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FROM THE EDITORS

One of the joys of working in this field is the opportunity to participate in conversations about the power and possibility of Indigenous literatures to effect change: in our communities (however they might be constituted), in our classrooms, in our families, in ourselves. We can perhaps all agree that literature matters, though the *how* of it is a bit less certain. Where does the power come from: the subject matter and political concerns with which the literature is engaged? The literary techniques writers employ? The aesthetic qualities, world-views, and philosophies embedded in the works and expressed by the artists? A combination of all of these, or something else altogether?

Words have power, and for more than thirty years *SAIL* has been a space for the ongoing exploration of how that power works on the page and in the world, a space where Native and non-Native writers, scholars, teachers, students, and interested readers can come together to understand the power of Indigenous literary expression in its many manifestations and traditions. Creative writing, critical essays, book reviews, commentaries, letters, editorials, and even visual art have all offered readers the opportunity to consider provocative new works and return to familiar works in new and challenging ways.

This issue is fully within that expansive critical tradition. There are two exciting essays dedicated to the work of the inimitable Anishinaabe “crossblood” trickster theorist and novelist Gerald Vizenor: Yvette Koepke and Christopher Nelson take up the critical intersections of literature and science through the narrative role of genetics in Vizenor’s *Heirs of Columbus*, finding in it “a model of American identity rooted in body and science studies that chal-

lenges the historical fantasized objective neutrality of both science and political philosophy,” whereas Christopher Schedler’s provocative study of *Bearheart* examines Vizenor’s use of “the cannibalistic figure of the wiindigoo to reveal consuming forms of exclusion and assimilation by which groups assert their sovereignty,” comparing the “wiindigoo sovereignty” of the treaty-making nation-state to the survivance sovereignty of “native transmotion.”

In keeping with Vizenor’s boundary-crossing spirit, the other pieces in this issue challenge geographic and genre boundaries in their explorations of the power of Indigenous expression. In “Listening to Bones That Sing,” Azalea Barriese and Susan Gingell take us northward to the Canadian prairies and the writings of Cree poet Louise Halfe. They examine Halfe’s poetry collection *Blue Marrow* and its articulation of the profound generational power of Cree women’s voices in challenging and undoing the gendered ravages of colonialism on themselves, their families, and their communities. From the embodied rhythms of oral poetry to the spirited rhythms of Native hip-hop, Carrie Louise Sheffield brings the work of hip-hop artists Maniac: The Siouxpernatural and Night Shield to *SAIL*, one of the first essays in the journal (but hopefully not the last) to take up this musical genre as an increasingly important form of Indigenous literary expression.

To complement the original Native poetry, short fiction, and creative nonfiction that appears in *SAIL* every year, the final piece in this issue is the first of what we hope will be an occasional series of creative commentaries by a diverse range of writers that focus on the transformative work of Native literature in the world. Jim Wohlpart’s “Journey to the Great Mountain” chronicles an expedition he and his father made to Mt. Katadhin in Maine and examines the significance of both the journey and Linda Hogan’s *Dwellings* in teaching him another way of abiding in the world.

Each issue of *SAIL* offers the opportunity to enlighten us, challenge our expectations, enrich our experience, and continue important conversations about the power of Indigenous literature to change the world, one reader (or listener) at a time. We are honored to participate in this ongoing conversation with you.

James H. Cox and Daniel Heath Justice

Genetic Crossing

Imagining Tribal Identity and Nation in
Gerald Vizenor's *The Heirs of Columbus*

YVETTE KOEPKE AND CHRISTOPHER NELSON

Gerald Vizenor's 1991 *The Heirs of Columbus* uses crossing as a simultaneously material and narrative pose to imagine tribal survival as the heirs' matrilineal inheritance of Christopher Columbus's healing genes. Written shortly after Vizenor's first published work in postmodern theory, the edited collection *Narrative Chance: Postmodern Discourse on Native American Indian Literature* (1989), *Heirs* incorporates Vizenor's signature theoretical concerns. The novel writes back to the common cultural representations of Indians he terms "manifest manners" in a play on the phrase "manifest destiny," coined to describe the colonization of Native peoples and lands figured in Columbus himself. The heirs are what Vizenor would call "postindian" in *Manifest Manners: Postindian Warriors of Survival* (1994): "The postindian warriors bear their own simulations and revisions to contend with manifest manners, the 'authentic' summaries of ethnology, and the curse of racialism and modernism in the ruins of representation" (5). Though the novel refuses a scientific account of the number of heirs, they include Columbus's namesake Stone; his "shouter" maternal grandparents with the same names, Truman Columbus; and Felipa Flowers, the fashion-model lawyer trickster poacher and mother of his daughter Miigis; as well as Memphis, a black panther; Caliban, "the great white mongrel" (*Heirs* 14); and the black bear shaman hand talker Samana, namesake descendant of Christopher Columbus's New World lover. This mongrel cross-genus, cross-gender, cross-time group embodies Vizenor's representation of Columbus himself, which deliberately

crosses out—while leaving legible traces, since “he is not a separation in tribal consciousness” (185)—Columbus, the death-dealing racist, along with Columbus, the heroic explorer. This cross-motion is productive, much as in the process of weaving cloth, a patrilineal textual thread connecting Stone to Christopher Columbus but also to the executed métis resistance leader Louis Riel (127).¹

We argue that the novel as a whole expresses the genetic code(x) of Christopher Columbus, producing tricky displacements, reversals, and complex oppositions that imagine tribal identity. Far from a potent original thinker or the carrier of civilization, Vizenor’s Columbus is an “obscure crossblood,” probable Jew cursed with a clubbed penis who responds to “a summons to the New World” to bear Mayan civilization back to the Old World (3).² Far from the tragic end of the New World in disease and death, Columbus’s blood bears the beginning humors, the healing gene signature activated by Samana.³ The well-known dark humor of crediting Columbus with discovering America echoes in the erronies and ironies of the historical stories of the search for the headwaters of the Mississippi River, the novelistic location of the heirs’ stone tavern, and the discovery of the structure of DNA.⁴ *Heirs*’ elaboration of “cross” in all of its play conveys meanings in both content and structure, as do genes and bingo cards. As Stephen Osborne has pointed out, much of the negative reaction to the novel derives from the application of a mimetic representational standard to a text better read as “methectic”: “In a series of characteristic postmodern tropes, the representation in language becomes more real than the material ‘presence’—or, more accurately, the distinction itself is deconstructed. Genes are metaphors for stories, and vice versa.” While Osborne is surely right that “Vizenor is neither describing nor advocating tribal abandonment of traditional lands and modes of production for bingo, genetic therapy, and international waters” (125), this article insists on the materiality of genes and thus the breakdown of the distinction by exploring the “vice versa,” which focuses attention on the details of the novel’s representation of genetic science.⁵ This approach shows how Vizenor’s rewriting of the Columbus story puts his theory into play formally, offering a model of American identity rooted in body

and science studies that challenges the historical fantasized objective neutrality of both science and political philosophy.

Heirs imagines both individual and national identity as the coded antinomies of genes, but crucially this identity is not a postmodern invention. The “postindian arises from the earlier inventions of the tribes,” though they are not therefore nostalgic: “[T]he most secure simulations are unreal sensations, and become the real without a referent to an actual tribal remembrance” (*Manifest* 5, 8). For Vizenor, it isn’t a question of whether or not to apply or use postmodern theory; postmodernism simply *is* the texture of (tribal) reality: “The postmodern opened in tribal imagination; oral cultures have never been without a postmodern condition that enlivens stories and ceremonies.” As such, “[p]ostmodernism liberates imagination and widens the audiences for tribal literatures; this new criticism rouses a comic world view, narrative discourse and language games on the past” (*Narrative* x, 6). *The Heirs of Columbus* engages in these language games that reimagine the past and therefore the present and future as well.⁶ Taking up a common critique of postmodern theorizing, Arnold Krupat has used *Heirs* to argue that “[c]ertainly Vizenor has consistently and militantly refused to resolve contradictions. But this stance entails the conclusion that postmodernism cannot be or imply a politics” (“Stories” 171). Thus Krupat identifies Vizenor as “misleadingly postmodern” since “he, too, must finally appeal to the ‘ethical universal’ of a ‘certain simple respect for human suffering’” (173). On this view, politics necessitates predetermined, “universal” ground that sidesteps the meaning of “ethical” as a process of study, of determination of what counts as, for instance, “human suffering” and “simple respect” as well as who decides, and how. The novel embodies this highly contextual, performative process of ethical political negotiation.

The Heirs of Columbus tells the stories of the heirs’ creation of a new nation dedicated to healing children using bingo, manicures, and scientific research into genetic therapy. The narrative reproduction of Point Assinika, ever-growing through implantation of the heirs’ genetic signature, elaborates the Vizenorian concepts of “crossblood,” “sovereignty,” and “survivance.” The unique yet dis-

persed and displaced signature literalizes the “crossblood” as the tribal—not just for Natives, but for everyone.⁷ All are free to cross their blood with the heirs’ via gene therapy; all are free to cross into the tribal nation. The very structures of the novel effect this crossing, the “transmotion” that comprises sovereignty for Vizenor. *Heirs* focuses on the production of new material simulations to challenge not only Western restitution of an “Indian” past but also its inevitability. In the novel, Columbus and even European civilization arise from the earlier sensations of Samana and the inventions of the Maya. More generally, genes precede genetics, unsettling the very possibility of a “model.” Survivance—survival and resistance—inheres in healing, but healing as re-gene-ration incorporating remembered and new. If, as Karsten Fitz asserts, “[i]n Vizenor’s fiction, imagination serves as the crucial transcultural strategy of interpreting the world in tribal terms” (259), *Heirs* extends this “trans” or cross creativity to the material real.

X MARKS THE SPOT: DISPLACING THE AUTHORITY OF SIGNATURE DISCOVERY

Comic alliteration enacts the shift in authority over Christopher Columbus’s initials and identity on the first page of the novel: “The Admiral of the Ocean Sea, confirmed in the name of the curia and the crown, was an obscure crossblood who bore the tribal signature of survivance and ascended the culture of death in the Old World” (3). Whereas a “name” denotes ownership in concrete referents, a “signature” is a sign whose meaning relies on performance—in this case, Columbus’s first successful sexual performance with Samana. Samana “released the stories in his blood” (37), “an unrevealed signature of survivance” (29, 38) ultimately inherited by the heirs. This signature supersedes the name shared by anatomist Renaldus Columbus: the “discovery of the internal penis would not ease his torment” (31). The cross placed on the feminized body of the fertile “New World” by Christopher paralleled with Renaldus’s discovery of the clitoris transmutes into the X of a chromosome signature. *Heirs* challenges not just the power of civilized, scientific thought

motivating colonialist discovery, but the stable uniqueness of identity carried by the concept of "signature." All of the heirs share the same signature: panther, man, mongrel, bear-woman. Like making a cross as a signature, or like "Samana," "a name that has been inherited for more than ten generations" (44), the signature's performative meaning is open to motion—must be open in order to be activated. *The Heirs of Columbus* is one performance of the signature "Columbus," in which "the sovereign mariner" Stone Columbus poses on the sterncastle of the *Santa María Casino*, "an enormous barge that had been decked for games of chance on the ocean seas of the woodland" (6), near the Niña, a restaurant, and the Pinta, a tax-free market.⁸

As a sign of identity and of citizenship, this signature contrasts with static, one-dimensional representations such as photographs and passports: "Stone never owned a passport, and he would never hold a mere photograph, a political simulation with a national seal, to be more real than the human it represented" (131). Rather than an end, a "seal," the signature marks a start, stories in the blood manifested in dreams.⁹ Prompted by Columbus's appearance in their dreams, the heirs "come together at the stone tavern each autumn to remember the best stories about their strain and estate, and the genetic signature that would heal the obvious blunders in the natural world" (4). Through the irony of reports written by private investigators hired by the corrupt leaders of the tribe to discredit the heirs and their casinos, Vizenor equally attacks "the political reductions of identities" of tribal rolls: "[T]he measures of blood quantum have reduced the tribes to racist colonies" (156, 162). Stone has never been "a legal member of the tribe" (156). The heirs' "enemies and conspirators" include "tribal fascists who would abolish the heirs, their bingo, humor, and certain words, such as *crossblood*, and the genes of survivance" alongside "government agents and investigators who would overturn the new nation" (131). Vizenor's neologism distinguishes "survivance" from the "survival" typically designated by genealogical records that trace the continuance of chromosomal markers. The novel plays with the two common usages of the term *genetic signature*. A genetic signature can be a means of identifying

a specific genetically related group for membership or anthropological purposes. It can also be a characteristic pathological sign, as in the signature of a cancer or an infectious agent, used in diagnosis and prognosis. In either usage, the signature becomes a kind of “passport” surveillance or reductive determinate test at odds with the games of chance practiced by *Heirs*.

Vizenor’s prognosis of “creeds” of survival based on “blood quantum,” whether established by national governments or Native tribes, is “terminal.” Such measures validate the prospect of decreasing numbers or diminishing authenticity of Indians through dilution; they establish a hierarchy of purity that casts “crossbloods” as degenerate. Moreover, they invite attack motivated by what Vizenor commonly calls “envy”: envy of gambling profits, tribal privileges, traditional secrets, and tragic Native romance.¹⁰ The signature poses an “estate antidote” to this condition illuminated by the contrast between Stone and the nine heirs and Doric Michéd, one of nine admitted annually to the Brotherhood of American Explorers (132). The Brotherhood’s urban, East Coast, mannered building containing a gourmet restaurant and vault with security codes, guards, and surveillance cameras opposes the Point Assinika’s wild, West Coast, circus-like bingo pavilions with concessions. All are admitted to the “estate,” the new nation; “[f]ood, the genes, everything is free” (145), forestalling envy. Unlike the “elitist” and “covert” Brotherhood and the collector’s envy that drives Michéd to murder Felipa Flowers in pursuit of Christopher Columbus’s remains (48), the signature is neither secret nor new. The heirs’ inheritance, or “estate,” becomes the inheritance of everyone healed with a gene implant, who become heirs themselves, as would any matrilineally descended children. Beyond healing, then, *Heirs* offers identity or standing, the root of “estate.” This is a clear critique of tribal politicians and certification requirements such as a federal law intended to protect Indian artists that disadvantaged non-tribal members. More radically, it critiques most models of identity, tribal or not. Private investigator Chaine Riel Doumet reports that Stone “would accept anyone who wanted to be tribal, ‘no blood attached or scratched’”. Authenticity no longer pertains. “His point is to make the world

tribal, a universal identity" (162)—the "point" of the new sovereign nation Point Assinika.¹¹ Indeed, the Point's research enables a further trick of the authentic uniqueness invested in genes legally and within popular culture:

Their scientists have established the genetic signatures of most of the tribes in the country, so that anyone could, with an injection of suitable genetic material, prove beyond a doubt a genetic tribal identity. Germans, at last, could be genetic Sioux, and thousands of coastal blondes bored with being white could become shadow tribes of Hopi, or Chipewewa, with gene therapies from Point Assinika. (162)

Vizenor's use of the word "implant" to describe this process highlights both the playful humor and the self-selection or self-creation central to the scene, as does its comparison with "[b]ingomania [which] had matured as a new human condition of racial associations" (162, 137).

Columbus's legacy founds this new nation, dedicated to "discoveries" in "genetic therapies and biogenetic research on survivance" (122).¹² In *Heirs*, Columbus's "Old World lust for gold" led him to the "golden breasts and thighs" of Samana (43, 31); he came to possess the genetic signature, not golden treasure; he placed a cross not on the location of fabled El Dorado, but on the Dorado Genome Pavilion at Point Assinika. The Dorado Pavilion's scientists "isolated the genetic code of tribal survivance and radiance, that native signature of seventeen mitochondrial genes that could reverse human mutations, nurture shamanic resurrection, heal wounded children, and incite parthenogenesis in separatist women" (132). This signature destabilizes the certainty of identity, insofar as the heirs of Columbus do not inherit it from Columbus. The location of the mitochondrial genome inside the mitochondria—cytoplasmic organelles outside of the nucleus, which contains the rest of the cell's DNA—means that mtDNA is inherited matrilineally. Mitochondrial genes do not undergo recombination, the mixture of twenty-three nuclear chromosomes from the father and twenty-three from the mother to form an embryo. Rather, all of the embryo's mitochondria and thus

mtDNA comes from the ovum of the mother, because sperm cells do not contain much if any cytoplasm or mitochondria. Columbus “inherited the signature of survivance and tribal stories in the blood from his mother, and she inherited the genetic signature from maternal ancestors. Women [are] the bearers of the genetic signature” (28). The novel further plays with Columbus’s primacy. Columbus himself, like the children later in the novel, must be “healed” (29, 40) and “liberat[ed]” from “disease” (31) by Samana. And when an “agent” from the State Department says, “Columbus is the basic signature,” he unwittingly invokes Stone Columbus’s identical “unwonted surname” (5). The lead scientist responds, “Christopher Columbus has the same genetic signature of survivance, we have concluded from laboratory and computer studies, as the hand talkers and his namesake five centuries later” (135). The syntax of the scientist’s response compares Christopher to Stone and the other heirs, undercutting the sense of “basic” as original or foundational, as does the pun on “basic” for the four nucleobases introduced by the scientist on the previous page of the novel.

The novel’s representation of genetics, then, itself functions as a code(x) that produces messages. Mitochondrial DNA unsettles the uniqueness of DNA as certain foundation of identity. It mutates at a rate up to ten times greater due to less protective protein packaging, regulation, and proofreading than applied to nuclear DNA. Scattered spontaneous mutations in the population of mitochondria dispersed across every cell of one organism result in paradoxical heteroplasmic variation within sameness, as individual mitochondria and their clones express the effects of mutation variably depending on the cell and tissue demands for the power produced by the mitochondria. The novel similarly displaces Columbus as patriarch or origin: research positions him within “a genetic chain from the first hand talkers of creation” (132–33). Since the mitochondrial genome is much smaller than the nuclear genome, it can be analyzed exhaustively; lead scientist Pir Cantrip reports that “there is no sequence divergence in the seventeen gene signature of the mitochondrial material” (136). Point Assinika’s “[p]avilion communities” physically simulate this chain: the “scientific pavil-

ions were laced, one to the other" (132). Conception, embryogenesis, growth, and cell reproduction entail copying mtDNA to create new mitochondria mirrored by the scientists' methodology: "Millions of these genetic signatures were copied" (133). Without the energy yielded by mitochondrial oxidative phosphorylation, life would be impossible, just as the energy, most commonly termed "radiance," yielded by the genetic signature will "heal millions of lonesome and wounded children" (122). "The heirs, shamans, and healers carried an unbroken radiance" like the "sides of the blue pavilions were radiant at night, and the massive computers hummed and sounded the beats of memories, the genetic signature of survivance." The "Dorado Genome Pavilion, the heart of the genetic research" (132), is the caring "heart" of the new healed tribal body contrasted with what Teets calls "those big bellies on the reservation" (155), greedy politicians. This heart "beats," pumping out lifeblood, the millions of "crossblood" signatures.

CROSSING SCIENCE: READING THE CODE(X)

Crossing, then, represents not just individual, but collective tribal identity or nationhood. To bear the signature instances one of Vizenor's central concerns, to be "crossblood," rather than direct genetic transmission. The heirs pose various kinds of crossing. Stone embodies a common understanding of "crossblood" as mixture of Native and white. Identified in the novel as "mongrel" and "white," Caliban's Shakespearean namesake is described in *The Tempest* as a kind of devil, the "savage and deformed" son of a witch. The mother of "crossblood black bear" Samana "was a bear, and her father was the last shaman on the island who talked wild with bears" (12, 17). The novel resists any sense of degeneration in crossing, insisting that "[m]ongrels created the best humans, we had that crossblood wild bounce in our blood, but we never imagined that on two feet the beasts would lose their humor and memories, and turn against those who hauled them from the muck" (16). The "pretenders" to purity "cornered" the crossbloods, ending "humor in the blood" (17). The heirs themselves, as well as their claims, negate any chance of a return

to the seemingly more authentic tribal status of “fullblood.” The text resists romantic nostalgia while recognizing loss, most notably in the representation of Felipa. Early in the novel, Felipa

dreams that she was the last survivor in the tribal world. In the land of the dead she heard no stories, the dead were silent hand talkers. She raised one arm to salute, in the manner of the hand talkers, and lost a hand; she reached to save one hand and lost the other. Her body was broken and piled near a bronze statue and stained glass windows of a church. (24)

Felipa tries to communicate as a hand talker but is physically prevented. No way exists for her to recapture the stories of the dead hand talkers—or to restore Pocahontas. When lovely Felipa simulates Pocahontas’s position at Belle Sauvage in London, her death is also ruled “unintentional” from the same causes (117): if Pocahontas died of “climate, and a broken heart,” Felipa died from “exposure or loneliness” (107, 117). Her attempt to “save” one body, Pocahontas’s remains, ends with her losing the other, her own beaten corpse found at the base of the statue of Pocahontas. However, her dream ended in another dream, so that she would “learn the secrets of the bear codex” (24), “a translation of an original picture codex” of the Maya, who “founded world civilization” (25). Indeed, Felipa found the last copy of the codex disguised in London when she was a fashion model and returned it to the stone tavern, where it was lost in a storm when the *Santa María Casino* sank. It is because of that loss that the “Heirs of Christopher Columbus must remember their stories in the blood each autumn at the stone tavern” and ultimately translate the codex yet again, into the new alphabet of genetic code (25).

Bear-ing the chromosomal signature refers to the codex: “The bear codex revealed that the bear signature of survivance, the inheritance of a nonesuch genetic code, was the measure of civilization and the power of resurrections” (25). The codex/signature is a code/book that must be read; the shapes of letters, words, sentences convey meanings like chromo-somes, bodies usually depicted as cross-shaped made visible by taking up dye. Passive/possessive collection as in the Library of Alexandria is point-less, at odds with the

tribal nation Point Assinika: "Ptolemy ordered that the bear codex be translated, copied on papyrus, and deposited in the Library of Alexandria. . . . The library was destroyed by fire" (26). Ptolemy's treatment of the codex mirrors standard genetics protocol: translate a sequence, use techniques like polymerase chain reaction to copy it, and deposit it in a regulated gene bank, usually to be used for industrial profit. *Heirs* offers very different gene banks, containing considerable cash donated by the public: "Carp Radio encouraged citizens to open gene banks with their cash in every state to further the research on survivance in the New World" (124). Moreover, the novel emphasizes the crucial step of remembering/reading through activating or turning on DNA, in part through the use of sexualized language: scientists "had developed the in vivo genetic therapies of survivance, the implanted genes of the heirs, but only shamans and tricksters were able to stimulate the trickster opposition in the genes, the ecstatic instructions and humor in the blood" (144). The ambiguous complexities of the reading frame—the point at which transcription begins and ends, its direction, in addition to the tremendous processing of transcripts—rarely enter into popular discussion of DNA. The reductive understanding of uniquely factual identity cemented by television shows and supported by perceptions of DNA as an object, a straightforward blueprint, contributes to the minimization of arguably the biggest obstacle to successful gene therapy: regulating the genes, or getting them turned on usefully, once they have been placed.

The existence of the mitochondrial genome, the only extranuclear DNA in known life forms, suggests that mitochondria were once free-living organisms absorbed by cells as symbiotes that ultimately developed into crucially important organelles. The new tribal nation similarly absorbs independent, even skeptical, people who ultimately choose to perform crucial functions, from Admiral Luckie White to Lappet Tulip Browne, the investigator who becomes the nation's legal advisor. The same process applies to the scientists, such as Uta Moot, the robotics engineer who becomes one of "the wise women of the nation" (178). Overall, *Heirs* embraces but also

critiques and changes science so that it becomes an organelle of the tribal organism. In the novel, the *New York Times* reports, “Doctor Canon Simpson, the outspoken biogenetic engineer, national science adviser, and friend of the president, pointed out that the study of ‘genetic inheritance is more than counting the spots on mongrels’” (130–31)—a humorous declaration that points to the dominant or “Canon-ical” mode of genetic research, quantification of visual measures of inheritance tested through cross-breeding. “[C]ounting the spots” on polyacrylamide gels has more or less replaced observation of phenotypic traits, but the method persists. The novel further explores this scientific skepticism by dramatizing the two perspectives in disagreement “over the sentience of the hemlock and their stories. Most of the scientists . . . were on one side of the issue as rationalists, empiricists, and logical positivists; on the other side of the summit . . . were the blues, the wounded, the manicurists, and the Heirs of Columbus” (150). The conflict is negotiated as a wager by the leading genetic engineer, Pir Cantrip, and the comic embodiment of authority, the no name cross-dressing first lady, Stone’s father, who had once been a professor of consciousness studies and now ran the casino.¹³ Rather than “truth” or “measure[ment],” the deciding criteria of the game are infused with self-interest, subjectivity, and debate over what would be convincing or “obvious.” Instead of the “brown tree” killed in the name of scientific study, the “imagination” of the “blue tree” as an “instance of creation” wins the bet and the scientists accede to Stone’s position (152): “Our play has never been the scientific method, but with the pure pleasure of creation, the blue in the pith” (150). As much as genetic research impacts the life of the tribal nation, Point Assinika profoundly reimagines science.

When the scientists “conceded” after the hemlock “whispered a recipe for coarse sweet bread made from her inner bark” (152), science once again connects with the “obvious,” the mundane, the nurturant. In the Dorado Genome Pavilion, “[m]illions of these genetic signatures were copied in vacuum clean laboratories” (133). “[V]acuum clean” describes sterile conditions, yet the oddly insuf-

ficient phrasing invokes the domesticity of the vacuum cleaner and suggests a fecundity opposed to the infamous scientific debate over the empty vacuum or to uterine vacuum extraction. Hundreds of children journey to Point Assinika because they “would not be denied their dream to be healed; no matter the cold wet weather, their wounds and disabilities” (144), but also because they too seek “concessions,” the “fast food . . . counter at the back of the pavilion” (145). This association extends to the most striking revision of genetic research at Point Assinika: “[A]t the back near the restaurant and concessions [are] the padded double doors to the Parthenos Manicure Salon” (138). Teets Melanos, “trusted as a tribal manicurist to hear the secrets of women and the concessions of men, more than a shaman or a priest would hear on the reservation,” “discovered” a new scientific research “method”:

Teets amassed thousands of secret bits of skin and fingernail from the hands she manicured. The samples and genealogies provided molecular biologists with the genetic material they needed to isolate and compare the signature of survivance borne by the Heirs of Columbus. The bits and stories would be the source of genetic intromission and retral transformations at the Dorado Genome Pavilion. (141)

Teets's—teats—feminized domain with its red padded doors resembles the blood-padded uterus, producing not just the genetic signature but “portentous conceptions” when she “imagined that she could unite women and men with their nails and cuticles” when she “tumbled them in olive jars” (141). This alternative genetic research methodology reveals the limitations of standard science to accommodate sentient hemlocks or produce new identities enabled by caregiving, which “transformed” the children (147). Pir Cantrip acknowledges these limitations: “genome narratives,” he says, are “stories in the blood, a metaphor for racial memories, or the idea that we inherit the structures of language and genetic memories; however, our computer memories and simulations are not yet powerful enough to support what shamans and hand talkers have inherited and understood for thousands of years” (136).

Thus tribal gene therapy has two parts: the “scientists delivered the genetic signatures, the tribal healers touched the wounded and heard their creation stories.” This hybrid therapy poses another type of crossing of two parts or moieties: the “new moieties to heal were the genes of survivance and stories in the blood” (144). Creative, generative imagination carried in stories facilitates this crossing. Memphis the panther

remembered the bear and trickster creation stories at the tavern. She saw the blue radiance of creation in the stone and the blood of the heirs. “We imagined each other out there in the beginning. . . . Panther and brother, cedar and bear, we were the same stones, the same blue heat, and we imagined who we would be, stone or panther, someone warm in the world.” (16)

Later in the novel, lead scientist Pir Cantrip echoes Memphis’s memory/story in his account of gene therapy, taking up much of her language and sensory imagery:

The opposite has no power without the other, as a woman would resist a man, the wise one must be a moron to survive, and the chemicals of genes can be touched in meditation and memories, that blue radiance is a wondrous instance in human creation, and those who can imagine their antinomies and mutations are able to heal with humor. (134)

The epilogue suggests that the novel itself heals with humor by imagining the “antinomies,” or anti-names, of Christopher Columbus. On the one hand, “resented by the poor,” “his name is synonymous with the import of measles, typhus, yellow fever, and smallpox,” and on the other, Columbus is “paid tribute” by President Reagan as “the inventor of the American Dream.” Through its opposing “strategy,” the novel effects Columbus’s “survival in a wild consumer culture” (189). The novel’s chronological disjunctures and reversals and the promiscuous mixture of historical research with fantastic stories, most obviously in the novel’s biography of Christopher Columbus, likewise reflect these antinomies.¹⁴

"CROSSBLOOD" NATION

Heirs imagines the "crossblood" identity constitutive of tribal survivance and nationhood more as an agonistic yet productive opposition modeled by the genetic code than as a hybrid mixture. Cantrip explains, "These four letters [of the four nucleobases] are held together in a signature by their opposites, the biochemical codes are bound by their own opposition, and here is where the shaman and the trickster touch that primal source of humor, imagination, and the stories that heal right in the antinomies of the genetic code" (134). Genetic replication and function—transcription into messenger RNA (mRNA) and translation into proteins—relies on the opposition that pairs purine bases with pyrimidine bases, adenine with thymine and guanine with cytosine. The genes of all known living things are read using this "primal" opposition. One strand of the DNA serves as the template for another strand during replication, or for precursor mRNA during transcription; during translation, each transfer RNA carrying an amino acid to add to the polypeptide has an anticodon that binds to its three-base codon on the mRNA. Physical attraction binds the opposed base pairs, which are held together by hydrogen bonds between the fixed dipoles, positive to negative, proton donor to acceptor. Attraction of opposites ensures connection: "[G]enetic signatures do not exist in isolation, you might say that genes are the everlasting opposition in communal imagination, ironies, and memories, the very energies and agonistic humor of tricksters and shamans" (135). Stone asserts that the signature revealed in the bear codex follows the principle of the genetic code: "'We heal with opposition, we are held together with opposition, not separation, or silence, and the best humor in the world is pinched from opposition,' he said. Stone moved closer to the mirror, so close that his hot breath misted the reflection of his smile" (176). The mist disrupts the sameness of reflection by marking the mirror opposite. The genetic code is a codex, an instance of portable information with the ancient status of law or scripture reliant on its physical form to be legible. A codex has opposed pages in place of strands, a cover, spine, and bindings in place of protective

histones packing the DNA tightly enough to fit in the nucleus and be visible as chromosomes.

The novel incorporates many such held-together opposites, such that “if, instead of simply perceiving exclusive and opposed entities, the in-between spaces which typify these contradictions are thoroughly explored, they can also be considered sources of creativity, imagination, and healing” (Fitz 262).¹⁵ The opposite-sex couples Samana and Christopher, Felipa and Stone come together through attraction. Moccasins worn by Felipa and the healed children and used in the moccasin game form a pair. Point Assinika is “the first crossblood nation” (*Heirs* 144). Its crotch-centric Trickster of Liberty opposes the Statue of Liberty. Its flag matches the red of blood and the human “scarlet tunic” (61, 65) worn by Christopher and Stone with the blue bear paw of healing. The Point’s first biorobot is named Panda, symbolic of black-and-white opposition. The feminine Parthenos Manicure Salon pairs with the masculine Dorado Genome Pavilion. Christopher Columbus’s clubbed penis, “the curse of a twisted penis [that] had been laid on men as revenge by the women who were burned with the bear codex,” “turned the mere thought of sexual pleasure to sudden pain” (30, 31). Columbus also figures the intertwined Old World “culture of death” and New World “blue radiance of creation and resurrection,” as do the laser light shows (3, 13). “Jesus Christ and Christopher Columbus arose in the south. . . . Felipa Flowers and Pocahontas arose in the east”; “George Washington marched out of the north and met Crazy Horse and Louis Riel over the marina on the point. Almost was cheered when the four laser men, the adventurer, the general, the warrior, the crossblood, and later a lover and princess combined in a blue radiance near the statue [of the Trickster of Liberty]” (182, 125). The heirs themselves combine power over life and death: “[W]e inherited the genes that heal, and dreamed the herb that could eliminate the world” (126), the “war herb” crossed out of Black Elk’s narrative but crucial to the final moccasin game with the wiindigoo. Once the wiindigoo is thawed by vengeful government agents, the heirs cannot keep him from winning the game and the children. Only the prospect of the loss of his opposite and the irre-

vocable end of his game with the end of the world convinces the demon not to choose the correct moccasin, under which is the coin but also the war herb: "Who would you be without the heirs and the children to menace?" asked Stone" (182).

The novel's two-part structure models the relationship between the opposite sense and anti-sense strands of DNA, the healing "trickster opposition in the genes" (144). Part 1 of the novel, "Blue Moccasins," occurs largely at the stone tavern in a meadow at the Mississippi headwaters. While recursive and discontinuous, the narrative moves cross-country, from the stone tavern west to part 2, "Point Assinika," "otherwise named Point Roberts, situated in the Strait of Georgia between Semiahmoo, Washington, and Vancouver Island, Canada." The heirs followed the "formalities of taking possession of the point" and "made all the necessary declarations and had these testimonies recorded by a blond anthropologist" in order to place a cross on the location of a new sovereign country crossed or at odds with the surrounding country (119). Geographically distant, these two locations become physically linked by Stone's attraction: "Stone told the heirs that the time had come to move closer to the mountains and the ocean. . . . [T]he heirs moved the stone tavern, one stone at a time" (121). They contain opposite climates and terrain: temperate instead of wide seasonal variation, coastal edge instead of middle, point surrounded by water instead of land-bound interior, mountains instead of plains, ocean instead of lakes and river, outlet instead of headwater. The stone tavern represents the past, the House of Life reminiscent of Jewish tradition, the echoes of Christian stories, the "cradle board of civilization" where Samana lives (13), the casino reenacting Columbus's journey. Point Assinika, the new nation, represents the high-technology future of genetic research, biorobotics, and parthenogenesis. The novel signals this temporal difference using seasons and plot as well. The heirs meet at the tavern-tabernacle every autumn to remember, whereas they begin to build the new nation in the spring. "Blue Moccasins" centers on the trickster poaching of historical pouches and remains by Felipa, whose blue moccasins were missing when her dead body was found; "Point Assinika" centers on Stone, who

resurrects her in the Felipa Flowers Casino and laser light shows, and on the children, including their daughter Miigis, who lends her name, meaning “sacred creation,” to the Miigis Marina.

The popular designation of women and men as “opposite” sexes who “resist” or are placed against one another like paired nucleotides poses chances for crossing throughout the novel (134). Felipa and Stone cross in Miigis, just as the new nation’s flag combines the blue of Samana’s radiance and Felipa’s moccasins with the red of Christopher’s and then Stone’s tunics. The “first ladies of the casino and the new nation” (137), though, are the “male casino attendants” (131) required to cross-dress by “[p]ale no name” (132) who “was a woman” (156) in order to get an academic teaching position as a white male, but who was also Stone’s father. The “paramount transvestite” (132) first “promised to crossdress” to “save his dick” (142) from the women bent on punishing him for sexual harassment when he was a professor. In the same way, the wager on the sentience of trees presents cross-dressing as punishment and reward: “‘The losers crossdress in the casino overnight,’ said the first lady [no name]. She turned a shoulder and clucked in her thick tongue. ‘Wait, on second thought, crossdressers are the winners’” (151). When they lose the bet, the scientists cross-dress, learning the first lady’s lesson that “[y]ou can never be sure of what you see” and acknowledging their punny position as performers who “enlivened the casino” (146, 132). Just as no name’s cross-dressing signifies the tribal casino/nation though it is “a posture that had no name or instance on the reservation,” so “her courageous code and true gender” have no name or instance in scientific, biological definitions of sex difference (132, 157). This absence or no name humorously reworks Renaldus Columbus’s discovery of the clitoris, or “internal penis,” and Christopher Columbus’s discovery of Samana: “Her penis was hidden and blue, and his hair burned blue, the best stories in his blood” (31, 40). The novel thus unsettles the masculine authority of science and imperial conquest as well as bloodline. While Stone receives “no name” from his silent father, his mother’s family provides him with a hyperbolic patronymic through Truman Columbus, the name shared by Stone’s maternal grandparents. If his

father no name is a woman, Stone's grandmother is a true-man. The shift to code, genetic and computer, extends this unsettling, producing cross-genders that echo "crossbloods." The women who win the bet on the tree's sentence and get to enjoy the pleasures of Panda, the "first tribal robot," decide: "[L]et's make him a woman in the salon," said Harmonia. 'No sex, no genes, no trouble,' said Teets. 'Gender is in the computer, not the clothes,' said Lappet" (154). Panda's cross-gender displaces originary genetics and anatomy through code's manipulations and stand-ins.

The genetic code physically manifests connection through opposition and separateness through intertwining. The paired-base structure of a DNA molecule takes a helical form that defies a linear boundary between the strands. The tribal trope of moccasins likewise challenges boundaries. The Trickster of Liberty marking the open border of the new nation, welcoming the lonesome and wounded children to Point Assinika, wears "blue copper moccasins." Federal Judge Beatrice Lord transcends the border of conscious material reality when she puts on "electronic blue moccasins to enter the shadow realities of tribal consciousness." After the hearing, Miigis gives her blue beaded moccasins to "dream" her to the stone tavern (123, 84, 90). Insofar as only the heirs "dared to enter the stone tavern" (17), Miigis makes the judge an heir by transmitting the "crossblood" signature of survivance to her via the moccasins, which are shaped much like mitochondria and similarly associated with energy, with motion. Again, the gift of the moccasins opens the boundary between Natives and non-Natives by transferring authentic tribal identity; the text specifies that the laser figures, heirs, and healed children all wore blue moccasins. A tribal symbol within the novel as well as popular culture, moccasins' foremost characteristic is flexibility that creates a responsive, changing, curved boundary. This flexible border enables touch, connection with nature, and silence. Silence features prominently in the heirs' stories throughout the novel. Hand talkers, which include Samana, communicate in silence; they "are from the primal tribes, the silent people." Stone Columbus's very name manifests this silence: "Stones hold our

tribal words and the past in silence, in the same way that we listen to stories in the blood” (18, 9).

The stone tavern and Point Assinika also bend boundaries. Both locations sit at the international border between the United States and Canada. The bingo barge is moored in Lake of the Woods, which not only crosses the border but in a way erases it by removing stable visible markers of its location. Point Roberts belongs to the United States but is physically attached to Canada, highlighting the border’s arbitrariness. Both locations also span natural boundaries between land and water, most strikingly at the headwaters, where an obscure creek leaves otherwise unremarkable Lake Itasca to become one of the greatest rivers in the world; crossing the Mississippi requires only a few steps across the stones. The casinos themselves embody the interface of material states and interplay of permanence and impermanence. The stone tavern at the headwaters and the bingo barge instance solid on liquid, while the pavilions on the point and the marina instance “liquid” on or surrounding solid like the cytoplasm surrounding chromosomes. They embody Vizenor’s interest in crossing or “transmotion,” elaborated in *Fugitive Poses: Native American Indian Scenes of Absence and Presence* (1998): “Native sovereignty is transmotion, and the rights of motion are personal, totemic, and reciprocal; not base line surveys, futurity, or possessory” (16–17).¹⁶ These settings question the very concept of boundary for both theoretical and practical reasons. Practically, Stone makes a fortune on the *Santa María Casino* while “[b]order patrols from both countries circled the ‘dirty mary,’ copied boat and airplane numbers, estimated the tax free cash flow.” Likewise, “[b]ingo gamblers [at the Felipa Flowers Casino] could enter the bright, enormous tandem pavilions and leave from either nation, as there were no inspections at the tribal border; indeed, the heirs honored tribal identities but no political boundaries on the earth.” Point Assinika hopes that once their demands are “being considered as a dispute between states by the International Court of Justice, the United States and Canada would never overturn Point Assinika” (*Heirs* 7, 131, 163).

At issue, then, is sovereignty, a simultaneously practical and the-

oretical concept that reimagines opposed white and Native. In the novel the federal court rules in favor of the *Santa María Casino*, stating: "The notion of tribal sovereignty is not confiscable, or earth bound; sovereignty is neither fence nor feathers. The essence of sovereignty is imaginative, an original tribal trope, communal and spiritual, an idea that is more than metes and bounds in treaties" (7). Just as the imaginative, humorous reading of the genetic code(x) produces "crossblood" identity, so the simulation of a nation imagines sovereignty that crosses borders of time, place, and space. Almost Browne rebroadcasts the court's decision during a laser show in which "[t]hat night of the first voyage to the New World was resurrected over the stone tavern" such that the "Admiral of the Ocean Sea leaned down and touched the stones with his immense hands. The heirs were in his hands. . . . Stone danced with the golden hand talker [Samana] and turned blue in her radiance." Almost's tribal almost-version asserts, "The very essence of sovereignty is a communal laser. The *Santa María* and the two caravels are luminous sovereign states in the night sky, the first maritime reservation on a laser anchor" (62). This laser show anticipates the "several hundred children" who "would not be denied their dream to be healed" and so "marched in silence that night over the border into a wooded area" because "[t]ribal people were not allowed to cross the international border on their way to Point Assinika" (144). They too saw a nation as lights in the night: "The Felipa Flowers Casino appeared in the distance to be a carnival; the children came upon the bright pavilions with delight." Via the laser show, Stone participated in Samana's healing radiance like "the children chanted as they marched, 'Jesus our Maya, be our shaman on this broken night, heal the dreamers with your blue touch, our stories in the blood'" (145).

HEALING THROUGH GENETIC CROSSING

Healing is the mode of Vizenorian survivance, combining the often opposed goals or methods of survival and resistance.¹⁷ Obviously healing resists the Old World culture of death, but it also comedi-ally resists the martyrdom of "'tragic hero'" Louis Riel, as well as

the romantic ethnographic approach of Doric Michéd; the heirs are “healers, never stealers of their inheritance or tribal culture.” Point Assinika is “the first nation in the histories of the modern world dedicated to protean humor and the genes that would heal” (127, 153, 119). If the symbol of the United States of America, the Statue of Liberty, welcomes “your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,” the tribal nation’s Trickster of Liberty “promised to ‘heal the tired tribes and huddled masses yearning to breathe free’” (122). Children constitute the primary focus: “They come by the thousands to be healed, abandoned children, the tribal mutants who bear the curse of a chemical civilization” (170). More than historical or race-based oppression, “civilization” is the disease—civilization that does not exempt Natives. The novel stresses the pathologies of reservations: “Over and over [Teets] heard the stories from women and children about abusive men, stories that would alter and attune the tribal world” (141). Civilization’s disease is its unnatural or “chemical” separateness figured as isolation and abandonment. The children to be healed are “the lonesome mutants of a chemical civilization” (134). Stone’s own loneliness after Michéd steals and kills Felipa in his quest to possess Columbus parallels the wounds sustained by “abandoned and abused children”: “The adventurer had endured his wounds and bereavement; now he was at sea once more in a high humor. His ambitious course would heal millions of lonesome and wounded children” (147, 122). Stone’s ambition actively counters the pathological agency conveyed by the novel’s diction: “more and more wounded children, thousands of mutants poisoned in a chemical civilization, and those with unforgiven cancers, plastic faces, wooden hearts, heads, broken tribal minds and dreams” (147).

Beyond the ecological critique, these descriptions evince a moral critique rooted in socioeconomic status. “Unforgiven” witnesses the moral hierarchy applied to social conditions including disease that dictates attitude and funding decisions. The novel implies that “chemical civilization” views children in general as “cancers,” defective offspring who overproliferate and can be “poisoned” or excised. Teets vociferously denies that Stone shares this hard “wooden heart”

or self-serving, deceptive “plastic face”: “Stone heals these children, no one else ever cares about them.” Instead of cheap “plastic” and rudimentary “wood” available to those with limited resources, Stone’s Point Assinika gives gleaming futuristic technology; in place of the minimal educational opportunities and public schools leading to “wooden” “heads, and broken tribal minds and dreams,” the new nation offers “liberation of the mind” (155). In the process, Point Assinika addresses a dominant issue in biomedical ethics, especially in debate over gene therapy: access. Critics fear that gene therapy would create an underclass of those without the means to access the technology, who would suffer the redoubled and likely highly visible oppression of untreated bodies in a more perfected world. This fear simply crystallizes more mundane debate over limited access to health care—a burden borne disproportionately by children, minorities, and those with low socioeconomic status.

The new nation advances a three-part position that responds to prominent debates in health ethics. First, the “free state with no prisons, no passports, no public schools” promises freedom that is actually free: free entry, free membership, free food, free entertainment, free gene therapy supported by casino income. The Point avoids the “envy” that Vizenor consistently identifies as fueling racialized prejudice: “[T]here was no resistance [by preexisting residents], because there was nothing to lose” (124). Second, the lack of “state or federal restrictions” attracts collaborative investment by “[f]ive nations, seventeen companies, three shamans, and several independent scientists” in pursuing research (132, 122). Third, the Point relies on “the price wars” of an open market (122). The cure for the moralized hierarchy and self-interested “big bellies” is direct-to-consumer marketing of the open “invitation” for healing. The novel’s sexualization of gene therapy via words like “implantation” and “intromission” conveys the self-generated desire that motivates acceptance of the invitation. Freely seeking therapy as desire sidesteps the need for “informed consent” that characterizes the externalized prescriptions of standard medicine. It also refuses the imposed sameness of plastic faces and wooden heads, “molded pouts and smiles” (147). Self-selection addresses another major ethical concern regarding genetic

testing and therapy: who decides what should be treated. Again, gene therapy highlights an ethical issue applicable to most health-care decision making. How do we define normal? Should everyone be made normal, why, and at what cost? Genetic testing and therapy arguably could decrease tolerance for the disabled and diseased or even those carrying potentially defective genes, and the novel's repeated use of words like "mutant" or "deformed" might suggest such intolerance. However, the emphasis on self-diagnosis forestalls this judgment, which is no longer made by medical or legal authorities or by society: "The tribal children hobbled and limped, some without legs, others without arms, and many who were blind, but no one seemed to notice, because most of the gamblers in the casino were wounded, deformed, and grotesque" (145).

Indeed, one of the most striking features of the nation dedicated to gene therapy is the utter absence of physicians. The novel imagines the role of healer filled not by highly trained and powerful professionals invested with regulated masculinized authority to perform technical procedures, but by common manicurists who listen to stories.¹⁸ These feminized figures (abused women, a former priest) perform the ritual mani-cure, healing by laying on hands.¹⁹ Teets is "a handmaiden at the push of the orangewood" whose "second coming" is the appearance of the healer Chilam Balam/Blue Ishi with the blues (139): "She understood the pleasures of a manicure but never considered that children would be honored and healed by the solicitous care of their hands" (177). Healing transcends scientific genetic research. It entails crossing with the DNA signature of the heirs, but also crossing as spiritual care tending toward the miraculous or ecstatic. Investigator Riel reports,

[S]cientists are only part of the healing, as you know. The heirs, and a collection of people too incredible to describe, for instance, a former priest turned manicurist, are the paramount healers. They do this with stories and humor, and what they say becomes, in some way, the energy that heals. This story energy somehow influences the genetic code and the children are mended in one way or another. (164)

The novel's term "gene"—in contrast to "DNA," for instance—expresses both the popular and the gene-rative, gen-dered aspects of healing. Significantly, mitochondrial genes inherited matrilineally carry the healing signature, a "generative grammar" (135). Mitochondrial genes uniquely employ an alternative genetic code, which can incorporate the "consciousness of nurturance" characteristic of tribal cultures (185). As a result, investigator-turned-counsel Lappet Tulip Browne argues, "One day this nation may provide more reliable bionic leaders on the reservation than the natural ration of male genes has produced in the past several hundred thousand years"—a new genus (158). Vizenor's interest in a new type of genesis continues this theme: "Parthenos Manicure Salon became the New World pavilion to heal women, recount the ecstatic creation of children without men or their sperm, and encourage the genetic research on the signature of parthenogenesis" (148).²⁰

Parthenogenesis is but an extreme instance of the text's understanding of healing as regeneration, a special type of crossing. Like the novel's revision of identity, healing as regeneration unsettles the comfortable stability of material identity as body. Regeneration creates a body that is new but not new—unlike the far more common understanding of healing as eradicating disease, which restores the body. Again and again the novel describes those wanting to be healed as "wounded": "The wounded who waited to be healed and regenerated were given free meals, bingo cards, and hand care in the Parthenos Manicure Salon" (143). The damage to their bodily integrity depicts their trauma and pain, which remain visible in the regenerated tissue of the healed scar. Wounds show the openness of the body's seemingly secure borders—a necessary precondition to tribal healing modeled by the unzipping of a DNA molecule or the puncture wound from the injection of new genetic material. Even more frequent in the novel's diction are versions of "mutation." This word too carries a clearly negative tone evoking a wrong and a stigma visited upon the mutants; like poisoning or wounding, the key seems to be the location of the process imposed from outside without desire. At the same time, mutation simply means change—heritable genetic change. Mutation always occurs during sexual

reproduction, and the same potential for genetic change enables the crossing of the heirs' healing signature with others' DNA. Indeed, mutation must have generated the signature at some point. Though mutation is popularly used negatively, it is a neutral concept; mutations can be beneficial or harmful. While the term implies a normal allele contrasted with the mutant gene, this measure is relative and itself changeable. For instance, the heirs' unique signature could be termed a mutation within the larger population, but after gene therapy it could become the norm such that those unhealed would be mutants. The novel uses mutation to portray the "astound[ing]" "power of the genes from the heirs": "First, two miniature hands appeared on her arms. The stumps sprouted, and the hands grew out of the thick skin just the right size for her body, as if the genes also carried the memories of her age. Then her spine and chin were touched by the blue women, and her face and teeth moved into line" (165). But this image goes further to show a certain kind of power to generate new/old different/same parts uniquely "right . . . for her body."

Grounding identity in corporal certitude renders unoriginal, crossed bodies lesser; they become inauthentic or artificial. The novel intervenes. The genetic signature or stories in the blood "boldly converts the supposedly objective arithmetic of measuring American Indian blood into an obviously subjective system of recognizing narratives—memories—of Indian indigeneity" (Allen 111). Further, the text finds an opportunity rather than a danger in physical manipulations. Stone rejects blood quanta because "if it's so easy to fake blood then why bother with the measures?" (*Heirs* 162). Regenerative healing embraces "fake" parts, creating bodies that incorporate oppositions in a large-scale vision of genetic structure. The novel reimagines identity concepts prominent in minority and ethnic studies as well as postmodern theory. Stone's gene therapy and stories in the stones produce "new 'Stone Age Indians'" whose comic identity relies on games of chance, not tragic traditional pre-contact culture (163). Vizenor's play on "stones" crosses these two meanings: crosses them out, and combines them.²¹ Christopher Columbus's stones, or testicles, ultimately create Stone, descended

from his erotic coupling with Samana; when Felipa echoes Samana's naked dive into the water and she and Stone "made love on a granite boulder" (11), they transmitted the signature (as they did to their daughter Miigis).²² The process of healing centers on a pleasurable hand-job or mani-cure. The stone tavern embodies stable tradition but is moved to Point Assinika—a word that Vizenor has said means "stones" in Anishinaabe (Siemerling 98), a nation represented by "the enormous crotch high copper statue of the Trickster of Liberty" (*Heirs* 121). The novel's insistence that Stone's "stories are stones" furthers this paradox of unmoving motion, unchanging change: "Stones hold our tribal words and past in silence" (9).

Instead of tribes being absorbed and erased through mixture and dilution, tribal identity becomes dominant. Anyone can become an heir, which means not sameness but implicit difference as embodied by the original group of heirs or by the "tumbled identities" produced through gene therapy/manicures.²³ The text's worrying of borders and boundaries challenges models based on conflict between discrete cultural positions. At the same time, the centrality of opposition recognizes tension but does not therefore accept fragmentation or alienation. Rather, Vizenor uses a genetic model to incorporate opposition into function: "We heal with opposition, we are held together with opposition, not separation, or silence, and the best humor in the world is pinched from opposition." *The Heirs of Columbus* moves beyond challenge and critique to creatively imagine, like the children who "dream their bodies with the blues" (141, 176, 144). Healing requires dreaming, regardless of gene therapy: "The genes healed . . . most of those who were wounded and deformed at birth, but not everyone heard the bodies they had seen in dreams. The heirs and the blues were masters of the energies that healed." Far from imposing a bodily form/norm, "the point was the last tribal nation in the world that would honor their dream bodies and blue touch of creation." Healed bodies are new *and* remembered: "They dreamed new bodies. . . . [T]he scientists implanted the genes of the heirs, the signature that healed their wounds and regenerated their bodies. The children became their dreams, the memories their bodies carried from the stone" (143, 144, 146). This

healing process embodies the heirs' rebirthing of Columbus from new "stones":

"Columbus was a bad shadow, tired and broken, because he lost most of his body parts on the way, so the old shamans heated some stones and put him back together again," croaked Truman. "Harm, the water shaman, said he dreamed a new belly for the explorer, and Shin, the bone shaman, called in a new leg from the underworld, and he got an eye from the sparrow woman, so you might say that we created this great explorer from our own stones at the tavern." "Columbus has been seen, almost whole, at the stone tavern for five hundred years," said Stone. (19)

The heirs' body for Columbus represents the text *The Heirs of Columbus*, whose title and genre signal the novel, healing identity incorporating dreamed and remembered parts put together like the little girl whose regenerating body "'strained to become whole'" (164). The novel's epigraph, an excerpt from Jean-Paul Sartre's "What Is Literature?," signals its goal of utopian mutation: "We are no longer with those who want to possess the world, but with those who want to change it, and it is to the very plan of changing it that it reveals the secrets of its being." Sartre's phrasing teases most descriptions of genetic research such as the human genome project, referred to in the novel as a "shroud" (27), or a national traveling museum exhibit entitled *GENOME: The Secret of How Life Works*. The language of desire echoes the novel's representation of genetic manipulation, but also marks limits: "[T]he most beautiful book in the world redeems itself; it also redeems the artist. But not the man. Any more than the man redeems the artist. We want the man and the artist to work their salvation together, we want the work to be at the same time an act." The novel is not true and cannot secure a concrete referent for itself or its author; in Sartre's words, "The most beautiful book in the world will not save a child from pain." However, like the "'sacred stories, true or not, that the heirs have woven with the politics of genes and bingo'" (165), the text's truth or belief in its stories are immaterial to its "'political significance'" "how-

ever imaginative” (166). The novel’s epilogue distinguishes between authentic referentiality and creative play: “‘The novel is born not of the theoretical spirit, but of the spirit of humor,’ wrote Milan Kundera in *The Art of the Novel*. ‘A character is not a simulation of a living being. It is an imaginary being. . . . The novel is the imaginary paradise of individuals. It is the territory where no one possesses the truth’” (185). As genetic crossing transmutes the groundlessness of postmodern identity to utopian healing, so Vizenor turns the novel’s hyperbolically humorous inauthenticity to dreaming new bodies. In the words of one heir, Memphis the panther, “[w]hen imagination dies we become lonesome slaves to our bodies, prisoners to our sounds, species, and culture” (16).

NOTES

1. A talk radio exchange in the novel points out, “‘Stone has been compared to Louis Riel because both of them are crossbloods and leaders of insurrections, and because both of their fathers were wool weavers,’ said Duck Lake. ‘Christopher Columbus was raised by a weaver too, so now we have the sons of three weavers, and three explorers in the New World’” (127).

2. Much of the scholarship on the novel centers on Vizenor’s “trickster” treatment of the Columbus story and thus destabilization of history itself; see Kimberly Blaesus 95–99 and Benjamin Burgess, who applies the Midewiwin conceptual framework of stories. Michael Hardin compares *Heirs* with Latin American retellings, Christoph Irmscher with Michael Dorris’s and Louise Erdrich’s *The Crown of Columbus*.

3. Again, the novel does not deny or cross out Columbus’s negative impact; the epilogue, for instance, points out the conflicting threads of the Dominican Republic’s celebration of the quincentenary.

4. The Headwaters Center at Itasca State Park in Minnesota summarizes the search for the Mississippi headwaters, whose “discovery” was credited to Henry Schoolcraft in 1832 though the Ojibwe had long known the river’s source and Schoolcraft followed an Ojibwe guide, Ozawindib. The “discovery” of DNA’s double helical structure by James Watson and Francis Crick, described in a 1953 paper in *Nature*, has become common cultural knowledge. Watson and Crick shared the Nobel Prize in 1962 with Maurice Wilkins, who confirmed the structure using x-ray crystallography. Rosalind

Franklin did not share the prize, though her x-ray studies showing the double helix, which were released without her knowledge, contributed materially to Watson and Crick's elucidation of the structure.

5. Similarly, Irmscher stresses the novel's "satiric comment," which should "not [be read] as an endorsement of biological determinism or large-scale genetic manipulation experiments"; rather, "gene sequences turn into a metaphor for the temporally non-sequential 'games' of crossblood narration" (94, 95). Setting aside the reference to biological determinism, we do not disagree with Osborne and Irmscher, but too much emphasis on the narrative or figurative aspects of the novel's representation of genes forecloses analysis of the significances articulated in this article. Focusing on the figurative can also come close to reinstating—albeit in a reversed hierarchy—the binaries between real and textual, narrative and material, contested by these scholars themselves. Winfried Siemerling, for example, curiously denies any materiality whatsoever to the "explicitly metaphorical" "signification [that] does not aim at a physical referent (of blood)" (114).

6. Siemerling asserts, "Vizenor's postmodern strategies are clearly political: they engage and overturn historically produced representations of the 'Indian'" (111).

7. Several readers advance similar conclusions about Vizenor's use of "tribe," but without focusing on the implications of Vizenor's use of genetics. Fitz argues that "Tribe—composed of mixed-bloods and led by mixed-blood tribal tricksters—is a utopia, a vision, or a model of overcoming all prejudices and limitations." Fitz discusses the "transcultural and global quality of what Vizenor constructs as the post-tribal Native American trickster figure" (257). Siemerling stresses the "combination of universality and particularity in the notion of the 'universal tribe,'" in which she finds "variations of Du Boisian double consciousness, where identities are founded simultaneously on difference and universality" (107).

8. Irmscher notes that the novel's title "refers to the long legal battle . . . between the Spanish Crown and the descendants of Columbus over hereditary rights in the New World" (86–87).

9. Chadwick Allen situates *Heirs* in the context of debate between novelist N. Scott Momaday and critic Arnold Krupat over the concept of "blood memory." Allen reads the novel's representation of lead genetic scientist Pir Cantrip as a multivocal trickster response to Krupat's critique of blood memory, to which the novel specifically alludes.

10. See chapter 2, "Wistful Envy," in *Fugitive Poses*.

11. Krupat and Michael Elliot point out that "this may be Vizenor's clear-

est statement of the goals of a cosmopolitan, postnational sovereignty that manages to remain rooted in tribal values, including humor, healing, and the oral traditions of imagination, without defining membership through division, exclusion, or tragic narratives of victimization" (144–45). Osborne analyzes the meanings of "tribal" in the novel in detail, arguing that they contest legal models of identity.

12. See Irmischer's discussion of different types of discovery in the novel, which he argues "subtly undermines the very premise on which the logic of discovery rests: as readers we never have the feeling that we progress in our knowledge of what happens in the novel, either because things we already know are repeated again or, secondly, because new and apparently unrelated narratives develop" (95).

13. This marks an example of the kind of debate Allen identifies within Native American Studies over the concept of blood memory: "Vizenor's narrative bricolage suggests that dialogue between disparate ways of perceiving and engaging the world is not only possible but desirable" (110). Irmischer notes, "[I]t is no coincidence that *Pir Cantrip*'s name, besides its near palindromic quality, already implies 'trickstery' ('cantrip' = prank, joke)" (94).

14. Hardin asserts, "Having the accounts of Columbus be intentionally fictitious parallels and critiques the earlier accounts which were similarly fictitious in their representations without acknowledging it" (28). Irmischer points out that the novel thus interweaves oral and literate modes.

15. Fitz elaborates this concept through the trickster, "the ultimate transcultural figure—the most radical 'in-between-ness' or non-oppositionality" (263).

16. See Bradley John Monsma for further discussion of the significance of motion to Vizenor's "spatial poetics" throughout his fiction (67). Chris LaLonde analyzes border-crossing in Vizenor's fiction from a different perspective, Wolfgang Iser's theories on fictionalizing.

17. Hardin notes that "[g]iving the storytellers in *Heirs of Columbus* the power to heal works textually, but it also works self-referentially. As author/storyteller, Vizenor too can be, and clearly wants to be, one whose stories heal" (37). Osborne identifies "transformative healing power" as "the essence of the trickster, for Vizenor" (119).

18. These healers do not, however, represent traditional tribal medicine. In *Hotline Healers* (1997), for instance, Almost Browne is "summoned" to be a member of the Grand Medicine Society, but he "teased the old men and their secret traditions, and learned how to outsmart the seven temptations

on his own. He created a new version of the *debwe* ceremonies and practiced the reversion of violence with tricky stories” because the “obvious has more energy to heal than secrets, manners, and tradition” (6, 7).

19. The long history of laying on hands in the Western world stretches from the Bible to modern faith healing, from European kings to modern doctors. *Heirs*’ manicurists confound all of these sources of authority—religious, governmental, scientific, gendered, socioeconomic.

20. Parthenogenesis seems to have two main attractions, unwounded children and control for the woman. Teets imagines that parthenogenesis would produce “perfect children” (149). Luckie White “told the manicurists that she might choose to conceive a good luck child with the ecstasies of dream bodies.” These ecstasies include spiritual rapture like the Virgin Mary “or even a big win at bingo,” producing the “wingo tribe” (148). This designation links parthenogenesis with biorobotics, since “Panda, the first tribal robot” eagerly shouts “wingo” in the casino (along with the mongrels) (154). See also *Hotline Healers*, in which parthenogenesis features prominently.

21. See Hardin 39 for the mythic meanings of stones.

22. Irmischer discusses the novel’s presentation of “discovery” as sexual healing.

23. Hardin characterizes Point Assinika as “a heterogenous environment” recognizing “the other-as-subject” (41), which prevents colonization. This reading bears some similarity with Fitz’s attention to the transcultural, globalizing aspects of the novel.

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Wiindigoo Sovereignty and Native Transmotion in Gerald Vizenor's *Bearheart*

CHRISTOPHER SCHEDLER

In the study of American Indian literatures, the rise of criticism focused on literary nationalism, with its emphasis on tribal-specific approaches to literary study, the sovereignty of Native nations, and claims to tribal homelands, would seem to herald the displacement of Gerald Vizenor's work from a central position in the American Indian literary canon.¹ Indeed, Vizenor has been criticized for failing to address or for actively subverting in his creative work and criticism these issues of primary concern to literary nationalists. Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, one of the earliest and most ardent proponents for a nationalist perspective in American Indian Studies, identifies Vizenor as "a major voice" in what she calls "mixed-blood discourse," characterized by "an aesthetic that is pathetic or cynical, a tacit notion of the failure of tribal governments as Native institutions and of sovereignty as a concept, and an Indian identity which focuses on individualism rather than First Nation ideology" ("American Indian Intellectualism" 124–25). Sean Kicummah Teuton, arguing for a tribal realist approach to identity formation and knowledge production, sees Vizenor writing from the zone of the trickster in his poststructural criticism, which seems to reject any normative claims to American Indian identity, history, and land: "[D]isconnected from a distinct culture and land, it ultimately cannot support a coherent Native identity, nor protect actual Native territories." Moreover, Teuton claims that Vizenor's "ahistorical trickster fiction," such as his novel *Bearheart*, "provides little guidance on how to construct one's own Native selfhood," and instead

it "suggests that the cultural specificity of tribal values constitutes a 'terminal creed'" (Teuton 14, 172).

Other critics associated with American Indian literary nationalism have been more circumspect in their evaluation of Vizenor. Craig S. Womack, like Teuton, aligns Vizenor's work with poststructural theories "interested in those identities that break down oppositions, that challenge distinctions between insider and outsider status, that remain ambiguous," and he asks "if a theoretical approach that values obfuscation as much as clarification is consistent with Native worldviews" ("Single Decade" 71–72). Yet Womack affirms that the "futuristic tribal pilgrims" in Vizenor's *Bearheart* might "have something to teach us about the human, and the tribal, condition, the real Indian world" ("Single Decade" 82). Womack also notes that "Vizenor is very carefully read in the ethnographic record, and it is obvious that he has studied Ojibway language, as well as amended this research with contact with living Ojibway tribal members," and these tribal-specific "Ojibway traditions, and Ojibway literary history, when taken into consideration, significantly alter the categorization of Vizenor as a hybrid" ("Integrity" 138–39).² Likewise, Jace Weaver suggests, "Though Vizenor champions what he calls 'crossbloods,' he nonetheless champions them as *Natives* rather than 'hybrids'" ("Splitting" 22). Weaver further argues that Vizenor's poststructural approach may be put in the service of claims to cultural identity that align with nationalist goals: "He uses the postmodern to deconstruct outside view predicates of what constitutes 'Indians' and, in so doing, to create new potential for cultural identity and coherence" (*That the People* 141). Among the literary nationalist critics, Weaver has perhaps been the most vocal supporter of Vizenor's work as affirming Native identities, sovereignty, and what Weaver calls "communitism"—a proactive commitment to Native community, including the wider nonhuman community of the earth.

While it is true that Vizenor's fiction most often focuses on communities formed in transit out of members with multiple tribal and "crossblood" identity associations and his novels often end with the protagonists far from tribal homelands and still on the move, Vize-

nor has inserted himself and his work into the debate over literary nationalism, particularly in his development of the concept of Native transmotion as a form of tribal sovereignty.³ As Vizenor defines it, “transmotion, that sense of native motion and an active presence, is *sui generis* sovereignty” (*Fugitive* 15).⁴ He sees the inherent Native rights of presence, motion, and survivance on this continent as an “originary” form of sovereignty, which is sustained through treaties but is not limited by them:⁵ “Sovereignty as transmotion is not the same as notions of indigenous treaty sovereignty; transmotion can be scorned and denied, but motion is never granted by a government” (*Fugitive* 188). On the other hand, treaty sovereignty was granted to tribes by the US nation-state and thus can and has been limited as a means of colonial dominance over Native peoples, for example, in the legal definition of tribes as “domestic dependent nations” in the Supreme Court’s Cherokee decisions of the 1830s.⁶ As Peter d’Errico suggests, “According to the theory of sovereignty in federal Indian law, ‘tribal’ peoples have a lesser form of ‘sovereignty,’ which is not really sovereignty at all, but dependence” (242). For Vizenor, the sovereignty assumed by the nation-state within treaties is one that reserves for itself power over tribal peoples and territories. In contrast, for Vizenor the sovereignty of Native transmotion is “survivance, not an absolute power over people or territories.” Thus, Vizenor argues that “the notions of native sovereignty must embrace more than mere reservation territory. Sovereignty as transmotion is tacit and visionary; these notions and other theories of sovereignty are critical in the consideration of native rights, and the recognition of those rights outside of reservations, and in urban area.”⁷ Sovereignty of transmotion means not only Natives’ right of physical motion within and outside their communities but also “the ability and the vision to move in imagination” (*Fugitive* 189, 190, 182). In an updated preface to his *Manifest Manners*, Vizenor writes, “Natives have always been on the move, by chance, necessity, barter, reciprocal sustenance, and by trade over extensive routes; the actual motion is a natural right, and the tribal stories of transmotion are a continuous sense of visionary sovereignty” (ix). Weaver concurs that imaginative storytelling is essential to Native community and

sovereignty: "The telling of stories is both spiritual and essential: spiritual because of their ability to form identity and community, and essential as a means of claiming representational sovereignty against the forces in the dominant culture that suppress them and collapse the diversity and richness of Native lives into homogenized banality" (*That the People* 140). For Vizenor, Native stories of survivance are primary sites where the sovereignty of Native transmotion may be envisioned and enacted.

In this essay, I argue that Vizenor's novel *Bearheart* can be read as one such story of survivance. The futuristic world depicted in *Bearheart* represents the breakdown of the US nation-state and state-based nationalism, providing a canvas for Vizenor to explore alternative forms of sovereignty among the stateless groups in transmotion and territorialized in order to survive.⁸ In the novel, excessive consumption of fuel and other natural resources leads to the collapse of the American economic and political systems, and the country reverts to a hunting and subsistence culture.⁹ Bands of survivors must compete for the remaining limited food resources, including animals and humans: "Roving mobs of survivor hunters killed animals for food. . . . The fear of cannibalism caused the interstate walkers to sleep close together for common protection" (Vizenor, *Bearheart* 161). Throughout the novel, Vizenor uses the cannibalistic figure of the wiindigoo to reveal consuming forms of exclusion and assimilation by which groups assert their sovereignty:¹⁰ creating communal forms of identity, exercising jurisdictional power, and attempting to maintain community borders. Wiindigoo cannibalism is used not only to characterize exclusion and assimilation models of sovereignty that lead to the consumption of self and "other," but also to serve as a warning to those members of the tribal collective whose excessive self-identification, lack of vision, and binary view of the world target them as easy prey for such wiindigoo forms of sovereignty.

The wiindigoo, which can refer to both the man-eating giant of tribal myth and cannibalistic human beings possessing the desire to consume human flesh characteristic of the mythic creature, appears in one form or another in the oral traditions of many Algonkian-

speaking tribes, including the Ojibwa (also known as the Chipewewa), Cree, Blackfoot, and Algonkin, among others. Among the tribes of the northern woodlands, hunting and trapping were the primary means of obtaining food during the harsh winters, and death by starvation was a real and constant threat. The mythic wiindigoo, a giant of prodigious strength with a heart of ice whose thunderous roars paralyzed its victims before they were consumed, can be seen “as the personification of both physical and spiritual famine” (Colombo 1). Execution often required burning the wiindigoo to death in order to melt its heart of ice and so destroy its power (Landes 14). The wiindigoo, whose name may be derived from the Anishinaabe terms *ween dagoh*—“solely for self”—or *weenin n’d’igooh*—“fat” or “excess” (Johnston, *Manitous* 222), thus represents the most extreme form of self-identification and excess consumption within the subsistence cultures of the tribes, which required interdependence for survival.¹¹

In Vizenor’s novel, Proude Cedarfair and a band of tribal pilgrims embark on a quest through a postapocalyptic landscape of death and violence to find the vision window to a new world.¹² During their journey, there are multiple episodes in which the pilgrims are tempted to engage in cannibalistic acts or become consumed by cannibalistic desires (their own or those of others). Amidst the extensive literary criticism devoted to *Bearheart*, only Andrew McClure has addressed the acts of cannibalism in the novel in any detail, within the context of the representations of corporeality: “[t]he ways in which the body is represented, especially with respect to the accounts of sex, death, cannibalism, eating.” McClure argues that, through the scenes of bodily violence in the novel, Vizenor “deconstructs the problem of invented Indian identities” (54). In *Cannibal Fictions*, Jeff Berglund draws on Jack Forbes’s critique of Anglo-American imperialism as a form of what he calls the wétiko psychosis (using the Cree term for *wiindigoo*), to examine how cannibalism in *Bearheart* is linked to static Indian identities (the “terminal creeds” of the novel¹³) and the cannibalistic nature of consumerism: “Vizenor reminds his readers that characters who are terminal-creeders are self-destructive and communally destructive,

on par with characters such as the cannibalistic food fascists" (135). James Cox situates the cannibalism of the "white savages" within Vizenor's critique of the self-devouring impetus of colonialism: "[H]is critique of the consumption and exploitation of the environment also implies that colonialism was, from its beginning, a cannibalistic fight among European powers for the resources of the extra-European world" (115–16). Likewise, Joe Lockard suggests that Vizenor writes narratives of Native American survivance in the face of the "destructive cannibalistic force" of the "colonial Euro-wiindigoo" (209). None of these critics has articulated how Vizenor uses cannibalism in his novel to engage with issues of tribal nationhood and critique a form of wiindigoo sovereignty that operates through the logic of exclusion and assimilation.

The opening scenes of *Bearheart* introduce this form of wiindigoo sovereignty, as well as a competing model of tribal sovereignty, represented through transmotion and affiliation. The central episode in the novel, the confrontation between Proude Cedarfair and the evil gambler Sir Cecil Staples ("The Monarch of Unleaded Gasoline"), depicts the apotheosis of wiindigoo sovereignty and reveals its foundational role in the development of the US nation-state. In the final chapters of the novel, we see members of the tribal band fall prey to their own terminal desires for assimilation and exclusion, allowing themselves to become consumed by these forms of wiindigoo sovereignty. The alternative for Vizenor is an understanding of tribal sovereignty as a dynamic process of transmotion and affiliation, transforming through time and across space while remaining connected to sacred places, tribal history, and oral traditions, as well as human and nonhuman kinship communities.

In the opening chapters, Vizenor sets the terms of the debate for the competing definitions of sovereignty articulated in the novel. He depicts four generations of an Anishinaabe family, each led by a Proude Cedarfair, who attempt to protect their tribal homeland in the cedar forests near the headwaters of the Mississippi River in Minnesota. Representing this homeland as a sovereign cedar nation, Vizenor suggests that tribal sovereignty develops through affiliation that begins with connection to a sacred geography and extends

from family to a wider community. Vizenor's model of tribal sovereignty as a form of affiliation, encompassing both notions of familial descent and fellowship with wider communities of human and nonhuman beings, corresponds to Daniel Heath Justice's focus on kinship bonds as the foundation of indigenous nationhood, which he refers to as "peoplehood":¹⁴

Indigenous nationhood is more than simple political independence or the exercise of a distinctive cultural identity; it's also an understanding of a common social interdependence within the community, the tribal web of kinship rights and responsibilities that link the People, the land and the cosmos together in an ongoing and dynamic system of mutually affecting relationships." ("Go Away" 151)

First Proude, who migrates from the land of the first tribal families in the north, establishes his new home and kinships in the circle of sacred cedar and refuses to remove to the reservation: "We are the cedar,' he told his sons. 'We cannot leave ourselves. . . . We are the breath and voice of this woodland'" (7). Tol Foster extends this understanding of tribal relations further outward toward a form of Native cosmopolitanism, which interacts with external communities in a particular locale through what he calls relational regionalism: "[T]he case can be made for an outward-looking, dynamic cosmopolitanism based in notions of relation as the central 'tradition' of Creek cultural life" (271). Likewise, Proude's sovereign community extends beyond the borders of familial and tribal descent to include his "mixedblood" wife (who is raped, blinded, and silenced by federal government officials) and a "mixedblood" deserter from the government detachment—who joins the battle with Proude, names the cedar nation a "circus, a civil and sacred parish," and is captured, killed, and impaled on a stake during the cedar war (9). Here tribal identity may be appropriately understood as community-mediated and practice-based, as Foster suggests: "In tribal communities, one is not just born a tribal person, but instead becomes one through practices and behavior that serve the community, which then recognizes the individual as a member" (288). Vizenor likewise asserts a

form of tribal sovereignty as affiliation, ties of kinship that are community-mediated and practice-based, in opposition to the exclusion/assimilation model of sovereignty that Vizenor associates with the cannibalistic consumption of the wiindigoo.

Through the efforts of each Proude Cedarfair to maintain the sovereign cedar nation, Vizenor reveals the wiindigoo sovereignty practiced not only by the colonial US nation-state but also by corrupt tribal governments. Through four family generations, we are told, the Cedarfairs "have defended their sovereign circle from national and state and tribal governments, from missionaries, tree killers and evil tribal leaders." First Proude defends the sovereign cedar nation from the federal government's rapacious consumption of tribal resources and violent exclusion of tribal peoples, who are viewed as "goddamn black savage[s]" (7, 8). Second Proude, "burdened by the image of his brave father," turns governance of the cedar nation over to the women of the community and seeks to prove himself as a warrior, answering the call to "serve another nation threatened by evil aggressors" by fighting for the United States in World War I. Lacking a strong sense of his own identity and place within the tribe, he follows the US nation-state's call to assimilation, saying "[T]he wars of the whiteman will be my good wars until I find myself again" (11). Returning from the war, he faces a new form of federal assimilation through the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA), which attempted to replicate the constitutional government of the US nation-state on tribal reservations. Vizenor writes, "The constitutions were designed by white anthropologists and elections of tribal people were manipulated by colonial federal administrators. Men of evil and tribal fools were propped up in reservation offices to authorize the exploitation of native lands and natural resources" (12). Second Proude organizes a common defense league to protect the cedar nation and surrounding communities (or "circuses") from assimilation and exploitation by the corrupt tribal government, who "considered the circuses to be within the original colonial boundaries of the reservation, the boundaries created in treaties with the federal government" (12). Here Vizenor suggests that the treaty sovereignty, territorial borders, and constitu-

tional form of government assigned to tribes by the US nation-state may become a form of exclusion/assimilation rather than a means of empowerment for Native peoples.

After the deaths of the first three Proudés, all of whom come to rest in the red cedar water, Fourth Proude Cedarfair becomes the last leader of the cedar nation. Fourth Proude attempts to assert a form of economic sovereignty by providing “cedar ceremonial objects to tribal governments and cedar incense to tribal shamans and pantribal religious leaders. His ceremonial cedar products were considered sacred because they were made from sovereign native cedar” (15). However, his economic venture is undone and the sacred cedar nation overrun by urban tribal people seeking to assimilate spiritual beliefs and new religious rituals to “fill their pantribal urban emptiness,” but “lacking inner discipline, dreams, and personal responsibilities,” they accept substitute cedar incense for their substitute rituals and ceremonial entertainment over religious visions (16). Proude must then resist the economic appropriation of the sacred cedar for fuel by the federal government when the national supplies of gasoline and oil run out. When federal government officials present the executive order reserving the cedar as a federal resource, Proude rejects their jurisdiction over the sovereign cedar nation, denies their attempt to assimilate him as a citizen of the US nation-state, and asserts a *sui generis* tribal sovereignty: “‘This is a sovereign nation,’ Proude said walking toward them with his chest expanded. ‘These trees were the first to grow here, the first to speak of living on this earth . . . These trees are sovereign. We are cedar and we are not your citizens’” (26; ellipses in original). Though Proude and his wife, Rosina, are ultimately forced to leave their homeland by the vengeful president of the reservation government (Jordan Coward), Proude “saw his cedar nation existing in the minds and hearts of the living, he did not feel he needed to prove the endurance of sovereignties.” Ultimately, Proude determines that to defend the trees from consumption by the wiindigoo sovereignty of both the US nation-state and the tribal government and to ensure the survival of the cedar nation-people, they must disperse, as he says, “If we are gone he [Jordan Coward] will have no use for these

trees. . . . Three generations have defended the cedar circus, but to defend the trees now we must not defend them again" (15, 28). For Vizenor, tribal sovereignty as a form of affiliation endures beyond territorial boundaries, tribal governments, and federal treaties in the minds and hearts of the living Native peoples and through physical and visionary transmotion. In the episodes that follow, the tribal sovereignty of affiliation and Native transmotion will be challenged by the wiindigoo sovereignty of exclusion and assimilation in the survivalist communities that arise to fill the vacuum of the failed nation-state.

The first episode in which wiindigoo cannibalism is mentioned is in the chapter "Scapehouse on Callus Road," where Proude and Rosina first seek shelter. The scapehouse had been established as a "survival center" on the Red Cedar Indian Reservation by thirteen women poets from the cities during the first national energy crisis. It is now home to the women and their many domesticated plants and animals (cats, dogs, birds, and fish); as Proude suggests, "The outside is inside" (36). There is also one man, the "mixedblood" Benito Saint Plumero (also known as "Bigfoot"), who is taken in by the women as their shared sexual object. In *Postindian Conversations*, Vizenor suggests that men are also like domesticated animals to the scapehouse women, though "men were not exclusive pets" (105). Within the hermetic environment of the scapehouse, the women's assimilation of other human and nonhuman life forms through domestication becomes an assertion of wiindigoo sovereignty and leads to cannibalistic self-consumption: "Cannibalism was practical. . . . The women agreed that their bodies would be their food. The women eat what is known, what and who is part of their lives in the scapehouse, the plants and animals, and so their lives are continued in the cellular consciousness of the living energies of the scapehouse" (37).¹⁵ While we do not actually see in this episode any acts of human cannibalism, the killing and consumption of the domesticated animals serves as an implicit substitute and hints at later explicit acts of human consumption. In essence, the domesticated animals are humanized and so assimilated into the communal

structures of the scapehouse that to eat them is to engage in a form of cannibalism.

By humanizing their animals so that their normal eating practices simulate cannibalism, the scapehouse women reverse the wiindigoo myth, in which humans are imagined as animals in order to normalize cannibalism. In the wiindigoo myth, as recorded by Basil Johnston, a man named Weendigo must travel far away from his home after the animals and fish become scarce and his family begins to starve. After taking a potion for hunting success, Weendigo turns into a giant, and when he comes upon a village of people, he gives three war cries, which cause the people to faint and change into beavers. Weendigo, thinking nothing of this transformation, picks up fifteen beavers, skins them, and sits down to eat: "He didn't eat; Weendigo stuffed himself. In fact, he ate all fifteen beavers. Nor did it occur to Weendigo to question his enormous appetite. He didn't stop to wonder how he could eat more than one beaver; he didn't even stop to consider whether he should carry the beaver home to his family. He thought only of himself" (Johnston, *Ojibway* 166). The wiindigoo's excessive self-identification is clearly seen in this myth, as is the attempt to normalize cannibalistic acts by imagining human victims as merely animals that may be consumed. If the wiindigoo suffers from the delusion that humans are animals, the scapehouse women seem to suffer from the delusion that their animals are human, a form of assimilation that Vizenor associates with the cannibalistic consumption of wiindigoo sovereignty.

The consumption of domesticated animals occurs during the Scapehouse Ritual Feast, which is preceded by "a circular parade of humans and animals and birds in conversations from the kitchen to the scapehouse dining room." The animals here become personified as participants in the ritual, but in a sacrificial manner they are also the food for the feast, for which the main course is "stuffed kitten" (43). Proude and Rosina resist eating the meat of these animal familiars, and they frame their resistance as a refusal to eat a dead animal whose life has not been properly praised. As Rosina says, "We celebrate . . . what we will eat and praise . . . ourselves . . . Death comes in gentleness to deer and bear and kittens when we exalt

their flesh through our spirit" (44; ellipses in original). For Rosina and Proude, human and nonhuman beings are part of a community of relations. Weaver suggests that for Vizenor this is "an expression of connection and emotive bond with the wider community, considered no less than humans in creation" (*That the People* 144). In the affiliation model of tribal sovereignty, maintenance of right relations with others depends on the recognition of mutual interdependence. The interdependence of human and nonhuman beings in the scapehouse is sacrificed through processes of both assimilation, whereby animals are domesticated and humanized for cannibalistic consumption, and exclusion, whereby animals become simply meat. As Sister Caprice, the scapehouse butcher, suggests, "Death is death and food is food" (45), which serves as an implicit justification for the more explicit acts of exclusion and cannibalism that follow in the novel.

The second episode in *Bearheart* in which cannibalism occurs, this time in an explicit form, is in the chapter entitled "Gay Minikins." The Sacred Order of Gay Minikins was established by homosexual former priests, who are known only by their "number names following sacred oral initiation rites" (59). This form of identification by number dehumanizes the priests in a way similar to the wiindigoo's identification of his human victims with beavers. Likewise, the excessive self-identification of the scapehouse women, which leads them to consume only what (and who) is known, is replicated by the minikins, whose sacred "order is a house and haven of familiarities," says First Father. Like the scapehouse women, the minikins are isolated without gasoline and without food, after their food cache is stolen by their neighbors. The minikins assert their communal sovereignty despite the lack of governmental and religious recognition: "Neither the government nor the church has recognized our sacred order" says Father Sixteen. Despite the minikins isolation, as Father Nine says, "We do not fear death because we share our final sounds, our speech, our litanies, we celebrate our lives and sacred bodies together" (60). As we shall see, this sharing of bodies includes cannibalistic acts of ritual consumption.

While the scapehouse women's excessive self-identification leads

them to practice a form of assimilation, whereby animal “others” are made the same, domesticated, humanized, and cannibalistically consumed, the minikins in contrast practice a form of exclusion, having renounced any form of relations with the female “other.” As First Father angrily asserts, “[W]e have suffered less in the hands of ourselves and other men than in the wicked arms of church women . . . Our mothers were manners and creases and androgynous fantasies, but our fathers were ecstatic survivors,” and he goes on to say that “dependencies on mothers are poison” (60; ellipsis in original). Again we see an excessive self-identification, here in the form of a father-worship that excludes all women and mothers and that ultimately becomes self-devouring. Before they leave the home of the minikins, Proude and the other pilgrims are invited to share the “last meal” of the fathers: “Small macaroni elbows, stewed tomatoes, dried cheese, slices of coarse meat and green beans were counted and sorted in even piles and rows on eight red plates.” In this parody of the Last Supper, as First Father explains, the minikins and pilgrims share “[t]he last of our food, the last of our friends, the last of our good lives and loves.” The sharing of friends, lives, and loves here is more than metaphoric, as Father Nine reveals that the meat served at dinner is in fact “the bodies and souls of four fellow minikin fathers who have died before us here in this house” (61, 63, 64). This cannibalistic act serves as Vizenor’s explicit critique of the wiindigoo sovereignty of the minikins.¹⁶

While Proude could refuse to partake in the cannibalistic meal served by the scapehouse women, he only learns that he too “has eaten human flesh” at the end of the minikins’ last supper (64). However, Proude’s ritual return through visionary transmotion to the cedar nation, the place of his ancestors and tribal traditions, allows him to resist the excessive self-identification that leads to the practice of assimilation and exclusion within wiindigoo sovereignty. After leaving the minikins, Proude performs a ritual cleansing, inhaling the smoke from the cedar incense he carries with him and then bathing in the river, “the same sacred river which flows through the cedar circus. The same river that flows over the bones and spirits of his grandfathers and father” (68). In the river, Proude

encounters Belladonna Darwin-Winter Catcher, another tribal pilgrim, who is pregnant with twins as the result of her rape by three white men. While she rails against the "three evil whitesavages" who raped her, Proude focuses on the life growing inside her; as he says, "Evil does not give life" (69). The power of life and the power of evil will be tested in the central episodes of the novel, when the pilgrims confront Sir Cecil Staples, the mythic evil gambler and "monarch of unleaded gasoline" (102). As Barry notes, Proude's confrontation with the evil gambler is "narratively and philosophically at the center of Vizenor's text" (16). This central episode depicts the apotheosis of wiindigoo sovereignty, in the figure of Sir Cecil Staples, and reveals its foundational role in the development of the US nation-state.

While there are no explicit references to cannibalism in the meeting with Sir Cecil Staples, the evil gambler is associated with the wiindigoo in Anishinaabe myths and in Vizenor's other writings.¹⁷ In the prologue to *The People Named the Chippewa*, Vizenor offers a version of the mythic encounter between the Anishinaabe trickster, Naanabozho, and the evil gambler. When Naanabozho goes in search of his mother after she is taken from the woodland by a powerful wind spirit, his grandmother Nookomis warns him that

the distant land he intended to visit was infested with hideous humans and "evil spirits and the followers of those who eat human flesh. . . . First these evil spirits charm their victims by the sweetness of their songs, then they strangle and devour them, but your principle [*sic*] enemy will be the great gambler who has never been beaten in his game and who lives beyond the realm of darkness." (*People* 4)

Naanabozho does not heed his grandmother's warning, traveling through the realms of darkness, in which "he heard the groans and hisses and yells of countless fiends gloating over their many victims" (4). Finally, he reaches the evil gambler's wigwam, entering through a "mat of scalps." The gambler is described as "almost round in shape, smooth and white," and his flesh "seemed moist, like a poison mushroom." He grins confidently and reveals the consequences of

the game to Naanabozho: "I demand the lives of those who gamble with me and lose. I keep the scalps and ears and hands, and the rest of the bodies are given to my friends the flesh eaters." In the game they play, four figures, representing the four ages of man, are shaken in a dish four times, and they must remain standing on each throw in order to win. Naanabozho adapts the rules slightly when he requests to take his turn last as the challenger. The evil gambler begins the game, and the figures remain standing for his first three throws. "The destinies of the trickster and tribal people of the woodland depended upon the one chance remaining, the last throw of the dish. Should the figures of the four ages of man come down in the standing position then the trickster would lose and the spirit of tribal people would be consigned to the wiindigoo, the flesh eaters in the land of darkness" (5). But on the evil gambler's last throw, the trickster "made a teasing whistle on the wind and all four figures of the ages of man fell in the darkness of the dish." The trickster, here as cultural hero, has saved himself and the tribe: "The trickster had stopped evil for a moment in a game" (6). The story ends without closure, as Naanabozho begins his turn in the game, playing for the life of the evil gambler.

In *Bearheart*, Sir Cecil Staples is described in ways that align him with the mythic evil gambler: "Coiled stoutwhite" (101), "His shape was almost round" (110); "His soothing voice had overtones of hissing and echoes of fiendish groans" (109), and his world is one of "eternal darkness" (110). He too is like a poisoned mushroom, having lost his hair and teeth because his truck-driving surrogate mother "was forever spraying the truck trailer and dipping our clothes in insect poison" (123). Sir Cecil sits behind a "heart shaped desk," but like the wiindigoo, this evil gambler's heart seems to be made of ice. Rather than a wigwam decorated with the scalps and hands of his victims, Sir Cecil's "black metal altar trailer" is adorned with "hundreds of wooden and metal traps and rare instruments of torture" and "two complete skeletons. Their whitebones touching in fleshless passion" (101).¹⁸ Those who come to gamble with Sir Cecil for five gallons of gasoline must wager their lives, but the losers are allowed to choose their own means of death. While the mythic evil

gambler feeds the scraps of his victims to the wiindigoo, the flesh eaters in the land of darkness, Sir Cecil offers his victims to his "Mixedblood Horde of Mercenaries" (103). Sir Cecil decorates his trailer with photographs of his surrogate family, his brothers, sister, and mother—who is described as "like a big beaver in the end" (124)—as well as photos of his "mixedblood" horde of mercenaries with their "frozen faces" (129). The allusions to the beaver and the frozen faces in the photographs can again be associated with the wiindigoo's human-as-beaver object transference and icy visage.

The back story of Sir Cecil's life, as told to Inawa Biwide ("the one who resembles a stranger"), reveals the foundations of a wiindigoo sovereignty, which not only characterizes the evil gambler's desire for absolute power over his victim's life and death, but also undergirds the sovereign power of the US nation-state over those subjects under its control. With his royal surname, Sir Cecil Staples, the "monarch of unleaded gasoline," represents the classical figure of the "sovereign" whose power is derived from divine right: "absolute, unlimited power held permanently in a single person or source, inalienable, indivisible, and original (not derivative or dependent)" (d'Errico 248). After the Enlightenment, this classical conception of the absolute power of the sovereign is transferred to the sovereignty of the nation-state through its legal power to protect and control individual citizens and private property: "[S]overeignty became essentially procedural, the exercise of reason and public critique generated by the bourgeoisie who as 'the people' construct the nation-state through the act of making coercive laws, and subsequently as 'sovereign' coerce through them as a *nation* and are coerced by them as *individuals*" (Lyons 454; italics in original). Lyons suggests that American Indian sovereignty is not that of a nation-state, but rather that of a nation-people, whose central purpose is "the survival and flourishing of the people itself. . . . The sovereignty of individuals and the privileging of procedure are less important in the logic of a nation-people, which takes as its supreme charge the sovereignty of the group through the privileging of its traditions and culture and continuity" (454–55). In the postnational time period of the novel, Sir Cecil notes that the legal and procedural codes of

the sovereign nation-state are no longer operative: "That thin plastic film known as social control hanging over the savage urge to kill was dissolved when the government failed and the economic world collapsed." Because the individual citizens had been bound together as a nation-state, rather than a nation-people, "there were no common values to bind people together and hold down their needs for violence and the experience of death" once the government failed (126, 127). However, Sir Cecil also suggests that the wiindigoo urge to kill and consume was essential to the workings of the nation-state even when it was operative; as he says, "I learned about slow torture from the government and private business . . . Thousands of people have died the slow death from disfiguring cancers because the government failed to protect the public. The government tortured and sanctioned killing" (127; ellipsis in original). The evil gambler is not the antithesis of the wiindigoo sovereignty of the nation-state, but rather its apotheosis.

Sir Cecil is trained to assume the role of the wiindigoo sovereign by his truck-driving surrogate mother, who kidnaps thirteen children from different states (thirteen states for a new union) and raises her sovereign "family" on the road in the back of her trailer. Sir Cecil argues that these separate individuals, not bound by family bonds or kinship, had to form their "own government" (124). Owens suggests how unfettered mobility and the absence of kinship are part of the founding myth of the US nation-state: "To be on the road indefinitely, free of roots and responsibilities to family, community, or the earth itself, is the oldest and most destructive of all American metanarratives" (*Mixedblood* 162). The highest value espoused in this new sovereign nation-family was individual exceptionalism; as Sir Cecil says of his mother, "She said we should feel no guilt, ignore the expectations of others and practice to perfection whatever you choose to do in the world. She believed that people should do the things that gave them pleasure. As it turned out killing gave me a whole lot of pleasure then . . . My business has been to bring people to their death" (126; ellipsis in original). Sir Cecil's wiindigoo form of sovereignty develops from the denial of any responsibility for and relationship with other humans, as well

as nonhuman beings: "Mother hated the creeping and crawling of insects and was forever spraying the truck trailer and dipping our clothes in insect poison. Nothing lived on us" (123). Vizenor reveals that this wiindigoo sovereignty, which denies any interdependence with "others" and with the nonhuman world, is the self-destructive source of the evil gambler's external and internal dissolution, the loss of his hair and teeth to the insect poison and his all-consuming desire to take the lives of others.

Two of the pilgrims engage in the dish game with the evil gambler in the novel to wager their lives for five gallons of gasoline: Lilith Mae Farrier, who is chosen as the "good gambler" by the company through an elaborate word game, and then Proude, who must gamble for the lives of Lilith Mae and the rest of the pilgrims after Lilith Mae loses. After she is chosen to represent the pilgrims against the evil gambler, Lilith Mae "set her mind to luck and chance and being a good gambler. . . . She did not know the rituals of spiritual balance and power" (116). On the one throw of the dish that she wins, she is "driven with a perfect power"; however, "[s]he took personal pleasure in winning and lost her place in the energies of sacred time" (118). As the evil gambler suggests, her excessive self-identification with her own personal power leads to her demise: "[S]he lost her good power through her own selfish need for praise and credit" (129). In the end, Lilith Mae loses the game and is sentenced to die.

In contrast, before he engages with the evil gambler in the second dish game, Proude draws on wider sources of spiritual and collective power by returning to his tribal forms of identification and affiliation: place, ancestors, and oral traditions. Through visionary transmotion he travels with the crows back to the sacred cedar nation and draws on the power of his ancestors: "His eyes became black holes from woodland tribal souls." He also draws on the power of oral tradition, by recapitulating the tribal origin myth of the earth-diver: "Proude slipped into the water and swam beneath the surface in magical flight. He soared underwater through the colors of the families of the universe" (121). When Proude enters the trailer to gamble his own life for the lives of Lilith Mae and the other pilgrims, the evil gambler recognizes that Proude, like the mythic

trickster Naanabozho, seeks to “balance the world between good and evil,” rather than play “a simple game of death” (130). Like the mythic Naanabozho, Proude makes a “teasing whistle on the wind” on the evil gambler’s final toss of the dish and upsets the balance of his evil power (132). The lives of the pilgrims are saved, but they have been tricked by the evil gambler: there is no gasoline for the winners. While Lilith Mae’s life has also been saved by Proude, her excessive self-identification becomes terminal as she immolates herself and her dogs, ironically using the little remaining gasoline that the pilgrims have to escape in the process. Though her charred body is saved for burial by the pilgrims, we are left to imagine what might have happened to her remains at the hands of the wiindigoo horde of mercenaries: “The smell of burning flesh inflamed the horde of mercenaries. The horde watched her fingers drip and cheered when her thin forearm burned through at the elbow” (135). Choosing the traditional means of execution for the wiindigoo, Lilith Mae’s self-immolation may also be seen as a preemptive strike against the forces of assimilation and exclusion characterizing wiindigoo sovereignty that will assail the tribal pilgrims on the rest of their journey.

In the episode titled “Hlastic Haces and Scoliotoma Moths,” Little Big Mouse becomes a victim of the urge toward assimilation within wiindigoo sovereignty, as she sacrifices herself to the “whitecripples,” who travel in “communal families of people with similar disabilities” to establish a sovereign community in Dumfries, the new national capital of all “cripples” (145). When we are first introduced to Little Big Mouse, she is described as “a small whitewoman with fresh water blue eyes. She forgot her birth name but took names from the shrines she made from random things. She moved through her visual and tactual worlds on the surface of things . . . in constant touch with linear surfaces” (78). Clearly, this little mouse, who has forgotten her origins, takes her names from random shrines, and moves on the surface of things, is the polar opposite of Proude, whose character is sustained by his tribal identification with his place of origin, ancestors, and oral traditions. When she encounters the “hundreds of cripples, whole communal families of people with similar disabilities” walking with the pilgrims on the road to Dum-

fries (145), Little Big Mouse is immediately drawn to them as a surrogate family that might accept her because she possesses what they lack, a complete body. While Belladonna Darwin-Winter Catcher sees the “cripples” as evil and “incomplete animals lusting for our whole bodies,” Little Big Mouse is “ecstatic in the presence of the cripples and incomplete bodies” (145, 146). In essence, these two responses are part of the dialectic logic of exclusion and assimilation within wiindigoo sovereignty, either demonizing the disability of the “cripples” as evidence of an absence, a lack of wholeness, or valorizing their disability as evidence of their divine nature. In reality, the “cripples” are the products of cancerous diseases caused by the chemical poisoning of the earth by humans.

Proude sees both Belladonna's and Little Big Mouse's responses to the “cripples” as forms of exclusion and assimilation that deny human and animal affiliation and interdependence. Through visionary transmotion, oral traditions, and “inner animal voices and motions,” Proude is able to return again to the sacred cedar nation and make himself anew in the eternal present of the original earth-diver creation myth: “In the oral traditions of whales and past tribal travels he became water and fish and made the new earth on the backs of sacred turtles. Proude sat between turtle and otter and the animals on the new earth” (143). Rejecting both the desire to exclude the “cripples” as wholly other (“Less than whole, less than human”) or assimilate their difference, Proude suggests how the Native transmotion of memory and vision may help overcome such terminal creeds: “‘We become our memories and what we believe,’ said Proude in a deep voice. ‘We become the terminal creeds we speak. Our words limit the animals we would become . . . soaring through words from memories and visions. We are all incomplete . . . imperfect. Lost limbs and lost visions stand with the same phantoms’” (147; ellipses in original). The loss of their limbs leads the cripples to seek perfection and wholeness through the assimilation, and eventually consumption, of whole bodies, such as that possessed by Little Big Mouse. Likewise, Little Big Mouse's loss of vision leads her to sacrifice herself to obtain the beauty and energy she feels emanates from the “cripples,” who have overcome

their physical imperfections with imaginative visions of themselves in alternative forms. Some wear “dream shirts with various parts of bodies painted on the front”; others wear “permanent transparent plastic faces” (or “Hlastic Haces” as the chapter is titled in imitation of their speech made without lips) to cover their skinless muscles and flesh exposed by skin cancer; and some are dressed as scolioma moths “with giant compound eyemasks and double polyphemus wings” (145, 149, 147). Little Big Mouse is particularly attracted to the “moth-cripples” because, as she says, “in my heart I have always wanted to be a giant polyphemus moth with big eyes on my wings.” Again Vizenor points to her lack of imaginative vision; rather than asserting a vision of her own identity in relationship with others, she merely wants to assimilate the vision (the eyes and wings) of the “moth-cripples.” Appropriately, when she asks to borrow the wings from the smallest “moth-cripple” because, as she says, “[i]t would give me feelings of good power to be within the wings of a moth,” the other “cripples” attack her (148). The little moth scolds her, “You are perfect and now you want our imagination and visions for your own. . . . We are moths to survive and escape our lives. Perfect people leave so little to the poor and incomplete people of the world” (149; ellipsis in original). Thus chastened, Little Big Mouse decides that if she cannot adopt the prosthetics of the “cripples” to make her incomplete vision whole, she will sacrifice herself to make their incomplete bodies whole.

Little Big Mouse begins “telling stories about her incomplete lives” to the “cripples” and then begins an erotic dance for them (150). Stripping off her clothes as she dances, she stimulates the sexual energies of the “cripples,” which in turn arouses “her visual fantasies of animal lust.” Eventually, she stands naked before them, and the “cripples,” unable to contain their desires to possess her whole body, physically attack her, while “Little Big Mouse closed her eyes and dreams rolled into a world of beautiful deformities.” The sexual lust of the “cripples,” however, is superseded by the cannibalistic desires of the “savage whitecripples”: “The cripples gnawed and pulled at her until nothing remained of Little Big Mouse. She was carried away by the whitecripples, heart and brain and undigested

food. The cripples carried with them parts of her never known to their own imperfect bodies" (151). Little Big Mouse thus attempts to fill her void, her lack of imaginative vision, by allowing herself to be consumed by those whom she sees as possessing such a vision, while the "cripples" attempt to fill their own voids, their lack of complete bodies, by consuming what they see as her whole and perfect body, ironically rendering it into a deformed and incomplete collection of body parts in the process. Vizenor here reveals the dangers of succumbing to the desire for assimilation within a wiindigoo form of sovereignty.

If Little Big Mouse is a victim of the drive toward assimilation within wiindigoo sovereignty, which sees the self reflected in the "other," Matchi Makwa becomes a victim of its concomitant force of exclusion, using a binary view to see the world divided between self and "other." The chapter titled "Witch Hunt Restaurant" begins with the pilgrims witnessing a quarrel between two "families of white-walkers" that turns into a scene of murder and cannibalism. During the quarrel between the whitewalkers, Matchi Makwa observes one white man kill a rival man and woman with a hunting knife: "Without waiting for the flesh to cool the man with the knife removed the hearts of the victims and then carved and sliced the firm muscles from the shoulders and thighs and other parts of their bodies." As Matchi Makwa relates the story to the other pilgrims, we hear that the man with the knife "said he was going to kill and eat the woman because she traveled with him several months before and stole his meat supplies . . . Seems the man planned to feast on her flesh as restitution. But it was retribution too, because the [other white] man said over his dead body, and sure enough, as you saw it was over his dead body . . . Now he will feast on the two of them" (ellipses in original). When he is asked why the victims' family members had not protected them, Matchi Makwa suggests that they were "[s]trangers, more or less, from what I heard they had no reason beyond casual conversations to protect the two victims" (174). Here Vizenor suggests that the breakdown in family affiliation and kinship bonds among the nomadic whitewalkers produces the sense of alienation and excessive self-identification that characterizes wiin-

digoo sovereignty. In fact, we learn in the following chapter that the white cannibal who butchers the man and woman had been a loving family man, with a wife and two children. But when the rest of his family dies, the man stands by their grave marker and vows to “wander from this stone alone until the memories are gone.” Disconnected from those forms of tribal affiliation that are evident in Proude (family, place, and history), the man loses all sense of identity, ending the note he leaves with his package of family photographs, “In the name of the love and trust we once shared in this nation, no place, no date, no more living memories, no name. Signed, no name” (181). Isolated and alienated like the white cannibal, the other whitewalkers band together in “families,” loose groupings of strangers bound together for common protection of their bodies and property, which cannot provide the sense of interdependence, responsibility for others, and common purpose in the survival of the people that characterizes a tribal form of sovereignty.

Matchi Makwa and another pilgrim, Bishop Parasimo, follow the white cannibal into the rest stop on the interstate that has been turned into the “Ponca Witch Hunt Restaurant and Fast Foods.” The restaurant had been established by what Vizenor calls food fascists: “Two white-families from eastern cities merged their perverse energies and hordes and seized the federal interstate reststop building for their own bar and fast foods. Three previous occupants were killed when the easterners took the business. Their bodies were dried and served up with stew until the witch hunt families established their own flesh trade” (175). When Matchi Makwa and Bishop Parasimo sit down to eat in the rest stop, they discover the meaning of the restaurant’s name. Looking up, “they notice three figures tied and hanging alive above them. The figures were witches captured in the restaurant. The food fascists hung the witches out for a week or two and then cut them down and into pieces for takeout orders. The fascists would not serve the evil flesh of witches in their stew” (176). The pilgrims learn from one of the restaurant owners that the “witches” are identified as “other” and then sacrificed as scapegoats to assuage the guilt of the dominant society for their own destruction of the country. The female food fascist describes the “witches”

as "sirens from the cities . . . Let me tell you their poison is all over the world. Their fumes ruined this proud nation and gave us the problems we got now" (177; ellipses in original). To keep their poisonous fumes from escaping, "The food fascists bound the women nude in leather harnesses and poured hot wax in their vaginal and anal openings and in their ears and noses to prevent the evil fumes and sex with the devils." Not only does the exclusion and sacrifice of the "witches" relieve the whites of responsibility for the problems of the nation, it also gives them a false sense of security: "Our customers feel in good hands with the witches bound above them" (176, 178). Vizenor here reveals the wiindigoo sovereignty of the food fascists, who discursively construct the "other" as evil and then violently sacrifice these "witches" in order to affirm the authority and security of their own community. Bishop Parasimo tries to get the "witches" released by offering to purchase or borrow them for an exorcism, but his requests are rebuffed. So he and Matchi Makwa devise a "witch" liberation plan.

Unfortunately, Matchi Makwa is less interested in liberating the "witches" for ethical reasons than for carnal ones. He is attracted to one of the "witches" in particular and plans to keep her for himself after they are liberated. When we are first introduced to Matchi Makwa, it is suggested that his exclusive and binary view of identity will be his undoing. Rather than affirming his own "mixed-blood" identity, as the product of a white mother and Indian father, he continually repeats the phrase, "Our women were poisoned part white," associating whiteness with poison, rather than recognizing that evil comes from an individual's actions, not from racial identity. Proude recognizes that "Matchi Makwa was taken with the evil word sorcerers" and "Terminal names" (59). Thus it is no surprise to us when Matchi Makwa becomes a victim of the wiindigoo sovereignty of the food fascists. While the other pilgrims liberate two of the "witches," Matchi Makwa is overcome with his lust for the third "witch." Cutting off "the mound of wax moulded to her crotch hair and vagina" with a kitchen knife and tossing it to the floor "like a scalp," Matchi Makwa consummates with the "witch" "the total spiritual union between good and evil." Matchi Makwa here succumbs

to the same dualistic worldview as that of the food fascists, a narrow vision that depends on separation, exclusion, and fixed binaries of identity: self/other, white/Indian, male/female, and good/evil.¹⁹ While he is engaged in his terminal fantasies with the “witch,” he does not notice the approach of the food fascists, who kill the two lovers in the middle of their sexual act: “The bodies were cut into several parts and stuffed together into a giant handpowered meat grinder. The heads . . . were mounted on witching sticks and placed at each side of the restaurant entrance” (180). In the end, the rotting head of Matchi Makwa is rescued by the mammoth pilgrim Parawoman Pio and returned to the band of pilgrims, who bury it with a traditional ritual ceremony around the cedar fire, representing “the fires of families and nations,” so that the “soul of Zebulon Matchi Makwa would not wander on the aimless words of strangers down the interstate. His shadow was brought back to the cedar fire” (183). Later in the novel, Rosina affirms this reintegration, saying, “He was one of us . . . from the cedar” (226). Though consumed by the separation, exclusion, and binary views that characterize wiindigoo sovereignty, Matchi Makwa is ultimately reaffiliated with his tribal family and nation after death.

At the end of the novel, the remaining pilgrims near their final destination in New Mexico by riding the “freedom train” to Santa Fe, where they encounter the final representation of wiindigoo sovereignty in the pentarchical pensioners, five white rulers who plan to establish a new sovereign nation out of the ruins of the old one. Though this new nationalist movement is designed to “overthrow fascist power and return the government to whiteworking people” (219), it is clear that the new nation will be ruled by the principles of wiindigoo sovereignty we have seen displayed throughout the novel: rigid rules for pure living, sacrifice and obedience, divine rule, and power in the hands of the leaders (218). Thus it is no surprise that the pensioners engage in the same forms of assimilation and exclusion as earlier groups. First, they attempt to assimilate the tribal pilgrims, accepting a medicine bundle from Proude as train fare to “get some power” and claiming their own tribal identification: “[W]e got a soft chalk spot in the old chest bone for injuns . . . You see our

mothers had a little injun blood from way back in the good old reservation days" (220; ellipses in original). Proude secretly knows that there is no power to be had in the medicine bundle, which (in an ironic reversal) had been stolen from a museum and was not sacred. Though he is censured and ostracized by some of the other pilgrims for trading away the medicine bundle ("You can never come back to the center again. The tribes will be done with you now, giving up on yourself"), Proude affirms that the power of tribal sovereignty is dynamic and held in the hearts of the living, not static and held in the past or in material possessions: "The power of the human spirit is carried in the heart not in histories and materials" (217–18). The pensioners' efforts to assimilate the tribal pilgrims soon oscillates to a form of exclusion as the pilgrims are detained as prisoners and laborers, marked with number identifications, and then made the scapegoats in another witch hunt: "The new governors ordered an inquisition into witchcraft and shamanism. Prisoners were questioned, suspicions were confirmed, and charges of evil and diabolism were brought against the pilgrims." It is not surprising that such wiindigoo sovereignty leads again to violence and death as Inawa Biwide is tortured, and Private Jones, one of the mongrel dogs who has accompanied the pilgrims throughout their journey, is "butchered and eaten by the soldiers" in a final act of cannibalistic consumption of a tribal member. Rosina makes the comparison with other acts of wiindigoo cannibalism explicit when she confronts the pensioners: "Once we thought you were people of peace and freedom, but now we know you are no different than those whitesavages we met on the interstate" (225, 229, 227). In order to escape, the pilgrims move together in visionary transmotion through the whole history of the Palace of the Governors (the territorial seat of power of old and new sovereign nations in which Natives continue to be imprisoned) and find hidden behind the veneer of a new adobe wall an old fireplace and smoke hole through which they flee.

It is visionary transmotion as well that carries two of the surviving pilgrims, Proude and Inawa Biwide, through the vision window at Pueblo Bonito and into the fourth world on the winter solstice at the conclusion of the novel. That Inawa Biwide, first identified

as “the one who resembles a stranger,” should be the one chosen by Proude to accompany him into the next world points to Vizenor’s rejection of the assimilation/exclusion logic of wiindigoo sovereignty and his embrace of bonds of affiliation (through shared experiences, oral traditions, values, and vision) as the connective tissue of tribal sovereignty. In the end, it is through Native transmotion and affiliation that tribal sovereignty survives, transforming through time and across space so that the people may endure. In the end, such tribal sovereignty must also recognize a responsibility to those who come after, just as Proude and Inawa Biwide leave their bear tracks in the snow for Rosina to follow.

I have been arguing that we can read the representations of cannibalism in *Bearheart* as an explicit critique of the exclusion/assimilation logic of wiindigoo sovereignty, a logic that marks the limits of nationalist discourse, whether such discourse derives from the US nation-state or tribal nations.²⁰ On the one hand, we might see Vizenor’s novel as a literary representation of Justice’s “belief that Indigenous nationhood is a necessary ethical response to the assimilationist directive of imperialist nation-states” (*Our Fire* 8). On the other hand, the novel is also attuned to the dangers of exclusion within indigenous nationalist movements as well, as Foster warns: “The danger, then, of a tribally specific frame is that it too often leads us to close off voices that do not obviously seem to be part of the tribal community and to privilege the more conservative voices in that community” (270). In this context, it is also worth noting Warrior’s admonition that “nationalism is worth engaging in only insofar as concomitant institutions of criticism arise to challenge its excesses and temper its corrupting power. Some of the most important of those institutions arise within the nationalist struggle itself” (“Native Critics” 192). In my reading of *Bearheart*, Vizenor emerges as one of those internal voices of criticism, engaging with the discourse of American Indian literary nationalism in order to probe its limits.

More than just acting as internal critic, however, Vizenor also offers in his novel a model of tribal sovereignty, a community-based concept of nationhood that emerges through the dynamic process of transmotion and affiliation. Brooks describes a similar view of

nationhood evident among the Abenaki, who are “famous for cycles of gathering and dispersal within particular territories”: the Abenaki word for nation means “families gathered together,” and “the activity of nation building, in the Abenaki sense, is not a means of boundary-making but rather a process of gathering from within” (229). Thus Brooks calls for “a nationalism that is not based on notions of nativism or binary oppositions between insider and outsider, self and other; a nationalism that does not root itself in an idealization of any pre-Contact past, but rather relies on the multifaceted, lived experience of families who gather in particular places” (244). In Vizenor's *Bearheart*, such a model of tribal nationhood is represented through the sovereignty of transmotion and affiliation, encompassing the rights of mobility and community for Native peoples.

NOTES

I would like to thank my colleagues at Central Washington University, the Pacific Northwest American Studies Association, and the American Literature Association for their feedback during presentations of this essay as a work-in-progress, as well as the editors and external readers of *SAIL* for their insightful comments that helped to strengthen my argument.

1. Works that utilize a nationalist paradigm for the study of American Indian cultures and literatures include texts in the works cited by the following authors: Alfred, Allen, Barker, Brooks, Cook-Lynn, Cox, d'Errico, Deloria and Lytle, Justice, Lyons, Sinclair, Teuton, Warrior, Weaver, and Womack.

2. Sinclair concurs with Womack, noting, “[M]ost criticisms of Vizenor have obscured the fact that although he has written widely on Native identity, he has most often used Anishinaabeg-centered discourse in which to do so. . . . Vizenor consistently employs Anishinaabeg cultural expressions, historical events, and political practices as his primary methodology” (135–36).

3. Monsma examines the theme of mobility in *Bearheart* and Vizenor's other fiction and argues that “despite the novel's suggestion that new worlds might be attainable through performative language, it still leaves its characters in motion, continually moving away from their original landscapes and their first home” (63).

4. Foster glosses Vizenor's definition of transmotion as “the interplay between individual members and the group identity and between individual communities in relation to each other. Vizenor's term is explicitly *not*

linked to national borders or official documents, but instead to a cultural outlook and the stories that create it" (295n28). Sinclair argues from a literary nationalist perspective that Vizenor's understanding of transmotion is specifically rooted in "a cultural, political, and historical Anishinaabeg method of continuance" (137).

5. As Weaver notes, Vizenor's definition of "survivance" incorporates the concepts of survival, endurance, and resistance ("Splitting" 89n168). In a different context, Linda Tuhiwai Smith suggests that the survival of indigenous peoples depends on a relational knowledge of place and mobility: "[O]ur survival as peoples has come from our knowledge of our contexts, our environments, not from some active beneficence of our Earth Mother. We had to know to survive. We had to work out ways of knowing, we had to predict, to learn and reflect, we had to preserve and protect, we had to defend and attack, we had to be mobile, we had to have social systems which enabled us to do these things" (12–13).

6. The "Marshall trilogy" of Supreme Court cases—*Johnson v. McIntosh* (1823), *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* (1831), and *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832)—first substantively defined American Indian sovereignty in US common law. (For a concise summary and analysis of these cases, see Barker).

7. Sinclair underscores the crucial point that "Vizenor is not saying that tribal nations should give up claims to land, but that tribal peoples must think of land in *tribal ways, through tribal traditions, according to tribal beliefs and community-derived decision-making methods*" (148; italics in original). Justice also suggests that indigenous sovereignty must extend beyond ancestral homelands: "Over half of American Indians and a large number of Mexican and Canadian Natives do not live on traditional lands, . . . large populations of Native peoples who, while not grounded to an ancestral land base, nonetheless maintain their Native identities and struggle to establish their survival" ("Go Away" 160). This viewpoint may be distinguished from Cook-Lynn's emphasis on the primacy of land in the struggle for Native sovereignty: "[F]or a colonized people the most essential value in the defense of self is in the land, for it is in the land that the native finds morality, and it is only in the land that rights and nationhood reside" (*Anti-Indianism* 178). Chadwick Allen offers a similar defense of what he calls the "indigenous trump card, physical and spiritual longevity in the land": "Without the claim to specific lands and independent nation rights, Indigenous Peoples become indistinguishable from the long list of the world's oppressed" (216).

8. Analyzing the rise of Native nationalism among the Mohawks of

Kahnawake in Canada, Gerald R. Alfred distinguishes between different forms of state-centered and substate nationalisms, including state nationalism, ethnonationalism, and community sovereignty, all of which are oriented in some way toward the nation-state (*Heeding* 14–15). In his more recent writings, Alfred has argued that indigenous concepts of nationhood are incompatible with a sovereignty framework that is ultimately bound to the coercive power of the state; thus “‘sovereignty’ is inappropriate as a political objective for indigenous peoples” (“Sovereignty” 38). Womack suggests that tribal forms of sovereignty preceded European colonization: “[M]eans of identifying community members, understanding geographical relationships with neighbors, and working out jurisdiction have always existed among tribes, even if such understandings have changed over time or differ in significant ways from European jurisprudence” (“Theorizing” 361–62). Vizenor’s novel imagines how tribal forms of sovereignty might supersede European colonization and the US nation-state as well.

9. However, this reversion to a subsistence culture is characterized by savage acts of violence rather than a return to tribal forms of community. Vizenor notes in a number of interviews that the violence in *Bearheart* is the most troubling aspect of the novel for many readers. He suggests that the scenes of violence are ironic allegories of the historical violence perpetuated against Native peoples during colonization and up to the present. See Vizenor and Lee 97 and Isernhagen 118–19.

10. Though there are variant spellings for this mythical figure in different tribes, I use Vizenor’s preferred spelling of *wiindigoo*.

11. The tribal peoples who came to be identified as the Ojibwa/Ojibwe/Ojibway and Chippewa after colonization referred to themselves as the Anishinaabeg—singular Anishinaabe (Vizenor, *People* 13).

12. Their pilgrimage takes them from the headwaters of the Mississippi River in Minnesota to the vision window at Chaco Canyon, New Mexico, on a southwesterly journey that can be read as a Native version of classical pilgrimage narratives, such as John Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress* (see Rigel-Cellard), a parody of the “westerling pattern of American ‘discovery’ and settlement” (Owens, *Other* 229), and a revision of the narrative of European American emigration (see Cox).

13. As Louis Owens explains, “‘Terminal creeds’ in *Bearheart* are beliefs which seek to fix, to impose static definitions upon the world. . . . Such attempts to fix meaning according to what Vizenor terms ‘static standards’ are destructive, suicidal, even when the definitions appear to arise out of revered tradition” (*Other* 231).

14. Deloria and Lytle make a similar shift from the concept of nationhood to one of peoplehood in their discussion of early treaty negotiations between the US government and the tribes: "When we look back at the treaty negotiations between the United States and the respective Indian tribes, there is little mention of the complex of ideas that constitutes nationhood. . . . In almost every treaty, however, the concern of the Indians was the preservation of the people" (7–8).

15. Vizenor suggests elsewhere that the scapehouse women have attempted to create a sovereign community as an alternative to the dominant institutions ruled by men, but their attempt to isolate themselves from the outside world may be their greatest weakness, as they are caught within the "tricky tensions of terminal creeds and survivance" (Vizenor and Lee 104). Madsen views the cannibalism in this episode as a means of transformation: "[I]n the scapehouse, where all the occupants, including animals, birds, and humans, become after their death food for the living . . . the dead transform the living and find a form of immortality through cannibalism" (128).

16. It is also an implicit parody of the symbolic cannibalism of the Christian communion ritual, initiated with the last supper, in which the bread or host and wine are transfigured as the body and blood of Christ and then consumed by the parishioner receiving the sacrament of the Eucharist. In his essay "Signs Taken for Wonders," Homi Bhabha offers a parallel scene of Native resistance to the sacrament as a form of cannibalism when he recounts the response of a Christian convert upon first encountering the printed Book of God in 1817, as described by Anund Messeh, one of the earliest catechists in India: "'These books,' said Anund, 'teach the religion of the European Sahibs. It is THEIR book; and they printed it in our language, for our use.' 'Ah! no,' replied the stranger, 'that cannot be, for they eat flesh.'" (164). My thanks to Paulus Pimomo for pointing out this connection.

17. In Vizenor's novel *The Heirs of Columbus*, the evil gambler and the wiindigoo are not only associated, they are one and the same character. A handsome, blond wiindigoo engages the tribe in a moccasin game to the death, but the ice woman, who is on the side of the tribe, blows on the wiindigoo, and "evil was frozen solid with a smile" (*Heirs* 22). In *Father Meme*, the titular priest, who sexually abuses Native altar boys on the reservation, is characterized as physically frozen and morally evil, which aligns him with both the wiindigoo cannibal and the evil gambler and ultimately leads the boys to sacrifice him in the fish house and dump his body in the frozen lake (21, 22). In *Chancers*, the San Francisco Solar Dancers are described as "a ruck of urban warriors moved by the *wiindigoo* cannibal," who stalk the Uni-

versity of California and ritually murder their enemies on campus in order to release the spirits of dead Native ancestors, the titular "chancers" (25).

18. The skeletons in Sir Cecil's trailer offer another allusion to the wiindigoo: "The Weendigo was gaunt to the point of emaciation, its desiccated skin pulled tautly over its bones. With its bones pushing out against its skin, its complexion the ash gray of death, and its eyes pushed back deep into their sockets, the Weendigo looked like a gaunt skeleton recently disinterred from the grave" (Johnston, *Manitous* 221).

19. Berglund offers a contradictory reading of this episode, suggesting that Matchi Makwa and the "witch" are eliminated and consumed because "they break down the hierarchies and distort binaries: male/female, good/evil, to name only a few" (135), but as I hope to have shown Matchi Makwa is self-consumed by such binaries, which makes him easy prey for the food fascists' form of wiindigoo sovereignty.

20. Justice makes a similar point in arguing that a "purity/assimilation binary" (in reference to Cook-Lynn's model of tribal sovereignty and literary nationalism that excludes "mixed-blood" groups such as the métis) is ultimately "counterproductive to an argument on sovereignty that respects tribal specificity" (Justice, "Go Away" 162).

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Listening to Bones That Sing

Orality, Spirituality, and Female Kinship in
Louise Halfe's *Blue Marrow*

AZALEA BARRIESES AND SUSAN GINGELL

Cree poet Louise Bernice Halfe/Sky Dancer informs readers of her book-length poem *Blue Marrow* that the writing was guided by powerful spectral presences: "The prairie is full of bones. The bones stand and sing and I feel the weight of them as they guide my fingers on this page". For Halfe's persona, however, the haunting is doubled, reciprocal, because she both invokes the *kôhkomak*, the Grandmothers, whose bones sing to her, urging, "Haunt us / with your cries" (2, 73), and indicates her spirit is preoccupied with the Grandmothers' narratives:¹

ê-pêcimakik.

I haunt them.

My wailing stories. (52)

The resultant voice dancing of what, in an interview with Esta Spalding, Halfe calls "ancestral memory," works at the oral-written interface to reconstitute fur-trade history from Cree women's perspectives.² Halfe challenges the authority of the written colonial narrative by using oral forms and stories to evoke a tradition of oral history that has its own conventions and has always paralleled settler-centered written history. She does so, however, by hybridizing the oral and the written while exemplifying the way in which oral stories can serve as the basis of what Cree scholar Neal McLeod calls "the anti-colonial political imagination that struggles to preserve the Indigenous political system and identity" (78).

Invader-settler culture is further challenged by Halfe's subversive

appropriations of Roman Catholic liturgy in a countermovement to the ghosting of Indigenous spirituality: “Our songs [were] taxed, / silenced by tongues that speak damnation and burning” (98). Moreover, *Blue Marrow* makes clear that the ghosting of Indigenous peoples has been a gendered process. The cover of the second edition (2004) features Halfe’s *kôhkomak*, or grandmothers, in and above a band of Northern Lights, or Sky Dancers, which represents Halfe’s continuity with her female forebears and the Eternal Woman spirit. Both this cover and the dedication to one *kôhkom* and Halfe’s mother point to an even stronger revaluing of older Cree women, of *nôtokwêsiwak* (“female Elders”), in the revised version of the book-length poem than was evidenced in the first edition (1998). The latter’s cover reprinted a picture of Halfe’s great-grandparents, and its dedications, while headed with an honoring of “all *iskwêwak* [Cree women]—the beautiful browns” and singling out her daughter, Omeasoo, conclude with mention of both male and female members of her “Rainbow Family” and “all children born into the Rainbow.” In both editions, however, the centering on female kin animates the retrieval of female stories from the colonially imposed silence, thus recuperating Cree women’s power as the life-giving force acknowledged in her people’s oral creation stories and other forms of oral history (98), and as important guardians and transmitters of Cree culture.³ Halfe honors her female relatives, then, in ways analogous to those *nêhiyaw-Métis-nahkawè* critic Janice Acoose enacts in her essay for the Native Critics Collective, “Honoring *Ni’Wahkomakanak*,” asserting of these relations that their “*spiritual* presence continues to influence my life and work” (219; emphasis added). Halfe’s *Blue Marrow* thus corrects multiple biases in its representation of repressed Cree orality, spirituality, and gender balance, working to strengthen Cree nations, particularly their women, for the future.

In cracking ancestral bones to feed on their marrow (78), Halfe’s book lays bare historic Indigenous experiences still haunting contemporary lives and producing hybrids neither wholly positive nor wholly negative. But the partially autobiographical persona is deeply nourished by that marrow so that in retelling this history,

she asserts revived possibilities for the Cree, or *nêhiyawak*, especially Cree women. At the same time, she gives voice to the Grandmothers, making clear that they cannot pass on their teachings unless they, too, are nourished:

*We do not talk until we are fed.
You've wanted us yet you ignore us.
Dream us. Feed us. (54)*

Halfe thus manifests an understanding of her specters as communicating the kind of "something-to-be-done" that Avery Gordon argues distinguishes haunting from trauma. Warren Cariou's "Haunted Prairie: Aboriginal 'Ghosts' and the Spectres of Settlement," however, sees more than one thing to be done, identifying two vectors in Halfe's response to the colonial and neocolonial ghosting of the Aboriginal in prairie space. First he sees the ghostly Grandmothers' stories as meant "to heal the present generation" (731), but second, he understands Halfe to be delivering to descendants of the colonizers the imperative "to *do* something to acknowledge and to redress the wrongs of the past" (72). Undoubtedly, Halfe's spectrally inspired retelling of the history of the interactions of Indigenous peoples and newcomers moves through a paralyzing sense of harm to assert the potential of new life proceeding from renewed respect for Cree orality, spirituality, and womanhood; and though *Blue Marrow* is less explicit in its directive to those of non-Indigenous ancestry to do something than Thomas King is at the end of each of his four Massey lectures, the implications of her work chime with his imperative: "[D]on't say in the years to come that you would have lived your life differently if only you had heard this story. You've heard it now" (29).

INDIGENIZING HAUNTOLOGY

To read *Blue Marrow* by drawing on hauntological theory of Western origins as we do in this paper may seem to run against the powerful tribally centered and sovereignty-directed critical current initiated by studies like Craig Womack's *Red on Red: Native Amer-*

ican Literary Separatism (1999); Jace Weaver, Womack, and Robert Allen Warrior's *American Indian Literary Nationalism* (2006); and Daniel Justice's *Our Fire Survives the Storm: A Cherokee Literary History* (2006). Similarly, the use of such theory may seem to move against the flow of criticism that draws principally on Indigenous intellectual traditions that Warrior so effectively brought into wider scholarly consciousness in *Tribal Secrets: Recovering American Indian Intellectual Traditions* (1995). Certainly, a reading of Halfe's poem that centers on orality, spirituality, and kinship, and that pays considerable attention to *Blue Marrow's* ceremonial nature, aligns with the approach that Tom Holm, Diane Pearson, and Ben Chavis advocate in articulating their theory of the Peoplehood matrix, with its elements of language, sacred history, ceremony, and land.

However, the persona of Halfe's poem identifies that her writing and the spiritual journey that she takes to accomplish that writing are specifically motivated and directed by a haunting, so we engage with Western hauntological theory while situating this paper in relation to Warrior's intellectual trade route model of criticism (*The People* 181–82), trading back and forth between non-Indigenous theories of hauntology and Indigenous epistemologies that recognize “a spiritual reality that coheres” and has the power to transform “ordinary reality” (Womack, “Theorizing” 358, 365). In this way the theory of hauntology is Indigenized, that is, expanded and enriched.

Moreover, given the recent ferment of hauntologically focused scholarship in literary studies, situating the hauntings of *Blue Marrow* in relation to this scholarship can help clarify the nature of the ghosts in the Cree author's work.⁴ French Studies scholar Colin Davis explains that Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok understood the phantom as “the presence of a dead ancestor in the living Ego” (Davis), and their overtly psychoanalytic framing of the haunted person may seem inappropriate as a mode of accounting for Cree ghosts because that framing is embedded in Western epistemology. However, Halfe has a long-standing interest in psychotherapy, and her notes of appreciation and gratitude in her third book, *The Crooked Good*, acknowledge Saddle Lake Reserve Elder J. P. Cardi-

nal and psychiatrist Dr. David S. Barnes as “constant companions” and “finest mentors” despite their having passed on (133). However, Abraham and Torok’s view of phantoms as liars who work to forestall the revelation of their traumatic and typically shameful secrets (427) signals the need to Indigenize hauntology to make it appropriate for use in reading *Blue Marrow*. The term *hauntology* is the English translation of Derrida’s coinage *hantologie* in *Spectres of Marx*, and the French philosopher’s version seems more promising for our purposes than the psychoanalysts’, at least initially, because Derrida situates “hauntology” in literature and identifies it as an unknowing that underlies knowing.

Given the overwriting of Turtle Island Indigenous history, spirituality, and culture by North American colonial and neocolonial regimes, we might see in Halfe’s recuperative project grounds for aligning her ghosts with Derrida’s. M. NourbeSe Philip picks up Derrida’s term and shows its usefulness in a decolonizing context, employing it in the “Notanda” section of her deconstructive poem *Zong!* to describe her account of the unspeakable experience of African slaves thrown overboard by a slave ship captain in order that his employers might recover the chattel slaves’ commercial value from the insurers of the voyage rather than suffer the irrecoverable loss that possible deaths of allegedly natural causes would entail. Her work is, she posits, “a wake of sorts, where the spectres of the undead make themselves present” (201), and in this respect, *Zong!* is analogous to Halfe’s account of walking to be with her ghosted ancestors, and of her sitting, sweating, and dancing with her abused and overwritten biological and spiritual grandparents, especially her “Grandmothers, and the Eternal Grandmothers” (*Blue Marrow* 34). The hauntings of Halfe’s *Blue Marrow* reveal that she shares the convictions of Derrida and Philip both that the ghosts’ stories must be told and listened to and that those stories entail elements beyond rational knowledge, the kind of “spiritual reality” that Craig Womack envisions in “Theorizing American Indian Experience” (358). What Halfe does not share with Derrida is the idea that listening to specters is done to open the listener to secrecy or unknowing,

and where she and Philip differ is in the latter's belief that "[t]here is no telling this story" (Philip 189). Halfe's hauntology is quite unlike those of Derrida and Philip in that it seeks a recovery of knowledge, a way of making sense of past and present experience by attending to the teachings of the grandmothers/Grandmothers and thus arriving at the basis for a healthier future.

Halfe's ghosts are therefore more closely aligned with those that Chickasaw scholar James (Sákéj) Henderson explains in "Post-colonial Ghost Dancing: Diagnosing European Colonialism." He presents this round-dancing ritual of "the Plains Indians, my relatives," which began in the late nineteenth century, as "a sustained vision of how to resist colonization" (57), and he shares his people's understanding of the Ghost Dance as a way "to release all the spirits contained in the old ceremonies and rites . . . back into the deep caves of mother Earth" to protect them from colonial forces and "to renew the ecology." Over time, the renewed ecology "would forge a traditional consciousness" in future generations, in turn fostering "Aboriginal renewal" through a restoration of "traditional consciousness and order" (58). This consciousness and order, as we understand it, are precisely those of Holm, Pearson, and Chavis's Peoplehood matrix, in which religion is "inseparably linked" to sacred history, language, and the environment to shape a people's "world" and "worldview" (15).

Blue Marrow shows the legacy of the Ghost Dance at work. Halfe simultaneously evokes the ceremony, invites her ghosted ancestors to the page, and conjures the specters of the violations and violence at Wounded Knee when the persona addresses one of the Grandmother spirits, Ram Woman, saying, "You / lifted your moccasins / in a Ghost Dance" (96). Through poetry Halfe fulfills the commitment to keep alive traditional ceremonies, including the Ghost Dance, recorded earlier in the poem when The Keeper of the Stories says:

I will not lose my Pipe.
This holy war I stitch to my dress.
This Skull Dance.
This Ghost Dance. (21)

Thus, in kinship with Henderson, Halfe makes Ghost Dancing a postcolonial resistance strategy, sustaining the battle for Indigenous survival and renewal by making the ceremony of her poetry her weapon. Her version of haunting in *Blue Marrow* is certainly transformative, as she summons specters from the past, still very much alive in the present, to help make possible healing and wholeness for the future.

COLONIAL OVERWRITING AND CREE UNDERWRITING OF INDIGENOUS FUR-TRADE ORAL HISTORY

While the fur trade was, as Harold A. Innis writes, “the history of contact between two civilizations, the European and the North American” (288–89), in Eurocentric accounts of the contact zone, its highly asymmetrical relations of power characteristically result in representations of Indigenous peoples as inferior to their European fur-trade counterparts and of Indigenous people’s stories of the trade as relevant only insofar as they illuminate European traders’ experience. The discursive space of fur-trade history is, then, dominated by whiteness and masculinity given the privileging in Euro-North American societies of the written accounts of the male European fur traders—the French settlers and explorers trading furs with the Indigenous peoples in Eastern Canada in the early 1600s and the English and the Scots who followed thereafter. If little room is accorded the fur-trade experiences of Indigenous men, the effacing of Indigenous women is even more pronounced. Elizabeth Arthur and Jean Morrison, in the introduction to a collection of writings on three centuries of fur trade history, call attention not only to this discursive vacancy but also to the masculine bias of such reporting. In her individually authored contribution, Arthur notes that “fur trade records kept by European businessmen offer only an occasional glimpse of the Indian women they married, and the glimpses that do exist often tell more about the social attitudes of the men who kept the records than about the role of women in fur trade society” (117). Claiming that “the roles of women and mixed-blood progeny in the *pays d’en haut* deserve more attention” (Morrison 14), Mor-

rison articulates the need to recognize and record the experiences of Aboriginal women, especially Indian wives, those whom Sylvia Van Kirk calls “the women in between” (qtd. in Arthur 117).

In animating the otherworldly presences, calling them to life in the pages of *Blue Marrow* and letting them tell their “wailing stories” (52), Halfe underwrites Indigenous oral histories of the trade, siding with Indigenous women in particular and lending credence to their stories. She thus reconstitutes the historical record, reversing its scriptist, Eurocentric, and patriarchal slant in a return to repressed orality, Indigenous spirituality, and gender balance. Ghosts, as Kathleen Brogan suggests in *Cultural Haunting: Ghosts and Ethnicity in Recent American Literature*, can be put to rest in the sense of “being transformed into memories that usefully guide, rather than overwhelm, the present”; and while Halfe’s specters are hardly malevolent ghosts in need of being put to rest, the imagery of haunting that pervades the text suggests, as Brogan says ghosts typically do, “the possibility of freedom through revision” (Brogan 19).

WRITING THE ORAL IN *BLUE MARROW*

Halfe’s acts of linguistic revision—her use of Creenglish (i.e., Cree-inflected English) and her disruption of standard English with Cree (or *nêhiyawêwin* as speakers of the language refer to it)—transcreate oral traditions as she revises master narratives, producing new cultural fusions. Halfe’s narrator explains that the colonizers “tore out our tongues” (19), and she thus articulates her desire to

... bring to you
these Voices ...
filled with bird calls, snorting buffalo
kicking bears, mountain goats. (18)

Such voices, while here presented in a syntax that is more like that of English’s subject-verb-object base than the Cree-influenced syntax that Halfe uses elsewhere, act as synecdoche of the Aboriginal world and signal the intent to recount fur-trade history from this viewpoint. Though this version of history is told mostly in English, the English is

sometimes Indigenized and always carries Cree discourse, which is to say, it communicates Cree worldviews. The spectral presences Halfe conjures typically hybridize Cree and English but also privilege the Cree, especially in the way the Grandmothers' speech and stories are often constituted by oral forms and with reference to oral traditions. What Blaeser has termed an "oral aesthetic" (55) is at work in Halfe's poetry, signaling rebellion against standardization and the polarizing of oral and written forms that is characteristic of the "European literary tradition [in which] the written is privileged" and the oral resonates with the savage and the primitive (Schorcht 14).

Halfe brings to the printed page the way older Cree people speak English, with Creenglish presented through a form of what Peter Roberts calls "eye dialect." As Roberts explains, "Whereas the standard orthography identifies words or lexical units, eye dialect attempts to give the precise sound of these units by giving the symbols greater phonetic significance than they normally have and by altering the standard spelling, in spite of the fact that the standard spelling itself is not totally or exclusively phonetic" (137). Whether or not Halfe's writing of the oral intends to subvert the ideologies of the dominant culture, such print textualizing of Cree orality acts in this way. As Margery Fee explains of Indigenous authors who write the oral:

In representing speech they are breaking with the standard language promoted by the educational apparatus that denied many of their people functional literacy. To represent the colloquial talk of the ordinary people, to incorporate tales, gossip, jokes, stories is to demonstrate solidarity with an audience that rarely reads, perhaps may even attract this audience as readers. A way of talking is not simply a deviation from the standard norm, but represents a whole system of solidarities and identifications. (35)

While Halfe's Creenglish undermines the idea of "linguistic unity" that Françoise Lionnet recognizes as part of writing against the master narratives with their "homogenous and monolithic perspectives" (26, 27), it is also a going back to the mother tongue, the English thick with Cree that Halfe told interviewer Esta Spald-

ing was so dear to her because of its maternal connection: “I love to hear my mother speak in thick Cree. The dialect is my mother’s tongue, my mother tongue” (44). One of Halfe’s Grandmothers in *Blue Marrow*, for example, recounts in Creenglish

*... he put his moudth
on my cheek under dat dree.
I scream an scream. I wand him, now.
I wand him to dake me. An den he put hand
on nipwâm—kiss me ’gain by da fire.
I wrap him dere forever.
He go back to her. (38)*

Although the result of the merging of white body with brown noted here may emphasize the hierarchy of power in this contact—the trader returns, after all, to his European bride—the mixing of standard English with the grammar and phonology that approximate Cree people’s vernacular speech in English also appropriates English for Cree purposes. The persona acknowledges, “*My inglish no good*” (38), but in using the vernacular, she “mark[s] cultural . . . differences even while using the language of the colonizer” (Gingell 452). Halfe’s texturing of English is thus analogous to the use of vernacular or patois by a Caribbean writer like Michelle Cliff through which, according to Lionnet, traces of vernacular tongues interrupt the text (38), and “the English language is shown to be but a thin veneer barely hiding a . . . culture where the woman as native and the native as other merge with and emerge from the blind spots of official historiography” (47).

Such linguistic practice demonstrates Halfe’s deft control and manipulation of both Cree and English. As Pratt explains in discussing Chicano poetry, code-switching “lays claim to a form of subaltern cultural power: I own both your language and mine, the minority speaker says; both are mine to combine and recombine as I choose” (863). Halfe’s code-switching permits her both to transcode the meaning of Cree ethnicity itself as she recovers her maternal tongue and ancestral language and to recall oral practices at will,

thus signaling her identification and affiliation with those spectralized by previous writings of fur-trade history. When the poem's persona, for example, cries out against the ghosting of Cree spirituality and having to live in "whiteouts," the narrator's voice comes "Creeing" through the English for nine straight lines of the text. There follows a page mostly of translation in a series of alternating Cree and English lines, calling on the Grandmothers to "Climb Down" and "Come heal us": "*pê-nihtaciwêk, nôhkomak / . . . / pê-nânapâci-hinân*" (17). By thus writing *nêhiyawêwin* onto these pages, Halfe transforms a part of fur-trade history into Cree territory, a discursive space where her people govern the narrative.

Halfe further recuperates Cree orality by using oral discursive forms, which, according to Walter Ong, include "heavily rhythmic, balanced patterns, in repetitions or antithesis, in alliterations and assonances . . . which themselves are patterned for retention and ready recall" (34). The litany of female relations' names, repeatedly punctuated by the urging "Pray to them," is exemplary of this inscription of orality, as are many of the speeches of the Grandmothers whose voices resound in the pages of *Blue Marrow* (3–6). For example, the spokeswoman for the Grandmothers promises:

*We will guide your feather,
dipped in ink.*

We will flow.

We will flow.

. . .

We are here.

Here.

Here.

. . .

We will speak.

We will fill each leaf. (27–28)

Halfe's re-visioning of history is also witnessed in the other oral forms and small stories of *Blue Marrow*.⁵ The small narratives of the grandmothers and in one case of a grandfather are routinely repre-

sented as orature and draw on Cree oral traditions. She reverences the very Elderly Women (the *nôtokwêsiwak*) and Men (the *kisêyiniwak*) and the Grandmother Keeper of the Sacred Legends and small stories by saying:

*We give thanks to the nôtokwêsiwak
We give thanks to the kisêyiniwak
The Keeper of the âcimowinis
nôhkom âtayôhkan* (6)

Her recuperation of the oral also includes *nôhkom âtayôhkan* narrating the traditional Cree story of the Rolling Head (23–24), and “Nameless mama” recalling her telling of “*da âcimowina about wisahkêcâhk*” (89). The abundance of everyday stories (*âcimowina*) and sacred stories (*âtayôhkêwina*) are the result of the cultural imperative the narrator feels to nourish the next generation with these stories:

Grandmothers hold me.
I must pass all that I possess,
every morsel to my children. (7)

That the small stories introduced by the heading “*âcimowinis*” appear on almost every page demonstrates how critical oral stories are in capturing the tangled histories and legacies of colonialism’s violence. One small story begins,

My Grandmothers were country wives—
bartered, traded, stolen, bought and sold
sometimes loved by
Frenchmen—*mistikôsiwak*
Englishmen—*âkayâsiwak*
Ukrainians—*opîtatowêwak*
Norwegians
Irishmen
Scotsmen (61)

Another continues, “I ’member dere / stories” (61), as the storyteller recalls the hybridizing of races and languages in the contact zone:

*My mudder and fudder were liddle bid Irish
an French. My grandfudder, dough, he dick
dough white skin speak grandmudder's Cree.
She, grandmudder, was a pure. (61)*

The strength of the cultural imperative to pass on these stories is made evident in Halfe's petition to the Grandmothers to hold her because she "must pass" to her children all that she possesses (7; emphasis added), and the abundance of everyday stories, *âcimowina*, and sacred stories, *âtayôhkêwina*, in Halfe's book are the result. Now, however, the transmission is extended by the written stories. "Never owned," as Méira Cook observes, they are "passed along: from foremothers to narrator, mouth to ear, from speaker to listener, from writer to reader" (181). The *âcimowinisa*, whatever mix of languages they are told in, carry the voices and experiences of Cree communities. In celebrating their speech and oral forms and stories, Halfe makes her text a site of struggle for authority, but also a potent space of creativity and plenitude where oral Cree subjects have the power to represent themselves in their own way.

PARODIC UNDERMINING OF ENFORCED CHRISTIANITY AND THE REVALUING OF CREE SPIRITUALITY

Blue Marrow also enacts a struggle on spiritual terrain. The control Christian churches exercised over Cree communities largely ghosted their traditional spirituality for a time, a fact addressed mostly thematically by the first edition of *Blue Marrow*. However, in the second edition, the repressed erupts through Christian and sometimes explicitly Catholic liturgy in a way that acknowledges that while many *nêhiyawak* were indoctrinated by Christian teachings, the embrace of the faith was not uniform. The narrator reports that while "*nimosôm* took my fingers and guided me through his book," likely the Bible, "Another old man sat in the [grove] of trees, lifted his Pipe, my hands on the stem" (1). Halfe's spiritual location can be read from both the choice she makes not to capitalize the *b* in *book* while she does capitalize the initial letter of *Pipe*, and her interrupting with Cree both the *Gloria Patri* and the Hail Mary.

In the first prayer, she substitutes female or gender-neutral sacred forces for the patriarchal figures of Christian tradition, praising a Cree Trinity of Mother Earth, the Grandmother Keeper of Sacred Legends, and a Dream Spirit:

*Glory be to okâwîmâwaskiy
To the nôhkom âtayôhkan
To pawâkan (1)*

In the second prayer, Halfe reassigns the Virgin Mary's place as the most blessed of women to the Earth Mother, and instead of the Lord being said to be with Mary, the Creator is recognized as being "*filled with*" *okâwîmâwaskiy* (3). The pages-long invocation of female Aboriginal ancestors that follows these passages offers a matrilineal alternative to the patrilineage of Christ recorded in Matthew 1:1–16. Rather than venerating this line of patriarchs, Halfe honors her foremothers and directs readers to "Pray to them"; and rather than presenting angels glorifying God from the Heavens, Halfe notes that in her spiritual system, it is the "piyêsiwak—[the thunderbirds] / [w]hose [collective] voice sings from kîsik [the sky⁶]" (5). Moreover, by substituting *Celebration* for *temptation* in her rewriting of the Lord's Prayer as a petition to the Earth Mother, she shifts the negative focus of the Christian prayer to a life-affirming emphasis on joyful living: "*Oh mâmaw-ôhtâwîmâw / Lead us into Celebration*" (5), she prays. Knowing that the English grapholect encodes words related to the sacred by capitalizing them, Halfe communicates the holiness of rejoicing in life by rendering the first letter of *Celebration* in upper case. Thus her inventive rewriting of both Catholic prayers and sacred text subversively appropriates them to undermine the negative power of the Church over her people while re-tenuring Cree spirits and spirituality.⁷

That the Dream Vision of the poem retransforms her subjectivity, restoring the spirituality that had been ghosted, is evident in a number of the narrator's references. These include, but are not limited to, building a lodge with her mother at the women's cultural center (92) and identifying her people as Star People who are the

offspring of the Woman who fell to the Water World from the Sky World. Sky Woman needed the intervention of *wisahkêcâhk* singing to the Water People so that they might fetch mud from the Water's bottom to create a world in which Sky Woman could survive and continue the creation of the world, including that of man:

wisahkêcâhk sang to the Water People
to bring back Earth from where we dove.
She pinched the mud from the exhausted Muskrat.
Blew *yôtin* [wind]. Blew *iskotêw* [fire]. *iskwêw* was born.
pimâtisiwin fills woman.
Man is born. (98)

This print textualized version of the Cree oral story of creation, in which Sky Woman and water animals are cocreators of the world of human beings, is thus reinstated over the Judeo-Christian Genesis narrative, which in all English translations up to the late twentieth century, attributed the creation *ex nihilo* to a male God acting solo, gave priority of birth to the man Adam over the woman Eve, and rendered both Eve and animals subject to him as well as Him.

STORYING WOMEN BACK INTO THE PICTURE

The textualizing of the Cree creation story is part of the larger writing of the community of women into presence. Halfe dedicates the second edition of *Blue Marrow* to "nikâwiy," her mother, and "nôhkom," her grandmother, Adeline Halfe, and she talks affectionately about her four *nôhkomak*, Adeline, Emma, Bella, and Sarah, in the opening pages of the book (8–9) that reproduces their pictures on the cover. A photograph appearing later in the book (11) shows two of the grandmothers with their husbands and a young Louise (interview with Gingell and Barrieses), and it follows Halfe's assertion of her attempt to reconnect with her deceased grandmothers and the Eternal Grandmother, the latter figured here by the presence of the moon:

Oh Sarah, Adeline,
 Oh Emma, Bella,
 tongueless in the earth.
 Oh *nôhkomak*,
 your Bundles I carry inside,
 the full moon dancing
 beyond my wails.
 I've seeped into
 your faces,
 drowned in the pictures
 I have gathered
 and
 cannot
 hold. (9)

The second edition also lists the names of 158 Indigenous female ancestors in the invocation we previously referred to, one that is interrupted by female kin-centered adaptations of Catholic prayers (3–7).

While *Blue Marrow* recovers multiple voices, including those of European fur traders and Jesuit missionaries, the most dominant and compelling belong to Indigenous women married or traded to white men. Halfe names them, acknowledging the specificity of their stories and designating their modes of articulation, thus stressing their renewed access to voice: “Wandering Stone Grandmother wails. / Voice drifts and bites hard snow”; “Starved Gopher Grandmother wakes the torrential / winds in the depths of her belly as she speaks”; “Not So Long Ago Granny Wants to Get Even rages”; and “Petticoat Grandmother, her voice [is] ice-droplets / and spring rain” (45, 52, 64, 68). Halfe’s emphasis on Indigenous women’s self-articulation in natural terms, imbuing women with an agency closely allied with voice, is also witnessed in her introductions of other more general female voices: “All Women. Grandmothers and Eternal / Grandmothers, they scold with a wind / that shakes leaves”; “All Women. Grandmothers and Eternal Grandmothers. From the depths of waters / where legends sleep and grow, these Voices wake” (54, 77).

The power of the collective effect of women regaining voice

becomes clear when the narrator reveals, "When the Voices roar, / I write" (53). In recovering the voices of women whose bones lie in the prairie, Halfe reanimates the ghosts in order to re-vision Indigenous women's experience often misrepresented when not obliterated in written discourses on the fur trade and the settling of the so-called New World. Brogan suggests that ghosts, as both "presence and absence," function as "emblem[s] of historical loss as well as . . . vehicle[s] of historical recovery" (29), and Halfe casts haunting as a revisionist medium, her ghosts celebrated more than exorcised because they enable her reclamation of significant Indigenous herstories and restoration of gender balance to the record of the past. The ghosts' "wailing stories" recognize, for example, how Indigenous women's relationships with European traders changed the course of history, creating the Métis people. In acknowledging "[t]hese blond children of the fur traders / [who] seep through our women" (13), the present-day keeper of stories also refers to these intermarriages:

The little ones with dirty blond hair
look at me with dawn's eyes. I travel with them
into their backyard
where those men of god docked their ships,
took brown wives,
left them in barns and stalls—
horseflies and mosquitoes. (13)

Whether these relationships were passionate and affirming, like that of the Great Granny who had fourteen children with the Elderly White man (26–27); or violent and tragic, like that of Wandering Stone Grandmother, axed in her sleep by "the old white flesh" because the Jesuits had "*cursed her*" (49), Halfe's attending to these stories recuperates Aboriginal women's perspectives. Readers are thus told stories of a mother mourning her son, "*shot for killing their cow*" (20), as Almighty Voice's mother would have done, and of a daughter, who is recurrently reminded, even in intercourse, that she was "*the bargain from [her] father's trade*," yet when her husband lifted her dress, she "*received him joyfully*" (58). When an abandoned country wife tells of being "*fed by my neighbour's husband, / the*

small portions / he left for us at the bay" (58) and finally laying traps herself (59), or of a sister "*spoon[ing] wihkês—med-sins*" into her sibling as she "*lay on the ground filled with homebrew*" in a year in which smallpox dogged her people (30), Halfe calls attention to the complex dynamics of agency, survival, and resistance at play within the multiple social sites inhabited by Indigenous women.

All these *âcimowinisa* are attentive to the emotional, social, and physical negotiations Indigenous women had to make within the contact zone's inequitable racialized gender relations. Moreover, Halfe's politics of recovering female stories counters Indigenous women's erasure in dominant narratives of the contact while passionately affirming the women as strong, courageous, and resilient subjects, even within the context of conflict and oppression. The Holy ones in Halfe's vision—even though that vision is expressed in the words of her grandmothers/Grandmothers—are the women who offered active resistance to the erasure of Indigenous spirituality and planned for and acted on the protection of their sons' bodies against the invasion by sexually abusive Catholic brothers:

*There are Holy iskwêwak—nôsisim, all over.
We were the ones who burned down the jesuits'
church, trilled, danced and laughed through the night.
We watched those cabins eaten by our flames. We
were the ones, nôsisim, who hid the Bundles,
held council when we learned how those brothers
lifted their skirts to spill their devils into our sons' night.* (34)

In this work at least, then, women are the main heroes of Indigenous resistance and the Indigenous equivalent of the saints of Catholic theology.

HAUNTING IN THE NAME OF JUSTICE AND INHERITANCE

Because haunting is at its core political, according to Marlene Goldman and Joanne Saul, Halfe's specters demand an engagement not only with voice and memory but also with what Goldman and Saul

identify as justice and inheritance (654). Halfe's ghosts, as figures of healing and political action, provoke a reexamination of the wrongs of the past and attempt to drive home the need for redress in the present. Halfe's conjuring of her ancestors' bones foregrounds the continuity between past and present, the long-standing suppression of Indigenous women's voices, and the violence that the women continue to experience even today. The poem's narrator declares,

We hunger for those spitted bones.

So many scars.

So many sewed mouths.

Hundreds of Skeletons.

Betty Pamela Rita Gina. (46)

Halfe herself acknowledges in an interview with the present authors, "I wanted to hone in [on] . . . the murder of Aboriginal women across Canada and the voicelessness of the history, and [with] my anger toward both . . . issues, I wanted to make [*Blue Marrow*] woman-centered." Claiming a hearing for the articulation of Aboriginal women's identities and experiences often obscured by the official record and silenced by the continuing physical, emotional, cultural, and spiritual violations against these women, Halfe shows that they are well able to speak for themselves.

Furthermore, in speaking of the shared hunger for spitted bones, Halfe's discourse overlaps with that of the Trinbagonian Canadian poet Philip. In "Notanda," the latter recounts hearing a talk by a forensic anthropologist, Clea Koff, following the publication of Koff's book about identifying the bones of the victims of Rwanda's genocide. The anthropologist reported, "Families need proof. . . . [T]hey come looking for recognizable clothing and say, 'I want the bones'" (Philip 201). And Philip adds, "I, too, want the bones. . . . Haunted by 'generations of skulls and spirits,' [she's quoting Derida's *Specters* here] I want the bones." (201). However, in *Zong!*, unlike much of Philip's previous work, the vision is not like Halfe's, female kin-centered; nor, being Afro-centric, does Philip's book-length poem represent the act of recovering the bones and all they

represent in the culturally specific terms that Halfe does when she refers three times to Ghost Dancing in her book (21, 30, 96). Still, the significant overlap of the books' hauntologies arises from both volumes being responses to the ghosting of the poets' respective peoples by European imperialism and colonialism.

In *Blue Marrow*, Halfe makes sacred space for the articulation of Indigenous women's identities and experiences, including experiences of being violated. Whereas written historical records often obscure those identities and experiences, Halfe gives the women's accounts authority. In her rendering, Indigenous women are themselves producers of meaning, not just sites of meaning produced by others. Moreover, her ghosts are healers and political agents, who prompt, the way all ghosts do, a reexamination of the wrongs of the past; but hers also demand redress in the present and a better future.

TOWARD A SPACE THAT IS NOT
THOUGHT OF AS HAUNTED

Formerly repressed Cree female kinship, spirituality, and orality are refleshed in the present-day Cree narrator and made manifest in the three closing lines of *Blue Marrow*. There, the persona declares first her living reconnection to female kin by acknowledging "Grandmother, the Woman in me." Next, she records her recovery of Cree spirituality, which renders her "A pagan. Again." And, finally, she situates herself anew within Cree oral traditions and orality through both the translated Cree phrase "All my relations," which the *nêhiyawak* traditionally use to acknowledge their connection with all beings, and the closing *nêhiyawêwin* formula *ahâw* (99). The ghostly Grandmothers have, then, inspirited this contemporary Cree woman, so that, in her case at least, the "something-to-be-done" that the spectral Cree Grandmothers' arrival announced, has had positive results. In this way Halfe's work, while initially seeing the prairie as haunted space in the way Cariou suggested, ends by helping to create the space that Cree-Métis scholar Deanna Reder imagines in her response to Julia Emberley's *Defamiliarizing the Aboriginal*, "a space that is not thought of as haunted but rather one where the

existence of the spiritual alongside physical dimensions can do the work of reclamation using our epistemologies as sources—to build a place in which Indigenous history, interpretation, academic voices and perspectives can be present” (9). What remains is for reader-listeners of *Blue Marrow* to be analogously transformed by reckoning with these specters and their stories.

NOTES

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1. We use both *kôhkomak* and *Grandmothers* here because Halfe uses both, but we want to signal the broader reach of the Cree term by citing Janice Acoose's reminder that for Indigenous women, the English *grandmother* is a “culturally slippery and seductive term” (220).

2. By saying that Halfe works at the oral-written interface, we mean that she is writing the oral, both drawing on Cree oral traditions and using various techniques to bring Cree people's ways of speaking to the page, whether in their heritage language, *nêhiyawêwin*, or in Cree-inflected English, what we call Creenglish.

3. Though Halfe focuses primarily on female kin, the *omosômipanak* (Eternal Grandfathers), the *omosômimâwak* (grandfathers), and other male kin find their place in her poem, too.

4. Setting out two not wholly commensurate strains in contemporary “hauntological” thought, one deriving from the work of psychoanalysts Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok and the other from Derrida, Colin Davis provides in notes 7 and 9 of his “Hauntology, Spectres and Phantoms” a useful list of literary and theoretical work in these traditions to 2005. See, for instance, criticism arising from Abraham and Torok's work: Esther Rashkin, *Family Secrets and the Psychoanalysis of Narrative* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1992); Nicholas Rand, “Invention poétique et psychanalyse du secret dans ‘Le Fantôme d'Hamlet’ de Nicolas Abraham,” in Serge Tisseron et al., *LePsychisme à l'épreuve des generations* (Paris: Dunod, 2000), 79–96; Nicholas Rand, *Le Cryptage et la vie des œuvres: étude du secret dans*

les textes de Flaubert, Stendhal, Benjamin, Stefan George, Edgar Poe, Francis Ponge, Heidegger et Freud (Paris: Aubier, 1989); Serge Tisseron, *Tintin chez le psychanalyste: essai sur la création graphique et la mise en scène de ses enjeux dans l'œuvre d'Hergé* (Paris: Aubier, 1985) and *Tintin et le secret d'Hergé* (Paris: Hors Collection, 1993); Colin Davis, "Charlotte Delbo's Ghosts," *French Studies* 59 (2005): 9–15. For studies derived from Derrida's notion of spectrality, see, for example, Peter Buse and Andrew Stott, eds., *Ghosts: Deconstruction, Psychoanalysis, History* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999); Jodey Castricano, *Cryptomimesis: The Gothic and Jacques Derrida's Ghost Writing* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 2001); Nancy Holland, "The Death of the Other/Father: A Feminist Reading of Derrida's Hauntology," *Hypatia* 16 (2001): 64–71; Jean-Michel Rabaté, *The Ghosts of Modernity* (Gainesville: UP of Florida, 1996); Nicholas Royle, *Telepathy and Literature: Essays on the Reading Mind* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), *The Uncanny* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2003), and "This Is Not a Book Review: Esther Rashkin, *Family Secrets and the Psychoanalysis of Narrative*," *Angelaki* 2 (1995): 31–35; Emily Tomlinson, "Assia Djebar: Speaking to the Living Dead," *Paragraph* 26.3 (2003): 34–50; Julian Wolfreys, *Victorian Hauntings: Spectrality, Gothic, the Uncanny and Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002). Davis also notes Slavoj Žižek's critique of Derrida's hauntology in his introduction, "The Spectre of Ideology," to *Mapping Ideology*, ed. Slavoj Žižek (London: Verso, 1994): 1–33. The ferment has not abated since Davis's article; beside the titles listed in the works cited to this paper, selected studies include Justin Edward's *Gothic Canada: Reading the Spectre of a National Literature* (Edmonton: U of Alberta P, 2005); Alan Norrie's "Theorising 'Spectrality': Ontology and Ethics in Derrida and Bhaskar," *New Formations* 56 (2005): 96–108; David Ratmoko's *On Spectrality: Fantasies of Redemption in the Western Canon* (New York: Lang, 2006); Jo Frances Maddern and Peter Adey's introduction "Spectro-Geographies," to a special issue of *Cultural Geographies* 15.3 (2008); Gerry Turcotte's *Peripheral Fear: Transformations of the Gothic in Canadian and Australian Fiction* (Bruxelles: Lang, 2009); Cynthia Sugars and Gerry Turcotte, eds., *Unsettled Remains: Canadian Literature and the Postcolonial Gothic* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier UP, 2009); Mélanie Joseph-Vilain and Judith Misrahi-Barak, eds., *Postcolonial Ghosts, Les Carnets du Cerpac* 8 (Montpellier: Presses Universitaires de la Méditerranée).

5. Halfe's telling of *âcimowinisa*, small stories, to counter the master narratives of colonial and neocolonial history might be read as a fulfillment of

Jean-François Lyotard's vision in *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* of postmodernity's reinvesting in "petits récits," small stories.

6. In the glossary, Halfe translates *kisik* first as "sky" and then, to call attention to the parallel with the Christian concept, renders the Cree word also as "the Heavens" (105).

7. In speaking of the re-tenuring of Indigenous spirits, that is, returning the land to their possession and care, we are drawing on the concept of tenured identity that Kimberly Blaeser articulates in "Writing Voices Speaking: Native Authors and an Oral Aesthetic": "Perhaps the construction of a tenured identity through storytelling creates a sense of selfhood and community loyalty powerful enough to fuel survival" (54).

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Native American Hip-Hop and Historical Trauma

Surviving and Healing Trauma on the “Rez”

CARRIE LOUISE SHEFFIELD

The music of both artists discussed in this paper, as well as that of many other Native American hip-hop artists, can be found at www.emusic.com. Maniac: The Siouxpernatural and Night Shield are also now available on iTunes.

GENOCIDE AND HISTORICAL TRAUMA

In light of recent world events, such as those in Rwanda and Darfur, most people perceive genocide to be simply the destruction of a people through physical extermination alone; however, in reality it entails far more than mass murder. Genocide, the UN contends, includes not only the “[k]illing [of] members of the group,” but also “[c]ausing serious bodily or *mental* harm to members of the group; . . . [d]eliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; . . . [i]mposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; . . . [and] [f]orcibly transferring children of the group to another group” (emphasis mine). Genocide is a psychological as well as physiological attack on humanity that has far-reaching effects on survivors and their descendants. As part of the machinery of colonization, genocide is instrumental in the creation and perpetuation of historical trauma.

Native Americans have faced the deaths of their peoples through wars, the intentional and unintentional spread of disease, and even the placing of bounties on Native American skins.¹ Likewise, the forced removal of many Native American peoples to reservations far

from traditional homelands, the removal of Native American children to the Indian schools across the United States, as well as the sterilization of Native American men and women, clearly fall under the aegis of genocide. Further complicating the issue is the American popular media, which, through artificial representations of Native American identity and history, redefine Native Americans as simplistic and failing stereotypes that further erode Native American self-confidence and identity.

Acts of genocide such as these, Bonnie Duran, Eduardo Duran, and Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart argue, create a succession of traumas from one generation to the next, and ensuing generations are doubly traumatized (61). In settler colonies such as the United States, where the colonizing forces have not left, these traumas are continuously reinforced by a dominant culture that often reconstructs Native American peoples into artificial images such as the “savage” or “dying breed,” creating what Ron Eyerman identifies as “cultural trauma.” Historical traumas move beyond physical and psychological damage done to the individual and include “the dramatic loss of identity and meaning, a tear in the social fabric, affecting a group of people that has achieved some degree of cohesion. In this sense, the trauma need not be necessarily felt by everyone in a community or experienced directly by any or all” (2).

Duran, Duran, and Brave Heart further illustrate that historical traumas such as the loss of land and sovereignty, coupled with various governmental practices and long-term genocide, “systematically [attack] the core of identity—language and the family” (61). This conjunction of colonial-historical trauma can be the most damaging in that it works to dissociate individuals from the very things that could help them confront such traumas: memory and the community. Being separated from a strong Indigenous foundation for the construction of identity, these individuals often have nowhere to turn except to the very settler society that seeks to reconstruct them as problematic tropes like the “savage” or “dying breed.” In an interview with Laura Coltelli, Linda Hogan comments on the colonial elision of Native American identity, stating that, at one time, “I thought about my family that we were the last in our blood group,

the last Indian people—which wasn't true at all—but at the time I thought of Indian people as vanishing and that our stories and histories were disappearing. In some ways I got that idea from public education, from white education. They want us to believe that we don't exist" (72).

Native American authors such as Hogan are clearly aware of the relationship between the history of genocide in the United States and historical trauma. Take any of the most popular Native American authors (and even some not-so-popular ones) and you will most likely find a story that articulates the impact of genocide and historical trauma on Native American identity as well as a means of healing from those traumas in the contemporary world. Leslie Marmon Silko's Tayo in *Ceremony* must overcome the damage done to him by living in the United States as well as his participation in the Vietnam War; in the process, he connects with Betonie and tradition and finds a means of healing. Likewise, Linda Hogan's Angel in *Solar Storms* overcomes the physical and psychological traumas done to her by the American foster care system (as well as her own mother, who is also suffering from significant historical trauma) and reconnects with the community at Adam's Rib in order to heal. In Diane Glancy's *Pushing the Bear*, Maritole and the other Cherokees on the Trail of Tears must not only survive the Trail itself but rebuild their community in the new "Indian Territory" in Oklahoma.

Academic criticism has long focused on the healing motifs of texts such as these, and rightly so. They clearly articulate methods of identity construction and healing that diverge from white American ideology. However, while novels, stories, poems, and plays by Native writers have gained popularity in the classroom in recent decades, they often do not reach the general public, and their responses to genocide and the historical traumas it has brought about—along with their pathways to healing and recovery—don't necessarily reach those who need their messages the most. While literary fiction does have a significant role to play in bringing about social change, for most Americans, it exists in an academic bubble. On the other hand, while many in America aren't avid readers, they are avid lis-

teners, and music plays a vital role in inspiring change—especially among teens and young adults.

Most teenagers and young adults in the United States, regardless of their cultural identity, are more likely to turn on the radio than pick up a book. As such, music is a far more useful genre for enacting change and bringing about healing within young groups. One of the most popular forms of music in the United States, and around the world, is hip-hop. It has become a means not only for voicing protests against genocide, oppression, and poverty, but also for positive identity construction amongst underprivileged adolescents across the globe. For Native American artists such as Maniac: The Siouxpernatural and Night Shield, hip-hop provides an ideal venue to speak to a large, adolescent and young adult audience and articulate methods of healing, resistance, and the (re)formation of positive identities in the wake of historical trauma and genocide.

HIP-HOP AND HEALING

In the United States, hip-hop and rap have been popularized by artists such as Ice Cube, 50 Cent, Snoop Dogg, Tupac Shakur, and others. And while each of these artists may have a significant message to communicate about life as an African American man, life in the “hood,” or life in the United States in general, many critics of the genre argue that much of the popular hip-hop in the United States focuses on the glorification of violence and misogyny. For example, John McWhorter in *Winning the Race: Beyond the Crisis in Black America* denies that popular African American hip-hop in the United States has any politically redeeming qualities. According to McWhorter, hip-hop is incapable of “fighting the power” in the United States because it simply doesn’t *do* anything other than complain about life. “No doubt,” he argues,

hip-hop lyrics are festooned with spiky addresses not only of the police, but also with criticisms of Clarence Thomas, George Bush I and II, and Bill Clinton, and paeans to the beauty of far-off Africa. But alienation and political activism

are not the same thing. How effective are these observations in making change? To take one problem, AIDS is now as much a scourge in black communities as crack. But hip-hop, with its hypermasculinized and often homophobic substrate, would be about the last musical genre we would expect to address this epidemic in any sustained way. (325)

Well, yes and no. Popular hip-hop in the United States clearly does have its own problems with violence and misogyny. And McWhorter is correct in his assessment of the lack of focus on issues such as HIV and AIDS in popular hip-hop. However, he, like others who disparage the genre, is trapped by a focus on “pop” music. Sex and violence titillate audiences and mean big money for record labels, so songs that focus on such are often made into singles and aired on the radio. But the fact that sex sells doesn’t mitigate the potential for positive change the genre can have among its listeners.

McWhorter’s assessment of hip-hop illuminates what Danny Hoch in “Toward a Hip-Hop Aesthetic: A Manifesto” identifies as one of the critical problems people have with comprehending hip-hop and its goals. He argues,

Hip-hop art, when it is bad, is often embraced by the mainstream as the entirety of the talent and voice of the hip-hop generation. When it is good, outsiders and insiders alike misunderstand it for reasons of politics and fear. Bad hip-hop art is invariably inarticulate, unpolished, amateurish, juvenile. Good hip-hop art is highly articulate, coded, transcendent, revolutionary, communicative, empowering. (349)

As a genre, hip-hop was born out of the resistance movements during the US civil rights era and the decades that followed. It became a means of speaking out against what Marc Bamuthi Joseph in “(Yet Another) Letter to a Young Poet” identifies as American “apartheid, police brutality, and the systematic abandonment of social services spurred on by Reaganomics.” It continues today by speaking out against contemporary social problems in the United States, including the war in Iraq and the “high-jacking of civil liberties of the Bush administration” (15).

Globally, hip-hop has been an instrumental vehicle for the articulation of resistance and nationalism in the face of oppressive regimes. In "Doin' Damage in My Native Language: The Use of 'Resistance Vernaculars' in Hip Hop in France, Italy, and Aotearoa/New Zealand," Tony Mitchell illustrates hip-hop's potential: "[H]ip-hop in France is characterized to a great extent by its role as a cultural expression of resistance by young people of minority ethnic origin to the racism, oppression, and social marginalization they experience" (45). For Mitchell, the global use of hip-hop is not a mere repetition of African American hip-hop in the United States, nor is it the simplistic glorification of violence and misogyny typically associated with African American hip-hop. Rather,

it is a linguistically, socially, and politically dynamic process which results in complex modes of indigenization and syncretism. The global indigenization of rap and hip hop . . . has become a highly adaptable vehicle for the expression of indigenous resistance vernaculars, their local politics, and what Kong calls the "moral geographies" of different paragraphs of the world. (52)

Hip-hop, therefore, becomes a vehicle through which the Indigenous voice can be heard. It becomes an act of political resistance, allowing Indigenous issues to become public in ways they never could before. The power of hip-hop (indeed any music) as a form of political expression is the speed with which it travels across audiences and the sheer simplicity of the medium. Anyone can hear it, even in passing, and discover its message in a matter of minutes (or even seconds). For Indigenous artists and revolutionaries, what could be more effective? After all, you may not pick up their pamphlets and read them, and you can avoid going to rallies, but when their music plays over the airwaves, you have no choice but to hear what they have to say.

In the United States, hip-hop clearly performs the same functions, regardless of whether or not critics of the genre such as McWhorter can see them. In some cases, hip-hop has been used as positive means of identity (re)construction for at-risk youth in the

inner city. Edgar H. Tyson conducted a study in Miami that paralleled what he calls hip-hop therapy (HHT) with bibliotherapy. He points out that “[b]ibliotherapy is a well-established therapeutic technique in poetry therapy that utilizes literature (e.g., stories and poetry) to . . . help adolescents cope with problems” (132). And while Tyson only performed a small group study in which the participants constructed their own hip-hop songs about their lives, the results were positive overall. The members of the group who used HHT were more positively motivated toward their treatment and more eager to participate in their counseling sessions than those who did not participate in HHT. Tyson’s study suggests the positive potential hip-hop has among younger audiences who listen to the genre as well as its potential to encourage positive changes within this younger community.

Similarly, Kembrew McLeod argues that, for African American artists, hip-hop functions as a means of articulating an identity in the face of assimilation into the dominant, white culture in the United States. McLeod suggests that rather than constructing a totalized image of blackness, African American hip-hop artists construct an individualized one and want their “music to be a representation of [their] own lifeworld” (140). In doing so, they rewrite who they are in ways that deny the artificial construction of their identities by the dominant white culture in the United States. For McLeod “authenticity” does not refer to a singular identity that predates the birth of the United States, but rather the ideology of “keeping it real” that pervades much of hip-hop culture today. Hip-hop artists construct their own sense of a “real” identity outside of the one shaped through US history and the mass media. McLeod’s arguments about the construction of authenticity in the face of assimilation can be applied beyond the African American community. He writes: “The multiple invocations of authenticity made by hip-hop community members are a direct and conscious reaction to the threat of the assimilation and the colonization of this self-identified, resistive subculture” (146). Likewise, for Native American hip-hop artists in particular, hip-hop is a locus for (re)building positive Native American identity and community.

NATIVE AMERICAN HIP-HOP: HEALING,
RESISTANCE, AND IDENTITY

While Native American hip-hop is not immune from the more popular forms of the genre that glorify violence and misogyny, it, like African American and global hip-hop, is also an ideal venue to articulate a means of healing from historical traumas and resisting genocide. It also provides a place for the construction of a contemporary Native American national identity within a country that consistently seeks their elimination. Artists such as Maniac: The Siouxpernatural and Night Shield use hip-hop to identify the historical traumas faced by Native Americans as well as to articulate new pathways toward healing and recovery. Both artists identify the sociopolitical problems that impact Native teenagers today as well as a means for those teens to rectify those problems and create positive change in their lives and the lives of those around them.

Beginning with a voice-over from Arnold Joseph from Sherman Alexie's *Smoke Signals*, Night Shield's "Broken Dreams" identifies the reservation as a constant reminder of historical trauma for many who live on it. For Arnold Joseph, the reservation, including its "trading post and . . . post office / The tribal school . . . pine trees / [and] The drunks" doesn't provide him with the sense of a comforting home he needs in the wake of his own personal traumas. Even the parts of it that are positive or have potential, such as the "tribal school" and "the pine trees" reinforce the fact that the reservation is not all of his people's traditional homeland, but rather the place to which they were relegated by the colonial authorities in the abrogation of their sovereignty. For Night Shield, as with Arnold Joseph, "Life ain't easy when you're living on the rez," because the reservation is a "trap / . . . [where they've been] living for years." Likewise, Maniac argues in "The War Within" that "the reservations are like camps of concentration" where Native Americans "wander" aimlessly.

The difficulties of life on the reservation are further compounded by other historical traumas faced by Native peoples. In "Broken Dreams," Night Shield argues that Native Americans have been

... shadowized by the trail of tears
 Messed up big by Wounded Knee
 Blankets with small pox and chemical warfare
 Forced into a religion and they're cutting off your hair
 It's a dirty game and America don't play fair.

Although he isn't Cherokee, he claims a connection to the damage done by the Trail of Tears, arguing that all Native peoples have been weakened, or "shadowized," by not only that event but also by all it has come to represent in American history: the theft of land, the loss of thousands of lives, the loss of sovereignty, and the loss of traditional identity. Likewise, Native peoples as a whole have been "Messed up big" by all of the losses associated with the nationwide colonization. In his pan-Indian response to the traumas listed in this song, he argues that America hasn't only "not played fair" with those involved in these particular events, it "don't play fair" whenever it interacts with Native Americans. This inequity becomes even clearer in "The War Within," as Maniac shows how the traditional roles of his people have been rewritten by colonialism. He argues that,

In days of old
 Our foes were Pawnees and Crows
 Now we fight our own bros
 And leave skulls with bullet holes
 Fatal blows.

The search for an enemy has been turned inward, leading his people on a journey of self-destruction through violence and self-hate.

In "Journey of Hope," Maniac demonstrates how genocide and historical traumas have manifested themselves in the contemporary world. As the United States continues to appropriate Native American identity and sovereignty, Native peoples continue to lose out. He writes:

Mainstream seems to see us
 As little less than peasants
 Historical relics
 On soda pop labels

American school teams.

...

They keep makin' millions

Off our images while we suffer.

The rights to Native American identity have become, and in fact have always been, a commodity for white America. For Maniac, historical traumas are truly cyclical. Today's thefts are only the modern version of the ones in the past, and both still leave many Native peoples with little or nothing as they try to "survive / Off a third world supper."

In Night Shield's "Broken Dreams," we see another "rebirth" of historical traumas. In the early years of colonization in the United States, Native American peoples were denied a political voice, as puppet leaders were often put in place to "speak for" Native American nations when the United States sought signatures on treaties that would take away Native land. Today, in this post-9/11 era, that denial of a political voice returns with the Patriot Act. He writes that the government will

Sleep away your freedom with the Patriot Act

[and] Probably say I'm a terrorist for these things that I say

And with no due process they'll just lock me away

...

Land of the free man, don't make me laugh.

While the Patriot Act applies to all American citizens, its role in silencing Native voices is compounded by the long history of such forced silence. Night Shield doesn't feel free in making his claims because he knows that as a minority, especially as a Native, his right to free speech is automatically limited by the perception the dominant culture has of him. His call for change is a challenge to policies that are supposed to protect freedoms rather than limit them. Coupled with his ability to reach a broad Native audience through his music, this challenge is likely to earn him the label of "terrorist" because it is such a blatant refusal to keep his head down and his mouth shut. Like Night Shield, Maniac, in "The War Within," points out that he has to

Realize [his] rights to fight
 with all of [his] might
 Despite the fact that demons keep barking . . .
 Larger than 2,000 armies of devils in police officer suits.

The demons in the “police officer suits” are an essential part of the process of silencing Native voices. Like the Patriot Act, in their appearance of keeping peace and order, they “Sleep away . . . freedom” and encourage people to accept their presence, not as a necessary evil but as a social good.

For both Night Shield and Maniac, the contemporary impact of historical traumas can be seen wherever they look on their reservations. Poverty, gang warfare, and substance abuse plague the reservations in their songs. Night Shield claims that his reservation is “the second poorest in the nation” and that he’s “seen the Natives struggle / Living impoverished lives” (“Broken Dreams”). Likewise, Maniac argues in “Journey of Hope” that not only must Native peoples try to “survive / Off a third world supper,” but, “a better tomorrow / . . . don’t really exist / For many on the rez.” This poverty leads many young men and women to turn to gang life in order to, as Maniac continues, “Live life to the fullest. / The American dream, man / It’s what it’s all about.” But this gang life has turned their reservation into, as Night Shield explains in “Broken Dreams,” a “place [he doesn’t] want to raise [his] daughter” because “Kids [are] killin’ kids ‘cause they wearin’ certain colors.” And in “[reppin’] the red rag” as Maniac points out, and getting the “rep to claim the gang,” kids are getting themselves killed (“Journey of Hope”). In *Native American Postcolonial Psychology*, Duran, Duran, and Brave Heart suggest that traumatized young people, such as those who join gangs, “need the guidance and ceremony to launch them into adulthood, but there are few and in some places no grownups who can deal with the issues of imitation in a positive fashion” (42–43). Indeed, the young man in Maniac’s “Journey of Hope” turns to the gang because he is left without a strong parental figure to guide him: “His father was a drunk and mom just gave up. / Got him lookin’ at the world like ‘I don’t give a fuck.’” Maniac’s Myspace page tells of his personal experiences with the impact of historical traumas. It states:

As a child growing up on the rez you see and experience lots of negativity, (its rare that you don't) and like many other kids his age he witnessed alcoholism in the form of his father and most of his family, he witnessed drug abuse, domestic violence, gang violence and helped bury many friends and family members that were lost to suicide, murder and disease. But instead of becoming another statistic in this never ending cycle, he chose to use what he witnessed to tell the world of another world. ("Maniachiphop")

For Maniac, hip-hop is not only an outlet for the traumas he has experienced in his own lifetime; it is also a way to encourage his audience to envision their own "other world." It can enable his audience to reconstruct their vision of themselves and, in so doing, create new identities that will be strong enough to make change on the reservation. Like Silko's *Betonie*, they will be able to construct new ceremonies and methods of healing once they are able to see themselves outside the sphere of victimhood that historical traumas have created for them.

The lack of connection to family or community and the ensuing indifference toward their own lives leads to further problems as people seek to "Escape from reality / . . . / [and] get drunk or get high" (Night Shield, "Broken Dreams"). And this "escape" reinforces the cyclical damage done by historical traumas because as people ". . . drink [their] life away / smoke [their] life away / . . . [their] seeds come up the same way" ("Journey of Hope"). Akin to despair and self-hate, substance abuse often becomes an intergenerational problem trapping one generation after the next as they are raised within the field of trauma. The problems inherent in poverty, violence, and substance abuse are compounded by historical traumas such as the loss of sovereignty and identity, often creating a seemingly endless cycle of despair and self-hate. As Duran, Duran, and Brave Heart point out, historical traumas affect more than just those who immediately suffer them. These traumas and their "effects are complex, multigenerational, and cumulative. A constellation of features that occur in reaction to multigenerational, collective, histori-

cal, and cumulative psychic wounding over time—over the lifespan and across generations—historical trauma is characterized as incomplete mourning and the resulting depression is absorbed by children from birth onward” (64). Night Shield sums up the problem succinctly when he writes, “And folks wonder why so many teen suicides.”

In the end, both Night Shield and Maniac seek to encourage Native Americans to recognize the problems facing their communities today, as well as their historical antecedents, and work toward change and healing. In “Broken Dreams,” Night Shield addresses his audience directly, stating, “it’s up to my Natives trying to make the change.” For Night Shield, Native Americans need to stop “settl[ing] for what is instead of what can be.” While historical traumas and the continued colonization of Native peoples have clearly broken the dreams of his people, ultimately, it is this settling, the indifference to issues facing them, that makes them live “broken dreams.” Their compliance with their own entrapment needs to end. His chorus, repeated three times throughout the song, reinforces this sentiment by telling his audience that they “can rise above” and not only help themselves but “help the rez” when they stop “the settle for what . . . is.”

Likewise, Maniac argues that change begins with his Native audience. In “Journey of Hope,” he uses himself as one of the community examples Duran, Duran, and Brave Heart identify as absent in many Native American communities. Rather than “standing on the corner” with his gang, he “stay[s] on point and tr[ies] to come with mad rhymes / tr[ies] to stay righteous.” In doing so, he “fight[s] back with [his] mind.” His audience needs to realize that

Our words are divine
and our hearts gotta shine
In the mouth of madness.
...
know we got a dream to follow
we gotta come clean gonna’ be a team tomorrow.

It is through their words, their resistance, and working together that his audience will be able to enact change and reverse the mad-

ness that results from historical traumas. Like Night Shield, Maniac doesn't argue for his audience to only better themselves, but to work together to break the cycle of entrapment for the community as a whole. Because, as he states, "We all in that same struggle / We all on that same journey."

In "The War Within," Maniac further develops the need for a change in perspective. In this beat poem-style rap, he tells his audience of his own struggles with the impact of historical traumas on himself and his community. In doing so, he encourages them to become "paranormal"—to break out of the rut of settling for life as it is. After recognizing that the reservation is like a "camp of concentration," he finds a way to rise above being "faced with annihilation," writing:

But in space my manifestations
Rearranges the constellations
Like a daily operation
Killer priest called persuasion
Made me speak across the nation.
Lost in space and time
My mental's heavier than lead
My rhyme divine.
So look inside you'll find
My mind is
Paranormal.

By changing his perspective and refusing the traps set for him by history—by stepping into "space"—he finds the power to "rearrange the constellations" that mark his destiny and rewrite his identity. He's found a way to heal and protect his soul so it doesn't "reach corrosion"—indeed, it "rocks a bullet proof vest" now that he has realized that he has the power to make change through his words—through his music. He tells his audience his

rhyme is equal
To camels walking through the eyes of needles
I'm trying to reach you
And make you change your life patterns.

He has no illusions about how difficult it will be to reach his audience—like a rich man getting into heaven (or a camel going through the eye of a needle), he has a hard fight ahead of him, but still he tries. Because when he does reach them, like him, they will “realize [their] rights to fight / with all of [their] might” and challenge and change the problems brought about by historical traumas. *Then* will the “messiah [be] now approachin’” because they will embody him themselves.

Clearly, Native hip-hop’s primary audience is not mainstream, white America. While it’s true that white Americans do listen to their music and can be moved by it, the main audience is young Native Americans. It is an ideal vehicle through which to reach this young audience and get them thinking about, and hopefully making, a change. While academics come together in scholarly forums to discuss issues facing Natives today and also teach these issues in classrooms, the majority of young people, Native or otherwise, aren’t scholars and aren’t as likely to pick up a book and read it in order to analyze its political implications. But they are more likely to turn on the radio and nod their heads in agreement with songs such as these that shout their defiance into the face of white America. On the Reznet blog, a publication written by Native American college students, blogger Travis Coleman asserts that “hip-hop music and culture reach Native children and teenagers faster and easier than any other genre and, equipped with just a beat and a grievance, hip-hop and rap is often seen as a legitimate form of expression.”² Night Shield and Maniac clearly hope that in doing so themselves, some of their young Native American audience members will not only nod their heads but also change the way they see themselves and the world around them—that they will put an end to their sense of hopelessness and work to change their lives as well as the lives of others on the reservation. Then they will not only break the cycle of historical trauma but also instigate a *positive* intergenerational change as they become good role models for their own children.

NOTES

1. In "Fighting Name-Calling: Challenging 'Redskins' in Court," Susan Shown Harjo identifies the origin of the term *redskins* as coming from the bounties the US government paid for the skins of Native American peoples. The bloody skins were the impetus of the term now used as the name for the National Football League team in our nation's capital: the Washington Redskins. While this paper's goal is not to examine the impact of team names on Native American peoples, or the role team names play in the perpetuation of genocide or historical trauma, the fact that the term still exists as a part of American popular culture clearly shows genocide, as the UN defines it, is still being perpetrated in the United States and that it has clear implications in the continuation of historical traumas on Native American peoples.

2. Since the writing of this paper, the Reznet blog has become a more standardized Native news source and is now <http://www.reznetnews.org>. Since that change, the original blog post is no longer available.

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CREATIVE COMMENTARY

Journey to the Great Mountain

A. JAMES WOHLPART

In her collection of essays entitled *Dwellings*, Linda Hogan criticizes what she calls the “far-heartedness” of our contemporary culture and offers an alternative way of being and knowing. She describes the voices that surround us, that speak a forgotten language, that offer a forgotten knowledge of healing and wholeness, of stillness and peace, a knowledge of relation and connection. Hogan juxtaposes two particular essays in *Dwellings*, “A Different Yield” and “What Holds the Water, What Holds the Light,” in order to critique our culture and to describe this new way of being. In “A Different Yield,” Hogan emphasizes our need for a deep listening that reaches beneath the chatter of our culture and allows us to hear the hum of creation. She writes:

A woman once described a friend of hers as being such a keen listener that even the trees leaned toward her, as if they were speaking their innermost secrets into her listening ears. Over the years I’ve envisioned that woman’s silence, a hearing full and open enough that the world told her its stories. The green leaves turned toward her, whispering tales of soft breezes and the murmurs of leaf against leaf. (47)

In this passage, Hogan offers a way of being that is founded on a stillness and silence that opens the listener to the stories of the world. The attitude of deep listening draws the natural world to her, as if it has created a vacuum that must be filled. And yet the listening is not a void or an emptiness; it is described as being “full and

open” as if there is a reciprocity between the listener and the landscape. In this way, this deep listening, this alternative way of being, is founded on relationship and interconnection, a sharing between the human and the natural worlds.

Yet Hogan also critiques our culture as one unable or unwilling to accept the gifts that our landscape offers. In “What Holds the Water, What Holds the Light,” she describes several incidents, starting with Cortés’s burning of Iztapalapa and its amazing aviaries to looters dynamiting two burial mounds in Oklahoma when they could no longer extract artifacts for themselves, and concludes:

It seems, looking back, that these invasions amounted to a hatred of life itself, of fertility and generation. The conquerors and looters refused to participate in a reciprocal and balanced exchange with life. They were unable to receive the best gifts of land, not gold or pearls or ownership, but a welcome acceptance of what is offered. They did not understand that the earth is generous and that encounters with the land might have been sustaining, or that their meetings with other humans could have led to an enriched confluence of ways. (44)

Hogan’s concern is with a way of being that dominates the other, that is not based on reciprocity and openness. She explains that because of our limited worldview we have forgotten the intimate and integral relations that exist unseen around us, like thin strands of an elaborate spiderweb that connect plants and animals and humans. Hogan continues:

As one of our Indian elders has said, there are laws beyond our human laws, and ways above ours. We have no words for this in our language, or even for our experience of being there. Ours is a language of commerce and trade, of laws that can be bent in order that treaties might be broken, land wounded beyond healing. It is a language that is limited, emotionally and spiritually, as if it can’t accommodate such magical strength and power. The ears of this language do not often hear the songs of the white egrets, the rain falling into stone bowls. (45–46)

It is this way of being in the world, of living a life too fast and too loud and too shallow, of consuming too much, sleeping too little, and dancing rarely at all, that brought me to the Appalachian Trail in the summer of 2002. In the spring, summer, and fall of 2001, my father, then sixty-four, hiked the Appalachian Trail from its southern terminus on Springer Mountain, Georgia, up to the Maine border. The next summer, we planned on finishing the trail together. This journey was a time of transformation in my own life, the opening of a closed heart, the beginning of listening with a new set of ears. In the summer of 2002, as I edged closer to forty years of age, my life had come full circle. I had traveled away from the sources of power in my life, deep rich forests and open fields that I had explored in my youth, mountains that I had climbed in my early teens to hear the rush of wind through tall trees. But I had also begun to hear, once again, the insistent call of the red-shouldered hawk, a meditation bell bringing me back to my center, to a state of peacefulness and calm. I had felt its blessing as it wheeled above me in the stark blue sky, reminding me that all I have is this moment, in this place. I knew that another way of being, one that I had experienced in my youth, was opening, again, before me. My hike on the AT through Maine lasted just over two weeks. The heart of the trip, through the Hundred-Mile Wilderness leading up to Mt. Katahdin, pared back the layers that had accumulated, like dust, and offered me the opportunity to remember what I had lost. My journey allowed me to open myself to the intimate and fragile relations that surround us and sustain us so that I was ready to experience the sacred mountain of the Abenaki people.

On this journey, I had consciously decided to leave behind my journal, which I rarely parted with, and my camera, a faithful companion on all my hiking trips. Indeed, I left behind my watch, my compass, maps, and even a flashlight. I decided to wear my old boots rather than rush to the outlet mall to buy a new pair. I wanted to create a space where stillness could enter my being, where silence could grow and I could begin to hear another voice, one that I had been familiar with in an earlier time. I wanted, on this journey, to replace the language of commerce and materialism with a deeper,

richer, more satisfying language, one that gets at the core of our being. I wanted to allow the language of the forest to seep inside, to melt the barriers that had been erected between my being and the landscape that sustained me.

After further describing the rift between humans and nature, Hogan concludes:

What we really are searching for is a language that heals this relationship, one that takes the side of the amazing and fragile life on our life-giving earth. A language that . . . takes hold of the mystery of what's around us and offers it back to us, full of awe and wonder. It is a language of creation, of divine fire, a language that goes beyond the strict borders of scientific inquiry and right into the heart of the mystery itself. . . .

We are looking for a tongue that speaks with reverence for life, searching for an ecology of mind. Without it, we have no home, have no place of our own within the creation. It is not only the vocabulary of science we desire. We want a language of that different yield. A yield rich as the harvests of earth, a yield that returns us to our own sacredness, to a self-love and respect that will carry out to others. (59–60)

The way of being and knowing that Hogan alludes to is described, significantly, in ecological terms, emphasizing the importance of interrelatedness, of the web that connects all things, big and small, seen and unseen. And our access to that way of being, she notes, must be through a different language, one that is founded on the abundant and fertile earth, one that forms reciprocal relations and returns us to balance and harmony.

Our hike on the Appalachian Trail began at the end of May when Court Randall, my father's friend and former colleague, dropped us off on State Route 27, approximately 190 miles from Mt. Katahdin. As we left the car, my father inexplicably took the southbound trail, which led to a discussion about our route, and our direction. We began in uncertainty without a clear sense of north or south, east or west. We had been driving all morning and felt lost.

Once we found our bearings, we headed down the northbound

trail through fields rich with ferns and blooming with trillium, a flower with three white petals stacked above three green leaves. Later, on the first ascent, rockslides crossed the trail, making our footing treacherous. At one crossing, my father fell and slid down the hillside; fortunately, he was only slightly bruised and scraped.

As it was the first day of our trek, we were not accustomed to the weight of our packs or the steepness of the ascent. The day was warm and humid. We were reduced to wearing shorts with no shirts. We camped at Horns Pond Lean-to, covering about five miles on the first day. We bathed on the edge of cold Horns Pond, alone that evening like many evenings along the trail. As the sky slowly darkened, the stars began to shine through the day's fading brightness until night descended and the stars rushed to blanket the sky. We prepared for bed, and my father realized he had lost his watch, perhaps when he slid down the trail. Without a watch to keep time, we would become attune to the rising and the setting of the sun and to tracking its path across the sky.

The next few days were spent crossing several peaks—Avery Peak, Little Bigelow Mountain, Flagstaff Mountain. We hiked through patches of gray snow up in the highlands and through bogs and swamps in the lowlands. Deep forests of red spruce, many of them rising one hundred feet or more above the forest floor, shaded us from the sun and provided a peace and calm. Crimson red trillium struggled through the lush understory. In the lowland swamps, mosquitoes incessantly hovered around eyes and ears. Worse yet, black flies, which seemed to emanate from the trail as we walked, took chunks of flesh with them when they bit. It began to rain, which reduced the annoying insects but soaked us through.

We stopped, one night, at Pierce Pond Lean-to after covering some twenty miles during the day. A steady rain had come on, and as we hiked we found ourselves growing more and more quiet, more and more reserved. The patter of rain falling on new spring leaves created a music that drew out our spirits. I buried my head in my hat, the brim pulled low to keep off the rain.

My mind wandered to the journey of my life, which had been filled, early on, with walking and exploring Earth. I had grown up in

a small college town in the heart of Ohio. During the summer and on weekends during the school year, I would leave my home early in the morning to spend the day outside with friends. We would swim in the Kokosing River, or ride bikes on gravel roads far into the rolling countryside. We played soccer and baseball and football. Occasionally, we would camp out in the woods. We were together until dinner and then would reconvene for a game of capture-the-flag that would go long into the night. I would return home exhausted, my spirit filled, only to rise the next day to do it all over again. My days were a soft spiral marked only by the changing seasons.

When I was in high school, my family moved to Tennessee, and my life changed in palpable ways. My time was spent studying during the week or driving around with friends on the weekends, not doing much at all. I worked every summer. On rare occasions, I would hike in the Smokey Mountains with my father or in the Cumberlands with friends, but somehow I lost the thread of a life intimately connected to the natural world. What had once been a brother, more even, a twin, was now a distant relative that I visited rarely and could only join in small talk.

I moved on from high school to college, got married, and then on to graduate school where I immersed myself in studying and beginning my career. Though I was living in Colorado at the time, I only gazed at the far-off mountains as if they were foreigners who spoke a completely different language. I became consumed with the idea of success—of advancing a career, making money, and owning things. My spirit, which had once been so readily filled, felt empty.

At Pierce Pond that night, the rain continued to fall, softly but persistently drumming the tin roof. We were alone, thankfully, so we set up our tent inside the shelter to escape the mosquitoes and black flies. As the gray day drifted toward blackness, the loons began to call. We heard them, at first, off in the distance, a lonely, mournful sound, deep with emotion, then drawing closer until they dove beneath the lake in search of food. As I lay in our shelter, with this beautiful voice calling in the night, the sadness I had experienced during the day was multiplied until I drifted off into a fitful sleep.

Our hike continued with more heat and humidity and ever-tor-

menting insects. My father was bothered more than I, his ankles bloody and raw after having been consumed by black flies. My boots began to generate blisters on the bottoms and backs of my feet. We alternated between high peaks—Pleasant Pond Mountain, Moxie Bald Mountain—and lowlands. In the higher elevations, we were greeted with cool breezes and rain. When the clouds parted, granite outcroppings at the tops of the peaks afforded views of rolling hills covered with dense forests and valleys filled with shimmering lakes. We entered a lowland brimming with new spring life. The heat and humidity forced us to strip to our shorts, only to be chased by mosquitoes and black flies. Bug repellent worked for a short time, until we sweated it off. We wished for rain, if only to beat back the insects. The ground became swampy until the trail disappeared under water. Finally, we came to a place where the trail keepers had built a raised trail on split logs. We balanced our way on the top of the logs and down the trail. We entered a clearing and saw that the logs wandered off into the middle of a pond and then stopped. A cruel joke, we decided. We left the logs and bushwhacked around the pond until we found a beaver dam and crossed.

At the confluence of three rivers—Marble Brook, Bald Mountain Stream, and the West Branch Piscataquis River—my father explained to me the best method for river crossing. He showed me how to tie the strings of my boots together and then hang them around my neck. He went first and crossed with no mishaps. I tied my boots to the top of my pack frame, not wanting to be hampered with the weight of my boots on my neck. The clear liquid inside my blisters had turned red with blood; the immersion in the cold water numbed my feet and temporarily took away the pain. I slipped, midway across the river, and my boots swung from the top of my pack and clobbered me on the head. I made my way across and sat to put my boots back on. My father watched in silent amusement. The ache in my feet returned immediately.

We passed an elk carcass on the side of the trail as we hiked through Horseshoe Canyon, a narrow gulch with a wild roaring river. Beech trees, their bark smooth and light gray, mingled with white birches, their distinctive bark peeling in strips across the

trunk, which then gave way to white and red pines, tall and majestic. My blisters had opened, and my socks had become soaked with blood. I covered them with gauze, but that soon became soaked as well. To compound the misery of my feet, my mind had continued to run down well-worn paths.

After graduate school I landed a choice job at a new university in south Florida. The opportunity to assist in the creation of a new institution of higher education consumed my being. That, coupled with the experience of moving to a new and alien landscape, seemingly severed me from the natural world. My unhappiness grew and became reflected in my marriage. While my wife and I had two amazing children who had become best friends, we had grown more and more distant. I obsessed over all of the bad choices that we had made, the patterns and roles that we took on as we gave in to the expectations of a culture that defines who we are supposed to be as individuals and as couples—the pursuit of a home with a mortgage and a successful career and two cars with car payments. We sat in front of the television at night with nothing to share. We had come to a point where we could no longer bridge the gap that yawned between us.

The emptiness of spending my days staring at a computer screen or lecturing on the intellectual history of American literature and the isolation I felt in my marriage left me feeling as if my life had been hijacked and I had been run down someone else's life path. I no longer knew who I was or what made me happy.

To exacerbate all of this, after a swim in a friend's pool, I developed a double inner ear infection. The vertigo that developed as a result was so bad that for a week I could not lift my head off my pillow without the world spinning in circles. In that moment, my life lay before me like a book, my drive for success that had brought me an endless stream of weekdays in the office that often spilled over into the weekends, my marriage that had forsaken intimacy and relation, and I felt broken.

My father and I spent one last night in the wilderness after a little over a week of hiking. The next day we would leave the trail and resupply in the town of Monson, the last trail town before completing the AT. We had about 120 miles to go to Mt. Katahdin.

In Monson, we checked in to Shaw's Hiker Hostel. We stayed two nights in order to resupply, wash clothes, and, hopefully, heal. Mr. Shaw took us into nearby Greenville and I bought new boots. On the second day, I laced up my boots and tried to go for a walk. My feet hurt so intensely that I could only hobble a short distance. I told my father that I didn't know if I could go any further. We ate rich meals, salmon for dinner, and monster breakfasts. All meals were served family style, and Mr. and Mrs. Shaw joined the hikers around the table. Mr. Shaw made his own special concoction of bug repellent, which he assured us worked especially well on Maine insects.

In the afternoon, I lay in bed, a cool breeze blowing the white lace curtain, a blue sky rich and bold above. I concentrated on my feet and sent them healing energy. I felt them warm and tingle. I heard, outside, the calling of birds, one to the other, and the rustle of new leaves. I became absorbed in the moment, the white lace brushing my shoulder, the intense blue above. As I listened to the singing of birds and the rustling of leaves, my spirit rose from my body and escaped into the universe. I slept deeply.

On our last morning in the hostel, we woke to rain. Mr. Shaw explained that the next thirty miles of trail over steep mountains were treacherous in bad weather. His son agreed to drive us to the Hermitage, allowing us to bypass this section of the trail and to enter the Hundred-Mile Wilderness, the last section of trail leading up to Mt. Katahdin. I was not very hopeful that my feet would allow me to walk at all, but I was determined to try. After hiking through the Hermitage, we headed up the flank of White Cap Mountain under forests of spruce, fir, and hemlock. The trees appeared as ghostly shadows through the mist and fog. We spent the night at Carl A. Newhall Lean-to after completing only a short distance. I had been consuming ibuprofen like candy, which allowed me to hike with relatively little pain.

As we descended White Cap Mountain, we caught glimpses of Mt. Katahdin off in the distance. During the next few days hiking through the lowlands the rain was sporadic, a mild blessing as it chased away the insects. We encountered several southbounders. They were dressed in long-sleeved shirts and long pants; many wore mosquito

netting on their heads. Mr. Shaw's bug repellent worked well, so we hiked in shorts on the hotter days. We passed by many lakes with sandy beaches. On rare occasions we heeded the call for a swim.

On our third day out, we covered nearly twenty miles. My feet had begun to heal, and my father and I reveled at the ability of our bodies to regenerate even after being so devastated. In the boggy areas, we were blessed with rich spring life, soft mosses in multiple shades of bright green, a profusion of broadleaf plants, and flowers of white and red and orange. We got water from a spring, a sandy depression fifteen feet across with clear water bubbling up in the center. Along the entire trail, we treated our water only twice. The richness and fertility of the area provided hope. We sensed the fragile yet resilient strands that connect clouds and plants and wind and rock. When we hiked through forests of tall pines, the duff covering the trail muffled the sound of our walking and allowed us to hear voices that are normally unheard—the hushed flight of an owl, the wind singing through pines.

In the midst of the Hundred-Mile Wilderness, an area that was known for its solitude and wholeness, we began to cross logging roads and we saw, often in the distance though sometimes much closer, areas where trees had recently been harvested. Hogan writes, in her critique of our culture:

Even wilderness is seen as having value only as it enhances and serves our human lives, our human world. While most of us agree that wilderness is necessary to our spiritual and psychological well-being, it is a container of far more, of mystery, of a life apart from ours. It is not only where we go to escape who we have become and what we have done, but it is also part of the natural laws, the workings of a world of beauty and depth we do not yet understand. It is something beyond us, something that does not need our hand in it. (45)

As I sensed the fullness of this mystery on my walk, a mystery that was endangered in this intact yet fragile wilderness, questions arose in my mind about my own spirit and the emptiness I felt. I learned, during the crisis in my health, that I had high blood pressure, which

brought me to an awareness of my type-A personality, my strong drive and need for control. I was often quick to judge, yet my perspective was sometimes narrow and even shallow. As a result of the overwhelming unhappiness in my marriage, my wife and I agreed to separate and go our own ways. My life had come unraveled and I realized, finally, that I had lost the inner substance of my being. I knew that the life that I had created of work and family did not allow me to balance an independence of spirit with the warmth of interconnectedness. I had forgotten the feeling of a warm summer sun on my browned skin, the call of a killdeer as it feigned a broken wing to lead me away from its nest, the companionship of buckeye trees and the thud of their large brown nut hitting the ground—all of which had graced my youth. In the Hundred-Mile Wilderness, I had come face to face with my own brokenness. The fragmentation of my life was mirrored in the logging roads and clearcuts. As my career and my marriage traveled down a path filled with “shoulds” and “musts,” my relationship with my self, with others, and with the landscape became more and more diminished, my spirit languished, and I had less and less to give. The potential ravaging of one of the last large wild areas in Maine allowed me to encounter a fundamental question: in the midst of my own brokenness, how would I make my self whole again?

Hogan describes the fragmentation of our lives in an essay entitled “Creations” through a telling of the history of the Mayan people. As the Mayans became dissociated from the land, the foundation of their lives—both physical and spiritual—was eroded. Hogan writes:

Emptiness and estrangement are deep wounds, strongly felt in the present time. We have been split from what we could nurture, what could fill us. And we have been wounded by a dominating culture that has feared and hated the natural world, has not listened to the voice of the land, has not believed in the inner worlds of human dreaming and intuition, all things that have guided indigenous people since time stood up in the east and walked this world into existence, split from the connection between self and land. (82)

She continues:

[M]any of us in this time have lost the inner substance of our lives and have forgotten to give praise and remember the sacredness of all life. But in spite of this forgetting, there is still a part of us that is deep and intimate with the world. We remember it by feel. We experience it as a murmur in the night, a longing and restlessness we can't name, a yearning that tugs at us. For it is only recently, in earth time, that the severing of the connections between people and land have taken place. Something in our human blood is still searching for it, still listening, still remembering. (83)

In the midst of the Hundred-Mile Wilderness, walking through isolated forests and listening to the wind sing through swaying pines and cedars and spruces, I found myself wondering about the sources of our power, the places that provide us nurturing and sustenance. Is it from the rush of the automobile over miles of concrete? The cramped office and blinking computer screen? The politics and endless tasks of work? We retire at night, exhausted, not to dreams of wholeness and peace but to a mind that has been ravaged. We analyze and calculate and plan because we have lost touch with imagination and intuition. How would I make my self whole again?

Two days out from Mt. Katahdin, we woke to a spectacular day. The sky had cleared and the temperature had fallen. The leaves of a maple tree shimmered in the wind as if reveling in their new life. My feet were fully healed. We hiked almost twenty miles and camped at Abol Bridge Campground, a private campground on the West Branch of the Penobscot River. A thunderstorm rolled through after we set up our tent, so we climbed inside and waited it out. Just before dark, we took hot showers and then walked to the store and bought a hot meal—frozen pizza heated in a microwave—and cold beer. After we settled into our tent for the night, we debated hiking back up for another beer. We fell asleep to the sound of more rain, more thunder, and bright flashes of lightning. The wind woke us several times in the night as we felt nearly lifted off the ground.

Toward the early hours of the morning, the storm passed and the wind slowed.

On our last day of hiking before our ascent, we captured glimpses of Mt. Katahdin, tall and majestic, and growing taller by the hour. A Penobscot friend, Oannes Pritzker, had explained to me that the name Katahdin means “great mountain” in the Abenaki language. He had given me a prayer tie filled with tobacco to honor the spirits of the mountain and of his ancestors. We lunched at Little Niagara Falls, a dizzying rush of water over a smooth granite outcropping. We lay on the rocks next to the falls, absorbing the gentle warmth of the sun, profoundly moved by the sight of Mt. Katahdin, which now towered above us. Oannes had explained to me that the Abenaki people would not climb the mountain because they believed that the storm god Pamola resided there. I wondered at my own culture’s lack of awareness of such spirits, of the sacredness of the land.

When we arrived at Katahdin Stream Campground, we set up our tent in a lean-to. The patch of ground around each lean-to was course sand enclosed by old railroad ties. Inside the lean-to was a rake, and I knew, immediately, that the rake would be well used. My father, whose life has had its own tumultuous path, knows the peace and stillness that comes from intimate contact with the land. As the sun set, he began to rake, first behind the lean-to, then around the sides, and then in front, between the mouth of the lean-to and the small forest that separated us from the stream that ran down the mountain.

In the second to last essay in *Dwellings*, entitled “Waking Up the Rake,” Hogan describes her work in a bird sanctuary that acts as a rehabilitation center. Part of her volunteer hours are spent raking the cages. She observes, in a long passage:

There is an art to raking, a very fine art, one with rhythm in it, and life. On the days I do it well, the rake wakes up. Wood that came from dark dense forests seems to return to life. The water that rose up through the rings of that wood, the minerals of earth mined upward by the burrowing tree roots, all come alive. My own fragile hand touches the wood, a hand

full of my own life, including that which rose each morning early to watch the sun return from the other side of the planet. Over time, these hands will smooth the rake's wooden handle down to a sheen.

Raking. It is a labor round and complete, smooth and new as an egg, and the rounding seasons of the world revolving in time and space. All things, even our own heartbeats and sweat, are in it, part of it. And that work, that watching the turning over of life, becomes a road into what is essential. Work is the country of hands, and the way they want to live there in the dailiness of it, the repetition that is time's language of prayer, a common tongue. Everything is there, in that language, in the humblest of labor. The rake wakes up and the healing is in it. The shadows of leaves that once fell beneath the tree the handle came from are in that labor, and the rabbits that passed this way, on the altar of our work. And when the rake wakes up, all earth's gods are reborn, and they dance and sing in the dusty air around us. (153–54)

For Hogan, the act of raking becomes a kind of meditation that restores the balance in our lives, that nurtures the lost connection between humans and the natural world. Through meditation and prayer, we return to a place of harmony, remembering a knowledge that comes from close intimacy with a universe much larger than we are.

My father stepped inside the mouth of the lean-to, pulled the rake across his footprints, and gazed at the smooth stretch of sand that surrounded us. All sign of our walking around the camp area had been erased. My father's silent meditation spoke volumes to me. As he stood at the edge of our lean-to and gazed at his work, I witnessed his silence, a deep silence full of a calm and reserve that I knew originated from weathering a shattered life. Then, as the pinks and golds disappeared from the high clouds, a hush fell over the land. We climbed inside our sleeping bags, one last night in the wilderness, one last night to prepare ourselves for climbing the great mountain of the Abenaki people.

A little more than two weeks after our journey began, my father and I started our ascent of Mt. Katahdin. While the previous morning had been glorious with an abundance of sun and a piercing blue sky, that morning we woke to clouds and rain. The ranger station had put out a moderate warning for the day, which meant we could climb the mountain but that it would be risky. The trail paralleled Katahdin Stream out of the campground and wound its way through spruce and fir. Within a mile, we were soaked even though we were wearing ponchos. The trail grew more and more steep, and the dirt path gave way to long stretches of granite, slippery in the rain. After a few hours, we reached tree line and could see a long stretch of rock ahead of us. Any discernible trail under our feet disappeared, to be replaced by cairns and painted blazes on the sides of house-sized boulders. At times, the trail was more of a climb, replete with permanent protection mounted into the rock. We took turns leading until we crossed over the Gateway and found ourselves on a large plateau that stretched off into the distance. The top of the peak was lost in fog.

We passed Thoreau Springs and danced from one side of the trail to the other to avoid the puddles that congregated in any depression. The temperature fell. We stopped and put on our fleece and replaced our ponchos with rain jackets. The rain had turned to mist. I felt the heavy wetness of air and the solidity of rock beneath my feet. The thick fog swirled about me. Lichen covered the rocks on the sides of the trail. Short grasses clung to sparse dirt. Occasionally a small bunch of yellow flowers burst out of the earth. My father hiked ahead in the mist. When the fog rolled in, he disappeared from sight. I walked onward, head lowered, lost in thought until, suddenly, I found myself on the top of Mt. Katahdin and I saw my father spinning in a circle, his arms outstretched. For a moment, the clouds parted and we saw far into the valleys below us. My father gave me a hug, took a few pictures, and left to start back down. I was alone. The clouds closed in on me and I felt the embrace of Earth and sky.

In the last essay of *Dwellings*, entitled "Walking," Hogan describes

her own meditative journey. She ends her essay describing the significance of walking the land:

Tonight I walk. I am watching the sky. I think of the people who came before me and how they knew the placement of stars in the sky, watched the moving sun long and hard enough to witness how a certain angle of light touched a stone only once a year. Without written records, they knew the gods of every night, the small, fine details of the world around them and of immensity above them. (158)

She concludes:

It's winter and there is smoke from the fires. The square, lighted windows of houses are fogging over. It is a world of elemental attention, of all things working together, listening to what speaks in the blood. Whichever road I follow, I walk in the land of many gods, and they love and eat one another. Walking, I am listening to a deeper way. Suddenly all my ancestors are behind me. Be still, they say. Watch and listen. You are the result of the love of thousands. (158–59)

At the top of Mt. Katahdin, at the end of my journey, I remembered the patter of rain falling on new spring leaves and the rush of wind through tall trees. Further back, I remembered the soft days of my youth cradled in a generous and giving landscape. I sensed a web of love that transcended my own life. I felt in that moment that an ecology of spirit was possible, that I could return to a life of interconnectedness, like the tendrils of a fern, shooting out from the stock, interweaving with other plants.

The fog rolled across the top of the mountain like a tumbleweed. The gray swirl of clouds embraced me and I lost myself to the immensity of the universe. I took the small pouch of tobacco from my pocket and I gave thanks to the great mystery that surrounds and sustains us. I sprinkled a small portion of the tobacco in humble gratitude to the four directions, an offering, a prayer of thanksgiving. I thanked the heavens and I thanked Earth. My body became one with the wind and the rain. I was returned to myself,

remembering my own sacred place in the wider creation. On my journey to the top of the great mountain of the Abenaki, my ears had opened to a new listening, to the loon calling in the fading day and to the hushed flight of an owl, and I found stillness and peace.

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Book Reviews

Hertha D. Sweet Wong, Lauren Stuart Muller, and Jana Sequoya Magdaleno, eds. *Reckonings: Contemporary Short Fiction by Native American Women*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008.

ISBN 978-0-19-510925-2. 342 pp.

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Hertha D. Sweet Wong, Lauren Stuart Muller, and Jana Sequoya Magdaleno have collected a number of works of short fiction by fifteen women writers (roughly two pieces per author, with additional pieces from Joy Harjo and a third piece each from Louise Erdrich, Diane Glancy, and Anna Lee Walters). There is a need for new anthologies of the work of diverse Native women writers, both established and emerging, to update earlier important collections such as *Sister Nations* (2002) edited by Heid Erdrich and Laura Tohe; *Reinventing the Enemy's Language* (1997) edited by Joy Harjo and Gloria Bird; the much earlier *Spider Woman's Granddaughters* (1989) edited by Paula Gunn Allen; and the 1984 volumes *That's What She Said* edited by Rayna Green and *A Gathering of Spirit* edited by Beth Brant. With each newer collection, the work of emerging Native women writers becomes more readily available for classroom use.

Additionally, it is important to have collections of short prose. Such a grouping provides the opportunity of literary genre study with particular attention to various aspects of the work that are spe-

cific to prose fiction; indeed, collections of one genre or another facilitate additional pedagogical and scholarly attention to the genre study of Native literatures. To this end, anthologies of short prose are valuable contributions for teaching and scholarship. Accordingly, *Reckonings: Contemporary Short Fiction by Native American Women* invites attention to the study of literary genre in regards to Native American literatures and American women's prose fiction, making it a potentially significant literary offering both for use in the classroom and for individual study.

The volume is chronologically organized with short stories by Paula Gunn Allen, Brant, Glancy, Walters, Janet Campbell, Linda Hogan, Leslie Marmon Silko, Patricia Riley, Harjo, Endrezze, Erdrich, Kimberly M. Blaeser, Misha Nogha, Beth M. Piatote, and Reid Gómez. As this grouping indicates, the majority of the writers are well established in Native literature canons. In light of the volume being titled "contemporary," it is surprising that half of the writers in the collection are listed with no publications within the last decade, some of whom with no listed publications in almost two decades. I mention this because it indicates the extent to which the collection, although published in 2008, seems somewhat dated. Even the information about the contributors is old, with writers' 2008 affiliations, ranks, and post-2000 publications either out-of-date or unlisted. Should the book be reprinted, the editors might want to include more recent work by some of the writers to give the book greater currency and value for its use in the classroom. Additionally, there are very important Native women writing prose fiction who do not appear in the collection. It is surprising not to see established writers such as Susan Powers, Luci Tapahonso, LeAnne Howe, or Velma Wallis included. Granted, space constraints require difficult decisions.

The introduction of the book, which is coauthored by the three coeditors, orients the volume around a few thematic foci that determine the selections of the included prose works and possible directions for the study of the pieces in conjunction with each other: specifically, cycles of myth, life, resistance, and healing. The predominant theme that the editors return to and that occurs through-

out the introduction is the very complex issue of authenticity and identity within the realm of Native American literatures, namely, what does it mean for someone to claim, identify, and/or be Native American? The editors emphasize the importance of “unwriting and rewriting ‘Indianness’” in Native women’s literatures (xv). Accordingly, we are told that the editors “refuse to perform Indian ‘authenticity’” thereby eliding questions regarding “precisely who is ‘authentically’ Native” (xx, xxiii). They explain that in their literary choices for the collection, “we chose not to require tribal enrollment,” which they affirm as just “one of many ways to define American Indian identity” (xxiii, xxiv). The editors are brave in addressing this issue head on in their broadening identification of Native women writers, but it distracts from the legitimately important issue of literary genre study in regards to Native literatures. Instead of orienting the volume toward the literature itself, primacy is given to the divisive issues of authorship, identity, and tribal enrollment, as discussed in the final section of the introduction: “Parameters of This Anthology.”

The introduction’s larger attention to Indigenous identity simply raises more problems than it resolves, opening up the collection to stereotypic interpretations: “What is it about these stories that is characteristic of Native American experience? A way of perceiving the natural world, feeling connected to the land, rather than assuming dominion over it” (xiii). Contemporary ecocritical scholarship of global Indigenous and environmental literatures has moved far beyond past pat romanticizations of Indigenous women’s connections to the natural world. Indeed, a number of the selections included in the volume demonstrate just such a diversity of environmental experience that complicate such interpretive understandings of Native women’s lives and creative expression. The extensive notes to the introduction provide a helpful guide through the history of Native American literary anthologies, but little attention is given to the recent scholarship of either Native American or environmental literatures. Reading this volume, one would have no idea of the extensive scholarship in the field by the likes of Kate Shanley, Robert Warrior, Daniel Justice, Patrice Hollrah, Craig Womack, Sean Teu-

ton, Chris Teuton, David Moore, Jace Weaver, myself, and many others. While no volume will be comprehensive, as the editors explicitly point out in “choosing depth over breadth,” the notes give attention to the many anthologies and works of scholarship largely from the twentieth century with negligible inclusion of the extensive work in the first decade of the twenty-first century (xxiii).

Of course, the strengths of the collection, as is true of any literary anthology, lie in the literary works themselves. Many of the stories in *Reckonings* are tried-and-true pieces that are already demonstrating that they will stand the canonical tests of time. Beth E. Brant’s “Swimming Upstream,” Anna Lee Walters’s “Apparitions,” Leslie Marmon Silko’s “Storyteller,” and Joy Harjo’s “The Woman Who Fell from the Sky” and “Letter from the End of the Twentieth Century” are among the more well known and widely anthologized pieces. Additionally, the collection includes less well known selections of short prose fiction by other established writers. It is helpful to have such work by Janet Campbell Hale, Anita Endrezze, and Kimberly M. Blaeser available in print here. The collection concludes with work by two younger writers: Reid Gómez and Beth H. Piatote. In the stories “Electric Gods” and “Touch. Touch. Touching.” by Gómez and “Beading Lesson” and “Life-Size Indian” by Piatote, *Reckonings* closes by pointing forward to such new work by two new and emerging Native women writers. Having contributions by these and the other Native women writers in one volume provides the opportunity for greater attention to their work.

That being said, I want to reiterate that I think the greater value of this Native women’s literary collection is less in the particular choices of whom to include and more in its attention to the specificity of genre. For classes on the short story, this collection would provide a ready inclusion of Native literature and, more specifically, Native women’s literature, but for classes devoted to Native women’s literature, the Erdrich and Tohe volume and the Harjo and Bird volume still remain primary. Perhaps the editors or others will consider bringing out newer collections of Native women’s literatures. We are due for a more contemporary anthology, especially one that includes the range of twenty-first-century Native women’s writing

that is increasingly informed by tribal, gender, hemispheric, and global connections and exigencies. In the meantime, *Reckonings* provides an important resource for the teaching of Native American women's prose fiction.

John Lloyd Purdy. *Writing Indian, Native Conversations*. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2009. ISBN 978-0-8032-2287-8. 282 pp.

Kenneth M. Roemer, *University of Texas at Arlington*

"Conversations" is an accurate announcement for this study of contemporary American Indian fiction. John Purdy writes in a direct conversational style, free of jargon and heavy on civility. His book is a demonstration of what he and Louis Owens agreed on in an interview: "[S]cholarship and academic writing need not be contentious" (221). In part this civility is expressed by his insistence that his approach to criticism be taken as a motion "toward" conclusions, "a journey, a process, rather than *the* conclusive, definitive word" (viii) or a "terminal creed," to borrow Gerald Vizenor's term. The keystone of Purdy's civility is an openness, even an insistence, on the need for diverse approaches to studying Native writing. Nowhere is this more evident than in his brief introduction. On two facing pages he respectfully evokes the names of Charles Larson, Robert Warrior, Craig Womack, Jace Weaver, Michael Dorris, David Truer, James Cox, Elvira Pulitano, Arnold Krupat, Louis Owens, and Paula Gunn Allen (viii–ix). I tried to imagine all these scholar-critics in a room together; there would be some rather heated exchanges and long, tense silences. Purdy's point isn't that diverse speakers should all agree, but that they should all have a say: "[I]f it is otherwise, the discourse [on Native literatures] is dead" (ix).

I wish another appropriate word had appeared in the title—"collected," not because I enjoy alliteration (*Collected Conversations*), but because that addition would give readers a better understanding of the nature of the book. As the acknowledgments pages indicate (253–54), most of *Writing Indian* consists of twelve of Purdy's previously published articles in revised form (1986–2006, and

one forthcoming when this book was in press) and five interviews (Allen, Ortiz, Vizenor, Alexie, and Owens).¹ There are certainly practical and intellectual advantages to collected essays, especially in this case since several of these essays appeared in European volumes that may be difficult to access in print or online, and more especially because of Purdy's significant roles as long-serving, past editor of *SAIL*, as someone with extensive contacts with contemporary authors, and as a scholar-editor still actively promoting the developments of contemporary American Indian literature with his online journal *Native Literatures: Generations*.

Gatherings of revised essays invite two obvious evaluative questions: are some of the essays out of date and are there enough unifying elements to transform a collection into a "book"? The subchapters on *House Made of Dawn* and *Ceremony*, originally appearing in 1997 and 1986, respectively, struck me as a bit outdated: the former's key argument about the disastrous results of attempting to confront and destroy evil directly and alone, instead of acknowledging its unending presence and acting in community, was stated eloquently in Larry Evers' 1977 *Western American Literature* article "Words and Place"; and the significant connections between Tayo's narrative and Laguna oral narratives, especially convergence/emergence patterns, are well known. Still both subsections will be valuable introductions to newcomers to the field, and Purdy's provocative pairing of Auntie's story of Tayo's mother's naked and inebriated appearance at dawn and Tayo's sighting of a Ka't'sina at dawn is still original.

Although Purdy is careful not to promise a survey of contemporary Native fiction, the primary structural unifying element is chronological, and indeed this organization does offer a sense of development of books, authors, and significant events, especially the 1977 NEH Flagstaff Seminar and the 1992 Returning the Gift gathering. Chapter 1, "The 1970s," includes an interview with Paula Gunn Allen and readings of *House Made of Dawn*, *The Death of Jim Loney*, and *Ceremony*. Allen's comments about the danger of Native literature being pigeonholed as ethnic literature in the "Oppressed People's Garden" still resonates today (5).

Purdy frames chapter 2, "The 1980s," with Ortiz and Vizenor

interviews; his analyses focus on *Fools Crow*, *Winter in the Blood*, and Erdrich's first five North Dakota Saga novels. The placement of Ortiz and James Welch's *Winter in the Blood* (1974) is debatable, since Ortiz's *Going for the Rain* (1976) and *A Good Journey* (1977) and Welch's novel were such crucial breakthroughs in the 1970s. But Ortiz's comments about the use of English and Native languages are certainly relevant to Erdrich's works, and Purdy makes insightful connections between the destructive and constructive journeys in *Fools Crow* and the mostly destructive movements up and down the Highline Highway in *Winter in the Blood*.

It is appropriate that chapter 3, "The 1990s," opens with a lively interview with Alexie and that much of that interview and the last subsections of the chapter concentrate on film (*Smoke Signals*, *Imagining Indians*, and *Harold of Orange*). Alexie was the "celebrity" author of the 1990s, and films by Indians had major breakthroughs during the decade. It also makes sense to place King here; *Medicine River* and *Green Grass, Running Water*, his best-known novels, appeared in 1990 and 1993. I enjoyed Purdy's discussion of crows and dogs in Vizenor's *Bearheart*, but placing analysis of that 1978 novel, revised and reissued in 1990, was bothersome, since that novel was so firmly grounded in specific events (e.g., the oil embargo) and culture of the 1960s and 1970s. One justification Purdy implies is that the 1990s witnessed the rise of humor in American Indian novels, and Alexie, King, and Vizenor are the best-known champions of this rise, so it makes good sense to house them together in one chapter.

In chapter 4, "The New Millennium and Its Origins," it makes less sense to have Owens and D'Arcy McNickle introduce us to the early twenty-first century. The transition from interview to analysis in the Owens section of the chapter is the best interview/analyses integration in the book, with Owens's discussion of his novels appearing from 1991 to 2001 leading nicely into Purdy's detailed discussion of *Dark River* (1999). And Purdy's use of film terminology and concepts of motion and narrative voice does make a convincing case for defining McNickle's *The Surrounded* (1936) as a hybrid traditional-modernist text. Furthermore, Purdy does qualify his chapter title with the word *origins*. Still, with so many young and not-so-

young “new” Native writers gaining attention in the last decade (an enterprise Purdy’s *Native Literatures* promotes), it would have been good to include one or more of these authors in the final chapter.

There are at least two other unifying elements to *Writing Indian*, one stated explicitly, the other implicitly; the latter succeeds better than the former. In his introduction, Purdy explicitly identifies a four-stage critical approach that he developed during a Fulbright in Germany: differentiate (how do Native authors differentiate their literature from other literatures by grounding them in tribal literatures and/or historical and cultural contexts?); investigate (how do the authors examine these differences and how do these investigations reshape readers’ perceptions?); and affirm and continue (how do the investigations suggest a privileging of integration with community over alienation, as well as the endurance of community and of Native verbal arts?). This method, abbreviated as *DIAC* throughout the book, works very well for some texts, notably Silko’s *Ceremony*. At other times it seems tacked on, as in the concluding comments after the Vizenor interview (128), or forced, as when Purdy stresses affirmation and continuity to a point in his interpretations of the endings of *House Made of Dawn* and *Winter in the Blood* that obscures ambivalences and pessimism.

The more successful implied unifying method reflects Purdy’s openness to different interpretive strategies, his belief that different books invite different approaches. At the core of his analyses is a commitment to neo-New Critical close readings combined with an awareness of the importance of cultural contexts, the impact of colonization, the usefulness of reader-response criticism (specifically the construction of implied or ideal readers, though he doesn’t use these terms), and, when relevant, the introduction of personal experience. Two striking examples of the appropriateness of his eclectic strategies are his discussions of Erdrich and Owens. In his excellent analysis of Erdrich’s Reservation novels through *Tales of Burning Love*, Purdy juxtaposes examples of chance, luck, coincidence, and fate as different card games in “the present” and, in the afterworld, bingo games, chance encounters by a lonely woman (June) with a mud engineer or Karl and Mary’s mother with a pilot, the

gigantic stick game of falling trees that ends *Tracks*, and the unexpected appearance of a skunk during Lipsha's vision quest. These and other related episodes provide Erdrich with excellent means of investigating the differentiating characteristics of past and present Anishinaabe people and culture (the *D* and *I* of DIAC). More specifically, Erdrich's investigation enables her to define how "[p]ower resides in vision, in an awareness that events are not based upon random chance but upon recurrent movements and motifs that swirl in recognizable patterns" (106). This awareness can bring self-understanding within the contexts of family, community, history, and stories (the *A* and *C* of DIAC). Purdy brings to his discussion of Owens's novels in the interview and in his follow-up examination of *Deep River* significant personal connections to Owens while he lived as well as personal reactions to Owens's death and the newspaper stories about the death. These connections and reactions enabled him to offer insightful and often moving interpretations of Owens's humor, humans, animals, the land, and how they all intertwine.

Am I voicing the old cliché that the parts are better than the whole? Not really. Together these conversations offer an engaging overview of important developments over the past thirty-plus years of Native fiction writing. But there are certain parts of the book that should be absolutely required reading for anyone interested in American Indian fiction. The interviews with Vizenor, Alexie, and Owens offer essential insights into the authors' respective works and into the ways avenues of publication are opened and blocked for Native authors. Finally, there are examinations of themes, especially humor and movement, and specific authors, especially Erdrich, that enrich conversations about all American literature.

NOTE

1. See Paula Gunn Allen, interview, *SAIL* 9.3 (1997): 5–16; Simon J. Ortiz, interview, *SAIL* 12.4 (2000): 1–4; Gerald Vizenor, interview, *AIQ* 29.1–2 (2005): 212–25; Sherman Alexie, interview, *SAIL* 9.4 (1997): 1–18; and Louis Owens, interview, *SAIL* 10.2 (1998): 6–22.

Pauline Wakeham. *Taxidermic Signs: Reconstructing Aboriginality*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2008. ISBN 978-0-8166-5054-5. 255 pp.

Jerome Bump, *University of Texas at Austin*

In 1984 Donna Haraway published “Teddy Bear Patriarchy: Taxidermy in the Garden of Eden,” her reading of the animals in Carl Akeley’s African dioramas in the American Museum of Natural History. In 2008 Pauline Wakeham, assistant professor of English at the University of Western Ontario, published her interpretation of a diorama of animals and humans in the Buffalo Nations Luxton Museum in Banff. According to Haraway, each of Akeley’s dioramas “has at least one animal that catches the viewer’s gaze . . . vigilant, ready to sound an alarm.” Nor are the “taxidermic specimens” in the Luxton diorama mere props, as they usually are in turn-of-the-century dioramas. In Banff plastic natives with blank stares are upstaged by stuffed animals who seem more alert and animated. In Wakeham’s reading, “the tableaux are accordingly overwritten by colonial discourse’s strategic conflation of the categories of animality and aboriginality—a discursive collapse that racializes native bodies and relegates them to a static space . . .” (2).

Haraway (whom Wakeham cites) stretched the meaning of *taxidermy* to include “social texts such as ethnographic photography and film.” Just as Haraway added a section on Akeley’s photography and his role in Martin Johnsons’s safari film, Wakeham’s next chapter focuses on E. S. Curtis’s twenty-volume photographic collection, *The North American Indian* (1907–1930), and his film, *In the Land of the Headhunters: A Drama of Kwakiutl Life* (1914). Wakeham argues that these works demonstrate “the persistent appeal of colonialist and racist ideology that so ably buttresses the hegemonic status quo. It is the fantasy of allochronism and aboriginal death that abets the state and its apparatuses, as well as the forces of capital, in willfully overlooking the vital fact that Indigenous peoples are alive in North America today” (127). Film is also the subject of Wakeham’s next chapter. The restoration of the 1927 documentary *Nass River Indians* raises the disturbing question, “How might the work of postcolonial restoration be co-opted by the state to reclaim national plunder?” (163).

Wakeham departs from Haraway's pattern in her final chapter, stretching the term *taxidermy* to two different kinds of topics: "Kennebec Man and the Reconstruction of Epidermalized Aboriginality" and "Kwaday Dan Ts'inchí and the Fetishization of Flesh." According to Wakeham, debates about these archaeological resurrections of American Indian bodies "constitute powerful examples of the ideological pitfalls and power asymmetries that continue to contour efforts to repatriate Aboriginal remains and cultural belongings" (201).

These valuable contributions to our understanding of American Indians suggest many more avenues for research, such as the wearing of the animal skin as "taxidermic sign" and the role of such signs in American Indian literature. To return one last time to the parallels with Haraway, the conclusion of her essay focuses on the exploitation of the natives in African safaris and on patriarchy in the American Museum of Natural History. However, in the center of her essay, immediately after stretching the term *taxidermy* to include photography and film, she turns to the stories in Akeley's *In Brightest Africa* and in his wife's biography of him. To future researchers, Wakeham's book may also suggest many links to stories. In *Black Elk Speaks*, for example, the wearing of animal skins is obviously at the center of the bison and elk ceremonies (xvii). Such stories from the past, of course, need not make us overlook "the vital fact that Indigenous peoples are alive in North America today." Ceremonies like those celebrated in *Black Elk Speaks* are the source of the wearing of skins in powwows today. Dressing in skins in these rituals suggests other avenues for research. For instance, one might contrast the powwow dancers to the wealthy city dwellers who strut about in furs. Behind this urban perversion of American Indian customs are, of course, the "forces of capital" that demand that animals be skinned alive for the sake of the fashion industry (127).

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 related 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.

A conversation with Lisa Brooks, Michael Elliot, Arnold Krupat, Elvira Pulitano, and Craig Womack took place at Emory University on April 22, 2011. The participants talked about hybridity, sovereignty, and international approaches to Native American literature. No papers were presented, and the panelists concentrated on listening and speaking to each other instead of formal presentations. The resulting dialogue, introduced and followed by written statements from the speakers about the significance of the videotaped discussion, can be viewed by accessing the online journal *SouthernSpaces.org*; <http://southernspaces.org/2011/cosmopolitanism-and-nationalism-native-american-literature-panel-discussion>.

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KENNETH M. ROEMER is a Piper Professor and Distinguished Scholar and Distinguished Teaching Professor at the University of Texas at Arlington. He is the editor of *Approaches to Teaching Momaday's The Way to Rainy Mountain* and *Native American Writers of the United States* and coeditor of *The Cambridge Companion to Native American Literature*. The latter two works won Wordcraft Circle of Native Writers and Storytellers Writer of the Year Awards (reference category). His articles and essay reviews on American Indian literatures have appeared in *SAIL*, *American Literature*, *American Quarterly*, *American Literary History*, and *Modern Fiction Studies*. He has published four books on utopian literature and, for the past sixteen years, has been the advisor for UTA's Native American Students Association.

CHRISTOPHER SCHEDLER is associate professor of English at Central Washington University, where he teaches courses in American Indian, Latino/a, and ethnic American literatures. He is the author of *Border Modernism: Intercultural Readings in American Literary Modernism* and articles on Alejandro Morales, John Joseph Mathews, Americo Paredes, Willa Cather, and Ernest Hemingway. He is at work on a book manuscript examining migration narratives in literary texts by Native and ethnic American authors of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

CARRIE LOUISE SHEFFIELD teaches courses on race and ethnicity in American literature at the University of Tennessee. Her research interests (and current book project) focus on contemporary Native American literary and pop-culture responses to historical traumas. She received her PhD in theory and cultural studies from Purdue University in 2005.

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MAJOR TRIBAL NATIONS AND BANDS

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

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

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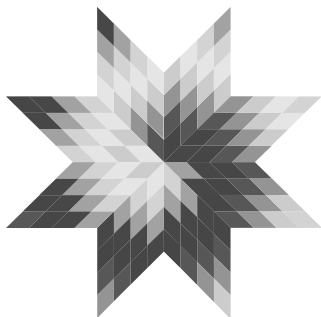
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