

VOLUME 25 • NUMBER 3 • FALL 2013

Studies in American Indian Literatures

EDITOR

CHADWICK ALLEN, Ohio State University

Published by the University of Nebraska Press

The editor thanks the College of Arts and Sciences at The Ohio State University for their financial support.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Studies in American Indian Literatures (SAIL ISSN 0730-3238) is the only scholarly journal in the United States that focuses exclusively on American Indian literatures. SAIL is published quarterly by the University of Nebraska Press for the Association for the Study of American Indian Literatures (ASAIL). For current subscription rates please see our website: www.nebraskapress.unl.edu.

If ordering by mail, please make checks payable to the University of Nebraska Press and send to

The University of Nebraska Press
1111 Lincoln Mall
Lincoln, NE 68588-0630
Telephone: 402-472-8536

All inquiries on subscription, change of address, advertising, and other business communications should be sent to the University of Nebraska Press.

A subscription to SAIL is a benefit of membership in ASAIL. For membership information please contact

Jeff Berglund
PO Box 6032
Department of English
Northern Arizona University
Flagstaff, AZ 86011-6032
Phone: 928-523-9237
E-mail: jeff.berglund@nau.edu

SUBMISSIONS

The editorial board of SAIL invites the submission of scholarly manuscripts focused on all aspects of American Indian literatures as well as the submission of bibliographical essays, review essays, and interviews. We define "literatures" broadly to include all written, spoken, and visual texts created by Native peoples.

Manuscripts should be prepared in accordance with the most recent edition of the *MLA Style Manual*. SAIL only accepts electronic submissions. Please submit your manuscript by e-mail as an attachment (preferably as an MS Word document).

SAIL observes a "blind reading" policy, so please do not include an author name on the title, first page, or anywhere else in the article. With your submission do include your postal and e-mail addresses along with your phone number. All submissions are read by outside reviewers. Submissions should be sent directly to Chadwick Allen at SAIL@osu.edu.

For detailed information on SAIL's editorial policy for special issues, please consult the title's submission guidelines on the Journals side of www.nebraskapress.unl.edu.

Copyright © 2013 University of Nebraska Press
All rights reserved
Manufactured in the United States of America

If you would like to reprint material from *SAIL*, please query for permission using our online form, located under the Journals menu heading on our website: www.nebraskapress.unl.edu.

SAIL is available online through Project Muse at <http://muse.jhu.edu> and through JSTOR at <http://www.jstor.org>.

Articles appearing in this journal are abstracted and indexed in *Anthropological Index*, *Arts & Humanities Citation Index*, *Bibliography of Native North Americans*, *Current Abstracts*, *Current Contents/Arts & Humanities*, *ERIC Databases*, *IBR: International Bibliography of Book Reviews*, *IBZ: International Bibliography of Periodical Literature*, *MLA International Bibliography*, and *TOC Premier*.

Cover photo courtesy of Bonita Bent-Nelson, copyright © 2003. Cover and interior design by Kimberly Hermesen.

GENERAL EDITOR

Chadwick Allen

BOOK REVIEW EDITOR

Lisa Tatonetti

EDITORIAL BOARD

Lisa Brooks, Jodi Byrd, Robin Riley Fast, Susan Gardner, Patrice Hollrah,
Molly McGlennen, Margaret Noodin, Kenneth Roemer, Christopher Teuton,
and Jace Weaver

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Anne Mai Yee Jansen

EDITORS EMERITUS

James H. Cox, Helen Jaskoski, Daniel Heath Justice, Karl Kroeber,
Robert M. Nelson, Malea Powell, John Purdy, and Rodney Simard

CONTENTS

- vii From the Editor
- ix In Memoriam: Remembering Alexander Vashchenko
ANDREW WIGET

ARTICLES

- 1 Irony, Pattern, Mystery: The “Tribal Traditional” in
The Death of Jim Loney
LINCOLN FALLER
- 33 Gertrude Bonnin’s Rhetorical Strategies of Silence
ELIZABETH WILKINSON
- 57 Intimate Enemies: Weetigo, Weesageechak, and the
Politics of Reconciliation in Tomson Highway’s
Kiss of the Fur Queen and Joseph Boyden’s *Three Day Road*
SOPHIE MCCALL
- 86 Narrative Healing in Betty Louise Bell’s *Faces in the Moon*:
A Tribute to Cherokee Continuance
CHRISTINA ROBERTS

BOOK REVIEWS

- 107 Michelle H. Raheja. *Reservation Reelism: Redfacing,
Visual Sovereignty, and Representations of Native Americans in Film*
JOANNA HEARNE
- 110 Alexandra Harmon. *Rich Indians: Native People and the
Problem of Wealth in American History*
EVE DARIAN-SMITH

- 115 Joe Dale Tate Nevaquaya. *Leaving Holes & Selected New Writings*
LYNETTE WISE LEIDNER
- 118 Daniel Heath Justice. *The Way of Thorn and Thunder:
The Kynship Chronicles*
DAVID D. OBERHELMAN
- 120 John Joseph Mathews. *Twenty Thousand Mornings:
An Autobiography*
MASCHA N. GEMEIN
- 124 Mark Cronlund Anderson and Carmen L. Robertson.
Seeing Red: A History of Natives in Canadian Newspapers
KYLE CARSTEN WYATT
- 127 Scott Lauria Morgensen. *Spaces between Us:
Queer Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Decolonization*
LEAH SNEIDER
- 132 Contributor Biographies

FROM THE EDITOR

Reclamation and Return

A central concern of contemporary Native American and Indigenous literary studies is the ongoing effort to expand our archive: to rediscover and reclaim lost, forgotten, or previously unknown authors and texts; to engage authors and texts not only across borders of tribe and nation, but also across borders of gender, sexuality, ability, and citizenship; to open our methods of inquiry and analysis to diverse genre and media and to multiple modes of representation and performance. An equally central concern of our field, however, is the need to continually return critical attention—with its ever-evolving understandings of relevant contexts for reading and productive methodologies for analysis—to authors and texts assumed to be well known and thus assumed to be fully understood and appreciated, whether such authors and texts have in the past been considered “central” to the field or “marginal.” The addition of new authors and texts and the development of new understandings of relevant contexts and productive methodologies potentially change how we read, interpret, and understand the familiar and the obscure alike.

The four highly accomplished essays in this issue of *SAIL* invite us to turn our attention to both familiar and obscure authors and texts and to consider each within new contexts and from new critical perspectives. Lincoln Faller opens the issue by reconsidering James Welch’s much-discussed but ever-elusive 1979 novel *The Death of Jim Loney*. Faller revisits past assessments of the novel’s provocative and ambiguous ending, and he develops new readings of its central scenes by exploring aspects of the novel’s literary structure and system of historical and cultural allusions that are especially occulted and difficult to interpret—or even to recognize. The result, appropriately, is an expanded appreciation for the novel’s mystery and for Welch’s considerable literary skill, rather than an assertion of an exhaustive or definitive account. Eliza-

beth Wilkinson then reconsiders Gertrude Bonnin's complex rhetorical strategies from the early twentieth century, especially her strategic use of her own narrative silences, her depictions of the silence and silencing of others, and her deployment of delayed discourse. Wilkinson's strategy of pairing Bonnin's lesser-known 1924 report *Oklahoma's Poor Rich Indians: An Orgy of Graft and Exploitation of the Five Civilized Tribes—Legalized Robbery* with her better-known trilogy of essays about the Indian boarding school experience published between 1900 and 1902 in the *Atlantic Monthly* is especially fruitful and persuasive; it provides a useful model for future studies. Next, Sophie McCall considers the contemporary political issue of Indigenous-settler reconciliation, especially as it is being debated in Canada, and the contemporary literary-critical issue of the merits of "nationalist" versus "postcolonial" approaches to reading and interpretation, through a different kind of critical pairing, the close comparison of Tomson Highway's 1998 novel *Kiss of the Fur Queen* and Joseph Boyden's 2005 novel *Three Day Road*. McCall focuses her wide-ranging comparative analysis through Highway's and Boyden's evocative representations of the Cree figures Weetigo (a cannibal spirit) and Weesageechak (a trickster), which allows her to frame the broader political issues she raises in distinctly Indigenous terms. Finally, Christina Roberts invites reconsideration of Betty Louise Bell's moving but understudied 1994 novel *Faces in the Moon*. Roberts examines the complexity of the novel's narrative voice and the potential relationships of that narrative voice to Bell's nonfiction writing by focusing, in particular, on Bell's unflinching representation of the abject figure of the detribalized Indigenous woman and on Bell's commitment to creating a narrative of healing. Similar to Faller's reconsideration of Welch, Roberts's reconsideration of Bell concludes not with an assertion of mastery over this nuanced text but rather with an appreciation for its subtlety and power.

Chadwick Allen

IN MEMORIAM

Remembering Alexander Vashchenko

ANDREW WIGET

When Alexander Vashchenko passed away on 11 June 2013 after a short but terrible battle with cancer, all of us lost a professional colleague of international stature whose voice had become an essential part of the ongoing conversation in the humanities between Russia and North America.

Nearly thirty years have passed since I first met him in the summer of 1985. The study of Native American literature was then only an emergent phenomenon in the United States, and the first edition of the remarkable *Heath Anthology of American Literature*, which would fully integrate American Indian and other minority voices into the study of American literature, was still four years away. So I was astonished when I heard that a visiting Soviet scholar was going to speak on American Indian literature, a topic that surely must have been extraordinarily esoteric for scholars in his country. I had to attend. There I listened to a slim, intense, bookish-looking fellow present a very good reading, both sensitive and informed, of N. Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn*. Afterward, as we talked, his eyes brightened with warmth and friendship, and his scholarly demeanor burst open like a sudden sunrise. He was patient as I bombarded him with questions, and he was anxious to know about my work with Indian writers and Indian tribes. I learned that he had been the young Moscow State University graduate student assigned to assist Momaday on his 1974 visit as the first Fulbright scholar to the Soviet Union. In 1989 I invited him to tour the Southwest with me, and the following year he invited me to the Soviet Union. We spent all of August 1990 together, as he took me all over Russia, from Karelia in the north to the Caucasus in the south. In trains and planes, cars and boats, we talked and talked, days and nights, telling stories and jokes, sharing personal experiences, our sense of our own country and



Alexander Vashchenko. Photograph by Andrew Wiget.

each other's, discussing literature and teaching and writing. By then, I had learned to call him Sasha, the affectionate nickname for Alexander. He had become my friend.

At that time Sasha was working at the Gorky Institute of World Literature in Moscow, contributing articles on American Indian literature, canonical authors, and later Chicano writers to what would eventually be a new, five-volume history of American literature, definitive for the USSR. Later he would proudly show me the fifth and final volume and point out that he contributed articles on Indian writers to every volume. Sasha and I organized a very strong international conference at the Gorky Institute that brought Sasha and his colleagues together with the best American scholars from the Yale Project/Heath Anthology—Paul Lauter, Amy Ling, Hortense Spillers—with the aim of deepening our understanding of the dynamics of American literary history and

canon formation. When I mentioned that I would like to speak with anyone who had been working with Siberian Native peoples, because I understood that their stories and traditions bore some similarity to those of American Indians, Sasha introduced me to one of the Gorky folklore scholars just returned from a Siberia expedition, Olga Balaeva, who would later become not only my colleague but my spouse. Together the three of us organized a 1994 international expedition to the Siberian Khanty; it was the first of many trips to Siberia for Sasha and for me, and a life changer for both of us. A year later, Sasha brought out a two-volume, Russian-language collection that he edited called *In Nature's Heartbeat*, one volume of which represented his selection of Native Siberian writers, and the other of his Russian translations of Native American writers. This remarkably ambitious, even visionary project anticipated by twenty years his recent anthology of Native Siberian literature in English, *The Way of Kinship*, and, of course, the present Vaella-Momaday dialogue. In the following year he published his translation of *Black Elk Speaks* and later his translations of Momaday. Sasha wrote articles and books on American Indian literature, literally creating the field for the Russian-language world. When I came to edit the *Dictionary of Native American Literature*, I reached out to Sasha as the first international contributor, and he wrote a wonderful article on Native American Oral Historical Epics.

Sasha was twice invited to lecture at my university, New Mexico State, each time for a whole semester. He taught Russian literature, and together we talked and traveled. The first time he came to my university we traveled more intensively throughout the Southwest, among the Navajos, Apaches, and Puebloan peoples, attended Shalako at Zuni, and visited Scott Momaday, Leslie Silko, and Larry Evers in Tucson. The second time, having become deeply interested in Chicano literature, he met Rudy Anaya and other Chicano writers as well as many Chicano scholars. Sasha then translated some of their work and, as with Native American literature, laid the foundations of yet a second field of study for Russian-language students. He directed the first Russian dissertations on both Native American and Chicano literature. His daughter, Anna, honored his affection for Spanish by mastering that language he loved not too little but too late.

So much of my sense of Sasha is shaped by his deep humanism. He was a humanist in an academic sense, who wrote with passion, intel-

ligence, and scholarship about comparative mythology and the nature of aesthetic. But Sasha was also a humanist in a broader, deeper sense, a type of sensibility no longer critically fashionable in our cynical age of numbering all our sins, counting all our crimes, to which Sasha, who certainly agreed with that calculus, would nevertheless answer, “Yes, but . . .” As much pain and evil and cruelty he acknowledged in the histories of both Russia/the Soviet Union and the United States, he never lost sight of the important cultural values woven into the crude fabric of history nor of the fact that individual acts of grace can help to redeem the ugly burden of history. He himself was a testament to that belief. Part of his love of American Indian and Chicano peoples and their cultures, and indeed of Russian regional village cultures, was his deep commitment to their valuing of kinship and community, the bond of social relation strengthened by meals shared, stories told, and songs sung in the extended family, strengthened every time custom is reproduced, diminished every time the mind-numbing assimilative forces of globalization and popular culture gain ascendancy. For him, this human social bond was an almost transcendental force, something not unlike a deeply religious feeling that rendered all the attractions of commercial mass culture shallow by comparison.

More than a scholar or teacher, Sasha was also an indefatigable and superb translator, especially in support of any effort that would foster dialogue through Indigenous literatures. When I shared the news of his death, one Siberian writer remarked despairingly, “Now, whom shall we find?” Indeed. At present there is no one else. Sasha had become the indispensable link between two worlds. A few days before he passed, we talked in the hospital, remembering our times together. I suggested to him that we had been bridges between our countries and cultures. He thought over that metaphor a minute and corrected me. “Gates,” he rasped, “We were gates.” I have been thinking about the difference between the two metaphors. Bridges are permanent constructions, built over time, piece by piece, and there is some truth to that image of our work. But Sasha’s image is much more in character: Gates as points of entrance, doors unlocked and pushed aside in a single act of the will, demanding strenuous effort but in the end opened as wide as the widest arms, so that the crowds can flood in. For me and for many others, Sasha was such a gate, opening a passage between hearts and worlds that can never be closed.

Irony, Pattern, Mystery

The “Tribal Traditional” in *The Death of Jim Loney*

LINCOLN FALLER

People have told me this: “You are a role model. Go in and talk to these people and let them know that an Indian can write.” I know most of my Indian friends who are writers or activists or whatever, are also considered role models. So you’re reduced to this group of people with their few role models instead of all the people rising up. . . . It’s hard to identify with a role model, incidentally.

James Welch, 1982 (Bevis, “Dialogue” 178)

Of James Welch’s five novels the most problematic and, arguably, the least understood is *The Death of Jim Loney*. Or so the long history of commentary on it would indicate. This essay delves first into questions that have so far largely defined discussions of the novel, which have been dominated by what it means for Jim to arrange his own death after he kills Pretty Weasel. It then goes on to consider aspects and qualities that previous considerations have overlooked or insufficiently explored, among other things the novel’s chronology, how it maps the movement of its protagonist across its landscape, and, in general, its often highly occulted allusions to the traditional cultures of the Blackfeet and Gros Ventre peoples. *The Death of Jim Loney* is far more finely nuanced, far more superbly crafted, far more profoundly ironic, far more polyvalent and mysterious than we have so far understood. In being all these things, to a very high degree, it puts its readers in a difficult position, and this, I’ll suggest, is crucial to Welch’s concern, still early in his career, to demonstrate his craft—and power—as an *Indian* writer. But as an Indian writer, it needs to be added, not easily or comfortably assimilable to even the most well meaning and appreciative—but at the same time offputting, even potentially demeaning—notion of what that conjunction of terms, surprising to some people at least, might mean.

NO EPIPHANIES: THE ENDING AND ITS IRONIES

Two related questions have long bedevilled readers of *The Death of Jim Loney*: How “Indian” is the novel? How “Indian” is Jim Loney? Kathleen Sands, one of the first to raise these questions, resolved the former by arguing, with reference to the latter, that however deracinated and clueless he may be, what Welch has called the “orchestration” of Loney’s suicide by tribal cop represents his choice to die “like a Gros Ventre warrior” (131).¹ This point, taken up and repeated in subsequent commentaries on the novel, aims at countering the “depressing” impression it might otherwise leave; “this dark novel is ultimately consoling,” Sands says (127).² Loney in this reading is not just another instance of an all too familiar stereotype but something of a tragic hero. Indeed, something of an existential tragic hero. Faced with the absurdity of his accidental killing of Pretty Weasel, a crisis in his otherwise meaningless and directionless life, Loney chooses nonetheless to take responsibility for that act and in so doing defines himself as he never has been able to before.³ The man who “never felt Indian” (*Jim Loney* 89), who didn’t feel like anything, really, certainly not white either, determines to die as an Indian, and does. He heads for Mission Canyon, where despite his earlier alienation from the landscape he feels now the presence of his maternal ancestors, and where he presents himself to be shot on Indian land by an Indian policeman.⁴ In doing so he elevates himself above the anomie and ennui that characterizes life in Harlem, Montana, a small town almost at “the end of the world” where even a privileged white person—in this case Jim’s girlfriend, Rhea—can feel little or no “possibility of spirit” (10).

For all its attractions, this argument ought to sit uneasily with careful and attentive readers of the novel. Perhaps not quite for the reasons it does so with Ernest Stromberg, who argues that “Indian” itself is an ambiguous and problematic category, made in the novel all the more ambiguous and problematic because Jim Loney is himself in no position to know what “feeling like an Indian,” or not, would be. In other words, even leaving questions of “authenticity” aside, if we’re to somehow ascertain his “Indianness” we can’t rely on Jim Loney’s sense of things.⁵ Louis Owens is more direct in his response to the “dying like an Indian” argument. For him, the ending of the novel is powerfully ironic, and in a way that does not mitigate or compensate at all for the bleakness that

precedes it. If "choosing to die a warrior's death" is what Loney does, he argues, it's not at all tragic but "pathetic": Adopting "the stance of the Indian as tragic hero, that inauthentic, gothic imposition of European America upon the Native American," Loney merely "enacts the fate of the epic Vanishing American." He "simply remains victimized by the authoritative discourse that defines the utterance 'Indian'" (155).

If one wants a model of what it means for an Indian to "die like a warrior" in post-reservation times, here is an instance that might better serve, one apparently still well known in Montana. In 1890 a Northern Cheyenne named Head Chief killed a young white man who had interrupted him butchering a stolen cow. Head Chief and his companion, a boy named Young Mule, attempted to conceal the murder, but it was found out. Afraid that his people would suffer military retaliation, Head Chief took the blame for his crime, but he and Young Mule, "not want[ing] to be imprisoned and hanged," and knowing that "they would have to die . . . preferred to die like warriors." So they sent "word to the troops and the Indian police that they had fled to a hill four or five miles away, and could be captured there." Such was George Bird Grinnell's account of the affair from what he heard at second hand. John Stands in Timber, six years old at the time, remembered that Head Chief announced that, on the next ration day, he would "play with the soldiers" and "die like a man," and that Young Mule decided to accompany him. Accordingly, on that day, the two of them rode down into Lame Deer firing their rifles at the gathered soldiers and, before the gathered tribe, died in a hail of bullets (Grinnell, "Account" 61–62, *Stands in Timber and Liberty* 251–55).⁶

In comparison Jim's offering himself up to die seems quite diminished. Head Chief and Young Mule can be remembered for their bravery and aplomb, for their defiance of an authority all too ready to think the worst of them, for their going down fighting in a way that could make their people proud and that could be admired even by potential enemies; theirs was "a meaningful, tribal death" (Strauss 5).⁷ Jim ponders the fact that his other good friend, Yellow Eyes, was "killed beyond recognition" (103). He himself, it might be said, arranges to be killed "within recognition," but what does that entail?⁸ How, we should ask, will Jim Loney's defiant stand be understood and remembered? Or is it even defiant? He submits passively to death. At the range from which he fires it, that 16-gauge shotgun itself is a pathetic weapon, with no hope of reaching

any target. It is just a way of saying, here I am, shoot me. But that's not likely what people will think. It concerns Jim that Yellow Eyes "disappeared without a trace. Nobody ever said, 'Whatever happened to Yellow Eyes?'" (104). The headlines, if indeed there are any, will say that Jim was killed in a shootout with police. And up along the Highline, where people gather in bars and drink, he'll be remembered—if at all—as just another of those hopeless, drunken Indians who for no apparent reason can kill their best friend and then light out for the mountains as if they somehow could get away. Welch hadn't yet read D'Arcy McNickle when he wrote *The Death of Jim Loney*, but at the end of the novel Jim does what Archilde in *The Surrounded* himself is afraid of doing, and eventually does at the end of his novel, that is, "hide in the mountains . . . like an Indian" (McNickle 220).⁹ And like an Indian in the most clichéd of Hollywood westerns, Jim Loney dies shot and falling from a high place in the walls of a canyon. That the cowboy who shoots him is actually an Indian—a "thug," really, as Loney describes him (156)—hardly matters. The trope extends all the way back to *The Last of the Mohicans*, the murderous Magua falling to his death from a cliff somewhere high in the Adirondacks.¹⁰

In interviews Welch often spoke of the "positive" aspect of Jim Loney's death.¹¹ That did not keep him from hedging the event about with all sorts of ironies. The novel is rich in references to the landscape surrounding Harlem, Montana, but there are only two features in that landscape for which Jim feels any affinity. These are, of course, Mission Canyon in the Little Rockies and the Milk River. He sees the latter, in the "feckless" meandering of its waters, as a symbol for his life, wondering "if it always sought the lowest ground" (99). It is significant, then, that the message he leaves for Amos with the dog he encounters in Hays, just before he enters the canyon, is that he's taking a "dog to higher ground" (147). Snake Butte, with its petroglyphs, frightens and alienates him, though one presumes it would no longer once he comes to see the canyon, too, as a place memorializing Native lives. Curiously the Bearpaws, which get five mentions altogether in the novel, have no associations at all for him. Rhea thinks of them (9), Kate mentions the view of them from Rhea's house (59), and she twice notes their growing light in the dawn as she and Jim park out by Snake Butte and talk (79).¹² But the Bearpaws never even register in Jim's field of vision. Is it significant that the canyon and the Little Rockies themselves, as also the river,

carry names that must have been imposed by whites, while the place that repels him, and the place that means nothing to him, carry names that certainly sound Native?¹³ In any case, as Jim makes his way to and then into the canyon "like a Gros Ventre warrior," on a "mission" into that place for which no Native name survives, with a shotgun in one hand and the remnants of an extra-large bottle of whisky in the other, it can only seem ironic that these, the dubious benefits of Western civilization, are "the few supplies he will need" (Sands 131).¹⁴

There may be a further irony in that Jim, leaving Harlem and even Hays behind, climbing up into the rocks of the canyon, can be carrying with himself, however unconsciously, something of that third scourge of Indian people, the Bible. He can seem to be answering the call of Isaiah—"Turn away from man in whose nostrils is breath, for of what account is he?"—rather than responding to that other, seemingly Indigenous presence that haunts him, the dark bird. Just before those lines from Isaiah that come strangely into Jim's mind at the very beginning of the novel, the prophet has been speaking of going into mountains and entering into rocks, prophesying a "day" when men in fear of the Lord "will cast forth their idols of silver and their idols of gold . . . to enter the caverns of the rocks and the clefts of the cliffs" (Isaiah 2:1–21).¹⁵ Owens sees in the passage from Isaiah, like Jim's visits from the bird, a warning to "look beyond human limitations toward the transcendent or spiritual," a warning he fails to understand because "he has no tradition, no teachers" (148). What of the transcendent could Jim possibly understand, given that his idea of "heaven" as he waits on his outcropping to die is a "place where people bought each other drinks and talked quietly about their pasts, their mistakes and their small triumphs . . . and everything was all right"? (155). What a sad, impoverished idea of the afterlife. Jim, sad bricoleur that he is, pieces his destiny together as well as he can—which is to say poorly—from the few odd fragments of culture he has.

Dying, Jim sees the dark bird across the canyon ascending into the sky. Is it his spirit going to a better place? That would have to be a better place than he himself can imagine. Or is that bird, which he thinks may be a sign from his mother's people, finally abandoning him? Jim at the end is vouchsafed no clear insight, no epiphany, nor is the reader.¹⁶ If indeed he dies like an Indian, his fate can seem far more pathetic and sad than Louis Owens even would have it. Along with any aspirations he may have to die a warrior's death, gun, whisky, and possibly the Bible

also figure in his search for “higher ground.” The terrible irony is that these, too—as much as any ancient code of honor—can and do shape notions of “Indianness”—even Indians’ notions of “Indianness”—in the world we Americans have made. “Your country lies desolate,” says the prophet, “your cities are burned with fire; in your very presence aliens devour your land” (Isaiah 1:7). That Jim chooses to die on Indian land is certainly symbolic, but just as symbolic—and more than that, actual—is the fact that the integrity of that land and all that it might represent of “Indianness” has itself been compromised. The reservation, Jim remembers as he nears his final destination, “used to include all the mountains until the white men discovered gold” (154), and then they took that land, too, along with the gold.¹⁷

Still, as this remarkably nuanced, often quite subtle novel indicates, Jim Loney might have come to a far worse end. The novel suggests, but does not opt for, a potentially terrible conclusion. William Bevis opines that it actually has two plots, a “weak” “white existential” one, from which “point of view, [Loney] is indeed a sad case,” and an “Indian” one that presents “a pattern of proud Native American resistance to assimilation” (“James Welch” 43–44). While, for reasons I’ve been pointing out, this distinction seems questionable to me if it’s meant at all categorically, there is a possible plot element—and I’d suppose it more “white” than “Indian”—that would have made Jim’s ending far more awful and far less meaningful than just “sad.” Indeed, had it been realized, finding anything at all sympathetic or positive in how Jim ends his life would have been well nigh impossible, and the novel as a whole could come to seem unbearable. Note, then, that on the last night of his life Jim, who’s been doing some drinking, shows up very late at the house of his only surviving friend—his lover, a woman who has told him she is leaving him—carrying a shotgun. Rhea lets him in; then, feeling “her shoulders twitch violently, as though she had just understood the implications of the gun,” she “expect[s] the worst” (134). Which does not occur. Still, it is not for nothing, I’d suggest, that later, watching Rhea sleep, “with the shotgun in the crook of his arm,” Jim feels that “in an odd way . . . he was sparing her life” (138). His gun still holds two shells, one for her and one for him. Murder-suicides are not all that odd or uncommon an occurrence in worlds like the one Jim Loney is about to leave. Happily, and Welch has a way of making us grateful for small happinesses, Jim is odd and uncommon not least in the way he chooses to leave his world.

PUZZLE TIME: CHRONOLOGY, CHIEF JOSEPH,
MORAL VICTORIES, THE POSITION OF THE SUN

"I have a beginnning and ending in mind when I start a novel," Welch told an interviewer, "the beginning stays pretty much the way I'd envisioned it" (Robbins 105). So why begin this novel with a high school football game that is narrowly lost sometime in the first week of October? Putting aside all that may be said about small-town life and the smallness of its excitements, and much might be said about the novel's relentless portrayal of both, there can seem something anticipating Jim's own endgame in the way this game is lost.¹⁸ The effort at a touchdown goes awry not because the tactic employed is bad—it looks as though it might have won the game—but because the kicker, "dancing behind him like a thin bird," collides with the player about to pass the ball. The kicker, a solitary figure whose clean uniform indicates his lonely status, recovers the ball but to no good effect. The last we see of him he is lying on the ground "without moving." The kicker, also a loner, bears comparison both to Jim in his solitary screw-up—like him bringing down a companion without meaning to, like him ending motionless on the ground (is he figuratively, as well as literally, "on the ball"?)—and of course to the dark bird that haunts him. If not a message from his mother's people but only an alcohol-induced hallucination, that bird is just as much Jim's nemesis as the kicker was the passer's. Or, maybe it is, too, as a messenger from his mother's people.

Eventually, perhaps because they do retain possession despite the kicker's foul-up, the Harlem team does score a touchdown. Failing, however, to make the extra point that would tie the game or the two that would win it, Harlem loses 13–12. "Hell, that's a moral victory," says Russell the bartender when he hears the news, and he and Jim both laugh, sharing "an Indian joke" (6). The joke, of course, is that moral victories are always losses, but calling them such is a way that losers can gloss their loss and victors, especially perhaps when they've won by unfair means, can assuage their guilt. Presumably Welch's point is that Indians know a lot about moral victories, as those are all that history has allowed them. The most positive claims that commentators on the novel have ever made for Jim Loney's "orchestrated" suicide, including Welch, is that in effect it amounts to a moral victory. But the joke and the occasion of the game refer to larger, far more occulted matters that Welch, quite mysteriously, has built into his narrative.

Critics of the novel have so far evinced only the most approximate notions of its timeline, which is actually quite precise. Given the novel's dating of Thanksgiving as November 24 (44), it can be determined that it is set in the year 1977. Given that we're told that the football game takes place the first week of October (3), and given the fact that high school football is played on Friday nights, it is possible to date that game, and thus the beginning of the narrative, as Friday, October 7, 1977. Exactly one hundred years before, on Friday, October 5, 1877, another "moral victory"—representing, actually, an excruciating loss—took place not far from Harlem, Montana. This was the surrender of Chief Joseph—"From where the sun now stands I will fight no more forever"—and his band of Nez Perce. They were stopped just forty miles short of the Canadian border by the US Army and its Indian allies—Lakota and Cheyenne, some of whom just the year before had wiped out Custer—after a running fight that covered some 1400 miles as they fled from their homelands in Oregon. It was the confiscation of those homelands that prompted them to seek refuge in Canada. The surrender took place in the Bearpaws, now the site of the Bear Paws Battlefield, a unit of the Nez Perce National Historical Park. The Bearpaws, as previously noted, are a feature in the landscape surrounding Jim that means nothing at all to him, that he never even seems to see. As it happens, the team that Harlem loses to is from the next town to the west, Chinook, the closest town to the battlefield park and its mailing address.

Chief Joseph, who hailed from so far away, seems a curious figure for Welch to have had in mind. We do know, however, that in the mid-1970s young militants on the Fort Belknap reservation, which is of course the reservation that figures in the novel, organized an annual powwow that honored Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce, along with Indian veterans. The powwow competed with another of longer standing and came to include significant participation by visiting Nez Perce who, among other things, performed ceremonies honoring their ancestors on the battlefield. As this powwow became somewhat controversial, Welch would likely have known about it (Fowler 172–75). But what could he have meant in evoking the defeat of that heroic figure, and doing it so cryptically? As no one seems to have noticed this in his lifetime, we can only guess.

In the first place, Welch may have had in mind the contrast between Jim's "moral victory," if that's what it is, and Chief Joseph's. Neither ever gets to Canada, though, after shooting Pretty Weasel, Jim, too, enter-

tains the possibility. But Joseph, rather than fighting to the death, or just offering himself up to death, chose to survive. He then lived on to become a deeply respected and revered figure among whites as well as Indians. His flight from the Wallowa Valley into the Rockies and then, finally, the Bearpaws aimed at the survival of a people; he surrendered so as to save his people. This was not the project of an individual pursuing individual goals and concerns with no regard for the consequences for others. And for all these reasons, though Joseph's surrender was indeed a defeat, it was also, indeed, as true a moral victory as could be imagined. If Jim's death is in any sense a triumph, it is an utterly personal and private one; it will do no one else any good, and it will not be remembered in a good way.¹⁹

That Jim himself—along with Rhea and Kate, who at least can see the Bearpaws—has no sense of the most notable historical event to have occurred in his surrounds—an *Indigenous* historical event—speaks of course to his isolation in his own self. Jim spends considerable effort trying to find his "history," by which he means his personal and, at most, his family history, and what little he finds doesn't much help. His sense of history is altogether too narrow. As their relationship is about to end Jim tells Rhea that he's never "understood" his "country": "once in a while I look around and I see things familiar and I think I will die here. It's my country then" (94). And when Rhea asks why he must think of this in terms of dying, "it seems so limiting," Loney in another rare moment of laughter agrees. Dying will define him, but he will die with only a barely sensed and incomplete knowledge of what his country could mean for him. True, he finds consolation in imagining the lives lived by his Indian ancestors in the canyon where he is about to die—and so the place becomes "familiar" for this man bereft of family—but a greater and possibly more redemptive wisdom sits in a place he never visits, never thinks about, never even sees, though, always there, it defines a part of his horizon.²⁰

Of course, readers of the novel haven't been too good at seeing any of this, either. Welch, curiously, is playing rather a deep game. Describing some of the impulse behind the writing of his first two novels, he said this:

If you were a tourist coming along Highway 2 there on the Highline, all you might want to do is get through this country as fast as

possible so you'd reach either the Rocky Mountains on one side, or, say, Minnesota on the other where the country gets green and lush again. I wanted to hijack a carload of those tourists and tell 'em, "O.K., here's what's here."

"I just wanted them to be immersed in this country," he continued, "so that they would see as much as I see, because, to me, that was a whole world right there and most people can't see that world" (Bevis, "Dialogue" 165). For all this wish to make outsiders aware of "a whole world" worth seeing on more than just simply aesthetic grounds—lacking as this country does the sublimity of high mountains or the lushness of green and fertile fields—Welch can seem quite guarded and cryptic in what he discloses of it and its meaning.

There are other ways in which the novel's chronology is suggestive of meanings not immediately apparent. The significance of Thanksgiving for Indian people—or the lack thereof—is certainly highlighted, both in Jim's unawareness of the day itself—which is also yet another sign of his social isolation—and in his sad awareness, as he passes through Hays, that Amos will eventually discover "Thanksgiving is not meant for him" (147). So much is relatively obvious in its implications. But far more subtle is the fact that Rhea, for all she seems to care for Jim, does not spend that holiday with him. Where is she, and with whom? Jim occupies only a particular fraction of her life, as is apparent when she later gives a party and he has not been invited. Kate is in transit on Thanksgiving Day, not scheduled to arrive until the day after, November 25. Toward the end of the novel she leaves home in Washington DC, early on the morning of December 24, intending to catch a ferry to Bainbridge Island later that day so she can make a scheduled meeting with a group of Indian educators. But who meets on Christmas Day? What does she do on Thanksgiving, and why isn't she spending it with her brother? It's not just Jim who's out of synch with the calendar, or the calendar at least that brings most Americans together in celebration against the declining days of autumn and the onset of winter.

And yet in other respects the calendar seems peculiarly significant to the novel's ending, as well as to the event that prompts that ending. Jim dies at dawn on Christmas Eve, one of the few days in his early life he remembers with pleasure, as it was on Christmas Eve that he and Sandra would go to midnight mass and eat some kind of pudding, drink hot chocolate.²¹ Though some might be tempted to see something Christo-

logical here, it seems to me just another of the ironies that surround Jim's death that he dies, not on Christmas itself, or around midnight on Christmas Eve, but a good many hours short of either.²² Dawn in any case is not particularly significant when it comes to Christmas, though it can play a crucial role in Christian ritual at Easter, which is the one other holiday that Jim remembers from his childhood. But Easter, and all it might suggest of sacrifice and salvation, is some great distance away, and, as elsewhere in this novel, most notably in Jim's dream that begins with a padlocked church, Christianity offers no solace.

It might seem significant, however, that Jim's dying on December 24, a Saturday, takes place exactly four weeks after Kate's arrival, on November 26, also a Saturday, and that his killing of Pretty Weasel, on December 21, a Wednesday, takes place just one day short of four weeks after the death of his dog and his meeting Amos, on November 24, Thanksgiving.²³ Quaternity is central to Native American cosmology and ritual, as well as to narrative form, a sign of completeness and wholeness, essential to Native notions of time and space. The four directions, comprising a circle or hoop, are defined by where the sun rises and sets at the solstices, year after year from time immemorial. And what of Jim's dying at dawn? In many cultures, those of the Great Plains especially, dawn is a time of great spiritual importance and commonly an occasion for prayer, which is directed at the rising sun. It may seem significant then, too, that as he sees that dark bird flying off into the rising light that crests the canyon at his back, Jim dies facing west not east, not toward the rising sun but, still in the shadow of the canyon, away from it. And here is a further point about the novel and the calendar, though to be sure rather a different calendar from that which just enumerates days and dates. While it is far from being obvious and actually takes some puzzling out, it can seem highly significant that the great precipitating event in the novel, Jim's killing of Pretty Weasel on December 21, occurs just after first light at the winter solstice. And, if we count that as day 1, Jim's own death occurs day 4 following. What to make of all this?²⁴

TRACES OF THE TRIBAL TRADITIONAL: MYSTERIES BEYOND UNDERSTANDING

Given that *Winter in the Blood* and *The Death of Jim Loney* were both about "Indian men who had problems with identity," Welch said, he

wrote *Fools Crow* because he wanted “to sort of tell where these guys might have come from” (Shanley, “Interview” 24). “These contemporary people that I was writing about,” he’d asked himself, “what was the difference between that old tribal, traditional culture and where they are now?” (Lupton, “Interview” 201). Where they are now is lost, that world—which might have better helped them to know who and what they were—being lost to them. But as the protagonist of *Winter in the Blood* eventually finds, this is not to say that something of that world does not still persist, and such is the case even for so deracinated a character as Jim Loney. The problem is that he has difficulty recognizing it, though understandably so, as its presence is never more than dim or occulted. And I’m not just speaking of the dark bird, which Loney does think has “some meaning” (92), though he doesn’t know how to interpret it, and which, if we follow one suggestion, may be a manifestation of the Gros Ventre thunderbird, Bha’a (Purdy 67–71).²⁵ Consider for instance, his response to the dead, trapped muskrat he encounters toward the end of his second and last year at the hated boarding school. “It had been trapped and never retrieved,” and the sight of its rotted remains makes “Loney cry and he thought that he would die, too, if he did not leave that school” (45). It does not take a great deal of imagination to see that Loney sees in that animal, trapped, abandoned, wasted, an emblem of his own condition. It is a moment of crisis, and it prompts him to leave that school, though the situation that replaces it—boarding in Harlem with a congregation-less pastor and his equally distant wife—does not seem much of an improvement. Leaving the school, too, means that he gives up what could have been a promising, sustaining relationship with Brother Gerard, who has befriended him and might have guided him to a more fruitful path in life.

This episode is so perfect in evoking Jim’s psychology as an abandoned and wounded child that it is easy to read it as just that, to register the poignancy of the moment and to relate it to the adult who eventually feels he’s “lost forever the secret of survival” (137). But there’s another way it might be read, in a “tribal traditional” way deriving from Welch’s double heritage as the son of a Blackfeet father and a Gros Ventre mother.²⁶ As with other Algonkian peoples, the Blackfeet and the Gros Ventre creation (or re-creation) stories begin with the world entirely flooded. At the behest of one spiritual being or another, a series of creatures dives deep into the waters seeking mud from the bottom from which land

might be created. These earth-diver stories variously involve four animals, differing from tribe to tribe and even sometimes within a tribe. In the Blackfeet version that appears most frequently in print, and in one of the Gros Ventre versions, the last of the earth-divers is the muskrat. According to the Gros Ventre version, all four of the animals drown and muskrat fails to bring up any mud. But Earthmaker finds just barely enough in the folds of the flesh of other of the divers to re-create the world. In the Blackfeet version muskrat does at last succeed in bringing up some mud and, though nearly killed by the effort, is the only diver to survive.²⁷ Had Jim known these stories, and clearly he doesn't, he might have responded differently to that dead muskrat, his identification with it perhaps no less sad but taking a more positive form. Muskrat is a world-creator and so, especially as he sacrifices himself to that end, more hero than victim. Had Jim known these stories he might have taken heart, might have felt out of misery and pain something good still might be created. If only he knew more of his history, and if only his notion of history were capacious enough to include stories like these, he might not have lost the ability to survive. The pathos of this particular muskrat, readers themselves might reflect as they think on its potential relevance to Jim's situation, is that, trapped as it emerged from its den into the larger world, it never had a chance.

Loney's inability to understand or even recognize the persistence of a world charged still with "tribal, traditional" meaning figures powerfully in his fateful hunting trip with Pretty Weasel. Limited as we are to his point of view, we may have difficulty recognizing that world, too. Even before the bear is seen, this hunting trip is certainly a most peculiar event. When Jim and Pretty Weasel go out hunting on the morning of December 21, they do so as Indians, out of season and regardless of state regulations. In 1977 the season for pheasant in Montana, which is their first intended prey, ended December 4, and that for deer, which Pretty Weasel decides on instead, November 27. Given these facts, it's hardly worth saying they dispense with hunting licenses. Though the point is never explicitly made by the novel, Pretty Weasel and Jim are in effect exercising their aboriginal rights and, unwittingly or not, making a political point. Hunting regulations in Montana don't apply on Indian lands, but when Jim and Pretty Weasel cross the Milk River they are, literally, off the reservation.²⁸

Why does Pretty Weasel suddenly reappear in Jim's life? We know,

given his surveillance of Jim a full week before he makes contact, that this is a considered decision. Jim thinks the hunting trip is some kind of “test” (96) but doesn’t know of what it could be. Louis Owens has seen a certain ritual aspect to their encounter, noting Pretty Weasel’s taking the cigarette Jim gives him in the bar the night before as if it were an “offering,” though he’s never smoked (152).²⁹ To this one might add Pretty Weasel’s bowing his head to make the sign of the cross when they leave his pickup, which Jim at first thinks is nothing more than his taking a leak. Something more than a simple hunting trip seems to be going on here, even before they see the bear. The crossing of the river itself is a fraught affair, not because of any awareness on their part that they’re breaking the law, but because they’re literally on thin ice that might break up at any moment. As it happens, there are Blackfeet and Gros Ventre traditions telling of a frozen river where the ice broke up, separating a part of the tribe that was camped on the other side. Isolated from the group, they were lost, never to be found again.³⁰

Crossing that frozen river, Jim and Pretty Weasel enter into a still more profound Indian realm and see a bear where none ought to be. This bear certainly deserves all the attention it has got, and more. As Welch himself indicated, he meant the bear as a “completely unusual phenomenon.” “There used to be bear in that part of the country. But because the white people came in, settlers and so on, they eventually drove the bear out, killed them all out.” But is it a real bear and not a vision? There Welch strategically equivocated: “I’m leaving that ambiguous. In [Loney’s] mind it was a bear” (Lupton, “Interview” 204). Real or not, an actual physical presence or a vision, the terms of these distinctions the very fact of that bear throws into question. (And if it is real, why in late December isn’t it hibernating?³¹) The bear certainly gives every appearance of being a “medicine” bear, a spiritual being of great power—as only two of the commentators on the novel have so far observed—but it also leaves tracks.³² It is not a hallucination—not merely a psychological phenomenon, as both Pretty Weasel and Jim do see it—but, “rare and inexplicable” (115), as close to a physical impossibility as can be imagined. In other words, it violates Euro-Western epistemology and, in so doing, challenges the dominant culture’s notions of reality by suggesting other possibilities.³³ It is, both figuratively and literally, a return of all that was repressed in the once Indigenous world by white settlement, and so—in more than one sense of the term—

unsettling. The bear, said Welch, "discombulated Loney" (Lupton, "Interview" 204), and it is meant to do the same to us. And if we allow that to happen, what's the consequence?

It is not impossible to imagine reasons why Loney's shooting of Pretty Weasel is more than just an accident and, indeed—if we're willing to overlook a few seemingly small details—even rather easy. There are indications before Pretty Weasel comes back into his life that Jim is contemplating doing something drastic about that life, though what that may be, given his dulled state of mind, neither he nor we can quite yet know. When his sister tells him that he needs "some purpose," that he "can't go on day after day sitting at that table, looking out that window," Jim, we are told, "had been thinking and it was going to take some time. After that he would be free" (67). Unable to sleep the night before the hunting trip, anticipating that Pretty Weasel will arrive for him in the morning, meditating on the loss of his dog, the woman who took care of him as a child, his girlfriend, Jim thinks, "After tomorrow I will have no future. Everybody and everything will be gone out of my life. Kate"—who's also gone from his life—"was right—I have nothing left, no conviction, no spirit. After tomorrow's slim purpose I will simply exist" (95). After the shooting, unable to see it as an accident, Jim "devise[s] an end of his own" (115) without realizing it and, visiting his father, sets into motion "a dim plan that he didn't understand" (132). There is evidence, then, that at some unconscious level Jim, looking for some sort of occasion to release him from the burden of living, finds that occasion by pulling the trigger on Pretty Weasel. Perhaps the novel is about a murder-suicide after all, the "murder" being done without conscious intent but with strong unconscious motives.

Such a reading would be a "white" reading, to borrow a terminology from Bevis. I find in teaching the novel that many of my students tend to it. But the novel does not present itself as something to be understood only in terms of the psychology of its protagonist. Other, uncanny things are happening. Jim's out-of-body experience where he sees himself weeping at his kitchen table—unwittingly "crying for pity"?—his father, his lover, and his sister coming to join him, concludes with a powerfully prophetic moment when his father gives him a shotgun (32).³⁴ That Jim later remembers his father had just such a gun when he was a boy (95) suggests a psychological explanation for the intrusion of the gun into what at first may seem a drunken dream or a hallucination.

But then, on the last night of his life, his father does give him a shotgun, “and it looked and felt just as it had in his dream” (132). Uncanny as well is the coincidence—or seeming coincidence—of Amos’s suggesting that Swipesy be buried “out there” in the Little Rockies and his saying “I live way out there” (47), thus twice echoing the woman in Loney’s dream who, weeping at a grave, also twice says her son is “out there,” too, in the Little Rockies (29, 30). For Loney these experiences are more than just dreams or coincidences; he takes them as signs, and they guide his actions. Taking the shotgun from his father in a heightened state of mind—“for a moment everything went away”—Loney says, “it’s a perfect bird gun” (132). And of course he follows the gesture the woman in the dream makes, choosing to “allow himself to be found” “out there” (30).

The shooting offers readers the most uncanny moment in the novel, what Jim Loney thought a bear metamorphosing into his dying friend. Some of my Anishinaabe students have suggested that Pretty Weasel is a “bearwalker,” a shape shifter who has changed into a bear and then, at the moment he is shot, back into a human. Their grandmothers used to warn them not to play too far into the woods for fear of the bearwalkers, who were dangerous. I have not been able to locate any reference to just such shapeshifters in the ethnography of the Gros Ventres or the Blackfeet, though Kroeber does record a Gros Ventre story of a girl who married a bear that turned into a man, and Wissler and Duvall the story of a Blackfeet who could turn into a bear and back again.³⁵ More important, perhaps, than what Jim sees or thinks he sees as he pulls the trigger, is his situation leading up to and in that moment, and what he does after. It is all highly ritualistic, without his being aware of it.

After the shooting, Loney apparently loses consciousness. He comes back to himself “looking at the sun in the western sky”—it’s afternoon—“his back to the cattails” (106). That morning when Pretty Weasel came out of the cattails to be shot, Loney was facing them, so—when he fired into what he thought was the bear, seeing in the “brilliant sun and sparkling snow” of “the blinding field . . . the darkness of it, its immense darkness in that dazzling day” (105)—he was facing east. Readers of Camus may be reminded of Meursault’s killing a man in similarly blinding sunlight, the crisis point in his particular existential drama. But whatever shooting Pretty Weasel may or may not mean to Loney, it is not in its context a wholly random or meaningless act indicating the absurdity of the human condition in a meaningless universe. The sun

that blinds Loney has risen that morning at its lowest point in its annual circuit of the sky; it is the winter solstice, a time in traditional tribal religions fraught with cosmological significance and requiring appropriate ceremonies. This particular conjunction is also a fraught one for Loney even before he fires his rifle, his state of mind being as low as it ever gets.

Waiting for Pretty Weasel, who's gone after the bear, Loney reflects on the pointless, unrecognized death of Yellow Eyes, with whose father his mother had connected for a time, his mother's abandonment, his inability to deal with it—all that, and presumably his life, seeming just a "dream made of shit" (103–04). Then he hears Pretty Weasel's rifle fire and runs toward the cattails. Unable to see into them, he begins "to circle to his left, toward the point where they had seen the bear enter" (105), moving into the position from which he will shoot. Circling to the left while facing east, as Loney does, is to move clockwise, a ritual movement in the Great Plains cultures. For this is to emulate the movement of the sun in the course of a day and over the course of the year, a movement that organizes ceremonies of all kinds including prayer, shamanistic healing, and ritual dance, as well as many activities of ordinary life like social dancing or even entering a tipi. To move clockwise—or rather, sunwise—harmonizes human beings with the great and mysterious power of the cosmos, which itself moves in a great circle. (It's actually more appropriate to say that clocks move sunwise than that the sun moves clockwise, for in their movement the hands of clocks imitate the shadows cast on sundials.) In Great Plains ritual the first of the directions to be acknowledged in such circular ceremonial movement is generally the west, as in the smoking of the pipe, and it is to the west that Loney is positioned with reference to the cattails.³⁶ But Loney does not complete the circle. Whistling only part of the signal that he and Pretty Weasel used to use while hunting, he forgets the rest of it. He thinks, "If I could remember, if I could complete it" (105), Pretty Weasel would signal back. But Pretty Weasel does not signal back, and Loney shoots him.

If we map the larger pattern of Loney's movement on this momentous day of the solstice, his situation can seem more ominous still. From his starting point in Harlem, he moves in all four directions: first south to the highway, then east to where they leave Pretty Weasel's truck, then north across the river. After the shooting Loney does not backtrack to the vehicle, but returns to Harlem on foot by the old highway, keeping on the north side of the river, heading back west. South, east, north,

west: this is to move counterclockwise, the exact opposite of what is generally appropriate in ritual. In mapping Loney's movement on the day of the hunt are we seeing something that might be the equivalent, in Christian (or Satanic) terms, of saying the Lord's Prayer backward? Is something equally sinister happening? Among the Lakota, at least, such counterclockwise movement has catastrophic implications.³⁷ It may be that Loney knows more than he realizes when, a couple of days after the shooting, he thinks "of the bear not as a bear but as an agent of evil," and that on his "last purposeful day he had succumbed to that evil" (115).

Or this may be yet another of his misunderstandings. Bears have great power, which can certainly make them dangerous and tricky to be around—Blackfeet and Gros Ventre mythology offer numerous examples of this—but that power can also be helpful to human ends. "As the largest and most dangerous of the carnivorous mammals," according to George Bird Grinnell, who began his ethnographical career among the Blackfeet, "the bear was venerated, yet not so much for its strength as for its wisdom. It was believed to be invulnerable, to have the power of stopping the bullets or arrows shot against it, or to be able to take care of itself if wounded." For these reasons, and because bears seemed to have knowledge of medicinal plants, bear "medicine" played an important part in healing rituals among most North American peoples. Indeed, Grinnell adds, the bear might even "render invulnerable those whom it wished to help, and might even restore to life persons toward whom it felt an especial friendliness" (Grinnell, *Indians of To-day* 49–50).³⁸

The Gros Ventre Bh'aa could take other forms than that of a bird. "Any large strange animal might in the olden days be called Bha'a," according to John M. Cooper, "or even be looked upon as an embodiment or theophany of Bha'a" (10). The bear may be a more palpable manifestation of that dark presence that appears to Loney at other liminal moments of consciousness, and as a bear, it could be there to help him with its healing power, to somehow offer him a way out of his "dream of shit" of a life. As it happens, this indeed is what it does, though with doubly fatal consequences. The fault, however, may not be with the bear. In seeking Jim Loney out as he does, Pretty Weasel does what a friend ought to do according to traditional Gros Ventre values. "There is an old Gros Ventre saying," Cooper noted, "that if a man is ailing and some relative or friend of his comes in and says pleasant things to him or tells him he is going to get well, such a talk helps him" (368).

The hunting trip is Pretty Weasel's way of boosting Jim Loney's morale, re-evoking a time when the two of them still felt more in the way of potential in the world. "Times have changed," says Loney, and Pretty Weasel responds, "We can remedy that" (89). Drinking with him in the bar the night before the hunt, Loney thinks how "he never felt Indian," but hunting with Pretty Weasel will be to *do* something quite "Indian," that is, to hunt off reservation land without regard to Montana's game laws. Unfortunately when Pretty Weasel and Jim Loney see the bear, they stop being "Indian." In trying to shoot it, Pretty Weasel acts like a white man, says William Thackeray, and in actually shooting it, or what he thinks is it, says Owens, Loney "symbolically kills the Indian potential in himself" (Thackeray, *Death*; Owens 153). The Blackfeet did not traditionally kill or eat bear, and according to one source, when "hunting in bear country, they talked to the bears saying, 'We are not looking for you. Keep out of our way'" (Rockwell 55).³⁹ Whatever "Indian potential" Loney may or may not have had before encountering that bear, he certainly did not then, or even later perhaps, understand or appreciate the extraordinary nature of the event vouchsafed him.

But then neither can we readers either, for all our seemingly superior insight, as fully as we might want to. In the novel's allusive hints at the "tribal traditional," in its suggestions of Indigenous patternings and order, we are offered no more than gestures at a realm of meaning that remains, for all its rich implication, teasingly mysterious. What does all that's just been said about the hunting trip add up to? There is really no way of making it cohere into any one interpretation of what that trip might mean, either to Jim or to us. The best we can say is that it is powerfully rich in meaning, which we cannot understand. That, according to some definitions, is what is meant when the English word "medicine" is used in a Native context. "Medicine" relates to power not understood, the power of which inheres in, depends on, and indeed requires that it not be understood, and which pervades everything. In the hunting episode, and generally, the novel works a powerful—and, I'd add, a wonderfully salutary—"medicine" on its readers. The harder we try to understand it, the more it engages and eludes us, and the more we feel its power.

Given our success in discovering the counter-sunwise movement of Jim's going out and coming back on that fateful hunting trip, we may, for instance, be encouraged to map his movements from and to Har-

lem over the course of the novel as a whole. He travels south with Rhea on their picnic/tryst in Mission Canyon, then west to Havre to pick up Kate at the airport, then south with Kate for their final conversation at Snake Butte, then east with Pretty Weasel on the hunting trip, then south again, alone, to meet his end in Mission Canyon. There is no ritual implication in this, so far as I can see, just an oscillation west and east on the Highline, bracketed and punctuated by three trips south, the middle one going only so far as Snake Butte and not as far south as the Canyon. There is a kind of formal patterning here that gives shape to the action of the novel—it is on his third and final outing to the south that the novel ends—but what else can we relate it to? Can any more be said of Jim's excursions in these particular directions, in this sequence, than that they illustrate—except in the final instance—his lack of direction? One thing is clear; he never goes north to or toward Canada, never manages on this larger scale—in whatever sequence—a complete circuit of all four directions.⁴⁰ Robert Nelson argues that Jim discovers “his own best place in the landscape lies not north,” in Canada, “but rather south,” in Mission Canyon, where, “spiritually,” he achieves “complete reintegration . . . with the regenerative spirit of the land,” choosing to give up his life and “return to shadow form” (121, 127, 131). But what then do we make of the Gros Ventre and Blackfeet belief that dead souls travel north to begin the afterlife, to the Big Sand or the Sand Hills, respectively?⁴¹ Trying to apply what we can gather of the history and ethnography of those peoples here gets us nowhere. No small part of the power this novel exercises over readers is that its game changes even as we become more greatly attuned, or so we may think, to its deep play.

The Death of Jim Loney doesn't just aim at surpassing paraphrase, like any other post-Romantic, modern, or even postmodern text. It aims, in doing this, at doing much more. “Whereas postmodernism celebrates the fragmentation and chaos of experience,” says Louis Owens, “literature by Native American authors tends to seek transcendence of such ephemerality and the recovery of ‘eternal and immutable’ elements represented by a spiritual tradition . . . that places humanity within a carefully, cyclically ordered cosmos.” He sees this figured typically as a process in which a protagonist is brought “toward a coherent personal identity entirely dependent upon a coherent cultural identity” (20). If among the fragmentation and chaos of life in and around Harlem, Montanta, we look for such “transcendence” or “coherence” in Loney

himself, as Owens himself allows, we're bound to be disappointed. What the novel denies us there, though, it provides elsewhere. "Landscape," Welch once said, "is almost the main character in everything I write" (O'Connell 2, cited by McFarland, *Understanding* 12). Given the ways in which the presence and palpable significance of the landscape in this novel can be felt, with all that it harbors of history and spirit, there can only ever have been any question of the novel's being "Indian" or not—or "depressing" or not—because readers have overlooked that presence. Perhaps this is because too much attention has been given to the predicament of its protagonist, though this of course is the usual way of reading novels within the Euro-American literary tradition. (And this is a "Western, European-American" novel, too; Welch was quite clear about that [Coltelli 186]). With all our access to ethnography and the recorded history of the Blackfeet and Gros Ventre peoples, we readers, and especially we academic readers, can feel better equipped than Loney to recognize the abiding significance of the Indigenous world that surrounds him and Harlem—and, too, the sheer significance of its *still* abiding, despite all the weight of history. With unusual subtlety and power Welch makes us aware, as Leslie Silko, too, insists, that "in the Americas, the sacred surrounds us, no matter how damaged or changed a place may appear to be" (Silko 145)—or, it might be added, no matter how damaged or changed the people living in that place, Native and white, may appear to be. If only at the margins of our consciousness, teasingly beyond comprehension, an Indigenous world endures.

The marginality and "teasing-ness" of this—the making readers aware of a liminality or threshold they cannot cross—strike me, at least, as aiming to serve an important and peculiarly indigenous end. Owens and many other scholars and critics of Native American literature have emphasized the participatory role of listeners in traditional storytelling, "who could be counted on to contribute a wealth of intimate knowledge to the telling of any story, to thus actively participate in the dynamics of the story's creation" (13). Sidner Larson sees something of this same dynamic in the way *The Death of Jim Loney* "force[s] the reader to become more interactive with the text . . . multiple references introduced at different points urg[ing] the reader to attempt assembling them coherently" (530). Different readers, to be sure, will be differently engaged, though, depending on what they bring to their reading of the text. What happens then, if—persuaded to meet the entirely

appropriate, just, and rising demand that Native American literature be read within the context of the specific history and culture that shaped (and shapes) its authors and defines (or defined) the world it seeks to represent—we do our very best to read *The Death of Jim Loney*? It will, it seems, never be quite enough. To recognize the “Indianness” of the world the novel represents is not to understand or comprehend it, or indeed to “understand” or “comprehend” the novel as a whole. This is a novel that allows readers no mastery over it; the harder we try, the more recalcitrant, the more secretive and withholding it becomes. Inevitably we are made aware of just how limited our participation in the story’s “dynamics” must be. Owens says that Jim’s “knowledge of his Indian heritage” is “held tantalizingly just out of reach” (26). The same may be said about the “Indianness” of the novel and the novel itself, even as we hold it in our hands.

“What do Indians want from writing?” Scott Richard Lyons has notably asked. “Rhetorical sovereignty” is his answer. Such sovereignty, like Native political, cultural, and intellectual sovereignty, comes from the retaining and expressing of Indigenous power and authority in the face of all those who—and all that which—would deny these or, what can sometimes seem worse, encroach on and expropriate them to their own purposes.⁴² Who needs to be shown that an Indian “can write”? Obviously all those for whom Indians and writing seem incommensurate and disjunctive categories. What’s involved in such “showing,” and what are the implications, the risks, the potential cost, for the one doing the showing? Urged on early in his career by well meaning (and perhaps somewhat patronizing) voices, Welch shows with his poems and his novels that he is a master of the rhetorical forms and conventions of modern literature, but this involves far more than a mere submission to what is required for recognition as an accomplished writer by the dominant (and always seeking to dominate) culture. Such by itself would risk losing the Indian in the writer through yet another act of assimilation or, perhaps worse, retain the Indian only in some version of the old stereotypes. Welch the *Indian* writer reserves a great deal to himself, which is deeply encoded in his writing, not easily discoverable. And more than that, he writes an Indianess that cannot be parsed; it has its secrets, which it keeps without revealing. There are spaces in his writing, like those on many reservations, that bar entry to even the most sincere and respectful inquirers (to say nothing of wannabes). What better

term than "rhetorical sovereignty" to describe what Welch is achieving in *The Death of Jim Loney*?

As I write, the view outside my window includes the sacred mountain of the Taos Pueblo. It is a beautiful mountain, and even I can feel its spiritual power, but it is, and it represents, a place I shall never be able to access. Because of its great spiritual importance to the people of Taos Pueblo, it is not open to outsiders, though outsiders—if they take the trouble to travel this far from airports and major highways—may see it looming over land that has been occupied (though never completely) by Europeans for more than four hundred years. They may even, if they open their minds to it, feel its continuing power. But even so, for them—and far more importantly for the people of Taos Pueblo, from what little I understand—the continuation of that power requires, for otherwise it might weaken and vanish, that the mountain remain inaccessible. Damn, could that Indian *write*.

NOTES

1. Paula Gunn Allen makes the same claim in nearly the same language, 93, 145. For Welch's use of "orchestrate," see Bevis, "Dialogue" 176.

2. Welch himself observed that "a lot of people have been depressed by *Winter in the Blood* and *The Death of Jim Loney*" (Shanley, "Interview" 18).

3. Thackeray seems to have been the first to have suggested that *The Death of Jim Loney* had an existential theme ("Death"). For subsequent considerations of the "existentialism" of *The Death of Jim Loney*, see Bevis, "Dialogue" 177, and, for comparisons to Camus's *The Stranger*, see also R. M. Nelson 120–21; Lupton, *James Welch* 78–81; and Harrison x–xi.

4. Though not noted by other commentators, Hays, in the southern part of the Fort Belknap Reservation and which Loney passes through as he enters the canyon, is mainly inhabited by Gros Ventres, Loney's mother's people. Loney thinks his mother is from Hays (14), but as he later learns, and complicating matters in a way quite characteristic of this novel, she's actually from Lodgepole (124), some fifteen miles to the east, an Assiniboine community. There is no easy way to map the psychology of Jim's seeming attraction to his indigenous origins, and it may be relevant, too, that in returning to the canyon he's returning to a place where he and Rhea had one of their happier moments, picnicking and making love in her car, and where he once spent another idyllic afternoon on another picnic. This was with the otherwise inattentive and unengaged minister and his wife with whom he boarded during high school, and it was from the very outcropping he climbs up on to be shot that he observed those two holding each other, though they never showed any such affection at home (150). For information on the population of the Fort Belknap reservation, which is shared by the Gros Ventres and Assiniboines, see Fowler 14.

5. In critics' efforts to define Loney's "Indianness," C. Nelson finds a regrettable tendency to essentialism. In "examin[ing] the danger of accepting static definitions of Native identity, whether based on blood or culture," *The Death of Jim Loney*, he argues, presents "the complex hybridity that defines contemporary Indianess" (301–34).

6. Even though Stands in Timber calls Head Chief a "troublemaker," his account seems somewhat admiring. A more detailed version of the story, by no means unsympathetic, is offered by Jules Chaudel, one of the soldiers present at the shootout, in Marquis (112–14). See also, more recently and far more celebratory, both Erdoes, recorded in 1972 at Busby, Montana, on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation, and the commentary by Small, Head Chief Woman of the Northern Cheyenne. On November 4, 2011, the Northern Cheyennes commemorated the two warriors with a "Head Chief Young Mule Hill Climb" at Lame Deer, where they had fallen well over a hundred years before (Northern Cheyenne Tribe). Visitors to Lame Deer can see the route the two men took down that hill to their deaths, which has been marked with white boulders just to the north of what is now the Chief Dull Knife College campus.

7. This description refers to the deaths of "Head Swift" and "Crazy Mule" (apparently variations on the names of Head Chief and Young Mule), the "most famous" of the "suicide warriors" of the reservation period (Strauss 5). This echoes Weist (137), who, giving their names in the usual fashion, calls them "suicide warriors" and notes that "the incident was widely reported throughout the country and remains the most famous event of the reservation period."

8. "Rather than die 'killed beyond recognition,'" says Shanley, "Loney makes a public spectacle of dying." To be "'killed beyond recognition' represents a silence and a silencing" ("Circling Back" 9–10).

9. Held at the Agency while questions are raised about his brother Louis's death, Archilde despairs that his "end had come almost before a beginning had been made. He would wind up like every other reservation boy—in prison, or hiding in the mountains" (150). Bevis, who would certainly have known, says that Welch hadn't yet read McNickle until after he had written his first two novels ("James Welch" 45).

10. For Thackeray, Loney's death falls short even of the standard set by Magua; see "Dance" 137.

11. For example, in Bevis, "Dialogue" 176–77; at a panel discussion at the University of Minnesota, 16 May 1984, cited by Westrum 143; and in Bruhac 320, Coltelli 192, Perkins 171.

12. The fifth and last mention of the Bearpaws occurs when the sheriff asks whether Jim Loney has fled there or to the Little Rockies (140). He would have had jurisdiction in the Bearpaws, which are not on reservation lands.

13. The Milk River was given its name by Lewis and Clark. The Bear Paws (or Bearpaws) and Snake Butte are indeed Native names, though of course translated into English. See McRae and Jewell 362, 13, 361, respectively. The origin of the name of Mission Canyon is obvious. As C. Nelson remarks, it "incorporates the history of white colonization" (321).

14. Sands sees no irony here at all; but Jim is aware of the inappropriateness of the bottle and the gun, telling the dog he encounters in Hays not to mention these to Amos (147).

15. Welch quotes the Revised Standard Version.

16. Unable to "forget about his past" or to "make any discoveries about his past," said Welch, there are "no epiphanies" for Jim Loney (McFarland and Browning 11). As I hope to make clear, there should be none for readers, either.

17. The gold mining on the expropriated portion of the reservation produced major environmental damage, including the poisoning of streams with cyanide and heavy metals (Abel, Schneider). In 1979 the mines at Zortman and Landusky were bought by the Pegasus Gold Corporation, which established "the largest cyanide heap-leach operation in the world" before filing for bankruptcy in 1998 (Schneider). When Loney passes through Hays on his way into the canyon, he sees "a flying red horse" on "a faded gas pump" (147). Readers of a certain age will recognize an old trademark of the Mobil Oil Company, but one can wonder whether Welch, who published this novel in 1979, could have had another flying horse in mind.

18. The "losing game of football," says Lupton, "symbolizes [Loney's] life" (*James Welch* 75). She doesn't develop the point any further, but Westrum does, contending that the two colliding players "represent Loney's two distinct heritages" (139-40). This is based on the kicker's being likened to a bird, and that bird being conflated with the dark bird. C. Nelson offers a more nuanced and persuasive reading of the implications of the fouled-up play as a metaphor for Loney's life and situation, identifying Loney with only the kicker and seeing, in his wearing "one black shoe and one white shoe," an analogy to Loney's mixed ancestry (322).

19. For this reason I don't buy the suggestion that Loney's death is part of a ritual that will somehow prepare a way for Amos After Buffalo to better deal with the world the novel presents, however much this may leave readers, after all, with "a message of hope and the promise of renewal" (Riley In-the-Woods 165-66). Jim, in death as in life, will not seem like anyone a young Native boy should admire or emulate. Sharing this opinion are Baringer (46) and C. Nelson (330n19).

20. For the ways in which history can inform Native landscapes for Native people, making a kind of Indigenous *paysage moralisé*, see Basso.

21. Jim tries to telephone Kate on December 23 (113-14), at the beginning of a long night that includes visits to Kennedy's bar (not narrated), a graveyard in search of Sandra's grave, his father's trailer, and Rhea's house, before he sets out to the canyon early the next morning. The only mention of Christmas Eve occurs as Painter Barthelme, sitting in his police car as Loney ducks into the bar, ends a long set of sour reflections by thinking, "Tomorrow was Christmas Eve" (117).

22. For this and other reasons, Stromberg's suggestion that Jim's dying "on or very near Christmas Day" can make him seem "a Christ-like martyr" (49) seems to me quite far-fetched.

23. If Jim had been able to get through that fateful Wednesday unscathed, he would have broken through into a Thursday, four weeks on from Swipesy's death and his encounter with Amos, when in his own estimation he would "have no future," would "simply exist" (95). In defining these dates the Friday, December 23 date is again key. Just after trying to telephone Kate, Loney wonders how long ago it was that he shot Pretty Weasel, "two days ago, three?" (114). Later that night, the night

of December 23–24, he wakes up after making love to Rhea and feels hungry, not having “eaten in the two or three days since killing Pretty Weasel” (136). At about the same time, or perhaps still later, when Jim’s father tells the police about the killing, the sheriff says that that afternoon, i.e., the 23rd, Pretty Weasel’s father had reported he’d been missing from home three days, which is to say from December 20. That would have been the night he and Jim were drinking at Kennedy’s; it is early the next morning that he and Jim go off on their hunt, thus the 21st.

24. In Euro-Western computation the time from Pretty Weasel’s death to Jim’s is only three days, i.e., approximately 72 hours, but in Great Plains ritual any part of a day can count for ritual purposes. Thus contemporary sun dance ceremonies (or medicine lodges), often held over weekends to maximize opportunities for participation, can run from a Thursday morning to a Sunday afternoon, counting as four days.

25. The Bha’a, according to Cooper (10, 11), “had dark or black feathers, and was a swift flier” (10). His nest “was on the top of a high mountain” in the west (11), which is the direction that the dark bird takes lifting out of the canyon as Loney dies.

26. Asked about his family background, Welch indicated he had more extensive ties to his father’s side among the Blackfeet of Browning than to his mother’s among the Gros Ventre at Fort Belknap (McFarland, *James Welch* 15). His repeated mention of his father telling him stories about his great-grandmother’s experiences also suggests that Welch knew more about Blackfeet traditional culture than that of the Gros Ventres. On what he learned “growing up around the reservations,” see Bruhac 314–15, and Shanley, “Interview” 17, 37. About the influence of his great-grandmother through his father’s stories, see Bevis, “Dialogue” 171, Robbins 108, Perkins 174–75, and Lupton, “Interview” 8. But it shouldn’t be overlooked that Welch also relied on historical and ethnographic texts for his “traditional” knowledge as early as his 1982 interview with Bevis when he was working on *Fools Crow* (“Dialogue” 171) and perhaps earlier. *Fools Crow* owes clear debts to Grinnell’s *Blackfeet Lodge Tales*, McClintock’s *The Old North Trail*, and Ewers’s *The Blackfeet*. Welch acknowledged the debt to Grinnell and Ewers and allowed that he read a few of J. W. Schultz’s books, including *My Life as an Indian*, and possibly some of McClintock; see Bruhac 316 and Bevis, “Wylie Tales” 25. Perhaps Welch’s seemingly greater identification with his Blackfeet side excuses the lapses committed by Rainwater (151) and Lupton (*James Welch* 66), who misidentify Loney as Blackfeet, when in fact his mother was Gros Ventre. Lupton also identifies Amos After Buffalo as Blackfeet (*James Welch* 68), but, living on Fort Belknap, he’d be Assiniboine if not Gros Ventre.

27. Somewhat different Gros Ventre creation stories were recorded by Kroeber in *Gros Ventre Myths* (59) and by Cooper (435–36). I am referencing the Cooper version. In the Kroeber version turtle is finally successful in bringing up mud after duck, otter, and beaver fail, there being no mention of muskrat. Grinnell and a current Blackfeet source denote the muskrat as the final, successful earth diver, but in the Wissler and Duvall version muskrat is the third diver, perishing in the attempt; the fourth and successful effort is made by duck, though the placement of a question mark in their text after “duck” makes this less than certain. See Grinnell, *Blackfeet Indian* 145–46, and Kipp, versus Wissler and Duvall 19. In arguing that *The Death*

of *Jim Loney* is organized ritualistically along the lines of the earth-diver story, with Amos After Buffalo at some future point to complete the ritual of renewal and recreation begun by Loney, Riley In-the-Woods uses Wissler and Duvall's version of the creation story; the other versions would raise problems for her interpretation.

28. The Milk River forms the northern boundary of the Fort Belknap Reservation. Information on the 1977 hunting seasons was kindly provided by Geary, who also confirmed that state game laws do not apply on Indian reservations. Reservations establish and enforce their own game laws.

29. The tobacco offered in anticipation of a request or in gratitude can, these days, just be a cigarette.

30. For the Gros Ventre story of the tribe being separated by river ice breaking up, see Kroeber, *Gros Ventres Myths* 112. For the Blackfeet story see Grinnell, "Early Blackfoot" 162–63, which also notes a similar story among the Suhtai Cheyennes, 163–64.

31. According to Affeld, bears in Montana tend to den up by late November and hibernate until mid-April. At Yellowstone Park, admittedly colder earlier than the Harlem area, bears begin hibernating from late October to mid-November (National Park Service, which also cites Judd, Knight, and Blanchard).

32. Thackeray, "Death" and "Dance" 136, where he refers to the bear as "the Great Bear Spirit"; Owens 153. "A reverence for the bear," Grinnell observed, "appears to be common to all North American tribes, and is based not upon anything that the animal's body yields, but perhaps on the fact that it is the largest carnivorous mammal of the continent, the most difficult to kill and extremely keen in all its senses" ("Early Blackfoot" 260). For a wide-ranging survey of the significance of the bear in North American Native cultures, see Rockwell.

33. Welch's admiration for "a lot of Latin American writers" may be relevant here. They can "suddenly put you in another world, and you aren't aware that you've passed this boundary of reality into this other reality." "For the Indians," too, he added, "there wasn't a heck of a lot of difference between the physical world and the spiritual world" (Bevis, "Dialogue" 179).

34. On "crying for pity" defined as "debasing oneself, occasionally torturing oneself, so that God will look upon one with pity," see Thackeray, "Crying for Pity" 63. This was (and still is) a form of ritual prayer among several of the Great Plains cultures. It is what Neidhardt saw Black Elk doing when he wept and bemoaned his piteousness while praying on Harney Peak (see Neidhardt's Postscript, especially 221).

35. For the bear into man story, see Kroeber, *Gros Ventre Myths* 115. This collection also includes the story of a girl who turns into a bear and kills everyone in camp and almost all her family, 105–08. For the Blackfeet story of Bear-Moccasin, a "great medicine man" who could turn into a bear but was also a dangerous and disruptive figure, see Wissler and Duvall 143–46. The Arapahos, who are closely related to the Gros Ventres, also have stories of bears taking on human characteristics or being mistaken for humans; see Dorsey and Kroeber 226–28. According to Grinnell, "the Blackfeet believe [the bear] to be part brute and part human, portions of its body, particularly the ribs and feet, being like those of a man" ("Early Blackfoot" 260).

36. For the west-north-east-south movement of the Blackfeet pipe ceremony, see McClintock, *Blackfoot* 9. I have no information on Gros Ventre practice, but the same ritual pattern obtains for the Assiniboinés (personal observation), who share Fort Belknap with the Gros Ventres, as well as for the Lakota (see Neidhart; Brown).

37. Thus, with reference to Lakota ritual and ceremonial practice, Brown states: “The sun-wise or clockwise circumambulation is almost always used by the Sioux; occasionally, however, the counter-clockwise movement is used in a dance or some occasion prior to or after a great catastrophe, for this movement is in imitation of the Thunder-beings who always act in an anti-natural way and who come in a terrifying manner, often bringing destruction” (5n4).

38. For the story of a wounded Blackfeet warrior rescued and returned to his people by a bear who speaks to him and carries him on his back, see McClintock *Old North* 471–47. According to Blackfeet belief, it was bears who endowed the tribe with the bear knife and the bear spear, both of which possessed great power in warfare (Wissler and Duvall 95–98, McClintock, *Old North* 354–61). According to Fish, who identifies himself as a “traditional Blackfeet herbalist,” Blackfeet knowledge of those “plants which are healing and those which are not safe to eat . . . goes back to the beginning of time, when the Blackfeet made peace with the bear.” “This knowledge is easily gained by the bear, who eats almost everything. The bear was the original teacher, showing the Blackfeet the differences in plant medicines.” For the bear’s importance in herbal and shamanistic healing over Native North America, see Rockwell, particularly 75–89.

39. See also Schaeffer 35. As Schaeffer “learned from native informants,” the Blackfeet “had a repugnance to killing, eating or even processing and using the animal’s hide.” This “aversion is thought due to their belief that the bear is a sacred animal, akin to man, and therefore not to be used for food” (32).

40. Note, in this connection, that the novel is divided into only three parts. While in Euro-American narratives three iterations make a significant series or set—consider for instance the way jokes are typically organized—in traditional Native American narratives things tend to happen in fours. From the one perspective, then, Jim Loney’s story can seem to have a beginning, middle, and end, and so appear complete, but from the other it can seem still to be lacking in wholeness or completeness.

41. According to Gros Ventre tradition, “Dead people go to a barren region in the north” (Kroeber, *Ethnology* 276). For the Big Sand, see Cooper 225. For the Sand Hills in Blackfeet tradition, see Welch, *Fools Crow*; Grinnell, “Early Blackfoot” 62, 275, and *Blackfeet Indian* 40–49, 213, as well as Wissler and Duvall 163.

42. In the latter case I have in mind not just “wannabes” and “new agers” but people like myself, ethnographers and “lit-critters.”

WORKS CITED

- Abel, Heather. “The Rise and Fall of a Gold Mining Company.” *High Country News*, 22 Dec. 1997. Web.
- Affeld, Marlene. “Montana Bears Prepare for a Long Winter Sleep.” *EzineArticles.com*, n.d. Web. 11 Jan. 2012.

- Allen, Paula Gunn. *The Sacred Hoop*. 1986; Boston: Beacon Press, 1992. Print.
- Anonymous. *The Holy Bible Revised Standard Version*. New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1952. Print.
- Baringer, Sandra. "'Captive Woman?': The Rewriting of Pocahontas in Three Contemporary Native American Novels." *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 11.1 (1999): 42–63. Print.
- Basso, Keith. *Wisdom Sits in Places: Language and Landscape among the Western Apache*. Albuquerque: U of New Mexico P, 1996. Press.
- Bevis, Bill. "Dialogue with James Welch." *Northwest Review* 20.2/3 (1982): 163–85. Print.
- Bevis, William W. "James Welch." *Western American Literature* 32.1 (1997): 33–53. Print.
- . "Wylie Tales: An Interview with James Welch." *Weber Studies* 12.3 (1995): 15–31. Print.
- Brown, Joseph Epes. *The Sacred Pipe: Black Elk's Account of the Seven Rites of the Oglala Sioux*. 1953; Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 1989. Print.
- Bruhac, Joseph. "I Just Kept My Eyes Open: An Interview with James Welch." *Survival This Way: Interviews with American Indian Poets*. Ed. Joseph Bruhac. Tucson: Sun Tracks and U of Arizona P, 1987. 311–21. Print.
- Coltelli, Laura. "James Welch." *Winged Words: American Indian Writers Speak*. Ed. Laura Coltelli. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1990. 185–199, 204. Print.
- Cooper, John M. *The Gros Ventres of Montana*. Part 2: *Religion and Ritual*. Ed. Regina Flannery. Washington DC: Catholic U of America P, 1957. Print.
- Dorsey, George A., and Alfred L. Kroeber. *Traditions of the Arapaho*. Chicago: Field Columbian Museum, 1903. Print.
- Erdoes, Richard. "The Death of Head Chief and Young Mule." *American Indian Myths and Legends*. Selected by Richard Erdoes and Alfonso Ortiz. New York: Pantheon, 1984. 477–80. Print.
- Ewers, John C. *The Blackfeet: Raiders on the Northwestern Plains*. 1958; Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 1983. Print.
- Fish, Wilbert. "Traditional Blackfeet Herbalist." N.d. Web. 25 Apr. 2010.
- Fowler, Loretta. *Shared Symbols, Contested Meanings: Gros Ventre Culture and History, 1778–1984*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1987. Print.
- Geary, Laura. Wildlife Bureau of the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks. Personal communication 12 July 2011.
- Grinnell, George Bird. "Account of the Northern Cheyennes Concerning the Messiah Superstition." *Journal of American Folklore* 4.12 (1891): 61–69. Print.
- . *Blackfeet Indian Stories*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926. Print.
- . *Blackfeet Lodge Tales*. 1892; Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1962. Print.
- . "Early Blackfoot History." *American Anthropologist* 5.2 (1892): 153–64. Print.
- . *The Indians of To-day*. Rev. ed. New York: Duffield, 1911. Print.
- Harrison, Jim. Introduction. *The Death of Jim Loney*. By James Welch. ix–xiv. Print.
- Judd, S. L., R. R. Knight, and B. M. Blanchard. "Denning of Grizzly Bears in the

- Yellowstone National Park Area." *International Conference on Bear Research and Management* 6 (1986): 111–17. Cited by National Park Service, Yellowstone.
- Kipp, Jim. "Blackfeet Creation Story, and the First Buffalo." *trailtribes.org*, n.d. Web. 20 Jan. 2012.
- Kroeber, A. L. *Ethnology of the Gros Ventre*. New York: American Museum of Natural History, 1908. Print.
- . *Gros Ventre Myths and Tales*. New York: American Museum of Natural History, 1907. Print.
- Larson, Sidner. "Multiple Perspectivism in James Welch's *Winter in the Blood* and *The Death of Jim Loney*." *American Indian Quarterly* 31.4 (2007): 513–33. Print.
- Lupton, Mary Jane. "Interview with James Welch (1940–2003)." *American Indian Quarterly* 29.1/2 (2005): 198–211. Print.
- . *James Welch: A Critical Companion*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2004. Print.
- Lyons, Scott Richard. "Rhetorical Sovereignty: What Do American Indians Want from Writing?" *College Composition and Communication* 51.3 (2000): 447–68. Print.
- Marquis, Thomas. *The Cheyennes of Montana*. Ed. Thomas D. Weist. Algonac: Reference Pub., 1978. Print.
- McClintock, Walter. *Blackfoot Medicine-Pipe Ceremony*. Los Angeles: Southwest Museum Leaflets, no. 21, 1948. Print.
- . *The Old North Trail; or, Life, Legends and Religion of the Blackfeet People*. 1910; Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1999. Print.
- McFarland, Ron, ed. *James Welch*. Lewiston: Confluence P, 1986. Print.
- . *Understanding James Welch*. Columbia: U of South Carolina P, 2000. Print.
- McFarland, Ron, and M. K. Browning. "An Interview with James Welch." McFarland, *Welch* 1–19. Print.
- McNickle, D'Arcy. *The Surrounded*. 1936; Albuquerque: U of New Mexico P, 1978. Print.
- McRae, W. C., and Judy Jewell. *Moon Montana*. 7th ed. Berkeley: Avalon Travel Pub., 2009. Print.
- National Park Service, Yellowstone. "Denning and Hibernation Behavior." Web. 11 Jan. 2012.
- Neidhart, John G. *Black Elk Speaks, Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux*. Ed. Raymond DeMallie. 1932; Albany: State U of New York P, 2008. Print.
- Nelson, Christopher. "Embodying the Indian: Rethinking Blood, Culture, and Identity in James Welch's *Winter in the Blood* and *The Death of Jim Loney*." *Western American Literature* 41.3 (2006): 301–34. Print.
- Nelson, Robert M. *Place and Vision: The Function of Landscape in Native American Fiction*. New York: Peter Lang, 1993. Print.
- Northern Cheyenne Tribe. "Head Chief Young Mule Hill Climb." *Northern Cheyenne Tribal Government News* 1 Nov. 2011. Web.
- O'Connell, Nicholas. "James Welch." *At the Field's End: Interviews with 20 Pacific Northwest Writers*. Seattle: Madrona, 1987. 58–75. Cited by McFarland *Understanding James Welch*.

- Owens, Louis. *Other Destinies: Understanding the American Indian Novel*. Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 1992. Print.
- Perkins, Owen. "An Interview with James Welch." *High Plains Literary Review* 17.1-3 (2002): 163-87. Print.
- Purdy, John. "Bha'a and *The Death of Jim Loney*." *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 5.2 (1993): 67-71. Print.
- Rainwater, Catherine. *Dreams of Fiery Stars: The Transformations of Native American Fiction*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1999. Print.
- Riley In-the-Woods, Patricia. "*The Death of Jim Loney*: A Ritual of Recreation." *Fiction International* 20 (1991): 157-66. Print.
- Robbins, Kenn. "A Conversation with James Welch." *South Dakota Review* 28.1 (1990): 103-10. Print.
- Rockwell, David. *Giving Voice to Bear: North American Indian Myths, Rituals, and Images of the Bear*. Niwot: Roberts Rinehart, 1991. Print.
- Sands, Kathleen. "*The Death of Jim Loney*: Indian or Not." *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 1st ser. 1, 5.3/4 (1981): n. pag.. Web. Rpt. McFarland Welch. 127-33.
- Schaeffer, Claude. *Bear Ceremonialism of the Kutenai Indians*. Browning: Museum of the Plains Indian and Crafts Center, and Washington DC: US Indian Arts and Crafts Board, 1966. Print.
- Schneider, Andrew. "A Wounded Mountain Spewing Poison." *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* 12 June 2001. Web.
- Schultz, J. W. *My Life as an Indian: The Story of a Red Woman and a White Man in the Lodges of the Blackfeet*. New York: Doubleday, Page, 1907. Print.
- Shanley, Kathryn W. "Circling Back, Closing In: Remembering James Welch." *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 18.3 (2006): 3-13. Print.
- . "Paradoxa Interview with James Welch." *Paradoxa: Studies in World Literary Genres* 15 (2001): 17-37. Print.
- Silko, Leslie Marmon. *The Turquoise Ledge: A Memoir*. 2010; New York: Penguin, 2011. Print.
- Small, Gail. "Context Is Everything." *Every Day Is a Good Day: Reflections by Contemporary Indigenous Women*. Ed. Wilma Pearl Mankiller. Golden: Fulcrum, 2004. 54-56. Print.
- Stands in Timber, John, and Margot Liberty, with assistance by Robert M. Uteley. *Cheyenne Memories*. 1967; Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1972. Print.
- Strauss, Anne S. "The Meaning of Death in Northern Cheyenne Culture." *Plains Anthropologist* 23.79 (1978): 1-6. Print.
- Stromberg, Ernest. "The Only Real Indian Is a Dead Indian: The Desire for Authenticity in James Welch's *The Death of Jim Loney*." *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 10.4 (1998): 33-53. Print.
- Thackeray, William W. "'Crying for Pity' in *Winter in the Blood*." *MELUS* 7.1 (1980): 61-78. Print.
- . "The Dance of Jim Loney." McFarland Welch. 135-38.

- . “*The Death of Jim Loney* as a Half-Breed’s Tragedy.” *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 1st ser. 5.3/4 (1981): n. pag. Web.
- Weist, Tom. *A History of the Cheyenne People*. Billings: Montana Council for Indian Education, 1977. Print.
- Welch, James. *The Death of Jim Loney*. 1979; New York: Penguin, 2008. Print.
- . *Fools Crow*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1986. Print.
- Westrum, Dexter. “Transcendental Survival: The Way the Bird Works in *The Death of Jim Loney*.” *McFarland Welch*. 139–46.
- Wissler, Clark, and D. C. Duvall. *Mythology of the Blackfoot Indians*. 1908; Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2nd ed., 2007. Print.

Gertrude Bonnin's Rhetorical Strategies of Silence

ELIZABETH WILKINSON

When one powerful group or individual silences another less powerful group or individual, silence can be viewed as a marker of victimhood. A simplistic example: any public protest that is summarily shut down is silenced, the protesters victims of being silenced. Silence as an indicator of victim status presupposes a gaze from outside looking in and describes silence that happens as a result of oppression. In contrast, even from a position of less power, individuals can use silence not as a victim-based *reaction to* but as a central strategy of *action for*. For example, Audra Simpson's discussions with Mohawk peoples on the issue of tribal membership and citizenship show rhetorical deployment of silence with the goal of negotiating an intricate political situation (76–78). Following the idea of silence as purposeful rhetorical strategy, this article explores the less widely acknowledged use of silence(s) by Yankton writer and activist Gertrude Bonnin/Zitkala-Ša.¹ She deploys manifestations of silence, particularly in the report *Oklahoma's Poor Rich Indians* and in her *Atlantic Monthly* trilogy on Indian boarding school, as an expression of rhetorical agency and discursive power, in both instances primarily addressing an uninformed and predominantly white audience. The goal of this article is to provide another angle from which to evaluate Bonnin's sophisticated rhetoric; that is, to examine, define, and analyze the multiple iterations of silence and silencing she uses to promote her political purposes. I argue that Gertrude Bonnin uses strategies of silence and of delayed discourse to unsettle her white readers, forcing them to acknowledge the unbalanced relationship between Anglo-America and Native America in the early 1900s. She writes with the obvious goal of urging readers to reform their own and subsequently the US government's beliefs and actions.

In the 1924 report *Oklahoma's Poor Rich Indians: An Orgy of Graft and Exploitation of the Five Civilized Tribes—Legalized Robbery* (OPRI), Bonnin uses a variety of silences (her own act of being silent) and descriptions of silencing (herself or another silenced by outside forces) as tools for rhetorical advantage when writing for the Euro-American public and political audience. Bonnin coauthored OPRI, a report destined for Congress and commissioned by the Indian Rights Association (IRA), with two white men, Charles H. Fabens and Matthew K. Sniffens. Their hope was to expose and end rampant abuses of Indian peoples by corrupt agents, businessmen, judges, and lawyers in Oklahoma. In the portion of the report that is clearly authored by Bonnin, she provides case studies of victims of Oklahoma's "legalized robbery," beginning with the heinous crimes committed against the childlike, eighteen-year-old woman Millie Neharkey. Within the span of a handful of paragraphs in the OPRI report, and specifically in writing about Millie's case, Bonnin displays some of her most pointedly effective uses of rhetorical silences.

However, a much longer and textually complex deployment of these strategies of silence and silencing appears almost a quarter of a century earlier in what is perhaps her most widely known and anthologized writings, her *Atlantic Monthly* trilogy originally published in January, February, and March of 1900 (republished in the collection *American Indian Stories* in 1921). In these semi-autobiographical essays entitled "Impressions of an Indian Childhood," "School Days of an Indian Girl," and "An Indian Teacher Among Indians," Bonnin's uses of silence and silencings are more subtle but have transparent rhetorical purpose. The trilogy, published when she was approximately twenty-four years old, was her first major publication, and while it can be read simply as an entertaining *bildungsroman* of an Indian girl, it is more importantly a scathing polemic criticizing the Indian boarding school system and is an important early example of her use of rhetorical silence.

Because Bonnin's clear and powerful rhetorical strategies of silences and silencings are more easily discernable in the concise paragraphs of OPRI (1924), I discuss that work first and establish definitions essential to my discussion of silence in the *Atlantic Monthly* trilogy (1900). By unpacking the terminology in the later piece and then applying it to the earlier, I shed new light on the more widely anthologized trilogy, making unfamiliar a work that is so familiar to many of us in the field of Native American studies. In the trilogy as in the OPRI report, Bon-

nin uses variations of silence/silencing to produce a tear in the fabric of "normal" and expected communication, thus generating a scenario in which unauthorized and unexpected information can emerge: information meant to transform. She has, in fact, through her deployment of silences and silencing, the purpose of altering her audience's sociopolitical association, moving readers from their unconsciously white, Euro-American alliance to, instead, a political alignment with Native peoples, specifically on the issues of land loss and forced boarding school attendance. Bonnin uses these moments of alteration, this rent-open rhetorical space, to reposition her readers and to press, I would argue to shame, her readers into action on behalf of Indian peoples.

Gertrude Bonnin's sophisticated rhetorical skill in the three *Atlantic Monthly* essays has been the subject of rhetorical analysis for a number of scholars, notably Ruth Spack, Amelia Katanski, P. Jane Hafen, and Barbara Chiarello. A few have analyzed her contribution to the *OPRI* report, among them Chiarello, Patrice E. M. Hollrah, and Ron Carpenter. Spack, writing about "School Days of an Indian Girl," suggests that Bonnin "is consciously exerting linguistic control in order to overthrow linguistic domination" (156). Spack asserts that Bonnin "uses an English-language speech to regain power by winning the statewide prize in oratory" but also states that "she succeeds only in trapping herself in the position of a colonized subject, which inevitably leads to her alienating herself from her own community" (157–58). What I can add to Spack's analysis is that, yes, in the oratory moment Bonnin uses the English language to play the dominant culture's language game and garners the win; however, in her writing about this and other boarding school experiences afterward, as an adult looking back, she succeeds not through European oratory but through savvy Dakota silence.² Additionally, in *OPRI*, that rhetorical strategy is deployed with additional finesse in defense of a pan-Indian community. In *Learning to Write "Indian": The Boarding-School Experience and American Indian Literature*, Amelia Katanski muses about why Bonnin's early semi-autobiographical rhetoric created such a vehement response from the father of the Indian boarding school, Captain Richard Henry Pratt. Describing the then accepted narrative of "social evolutionism," she concludes, "Zitkala-Ša, among others, countered this narrative with [her] own story, which emphasized cultural continuity, creativity, and resistance to assimilation" (129). Katanski describes a rent in the fabric of rhetoric expected

by non-Natives, similar to what I establish later in this essay, but I add an analysis of Bonnin's silence as the strategy that causes that rhetorical space to open up. Asserted by Jane Hafen and reiterated and reshaped by Barbara Chiarello is the idea that Bonnin uses the rhetoric of emotion to "enchant" (Hafen) and "perhaps create" (Chiarello) "sympathetic readers" in order to amass the support necessary to change the existing political paradigm (Hafen xxiii–xxiv; Chiarello 15). Bonnin creates her sympathetic audience through the use of sentimentalist tropes, but her deployment of silence manipulates both the expected narrative and her readers' positions in relation to that narrative. Commenting on Bonnin's rhetoric in *Oklahoma's Poor Rich Indians*, Patrice Hollrah writes, "Zitkala-Ša consciously chooses very specific rhetorical strategies that she knows will elicit a strong response from the American public regarding the exploitation of Oklahoma Indians' material wealth" (25). Hollrah analyzes Bonnin's rhetoric, but through the lens of gendered sentimentality. Chiarello also makes mention of *OPRI*: "It was not until 1924, when Zitkala-Ša co-authored 'Oklahoma's Poor Rich Indians: An Orgy of Graft and Exploitation of the Five Civilized Tribes—Legalized Robbery', that her words could carry sufficient weight to effect political change" (8). Along with Dexter Fisher, Cathy Davidson, Ada Norris, and others, Chiarello attributes the creation of the Merriam Commission, an agency "through which the government substantially altered its Indian policy" to the *OPRI* report (8). This essay attempts to show how Bonnin contributes to making that alteration happen through a strategy of rhetorical silence.

Before addressing it in Bonnin's works specifically, I discuss some of the general scholarship on silence. Anne Ruggles Gere describes silence as a representation of inarticulateness or, worse, oppression: silence as "limiting" or "disabling" (206). She elaborates, "A more positive perspective on silence is, however, possible if we see it as in dialogue [with] rather than in opposition to speech" (206). Gere cites Janis Stout, who writes that certain women authors "deploy the 'strategies of reticence' to unsettle readers into a recognition of the 'injustice and unreasonableness of the world's patterns of relationships between men and women'" (qtd. in Gere 207). Cheryl Glenn relates, "Like the zero in mathematics, silence is an absence with a function, and a rhetorical one at that" (4), and cites bell hooks, who asserts, "Moving from silence into speech is for the oppressed, the colonized, the exploited, and those who stand and

struggle side by side, a gesture of defiance that heals, that makes new life and new growth possible" (qtd. in Glenn 20). The "new growth" that hooks envisions can only happen because of the pre-existing silence, that "absence with a function," as described by Glenn.³ Gertrude Bonnin strategically creates an absence of information and a functional silence manufactured out of reticence or delayed discourse, which then make room for her own healing "gestures of defiance." By "[m]oving from silence into speech," describing her own experiences in her *Atlantic Monthly* trilogy as well as Millie Neharkey's case in the *OPRI* report, Bonnin exposes how both she and Millie are silenced by oppressive, corrupt authorities. Her varieties of rhetorical silence create the discursive space for her audience to reform and to grow.

In a recent communication on the use of silence in Native American literature, poet Heid Erdrich (Turtle Mountain Ojibwe) stated that she saw silence as "a force equal to character in stories," a sentiment embodied by Bonnin's rhetoric.⁴ Though he does not apply his theoretical stance to Bonnin specifically, Gerald Vizenor's description of the function of silence in Native literature neatly unpacks much of what she does rhetorically. He writes, "The shadows are the silence in heard stories, the silence that bears a referent of tribal memories and experience" (Vizenor 11).⁵ Penelope Kelsey discusses what could be interpreted as Vizenor's shadows/silence "that bears a referent," suggesting that Bonnin's "subversiveness" in the boarding school essays "has roots in Dakota familial and gender norms that Zitkala-Ša includes in the text" (67). Ron Carpenter, though, brings these elements together most cohesively in his discussion of Bonnin's use of silence in the trilogy. While it is not the focus of his essay, Carpenter uses silence as an example of what he deems "bicultural subjectivity." He asserts that Bonnin's narrator "must teach her Euro-american audiences to recognize the bicultural Indian, a 'civil' woman, who does not fit a crude stereotype. She defines the civil Indian as one who uses silence to monitor herself and to respect others, especially storytellers" (3). Carpenter suggests that Bonnin takes on a "mentoring role" with her readers, teaching them how to be silent and civil, a conclusion that I have come to believe as well. Carpenter analyzes multiple silences: when Bonnin's narrator observes silently, while waiting to invite elders over for storytelling; when Bonnin's mother silently oversees her beading; and when Bonnin the writer chooses silence rather than revealing "inner secrets of the tribe, or the purpose of the

woman's facial tattoos" (17–18). He uses these instances as examples of Bonnin "combin[ing] her bicultural resources to produce a new type of Indian, one that exceeds the prescriptive roles offered Native American women by either culture" (2). While Carpenter's focus is on multiple strategies Bonnin uses to create persona, mine is on the complex rhetorical dynamic she creates with her audience via her deployments of silence and descriptions of silencings.

SILENCES AND SILENCING IN *OKLAHOMA'S POOR RICH INDIANS*

While few scholars have noted Bonnin's polemical writings specifically in *Oklahoma's Poor Rich Indians*, none, as yet, have investigated her complex use of rhetorical silence in that text. In *OPRI* Bonnin deploys four types of strategic silences and silencing that work to position her audience into solidarity with Native peoples targeted for white-engineered graft. In one she chooses to be silent and in essence listening, placing herself in a neutral position that is simultaneously both writer and audience; in another she describes the silencing that happens when the ability to communicate is blocked, placing herself in a position in which she and the audience are sympathetically aligned; third, she creates silence by delaying expected discourse, placing the audience in opposition to her; and, fourth, she describes emotional silence as a reaction to horrific acts, where again she and the audience are sympathetically aligned. Using what is potentially a fifth type of "silence," Bonnin taps into the emotions of her readers by pointing out the "silence" that happens when readers do not hear or do not heed vital information from Indian peoples. While three silences described create sympathy in an audience and so align readers with the writer/speaker, delayed discourse has the potential to hold up the mirror, as it were, and reveal to readers their own conscious or unconscious opposition to the writer/speaker: Bonnin and those she represents. Bonnin's fifth type, the absence of hearing, creates a rather sneaky *ad hominem* that forces readers to either act upon what they now know or not act and become aware of their own inhumanity. All of these rhetorical silences/silencing work together to produce a rhetorical opening. Through that torn open space, Bonnin's voice emerges, urging for the creation of a new alliance and for potential empathy between her audience and the Native people for whom she fights.

By 1924 Bonnin had proved to be anything but silent, having published many literary works: poems, short stories, articles, essays, a collection of Dakota tales (*Old Indian Legends*), an anthology (*American Indian Stories*), and the *Sun Dance* opera. Additionally she had established a political presence through her tenure as secretary of the Society of American Indians (SAI) and editor of SAI's *American Indian Magazine*, and through her affiliation with the General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC). Bonnin began work with the GFWC in 1920, in 1921 helped that organization to establish the Indian Welfare Committee, and in 1923 was appointed as a research agent representing the GFWC by Herbert Welsh, then president of the Indian Rights Association (IRA). The IRA, founded in 1882 in Philadelphia, had as its mission to "civilize" Indians and work toward gaining them full American citizenship. As part of this undertaking, IRA members visited reservations regularly, which may have been how the association first became aware of the nearly unimaginable graft suffered by Native peoples in Oklahoma. Welsh sent in a team to investigate. For five weeks in 1923, accompanied by Sniffen representing the IRA and Fabens, a lawyer with the American Indian Defense Association (AIDA), Bonnin gathered evidence of manipulation of legal loopholes, blackmail, coercion, rape, and murder by corrupt individuals who clamored for oil-rich Indian lands. To allow readers to connect emotionally with the very real effects of the widespread exploitation, Sniffen and Fabens introduce a section of the *OPRI* report with this statement: "There are some phases of our investigation that can be presented best by a feminine mind, and we leave it to Mrs. Bonnin to describe the following three cases" (Bonnin 23).⁶ Here, presumably, shared authorship ends, and Bonnin takes over exclusively, using a Dakota knowledge of the strength of silence combined with the rhetorical strategies honed in over a quarter of a century of sentimental and political literature. Equipped with these rhetorical tools, she presents horrific, unsettling details of crimes perpetrated on innocent Indian individuals.

Bonnin begins her section of *OPRI* by describing the brutal rape and robbery of a diminutive, eighteen-year-old Indian girl, Millie Neharkey, by a team of men from the Gladys Bell Oil Company. Rather than immediately launching into a description of Millie's situation, Bonnin instead steps back and is silent, aligning herself with her readers by playing the role of listener. She provides for readers "[t]his excerpt from

The Phoenix, of Muskogee, Oklahoma, dated November 2, 1923,” which “gives the story as follows” (23). Through this rhetorical configuration, Bonnin positions herself and her readers side by side: both are audience. To create the scaffolding that will support this alliance, Bonnin selects information from the recognized, reliable newspaper and presents it as something she feels compelled to pass along, as if she is bringing crucial information to the attention of a valued colleague or friend. Rather than paraphrasing evidence from the *Phoenix* for her audience and thus giving them information that is secondhand, Bonnin remains silent and allows her audience to read it for themselves. Bonnin delivers necessary and potentially inflammatory information, but by using the newspaper as her mouthpiece she removes potential prejudices that a white audience might presume. Unsettling her audience’s (conscious or unconscious) resistance, Bonnin maneuvers her readers into alignment with her and with Indian peoples—an arrangement brought about through her rhetorically chosen silence.

The *Phoenix* states that Millie had been kidnapped a few days prior to reaching legal age by a group of men from the Gladys Bell Oil Company in an effort to “defraud [her] . . . out of oil lands valued at \$150,000” (qtd. in Bonnin 23).⁷ The article names prominent businessmen, including the president of Gladys Bell, Grant C. Stebbins, and a lawyer who faced disbarment because of his involvement, Robert F. Blair. The two men, along with A. B. Reese and W. R. McNutt, are reported to have tricked Millie into leaving her mother’s house, taken her out of the state, coerced her through fear and intoxication to sign over her power of attorney, and forged checks in her name. Even more scandalously, the *Phoenix* reports, “It has been rumored for several months that white slavery charges would be filed against the abductors of the girl” (25).⁸ The charges of “white slavery” most likely referred to the White-Slave Traffic Act of 1910, which sought to curb the interstate transport of women for the purposes of prostitution; therefore, what the *Phoenix* suggests is that the men who abducted, abused, and robbed Millie Neharkey also would be charged with repeatedly raping her. Rhetorically Bonnin does well to remain silently aligned with her audience and “listen” through the medium of the newspaper to the charges being leveled. By doing so, she remains objective and, as she later affirms, equally stunned and horrified at the story they read. To emphasize the depravity, Bonnin includes an excerpt from the *Phoenix* quoting Superinten-

dent Wallen, who reportedly said, "The case is one of the most revolting in the history of Indian service" (26). Bonnin doesn't have to accuse powerful white men of heinous crimes perpetrated on a helpless Indian girl: she remains silent while a white superintendent and an established white-run newspaper present the case for her.

Excerpts from the *Phoenix* show that the men of the Gladys Bell Oil Company who conspire to rob Millie Neharkey perpetrate a more conventional type of silencing as a tactic to ensure their success: they sever her lines of communication. Bonnin again maneuvers the *Phoenix* into a position as messenger to establish this next type of silencing, one that promotes her audience's sympathy. The article states that "the girl was kidnapped and hurried out of the State by employes [*sic*] of the oil company and taken to Cassville, Mo., where Blair procured her signature to a deed conveying land to Stebbins for a cash consideration of \$1000" (24). The men whisk Millie away from friends and relations who might have heard her pleas for help, and then take even more extreme measures to guarantee that she cannot speak to protest or defend herself. From the *Phoenix*: "In connection with the kidnapping it is charged that the girl was plied with intoxicating liquors, kept in a state of fear and *prevented from communicating* with her former guardian or Indian officials" (24; emphasis added). While she is drugged and unable to contact anyone who could assist her, Blair, who had forced her to sign over power of attorney, appeared in the Tulsa County court "claiming to represent Millie Neharkey"; that is, speaking for her while simultaneously silencing her. Bonnin's strategic presentation of this forced silencing works to tug at readers' heartstrings, keeping the audience firmly aligned with Millie.

Bonnin provides almost three pages (a significant percentage in a thirty-nine-page report) of excerpts from the *Phoenix* alleging the following: the criminal collusion among the lawyer, lackeys, and business executive; attorney malpractice; kidnapping; forged checks; and "white slavery." Then, she ends her use of newspaper excerpts, resumes the position of author, and deploys a third strategy of silence: delayed discourse. While the kidnappers force Millie *into* silence, Bonnin provides Millie *with* silence, one that protects her from social censure. Bonnin states that she met personally with Millie Neharkey and that "She talked English" (26). She describes a deeply emotional exchange, "a long private conference with this little girl," who imparts to her "horrible things" that

the men of Gladys Bell committed (26). The anticipation at this point is that an explanation of what really happened is about to be revealed, the scandalous details delivered firsthand from Millie as channeled through Bonnin. Instead of launching into the expected description, Bonnin skirts over what would be salaciously interesting information and explains that much of “the horrible things [Millie] rehearsed . . . [are] of official record at Union Agency, Muskogee” (26). If readers want the details, they won’t hear them from Millie or her now protector, Bonnin. Through this delayed discourse, Bonnin produces a silence that both is and is not. Bonnin protects Millie with a silence that prevents social censure. She won’t hold her up to the scorn that in the early twentieth century came with being the victim of rape, and she won’t fall into the trap of creating a sexually charged “savage” to feed into stereotypes to which many non-Natives consciously or unconsciously subscribed. Information, she tells her audience, is available should readers want to pursue it, but they are not going to get it from her.

The delayed or in this instance absent discourse opens up rhetorical space, providing her readers with an opportunity for sociopolitical realignment. Readers are moved from their former rhetorical position at the side of Bonnin and Millie, a position created by Bonnin’s use of the *Phoenix* and specifically the sections presented to evoke sympathy. The audience now sits in rhetorical opposition to Millie and Bonnin; the two Indian women have information that they will not provide to white readers. Strategically, readers are presented with a choice: proceed emotionally on without damning descriptions or seek out those details that fulfill base desires. Without immediate titillating particulars of savage rape, with only the heart-wrenching image of an assault on a young girl not much more than a child, readers are steered toward feeling for Millie almost as they might one of their own children; just as Bonnin has done, they assume a maternal position in relation to Millie and, like Bonnin, “[m]utely . . . put . . . arms around her” (Bonnin 26).

Upon hearing Millie recount her kidnapping, rape, and robbery, Bonnin describes her own reaction as being shocked into silence. After sketching out the brutal scenario using details from the *Phoenix* and while describing her firsthand interactions with Millie, Bonnin writes, “I grew *dumb* at the horrible things she rehearsed. . . . There was *nothing I could say*,” and continues, “*Mutely* I put my arms around her” (26; emphasis added). Bonnin connects with readers’ cultural memory, rely-

ing on their ability to evoke or imagine a time when they were so horrified as to be unable to react; in so doing she writes to elicit that stunned silence, akin to her own, from readers in the present moment. The audience, now again on Bonnin's side, simultaneously experiences with her the emotional silence in reaction to what has happened to Millie at the hands of the presumably well-respected lawyer and businessmen—representatives of their own white community. Readers potentially react just as Bonnin has: dumbfounded at the brutality perpetrated on a helpless child. They, too, are speechless in reaction to the girl who becomes “a victim of an unscrupulous, lawless party . . . whose little body was mutilated by a drunken fiend who assaulted her night after night” (26). This shared moment of emotional silence is analogous with the shared position of silently “listening” to the newspaper account; in both instances an alliance between author and audience occurs. Rather than be on the side of their own white community members, the “drunken fiend[s]” who share their own cultural makeup, they can do nothing but sympathize with and support “helpless little Millie Neharkey, an Indian girl of Oklahoma” (26).

In the last part of Bonnin's presentation of the case of Millie, she explores that fifth type of “silence,” one that only qualifies as silence because of information that goes unheard or unheeded. She once again rhetorically positions readers in a way that asks them to consider their conscious or unconscious opposition to Indian people, but in so doing she again provides her readers the opportunity to choose. Bonnin relates that in the moment of being abducted, tortured, and raped, Millie's “terrified screams brought no help, *then*” (26; emphasis added). Millie is silenced in relation to those who could help her. The wording is almost accusatory. A young Indian girl, whom Bonnin has finessed her audience into sympathizing or even empathizing with as if their own child, was crying out for help but was neither heard nor heeded, *then*. *Then*, Bonnin seems to be saying, you did not hear her; *then*, while the little girl screamed for help, for you, readers, there was only silence. But Bonnin's “*then*” carries with it the unspoken subtext of potential emotional forgiveness and opportunity for reform: you didn't know; you didn't help because you didn't know; you didn't help and so unknowingly supported a system that produced the depraved “fiends” of the Gladys Bell operation. That was all “*then*,—but now”—now is different (26). Bonnin follows *then* with an almost poetic caesura created by a comma

combined with a dash, “Her terrified screams brought no help then,—” and follows that directly with what can be read only as a challenge: “but now” (26). That rhetorical pause—an actual moment of silence woven into the fabric of the narrative—is, in fact, that opening readers must have in order to align themselves with the author and with Indian peoples. Now, her readers hold the “present record,” the official report *Oklahoma’s Poor Rich Indians: An Orgy of Graft and Exploitation of the Five Civilized Tribes—Legalized Robbery*. The *now* that Bonnin has put on the page, the *now* that her readers are reading, is invoking without explicitly stating that *now*, through Bonnin’s report, readers will hear Millie’s horrifying story and must act. At the end of her segment on Millie, Bonnin counters her own silence and Millie’s unheeded and unheard screams with a rhetorical refusal to be silenced. She demands that “honest and fair-minded Americans” use “the power . . . in their hands” to work for justice (26). The strategically iterated types of silences create the rhetorical rent in the discursive fabric, making way for Bonnin’s powerful, public record of events.

EARLY DEVELOPMENTS OF RHETORICAL SILENCES IN THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY TRILOGY

Bonnin writes Millie’s story and the stories of many other Native men and women by using the rhetoric she learned while negotiating her own circumstances of silence/silencing: Indian boarding school. Ironically, the boarding school attempts at silencing led to the rhetoric that Bonnin made her own and fashioned into a weapon in defense of the rights of Indian peoples. The types of strategic silences analyzed in *Oklahoma’s Poor Rich Indians* have, if not their origin, then their clearly identifiable development in Bonnin’s semi-autobiographical trilogy. In *OPRI* Bonnin concentrates her depictions of silence and silencings into a handful of paragraphs. In the trilogy these representations of silence are subtly woven throughout each of the multichaptered installments; additionally Bonnin includes stories with positive iterations of silence used to model proper behavior. As Carpenter has pointed out, Bonnin uses silence to teach her white audience some manners. And while *OPRI* is forthright in its political purpose, Bonnin’s trilogy taps into the majority culture’s anthropological curiosity to present an account that disrupts her audience’s unchallenged support of Indian boarding schools. Like the uses of

silence, the political activism is present but is often diverted, diffused, or restrained; that is, until the last paragraph of the third essay. Bonnin uses rhetorical silences to persuade her audience to shift allegiance away from unquestioned government policies and toward informed support of Indian peoples. In the end she also tells her audience what it cost her to gain that rhetorical ability, which leads her, and them, to assess and more importantly to problematize the end result.

Bonnin begins "Impressions of an Indian Childhood," the first installment in the trilogy, by interlacing multiple types of silence into a scene involving her own child-self in interaction with her mother. In the first and second paragraphs, Bonnin paints a bucolic scene of her mother going to the river for water and herself tagging along. The tone turns when she explains of her mother, "Often she was sad and *silent*, at which times her full arched lips were compressed into hard and bitter lines, and shadows fell under her black eyes" (68; emphasis added). In response Bonnin "clung to her hand and begged to know what made the tears fall" (68). To her sympathetic request her mother replies, "*Hush*; my little daughter must *never talk* about my tears" (68; emphasis added). Three iterations of silence exist here: Bonnin's mother's emotional self-silence; a silence that happens in response to Bonnin begging to know the source of her mother's sadness; and her mother's subsequent silencing "hush" of her "little daughter."

The brief sentence about Bonnin's mother and her emotion-driven silence is packed with disturbing force for Bonnin as a child and for her readers, who will, with her, be "hushed" and made to wait for the information they desire. The silence enacted by Bonnin's mother suggests a response to some terrible past experience. Using the image of the Indian woman, her lips pressed together in a moment of stoic resistance to the sadness she is feeling, Bonnin activates a stereotype that is familiar, and presumably gratifying, to the reader, but she does so only to create an opening for her own rhetorical purpose. This iteration of silence can be viewed as a precursor to, in *OPRI*, Bonnin's shocked silence upon hearing about the crimes committed upon Millie, as both are reactions to white transgressions. Additionally, both emotional silences lead to a moment of delayed discourse. Similar to readers desiring firsthand details about Bonnin and Millie's "private conference," a turn-of-the-century white reader's predictable reaction to the moving description of Bonnin's mother is to ask: What turns the romantically picturesque

Indian woman and her daughter into a scene of sadness and silence? Bonnin and, more importantly, Bonnin's audience, who are now aligned with her in their desire for explanation, "cling" to the Indian mother and "beg" to know. Readers, like Bonnin, are held at arm's length while she is hushed; consequently the desired discourse is delayed. These iterations of silence—the "sad and silent" mother, the begging for explanation that goes unanswered, and the "hushed" child—produce a desire, in an unsettled audience, that creates a space for explanation.

Bonnin's mother is "Often . . . silent" but not always. Following almost a full column of text, Bonnin rewards her readers with the anticipated information. She utilizes tropes of sentimentality (tears, tragic deaths) and a pathetic appeal when she writes that her mother wraps an arm around her and points to the place where her uncle and sister are buried, and then says, "We were once very happy. But the paleface has stolen our lands and driven us hither" (69). This, then, is what produced her mother's "sad and silent" moment: theft of land, displacement, death. With the same maternal image that she will re-create when writing about Millie ("Mutely I put my arms around her"), Bonnin creates a rhetorical space for unexpected information. In a few brief sentences she alters an expectedly romantic Indians-going-for-water scene into a rhetorical critique that can be readily accepted, is in fact desired, by her white audience. She makes her readers, just like her child-self within the narrative, want to know what has produced this suppressed emotion in her mother, and that desire allows for the clearly voiced indictment of the US government for its injustices.

Additionally, Bonnin's rhetorical virtuosity is shown by her use of "hush." While Bonnin's mother objects to broken treaties and subsequent Dakota displacement, she admonishes her daughter, "Hush . . . never talk about my tears" (Zitkala-Ša 68). The irony is, of course, that by writing about the incident in the very essay that her white *Atlantic Monthly* audience is reading, Bonnin has "talked" about those tears and has revealed the cause of them. Similarly, Millie's story is communicated through newspaper excerpts. In both incidents Bonnin uses some slick rhetorical savvy. For each, Bonnin uses a surrogate to deliver the information and accomplishes three goals: she aligns herself with readers, she remains credibly objective, and she creates a protective rhetorical bubble for both her child-self within the trilogy and for Millie within the *OPRI* report. While the description of Millie's kidnapping comes from

the *Phoenix*, relieving Bonnin from delivering the words herself, Bonnin ultimately assumes “linguistic control” of the story and so places herself in a protective position in regards to Millie. Likewise in “Impressions of an Indian Childhood,” Bonnin does not accuse the “paleface” of wrongdoing; it is her mother who tells the story after protectively admonishing her child to “hush” and “never tell.” While the child-Bonnin within the narrative is silent, “hush[ed]” by a mother bent on protecting her child, the adult writer and activist Bonnin must weather the abuse that eventually comes from making her protest public.⁹

In contrast to these first iterations of silence, others in “Impressions” reflect culturally (Yankton) embedded respect and provide fodder for Bonnin to use silence within storytelling to impart what might be labeled proper etiquette to her white audience.¹⁰ In the second chapter of “Impressions” entitled “The Legends,” Bonnin writes about inviting the “neighboring old men and women to eat supper” (71). She describes waiting at the entrances of their homes: “Sometimes I stood long moments without saying a word. It was not any fear that made me so *dumb* when out upon such a happy errand; nor was it that I wished to withhold the invitation, for it was all I could do to observe this *very proper silence*” (71; emphasis added). This description of silence comes a short four paragraphs after Bonnin describes her mother holding back tears and suffering in silence at the memory of her deceased kin. Bonnin keeps the painful memory fresh in readers’ minds by re-invoking her relative in the transition paragraph: “even strangers were sure of welcome in our lodge, if they but asked a favor in my uncle’s name” (71). This welcoming of “wayfarers,” she says, is how she heard so many stories, and this paragraph-ending sentence deftly segues into the section describing the positive deployment of silence used to respectfully listen.

In order for her readers to clearly understand the difference between victim silence (transformed into a rhetorical strategy of *action for* through Bonnin’s writing) and polite silence, she patiently defines it. The silence in this second scene is “very proper” and, she tells readers, does not stem from fear. Instead, she writes her silence “was a sensing of the atmosphere, to assure myself that I should not hinder other plans” (71). Silence as an act of patient listening is presented as a basic skill taught by her mother. The abrupt juxtaposition between the silence resulting from the wrongs of the “paleface” and the polite silence of Dakota society, then, lends to the interpretation that this tale may be

offered as a tutorial for her white readers: be quiet, she says to them, observe a “proper silence” and listen. Bonnín follows with, “My mother used to say to me, as I was almost bounding away for the old people: ‘Wait a moment before you invite any one [*sic*]. If other plans are being discussed, *do not interfere*, but *go elsewhere*’” (71; emphasis added). Using the age-old technique of storytelling in order to teach a lesson, Bonnín is admonishing her white audience to mind their manners: listen to what is being said. If they “listen,” readers may “hear” the message that their money supports a dysfunctional boarding school system, and they may stop interfering and go elsewhere.

The silence in “Impressions of an Indian Childhood” contrasts with more pointedly negative depictions in the second installment of the trilogy, “School Days of an Indian Girl.” Bonnín describes herself using silence in order to resist boarding school, but she also deploys the silence that happens when an audience is unable or refuses to hear. While examples from “Impressions” are chronologically presented, the scenes from “School Days” work best grouped thematically. In the first example I investigate Bonnín’s description of being forcibly silenced, much like when Millie is prohibited from contacting those who might help her. The second unpacks Bonnín’s many moments of ostensible silence that occur when Indian voices, akin to Millie’s screams, are not heard. Finally, I circle back to the beginning of “School Days” to discuss Bonnín’s key image of the telegraph pole, a symbol that initially appears in “Impressions” and then recurs in the third installment of her trilogy, “An Indian Teacher Among Indians.” The telegraph pole acts as a complicated representation of Bonnín herself, symbolizing both silence and voice and, most importantly, illustrating the pain incurred through the process of preparing (or of being prepared) to enter the realm of Euro-American rhetoric. Bonnín’s depiction of a tree forged into a telegraph pole uses strategies of silence/silencing to specifically demonstrate to her naive audience the emotional backlash that can result from the Indian boarding school system.

One of the most emotional deployments of silence occurs in the chapter titled “The Cutting of My Long Hair.” Bonnín relates, shortly after arriving at boarding school, being dragged from under a bed, tied to a chair, and having her long braids shorn. When her friend Judéwin tells her their hair is to be cut, Bonnín attempts to escape rather than submit. She writes, “I crept up the stairs as *quietly* as I could in my

squeaking shoes,—my moccasins had been exchanged for shoes” (92; emphasis added). Her moccasins, had she still had them, would have provided a comfortable and protective silence. A silence, like that of her mother’s “hush” and of her own for Millie, that would keep her safe. But her “squeaking” school shoes issued to her by her white educators must *be silenced* to ensure her cultural survival—they are representative of a silence of victimization. In a variation of the silence enacted by her mother (who becomes sad and silent in response to wrongs done to Dakota peoples and who hushes her daughter in what reads as a defensive and protective act), these representative symbols of assimilation must be silenced in an attempt at survival. Bonnin succeeds, despite her white man’s shoes, and makes it upstairs without being detected, where she hides under a bed. When her name is called, she writes, “I did not open my mouth to answer” (91). This silence, even though here she chooses it, is certainly not one of politeness or respect. While it could be labeled a silence of resistance, it is generated by fear, and, moreover, it is unsuccessful within the narrative. However, when analyzing the scene as a rhetorical strategy, the description of silent victimization echoes the iterations of silence deployed through the voice of Bonnin’s mother in “Impressions” and Millie’s silencing while being kidnapped and raped. This scene, too, evokes a pathetic and sentimental reaction in its attempt to pluck at readers’ heartstrings over the injustice suffered by a child, and in this instance as in Millie’s case, a child whose mother (or guardian) is not present to protect her.

Bonnin describes three incidents that work to show how Indian voices have been ignored—and thereby essentially silenced—by the “paleface.” When she first arrives at boarding school, Bonnin is bewildered by the strange surroundings and cries until one of the older students advises her, “Wait until you are alone in the night” (89). Heeding her classmate’s counsel, she “swallow[s] [her] sobs” but calls out for her mother, brother, and aunt. “I pleaded,” she writes, “but the ears of the palefaces *could not hear me*” (89; emphasis added). While this example could refer to a language barrier, she writes in such a way as to lay blame on the “palefaces” inability to hear. Later Bonnin writes, “It was next to impossible to leave the iron routine after the civilizing machine had once begun its day’s buzzing; and as it was inbred in me to *suffer in silence* rather than to appeal to the ears of one whose open eyes *could not see my pain*, I have many times trudged in the day’s harness heavy-

footed, like a *dumb* sick brute” (96; emphasis added). The syntax suggests that Bonnin only “suffer[s] in silence” and becomes “like a dumb sick brute” because those who run the “civilizing machine” “could not see [her] pain.” Interestingly, audibility shades into visibility here; Bonnin remains silent because her white teachers are unable to see what is plainly apparent. This reinforces that the lack of communication is not a problem of language difference but is a defect on the part of the white educators of perception and sympathy generally. The arrangement of information in the phrase “rather than appeal to the ears of one whose open eyes could not see my pain” adds a sarcastic tone: that is, if they cannot see with open eyes how much a child is hurting, how can she expect them to use their ears to hear her?

Wrapping up her emotional retelling of her school days, Bonnin poignantly relates a third incident of unheeded voice. She writes: “Perhaps my Indian nature is the moaning wind which stirs [my memories] now for their present record. But, however tempestuous this is within me, it comes out as the low voice of a curiously colored seashell, which is *only for those ears that are bent with compassion to hear it*” (97; emphasis added). In each previous depiction Bonnin simply describes for her audience an incident in which she is not heard. In the third example the wording requires readers to act. Because of her reference to the “present record” in the first clause, “those ears that are bent with compassion” in the dependent clause in the second sentence refers specifically to the *Atlantic Monthly* readers holding the “present record” in their hands. Due to Bonnin’s clever, if possibly a bit underhanded, ad hominem appeal, her readers can only be one of two things: cold tyrants who have no feelings for the welfare of others, or what Bonnin wants them to be: “those . . . bent with compassion,” those who hear the pleas of Indian children trapped in dehumanizing boarding schools. All three examples, and there are more, target those “palefaces” who, previous to reading, could not or would not “hear.” The last illustration requires readers to acknowledge a newly acquired understanding gained from Bonnin’s texts; her story has broken through the “silence” created by their previously normative boarding school narrative. While white readers might have been forgiven for not taking action when “deaf” to the problem, they now have no excuse and must either act or admit to coldhearted disregard.

Bonnin’s elucidation of silence includes a symbolic, key image, the telegraph pole, which she describes prominently at both the beginning

and the end of her boarding school experience. When Bonnin writes of her trip on the "iron horse," the train, she reflects on what repeatedly flashes by her:

Chancing to turn to the window at my side, I was quite breathless upon seeing one familiar object. It was the telegraph pole which strode by at short paces. Very near my mother's dwelling, along the edge of a road thickly bordered with wild sunflowers, some poles like these had been planted by white men. Often I had stopped, on my way down the road, to hold my ear against the pole, and hearing its low moaning, I used to wonder what the paleface had done to hurt it. (88)

Bonnin sees the telegraph pole and is "breathless"—a word suggesting a surprised intake or holding of breath and, consequently, a silence. The telegraph pole, too, is a soundless image when seen through a window, while the train speeds Bonnin away from her home and toward White's Manual Labor Institute. The pole outside the window and the girl, breathless, are both silent . . . victims or at least victim-like—one having been mysteriously "hurt" by the white man, the other having been coerced by white missionaries into leaving home. The implied analogy is subtle here but becomes explicit at the end of the third essay.

Bonnin's anthropomorphosis of the pole, when she writes that it "strode by at short paces," sets up the comparison she makes between the pole and herself in the last two essays. The act of being "planted by white men," the "low moaning," and the "hurt" all reappear in Bonnin's description of self later in the second essay and are reaffirmed at the end of the third. For example, the only sound the telegraph pole emits is a "low moaning" that Bonnin remembers and attributes to being caused by the "paleface" (88). The reiteration of moaning connects Bonnin to the telegraph pole when later in "School Days" Bonnin describes, as previously noted, her "Indian nature," which is a "moaning wind" stirring her memory and causing her to write the very "record" her readers are holding. In the same passage Bonnin relates that the "tempestuous[ness] . . . within her . . . comes out as the *low* voice of a curiously colored seashell" (97; emphasis added). Bonnin's low and moaning voice echoes the low moan of the telegraph pole, and both result from alterations performed by well-intentioned "palefaces": a tree is made over into a telegraph pole; an Indian girl is made over into a "civilized" boarding school student.

Bonnin, though, does not make the explicit comparison between herself and the tree-turned-pole until the end of the trilogy.

In the third installment in a section entitled “Retrospection,” Bonnin returns to the telegraph pole image. She writes: “Like a slender tree, I had been uprooted from my mother, nature, and God. I was shorn of my branches, which had waved in sympathy and love for my home and my friends. The natural coat of bark which had protected my oversensitive nature was scraped off to the very quick” (112). She follows this with “Now a cold, bare pole I seemed to be, planted in a strange earth” (112). The image of a pole, specifically a pole “planted,” echoes the image of the telegraph pole described in “School Days of an Indian Girl” that had been “planted by white men.” Both the telegraph pole shorn of its branches and the girl gone to boarding school shorn of her braids have had their “natural coat . . . scraped off to the very quick.” They have been altered and have been removed from the land that nurtured them; they are now both planted in a “strange earth.” The tree turned into a telegraph pole is a silent and stark symbol; both it and Bonnin, in the midst of the comparison, appear victimized and mute.

The silence Bonnin invokes via the symbolic telegraph pole is a silence of victimization, but she deploys it in the essay only to turn it into a rhetorical space for her voice. Both she and the telegraph pole, altered as they are, have the power to deliver messages. Directly after creating the metaphor, she writes: “Still, I seemed to hope a day would come when my *mute* aching head, reared upward to the sky, would flash a zigzag lightning across the heavens. With this dream of vent for a long-pent consciousness, I walked again amid the crowds” (112; emphasis added). In describing her “mute aching head”—her painful silence—Bonnin solicits a sentimental response from her audience. Because of her presentation of the boarding school experience, her *Atlantic Monthly* readers are prompted to pity her painful transformation. In that pocket of created rhetorical space, Bonnin invokes a future voice—which is ironically simultaneously the voice right there on the page, the voice her readers read. She writes that the day will come when she, like a telegraph pole, will transmit messages, will “flash a zigzag lightning across the heavens” and “vent” her “long-pent consciousness.” And so, in the very trilogy she has written, like the tree turned into a “low moaning” telegraph pole, Bonnin, “uprooted” and “shorn of her branches,” achieves her “dream” by publishing her essays in *Atlan-*

tic Monthly. In writing about being silenced, she—representing herself and other boarding school students—resists being both victimized and silenced. Like bell hooks asserts, Bonnin claims her “gesture of defiance that heals, that makes new life and new growth possible.”

While the benefit of a political voice is great, Bonnin clearly shows that this ability to use the oppressor's language has not been acquired without a painful cost. The process of being fashioned into an English-speaking and -writing political activist wounds deeply in the act of fostering rhetorical abilities with the power to heal. Bonnin deploys silences and silencings as strategic weapons and uses them to create rhetorical space for an explicitly claimed, powerful voice. Her silence brings white readers into alliance with Native peoples. She exposes to readers their own tacit opposition, consciously or unconsciously, to human rights that morally should be shared by all, including Indians. Bonnin uses descriptions of silence to transform her readers from opponent to ally, and she uses silence to ensure her pan-Indian public and political voice.

NOTES

1. Bonnin is a member of the Yankton branch of the Dakota peoples. The Dakota consist of three branches, distinguished by language: the Dakota, Lakota, and Nakota. Within each of the three larger, language-based groups are smaller bands. The Nakota include the Upper Yanktonai, Lower Yanktonai, and Yankton bands. Bonnin belonged to the Yankton and is referred to in most literature as Yankton Sioux or Yankton Dakota, signifying her connection to her band and to Dakota peoples generally. She was born Gertrude Simmons, adopted the Lakota name Zitkala-Ša, and used it for much of what she published, starting in 1900. She acquired the name Bonnin when she married a mixed-blood Yankton, Ray Bonnin.

2. Inherent in Spack's description of the need to “overthrow . . . domination” is the notion that Bonnin assumes a position of victim fighting oppressor, which may in fact be the case. However, her uses of silence always and already position her, as Spack also asserts, in “linguistic control” of the rhetorical situation. For example, when discussing the scene in which Bonnin participates in an oratory contest in which rival schools unveil a derogatory banner, Spack writes, “The narrator recognizes that she is being branded as a degraded woman, a Euro-American man's sex object. Thus at that moment, despite public recognition of her linguistic skills, she feels powerless. She fights back in the only accessible way: by succeeding on the European Americans' terms” (157). In the oratory moment described in her text, Bonnin uses the spoken English language to fight the written language (and image) of the banner, in a successful attempt to “overthrow linguistic domination.” However, in writing about that moment in “School Days of an Indian Girl,” Bonnin's rhetorical

position is not one of victim but one of “linguistic control.” Bonnin, exclusively, has the inside story, with which she is privileging her audience. It is important to note that scholars assume Bonnin’s trilogy to be semi-autobiographical; that is, she uses an amalgamation of boarding school narratives combined with her own experiences to craft her texts.

3. I want to note here that I went to Glenn’s book—specifically chapter 5, “Commanding Silence”—thinking that information on the “silent Indian” stereotype would be informative. While it was not particularly helpful (see Victor Villanueva’s review of it), the preceding chapters, especially the first two, “Defining Silence” and “Engendering Silence,” proved beneficial to establishing structural substance to the definitions of rhetorical silences.

4. I took the opportunity to start a message thread with a number of rhetoric and Native studies scholars via the social media tool Facebook. That led to an email exchange with Heid Erdrich in which she wrote: “In my understanding of Anishinaabe traditional/oral literature, there is not a character named Silence, as far as I know. When I say Silence is an Ojibwe and universal character, I am recognizing it as such, as a force equal to character in stories, both traditional and contemporary. Gordon Henry has a character, Elijah Cold Crow, who speaks only in Haiku and enacts a kind of silence that way as well as with his name. Other books, David Treuer’s *Little* and perhaps a few others I could think of if I had the time, depend on characters who do not speak.”

5. Vizenor has written extensively on silence and shadows. He defines “shadows” in the context of his article “Ruins of Representation: Shadow Survivance and the Literature of Dominance” in the following manner: “The archshadow is the consciousness of natural reason, the silence and animate shadows over presence. The shadow is that sense of intransitive motion to the referent; the silence in memories. Shadows are neither the absence of entities nor the burden of conceptual references. The shadow is the silence that inherits the words; shadows are the motions that mean the silence, but not the presence or absence of entities. Archshadows are honored in memories and the silence of tribal stones. Shadows and the postmodern are the natural trace of liberation in the ruins of representation” (7).

6. *Oklahoma’s Poor Rich Indians, an Orgy of Graft and Exploitation of the Five Civilized Tribes—Legalized Robbery* is authored by Bonnin, Fabens, and Sniffen. I use only “Bonnin” plus the page number when citing this work. In citing passages from the *Atlantic Month* trilogy, I use “Zitkala-Ša” plus page number, respecting the fact that Bonnin chose to write those essays using the name she had selected for herself. All references to the trilogy come from *American Indian Stories, Legends, and Other Writings*.

7. According to the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, \$150,000 in 1924 would be worth \$2,044,658.49 in 2013.

8. It is interesting to note that the *Phoenix* invokes the possibility of “White slavery” charges in the case of a Native American woman. The use of it reflects the tangled racial ideologies at play in Oklahoma and in the United States at that historical moment.

9. The February 1900 edition of the Carlisle Indian School's newspaper, the *Red Man*, reprinted "School Days of an Indian Girl." The edition also included this response from Richard Henry Pratt, founder of Carlisle and of the Indian boarding school system in general: "We do not for a moment believe that 'Zitkala-Ša' desires to injure the cause of her own people, whose title to the blessings of enlightenment and civilization has so lately found a general recognition, but we do feel that the home-sick pathos—nay, more, the underlying bitterness of her story will cause readers unfamiliar with Indian schools to form entirely the wrong conclusions. Her pictures are not, perhaps, untrue in themselves, but taken by themselves, they are sadly misleading." Her later writings, including one entitled "Why I Am a Pagan," elicited an even more vitriolic response.

10. This section echoes Ron Carpenter's analysis of Bonnin's use of silence in the trilogy essays. He sees Bonnin as establishing a Yankton component of her "bicultural subjectivity" through iterations of silence, while I write about these moments as rhetorical strategies. I agree with Carpenter's assessment that Bonnin places herself in the role of teacher (Carpenter uses the word "mentor") in relation to her white readers.

WORKS CITED

- Bonnin, Gertrude, Charles H. Fabens, and Matthew K. Sniffen. *Oklahoma's Poor Rich Indians: An Orgy of Graft and Exploitation of the Five Civilized Tribes—Legalized Robbery*. Philadelphia: Indian Rights Assn., 1924. Print.
- Carpenter, Ron. "Zitkala-Sa and Bicultural Subjectivity." *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 16.3 (2004): 1–28. JSTOR. Web.
- Chiarello, Barbara. "Deflected Missives: Zitkala-Ša's Resistance and Its (Un)Containment." *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 17.3 (2005): 1–26. Project Muse. Web.
- Erdrich, Heid. "paper, chat." Message to the author. 20 Apr. 2011. Email.
- Gere, Anne Ruggles. "Revealing Silence, Rethinking Personal Writing." *College Composition and Communication* 53.2 (2001): 203–23. JSTOR. Web.
- Glenn, Cheryl. *Unspoken: A Rhetoric of Silence*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 2004. Print.
- Hafen, P. Jane. Introduction. *Dreams and Thunder: Stories, Poems, and the Sun Dance Opera*. By Zitkala-Ša. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2001. xiii–xxiv. Print.
- Hollrah, Patrice E. M. "*The Old Lady Trill, the Victory Yell*": *The Power of Women in Native American Literature*. New York: Routledge, 2004. EBSCOhost. Web.
- Katanski, Amelia. *Learning to Write "Indian": The Boarding-School Experience and American Indian Literature*. Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 2005. Print.
- Kelsey, Penelope Myrtle. *Tribal Theory in Native American Literature: Dakota and Haudenosaunee Writing and Indigenous Worldviews*. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2008. Print.
- Pratt, Richard Henry. Commentary on "School Days of an Indian Girl." *Red Man* Feb. 1900. Carlisle Indian School Press. Print.

- Simpson, Audra. "On Ethnographic Refusal: Indigeneity, 'Voice' and Colonial Citizenship." *Junctures: The Journal for Thematic Dialogue* 9 (2007): 67–80. *Expanded Academic ASAP*. Web.
- Spack, Ruth. *America's Second Tongue: American Indian Education and the Ownership of English, 1860–1900*. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2002. Print.
- Villanueva, Victor. "The Layerings of Silences." Rev. of *Unspoken: A Rhetoric of Silence*, by Cheryl Glenn. *College Composition and Communication* 58.4 (2007): 721–31. Print.
- Vizenor, Gerald. "Ruins of Representation: Shadow Survivance and the Literature of Dominance." *American Indian Quarterly* 17.1 (1993): 7–30. *JSTOR*. Web.
- Zitkala-Ša. *American Indian Stories, Legends, and Other Writings*. Ed. Cathy N. Davidson and Ada Norris. New York: Penguin, 2003. Print.

Intimate Enemies

Weetigo, Weesageechak, and the Politics of Reconciliation
in Tomson Highway's *Kiss of the Fur Queen* and
Joseph Boyden's *Three Day Road*

SOPHIE MCCALL

The ongoing Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC Canada), struck in 2008, is part of the current global proliferation of discourses of reconciliation.¹ Recent commissions in places such as South Africa, Chile, and Sierra Leone are suggestive of what Pauline Wakeham calls the “increasing co-optation of discourses of reconciliation by a hegemonic network of institutions and agents” (par. 1). In spite of a high level of scholarly and public interest, there is little agreement about what the term *reconciliation* means and how to initiate a transformative politics of reconciliation. Paulette Regan suggests that a “deep divide exists between Indigenous peoples and Canadians about what reconciliation is and how best to achieve it” (“Apology” 47): while Canada wants to “achieve legal certainty,” First Nations’ advocates highlight the need for reparations in the form of land, resources, and other forms of restitution (48). In Indigenous literary studies, the fissures in approaches to reconciliation stem from and echo other, overlapping tensions between those critics who argue for Indigenous nationalist positions, emphasizing the need for deeper engagement with tribal traditions of storytelling, governance, and cultural practice versus those who draw on postcolonial theories that focus on issues such as cultural hybridity, liminality, and white-settler complexes of guilt and complicity. For Indigenous nationalists, such as Taiaiake Alfred (Kanien’kehaka), Glen Coulthard (Dene), Roland Chrisjohn (Onyota’a:ka) and Sherri Young, and many others, reconciliation often functions hand-in-hand with the nation-state’s drive toward amnesia; furthermore, since there never was a historical moment of “conciliation,” reconciliation is beside the point. For scholars who critically engage with *reconciliation* as a way to talk about settler colonialisms, on the other hand, the key words of postcolonial theory—

ambivalence, negotiation, complicity, resistance, and so on—offer some useful conceptual tools to build an interpretive framework.²

This essay fleshes out the differences and overlaps between postcolonial and Indigenous nationalist critical approaches through an analysis of Tomson Highway's *Kiss of the Fur Queen* and Joseph Boyden's *Three Day Road*. I argue that bringing into dialogue these two approaches can create productive openings for thinking through the multiple and competing senses of what a politics of reconciliation entails. The two novels explore residential schools as part of a larger policy of assimilation and genocide through the interaction of two figures from Cree storytelling traditions, the Weetigo/*windigo* (a cannibal spirit) and Weesageechak (a 'trickster').³ Both Boyden (of Irish, Scottish, and Métis ancestry) and Highway (a Cree writer) associate the Weetigo with the invasive and spirit-devouring effects of residential school and other colonial institutions; Weesageechak's role in "healing" from that inheritance, on the other hand, takes on a different form in each novel. The final scenes of Boyden's novel suggest that a recovery of Cree traditions, through storytelling, ceremony, and connection to land, is necessary for healing; Highway's novel, while also invested in such a recovery, further suggests that healing comes from artistically transforming those Cree traditions within a dynamic, intercultural context. I argue that the representation of the intimate enemies of Weetigo and Weesageechak in Highway's *Kiss of the Fur Queen* and Boyden's *Three Day Road* illuminates both the ruptures and the unexpected common ground between postcolonial and Indigenous nationalist approaches to reconciliation. I further suggest that a combination of both postcolonial and Indigenous nationalist perspectives may best do justice to the complexities of these novels and the conceptualizations of healing and reconciliation that these texts offer.

RECONCILIATION: MORE THAN ONE APPROACH

Before engaging with Highway's and Boyden's novels, I want to establish the key historical and cultural contexts for the debates on healing and reconciliation. In this section I argue that the rifts in conceptions of *reconciliation* may offer useful critical leverage by which to engage with the different roles and responsibilities in initiating a program of social justice. Many critics have drawn attention to the problems with a state-imposed discourse of reconciliation that, with its implicit drive

to establishing certainty, clarity, and resolution of Indigenous-settler relations, all too often resembles a politics of national amnesia.⁴ Keavy Martin argues that the recent turn to reconciliation reflects “the desire for closure that governs . . . national discourses around Aboriginal issues—in particular, the legacy of residential schools” (Martin, “Truth” 49). She argues that “a fixation upon *resolution*. . . is not only premature but problematic in its correlation with *forgetting*” (49; emphasis in the original). From an Indigenous nationalist perspective, such as that of Martin, Alfred, Coulthard, and Chrisjohn and Young, reconciliation is a top-down initiative that, far from addressing the root cause of problems, distracts from the core issues of justice. For Alfred, reconciliation is a “pacifying discourse,” which demands that Aboriginal people become “reconciled with imperialism” (182, 183). Instead, Alfred argues, what should be pursued is a politics of restitution of Indigenous lands and of Indigenous traditions of governance. In Alfred’s words, “restitution is not a play on white guilt; that is what reconciliation has become” (182). In a compelling analysis Alfred puts justice, not reconciliation, at the centre of his project. Chrisjohn and Young also suggest that the current discursive climate that values reconciliation acts as a smokescreen that diverts attention away from Aboriginal people’s calls for restitution. They further question the emphasis on individual psychological treatment inherent in notions of *healing* in dealing with issues arising from residential schooling: “The function of therapy is to talk us out of our justifiable anger; to put some time between the ‘wounding’ and the present; to trick us into accepting our psychic murder as restitution” (122).

Healing, like *reconciliation*, presents its own conceptual complexities, particularly in colonial contexts, since the notion implies that it is up to Indigenous people to restore themselves to health in spite of contending with the ongoing effects of assimilative and genocidal policies in Canada. Prevailing notions of healing, stemming from a Western psychoanalytical conceptual framework, emphasize the *victim’s* responsibility in pursuing therapy, overlooking the pathology of the perpetrator and bracketing larger historical contexts of colonialism and the intergenerational transmission of trauma (Chrisjohn and Young 98; Episkew 8–11). In statements calling for Aboriginal peoples’ “‘recovery’ in a therapeutic sense,” Chrisjohn and Young point out there is rarely “mention of land, trees, minerals, resources, and other things that. . . have a price tag associated with them” in modern capitalist societies (37).

These authors recommend dismantling the “therapeutic state” (121). Notwithstanding the validity of this critique, alternative understandings of healing also circulate widely within Indigenous intellectual networks: what is sometimes referred to as “the healing movement” traces a longer genealogy than “reconciliation” and has as its impetus a series of grass roots initiatives that have been developing over at least the past forty years. For example, the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, an Aboriginal-run, not-for-profit organization in operation from 1998 to 2012, fostered and supported a diverse range of community-based healing initiatives that addressed the legacy of physical and sexual abuse suffered in Canada’s Indian Residential School System, including intergenerational impacts. There are multiple ways to understand and mobilize notions of healing and reconciliation, and these differences offer opportunities to create productive critical dialogues concerning community-focused versus state-sponsored initiatives.⁵

It could be argued that the deep ruptures in how to understand reconciliation, particularly between the state and Aboriginal communities and their affiliated solidarity groups, may fatally compromise the usefulness of the term. However, as Paulette Regan notes, fractures in conceptions of reconciliation may be both appropriate and enabling given the fact that at this moment in history Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada have different responsibilities in coming to terms with the past. She argues that these divergent perspectives open up a dynamic space of debate concerning legacies and futures in Indigenous/non-Indigenous relations. If for Aboriginal people the first step in a process of reconciliation should involve negotiating land rights and honoring Indigenous traditions of law, for non-Aboriginal Canadians that first step might include confronting the past by “unsettling the settler within,” a phrase that evokes the political potential of a collective sense of psychic disquiet in settler mentalities.⁶ The purpose of distinguishing the moral imperatives of Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities in a politics of reconciliation is not to reify an overly simplistic binary opposition between these groups but rather to acknowledge the differences that continue to manifest themselves—most glaringly in socioeconomic disparities between settler and Indigenous populations. At the same time, acknowledging other fissures *within* Indigenous nationalist approaches—for example, with respect to feminist analyses—is also productive, particularly if reconciliation is not viewed in a singular, lin-

ear, and teleological way. For example, Shari M. Huhndorf (Yup'ik) and Cheryl Suzack (Anishinaabe) argue that the dominance of the treaty model that underpins some material arguments for the restitution of lands and resources not only risks reinforcing colonial notions of sovereignty but may also create problems for women, whose claims to land, property, on-reserve housing, and other material resources are often more tenuous than men's (Huhndorf and Suzack 5–6; Huhndorf 3–15).⁷ A focus on treaties and land claims also raises questions about the role of urban communities that may or may not have ongoing relationships to their ancestral territories and communities (Lawrence 11–14).

Gregory Younging, scholar and assistant director of research for the TRC Canada, from Opsakwayak Cree Nation, makes the case for a materially grounded program of restitution to address past and ongoing injustices through the honoring of treaties, the recognition of land claims, and Canada's signing of the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*; but he also argues that "Canadians . . . need to undergo a type of micro-reconciliation within themselves" (327). In other words, Younging argues that a politics of reconciliation must involve both material restitution for Indigenous communities and a psychic unsettling of Canadians "fac[ing] up to what has been done in their name," and "own[ing]" this knowledge as "part of who they are" (327). Following Younging's argument for why a cynical attitude should not be the end point in thinking through a politics of reconciliation, since cynicism may be a part of a settler guilt complex and as such enables a certain denial of responsibility, I would like to make the case for a two-pronged approach in developing a critically informed politics of reconciliation. A two-pronged approach would require, following Alfred's plan of restitution, significant changes in the allocation of resources in Canada and, following Regan's vision of "unsettling the settler within," challenging the economy of guilt and denial that underpins some versions of reconciliation. Reconciliation, then, is not defined in a singular manner. Rather it becomes a cluster of approaches that can achieve different aims. Furthermore, a gap between "healing" and "reconciliation," as well as between social justice projects that address the divergence of settler and Indigenous responsibilities, may create the conditions in which to pursue a range of strategies that involve the empowerment of Indigenous communities, the acceptance of responsibility on the part of governments and other institutions, and the meaningful transformation of

the settler mentality, as affecting both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. Acknowledging the divergence of goals among a range of stakeholders makes possible a more open-ended conceptualization of reconciliation—for example, one that accounts for feminist critique. In the next sections I examine closely the highly interactive and volatile figures of Weetigo and Weesageechak in Highway's and Boyden's novels to demonstrate the importance of attending to these competing notions of reconciliation, using both postcolonial and Indigenous nationalist critical approaches.

CRITICAL APPROACHES TO WEETIGO AND WEESAGEECHAK

Analysing the figures of the Weetigo and Weesageechak from Cree mythology immediately raises difficult ethical questions concerning how a scholar should research, learn, and write about Indigenous storytelling traditions, as well as putting in motion larger debates about the role of postcolonial theory in Indigenous literary studies. In Deanna Reder (Cree-Métis) and Linda Morra's edited collection, *Troubling Tricksters: Revisioning Critical Conversations*, contributors call for a restoration of tribal-centred understandings of Weesageechak and other "trickster" figures, arguing in favor of community-based research practices that value the experience and knowledge of elders and other community resources. Many of the contributors self-identify as Indigenous literary nationalists, and while they acknowledge how dynamic and shape-shifting the figure of Weesageechak is, they argue that postcolonial theory, particularly since the 1990s, has gone too far in emphasizing the trickster's role in representing a postmodern concept of radical indeterminacy, as if its cultural significance could become infinitely reinterprettable.⁸ Labrador Métis/Inuit critic Kristina Fagan argues that "extract[ing] the use of the trickster from its particular cultural context and ma[king] it a tool in the critic's own theoretical project" is symptomatic of a larger problem with postcolonial analyses that do not respect the specific tribal contexts of Indigenous literatures and storytelling traditions (Fagan, "What's" 7). Critics of both Highway's and Boyden's novels have explored tribal-centred interpretations of the Weetigo, using the work of Cree writers such as Neal McLeod or Anishinaabe writers like Basil Johnston, to ground their scholarship in culturally

appropriate frameworks.⁹ However, attempting to master the “correct” way to interpret the Weetigo or trickster may create other problems. As Anishinaabe scholar Niigonwedom James Sinclair points out, the interpretation of traditional or sacred stories “requires a cultural fluency that . . . takes a lifetime to learn” (Sinclair 24). Working with elders and developing community-based research takes time and does not guarantee unfettered access to knowledge, even for those scholars who have close ties to the community or communities. Studying anthropological texts must be attempted with an awareness of the mediated nature of the acquired knowledge: who collected this information, for whom, and for what purposes? Defining a singular Cree interpretation of the Weetigo or Weesageechak may quickly become reductive, and both novels warn against this by at times emphasizing the tension between them, and at other times emphasizing their many overlapping characteristics.

To some extent, the novels themselves provide guidance as to how to approach these figures; going to outside sources will not necessarily clarify their multiple meanings. Indeed, “clarification” is precisely what these novels *refuse* to offer: rather, these novels ask the reader to become aware of the limits of his or her own interpretive codes, shaped as they are by the particularities of experience and social location. Both Highway’s and Boyden’s novels suggest the necessity and value of mobilizing a range of approaches in order to address the multiple, contradictory, and ongoing effects of colonialism and to bring about a program of decolonization. At the same time, the novels appear reluctant to offer any direct or explicit lessons on colonization or decolonization; rather, they show the “enmeshment of the positive and the negative, of the deformed and the beautiful, of human depravity and potential” (Adair 30), as well as the power and persistence of stories as a source of nourishment for Indigenous communities.

WEETIGO IN *KISS OF THE FUR*
QUEEN AND *THREE DAY ROAD*

On the surface, both Highway and Boyden represent the figure of the Weetigo in a negative light as a manifestation of the linked force of colonial institutions such as the residential school, the Catholic Church, the hospital, the prison, the army, and the reserve. In Jennifer Henderson’s words, *Kiss of the Fur Queen* is a book about “the terror of colonial

institutions” (Henderson 176). Highway makes the connection between the Weetigo and the church abundantly clear in describing the simultaneity of a case of Weetigo possession and the arrival of the first priest in Cree territory: “a man became possessed by Weetigo, the spirit who feasts on human flesh. At this time, the first priest arrived on Mistik Lake” (Highway 245–46). Reinforced by church, state, and the law, the Weetigo appears to triumph: the medicine woman Chachagathoo, who is treating the victim, is accused by the priest of witchcraft; the victim dies; Chachagathoo is charged with murder and sent to prison, where she hangs herself in her cell (246). Highway tells us that Chachagathoo was “the last shaman in that part of the world, the last medicine woman, the last woman priest”; but the church had labeled her as Satanic, poisoning her reputation within the Cree community for generations (247). Boyden narrates a similarly formative event of windigo possession and windigo killing occurring at precisely the same moment as the imposition of colonial-capitalist regulatory systems in Cree territory (34–49). In the first story that Niska “feeds” to her nephew Xavier, an injured, morphine-addicted, and starving World War I veteran, Niska relates how her father, a leader of the Cree community and a *hookimaw* or windigo killer, is seized by Hudson’s Bay Company men and the Northwest Mounted Police following his windigo killing and put in jail, where he dies (Boyden, *Three* 47).¹⁰ Boyden, like Highway, uses the figure of the windigo to connect the institutions of law, police, prison, reserve, residential school, and army, suggesting that these institutions are responsible for putting Cree ways of life under siege. Niska ostensibly is referring to the sacrifice of millions during World War I when she says that “war touches everyone and *windigos* spring from the earth” (49); however, she may also be suggesting genocidal practices in Canada, in which Cree territories are being appropriated, Cree institutions of law are being ignored, and Cree people’s lives and freedoms are being taken away.

Both novels suggest that colonial institutions such as the residential school and the army produce an inmate population characterized by their “docile bodies,” as Michel Foucault would have it, as well as coerce the inmates’ participation in silence, denial, self-incrimination, and self-surveillance.¹¹ Upon seeing his brother being violated by a priest who looks like “a bear devouring a honey-comb, or the Weetigo feasting on human flesh,” Jeremiah attempts to speak out but cannot (Highway 79). Jeremiah witnesses the priest’s transgression and is forced to accept it

within the rule of law produced by the institution. His learned docility leads him to ask himself: "Had this really happened before? Or had it not? But some chamber deep inside his mind slammed permanently shut. It had happened to nobody. He had not seen what he was seeing" (80). The institutional effects of this denial lead Jeremiah to become emotionally and physically paralyzed or "dead" (205, 207). It takes Jeremiah years to retrieve his memory and recall not only the abuse of his brother but also his own abuse. Similarly in *Three Day Road*, Boyden continually parallels the institutional spaces of the residential school, the reserve, and the army in order to show how these sites of colonial governmentality produce docile subjects who either assimilate to the dominant cultural codes established by the institution (Elijah), or who become increasingly silent, introverted, and sealed off from others (Xavier). Although both Elijah and Xavier have their own ways to undermine its authority, the military successfully co-opts their full participation in the primary activity at the front: hunting for Germans. They both excel at their tasks as snipers, given their apprenticeship in tracking from Niska, though only Xavier seems aware of the travesty of naming what they do in No Man's Land *hunting*. While for Elijah "to hunt is to hunt," Xavier insists that "I hunt for sustenance." Elijah, who is developing what could be described as an addiction to killing, responds: "And so do I" (Boyden, *Three* 320).

In both novels colonial institutions disrupt the respective Cree community's sense of the ethics around consumption for survival, leading to a destabilizing pursuit of consumption for consumption's sake, reinforced by an overarching settler culture of consumer capitalism. In Highway's novel the Okimasis brothers' visit to the shopping mall food court, described as "the belly of the beast," illustrates how the desire to consume and be consumed renders the boys vulnerable to Weetigo possession (Highway 119).¹² A continuum between church, residential school, and shopping mall is created when the boys indulge in bloody, ketchup-laden hamburgers along with the other "people shoveling food in and chewing and swallowing and burping and shoveling and chewing and swallowing and burping, as at some apocalyptic communion" (119–20). This "apocalyptic communion" suggests the brothers' unwitting collaboration with the feaster or Weetigo, as well as their eventual transformation into the feasted by "a beast that, having gorged itself, expels its detritus" as they leave the back exit of the mall (121). The novel

implies a social pandemic of (over)consumption, in which subjects simultaneously become victims and agents of compulsory consumerism. This theme is most poignantly explored through the character of Gabriel, whose sexual promiscuity does not abate once he is diagnosed with HIV and develops symptoms of AIDS. Both exploiter of and prey to the Weetigo's insatiable appetite, the character of Gabriel suggests that as much as the Weetigo devours, it is itself devoured by a wasting, consumptive disease that further stimulates its cravings.

Along with AIDS a further medical implication of the Weetigo as a figure that represents the annihilating compulsion to consume and be consumed is the disease of "consumption" or tuberculosis. Tuberculosis is intimately connected to Canada's colonial and genocidal history, as the high rates of infection in Indigenous communities in the first half of the twentieth century justified the institutionalization of infected individuals in hospitals and other treatment centers far from their home communities, enabling the breakup of Indigenous families, the imposition of Christianity and of the English language, and the deepening of policies of assimilation. Tuberculosis was an enormous threat to the well-being of students in residential schools, particularly before the vaccine was developed and readily available after World War II. Overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, a lack of ventilation, and a failure to separate infected students were common in many of the schools, leading to death rates as high as 40 percent (Milloy 89–93).¹³ In drawing attention to the high cost of "consumption," in more than one sense, both Highway's and Boyden's novels repeatedly contrast sustenance with overindulgence and the impossibility of satisfying greed.

In both novels the figure of the Weetigo is used to imply a paradoxical interdependence of overconsuming (wasting) and of being consumed (wasting away), of devouring and of being devoured, of starving to death and overindulging.¹⁴ In *Three Day Road* Xavier comments: "I see a hunger in Elijah that he can't satisfy" (Boyden, *Three* 326). In describing his own addiction to morphine, Xavier states: "Their morphine eats men. It has fed on me for the last months, and when it is all gone I will be the one to starve to death" (10). Elijah's desire for food decreases in direct proportion to his mounting appetite for morphine, which concomitantly threatens to consume him. As he becomes increasingly gaunt, his desire for more killings replaces his desire for sustenance: "Elijah . . . says the spark [in his dying victims' eyes] fills his belly when it gnaws for

food" (200). His alienation from his body's physical needs parallels his growing estrangement from the Cree teachings he learned from Niska and Xavier after they rescued him from the residential school. In particular, Elijah abandons the code of ethics of the hunter, whose motivation should follow the community's needs rather than the desire to hunt for its own sake: "I remember him learning to love killing rather than simply killing to survive" (269). Thus both novels suggest that Weetigo possession spawns insatiable desire—a desire that, engendering ever more intensifying desires, is infectious and spreads like an epidemic.

While both novels suggest that colonial-capitalist institutions are to a large degree responsible for providing the Weetigo with hospitable environments in which to unleash its appetite, the novels offer very different responses to the question of how to exorcise the Weetigo or quell its ravenousness, how to heal from the wounds of colonialism, and what role Weesageechak should play in these linked processes. While *Kiss of the Fur Queen* embraces desire and contamination as agents of change and transformation as opposed to paralysis and stasis, *Three Day Road* imagines healing as a retreat from the polluted spaces of the residential school, the reserve, and the battlefields, a withdrawal from contact with mixed cultural spaces, and an embrace of the life of the ascetic who denies her or his desires. The interrelationship between the Weetigo and Weesageechak is markedly different in the two novels, leading to a different picture of what "healing" entails, and what a project of reconciliation may potentially involve.

While Highway implies that the shaping of a person's desire by the corrosive effect of institutions—prisons of various kinds that extend themselves well beyond the walls of the church, the school, the prison, or the hospital—represents to some extent the triumph of the Weetigo, since the individual becomes simultaneously the victim of the Weetigo and the Weetigo itself, Highway also suggests that desire provides an engine for change. While Gabriel's Weetigo-like sexual practices as an adult are destructive for himself and others, Gabriel simultaneously transforms the abject scenes of his childhood, precisely through his embrace of his inner Weetigo. Through dance, music, sex, and the renewal of Cree traditions in "samba-metered hisses" (Highway 280), he crafts for himself a range of personae that appear to blur defiance and submission. The life force that Gabriel's desire represents, and the pleasure that pursuing those desires creates, exceeds the Weetigo's power.

Gabriel may have been the victim of the Weetigo-like priests in residential school, and as an adult he may have sought to replicate these experiences; but he is also able to reclaim and act upon his desires (unlike Jeremiah). With his lover Gregory, the choreographer who dresses always in black and who wears a small silver crucifix around his neck (as if he were another manifestation of the priests in residential school), Gabriel appears, in Jeremiah's eyes, the suffering Christ figure nailed to the cross: "there, against the bedroom wall, black on white, Gregory Newman hung nailed to his brother, by the mouth" (Highway 204). Yet the scene hints at the limitations of Jeremiah's perspective; for Gabriel it is a moment of taking ownership of his desire or "passion" in both senses of the word. Under Gregory's gaze Gabriel finds pleasure in being consumed while studying ballet: "think of your pelvis . . . as a plate with an offering.' . . . Gabriel felt his whole groin area opening, breathing. Suddenly he felt himself devoured" (200). According to Adair, "Gabriel's sensation of being figuratively eaten is enacted during a moment of physical empowerment. In this light the *wihtikow*, as well as being a consuming entity, is a transformative force that enables Gabriel to weave and dance amidst the oppressive elements in his life" (Adair 16). The Weetigo thus "expresses a cultural dance between oppression and empowerment, repression and emergence, and the colonial past and the mythic present" (2). The extraordinary dynamism of this dance of opposites brings about the potential for change—which, in Highway's work, is almost always enabling, even if the effects of change are unpredictable or even negative. Even the tragedy of Gabriel's death ultimately results in Jeremiah learning his brother's lessons of embracing desire, risk, and transformation—lessons that permit him finally to "live"—to overcome his deadened emotional state and to connect to others.

Gabriel's paradoxical embrace of and combat with the Weetigo heightens in other institutional contexts such as the hospital, which colludes with the church in attempting to ban Indigenous practices of health and healing (Highway 304). Yet Highway's novel continually highlights the contradiction inherent in institutional power and the capacity for individuals to redirect the power of these institutions against themselves. The Weetigo becomes both the source of subjection and a propelling force that demands action, and as such it shares common ground with Weesageechak, with its endless capacity for transformation. Indeed Adair goes so far as to say that the Weetigo in Highway's

novel is “another manifestation of *wisahkecâhk*” (Adair 30), the latter who, I would suggest, plays an even more vital role than the Weetigo in this novel, by recentering Cree forms of knowing and re-Creeifying colonial spaces within a context of cross-cultural exchange.

WEESAGEECHAK IN *KISS OF THE
FUR QUEEN AND THREE DAY ROAD*

In *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, Weesageechak takes on many guises and borrows from many cultural traditions, leading not to a watering down of Cree traditions, but rather setting Cree stories in a mixed cultural context. Simultaneously a brave hero and a complacent bystander, Weesageechak shape-shifts into a myriad of figures, including the Fur Queen, fertility goddess, sex worker, Polish piano teacher, vampy arctic fox, the Virgin Mary, Chachagathoo, the Anishinaabe medicine woman Ann-Adele Ghost rider, and still others. What unites all of these (mostly) female figures is their donning of white fur, contrasting with the ecclesiastical men in black. But the white-and-black motif does not so much rigidly separate the figures of Weesageechak and Weetigo as show their interrelationship. The world of Highway’s novel is one of continuous flux, and this perpetually shifting ground manifests itself in a constantly evolving relationship between the Weetigo and Weesageechak. If Weesageechak is at one point a brave weasel who “chewed the Weetigo’s entrails to smithereens from the inside out” (Highway 120), carrying the mark of his contamination on the tip of his tail, in other manifestations Weesageechak is not so much a heroic, self-sacrificing figure but one who strangely resembles the Weetigo. While the Fur Queen at times acts as a protector of the boys, scaring off the predatory priest in residential school (74), she also winks at inappropriate moments, making the reader wonder just whose side she is on, and smiles as she watches the brothers get into a violent fistfight (208). Her lips are “streaks of blood,” as if, like the Weetigo, she has just ingested bloody meat, and her eyes are white flames against her ice-cold skin, which “look[s] chiseled out of arctic frost” (10). It is certainly possible to mistake Weesageechak for the Weetigo, as when in his dream Jeremiah mixes up the healer Chachagathoo, the Fur Queen, and the Weetigo: “She was back! To feast on his flesh, devour his soul, her crown, her white fur coat, her eyes of fire. And she was clutching at his throat, squeezing it shut. Chachagathoo,

rising from her grave. . . . No. It was the monster gnawing at his innards, devouring him live, that Chachagathoo had come to get, not him” (252). Jeremiah is realizing that Chachagathoo is saving him from the Weetigo, not attacking him. Nevertheless, the dreamscape creates a strong continuum between the Weetigo and Weesageechak, suggesting a “queer interdependence of that which harms and that which heals” (Cvetkovich, qtd. in Henderson 176). I would agree with Cynthia Sugars, who argues that it is up to Jeremiah to learn to tell the difference between the Weetigo and Weesageechak (Sugars, “Weetigos” 84); through their dynamic interrelationship, Jeremiah finally succeeds in dislodging the Weetigo’s stifling hold. In other words, the figures’ ongoing struggle for dominance creates movement and, ultimately, change.

It is important to state that Highway’s novel is not a celebration of mixed-up hybridity for hybridity’s sake: there is too much at stake in Highway’s insistence on transformation over stasis, on continuities over binary oppositions. The emphasis on transformation has important implications in the novel’s conceptualization of “healing” as a dynamic process of engagement across a diverse range of artistic and cultural communities. The potential for interconnectivity between the figures of the Weetigo and Weesageechak challenges Judeo-Christian traditions of rigidly separating heaven and hell, good and evil, spirit and body, male and female—differentially valorized binary oppositions that have shaped colonial institutions in Canada. The spirit of the text is one of flux, a mixing into “one riotous, bubbling stew” (Highway 256), and by ingesting this stew, the boys rediscover their Cree sense of taste: “Suddenly, the piano was a powwow drum propelling a Cree Round Dance with the clangour and dissonance of the twentieth century” (267). By mixing piano with pan-Native powwow drumming, twentieth-century (post)modern “dissonance,” and Latin musical and dance traditions such as Brazilian maraca, bossa nova, and samba (270), the brothers reclaim Cree Round Dance traditions within cross-cultural contexts and initiate a process of psychic and artistic decolonization. This is the inter-fusional world of the “torch-singing fox with fur so white it hurt the eyes” and “eyeshadow . . . so thick she could barely lift the lids” (231): aka “Miss Maggie-Weesageechak-Nanabush-Coyote-Raven-Glooscapoh-you-should-hear-the-things-they-call-me-honeypot-Sees . . . show-girl from hell” (233–34), a mercurial figure whose rapid transformations create change, but of an unpredictable nature. Her pan-Native hybridity

may be one reason why she has received less attention in recent Indigenous nationalist inspired readings of the novel;¹⁵ but again her role is one of a powerful catalyst with generative if unknown consequences. While the first wave of literary criticism on *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, influenced by postcolonial theory, focused to a large extent on the cross-dressing, culturally mixed, hybridized figure of Fur Queen, more recent analyses, drawing on Cree-centered readings, have somewhat left her by the wayside.¹⁶ Conversely, criticism on *Three Day Road* has been more clearly influenced by debates concerning Indigenous literary nationalism following the novel's publication in 2005, leading to a general acceptance of the notion that Xavier and Niska, both of whom are more firmly Cree-identified than the culturally hybrid character of Elijah, define the moral center of the text.¹⁷

In contrast to *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, which emphasizes the importance of change and transformation in re-Creeifying urban, colonized spaces, *Three Day Road* places more emphasis on the value of retreat from a morally compromised, rapidly transforming world in order to conserve Cree ways of life. In response to the army's pressures to conform, Xavier identifies strongly with Cree language, culture, and practices: "me, I won't sing their songs. I have my own songs" (Boyden, *Three* 16). There is no doubt his identification with Cree culture is empowering. Xavier and Niska represent and speak for those few Cree communities still committed to living a traditional, autonomous life on the land. Xavier states that it is his moosehide medicine bundle, not his military ID tags, which anchors his sense of identity: "I leave my medicine bundle around my neck. That alone is who I am" (365). In order to maintain this sense of connection to his Cree roots, Xavier is compelled to retreat from the military world. He becomes increasingly alienated from the other soldiers as he struggles with both racist exclusion and exercising his right to practice his cultural traditions. His efforts to create a wall around himself become crystallized in language: "I learn their English but pretend I don't. When an officer speaks to me I look at him and answer in Cree" (78). He progressively seals himself off from interaction with others in silence: "I talk even less than before, do not smile at all any more" (283). He takes advantage of his worsening deafness to further remove himself: "I can't listen any more so get up and walk away with ringing ears" (338). Xavier's strength emerges from his ability to retreat: from the English language and its conventions of privileging hierarchy; from the

military culture of discipline and punish; from British/Euro-Canadian cultural norms of etiquette, competitiveness, and cruelty; and ultimately from contact with non-Cree peoples, institutions, and ways of life as he takes the “three day road” into the bush with Niska.

The Cree-identified character of Xavier contrasts with the culturally hybrid character of Elijah, who is “turning *windigo*” (44). Elijah is associated eponymously with the trickster: on the battlefield he adopts the nickname “Whiskeyjack,” a mispronunciation of his “Cree name . . . Weesageechak,” a name “he doesn’t share with the *wemistikoshiw*” or non-Cree soldiers (154). Unlike Xavier, Elijah is loquacious and adept at manipulating situations with his rhetorical skills. Akin to his namesake “the whiskeyjack, a grey jay that loves the sound of its voice,” he excels at all forms of communication—speaking, writing, translating, mimicking accents—and rarely misses an opportunity to demonstrate his facility with language (154). He becomes a cultural broker and masters the codes of behavior of the colonizer. On numerous occasions he takes on the role of translator for Xavier, who does not speak English well. Yet as translator, or *traddutore* (in Italian), he sometimes acts more like a *tradtore*, or traitor. Depending on his own interests, or perhaps his caprice, Elijah alternately helps and hinders Xavier to survive the brutalities of trench life. During the boys’ training Elijah misleads Xavier into pronouncing in English a request for special treatment that Elijah knows their superior, Lieutenant Breech, will interpret as insurrectionary (78). As a result Xavier becomes labeled a troublemaker by the high-ranking officers and the butt of the other soldiers’ jokes. Later on, when Xavier finally finds the words (in Cree) to defy the racist and irascible Lieutenant Breech, Elijah mistranslates his friend’s insurgence, mollifying Breech by feeding him more racial stereotypes (255–57). Throughout the novel, it is asserted in a variety of ways that words, particularly written words in English, are the source of misunderstanding, culminating in the fatal mistranslation of Niska’s letter by Joseph Netmaker (318), as well as the misidentification in another letter of Elijah as the surviving, self-sacrificing military hero (5). The novel leaves as an open question the effect of the role that characters like Elijah play—mediators/translators who have expertise in navigating oppositional political contexts—to bring about a program of healing or reconciliation.

Elijah Whiskeyjack’s potential untrustworthiness as cultural translator is conflated with his ambiguous familial background and under-

lined by his fellow soldiers' mispronunciation of his Cree name, Weesageechak: "Whiskeyjack is how they say his name, make it their own. He has told me that what they do to his name is what sounds to my ears like a longer word for bastard, making his name a name without a family" (154). Elijah's uncertain origins contribute to his representation as untrustworthy: his mother, who died when he was a child, is not known to Niska, which is unusual, given Niska's family's strong connections to most of the Cree communities within the area, as well as to her mother's Ojibwe (or Anishinaabe) community (332). Elijah knows little of his father: "I was told my father traps for the HBC but I have never seen him" (266). Although Xavier's father is also unknown, indeed never mentioned, and his mother, Rabbit, reported to be "a drinker of *wemistikoshiw* rum," abandoned Xavier at the residential school to be raised by the nuns (214), the question marks in Xavier's ancestry appear to have little consequence. This is because his aunt Niska, his mother's sister, keenly felt her responsibility to rescue Xavier from the residential school, as she herself was rescued by her own mother. As he is unambiguously a part of his mother's extended family, Xavier is never considered a "bastard," holding "a name without a family." In contrast, as Boyden notes in an interview, Elijah, who spent many more years than Xavier in residential school, "isn't grounded in his place or culture, and this ends up being very damaging to him" (qtd. in Wyile 91).

Elijah as Weesageechak represents a principle of dynamic change and is described as "the trickster, the one who takes different forms at will" (Boyden, *Three* 154); indeed, the "gleam of the trickster [that] is in his eyes" (310) may well be a sign of his metamorphosis into the more dangerous figure of the windigo. Whereas in *Kiss* Weesageechak's shape-shifting kinship with the Weetigo is enabling, as it brings about the potential for change, in *Three* it is more threatening. In Boyden's novel Elijah Whiskeyjack's/Weesageechak's transformation into the windigo appears irreversible. As he morphs, Elijah becomes an increasingly sinister figure: serving meat to Xavier, joking that it is the flesh of German soldiers (310), collecting trophies of his killings in the form of scalps (308), shooting a child at point blank range (306), going on unauthorized killing sprees (336), killing a wounded Canadian soldier by overdosing him with morphine (337), silencing Breech and Grey Eyes when they risk discovering his secrets (340), and, finally, attempting to murder Xavier (368–69). Unlike in *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, in which the shifts

between Weetigo and Weesageechak are multiple and can be reversed, Elijah's transformation from Weesageechak to windigo in *Three Day Road* moves inexorably toward the final showdown between windigo and windigo killer, or *hookimaw*.

WINDIGO AND HOOKIMAW IN *THREE DAY ROAD*

The windigo and hookimaw are, of course, Elijah and Xavier, the two best friends who become each other's deadly enemy. For many of the crimes that Elijah commits, Xavier is his silent accomplice. Elijah may have shot a young, defenseless boy, but he did so only after Xavier had already shot the unarmed mother (305). When Elijah kills Grey Eyes and Breech, staging the double execution as an accident, Xavier's mute witnessing becomes his tacit acceptance (340). And while Elijah succumbs to windigo possession, Xavier only narrowly escapes it. As in *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, in which the weasel cannot destroy the Weetigo without getting covered in shit, in *Three Day Road* the windigo killer risks becoming contaminated or infected by the windigo. In both novels an up-close-and-personal form of killing is required: Xavier must strangle the windigo with his own hands. Boyden emphasizes the closeness of Elijah's and Xavier's final confrontation in a crater in No Man's Land: Elijah "reaches as if to hug me [Xavier]. When his hands touch me, a cold shock runs the length of my body. . . . My hands wrap around Elijah's throat. I don't know what else to do" (368). Acknowledging his acceptance of the responsibility of the hookimaw, Xavier says, "I have become what you are, Niska" (370); yet it is also clear that he has become Elijah. Still holding his friend's military ID that he had ripped off Elijah's neck along with the moosehide medicine bundle (and after he had thrown away his own dog tags with the intention of deserting), Xavier is taken off the field unconscious and is henceforth known only as Elijah Whiskeyjack by medical and military authorities. He himself becomes convinced: "I allow myself to believe that I am Elijah" (375). With one leg painfully amputated, he, like Elijah, develops an addiction to morphine, surrendering to a windigo-like cycle of craving and deprivation, consumption and starvation.

As much as the novel underlines the uncomfortable extent to which Xavier becomes the double of Elijah, it is never implied that Xavier's transformation is due to his cultural identity; in contrast, Elijah's trans-

formation into windigo is paralleled with his culturally hybrid identity. Elijah becomes the untrustworthy “mimic man” who manipulates, according to his own interest, his paradoxical position of privilege and of marginality.¹⁸ And yet the novel asks the reader to consider the pathos of Elijah as windigo. Niska states: “I realized then that sadness was at the heart of the *windigo*, a sadness so pure that it shriveled the human heart and let something else grow in its place” (261). Suggesting that the windigo’s voracious appetite is driven by sadness,¹⁹ rather than the more expected emotions of anger or revenge, the novel exposes the limitations of commonly held assumptions about the culturally mixed subject. Elijah as windigo *and* Weesageechak simultaneously fulfills and challenges stereotypes of savagery, boldly confronting the reader with received ideas about the untrustworthiness of the culturally hybrid figure.

Ultimately Elijah is killed off; the future lies with Niska and Xavier, who must rely on their own skills for survival, based on their lifelong knowledge of traditional Cree territories, stories, ceremonies, and medicine. Traditional Cree knowledge is represented as something that should be conserved and even isolated from other cultural influences. Immediately following her insight that “sadness was at the heart of the *windigo*,” Niska articulates the novel’s general problem with desire and its advocacy for a life of retreat and of asceticism: “To know that you [windigo] have . . . done something so damning out of a greed for life that you have been exiled from your people forever is a hard meal to swallow” (261). Both Xavier’s and Niska’s ability to connect to Cree healing traditions is dependent upon a withdrawal from this world in favor of another and a repudiation of their “greed for life” (261). As Niska paddles Xavier up the river, she tells her nephew stories from her life, including the story of her seduction of, and by, a French trapper who, as the affair ends, attempts to violently degrade her and steal her spirit. The story underlines the danger of acting upon sexual desire (174). Niska’s extraordinary cycle of eight stories that she tells Xavier as they travel up the river expresses a degree of anxiety about change, transformation, and desire. I should qualify that Niska is not a rigidly traditional or static character; indeed, she demonstrates a firm acceptance of the necessity, importance, and inevitability of change. However, she represents and embodies the value of conserving ways of life that are under threat by a dominant society whose addiction to change and “development” has resulted in unprecedented levels of destruction. From the

first story, “Noohtaawiy: My Father,” in which her community, driven by starvation, becomes vulnerable to windigo possession (34–49), to the stories of her ill-fated love affair with the Frenchman and her solitary apprenticeship as medicine woman/hookimaw (130–35; 164–76), to her narrative of rescuing Xavier and Elijah from residential school (213–20), Niska teaches that following one’s desire leads to change, and as she sardonically comments, “at this point in my life, I had no reason to believe that the change would be good” (215). That Niska’s puberty and menstrual cycles are triggered by two separate windigo-killing episodes suggests that events that awaken sexuality are dangerous, bringing about unwelcome change: “my womanhood had come to me like a tainted thing, a sick animal, at the moment it should not have” (46; see also 263–64).

The conclusion to *Three Day Road* underlines the novel’s emphasis on the value of retreating from this world in favor of another that values traditional knowledge. Xavier, very near death, starving and craving only more morphine, having been infected by the windigo in the process of strangling Elijah, at risk of reliving interminably his memories of the front as he struggles with post-traumatic stress disorder, ultimately is saved by a renewal of Cree traditions removed from sites of colonial governmentality. Niska makes a *matatosowin* or sweat lodge to exorcise the windigo spirit that risks claiming Xavier’s life. Their night-long retreat is a manifestation of the larger conceptual framework that animates the novel’s notion of healing as a turning away from this world and toward another. The *matatosowin*’s flap is closed tightly, the “[d]arkness is complete,” and they must “bend to the ground and try to breathe the cooler air there” (379). Paradoxically, their shared retreat from this world enables Niska to “open [her]self to the *manitous*” (378) and Xavier to overcome his sense of alienation. Niska’s efforts to heal Xavier can only be accomplished by reaching Xavier’s inner ear, so to speak, and overcoming what is sometimes his willful deafness. He must recognize his kinship with Elijah, acknowledge how close he, the hookimaw, came to becoming the windigo. In the tent Xavier asks for forgiveness from his dead friend and also accepts forgiveness. Xavier’s position is no longer one of refusal; he hears and responds to Elijah’s voice from beyond the grave. However, he adds: “I can’t forgive everything you did there . . . It is not my place to do so” (380). Although he does open himself up to some extent by avowing that he forgives Elijah, he also carefully clarifies

the limitations of that forgiveness—he says it is “not [his] place” to forgive Elijah, since he cannot forgive on behalf of the silenced dead.

CONCLUSION: WEETIGO, WEESAGEECHAK,
AND THE POLITICS OF RECONCILIATION

In refusing to grant forgiveness to Elijah on behalf of his victims, Xavier implies that victims should not be burdened with the necessity to forgive their perpetrators, particularly through the intercession of a third party. The scene can be read as a response to the recent proliferation of truth and reconciliation commissions around the world that stage precisely these kinds of dramas, in which survivors must dialogue with and potentially forgive the murderer(s) of their loved one(s).²⁰ Underlying this scene is the question of what role the state should play in dealing with legacies of violence that cut across communities, neighborhoods, families, and nations. Xavier’s position reinforces the novel’s conceptual framework, which views healing through a Cree-centred lens. In a variety of ways Boyden’s novel implies that Indigenous peoples should look to their own traditions of healing, such as the Cree *matatosowin*, to exorcise colonial hauntings, rather than relying on state-sponsored initiatives. The novel also insists that agency should rest with Cree individuals and communities in such a process. By setting the final scenes of the novel in the heart of Cree country, a three days’ journey away from reserves or other manifestations of colonial-capitalist incursion, Boyden suggests that healing initiatives are meaningless without the restitution of land and all that flows from it. These are the issues that Indigenous nationalists insist are the key to successfully bringing about a program of social justice and of social change. In these ways the novel offers important correctives to hegemonic, state-imposed notions of reconciliation. However, what is less spelled out is what role cultural translators such as Elijah should play in processes of healing—characters who have developed proficient skills in negotiation, translation, and apparent accommodation. Characters like Xavier and Niska also raise questions about how traditional culture is conceptualized in the novel, since both characters are compelled to retreat from mixed cultural spaces in order to protect, uphold, and practice their traditions.

In contrast, in *Kiss of the Fur Queen* the characters seeking to Creeify Winnipeg do so in “samba-metred hisses” and by remain-

ing open to and synthesizing complex, layered, cross-cultural contexts (Highway 280). Through a collective exploration of “clangour and dissonance” (267), the Okimasis brothers learn how to exorcise the Weetigo. In no way is healing imagined as a retreat from the multiple institutions that shape the complex, layered spaces of the city; indeed, only by figuratively returning to the sites of abuse can individuals rewrite their stories as narratives of empowerment. At Gabriel’s deathbed in the hospital—an institution, like the church and residential school, which attempts to prohibit Cree healing practices such as burning sweet grass and to impose Christian rituals such as last rites—the medicine woman Ann Adele Ghost rider, in her white ermine cape, channels the Fur Queen/Weesageechak/Chachagathoo. She gently removes the rosary from Gabriel’s fingers and replaces it with an eagle feather. Although she considers tossing the rosary into the trash can, she chooses instead to hang it on a Ken doll wearing a cowboy hat and a white-tasseled skirt (303). With humor and humility Highway is suggesting that it is within the space of the institution that healing and reconciliation may occur. The novel continually seeks out ways to stage an intermingling of opposites, a “dance of oppression and empowerment,” as Adair puts it so aptly (2), a mix of spiritual, cultural, and artistic symbols that, in the energy of their clash, create the potential for change and transformation.

Whereas the intimacy of the relationship between Weetigo and Weesageechak in *Kiss of the Fur Queen* suggests the importance of creating the conditions for cross-cultural, collaborative artistic practice as a way of imagining healing, in *Three Day Road* the closeness of the relationship of the windigo and Weesageechak is a threat to the project of restoring traditional Cree ways of life. Highway’s novel suggests that Cree therapeutic approaches become particularly potent when in dialogue with other traditions; Boyden’s novel constructs a notion of Cree identity that is more inward-looking, importantly recognizing and affirming Cree healing traditions but also treating with some wariness cross-cultural, synthesized forms. A Cree-centered perspective such as the one implied in *Three Day Road* is less forthcoming about the role of non-Indigenous people in Canada—a highly diverse group of settler cultures that, arguably, have a greater share of responsibility in making changes and sacrifices in the hopes of establishing more equitable social relations. The differences between the two novels suggest the necessity and value of developing a two-pronged approach to reconciliation,

which would insist not only upon a materially grounded program of restitution but also upon non-Indigenous communities in Canada taking responsibility for coming to terms with the past. Together the two novels suggest that the critic must become adept at mobilizing both Indigenous nationalist and postcolonial critiques in order to address the multiple, contradictory, and ongoing effects of colonialism and to glimpse pathways to decolonization. At the same time, the novels do not primarily thematize colonization or decolonization; instead they accentuate the role of storytelling traditions in providing true sustenance for Indigenous individuals and communities. Boyden's and Highway's shifting, elusive, highly interactive figures of Weetigo and Weesageechak teach us that ready-made, cookie-cutter approaches to healing and reconciliation will not suffice.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This essay is part of a larger research project on arts-based approaches to reconciliation, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, with team members Ashok Mathur and Jonathan Dewar; I wish to acknowledge my team members' input and support. Thanks to my colleague Christine Kim and my graduate students, Dave Gaertner and Ben Gehrels, for their excellent feedback on earlier drafts of this paper. I would also like to thank the two anonymous reviewers for their detailed and very helpful commentary. Finally, I thank my graduate students in English 841 at Simon Fraser University (spring 2011) for their insightful discussions of much of the material I discuss in this essay.

NOTES

1. In 2007 the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement came into effect, providing some limited compensation to former attendees of residential schools in Canada. The settlement agreement also mandated the establishment in 2008 of a five-year-long Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. See Regan, *Unsettling*; Younging, Dewar, and DeGagné; and Henderson and Wakeham for more.

2. See in particular Regan, *Unsettling*; McGonegal, 24–37; Henderson; and Moore-Gilbert.

3. In Highway the spelling is Weetigo; Boyden writes *windigo*. As much as possible I use the form appropriate to the novel I am discussing. If I am quoting from a secondary source (such as Johnston, who uses Weendigo, or Adair, who writes

wihtikow), I follow those authors' spellings. The default form I use in this essay is Weetigo. Highway and Boyden spell Weesageechak identically; see Reder and Morra for alternate spellings.

4. Carole Blackburn, in her article "Searching for Guarantees in the Midst of Uncertainty: Negotiating Aboriginal Rights and Title in British Columbia," argues that the provincial government's drive to create a sense of "certainty" with respect to Aboriginal rights, by drafting modern treaties, primarily aims to facilitate large-scale economic development of natural resources in sectors such as forestry and mining. Blackburn contends that "[a]chieving certainty in Aboriginal rights is a mechanism of security because it removes a condition that interferes with the processes of the economy" (587). In this analytical context treaty negotiations act as "a form of governmentality that helps regulate a population, mediates between Aboriginal-rights claims and the demands of global capital, and produces effects of state sovereignty" (586).

5. Mike DeGagné, the founding executive director of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation (AHF), at a presentation at a graduate seminar at Simon Fraser University, February 3, 2011, provided an overview of the "healing movement" in Canada since the late 1960s. See Martin for more on the AHF ("Truth" 55). See also Fagan ("Weesageechak") and Episkenew for more on the differences between psychoanalytic trauma theory and Indigenous-focused notions of healing.

6. The phrase comes from the title of Regan's critical monograph, *Unsettling the Settler Within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling, and Reconciliation in Canada*.

7. Part of the reason Indigenous women's relationship to land and property is less substantial than men's (quite apart from the persistence of European patriarchal norms) is the gender imbalance in the *Indian Act*, Canada's colonial legislation that defines who is and who is not an "Indian." Although Bill C-31, an amendment to the *Indian Act* passed on June 28, 1985, partly corrected this gender imbalance, problems persist as a result of the bill's "third generation cut-off." See Suzack et al.; Suzack 175–78; Lawrence 11–14; Wolski; and McCall 118–21.

8. While postcolonial theorists such as Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak historically have distinguished postcolonialism from postmodernism, Indigenous literary nationalists (such as Weaver, Womack, and Warrior) are more likely to view the postcolonial and the postmodern as virtually interchangeable since both approaches use European history (colonialism) and aesthetics (modernism) as a way to define themselves. See also Sugars (*Unhome-ly*) and McGonegal for more debate on the relationship between the postcolonial and the postmodern.

9. See Herb Wylie, who relies extensively on Johnston in his analysis of Boyden's *Three Day Road*, and Robin Shawn Adair, whose detailed consultation with McLeod on the subject of the *wihtikow* underpins his analysis of Highway's *Kiss of the Fur Queen*.

10. Vikki Visvis shows that Niska's account follows very closely on "a particular Windigo narrative, namely, James Stevens's account of the Fiddler case," published in 1985 (Visvis 226). Visvis writes that "Jack and Joseph Fiddler's role as Windigo killers, their imprisonment, Jack Fiddler's jailhouse death, and the subsequent loss of tradi-

tional Indigenous values are all echoed in Boyden's representation of Niska's father" (226). Visvis also points out that "Jack Fiddler's tendency to suffer from 'spells' of fainting and unconsciousness are manifested in Niska's own 'visions'" (227).

11. In *Discipline and Punish*, Michel Foucault argues that the institution of the prison, but equally the school, the hospital, the army barracks, and the factory, produce "docile bodies," or individuals willingly replicating and extending the institution's disciplinary tactics into wider society. Individuals internalize the institution's assignment of social roles and play them out in their most intimate actions and thoughts (Foucault 135–69). From a Foucauldian analytical perspective, it makes little or no difference if individuals choose to join an institution, like Elijah and Xavier, who voluntarily sign up for the army, or if, like Jeremiah and Gabriel, they are forced to relocate to a residential school hundreds of miles south of their home community. Foucault's work is foundational to a range of critical approaches in scholarship, including postcolonial approaches.

12. A number of critics have analyzed this scene in *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, in which the Okimasis brothers together retell the story about how Weesageechak, in the form of a weasel, defeats the Weetigo by crawling up his "bumhole" and eating his innards from the inside out (Highway 118–21). See Brydon; Sugars; McKegney; Fagan, "Weesageechak"; and Adair.

13. Today, tuberculosis in Aboriginal communities in Canada continues to be a major concern. As reported in the *Globe and Mail*, a recent federal investigation "reveals the TB rate among status Indians to be 31 times higher than that of non-aboriginal Canadians. Among the most susceptible of aboriginal populations are the Inuit, for whom the TB rate is 186 times that of Canadian-born non-aboriginals" (Curry par. 2).

14. Basil Johnston, who has written on the cultural significance of the Weetigo in Anishinaabe storytelling traditions, both historically and in contemporary times, analyzes in detail how the cannibal monster represents a paradoxical interdependence of overconsumption and starving to death: "The Weendigo gorged itself and glutted its belly as if it would never eat again. But a remarkable thing always occurred. As the Weendigo ate, it grew, and as it grew so did its hunger, so that no matter how much it ate, its hunger always remained in proportion to its size. . . . [T]he more it ate, the bigger it grew; and the bigger it grew, the more it wanted and needed" (Johnston 222; qtd. in Wyile 87).

15. In Cynthia Sugars's words, "postcolonial theories of hybridity, namely those initiated by Homi Bhabha and Edward Said, have often been met with suspicion by Third and Fourth-World subjects" (Sugars 73). Quoting Diana Brydon, Sugars continues that "many Native writers resist hybridity as a 'violating appropriation'" (73).

16. Diana Brydon's and Cynthia Sugars's highly influential essays on Highway's novel represent most clearly this first wave of postcolonial criticism; it is worth noting that both critics discuss extensively the advantages and drawbacks of applying postcolonial theory to Indigenous texts. More recent analyses that have carried on this discussion include Henderson, Sarkowsky, Krotz, and Smith. In contrast, essays by Sam McKegney, Kristina Fagan ("Weesageechak"), and Robin Shawn Adair are explicitly

informed by critical discussions of Indigenous nationalist approaches. None of these critics discusses the Fur Queen, but both McKegney and Adair analyze the role of the Son of Ayash, who is more clearly a heroic figure in Cree storytelling traditions.

17. See Visvis; Gordon; and Wyle. Although these analyses of *Three Day Road* express, to varying degrees, their intention to use culturally appropriate and Cree-centered critical approaches, it is also true that some of the essays show how entrenched postcolonial theory is in current literary criticism of Indigenous literature, as Keavy Martin has suggested in her review of *Troubling Tricksters* (Martin, Review 138).

18. See Bhabha for his foundational postcolonial analysis of the “mimic men”: racially or culturally hybrid figures whose identities are “always produced at the site of interdiction” (Bhabha 88–89). Bhabha’s analysis of mimicry is partly in response to V. S. Naipaul’s novel *The Mimic Men* (1967).

19. In a recent essay Boyden has developed the idea that a particularly tragic legacy of residential schools is a form of intergenerational sadness, a sadness that manifests itself in high rates of suicide among Aboriginal youth. See Boyden, “Hurting.”

20. These issues become particularly complex in *Three Day Road* since it is Xavier who kills Elijah. However, the novel insists on numerous occasions that a windigo killing should not be considered murder.

WORKS CITED

- Adair, Robin Shawn. “Wihtikow Feast: Digesting Layers of Memory and Myth in Highway’s *Kiss of the Fur Queen* and McLeod’s *Sons of a Lost River*.” MA thesis. Dept. of English, U of Saskatchewan, 2010. 1–32. Web.
- Alfred, Taiaiake. “Restitution Is the Real Pathway to Justice for Indigenous Peoples.” Younging, Dewar, and DeGagné 179–87.
- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures*. New York: Routledge, 1989. Print.
- Bhabha, Homi. “Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse.” *The Location of Culture*. New York: Routledge, 1994. 85–92. Print.
- Blackburn, Carole. “Searching for Guarantees in the Midst of Uncertainty: Negotiating Aboriginal Rights and Title in British Columbia.” *American Anthropologist* 107.4 (2005): 586–96. Web.
- Boyden, Joseph. “The Hurting.” *Finding the Words: Writers on Inspiration, Desire, War, Celebrity, Exile, and Breaking the Rules*. Ed. Jared Bland. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2011. 236–41. Print.
- . *Three Day Road*. Toronto: Penguin, 2005. Print.
- Brydon, Diana. “Compromising Postcolonialisms: Tomson Highway’s *Kiss of the Fur Queen* and Contemporary Postcolonial Debates.” *Compr(om)ising Post/colonialism(s): Challenging Narratives and Practices*. Ed. Greg Ratcliffe and Gerry Turcotte. Sydney: Dangaroo P, 2001. 15–29. Print.
- Chrisjohn, Roland, and Sherri Young, with Michael Maraun. *The Circle Game: Shadows and Substance in the Indian Residential School Experience in Canada*. Penticton: Theytus Books, 1997. Print.

- Coulthard, Glen. "Subjects of Empire: Indigenous Peoples and the 'Politics of Recognition' in Canada." *Home and Native Land: Unsettling Multiculturalism in Canada*. Ed. May Chazan, Lisa Helps, Anna Stanley, and Sonali Thakkar. Toronto: Between the Lines, 2011. 31–50. Print.
- Curry, Bill. "Aboriginals in Canada Face 'Third World'–Level Risk of Tuberculosis." *Toronto Globe and Mail*. 10 Mar. 2010. Web.
- Episkew, Jo-Ann. *Taking Back Our Spirits: Indigenous Literature, Public Policy, and Healing*. Winnipeg: U of Manitoba P, 2009. Print.
- Fagan, Kristina. "Weesageechak Meets the Weetigo: Storytelling, Humour, and Trauma in the Fiction of Richard Van Camp, Tomson Highway, and Eden Robinson." *Studies in Canadian Literature* 34.1 (2009): 204–26. Web.
- . "What's the Trouble with Trickster? An Introduction." Reder and Morra 3–20.
- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage, 1979. Print.
- Gordon, Neta. "Time Structures and the Healing Aesthetic of Joseph Boyden's *Three Day Road*." *Studies in Canadian Literature* 33.1 (2008): 118–35. Web.
- Henderson, Jennifer. "Something Not Unlike Enjoyment': Gothicism, Catholicism, and Sexuality in Tomson Highway's *Kiss of the Fur Queen*." *Unsettled Remains: Canadian Literature and the Postcolonial Gothic*. Ed. Cynthia Sugars and Gerry Turcotte. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier UP, 2009. 175–204. Print.
- Henderson, Jennifer, and Pauline Wakeham. "Colonial Reckoning, National Reconciliation? Aboriginal Peoples and the Culture of Redress in Canada." Henderson and Wakeham 1–26.
- , eds. *Aboriginal Redress*. Spec. issue of *English Studies in Canada* 35.1 (2009). Print.
- Highway, Tomson. *Kiss of the Fur Queen*. Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 2008. Print.
- Huhndorf, Shari M. *Mapping the Americas: The Transnational Politics of Contemporary Native Culture*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2009. Print.
- Huhndorf, Shari M., and Cheryl Suzack. "Indigenous Feminism: Theorizing the Issues." Suzack et al. 1–20.
- Johnston, Basil. *The Manitou: The Spiritual World of the Ojibway*. New York: HarperCollins, 1995. Print.
- Krotz, Sarah Wylie. "Productive Dissonance: Classical Music in Tomson Highway's *Kiss of the Fur Queen*." *Studies in Canadian Literature* 34.1 (2009): 182–203. Print.
- Lawrence, Bonita. *'Real' Indians and Others: Mixed-Blood Urban Native Peoples and Indigenous Nationhood*. Vancouver: U of British Columbia P, 2004. Print.
- Martin, Keavy. Review of *Troubling Tricksters: Revisioning Critical Conversations*, ed. Deanna Reder and Linda N. Morra. *English Studies in Canada* 36.4 (2010): 137–40. Print.
- . "Truth, Reconciliation, and Amnesia: *Porcupines and China Dolls* and the Canadian Conscience." Henderson and Wakeham 47–65.
- McCall, Sophie. *First Person Plural: Aboriginal Storytelling and the Ethics of Collaborative Authorship*. Vancouver: U of British Columbia P, 2011. Print.

- McGonegal, Julie. *Imagining Justice: The Politics of Postcolonial Forgiveness and Reconciliation*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 2009. Print.
- McKegney, Sam. "From Trickster Poetics to Transgressive Politics." *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 17.4 (2005): 79–113. Web.
- Milloy, John S. *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879–1986*. Winnipeg: U of Manitoba P, 1999. Print.
- Moore-Gilbert, Bart. "Postcolonialism: Between Nationalitarianism and Globalization? A Response to Simon During." *Postcolonial Studies* 1 (1998): 49–65. Web.
- Reder, Deanna, and Linda Morra, eds. *Troubling Tricksters: Revisioning Critical Conversations*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier UP, 2010. Print.
- Regan, Paulette. "An Apology Feast in Hazelton: Indian Residential Schools, Reconciliation, and Making Space for Indigenous Legal Traditions." *Indigenous Legal Traditions*. By Law Commission of Canada. Vancouver: U of British Columbia P, 2007. 40–76. Print.
- . *Unsettling the Settler Within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling, and Reconciliation in Canada*. Vancouver: U of British Columbia P, 2011. Print.
- Sarkowsky, Katja. "Beyond the Contact Zone? Mapping Transcultural Spaces in Tomson Highway's *Kiss of the Fur Queen* and Eden Robinson's *Monkey Beach*." *Transcultural English Studies: Theories, Fictions, Realities*. Ed. Frank Schulze-Engler, Sissy Helff, Claudia Perner, and Christine Vogt-William. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009. 323–38. Print.
- Sinclair, Niigonweddom James. "Trickster Reflections: Part 1." Reder and Morra 21–58.
- Smith, Lindsey Claire. "'With These Magic Weapons, Make a New World': Indigenous Centered Urbanism in Tomson Highway's *Kiss of the Fur Queen*." *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 29.1 (2009): 143–64. Web.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988. 271–313. Print.
- Sugars, Cynthia, ed. *Unhomely States: Theorizing English-Canadian Postcolonialism*. Peterborough: Broadview P, 2004. Print.
- . "Weetigos and Weasels: Tomson Highway's *Kiss of the Fur Queen* and Canadian Postcolonialism." *Journal of Commonwealth and Postcolonial Studies* 9.1 (2002): 69–91. Print.
- Suzack, Cheryl. "Land Claims, Identity Claims: Mapping Indigenous Feminism in Literary Criticism and in Winona LaDuke's *Last Standing Woman*." *Reasoning Together: The Native Critics' Collective*. Ed. Craig S. Womack, Daniel Heath Justice, and Christopher B. Teuton. Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 2008. 169–92. Print.
- Suzack, Cheryl, Shari M. Huhndorf, Jeanne Perreault, and Jean Barman, eds. *Indigenous Women and Feminism: Politics, Activism, Culture*. Vancouver: U of British Columbia P, 2010. Print.
- Visvis, Vikki. "Culturally Conceptualizing Trauma: The Windigo in Joseph Boyden's *Three Day Road*." *Studies in Canadian Literature* 35.1 (2010): 224–43. Web.

- Wakeham, Pauline. "Discourses of Reconciliation, Aboriginal-State Relations, and the Production of Postcolonial Closure." Abstract for TransCanada II: Literature, Institutions, Citizenship. U of Guelph, 11–14 Oct. 2007. Web.
- Weaver, Jace, Craig S. Womack, and Robert Warrior. *American Indian Literary Nationalism*. Albuquerque: U of New Mexico P, 2006. Print.
- Wolski, Erin. "The Role of Culturally Relevant Gender-Based Analysis in Reconciliation." Younging, Dewar, and DeGagné 269–79.
- Wyile, Herb. "Windigo Killing: Joseph Boyden's *Three Day Road*." *National Plots: Historical Fiction and Changing Ideas of Canada*. Ed. Andrea Cabajsky and Brett Josef Grubisic. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier UP, 2010. 83–97. Print.
- Younging, Greg. "Inherited History, International Law, and the UN Declaration." Younging, Dewar, and DeGagné 323–36.
- Younging, Greg, Jonathan Dewar, and Mike DeGagné, eds. *Response, Responsibility, and Renewal: Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Journey*. Ottawa: Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2009. Print.

Narrative Healing in Betty Louise Bell's *Faces in the Moon*

A Tribute to Cherokee Continuance

CHRISTINA ROBERTS

Betty Louise Bell's novel *Faces in the Moon* (1994) offers much more than an in-depth character analysis or a solipsistic focus on one individual's angst with the world. Woven into the narration of the novel is an intergenerational story, a story that resonates beyond its pages and illustrates the importance of writing that Daniel Heath Justice points to in *Our Fire Survives the Storm: A Cherokee Literary History*: "To write about family and history is to try to give voice to silenced ghosts as much as to give strength to the living" (7). In giving voice to silenced ghosts, *Faces in the Moon* connects to a past marked by removal and allotment, and the novel's intricate structure, character development, and shifts in viewpoint merge to tell a story that illustrates what Eduardo and Bonnie Duran term the "soul wound," or a shared pain that has its origins in the colonization of North America, dishonored treaties, and centuries of injustice (24).¹ At the same time, Bell's novel gives strength to the living through its emphasis on the journey of a detribalized individual and the transformative power of story. In this essay I illustrate the careful ways in which Bell structures the narrative to focus attention on the legacies of colonization, but I argue that her ultimate act is one of creation. Bell unites the past with the present and in doing so creates a healing narrative that transforms a past marked by trauma and loss to reveal the ongoing resilience of Cherokee women.

Faces in the Moon is divided into five segments and includes numerous flashbacks, often in the form of italicized snippets of text. The brief novel opens with an unidentified narrator who declares: "I was raised on the voices of women. Indian women. The kitchen table was a place of remembering" (4). The novel's first segment, "Raising Voices," focuses on this unidentified narrator who connects with the main protagonist of the novel and carrier of family stories, Lucie Evers:

And I know their stories have grounded my sympathies, speaking through my spirit without time or place or will, Momma, Auney, Lizzie: they come alone or together, sometimes carrying with them Uncle Jerry and Uncle Henry and Robert Henry. Sometimes, they simply stand in the mortal light of their beloved Hellen, Lizzie's sister-in-law, Momma's mother, my grandmother. But, always, their real companion is Lucie, the child who sat and listened and stared into their stories, the child whose place I have taken. (5–6)

The unnamed narrator introduces Lucie, a character whose experiences, thoughts, and memories comprise the bulk of the novel. This initial narrator acknowledges that her family's stories speak through her spirit, illustrating Justice's point about the strength that is found in writing about family. Furthermore Bell draws a matrilineal connection to the past, calling attention to familial history and the important role of Cherokee women.

Marilou Awiakta's *Selu: Seeking the Corn-Mother's Wisdom* reveals how vitality is sustained through interconnectedness and focuses on the sacred roles that women play, themes that are at the core of Bell's novel. Awiakta also states: "Not only are racism, sexism and distain for Mother Earth coming to harvest in the 1990s, they also seem to be reseeding themselves. Thoughts and energy to counter them are also coming to harvest and, hopefully, will reseed in an even stronger strain, so that the twenty-first century will begin a new era of peace and justice" (37–38). Awiakta complements her focus on seeding with an emphasis on round, double-woven baskets and the role of women as weavers, communicating how

women since the beginning of time have been "weavers," weavers who work from a spiritual base. We know how to take diverse strands of life and spin them into a pattern. How to listen to the whole web at once and mend small tears that occur. If the web should be damaged beyond repair, women, like our sister the spider, know how to ingest the remaining strands and spin a new web. (195)

The hopeful tone and optimism of Awiakta's book exemplify the resilience of women, and she passes along "a corn seed for remembrance" to encourage the healing taking place within communities once marked

by trauma (195). Bell and her narrators take on this sacred role, carefully weaving together damaged strands and spinning new webs and patterns for future generations.

Furthermore, as Elizabeth Archuleta notes in her winter 2006 *SAIL* article “‘I Give You Back:’ Indigenous Women Writing to Survive,” writing by Indigenous women encourages “responsibility, the promotion of healing, and a call for survival” (89). Archuleta points to key themes in writing by Indigenous women, themes that focus on countering misinformation, speaking out against oppression, and generating bodies of collective knowledge. In leading up to her point about the healing function of writing, Archuleta briefly mentions Bell’s novel and the significance of conversations between Indigenous women. She suggests, “Writing becomes a path to healing, and an Indigenous feminist ethos of responsibility compels women to share their stories and personal pain with one another to promote healing for everyone” (98). Furthermore, as Joseph Bruchac (Abenaki) contends, “it is only through our own stories that people—Indian and non-Indian alike—can begin to understand the true American Indian Heritage” (35). He highlights the living quality of stories and stresses that they are “[a]live as memory, memory that shapes and explains a universe, alive, aware, and filled with power” (35). Writing by Indigenous women offers healing through stories that shape and explain our universe, and Bell’s novel illustrates the healing that emerges through a sharing of a compelling story.

In a similar manner to Awiakta, Denise K. Henning’s contribution to *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism*, “Yes, My Daughters, We Are Cherokee Women,” speaks to the powerful roles of Cherokee women and offers added insight into Bell’s novel. At one point, Henning writes:

For thousands of years my people have lived in a matriarchal, matrilineal, and matrilocal society. This female-centered society kept our nation grounded; our nuclear and extended families were related, traced and identified through the mother. Even though some of our cultural knowledge and oral history has been lost, it is clear that our Nation relied on and was nurtured by the feminine principle. (188)

Henning stresses that social and family relations are sustained by the feminine principle, and she references the story of Selu, the Corn Woman, as one that “reflects the importance of women as the givers of

life" (188). However, she also points out that "the concept of women as sharing in the power structure of the nation did not fit into the colonizer's sexist views" and mentions that the colonizers "set out to destroy the connections to power and the locus of control of the Cherokee Nation, the women" (194–95). At the same time, Henning notes,

Even in the face of sexist attitudes, cultural and physical assault, and the loss of balance and harmony so desperately protected, Cherokee women have continued to maintain their matrilineality, their inner power and strength to come into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries with new determination. (195)

In her novel Bell offers insight into the new determination that Henning references, which is illustrated in her careful use of an unidentified narrator in the opening segment of her novel, "Raising Voices."

Bell subtly adds layers of credibility and vulnerability to a fictional narration through this opening segment, because as the book's opening dedication to "Lizzie Bell" suggests, this initial narrator could be read as a representation of Bell's voice. Yet, at the same time, the separation between the child Lucie and the adult narrator hints at the depth of trauma explored within the novel. The narrator openly confesses, "I have tried to find [Lucie], I have tried to know her but, as I sit here at the kitchen table, she comes only through their voices" (6). However, the unnamed narrator also invites other detribalized women to identify with Lucie as she undertakes her symbolic journey. The remaining four segments within *Faces in the Moon* focus primarily on Lucie's perspective and reflections about the past, but Bell also weaves together the voices and perspectives of other members of the Evers family, enhancing its intergenerational quality.

Bell's structuring of *Faces in the Moon* exposes the root causes of intergenerational traumas and challenges a historical record that silences Indigenous women. One of the earliest indications of this intent is found in the novel's first italicized segment:

Dust, outlaws, pretty black-eyed Indian women raising children alone, chopping their way through cotton, good-ol' boys and no-good men. Full-bloodied grandmothers, mixedblood renegades and lost generations, whirling across the red earth in forty-nine Chevy's, drunk on homemade beer, and aged by years of craving under the hot Oklahoma Sun. (5)

As her adjective “full-bloodied” reveals, Bell provides early hints at the origins of trauma for Indigenous women, while also giving agency to the women who were “raising,” “chopping,” and “whirling” through life. These past unresolved traumas are frequently mentioned in italicized font and provide an indication of the severe influences of intergenerational trauma. Eduardo Duran’s brief overview of intergenerational trauma in *Healing the Soul Wound: Counseling with American Indians and Other Native Peoples* is helpful to an interpretation of Bell’s novel. According to Duran’s research, the concept emerged from Israeli studies on intergenerational post-traumatic stress, and the research suggests that when previous generations do not deal with trauma, it is passed on to subsequent generations and has a cumulative effect “whereby unresolved trauma becomes more severe each time it is passed on to a subsequent generation” (16). In her characterization of Lucie, Bell creates a detribalized character who embodies the cumulative effects of unresolved trauma, and her reconnection to family and the Cherokee Nation requires the spinning of a new web to restore her relationship to the past.

As it moves toward mending the wounds from past traumas, *Faces in the Moon* chronicles intimate experiences of detribalized Cherokee women through imaginative acts of remembrance and recovers the perspectives of women who faced particular social and cultural consequences of removal, allotment, and other forms of subjugation. In placing women at the center of her novel, Bell anticipates themes of colonization exposed by Andrea Smith’s *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide*. Smith’s revealing treatise discusses the importance of placing Indigenous women at the center of analysis, because it “compels us to look at the role of the state in perpetuating both race-based and gender-based violence” (3). She argues that the shift in focus is essential: “We cannot limit our conception of sexual violence to individual acts of rape—rather it encompasses a wide range of strategies designed not only to destroy peoples, but to destroy their sense of being a people” (3). Bell’s novel highlights some of these strategies through acts of remembrance, and the narrative concentrates on the particular ramifications of Cherokee removal, the General Allotment Act (1887), and the cycles of abuse that Cherokee women endured.

Lucie’s memories drive the narrative and illustrate the intergenerational legacies of abuse, poverty, and the loss of cultural knowledge. Bell introduces Lucie as a detribalized, mixed-blood woman who does not

readily identify as Cherokee. The second segment of the novel, “Beat the drum slowly . . . but . . . not . . . too . . . fast,” begins with Lucie’s memory of her mother’s frequent reminders that “Your grandma was a full-blooded Cherokee” (8). Through Lucie’s memories *Faces in the Moon* reflects many elements Justice outlines in *Our Fire Survives the Storm*, including his point that “to be Cherokee is to be in relationship with the People; even those who are to varying degrees detribalized assert a relationship through perceived absence, and retribalization depends upon reestablishing those bonds of kinship” (23). Indigenous detribalization is and was a shared goal of North American colonization, and Justice’s mention of retribalization connects to a crucial theme in Bell’s novel: the fractured narrative structure illustrates the painful legacies of broken bonds, but the honest representation also leads to reconnections to shared histories and cultural identities through the reestablishment of bonds of kinship. Justice demonstrates the importance of kinship bonds by dedicating his work to “both the spirit and service of continuance,” a concept he draws from Amanda J. Cobb’s *Listening to Our Grandmothers’ Stories: The Bloomfield Academy for Chickasaw Females, 1852–1949* (15). Cobb defines continuance as “the remembrance of times, places, and people; the knowing of those times, places, and people through imaginative acts; and finally, the going on, the telling of stories” (xv). Bell’s novel sheds light on soul wounds and legacies of North American colonization, and in confronting the root causes of intergenerational trauma, Bell invites others to reestablish the bonds that are vital to retribalization and Cherokee continuance. This essay illustrates the ways in which *Faces in the Moon* serves as an example of Cherokee continuance in its narrative layering and focus on remembrance, and I argue that Bell’s novel ultimately expresses healing through its restoration of the familial bonds once broken by the legacies of colonization and its emphasis on recovering multigenerational and historical knowledge.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL FICTION: BLURRING OF BOUNDARIES

One of the remarkable elements of Bell’s novel is its narrative layering and the multivoiced manner in which stories are shared. While it is classified as fiction, the novel makes references to Bell’s personal history and illustrates some of the challenges detribalized Indigenous and

mixed-blood women face, and Bell blends fiction and autobiography to enhance the poignancy, tragedy, and resilience found within the novel. In “Burying Paper,” Bell’s contribution to *Here First: Autobiographical Essays by Native American Authors*, she reveals some of the connections between her personal life and the novel, writing that *Faces in the Moon* “came not from the canons of English and American literature but from the Oklahoma voices of my mother and great aunt” (35). In this essay, as in her novel, Bell is open about the intimate consequences of colonization, relating aspects of her familial history to create a shared space for other detribalized women to break free from destructive cycles. For example, in the opening segment of *Faces in the Moon*, the unidentified narrator volunteers the following revelation:

I grew tired of living in the past and craved to find my stories in narratives of direction and purpose. I lived in the time of choice, where a person has only to believe to make it true. I have lived in desire these four decades and practiced invention for just as long, but no matter how great my desire to run away from home, to live in a place and history free from secrets, I always take up my position at the [kitchen] table, in the early morning hours, and listen for those women’s voices. (5)

The narrator confesses her desire to run away and live “free from secrets,” and yet she finds herself listening to “those women’s voices,” presumably the Oklahoma voices of Bell’s mother and great aunt. Bell’s writing reflects her Cherokee and Oklahoma heritage, and her intimate character portrayals within *Faces in the Moon* illustrate the tangible influences of intergenerational traumas on women. Bell’s autobiographical essay divulges key details about her life and the painful secrets that the unnamed narrator and Lucie carry.

Both “Burying Paper” and *Faces in the Moon* emphasize the importance of focusing on the perspectives of Indigenous women, writing, and stories. At the beginning of *Faces in the Moon*, Bell highlights the importance of memory and story when she offers Lucie’s reflections:

Some parents believe children have no memories. They hold their stories and lives until they are ready to return them, with full chronology and interpretation. History is written in this complicity, an infinite regression of children forgetting and remembering.

It takes a long time to remember, it takes generations, sometimes nations, to make a story. And sometimes it takes a call in the night before the story is known. (22)

At this point, the full story is unknown to Lucie or the reader, but when she receives a phone call and learns of her mother's illness, Lucie begins the difficult process of remembrance. She initially declares, "I had no story" (32), signifying her inability to connect herself to a larger family and tribal narrative, and yet the act of telling her story is crucial to Lucie's personal recovery. She cannot heal without dealing explicitly with the traumas that have controlled her life. Bell's emphasis on remembrance highlights the connections between individuals and generations, and Lucie's healing begins when she starts to weave her story into the larger narrative of a nation and numerous generations of Cherokee women.

Bell chooses to convey these experiences through a novel, because as she explains in "Burying Paper": "Always I have trusted words. To shape, inform, and bring the world closer" (31). Following this point, Bell offers a memory that calls attention to how she felt about books, reading, and her family:

Everything I know, I was proud to say, I learned from books. At the age of six, I remember declaring my ambition to be a reader. In a house where both parents were semiliterate, where I read and wrote letters for relatives who could not read or write, I knew no greater ambition than to read. And in the books I read, there were real families: families free of lasting poverty, alcoholism, and violence. Their houses were homes, their love clear and clean, their survival finally certain. (31)

As this excerpt illustrates, Bell's writing often emphasizes honest expression over grammatical correctness. Bell mentions that her ambition emerges from family need, and she focuses on her desire for a family free from poverty, alcoholism, and violence. At another moment in the essay Bell succinctly explains her choice to pursue writing: "I wanted to become a writer because I could imagine nothing that would take me faster and farther down roads closed to women, Indians, and the poor" (39). Instead of implying that these roads were closed to a singular poor Indian woman, Bell recognizes that she travels these difficult roads with other Indigenous women, and her novel and writing are geared toward

those who are also struggling to recover from broken relations to family and the past.

Books and words showed Bell what “real” families experienced, offering her an escape from the poverty, alcoholism, and violence that threatened to destroy her family, and she began to see writing as essential to the survival of her family and family stories. Bell was born in 1949 and had to help care for her family in ways that presented tremendous challenges to a young girl. Her family’s constant economic struggles led to significant hardship. She writes in “Burying Paper”:

“You were born stubborn. Had to do things your own way,” my mother always insisted when I attempted to tease out an apology for the early burdens of child care and family survival placed on me. “You wanted to do them,” she says and, in more forgiving moments, I think she may have been right. But, most of the time, I wonder how we survived, and I look for someone on whom I can settle my anger and grief. (34)

Bell alludes to a struggle for survival that reveals the intergenerational legacies of poverty and their effects on mother and daughter, a significant theme in *Faces in the Moon*, but the essay focuses more on the ways in which the women in her family “spared [her] from the usual dreams and destinies of mixed-blood women in Oklahoma in the early fifties” so she “would not repeat their hard shames of poverty, illiteracy, domestic labor, or too many husbands and too many children” (33). Through the support of the women in her family, Bell embraced literacy and education to emerge from the abusive cycles that had shaped previous generations, a journey she re-creates in her novel to guide other detribalized women.

Though Bell experienced significant hardships, resulting in grief and anger, her writing emphasizes the importance of restoring broken familial bonds through piecing together the past and radically accepting the tangible inheritances of colonization. Bell notes that the anger and grief she feels toward her mother are because of the early burdens of family survival, but by piecing together the past, she comes to understand that her mother had to endure her own severe hardships as a child. In “Burying Paper,” Bell shares an intimate portrayal of her mother:

The last time I saw my mother she handed me a spiral notebook in which she had written down the facts of her early life. As if she

had a premonition that we would never see each other again, she insisted I read the journal right then. . . . Quickly, I realized that these stories were different from the ones I had heard since childhood: these were the stories she could not tell a child, the stories of her life after her mother died, the stories of a nine-year-old mixed-blood girl taken into the bed of her white stepfather to negotiate shelter and food for herself and her two younger sisters. (36)

Through these stories, Bell begins to understand the traumatic events that shaped her mother's life. Her mother's personal revelations help Bell to gain a level of understanding that leads to a deeper awareness of the ramifications of detribalization on Cherokee and Indigenous women. She touches upon the consequences of her grandmother's early death and the sexual abuse her mother endured, but Bell also highlights that her mother ceded her childhood innocence to provide food and shelter for her and her sisters. By learning more about her mother's experiences, Bell was able to separate from her own personal pain and start to see the patterns of violence against Indigenous women, a journey she re-creates in a fictionalized form in her novel. Within the pages of *Faces in the Moon*, Bell draws upon the personal insights she articulates in "Burying Paper" to emphasize continuance and to aid retribalization efforts through the sharing of secrets and stories.

HEALING THROUGH A NARRATIVE JOURNEY OF REMEMBRANCE

Faces in the Moon creates a compelling link to the past, placing contemporary characters along a Cherokee historical continuum. The work of remembrance forces Lucie to begin the process of reconciliation with her mother, Gracie Evers. Gracie is the link between Lucie and her past, but she represents a fragile link fraught with memories of abuse, abandonment, and violence. In one of her first shared memories, Lucie recalls learning about her family history through her mother's stories:

"Your grandma was a full-blooded Cherokee," my mother said again and again, as far as I can remember. It was the beginning of the story, the beginning of a confidence, and I lean forward, knowing that in the next few minutes no cheek will be pinched, no broom handle swung, no screams or tears wasted. (8)

Gracie's stories offer Lucie a temporary respite from violence, but her storytelling also establishes the significance of family and Cherokee history early in the narrative. Lucie recalls that her mother told her about her heritage "again and again," indicating the repetition of the story and its importance. Through the act of retelling and remembering the stories, Lucie takes on the role of storyteller in the narrative, a role that eventually leads her to reestablish familial bonds and to take the initial steps toward retribalization. Yet, Lucie's journey lays bare the challenges of confronting these legacies of abuse and trauma.

Lucie engages in acts of remembrance that reveal painful secrets about her mother and initially describes her mixed feelings toward Gracie as follows:

I did not hate her, then. It was easy to believe in the photograph on Lizzie's bureau: a dark-eyed beauty with olive skin and black hair to her waist, shapely in a cotton housedress and holding a newborn baby. . . . After my great aunt's death, it was harder and harder to put the pretty girl with the child together with the fat, beat-up woman who cursed and drank, pushed into her only threat, "Maybe I'll just run away and leave y'all to yourself." Some tension had given, some spirit snapped in the space of ten years, and the pretty girl had swollen into fatigue and repetition. (8–9)

Bell highlights Lucie's response to Gracie's transformation and connections to alcoholism, domestic violence, and the struggle for survival that led to the snapping of Gracie's spirit. At this early moment in the novel, Lucie and the reader do not know about the circumstances that led to Gracie's painful transformation. However, Bell highlights some of these secrets in italicized text, offering haunting memories like the following:

Whispers and movement wake me in the middle of the night. A large fat pink man stands just inside the opened door. My mother is in front of him. In the moonlight I see her large nude ass and the roll of fat hanging on her hips. She is whispering, something urgent and desperate. I hear her ask, "The car payment's okay this month?" The pigman grunts. A breeze comes through the door and blows the smell of their sweat and whiskey into my corner. He leaves. Momma comes and lies next to me on my pallet. I pretend to be asleep. (59–60)

The novel focuses on Lucie as the carrier of stories, memories, and secrets, and Bell stresses how Lucie coped with the secrets as a young

girl by pretending to sleep. Furthermore, italicized fragments of memory like the one above interrupt the narrative at key moments, indicating how often these bitter memories haunt and overwhelm Lucie. Bell structures the novel to expose Lucie's coping mechanisms and to reveal how her hatred and resentment toward her mother develop over time.

As events unfold in the novel, Lucie experiences vivid flashbacks and memories that divulge generational patterns of abuse, neglect, and emotional abandonment. Lucie recalls fragments about her family history and calls attention to the events that led to Gracie's attempts at assimilation. These fragments focus on the origins of Gracie's life struggles but also focus on the limited options available to detribalized women:

They were Evers, sometimes more, sometimes less, but always Evers. The daughters of Hellen Evers and some no-account traveling Scotch preacher who never married their mother, turning up only to impregnate her a second time, and leaving them, finally, on the side of the road. The young Indian mother walked, carrying one baby and coaxing the other, until she came to a junkyard. There, she made a home for them in an abandoned car. There, until the rent money was saved, she left Gracie in the back seat to look after the baby, Rozella, while she walked into town and looked for work. (11–12)

Bell notably omits the name of Lucie's grandfather, focusing more on connections to women in the Evers family, and offers insight into the abandonment, poverty, and domestic violence that Cherokee women faced. Each of the Evers women experiences these forms of oppression to varying degrees throughout the novel, but as this passage indicates, Bell focuses equally on the strength and resilience of the Evers women as well. In order to support her family, Hellen started cleaning local houses where the "white women worked her to death, and the white men was always touching her up" (17). In sharing these memories and secrets, the novel reaches back into history to illustrate the dire circumstances that many women like Hellen endured. As a carrier of stories, Lucie begins to work through the root causes of her own personal traumas and, in doing so, uncovers the origins of familial trauma.

When Lucie considers all that has happened, she recognizes her mother's trauma and reflects: "My blood carries the worry and wear that made her middle-aged at thirty and old at forty" (33). Without a

network of relations to support her as a child, Gracie has early burdens placed upon her and develops a self-hatred that manifests in her repeatedly bleaching her hair yellow and in her unwillingness to see herself as a Cherokee woman. In one of the early storytelling sessions Gracie tells Rozella and Lucie, “Y’all carry the Indian blood, that’s for sure. Your black hair and Rozella’s quiet ways, ain’t no mistaking y’all. I ended up with the Scotch blood. Don’t look like there were a drop left for y’all” (10). Gracie believes that she “ended up with the Scotch blood” but has to bleach her hair and wear makeup as a mask to maintain this image of herself (10).² By identifying the events and moments that have prematurely aged her mother, Lucie claims her heritage and story, but she must still confront the personal traumas that have a powerful grip on her life.

In one of Lucie’s most painful memories, the narrative shifts into a third-person discussion of Lucie’s past as she remembers the specific circumstances that led to her estranged relationship with her mother. The shift in point of view occurs abruptly: “When Lucie was four years old, J. D. moved into their tiny house. He was a tall, red-faced, ugly man with a short temper, a supply sergeant with a good salary, stationed at Fort Sill” (64).³ The use of third-person indicates that the memory is so painful that it requires an emotional detachment from a horrific moment in Lucie’s life. At this point in the narrative Lucie also recalls J. D. repeatedly calling her a “half-breed,” drinking excessively with her mother, and continuing forms of assault that typify the violence against Indigenous women addressed in Andrea Smith’s *Conquest* (65). Lucie remembers the most brutal attack as follows:

“I’ve a mind to come over there and knock some sense into your head. T’aint nothing but Injun trash. Your momma’s trash, and you’re trash too.”

Lucie looked at him, stared at his pitted face.

“Scum,” she said.

Her hands flew to her mouth. The sounds of apology were beginning as the fist struck her face. She covered her face as he dragged her across the linoleum by her hair.

“I’m gonna teach ya a lesson you ain’t gonna forget. Now’n you shut up or I’m a-gonna make it hard on ya.” She tried to swallow her sobs, but they refused to stay down. She saw Momma, sleep-

ing. He tightened his hand around her face and locked her mouth. With his other hand he unbuttoned her nightgown and fished it down her shoulders. Her body lay lifeless beneath him as he pulled her cotton panties down. (67–68)

The narrative vividly illustrates J. D.'s violent rape of Lucie at age four, a rape that occurs after she stands up for herself, her mother, and their shared Cherokee heritage. In this memory the narrative returns from a third-person discussion to an italicized first-person point of view that reveals Lucie's inner strength: "*There was the flash of pain and the taste of vomit. In the same dizzying flash the pain took the fear. I know now that fear left me that morning. I began to plan to kill him. I kept my eyes down, I didn't look at him, but I watched for my chance*" (68). With the return from third to first person, Bell also utilizes italics to further demonstrate Lucie's resilience. Lucie initially remembers her rape from the safety of the third-person, but she also reclaims the strength she felt surge after the attack. In reliving a horrific rape, Lucie experiences release from one of the traumas that have had a firm hold on her, but she must still confront the abandonment that defines her life.

Abandonment is a notable facet of intergenerational trauma that can be cumulative and damaging to retribalization efforts, and it represents a significant challenge in Lucie's life. After raping Lucie, J. D. insists that Gracie choose either him or her daughter, and Gracie takes Lucie to live with her great aunt Lizzie, a decision that scars the young Lucie and contributes to her inability to find her story or to forgive her dying mother. However, Lucie's interactions with Lizzie reconnect her to a larger shared cultural heritage. A great-aunt through marriage, Lizzie teaches Lucie about family history and their Cherokee heritage. In one memory Lizzie informs Lucie,

"I ain't gonna say I approve of your momma's ways. I weren't raised thataway. And your grandma weren't raised thataway. Always dancing and drinking and going around with soldiers. Leaving their families and hightailing it to the cities. It seems like we lost a whole generation of children.

"The Cherokee always been a proud people. They took care of their children and families. . . . Nowadays seems like people forget how to look out for their families. But it ain't their fault, I reckon. Times is different. No truer word been said. Now you're

gonna grow up 'out knowing your people. We's not always gonna be round, and ya gonna have to count on your momma. And she can't count on herself." (122–23)

As Gracie's past unfolds through the sharing of memories and stories, Lucie begins to see and understand her mother in a new light. The reason Gracie "can't count on herself" connects directly to a larger familial and Cherokee history shaped by colonization. After generations of traumas, from relocation and violence to forced assimilation and sexism, Indigenous women like Gracie saw an Indigenous heritage and identity as liabilities.

Two significant aspects of Lucie's retribalization occur through the recognition of the violence that generations of the women in her family endured and the full recovery of her family's story. Lucie's grandmother, Hellen, was detribalized because of "some no-account traveling Scotch preacher" who took her away from her family and abandoned her (11). Hellen "had two little girls and no body to look out after her" and ended up marrying an abusive man who perpetuated the cycles of violence (157). Hellen died shortly after this marriage, leaving Gracie to raise her younger sister Rozella, and they both suffered abuse at the hands of their stepfather. While Bell does not clarify precisely what abuses took place, she makes it clear that Gracie and Rozella suffered because they were removed from their family. These particular remembrances parallel Gracie's death in the novel, and when Lucie hears of her mother's death, she remarks:

I felt myself open to the light. I almost dropped to my knees in gratitude. I looked around the living room and considered the things I might keep. The photos of my young mother with her new baby and Lizzie and myself in front of the Packard would pack easily; everything else could just as easily be hauled away. (175)

Lucie's casual remarks indicate the extent of her emotional detachment, and her immediate focus on how to deal with the material reality of her mother's death suggests that she has suppressed any deeper feelings. However, Lucie makes a crucial discovery that further catalyzes her recovery process. In her mother's home Lucie finds a composition book with an enclosed memoir entitled "My Life," which opens with the following letter:

Dearest Daughter,

I had in mine you mite need anuther storie somtimes. Its a good storie plain working people jest gitting by in this wurd out much to be proud a cep a loving and a helping one anuther in a hard times. Correct my bad spelling an gramer I onlee went to a 3 grade I a hate fer people a knowed my ignorrence. You knowed to do it rite you got yurself edjucated not like me can't spell to save my life you knowed best. (179–80)

The discovery of Gracie's memoir allows Lucie to experience a side of her mother that she never knew, a vulnerable side that is deeply aware of her ignorance. As she reads her mother's stories, Lucie recalls:

They were not the stories I had heard at the kitchen table. These were the details of a girl child growing up abandoned and unprotected, silenced in beer and laughter; these were the stories that spun the others, making the laughter high and loud, building a hysteria of family and need, holding without splitting and running without distance. (183–84)

Gracie's stories illustrate the struggles and loss she experienced early in life, and Lucie finally comprehends the legacy of colonization and her mother's desire for assimilation. Bell's diction touches upon the interconnectedness of stories in that "these were the stories that spun the others." Gracie's stories are "making," "building," and "holding," and they are living and vital elements that provide Lucie with the necessary threads to reconnect with her mother and her history. Once Lucie reclaims these truths, she gives voice to women in her family:

"You do the right thing," my mother wrote.

"Do right," Auneysaid.

"Don't wash your dirty linen in public," Lizzie warned. "Ever' story ain't for repeating. A body don't need tell ever thing he knowed."
(184)

Bell sets these voices apart with italicized font and uses distinct verbs to indicate the specific expressions of women and their influence on Lucie. Lucie burns her novel in her mother's kitchen sink, starting with the first page, and then sets fire to the last page of her mother's story. Lucie's memories and the symbolic manner in which she burns the stories prepare her to confess "I did not hate her then," as she honors her mother

and family history for the first time (185). At the same time, in the burning of written evidence, Lucie relies upon oral stories and memory, an intentional detail in Bell's novel because it invites readers to consider the role writing plays in the Cherokee Rolls and the Dawes Commission.

While staying in Gracie's house, Lucie comes across a copy of her grandmother's death certificate. It does not list the name of Hellen's father, Robert Evers, but Gracie had scribbled his name on a sheet of paper and had attached it to the certificate. In order to set the record straight, Lucie decides to emend her written history, but in order to do so she must operate within a governmental system that actively sought to detribalize the Cherokee Nation. After repeatedly writing letters requesting the change to no avail, Lucie goes to the Oklahoma Historical Society to find written evidence of her ancestry, because "Oral histories were not reliable sources . . ." (190).

Lucie's interaction with the desk clerk provides a critical insight into the consequences of claiming one's Cherokee ancestry:

"Who do you think you are?" he said.

"Lucie Evers."

"No," he sighed, "what tribe?"

"Cherokee?" I said, but heard the question in my voice.

He smirked and reached behind him for the book. He stretched the heavy black book toward me, grinning broadly at the joke.
(191)

The exchange between Lucie and the desk clerk illuminates a well-known stigma associated with expressing one's Cherokee ancestry. The clerk's "smirk" indicates how often people claim Cherokee ancestry, while it subsequently dismisses contemporary Cherokee identity. Lucie has the dual burden of emending a document without written proof and defending her ancestry. However, Lucie's response indicates the inner strength that she has developed over the course of the novel:

"I ain't asking you to tell me who I *think* I am. I am the great-granddaughter of Robert Henry Evers, I am the granddaughter of Hellen Evers Jeeters, I am the daughter of Gracie Evers, the niece of Rozella Evers, and the grandniece of Lizzie Sixkiller Evers."

My hands almost relax, but I catch the grin forming at the corners of his pale thin mouth.

"Let me put it to you this way. I am a follower of stories, a nego-

tiator of histories, a wild dog of many lives. I am Quanah Parker swooping down from the hills into your bedroom in the middle of the night. And I am centuries of Indian women who lost their husbands, their children, their minds so you could sit there and grin your shit-eating grin.” (192)

In this declaration, Lucie fully accepts her position as a “follower of stories” and “negotiator of histories,” and she claims her connection to the women who have been abused, neglected, and traumatized by the various forms of systemic oppression ushered in with colonization. When she cries out that she is Quanah Parker, Lucie embodies the legendary man who inspired her grandmother and many other Indigenous people of the Southeast. One of Hellen’s stories refers to Quanah Parker at an earlier point in the narrative:

He was the Indian Jesse James. He were a half-breed, his daddy was a Comanche and his momma a white woman. And if ya were a white settler, a-squatting on Indian lands, ya didn’t wanna wake up in the middle of the night an’ find him standing right over your bed. Lordy, no, that woulda been your worst nightmare. (142)

Quanah Parker fought for land rights, and his story offers Lucie inspiration as she fights for recognition. Bell vividly describes Lucie’s reconnection with her identity through a powerful image: “In a store window I caught a glimpse of the small Indian woman, and I eased forward to catch her, with the stealth of a cat, pushing my face into my own reflection” (187). Lucie symbolically catches this image and pushes her face into her own reflection, taking crucial steps toward retribalizing. She does not take the road of assimilation or accept the condescension of the clerk at the Oklahoma Historical Society. As Lucie takes the Dawes Roll book, she waves her pen in the air and says to the clerk, “I am your worst nightmare: I am an Indian with a pen” (192). Lucie claims the pen as a weapon and tool that can be used to emend the historical record, an implement vitally necessary in her role as storyteller and one that has transformative powers.

CONCLUSION: SPINNING A NEW WEB OF LIFE

Faces in the Moon focuses on the challenges that Lucie as a detribalized individual faces and illustrates how she and the other women in her

family have been molded by intergenerational traumas. In structuring the narrative in the way she does, Bell draws upon her family history and the larger history of the Cherokee Nation to reveal moving truths that serve as powerful reminders of the ongoing impacts of colonization. The multilayered perspectives within *Faces in the Moon* contextualize the narrative and function as a testament to Cherokee and Indigenous continuance through the chronicling of voices from the past. Bell's novel presents readers with a narrative that emphasizes multigenerational and historical knowledge, a narrative that speaks to those individuals who seek to transform painful intergenerational traumas and reclaim Indigenous histories. In fact, the polyphony of the narrative unites the past and present, potentially connecting detribalized individuals to their familial and cultural histories. These portrayals offer potential insights into multiple generations of Cherokee people, but they also reveal forms of healing that arise from the generational knowledge that maintains and reestablishes bonds of kinship.

Furthermore, *Faces in the Moon* confronts inequities within the historical record and reinvents the form and function of the novel to suit the pressing need for Indigenous women to heal through the sharing of stories and continuing efforts to retribalize. In a contribution to the *Encyclopedia of North American Indians*, "Literature by Indians," Bell optimistically writes, "Given the current emphasis on the representation of all American cultures, Native American literature promises, in terms of content and reception, to become less isolated and marginalized in the future, to become, at last, the first of many literatures of the United States" (340). However, her novel, which eloquently addresses the intimate consequences of assimilation and colonization, has been largely ignored. On the back of Bell's novel, Leslie Marmon Silko declares: "*Faces in the Moon* makes a major contribution to American literature and gives us a rare and important insight into love between a daughter and mother." Silko's emphasis on the love between mother and daughter is key to the narrative, and the novel's function as a site of healing is equally noteworthy, especially for individuals who have faced similar circumstances.

Bell's structural choices invite readers to experience transformation and empowerment through active remembering of and connection to the past. Lucie's life and her actions become emblematic of the recovery still needed by those whose lives have been formed out of tragic circum-

stances, and Bell's novel reflects the rich historical context found within contemporary Cherokee literature. Through vivid illustrations of the consequences of historical soul wounds, the novel invites others to confront intergenerational traumas, presenting a form of narrative healing that combines memory, imaginative acts of remembrance, and storytelling. By weaving parts of her personal and familial history into the narrative, Bell further highlights a shared cultural history that reflects a multiplicity of Indigenous women's experiences, spinning a new web of life and creating a path toward healing for other detribalized women to walk.

NOTES

1. A more detailed definition of a *soul wound* is offered in Duran and Duran's *Native American Postcolonial Psychology* as follows:

Why should Native Americans be so plagued with problems of this nature? This question arose regularly during E[duardo] D[uran]'s work with Native people in central California. In order to gain some insight into this issue, E. D. simply posed the question to the community. Most people responded with issues of injustice, the conquest, the dishonored treaties, and so on. In this, a common thread was found that weaves across much of the pain and suffering found in the Native American community across the United States and perhaps the Western Hemisphere. The image which became most binding and meaningful to the authors and to some of the other people working in other Native American communities is the concept termed the *soul wound*. (24)

2. Gracie's attempts at assimilation can also be interpreted as emphasizing her difference from the dominant culture, a form of mimicry that can be viewed as the form spelled out in Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* and Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture*.

3. Bell's placement of J. D. as a supply sergeant at Fort Sill is a small but important element in the narrative. Fort Sill was built during the Indian Wars in 1868 and became the reservation for the Kiowa and Comanche. Fort Sill also became the site of the surrender in 1875 of Quanah Parker, who represents another small but important figure in Bell's novel.

WORKS CITED

- Archuleta, Elizabeth. "I Give You Back': Indigenous Women Writing to Survive." *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 18.4 (2006): 88–114. Print.
- Awiakta, Marilou. *Selu: Seeking the Corn-Mother's Wisdom*. Golden: Fulcrum, 1993. Print.
- Bell, Betty Louise. "Burying Paper." *Here First: Autobiographical Essays by Native American Writers*. Ed. Arnold Krupat. New York: Modern Library, 2000. 30–40. Print.

- . *Faces in the Moon*. Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 1994. Print.
- . “Literature by Indians.” *Encyclopedia of North American Indians*. Ed. Frederick E. Hoxie. Boston: Houghton, 1996. Print.
- Bruchac, Joseph. *Our Stories Remember: American Indian History, Culture, and Values through Storytelling*. Golden: Fulcrum, 2003. Print.
- Cobb, Amanda J. *Listening to Our Grandmothers’ Stories: The Bloomfield Academy for Chickasaw Females, 1852–1949*. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2000. Print.
- Duran, Eduardo, and Bonnie Duran. *Native American Postcolonial Psychology*. New York: State U of New York P, 1995. Print.
- Henning, Denise K. “Yes, My Daughters, We Are Cherokee Women.” *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism*. Ed. Joyce Green. London: Zed Books, 2007. Print.
- Justice, Daniel Heath. *Our Fire Survives the Storm: A Cherokee Literary History*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2006. Print.
- Smith, Andrea. *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide*. Cambridge: South End P, 2005. Print.

BOOK REVIEWS

Michelle H. Raheja. *Reservation Reelism: Redfacing, Visual Sovereignty, and Representations of Native Americans in Film*.

Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2010. ISBN: 9-780803-211261. 338 pp.

Joanna Hearne, *University of Missouri*

In this compelling book, Michelle H. Raheja develops several nascent theoretical threads in Native American film and media studies into a richly coherent framework for theorizing Indigenous films, while bringing substantial archival work on silent-era films into conversation with late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century productions. The field has seen the publication of a number of historical surveys of Hollywood images of Indians, including Jacqueline Kilpatrick's *Celluloid Indians*, M. Elise Marubbio's *Killing the Indian Maiden*, Angela Aleiss's *Making the White Man's Indian*, and others, as well as books that integrate studies of Native films with literature and other arts (e.g., Dean Rader's *Engaged Resistance*), and comparative studies of Fourth World transnational Indigenous cinemas (e.g., Shari Huhndorf's *Mapping the Americas*, Corinn Columpar's *Unsettling Sights*, and Houston Wood's *Native Features*).

Reservation Reelism contributes to the development of Native film and media studies in a number of ways. First, Raheja integrates the study of images of Indians, Native performers, and Indigenous control over film productions, producing a more holistic understanding of the production of Indigeneity on-screen, and one that privileges the presence of Indigenous perspectives even in studio-era films that seem to perpetuate Hollywood stereotypes. Second, her analysis retrieves and reinterprets silent- and studio-era productions and performers as part of a genealogy of Indigenous film, arguing that they should be under-

stood as the historical precursors to unfolding production practices. Perhaps most importantly, the book brings together interdisciplinary theoretical perspectives from media studies, cultural studies, and Indigenous studies to develop several existing keywords into fully articulated conceptual tools around the ideas of *performative redfacing* (“the process and politics of playing Indian”), *virtual reservations* (“the imagined and imaginative sites produced by the cinema”), and *visual sovereignty* (“the creative self-representation of Native American visual artists”) (xii, 9).

The introductory chapter, “Toward a Genealogy of Indigenous Film Theory,” foregrounds Raheja’s substantial archival work on the network of Native performers in and around Los Angeles during the studio era. Emphasizing both the frustrations and the agency of these actors, consultants, and directors, she describes Hollywood as a “vexed social and imaginary geography where self-representation and stereotype collide and are continually negotiated” (3). Importantly, this emphasis upon negotiation revises previous assumptions about Hollywood Indians as an “abject repository of the dominant culture’s national visual fantasies about race, gender, legal discourse, and anthropological knowledge” (15).

If one strength of the study is its focus on a range of productions, from silent films to music videos, another is Raheja’s close attention to Native actors as well as non-Native actors in Hollywood. In the second and third chapters, she continues this focus on complexities of performance—what has happened behind the scenes in terms of casting practices, individual careers, and the physical elements of dance, costume, movement, and language, across the fraught issues of authenticity that permeate the cultural work of redfacing. Aligning redfacing with the potentially subversive and pedagogical elements of Indigenous trickster figures, Raheja considers several case studies during the twentieth century, from the silent film work and stage performances of actresses Minnie Ha Ha (Cheyenne) and Molly Spotted Elk (Penobscot) to the long career of Italian American actor Iron Eyes Cody (stage name of Espera Dicorti). If Ha Ha and Spotted Elk complicate our understanding of stereotypical Indian “drudge” and “maiden” screen roles, Cody’s long career presents us with the opposite case, a non-Native actor’s controversial, career-long practice of playing Indian both on and off the screen. The case of Cody, whose stylized Plains Indian costume became the “pervasive metonym for ‘Indianness’” after his appearance in the widely circulated 1971 *Keep America Beautiful* (KAB) pub-

lic service announcement, opens up larger issues in US visual culture, particularly the field of fantasy or “economy of passing” in which “the mass-mediated Indian subject inhabits several important roles for a liberal audience—environmental steward, precolonial subject, and spiritual guardian—all as parts of a representational field that creates a ghost effect” (108, 120).

Having established this “ghost effect” as part of a larger colonial fantasy organized around “the evocation of Indian images in the service of erasure” (124), Raheja turns her attention in the next chapter to two Native-produced ghost stories, Shelley Niro’s experimental short film *It Starts with a Whisper* (1993) and Michael Linn’s genre feature *Imprint* (2007), the latter produced by Cheyenne/Arapaho director Chris Eyre. This chapter, “Prophesizing on the Virtual Reservation,” revisits the mass-mediated figure of the Indian ghost, rereading the cliché in light of Indigenous temporalities, discourses of prophecy, and the imaginative territoriality of the “virtual reservation, a space where Native American filmmakers put the long, vexed history of Indigenous representations into dialogue with epistemic Indigenous knowledges” (147). The concept of virtual reservations reorients our visual direction from the past (“vanishing Indians”) to the future, using Indigenous prophetic frameworks to do so.

In its final chapter *Reservation Reelism* brilliantly develops our understanding of visual sovereignty, while honoring the genealogy and complexities of the concept’s original expansion into the arts, cultural production and expression, and other flexible intellectual and historically specific models, with attention to thinkers such as Jolene Rickard, Beverly Singer, Robert Warrior, and Vine Deloria Jr. The chapter titled “Visual Sovereignty, Indigenous Revisions of Ethnography, and *Atanarjuat* (*The Fast Runner*)” is a defining essay in the field, first published in *American Quarterly* and already anthologized in several collections. In it Raheja integrates Indigenous studies and scholarship of visual culture to show how “visual sovereignty” can model “a reading practice for thinking about the space between resistance and compliance wherein Indigenous filmmakers and actors revisit, contribute to, borrow from, critique, and reconfigure ethnographic film conventions, while at the same time operating within and stretching the boundaries created by these conventions” (193). An early example of the visual mediation of sovereignty is the Haudenosaunee Two-Row Wampum Belt Treaty, a beaded repre-

sentation of a nation-to-nation political agreement that depends upon accurate “readers” or interpreters who can decipher its visual symbolism and meaning; a later example is the powerful first feature film of the Isuma production group, the 2001 drama *Atanarjuat/The Fast Runner*. Raheja brings together key theorists from film studies, such as Miriam Hansen and Vivian Sobchack, with traditional tribal concepts such as, for the Inuit, *illuriik*, a “tribally specific episteme” describing the partnering of opponents. In Raheja’s analysis of *Atanarjuat*, the concept of *illuriik* provides an extra-cinematic strategy to describe settler colonialism, “read here through the lens of an ongoing, Inuit process of coping with and sometimes purging detrimental outside elements” (214).

This final chapter on visual sovereignty will surely appear on every syllabus and bibliography in the field, and the epilogue may circulate even more widely—in this the author turns to her own family’s experiences to powerfully articulate how and why images of Indians matter both on and beyond our screens, and then she extends her analysis to new media texts such as music videos and amateur videos easily accessed on YouTube. *Reservation Reelism* is a focused and innovative study and will be crucial reading for anyone working in Indigenous film and media studies.

Alexandra Harmon. *Rich Indians: Native People and the Problem of Wealth in American History*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2010. ISBN: 978-0-8078-3423-7. 388 pp.

Eve Darian-Smith, *University of California, Santa Barbara*

This deeply historical, engaging, and elegantly written book makes a significant contribution to what is largely a forgotten narrative about Native Americans in US history. Providing a counterbalance to the widely held assumption that all Indigenous peoples are victims of oppression and exploitation and as a result are massively impoverished, the author showcases moments over the past four hundred years when a few Native American individuals and communities have actually been wealthy. These stories of Native good fortune are extraordinarily interesting in their own right, and I discuss a few below. As the author argues, “precisely because stories of wealthy Indians deviate from the familiar chronicle of economic decline they deserve to be told. . . .

As presumed rarities or anomalies, prosperous Indians have defied the expectations of contemporaries and historians. Their stories, including the reactions they provoked, should afford new insights about Indians and non-Indians who dealt with them" (9).

Stories of native prosperity, however, do not provide a happy counternarrative to tales of pervasive poverty as is typically presented in analyzing the history of Native American peoples. As Alexandra Harmon shows throughout the book, these combined stories ultimately affirm biases and racial prejudices of the dominant white settler society toward Native peoples. In other words, these historically anomalous stories of Indigenous wealth disrupted dominant stereotypes about Native peoples as "poor," "worthless," and "irrelevant." But, argues the author, how these moments were interpreted and dealt with ultimately confirmed many of these negative stereotypes rather than dislodging them. The end result is a long historical pattern of Euro-Americans discounting Native wealth and entrepreneurship in an effort to reassert their dominance over a marginalized minority. What this historical pattern suggests with respect to mainstream responses to the newly gained wealth by some Native Americans operating casinos and other commercial interests in the twenty-first century is immensely provocative and profoundly disturbing.

Why is wealth a "problem" when held by Indians but not when held by non-Indians? This is the central question that the author explores against a historical backdrop of American colonial settlement, capitalist development, frontier expansion, and efforts toward ethnic assimilation that constituted the burgeoning nationalist landscape of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. Harmon argues that what constitutes "wealth" is not a fixed concept and shifts over time. How wealth was interpreted by Indian and non-Indian populations at particular moments and the degree to which it was considered a "problem" reflected different cultural values and social relations. Hence people's reaction to wealth provides a site through which Indian and non-Indian understandings of themselves and each other can be read. Or, to use the language of the author, the "moral ideology" surrounding Native wealth presents a window onto broader themes involving how whites imagined Native peoples should act, think, and socially relate and the degree to which they should be allowed to participate in mainstream society. In short, the constitution of Indian identity, as much as

the constitution of non-Indian identity, was and is at stake in discussions about Native prosperity.

How Indians accumulated wealth, if they “deserved” to be prosperous, whether Indians shared their wealth with other Indians, the appropriateness of Indians holding individual property rights, and so on informed white Americans’ “moral judgments” of Indian economic behavior that in turn “merged with ideas about Indians” (3). Importantly, the tone and ramifications of this moral judgment shifted over time. According to the author’s discussion in chapter 2, in the early colonial era the presence of entrepreneurial Natives was not seen by whites as extraordinarily wrong or inappropriate. Colonists described individual men and women of Indigenous descent such as Coosaponakeesa, Molly Brant, and Alexander McGillivray as regal, civilized, and versed in the practices of gentility. While these colorful figures of early colonialism walked a tightrope between being accepted by both tribal communities and British colonial society, their open identification as Native and concurrent conversing in Enlightenment philosophy and conspicuous consumption of European luxuries were not regarded as totally anomalous. The values and practices displayed by these prosperous Natives coincided to some degree with the values of colonial elites anxious to distance themselves from the brash middle classes and at the same time affirmed an Indian ethics that required wealth be disseminated back to one’s tribal members. Teasing out these complicated and interconnected social and political aspirations by prosperous Indians and non-Indians, the author convincingly reminds us that during this early colonial period the relative status between these two cultural groups “still seemed negotiable” (88).

However, ambiguities of difference between Indians and whites were rapidly replaced in the early decades of the nineteenth century with a racial ideology that demarcated “races” based on quasi-scientific understandings of biology and descent. In chapter 3 this ideology informed racialized stereotypes about Native Americans as lazy and lacking the capacity to make economically sound decisions with respect to improving tribal lands and participating in capitalist ventures. This ideology in turn provided the rationale for whites to forcibly relocate Choctaws, Chickasaws, Creeks, and Cherokees from the southern American states and greedily settle upon their lands. It also informed the passing of the General Allotment Act (1887), which explicitly referenced a divergence of economic principles between Native and non-Native races that the

author examines in chapter 4. The story about the disastrous impact of the act in its breaking up of reservation lands into individual plots that many Native peoples were ill-equipped to make agriculturally productive and economically viable is reasonably familiar. Harmon adds another layer to this narrative of deliberate resource depletion by showing how it also created economic stratification among tribal members. Some ambitious Natives gained individual power and wealth through their ongoing relations with whites while more traditional communal-based Indians occupied positions of increasing poverty and deprivation.

Chapter 5 offers a story rarely told by or about Native Americans and one that I found personally fascinating. This is the story of the Osage Tribe, which was run off its Missouri territories in the early 1800s, was forced to relocate to a small reservation in Kansas but ultimately forced to sell that to white settlers in the 1860s, and with a small portion of the profits from the sale (the remaining \$8.5 million held in trust by the US government) bought a small corner of the territory owned by the Cherokees in Oklahoma. On this small parcel of residual land the Osages discovered that they were sitting on oil. By savvily manipulating the allotment laws in their favor, the Osages began oil production in 1897. By 1923 revenues from oil drilling exceeded \$27.6 million (174).

Oil-rich Osages consumed luxury goods, fancy cars, and high fashion with the same carefree abandon as many non-Indians who also benefited from the economic boom of the roaring 1920s. Osages were derided and laughed at by mainstream society who assumed Indians were an anachronistic dying race, beyond assimilation and civilization. Osages also participated in more traditional economic practices of reciprocity and generosity, hosting large parties for tribal communities and dispersing their profits in ways seen by whites as foolhardy, unseemly, and evidence of their incapacity to handle finances. The end result was the passing of a law in 1921 that enabled the US government to step in and manage Osages' personal income, allowing an annual allocation of only \$4,000 to individual tribal members. This explicit act of paternalism was seen as necessary to protect Indians from their inherited racial failings of stupidity, laziness, and cultural backwardness.

In reading this chapter I was struck by the similarities of derogatory rhetoric used in the past against wealthy Osages and used today against Native Americans profiting from casinos on reservation lands. The same colonial assumptions of Indian ineptness and white superior-

ity that prevailed throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are clearly in evidence in contemporary mainstream discourse and media. Today's tribes with successful casinos are seen as somehow corrupted by financial gain and as a result no longer spiritual and authentic Indians. Other critics claim that Indians have manipulated the legal system and received "special rights," have been unduly influenced by corrupt non-Indians, and in ways not specified have been generally devious and sly. However, what makes the current situation of affluent Indians different from the past is the scale of casino and commercial revenues and their political impact. Notes Harmon in her final chapter 7, in the twenty-first century "Indians appeared to profit, for the first time in history, by siphoning cash out of the other Americans' wallets faster than other Americans could extract wealth from Indian country. But money was not only flowing to Indians in unprecedented ways and amounts; it was flowing from Indians to non-Indians for novel purposes. Indians were paying multitudes of non-Indians to work for them, subsidizing government services in neighboring jurisdictions, supporting diverse charitable causes, and funding state and nationwide political campaigns" (250).

Today's debates and controversies over wealthy Native Americans continue to be inflected by long-standing historical injustices and racialized prejudices. Alexandra Harmon's *Rich Indians* offers new historical insights on these enduring cultural conflicts and in the process enriches our contemporary understanding of why wealthy Indians are still considered by many non-Indians to be a "problem." In bringing to our attention economic histories of both Indian and non-Indian populations and the ways these dovetailed and influenced each other, Harmon folds Indigenous economics and cultural politics into a mainstream framing that underscores the general significance of Indigenous histories in shaping American values, identities, and society. Admirably, Harmon refuses to treat Indians and non-Indians as monolithic categories and reduce complicated and intertwined histories to a polarized "us" versus "them" duality. At the same time, Harmon acknowledges that there is no getting around the fact that "present-day Indians who fear losing wealth to Whites can cite a historical record that Whites who warn of grasping [and greedy] Indians cannot match" (279). In thinking about what I predict will become an increasingly bitter backlash by large sectors of society hit hard by economic recession against a rising number of relatively wealthy Indians, Harmon's book *Rich Indians* is a timely

reminder of the historical legacies, mindsets, and racisms of colonialism that pervade our twenty-first century world.

Joe Dale Tate Nevaquaya. *Leaving Holes & Selected New Writings*. Norman: Mongrel Empire P, 2011. ISBN: 978-0-9833052-2-4. 64 pp.
Lynette Wise Leidner, *University of Oklahoma*

Joe Dale Tate Nevaquaya is a visual artist and poet. He is tribally affiliated with the Yuchi and Comanche tribes of Oklahoma. His first published book, *Leaving Holes & Selected New Writings*, has a history as interesting as the poems and stories it contains. In 1992 the original manuscript was selected as co-winner for the very first (then called) Diane Decorah Memorial Award for Poetry, today known as the Native Writer's Circle of America's First Book Award for Poetry. As Native scholar Geary Hobson explains in a foreword to *Leaving Holes*, the small press that had originally planned to publish this award-winning manuscript shut down before the project could be completed, regrettably leaving this remarkable work unpublished for nineteen years. Finally in 2011 the project was picked up by Mongrel Empire Press of Norman, Oklahoma. What should have rightfully happened nearly two decades ago has finally seen fruition, and this deserving work is now in print. This past April, shortly after its release, *Leaving Holes* was awarded the prestigious 2012 Oklahoma Book Award for Poetry, further confirmation of the superior and timeless quality of Nevaquaya's work. We have waited a long time to get this two-time award-winning book in our hands, and now we can say that it has been well worth the wait.

Nevaquaya is a true master of words. With his words he paints vivid, stark, cutting images that defy deconstruction, words that haunt the periphery of our consciousness long after their reading. The topography of the book invites a rigorous navigation, its divisions marked by abrupt shifts in styles and content. This is due largely to the span of time and human experience that these poems have witnessed in the last two decades: their voices reflect the life of the poet—his struggles, his pain, his endurance.

The first section of the book comprises the complete works from the 1992 manuscript. It includes poems that are defiantly abstract, yet organically tangible. Mary E. "Sass" White, in the introduction to *Leav-*

ing *Holes*, describes it best: “Like the skin of my own flesh, I know what his words feel like to the touch” (xi). Though many of these poems are written with an opaqueness that resists explication, they are excitingly powerful, eliciting an emotional reaction that can only be felt, not described. Their voices are broken and raw, wrapped in ancient longing and memory. These are poems that one must experience, not force into explanation. For example, in the poem “Fear and Passing”:

Unfolding the drops of salt and silent blood
sprinkled around the spaces of sleep, widows
weep in rage of the sea metallic tears
in sharkskins of envelopes, and snatch down
these moments of breathlessness
and naked drownings. (7–12)

Also included among the first section is a grouping of poems referred to as “Poems for those remembered.” These are short honor poems, titled for the particular individuals to whom they are addressed. For example:

Poem for Pamela White Thunder
An ancient dragonfly
hovers inside the mirror, remembering
a favored child
is tasting rain
with a new tongue. (32)

These poems are both private and revealing; reading them feels like peering briefly into a secret window to the soul of the poet.

The second section of *Leaving Holes* consists of Nevaquaya’s “Selected New Writings” and includes a collection of short prose “letters” entitled “Hizzoner, The Mayor of Red Wasp.” Each letter begins with “Notes from the Desk of the Mayor over to Red Wasp,” followed by an often lively report of the strange and recent “going-ons” in a small town dying a slow, but imminent death: “There’s just a handful of us left here in town, and a few old timers out past the single amber light blinking in all kinds of weather; hell even the drunks have died off, the ones that used to sleep in the abandoned ball field, where there hasn’t been no happy voices of children playing in years . . . There ain’t nothing more haunting at night than an abandoned ball field with a history” (43). Though located in the fictional town of Red Wasp, Oklahoma, the setting is a familiar backdrop for any reader who has ever experienced rural “coun-

try living.” Red Wasp, despite its dwindling population, is replete with its eclectic assortment of characters: there’s “Wilbur Red Rib, the paint-sniffing shape shifter and his boyfriend Tex,” Old Woman Owl Cud, Sylvestene Corn Husk, and the mayor himself, Hizzoner, among others who are as equally intriguing. In one letter Hizzoner writes:

There has been complaints coming into the office on a regular basis that there has been something walking on the roof tops since the full moon came to stay. Everyone has taken to putting out dinner plates full of pork steak and green onion, iced tea and cigars to boot . . . even Mamie Marie Eisenhower sat out a full fifth of Four Roses trying to appease the wanton visitor. I myself believe it’s the ghost of Ray Bradbury. Everyone pretends to go home and go to bed, though I know that they are sitting up in bed with their eyes fixed towards the ceiling, waiting and trying to remember their prayers from the Indian side of their family. (44)

These “letters” are amusing and yet tinged with the deeper notes of despondency. Are these strange things really happening in Red Wasp? Or has stagnancy eroded reality, a slow decay of both town and residents, resulting in the need for something—anything—to happen, even if it is fictive. Regardless, the strange familiarity of Red Wasp pulls its readers into its infectious madness.

Concluding the book is a collection of Nevaquaya’s new poetry entitled “Poems of November’s Grace.” Most of these are written as prose poems, displaying a more reflective quality than previous poems in the book: these poems, which read more like short stories, invite contemplation. They ask the reader to see the greater social issues that reside in the heart of their words. For example, in one poem entitled “Sistuhs,” the narrator and his companions stop at a Mississippi roadside drive-in to get coffee, when they notice a missing person flyer of a “woman in her mid-twenties [who] was last seen driving to work” (61). Sadly, the flyer has been amended to reflect the outcome: the woman “was later found shot to death in her car, parked along one of these red clay roads” (61). The narrator continues:

I am transfixed by her face and the circumstances of her life and death, my thoughts are interrupted by the sliding screen through which our coffees are being passed. The woman inside sees me

staring at the flyer and she says in a sad drawl, *She was one of our sistuhs and I can see that she could've been one of your sistuhs too.* She pulls her red knuckled hand back through the small opening, leaving the coffees steaming in the Mississippi air . . . As we slish away into the sparse traffic of this out of the way road, I turn once over my shoulder to look and she returns my gaze with a thoughtful smile, and for hundreds of miles I cannot remember the name but I hear these words, *She could've been one of your sistuhs too.* (61)

The contrast of these latter poems against the poems of two decades ago is striking, almost as if two different people have written them. However, given the space of life that has eclipsed the beginning roots of this book, it is possible, and probable, that the Nevaquaya who finished these works is indeed much changed from the one who began them.

The effect of such varying works collected into one book is strangely cohesive, offering a sense of growth and transformation. Thus, in reading *Leaving Holes*, one can trace the poet's journey from the beautifully raw fierceness of the original poems, to the wry humor of the Red Wasp letters, to the reflective meditations of his most recent works. For the reader, it is a journey well worth taking.

Daniel Heath Justice. *The Way of Thorn and Thunder: The Kynship Chronicles*. Albuquerque: U of New Mexico P, 2011.
ISBN: 978-0-8263-5012-1. 616 pp.

David D. Oberhelman, *Oklahoma State University*

The Way of Thorn and Thunder: The Kynship Chronicles, an omnibus volume of Daniel Heath Justice's previously published novels *Kynship* (2005), *Wyrwood* (2006), and *Dreyd* (2007), is a compelling tale that successfully melds the narrative and mythic conventions of the high fantasy genre with the traditions and history of the Indigenous peoples in the Americas, particularly their violent encounters with Europeans. Justice effectively adapts a genre most often associated with Northern European legends by drawing upon American Indian spirituality and customs, creating a world and peoples that are at once familiar and alien, an alternate history of North America in the 1700s as the British colonies advanced westward and displaced the native inhabitants. Readers will easily dis-

cern elements resembling those of high fantasists such as J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis, who fashion and populate their own invented universes. Justice aligns himself with later exemplars of that tradition such as Ursula K. Le Guin, Philip Pullman, and Robert Jordan by extending the basic high fantasy theme of the cosmic struggle between the forces of good and evil into other earthly arenas such as cultural, ethnic, religious, social, and political inquiry. Justice's trilogy thus bridges the gap between Native American literature and popular genre fiction, demonstrating how Indigenous fantasy can provide new insights into the unfortunate clash of civilizations that took place on this continent.

Central to Justice's vision in the series is the concept of a primeval natural world, the Eld Green, home of the aboriginal Folk, which was invaded by the Humans (the European counterparts) and ultimately reduced to a confined pocket known as the Everland in which the seven nations of the Folk reside. This "Melded World" juxtaposes the iron-wielding industrial realm of the Humans and the Everland that derives its energy from the sacred Eternity Tree and the force of *wyr*, the life-source derived from the language and memories of the Folk within their divine territory. Here Justice invokes the iconic imagery of Tolkien—the Eternity Tree recalls the two light-bringing trees of *The Silmarillion* Tolkien derived from the Norse Yggdrasil or tree of life—and blends it with the spirituality of the American Indians to produce a new mythos that is at once culturally specific and redolent of many other faiths and belief systems. The chronicles hinge upon the efforts of Human Dreyd priests and their master Lojar Vald of Eromar, the province bordering the Everland, to complete the melding of the land and eradicate the Folk by removing them to a place where their *wyr* can be appropriated. The sad chapters in American Indian history such as the broken treaties and even the Trail of Tears, a key episode for Justice as a Canadian citizen of the Cherokee Nation, are elevated to legendary status with *The Way of Thorn and Thunder*, and Justice thereby adapts the tropes of high fantasy to provide a new perspective on the conquest and oppressions of Native peoples by outsiders.

Justice also succeeds in making his series an eloquent account of the condition of women in American Indian history and culture. Tarsa, the Wielder or manipulator of the *wyr* energy from the Kyn Nation, is the heroine of the saga who undertakes a quest to save her people in a pattern like that of the hero's journey outlined by Joseph Campbell.

She embodies the spiritual capacity and will to survive that characterize the Folk in this series. Quill, the wyr-wielding Dolltender of the Tetawa Nation, and Denarra, the Strangeling of mixed Folk and Human parentage who struggles to live by any means she can in the Human's world, are the two other significant women in the narrative. They reflect different aspects of women's historical experience and ground the fantastic story in the harsh realities and prejudices facing indigenous women among the Europeans of the eighteenth century. The three women add a feminist viewpoint that distinguishes Justice's fantasy from the largely male-centered works of the genre and places him alongside authors such as Le Guin or Margaret Atwood, whose works foreground the varied roles and cultural perceptions of women.

Like many novels of the high fantasy genre, Justice's series presupposes a divided world in which there are clear moral delineations between right and wrong. Yet he does explore the darker side of the Folk through those who embrace the Dreyd-inspired Celestial Path religion, most prominently Neranda, the Kyn woman who signs the false treaty with Dreydmaster Vald and thus becomes branded *Shakar*, "traitor." The Humans of the distant city of Chalimor, the equivalent of London in Justice's map of the Melded World, are depicted as basically well-intentioned in the end, but subject to the prejudices and shortsightedness that characterized many of the historical Europeans separated by an ocean from the struggles for territory in the "New World."

A map, list of major characters divided by their nations and clans, and a glossary of characters, places, and concepts make Justice's arcane terminology and nomenclature more approachable. The trilogy will appeal to readers of the fantasy genre in addition to adherents of the work of great Native American authors such as Leslie Marmon Silko, N. Scott Momaday, and Louise Erdrich who explore the cosmic and fantastic elements of the American Indian heritage.

John Joseph Mathews. *Twenty Thousand Mornings: An Autobiography*. Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 2012. ISBN: 978-0-8061-4253-1. 302 pp.

Mascha N. Gemein, *University of Arizona*

In the beautiful language and style John Joseph Mathews (1894–1979) is known for, he drafted an autobiographical manuscript full of humorous

and contemplative anecdotes on the first twenty-five years of his life. Entitled "Boy, Horse, and Dog," the late 1960s manuscript was intended as the first of three or four autobiographical volumes, connected by the series title "Twenty Thousand Mornings." Mathews wrote the volume manuscript in 1965–67, did not find a publisher, and provided further editing in the 1970s. Thanks to Susan Kalter, associate professor of American literature and Native American studies at Illinois State University, we are now able to enjoy Mathews's storytelling about his own life, thoughts, and personality.

As Osage author Charles H. Red Corn points out in his foreword, Kalter has done an excellent job in scrutinizing Mathews's unpublished diaries and manuscripts in order to compose and annotate this posthumous autobiography with respect to the author's own comments and edits. Kalter uses her detailed introduction to provide a historical, literary, and biographical framework for the text. Further, in "Notes on the Text," as well as her insightful endnotes, Kalter explains in detail how she prepared the manuscript from Mathews's materials. While the original volume title still precedes Mathews's text, Kalter has chosen the intended series title, *Twenty Thousand Mornings*, for this edited publication, emphasizing Mathews's original plan of a multivolume endeavor.

"Boy, Horse, and Dog" covers Mathews' formative years, 1894 to 1921, and features what he terms his juvenile "knight errantry" (78). This period in the life of "Jo(hn)-Without-Purpose" (86, 205), as he humorously calls himself, largely corresponds to the lifespan of his horse Bally, whom he cared for all her life. Describing the years of roaming the blackjack hills and prairies with Bally and the bird dog Spot as the core of his early life, Mathews also relates to the naturalist theme in *Talking to the Moon* (1945).

According to Kalter, a possible title for a second autobiographical volume remains obscure. The disappointment of three press rejections for "Boy, Horse, and Dog," a general discontent with contemporary publishing, and distractions by other engagements, especially with the Osage Tribal Museum, seemed to have stopped Mathews from further writing. His diary entries make clear, however, that he considered *Talking to the Moon* as one volume within his autobiographical series.

Mathews recognized autobiography as a tricky business between fact and fiction. Conscious about potentially faulty memory and private matters, Mathews conducted research to verify his memory and diary

entries and let his sisters read the manuscript. He comments on the resourcefulness of his diaries or lack thereof for specific issues at various times in the text. The destiny of these pre-1921 diaries is unknown. Further, Mathews clearly identifies what he calls “memory slides” (9), understanding his memories as limited and at times isolated windows into the past. These allusions to the diaries and the limited nature of memory provide the anecdotes with a self-reflexive subtext that enhances their persuasiveness.

Mathews illustrates life in Pawhuska and the changes in the Osage Indian Agency as a result of Oklahoma statehood in 1907. For example, when it becomes a county in the state of Oklahoma, the previous access and hunting restrictions for non-Natives are abrogated. Mathews writes about place and people, country dances, visiting relatives, cockfights, the first movie screenings, two tornado adventures, high school sports, and other school experiences. While his older sister is sent to boarding school, Mathews receives local education, allowing him to maintain much of his boy, horse, and dog freedom to which he soon adds rifle hunting and preparing skins for taxidermy. One highlight of the text certainly is Mathews’s commentary on the first cars entering Pawhuska in 1916 with the resulting display of pride by their owners, his father’s critical reaction, and the priest’s reckless driving while hurrying to save a soul.

References to the Osage calendar and customs penetrate the text, and a moment of high awareness for his Osage heritage takes place when tribal members wordlessly enter the house to chant for Mathews’ deceased father. Overall Mathews presents himself as an open-minded young person who experiences a mainly rural life among various identities and life ways in the human and nonhuman world. With Catholic French ancestry on the maternal side and Big Hill Osage as well as Anglo-Welsh heritage from the father’s side, Mathews grows up with deep awareness for people’s judgmental perceptions of difference, rendering humorous anecdotes of his childhood navigation along two languages and various ideologies.

With benevolent curiosity Mathews finds and contemplates the natural diversity reflected in the human realm. Roaming the land as teenager, during adolescent hunting travels, and at different locations of his military training, Mathews encounters unique people who are warmly and amusingly remembered in many episodes. Especially the delightful remarks about his older sister Josephine, his mother, and grandmother

Girard show Mathews as deeply impressed by these women's particular characters and their multicultural worldviews.

If the "cavalier" (63) days of his teenage years anchor the first part of the volume, the awakened historical consciousness and testimonial writing about the World War I years strongly carry the second half. Upon entering the University of Oklahoma, Mathews considers the history of Indian removal, land grabs, and the hardships of farming life. After a brief involvement in his deceased father's business, Mathews drops out of college again to join the war effort. He continues his musings about American self-identity as haunted by its European "racial memory" (50), Victorian morality, and vindictiveness and traces it even in the US cavalry heritage looking down on an air force as a military element.

Mathews becomes part of the "citizen soldiers" and "90 day wonders" (163) who receive intense but minimal training. Deemed useless during the horseless Cavalry training, Mathews transfers to the Aviation Section. Although he is a second lieutenant, flight instructor, and specialist in night flying, his dreams of combat flying in the Middle East are soon shattered, but his anecdotes of often joyful and sometimes dangerous flight moments, fearful students, and frazzled militarized researchers allow for delightful musings about the American mind during the war period, the risky conditions of early aviation, and human nature in the face of danger.

The anecdotal autobiography is interspersed with philosophical considerations of man's primordial nature, here most explicit in his fascination with the Osage prayer chant and its resemblance to the wolf's howl and the wapiti's rutting sounds. Though raised Catholic, Mathews soon deviates from dogmatic belief, acknowledges his "animal feeling for my natural environment" (19), and from early childhood on muses about "the Force behind life" (4). Though deeply attached to his horse and dog, Mathews senses an early rejection of anthropopathy. Rather, he understands himself as animal, calling Bally and himself "[t]wo animals, two sentient things [that] became attached to each other" (32).

Naturalist observations, such as the distraction behavior of birds and coyotes to protect their offspring, and discomfort with hatchery employees stripping fish from a river and thus tampering with the "natural rhythm" (121), philosophically connect to contemplations about the fetishism observed among World War I soldiers in flight training. Mathews also traces the human fascination with flight back to the ven-

eration for birds, seeing angels as an expression for human longing at times when human flight seemed supernatural and powerful.

This autobiographical volume ends with Mathews returning to the University of Oklahoma to finish his degree and then, after taking a prolonged hunting trip to Wyoming, entering Merton College at Oxford University. In adherence with the volume title, the last entry is dedicated to his final goodbye from horse Bally and the “animal world of boyhood” (256).

While this entertaining book may well stand alone, it also allows the readers of Mathew’s previous work to learn to know this author anew and from a very personal side. *Twenty Thousand Mornings* provides many clues about Mathews’s perspectives and attitudes, including those that let us look at his fiction and nonfiction characters in other works in a new light.

Mark Cronlund Anderson and Carmen L. Robertson.

Seeing Red: A History of Natives in Canadian Newspapers.

Winnipeg: U of Manitoba P, 2011. ISBN: 978-0-88755-727-9. 350 pp.

Kyle Carsten Wyatt, *Walrus* magazine

Aboriginal affairs are an increasingly prominent part of the Canadian zeitgeist. Competing commentaries and conflicting reports regarding housing conditions on Attawapiskat First Nation; the re-election of National Chief Shawn Atleo in July 2012; anticipated Tory legislation that will allow for the privatization of tribal lands; fraught proposals to transport bitumen across unceded Native territory, especially in Northern British Columbia; and other current events with historical implications make Anderson and Robertson’s book, which came out in fall 2011, more relevant than ever.

Seeing Red is part of a recent critical trend that considers the relationship between Indigenous peoples and North American print culture. Unlike Hugh J. Reilly’s *The Frontier Newspapers and the Coverage of the Plains Indian Wars* (Praeger, 2010) or Philip H. Round’s *Removable Type: Histories of the Book in Indian Country, 1663–1880* (U of North Carolina P, 2010), this monograph privileges a Canadian perspective that focuses on newspaper coverage from roughly Confederation in 1867 to the centennials of Alberta and Saskatchewan in 2005. As such, it

promises to fill a significant gap in existing scholarship; unfortunately, it fails to deliver on that promise.

The authors organize their book around twelve case studies: the purchase of Rupert's Land in 1869; the signing of Treaty 3 in 1873; the Northwest Rebellion of 1885; the Klondike Gold Rush, 1898–1905; the death of Pauline Johnson in 1913; the “disrobing” of Grey Owl (Archie Belaney) in 1938; press coverage of Aboriginal people in the wake of World War II; discussions of the contentious White Paper in 1969; letters to the editor regarding the 1974 Anicinabe Park standoff in Kenora, Ontario; passage of Bill C-31 in 1985; the Oka Crisis of 1990; and two provincial centennials in 2005. The subject of each case study, many of them seminal events, presents a geographic, topical, and critical range of issues that feels apt. The requisite presentation of primary evidence with which to critically reinforce each case study, however, falters.

Consider, for example, the opening chapter, which examines coverage surrounding the purchase of Rupert's Land. Drawing primarily from the *Toronto Globe* and the *Montreal Gazette*, Anderson and Robertson demonstrate how the newly formed nation used the press to cultivate a collective mythology that speciously differentiated Canada from the United States—a mythology that continues to exist today. Despite repeated assertions that Canada–First Nations relations were morally superior to US–American Indian relations, the nineteenth-century press nonetheless “naturalize[d] the massive imperial land aggrandizement by casting [Rupert's Land] as free for the taking and Aboriginals as essentially unfit in several ways” (19). The authors' claim may surprise or even offend many contemporary Canadians, but concepts and phrases normally associated with American westward expansion—such as “manifest destiny” and the “colonization” of inexhaustible “virgin” lands—were frequently parroted by the *Globe* and *Gazette* and “presented conquest as simply a given” (23).

The chapter is a fascinating one, and the scope of research is admirable. Yet the ultimate effect is disappointing. Despite ample evidence from which to draw, individual quotations are clipped (two or three words at a time, sometimes one, which is the most nagging critical limitation throughout the book) and often uncontextualized. Though sections were less strictly defined in nineteenth-century newspapers compared with today's, it is generally unclear if remarks about Indigenous people are drawn from news stories or editorials; it is also unclear if the

Globe and *Gazette* just happened to use similar language or if they were directly responding to one another. And general discussions of the historical moment itself demand disproportionately high levels of reader familiarity; many Canadian scholars, and certainly most Americans, will not have the sense of Rupert's Land history and size that the authors assume. And an overly theoretical framework gets in the way of pertinent historical context and critical analysis.

One finds an equally compelling, and markedly more successful, study in the Pauline Johnson chapter. Anderson and Robertson argue that Johnson's death afforded newspapers "an opportunity to unleash the rhetoric of Canada's imperial ideology" (101). Drawing on obituaries, news reports, and editorials published throughout the country, they demonstrate how the poet was cast as a national possession that affirmed "cultural evolution" and reified a central tenant of colonial Canadiana: "the transformation from Mohawk princess to patriotic Canadian" (105).

The Johnson chapter is the most self-contained, and it would nicely supplement readings and discussions in a Canadian literature class. What makes it more accomplished than the other eleven chapters is the space given to primary evidence. Quotations have room to breathe here; analysis considers more than two or three words at a time. In this way Anderson and Robertson contribute something worthwhile.

Unlike Reilly's *The Frontier Newspapers and the Coverage of the Plains Indian Wars*, which is heavy on quotations and light on analysis, *Seeing Red* presents a provoking and original argument that is not actually supported by evidence. The book presents a selective inventory of clipped quotations, so it is difficult to assess the argument without first replicating the authors' research. I want to say that I agree with the authors, and that the monograph makes a valuable contribution to the fields of Native studies, Canadian literature, and media studies. Moreover, I want to say that I will recommend the book to scholars and encourage the editors and journalists with whom I work to read it—especially the provocative introduction. But footnote citations alone are not evidence, and it would be premature and disingenuous to judge *Seeing Red* as thorough, exhaustive, or even convincing.

Finally, Anderson and Robertson's sometimes strident argument would have benefited from engagement with recent print culture scholarship, as well as the history of the book, which is especially vibrant in

Canada. For instance, their central claim that newspapers have served as a hegemonic and imperial force in the formation of Canadian identity would be bolstered with additional information regarding distribution, circulation, and reception; more attention given to layout and paratext; and a consideration of how copyediting and deadlines, as well as the absence of fact-checking in newspapers, affect coverage and stereotypes. Furthermore, a gesture toward other print media would have been desirable and would have felt more pertinent than a reliance on Fanon and somewhat dated theoretical posturing. To not at least mention magazine culture—especially *Saturday Night*—is a significant shortcoming considering the prominent role magazines played in twentieth-century Canada. That the authors do find room to reference television and Hollywood movies puts this shortcoming into sharper relief.

Seeing Red does rightly challenge conventional thinking about Canada–First Nations relations and the ways in which the Canadian press portrays Native people. As today's newspapers devote additional column inches to Aboriginal affairs, Anderson and Robertson offer a necessary, if not entirely successful, interpretive lens.

Scott Lauria Morgensen. *Spaces between Us: Queer Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Decolonization*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2011.

ISBN: 978-08166-56332-5. 292 pp.

Leah Sneider, *Central New Mexico Community College*

Responding to the need for theoretical mining of modern queer theory's relationship to settler colonialism and Native studies, Scott Lauria Morgensen offers a critical understanding of the ongoing relations between queer settler colonialism and Indigenous decolonization. Morgensen, an associate professor of gender studies at Queen's University in Ontario, is also a coeditor of the recently published *Queer Indigenous Studies: Critical Interventions in Theory, Politics, and Literature* (U of Arizona P, 2011). In the preface of this monograph, Morgensen clearly lays out his three claims: 1) modern queer culture and politics are compatible with white settler society because they do not challenge colonization of Native peoples; 2) Native queer modernities "denaturalize settler colonialism and disrupt its conditioning of queer projects"; and 3) conversations between non-Native and Native queer politics lead the

way to transformation (ix-x). His methodology allies Native and non-Native queer politics, Indigenous feminism, critical race studies, and Two-Spirit critiques. In response to Andrea Smith's call for such work, Morgensen attends to the ways in which white settler colonialism and a heteropatriarchal power system defines Natives and non-Natives as queer. He also explores the ways that non-Native queer modernities and politics perpetuate settler homonationalism, which relies on replacing Natives. Native queer modernities respond to such biopolitics by "asserting Indigenous methods of national survival, traditional renewal, and decolonization, including within Two-Spirit identity" (3).

The book consists of two interrelated parts, "Genealogies" and "Movements," with part 1 tracing the histories and conversations and part 2 tracing the corresponding activism in the late twentieth century and focusing on "Native communities, settlers states, and the global arena" as a means to demonstrate how Two-Spirit and Native queer activism can alter their relationships to settler colonialism (xiii).

Chapter 1 develops the primary premise that settler colonization maintains the relationship with modern sexuality and queer modernities and attempts to show how the biopolitics of settler colonialism thus queered and subjugated all racialized Americans (31). Morgensen defines settler sexuality as "a white and national heteronormativity formed by regulating Native sexuality and gender while appearing to supplant them with the sexual modernity of settlers" (31). Central to this chapter and the book as a whole is the history of berdache, a figure understood as representing "immoral male desire" but here reconceived and invoked to refer to "a logic of sexual primitivity and civilization" informing the relationships between colonists and Natives (36-37). Thus, he claims that the conflict over desire and expressions of gender shaped colonization and Native resistance to it. Furthermore, he explores how queer modernities reinforce and perpetuate settler colonialism by failing to critically reflect upon their discursive and practical relationships to settler sexuality and Native history.

Morgensen continues to recount the origin and significance of berdache as a symbol of colonial and settler subjects that offers a "context of conversation" (56). Chapter 2 traces the trajectory of such context beginning in the 1970s in anthropology and claims that these conversations made Native culture "crucial to gender and sexual liberation" through their popularization of berdache as nonnormative (66-67). In

other words, predominantly white gay organizations appropriated berdache as a means to resist straight settler society. Morgensen further troubles these conversations and histories on berdache to show how they are both “synchronic and diachronic” (77). Two-Spirit terminology emerged in the 1990s in opposition to berdache and as an ongoing legacy of Indigenous critique of settler colonialism and the enactment of “a new Native politics” (78). Therefore, he asserts that Two-Spirit genealogies are of utmost significance to queer studies because they shed light on the intellectual and practical impact of settler colonialism on Native and non-Native queers. Finally, he argues that Two-Spirit epistemologies reflect Indigenous tradition that “challenges colonial knowledges, alters power relations with non-Natives, and incites new registers through which Native people can join and hold non-Natives accountable to work for Indigenous decolonization” (86).

The first chapter of part 2 focuses on the ways that race figures into queer discourse and queer cultural citizenship as defined by and as a project of settler colonialism. Morgensen argues that queer Americans naturalize and reinforce settler colonialism by appropriating Native history and attempting to show a progression from that history that did not include non-Natives but relies on them in contemporary gay America. He recounts the history of this relationship of “divergent politics” and exemplifies it through analysis of queer organizations juxtaposed against Native queer groups in New York. He argues, “white supremacy and settler colonialism are interdependent and must be theorized together, particularly if settler states define ‘race’—including, through antiracism—to occlude an illegitimacy that would be exposed by assertions of indigenous nationality” (109). Ultimately, he shows how Native queer groups create alliances across racial and national differences as a means to work together towards decolonization (125).

Morgensen then presents an ethnographic study of the Radical Faeries as an example of a group of non-Natives who use the land as a symbol of liberation by reproducing Indigeneity and thus reveals their normalization as settler citizens. Engaging as an ethnographer in chapter 4, he critically analyzes themes of homecoming, gathering, and sanctuary as constructed in these rural communes. Two-Spirit engagement and relationship offered the Radical Faeries a critical perspective that altered their practices and led toward responsibility and respect for Native people and traditions, exemplifying a move toward decolonization.

Chapter 5 extends Morgensen's argument across national lines to assert that global queer projects further settler colonialism by claiming Native history and concepts of primitivity while also upholding progressive politics. He broadens Jasbir Puar's concept of homonationalism as a settler colonial project in order to revisit urban Radical Faeries but in a transnational context. He also critically analyzes acts of queer primitivism intended to transcend national boundaries and promote progressive change but as deriving from the context of settlement. He then turns his critical attention to queer of color theorizing diaspora and both its neglect of attending to ongoing settler colonialism and its vain attempts at aligning with Native queer decolonization, particularly in Chicano/a work, especially that by Gloria Anzaldúa. He asserts that "theorizing queer mobility or displacement without articulating their relationship to settler colonialism and Native peoples will extend colonial power" (187). However, Two-Spirit transnational alliances that acknowledge difference within a colonial context work toward decolonization by destabilizing and questioning the nation state, settler politics, and economic globalization. Two-Spirit activism demonstrates transnational alliances with many nations by maintaining relationships across tribal nations and the land (189). Morgensen consistently reinforces the importance of preserving alliances across differences while recognizing positionality in relationship to settler colonialism.

The final chapter offers a case study of transnational Native AIDS organizing as decolonizing gender and sexuality. Morgensen creates the concept of "health sovereignty" that "promote[s] the decolonization of consciousness and social life among Native people as a basis for asserting cultural, economic, and political control over the conditions and methods of health" and thus offers the power "to disrupt the entire institutional apparatus of settler colonization" (196, 197). The methods revealed include critically understanding the history of settler colonialism, the relationships it informed, and its effects on health; developing knowledge and practices that respond to health disparities and putting Native people in control of their health and the corresponding research; forming Native health organizations; implementing a holistic understanding of health to include medical/physical, mental/emotional, and spiritual aspects that include traditional healing practices; promoting decolonization and "indigenist" identities through visual and creative media and storytelling; affirming traditional gender and sexual diver-

sity including adopting Two-Spirit terminology; bridging differences to strengthen communities both locally and globally; and challenging colonial biopolitics by traversing state and global health governance, centering Indigenous epistemologies, and asserting autonomy.

Finally, the epilogue asks how this understanding of colonial biopolitics and the relationships it informs can be extended outward or inform a critical understanding of international politics, especially relationships between the United States and Muslims and Islam. He calls on non-Native queers across the world to challenge settler colonialism, evaluate their activism through this critical lens, and ally themselves with Native queer and Two-Spirit activists.

Ultimately, Morgensen proves that modern queer theory and activism are not immune to colonial representations and appropriations of Indigeneity and need to turn a critical eye to their own discourse and practices by creating a relationship with Native queer and Two-Spirit theory and activism as a means to decolonization for all. His work adds to the ongoing conversation of how and why non-Natives consistently seek to embrace their primitive (aka “savage”) side as a means to relieve them from, while also enhancing, their sense of being civilized (aka “settler colonist”). Therefore, modern queer theorists and activists make up the primary audience for the book. The book is a valuable addition for classes centered on gender and sexuality, which often lack discussion of Native studies and its critical contributions.

CONTRIBUTOR BIOGRAPHIES

EVE DARIAN-SMITH is a professor in the Global & International Studies Program at the University of California, Santa Barbara. She has published numerous books and essays, including *Laws of the Postcolonial; New Capitalists: Law, Politics and Identity Surrounding Casino Gaming on Native American Land; Religion, Race, Rights: Landmarks in the History of Anglo-American Law* and, most recently, *Laws and Societies in Global Contexts: Contemporary Approaches*. She is on numerous editorial boards and is a former associate editor of *American Ethnologist* and *Law & Society Review*.

LINCOLN FALLER recently retired from the University of Michigan, where he specialized in eighteenth-century English literature but occasionally taught courses on the twentieth-century Native American novel. He now divides his time between Taos and Ann Arbor. Having abandoned England and the English, he is currently working on the collaboration of George Bent (1843–1918), a Southern Cheyenne, with George Bird Grinnell and George Hyde, who at the beginning of the twentieth century produced the foundational texts of Cheyenne history and ethnography.

MASCHA N. GEMEIN received her doctorate degree in American Indian studies at the University of Arizona in 2013. Her ecocritical research in cosmopolitics examines the multispecies perspective of tribal paradigms and the call for transnational environmental justice engagement in contemporary Native American fiction.

JOANNA HEARNE is an associate professor of English and film studies at the University of Missouri. She is the author of *Native Recognition: Indigenous Cinema and the Western* (SUNY P, 2012) and *Smoke Signals: Native Cinema Rising* (U of Nebraska P, 2012).

LYNETTE WISE LEIDNER is a graduate student in the creative writing program at the University of Oklahoma, with a secondary interest in Native American literature. Her nonfiction work has been published by Houghton Mifflin in *The College Writer: A Guide to Thinking, Writing, and Researching*; her creative work has been published in *Yellow Medicine Review*. She has also written pieces for *World Literature Today*. Her creative and academic works focus on multigenre narratives intersecting regionalism, poverty, and mixed-blood identity in Oklahoma. She is currently working on her first novel while teaching composition at the University of Oklahoma. She also works as a reading instructor for the Institute of Reading Development.

SOPHIE MCCALL is associate professor in the English department at Simon Fraser University, where she teaches contemporary Canadian and Indigenous literatures. Her book *First Person Plural: Aboriginal Storytelling and the Ethics of Collaborative Authorship* (U of British Columbia P, 2011), was a finalist for the Gabrielle Roy Prize and the Canada Prize. She is the coeditor, with Christine Kim and Melina Baum Singer, of a collection of essays, *Cultural Grammars of Nation, Diaspora, and Indigeneity in Canada* (Wilfrid Laurier UP, 2012) and, with David Charriandy, of a special issue of *West Coast Line* entitled *Citizenship and Cultural Belonging* (2008). She has published articles and book chapters in numerous journals and edited collections.

DAVID D. OBERHELMAN is a professor in the Humanities–Social Sciences Division of the Oklahoma State University Library. He holds a doctorate in English from the University of California, Irvine, and has published and presented on the Victorian novel, J. R. R. Tolkien, and contemporary fantasy literature, especially fantasy and multiculturalism. He is coeditor of *The Intersection of Fantasy and Native America* (Mythopoeic P, 2009).

CHRISTINA ROBERTS is an associate professor in the English Department at Seattle University, where she teaches courses in American literature. She is an enrolled member of the Fort Belknap Indian Community, and her passion for stories and storytelling comes from her connectedness to family, history, and a place-centered approach to life. An alumna of the University of Washington (BA in English and BA in comparative history of ideas) and the University of Arizona (MA and PhD in English literature), she brings her dedication to social and environmental justice to her work at Seattle University, while also allowing time to explore the Pacific Northwest and to play disc golf with her husband, Danny.

LEAH SNEIDER, PhD, graduated from the University of New Mexico in 2010 and is currently an adjunct for Central New Mexico Community College and Empire State College/SUNY, where she teaches college composition and ethnic American history, respectively. She specializes in Native American literature, particularly gender and Indigenous feminisms, which was the focus of her dissertation, *Decolonizing Gender: Indigenous Feminism and Native American Literature*. She recently published an article in *American Indian Quarterly* and has several other projects in the works. As an extension of her dissertation, her developing manuscript advances an approach that combines Indigenous feminisms and Two-Spirit theories to literary gender performances. She hopes to teach Native American or ethnic American literature courses full-time.

ANDREW WIGET is professor emeritus of English at New Mexico State University. A past president of ASAIL, he is the author of *Native American Literature* (1985) and the editor of *Critical Essays in Native American Literature* (1985) and *Dictionary of Native American Literature* (1995). He also represented American Indian literature on the editorial board of the first five editions of *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*. He currently lives in Moscow, Russia with his wife, Olga Balalaeva, with whom he coauthored *Khanty, People of the Taiga: Surviving the Twentieth Century* (2010), based on their twenty years of Siberian ethnographic fieldwork together.

ELIZABETH WILKINSON is an assistant professor of English at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota, where she also teaches in the Women's Studies and American Culture and Difference programs. Her chapter "Gertrude Bonnin's Transrhetorical Fight for Land Rights" appears in *Women and Rhetoric between the Wars* (Southern Illinois UP, 2013).

KYLE CARSTEN WYATT is a former editorial assistant for *Studies in American Indian Literatures*. He earned his doctorate in English and book history from the University of Toronto and is now the managing editor of the *Walrus* magazine.