linguistics from the University of Minnesota. She is director of the Comprehensive Studies Program and teaches American Indian literature at the University of Michigan. Her work focuses on the recovery and maintenance of Anishinaabe language and literature. Current research includes language proficiency and assessment, and the study of Indigenous literary aesthetics. To see and hear current projects visit www.ojibwe.net, where she and her colleague Howard Kimewon have created a space for language shared by academics and the Native community.

NANCY STROW SHELEY received an MA in English from the University of Illinois and a PhD in American studies from the University of Kansas. She is currently an associate professor in the English Department at California State University, Long Beach. Interested in global education, she has received two Fulbright honors, one to study Rwanda post-genocide and the other a six-month award to teach American Studies on the island of Cyprus. Sheley's areas of expertise are American art, culture, and literature from 1850 to 1930, especially the works of women writers and US ethnic literatures.

CAROL ZITZER-COMFORT is an associate professor of English at California State University, Long Beach. Her publications include *Through the Eye of the Deer*, an anthology of American Indian women's writing coedited with Carolyn Dunn; and *Breaking Boundaries*, a textbook for developmental English. Comfort's current research and interests include US ethnic literatures, disability studies, and composition and rhetoric. She is currently under contract with Pearson for a freshman composition textbook, which she is writing with her colleague Cora Foerstner.

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 Kirby Brown, editorial assistant, at klbrown@mail.utexas.edu.

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ERRATA

The review of *Lumbee Indians in the Jim Crow South: Race, Identity, and the Making of a Nation* in the last issue (23.1) misspelled the author's surname. It is Lowery, not Lowrey. We greatly regret this mistake and extend our apologies to the author.

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