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CHADWICK ALLEN, Ohio State University

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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

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FROM THE EDITOR

Crossing Genre, Media, Form

So much of the vitality of contemporary Native American and Indigenous literatures derives from movements *across* genre, media, and form. This statement holds true not only for innovative works of poetry and prose or drama and performance but also for film, video, and digital media and for graphic and multimedia texts. Crossings are happening in Indigenous self-representation in multiple directions, with multiple results and to multiple effects. But the statement holds true as well for Native American and Indigenous literary studies. The four essays presented in issue 27.3 demonstrate the analytic power of similar crossings of formal and disciplinary boundaries in works of scholarship and critical response.

In the opening essay, Susan Bernardin analyzes the complex interplay of literary and visual genres in the “gag cartoon” and mixed-media work of California-based artist and activist L. Frank. Through a process of multiple contextualization and close visual and literary analysis, Bernardin builds an argument for broadening our understandings of a contemporary Indigenous aesthetics conceived within multiple, simultaneous, and often collaborative frames. With Bernardin’s assistance, we are fortunate to present one of L. Frank’s signature pieces, featuring Coyote in a starring role, on our cover for this issue of *SAIL*.

The second essay, by Chris LaLonde, attempts to engage Stephen Graham Jones’s highly allusive (and elusive) 2006 novel-as-screenplay *Demon Theory* on its own terms. *Demon Theory* demands—and rewards—a devoted fan’s detailed knowledge of 1980s popular music and film, and it deploys no fewer than 703 footnotes to assist readers in becoming better-informed fans of the novel’s soundtrack. In his performative analysis of Jones’s interrelated techniques, LaLonde mim-

ics Jones's deconstructive format of gripping, filmic narrative leading to explanatory note, which itself leads to further layers of explication embedded in subnotes. In this way, LaLonde pays homage to Jones's provocations of form, popular media, and literary theory and excavates Jones's expansive message about the parameters of Indigenous self-representation across genres and cultures.

The third essay, by Natalie Eppelsheimer, continues a focus on the multiple forms of interplay between musical and literary genres in the evocation of complex cultural and national identities. Eppelsheimer investigates the roles of German poetry and German music at play in Louise Erdrich's 2003 novel *The Master Butchers Singing Club* in order to analyze the complexity of Erdrich's representation of a postcontact Anishinaabe American community.

Finally, in the fourth essay, Allison Hargreaves brings us back to the visual with her analysis of the 2006 film documentary *Finding Dawn* by Métis filmmaker Christine Welsh. Hargreaves reads *Finding Dawn* within and against the context of the current epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous women in Canada but also in terms of the documentary's multiple appeals and multiple pedagogies. Hargreaves argues that Welsh's techniques move beyond simply reporting the horrific details and traumatic effects of the contemporary crisis to actively instruct viewers in Indigenous feminist research methodologies. These methodologies, Hargreaves demonstrates, are vital not only for remembering and honoring the missing but for critiquing the dominant politics of representation and creating new forms of Indigenous communal knowledge.

—Chadwick Allen

Acorn Soup Is Good Food

L. Frank, *News from Native California*, and the
Intersections of Literary and Visual Arts

SUSAN BERNARDIN

COLLABORATIVE INDIGENOUS AESTHETICS

N. Scott Momaday's *The Way to Rainy Mountain*. Leslie Silko's *Storyteller*. Nora Naranjo-Morse's *Mud Woman: Poems from the Clay*. Eric Gansworth's *A Half-Life of Cardio-Pulmonary Function*. Deborah Miranda's *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir*. The collaborative interplay of literary and visual genres enacted by these diverse works posits that relationships are at the heart of Native aesthetics. These relationships extend from the mixed-genre form so common in contemporary Native literature to the dexterity of many Native artists who move among multiple creative forms: writing, painting, photography, performance and film work. Yet, this constitutive facet of contemporary Native literary arts remains undernoted. The most consistent scholar to do so, Chadwick Allen, has repeatedly called for a more capacious framework for Native literary studies that proceeds from the recognition that many Native artists work in "multiple media, and . . . often juxtapose genres and forms" (xxii). From *Blood Narrative to Trans-Indigenous: Methodologies for Global Native Literary Studies*, Allen has made the case that "when we conceive written literatures within a more expansive, inclusive context of Indigenous arts, the alphabetic text becomes simply one option within a larger field of self-representation. Literary scholars, I argue, ought to join writers, artists, and arts scholars to engage in Indigenous-centered conversations across the boundaries of traditional disciplines" (xxii–xxiii). Similarly, in *Engaged Resistance: American Indian Art, Literature, and Film from Alcatraz to the NMAI*, Dean Rader places "Native art, literature, and film in context and in conversation with one another to create a cross-genre discourse of resistance" that models what he aptly terms "indigenous interdisciplinarity" (1–2). While it should surprise no one in the field that

Native writers are also visual artists or saxophone players or that Native poets also create poem-films, how do we continue to translate that multiplicity into our interpretive practices?¹ To use Allen's and Rader's terms, how do we extend the "conversation" these works compel, both internally, with the new forms forged from the interplay of genres, and externally, with affiliated Indigenous arts practices?

At the same time, how do we pay closer attention to the multiple "lives" of Native literary and visual arts as they are produced and experienced at various sites for diverse audiences? As we know, location—where a work is presented, published, exhibited, or disseminated—*matters*. Consider the case of *News from Native California*, a Berkeley-based quarterly magazine, and its signature artist, L. Frank Manriquez (Tongva/Raramuri/Ajachemem).² Both separately and together, the magazine and L. Frank's cartoons and mixed-media work, *Acorn Soup* and *Second Serving*, exemplify what one might call the moving practice of Native literary studies. When L. Frank published *Acorn Soup: Drawings and Commentary* in 1999, her single-panel cartoon of the same name was already a long-term, highly popular staple of the magazine.

This essay locates L. Frank's work within the multiple contexts of *News from Native California*, *The Dirt Is Red Here* (an anthology of California Indian visual and literary arts), and the book *Acorn Soup*—all three of which are published by the nonprofit Heyday Books. How does L. Frank's *Acorn Soup* work as a form of local aesthetics within the California Indian-centered venue of *News*? How does the complex interplay of text and image in her work differently engage local and larger audiences? How do the shifting, collaborative relationships between form and format in *Acorn Soup* help us adjust the frames of Native literary studies?

Since 1987 *News from Native California* has documented contemporary Indigenous activism in California alongside the ongoing recovery of land, languages, foods, and customary arts. Its cofounders—writer-publisher Malcolm Margolin, anthropologist Vera Mae Frederickson, and anthropologist-filmmaker David W. Peri (Coast Miwok)—started the magazine to counter legacies of genocide, historical trauma, and intergenerational loss for Indigenous peoples in California. Those legacies unfold from Spanish military occupation, enslavement, sexual terrorism, and dispossession of Indigenous peoples in coastal regions from 1769 to 1834; state-sponsored extermination campaigns, kidnapping, and forced labor during California's founding decades; and eighteen

unratified treaties, which left many Indigenous peoples landless and “unrecognized.”³ The magazine’s founding placed it in a long lineage of diverse publications, transitory and long-lived, that have served and sustained members of particular Native nations and communities while informing broader Indigenous and non-Indigenous readerships. From *Cherokee Phoenix* to the Mohawk and Haudenosaunee-based *Akwesasne Notes* or the *Circle* out of Minneapolis, from *Wassaja* to *Indian Country Today*, Indian newspapers and journals have long functioned as vital sites of mobilization, community building, and resistance. On its webpage, *News from Native California* states that it is “devoted to the vibrant cultures, arts, languages, histories, social justice movements, and stories of California’s diverse Indian peoples. We strive to preserve the cherished knowledge of an older generation, provide opportunities for a younger generation making a place for Indian ways in the modern world and illuminate the beauty of Native cultures to all of California.” Since its collaborative inception, *News* has served as a message board for Native peoples across the state: With Respect tributes memorialize well-known community members; Big Times / Little Times lists everything from scholarship and grant opportunities to gatherings across the state.⁴ Until his death in 2002, Allogan Slagle, member of United Kootenai Band of Cherokees, attorney, and legal scholar, wrote a column entitled Groundhog Day that informed readers on current legal cases, especially around federal recognition efforts. Frank LaPena, Nompitom Wintu artist, retired professor, and columnist for *News*, sees the magazine as giving “a public voice to the Native American community. It’s also a venue for discussion and has allowed the thoughts of the people to reach a broader audience” (qtd. in Nakao).

The magazine’s publisher, Heyday Books, which Malcolm Margolin founded in 1974, has over forty California Indian titles, encompassing genres such as memoir and poetry and subjects ranging from language revitalization to Indigenous food knowledges. Like Heyday, *News* promotes collaborative cross-cultural and intertribal efforts to revive dormant and endangered languages, technologies, and expressive arts. Its pages regularly publicize the work of organizations such as Breath of Life / Silent No More, master-apprentice language workshops, the California Indian Basketweavers Association (CIBA), and California Indian Storytellers. The collaborative vision of the three founders of *News* extends to Heyday collaborations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous writ-

ers, activists, and artists such as photographer Dugan Aguilar's (Maidu / Pit River / Paiute) and Brian Bibby's *Deeper than Gold: Indian Life in the Sierra Foothills*. In 2003 Marina Drummer and L. Frank traversed the state, interviewing and visiting more than one hundred families and looking through their photograph albums. Those efforts culminated in *First Families: A Photographic History of California Indians*, a book coauthored by Frank and Kim Hogeland that serves as a rich counterarchive of California Indian intergenerational memory and continuance. As L. Frank notes in the book's preface, "What I saw and recorded explains how our families not only survived but went on against all odds with a tremendous sense of humor and beauty" (xi).

Dedicated to sharing, celebrating, and building intellectual trade routes among California Indian communities, *News* also functions as an Indigenous art salon, publishing the work of many of the top California Indian artists, photographers, and writers: Deborah Miranda, Darryl "Babe" Wilson, Judith Lowry, Dugan Aguilar, Julian Lang, Greg Sarris, Harry Fonseca, Frank LaPena, and Janice Gould, among others. Their poems, stories, paintings, and photographs appear alongside articles on politics, education, law, land, foods, and language. Such pairings are consistent with the relational format of *News*, which envisions collaboration as both valued methodology and value system. The Heyday anthology *The Dirt Is Red Here: Art and Poetry from Native California* (2002), edited by Margaret Dubin, similarly encourages relational readings of California Indian artists across aesthetic categories and tribal affiliations. Poems are paired with paintings or with photographs of contemporary regalia, baskets, and installations.⁵ Deborah Miranda's poem "Indian Cartography," for example, adjoins Judith Lowry's acrylic painting *Roadkill Warrior: Last of His Tribe*, a title that gestures to California's most famous Indian, Ishi. Together, the poem and painting generate complex thematic cross-currents of land loss, intergenerational memory, and Indigenous adaptations and resilience. Visually and textually linked, the poem and painting invite relational interpretation while underscoring that Native arts are always on the move between locally situated and broadly recognized frames of reference.

It is telling that L. Frank is the artist most closely identified with *News from Native California*, because her work epitomizes the magazine's interrelational approach to Indigenous aesthetics. Flexing the frames of how we might categorize and approach Native literature, her work

moves across a stunning range of forms: cartoons, photography, mixed media, carving, painting, canoe building. L. Frank is a self-described art janitor, decolonizer, and contributing editor to *News*. A descendant of peoples that survived the mission era in the Los Angeles Basin, she has been at the forefront of reconstructing Tongva language and reviving customary arts and technologies, including soapstone carvings and *tomols*, oceanic canoes. Such efforts seeded her leadership in activating opportunities for other California Indians triaging their own languages. In 1993 L. Frank cofounded Advocates for Indigenous California Language Survival (AICLS), which organizes master-apprentice language and other training programs to create new speakers of endangered languages. Her leadership at its annual Breath of Life / Silent No More workshops has helped participants reclaim what she calls “sleeping languages,” those languages no longer actively spoken in California. AICLS aims “to foster the restoration and revival of indigenous California languages so that they may be retained as a permanent part of the living cultures of native California” (AICLS website). In recent years, L. Frank has traveled to Hawaii, Australia, and Nunavut to work with Indigenous communities on language revitalization initiatives. For fifteen years, she also served as board member for the California Indian Basketweavers Association. A well-known two-spirit activist, L. Frank was interviewed for the 2009 film *Two Spirits* and has spoken at screenings of the film in California. She also has served as the co-emcee for the Bay Area American Indian Two-Spirit Powwow. With her activism and art, L. Frank models collaboration as both political and aesthetic practice.

COYOTE AESTHETICS

That collaborative ethos notably extends to L. Frank’s relationship with longtime readers of *News from Native California*, for whom acorn soup is not only a nutritious Indigenous food but also the title of her long-running single-panel cartoon. A staple of Indigenous California diets for millennia, acorn soup, whether prepared in heated baskets or on stovetops, continues to be consumed at big gatherings, at ceremonies, and at home. Acorns can contain up to 18 percent fat, 6 percent protein, and 68 percent carbohydrates, as well as high levels of vitamins A and C and numerous amino acids. In other words, acorn soup *is good food*. And it’s food synonymous with California Indian histories, communities,

and ceremonies.⁶ “*Acorn Soup*” was a staple of *News* between 1992 and 2006, and its recurring protagonist, Coyote, jumped the frames of the single-panel cartoon to serve as the quarterly’s graphic signpost, appearing on its subscription notices, on the back cover, in ads for language conferences. It would be fair to say that L. Frank’s Coyote has served as the signature image of *News*. Coyote’s ubiquity in contemporary Native art and literature attests to the figure’s ongoing regenerative and resistant possibilities both for specific tribal communities and for collective Native experiences. Yet how does L. Frank avoid serving up what Gerald Vizenor, responding to the commodification of trickster figures in popular culture, derides as “Coyote kitsch” (Isernhagen 82)?⁷ For one, Coyote remains an essential ingredient in the literatures and memories of California Indian peoples. For another, Coyote remains crucial to contrarian and humored stances in navigating the surreal turns of Indigenous realities in settler nations. In L. Frank’s formulation, “Coyote can do everything and he is a necessary, integral part of Native identity. He helps us remember that we are human beings” (Sorensen).

A predecessor in the field of California Coyote aesthetics, Harry Fonseca (Nisenan/Maidu/Hawaiian/Portuguese) not only highlighted Coyote’s gender fluidity but also used his pointedly playful Coyote and Rose series to signal Coyote’s adaptive contemporaneity. The Summer 2013 issue of *News* affirms Coyote’s ongoing relevance for California Indian artists and writers in imagining Indigenous survival. The issue’s special section of art, poems, stories, and reflections from the multimedia exhibit *Calling All Coyotes*, curated by Judith Lowry (Mountain Maidu / Pit River), highlights this continuing, productive engagement with Coyote’s shifting meanings for diverse Native communities in California. On the back cover of this issue, a spare watercolor-and-ink drawing of an atypically motionless Coyote, clad in bathrobe and pajamas, stands by a mailbox emblazoned with lettering that at first glance defies intelligibility. However, if readers turn to the contents page, they will find the artist’s name, date, and caption: l. frank. 1992. “Coyote Waits for News.” The caption may prompt the curious to return to the back cover, whose top left corner reads: “news from native California.” This metadrawing, a playful ad for the quarterly itself, elicits even more meaning once readers decode the mailbox’s letters, which read NATIVE NEWS in reverse. That several of the letters—*E*, *N*, *S*—are also written in reverse suggests the layering of L. Frank’s startling textual intervention. The reversals not



✱
91992

Fig. 1. L. Frank. "Coyote Waits for News." *News from Native California*, Summer 2013, 48.

only reinforce Coyote's famed proclivity for contrarian moves but also serve as authorial signature. In other words, while uninitiated readers might scramble to relate together the diverse elements of image, caption, and lettering, readers of *News* already familiar with "Acorn Soup" will instantly recognize this as her work.

In reversing the conventional left-to-right direction of written English, L. Frank draws sharp attention to other kinds of redirections and reversals, namely in point of view and place of viewer-readers. To access these larger questions driving her work, we are well served by returning to Coyote, who takes (off)-center stage in a 1998 acrylic painting entitled *Coyote Paints Erotica whilst Wearing Pajamas*. This painting appears in the introduction to *The Dirt Is Red Here* and proves an equally helpful introduction to "Acorn Soup," beginning with the collaboration between its humorous title and its subject: Vincent van Gogh's *Bedroom in Arles*. Together they involve the viewer in a series of *what if* questions, beginning with, What if Coyote made himself at home in Van Gogh's iconic 1889 painting of his room in Arles? The viewer's perspective, already rendered off-balance by Van Gogh's interior, is further

skewed by Coyote's position in the frame, facing viewers but closing off any view of his "erotica." Drawing on Coyote's reputation for libidinous appetites, the piece conjoins pajama comfort with claustrophobia: the walls are closing in, but Coyote resides there, paintbrush in hand, confidently claiming his space. Its ironies echo those in T. C. Cannon's well-known painting *Collector #5*, or *Osage with Van Gogh*, featuring a seated Osage man surrounded by his art collection, which includes a Navajo rug and a Van Gogh painting. The presence of Van Gogh's painting *Wheat Field with a Lark* in Cannon's painting not only puns on the trope of "collecting Indians" but also upends limiting definitional categories of Native art and artists.

L. Frank's painting similarly reframes assumptions about the relationship between contemporary Native and iconic Western artists and between Indigenous and non-Indigenous modernist genealogies. Moreover, this reinvention of Van Gogh's work—mirroring it but also messing with it—makes us see his scene anew. Most strikingly, through its sly humor, L. Frank's painting, like Cannon's, stages questions surrounding point of view. Who is looking at whom? What is Coyote painting? The painting's excessive interior frames—mirror, five paintings, two doors, and a window—proliferate both the promise and the frustration of gaining entry into this work. A painting of a painting that visually and verbally puns on interior and exterior viewpoints, on insiders and outsiders, *Coyote Paints* animates shifty, shifting questions of access, visibility, and intelligibility. In an interview, L. Frank shared that Van Gogh was her favorite painter, adding, "Anything you want in the painting, *it's purposely not in view* and pajamas are silk of course!" (personal interview, 16 June 2008).⁸ Like *Osage with Van Gogh*, *Coyote Paints* won't give us what viewers might want: it alternately defers and defies the consummation of meaning. Like the back cover of the Summer 2013 issue of *News*, this image of a domestic but not domesticated Coyote in pajamas teases viewers by leaving open a productive space of *not* knowing and seeing.

The questions elicited by L. Frank's painting are the very questions needed for approaching or "consuming" "Acorn Soup," which engages readers with its shifty form, format, and messages. But which "Acorn Soup" am I referring to? Does Coyote step in the same river twice? It is impossible to consider "Acorn Soup" apart from the multiple lives and shifting contexts that it has lived: as a single-panel graphic appearing in varying locations in *News from Native California* and as a book pub-

lished by Heyday in 1999 and currently out of print. And what *is* “Acorn Soup” anyway? It has been referred to as a cartoon, as a graphic, as a line drawing. Categorizing L. Frank’s work is no easy task. And that is largely the point, for “Acorn Soup” communicates with multiple lineages of California Indian, Native, and non-Native forms of literary and arts activism. In its form, “Acorn Soup” is akin to a gag cartoon, what comics historian and cartoonist Robert C. Harvey defines as “the humorously intended single-panel drawing with verbal caption beneath” (“How Comics” 25–26). If the power of the comics medium resides in the complex interplay of text and image, Harvey argues, then “the single-panel cartoon is the haiku of cartooning, its balance of visual and verbal element essential to its function” (“Wednesday” 7). A compressed form that relies on the viewer’s instant recognition of the comedic interaction of text and image, the single-panel (also referred to as single-frame) drawing is also the mainstay of political cartoons.

An installment of “Acorn Soup” appears on the back cover of the Spring 1995 issue of *News*. Coyote sits in a chair, drink in one hand, remote in the other, watching a TV whose screen shows a feathered, leathery Coyote. The caption underneath—“Coyote as a simple man”—is written in reverse. With its reversed text, this caption departs from a typical gag cartoon, as it requires active decoding to arrive at its possible meanings. More than that, those meanings are not readily available: understanding depends not only on the reader’s familiarity with Coyote but with the panel’s referencing of televisual culture and popular consumption of “TV Indians.” As a literal frame to this particular issue of *News* and as a work framed by the magazine’s focus on California Indians, “Acorn Soup” riffs on the virtual invisibility of California Indians on the screen of national life. At the same time, it forecasts cinematic scenes of “Indians watching Indians” on TV, those scenes of what Joanna Hearne calls “Native spectatorship” staged in Native films from *Smoke Signals* to *Skins*.⁹ These scenes of Indigenous engagement with televisual culture reframe the expected place of Native peoples, who are, in Sherman Alexie’s words, “usually just the extras, the brown folks at the edges of the screen” (*Face* 32). Or who are witnesses to settler society but are never seen as real, diverse people, as suggested in Jim Northrup’s poem “Brown and White Peek” when he calls TV that “window to America / we see you, you don’t see us” (104).

Considered in alternate formal terms, “Acorn Soup” embodies the

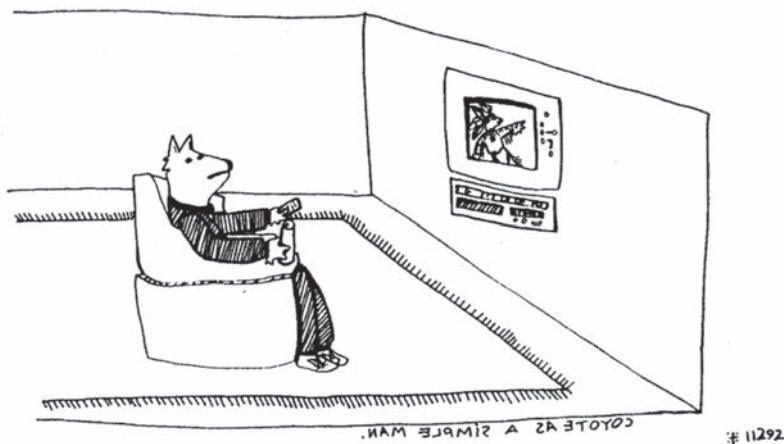


Fig. 2. L. Frank. Untitled. *Acorn Soup*. *News from Native California*, Spring 1995, 64.

surprising complexity of what Jo Ortel, in describing Tlingit artist Larry McNeil's work, calls "that most abbreviated story: the single-frame cartoon" (50). In McNeil's work as well, "it always goes back to story" (qtd. in Ortel 50). As "abbreviated story," "Acorn Soup" invites additional stories from its readers through its humorous take on ongoing challenges over who controls the means of Indigenous representations. As such it shows kinship with the lineage of political cartooning in Indian Country, exemplified in the work of Marty Two Bulls (Lakota) and the late Vincent Craig (Navajo), famed editorial cartoonists known for tackling both local tribal issues and shared concerns throughout Indian Country. This scene of Indians watching Indians on TV—that visual conduit of settler colonial culture—is not a new source of biting humor in Native-authored cartoons. For example, one of Vincent Craig's early cartoons, published in the *Fort Apache Scout*, the White Mountain Apache newspaper, features a single-panel drawing of an Indian man watching TV. As the TV screen announces, "The U.S. plans to crack down on illegal aliens," the voice balloon hovering above this Indigenous TV viewer retorts: "Look who's calling who an alien." In the book version, *Acorn Soup*, "Coyote as a Simple Man" is the title of its sixth and final chapter as well as the caption for a different cartoon of Coyote waiting for a bus. And the book's final page reproduces that TV-watching Coyote

from the 1995 issue. If readers turn the page to the book's appendix, they will find additional commentary on both chapter 6 and that closing cartoon. While the cartoon is further explained as "Coyote in his new natural habitat," the chapter as a whole is introduced by the statement: "Coyote . . . a complex philosophical construct in our minds but, really, just an everyday Joe" (Frank, *Acorn Soup* 64). The appendix, aimed at a wider audience than that of *News from Native California*, communicates the fusion of complexity and simplicity embodied by Coyote and, by extension, L. Frank's work. Put another way, the compressed expression of her single-panel cartoon belies its complex expression of ideas: Coyote is *and* is not a simple man.

Coyote's screen gazing in turn underscores that the politics of point of view is continually staged and made visible in L. Frank's work, most notably through its reverse-word captions. What does it mean that readers must actively decipher the English words to "read" the caption? Eluding the premise of accessibility afforded by these deceptively simple drawings, reverse writing thwarts passive consumption. In messing with its intelligibility, L. Frank both defamiliarizes and decenters the English language. Such tactics are akin to those of Hachivi Edgar Heap of Birds, whose public art installations similarly have refused English as either normative or natural. In his public signage interventions, from New York City to Oklahoma City, from Minneapolis to Venice, Heap of Birds engages in strategic, transient occupations that disrupt settler erasures of Indigenous languages, homelands, and memory. He does so by reversing place-names in English and juxtaposing them with statements in English or in Indigenous languages that serve notice that the land is still Indigenous and still under occupation. For example, his installation *Native Hosts* (1988) placed six signs within Manhattan that named traditional Indigenous owners of this territory. One such sign read: "NEW YORK [in reverse] TODAY YOUR HOST IS MOHAWK." What Lucy Lippard calls "performative events" (22), these signs instigate questions about relationships between land, language, and power. Or as Truman Lowe notes, "employing the framework of official signage" enables Heap of Birds to "engender a dialogue between place, history, and a sometimes unsuspecting audience" (11).

Readers can of course find a mirror and have those unsettling signs regain their familiarity as English words. And yet that seeming transparency can also be a trap. In the last sentence of her introduction to the

book *Acorn Soup*, L. Frank asks: “The title? It’s from the Marx Brothers’ ‘Duck Soup’” (17). The Marx Brothers’ wild pun-filled 1933 political and social farce features a well-known mirror gag borrowed from vaudeville and previous movies. Film critic Jason Fraley describes the scene: “Pinkie [Harpo Marx] is spotted by Firefly [Groucho Marx] and, while running away, accidentally runs through a mirror, shattering it to pieces. As Firefly follows, Pinkie must stand where the mirror formerly stood, which now creates an opening between two rooms, and pretend that the door frame is in fact a mirror, imitating Firefly’s movements in pantomime.” In their dexterous visual and verbal punning, *Duck Soup* and “Acorn Soup” point to the lure and lie of the mirror as a faithful reflection of reality. More than that, “Acorn Soup’s” mirror writing, like Coyote painting, asks us: Who is looking at whom? Holding up “Acorn Soup” to a mirror, readers see themselves seeing “Acorn Soup.” Our presence and position as viewers, as interpreters, as either inside or outside the frame of reference are hence made visible. That tricky reverse writing thus elicits our collaboration as an elemental part of accessing L. Frank’s work.

“Acorn Soup” also recalls foundational Native writers in English who similarly wielded the mirror as rhetorical decolonial strategy. Consider, for example, how writers William Apess and Gertrude Bonnin hold up a defamiliarizing mirror for their non-Native readers to see themselves *as they are seen* by their supposed Native subjects. In 1833 Apess drew on the mirror directly in his polemic “An Indian’s Looking-Glass for the White Man,” in which he directly addresses—and excoriates—a white audience. His narrative stance is akin to Louis Owens’s assessment of the vast archive of non-Native photographs of Native peoples: “The subtext to such a photograph is the admission that we always only photograph ourselves. The ‘other’ remains a mirror that gives us back our self-reflection” (191). Nearly seventy years after Apess, Bonnin’s memoir reverses the gaze that had been directed at her when she first traveled by train to boarding school: “Fair women, with tottering babies on each arm, stopped their haste and scrutinized the children of absent mothers. Large men, with heavy bundles in their hands, halted nearby, and riveted their glassy blue eyes upon us” (Zitkala-Ša 45).¹⁰ Together, these foundational acts of bearing witness and returning the colonial gaze with a vengeance underscore the potency of indigenizing the mirror.

ACORN SOUP IS GOOD FOOD

At the same time, many of the “Acorn Soup” cartoons that appear in *News from Native California* are uncaptioned. Their meanings thus hinge on recognition and identification, of the image mirroring the reader’s own experiences and knowledges. L. Frank has commented on the divergence of responses to her work by Native and some non-Native readers; the former “who come across it feel it is about them” and “claim it as their accomplishment” (personal interview, 16 June 2008). If the single-panel cartoon “Acorn Soup” in *News* reflects (or refracts) the diverse histories and lived experiences of California Indians, then the book *Acorn Soup: Drawings and Commentary*, modifies the corrective lens to encompass a wider (whiter?) readership. The book gathers selected cartoons from *News* along with new ones and organizes them into six chapters: “Just after the Beginning Time,” “Mission Times,” “Indians on Parade,” “Now about Then,” “More Now about Then,” and “Coyote as a Simple Man.” The book interlinks its compressed Indigenous coastal California history lessons with pointed, and pointedly humorous, commentary on contemporary Indigenous “balancing acts.” It does so by offering a sequence of single-panel cartoons that moves chronologically from origins to the present day, as well as transhistorically through considerations of Indigenous memory, resistance, and continuance.

These two movements, in collaboration with the interplay of text and image within and across individual panels, generate relational encounters different from those instigated within the pages of *News from Native California*. Unlike their shifting and serial appearances in different sections of *News*, these several dozen cartoons are placed within a framework provided by the artist, beginning with a “self-interview” in the introduction and ending with an appendix that provides brief commentary on each drawing, pointing out possible directions for interpretation. Coyote, equipped with glasses and pointer, frames the appendix while pointing to *his* appendix. This comic riff on the supplemental—the added but not necessarily necessary—underlines L. Frank’s pained recognition that to most people, California Indian lives, experiences, and histories are invisible: “I wish I didn’t have to explain these [cartoons], but that’s part of it. If people don’t like it, then their reality is different. If I’m going to inform, I have to explain things. The more knowl-

edge you have on any subject, the more intelligently you can respond” (Sorensen). The book’s apparatus of introduction and textual commentary anticipates a readership that won’t necessarily grasp what L. Frank calls the “Native indicators” in *Acorn Soup* (16). Coyote’s pointer thus underscores the complex directionalities of L. Frank’s work: directing a diverse readership with varying levels of familiarity with California Indian and Indigenous realities and histories.

That direction notably includes the interactive process of reading *Acorn Soup*, since the appendix, whenever readers come across it, invites them to move back and forth across the book. Readers have the option to interact with the book in multiple ways: they can decode the reverse-writing captions, recursively turn to the back for additional “readings” of each single-panel cartoon, and also make connections between sequences of panels and chapters. Although in its form not a conventional comic book, *Acorn Soup* shares and innovates on key elements of the comics medium, most notably in the collaborative interactions it compels from readers but also in its strategic use of framing, layout, and design. Comics scholar Hillary Chute notes that “most comics authors distinguish the contemporary cartoon from the form of comics: while cartoon denotes a single-panel image, representing one moment, comics move forward in time” (12). Scott McCloud, the comics theorist and cartoonist whose widely cited series of books has been foundational for contemporary comics readers and scholars, defines comics as “juxtaposed pictorial images and other images in deliberate sequence” (20). That “deliberate sequence” of visual storytelling, he argues, excludes single-panel cartoons from the comics genre, since there cannot be a “sequence of one” (20).¹¹ He concedes that single-panel cartoons “might be classified as ‘comic art’ in the sense that they derive part of their visual vocabulary from comics” (20). Chute adds, “The medium of comics is not necessarily about ‘good drawing’ . . . but rather what [Art] Spiegelman calls *picture-writing* and [Marjane] Satrapi calls *narrative drawing*: how one person constructs a narrative that moves forward in time through both words and images” (6). In both of these formulations, temporal movement is cast as the cornerstone of comics.

Through its sequence of single-panel frames, *Acorn Soup* both recognizes and rejects modes of temporality made normative by colonization. While the chapter “Mission Times” moves forward in time, the constitutive elements of the book—chapters, individual panels, and appendix—

work in concert to demonstrate the ongoing, interactive relationship between past and present for Indigenous peoples. For example, chapter 1, “Just after the Beginning Time,” condenses cosmology within seven single-frame panels. Together with the appendix, they offer a shorthand story of the world’s creation: the time of the first humans and the introduction of death into the world; Coyote’s stealing (and eating) the heart of Wiyoot, one of the first men; Wiyoot’s return to life. In an interview, the artist notes, “Part of my obligation to my ancestors is that people will know who we are” (Sorensen). Notably, the panel of Wiyoot’s return is a rare example of an unreversed caption in L. Frank’s work, suggesting in this sense its perspective as the normative one, not the backward one of settler histories. In later chapters, “contemporary time” panels invoking Wiyoot, deer dancers, and Coyote communicate a collaborative relationship of memory across time. Or, as L. Frank comments in the appendix, “We spend our time remembering Indian time while being confronted by now” (*Acorn Soup* 63).

Through its movement across diverse temporalities and its interplay of visual and textual elements, *Acorn Soup* coaxes active collaboration from its readers. Of course, all literary and visual arts require collaboration of some kind from their audiences. However, distinctive conventions of the comics medium make this collaboration more visible and perhaps more vital. Experimental comics artist and graphic novelist David Mack notes that “by the nature of sequential art, the reader’s mind is filling in what happens between the images I present. The readers are bringing their own past experience and perspective. The artwork, the story, happens inside the readers’ mind when they read the book. That is where the real magic happens. Between the panels. Around the pages. Between the turn of a page” (89). As Mack suggests, comics rely not only on the dynamic, shifting relationship between image and narration but on the crucial role of readers in forging connections of causality, time, and space “between the images” and “between the panels.” Mack here is referring to the “gutter,” the white space between individual panels (or frames). In comics, “the frames—which we may understand as boxes of time—present a narrative, but that narrative is threaded through with absence, with the rich white spaces of what is called the gutter” (Chute 6). Chute continues: “The effect of the gutter . . . is for the reader to project causality in these gaps that exist between the punctual moments of the frames” (8).

Although *Acorn Soup* is composed of single-panel cartoons and not “boxes of time” on individual pages, its individual pages are awash in white space. As a prominent feature of the book, white space both accentuates and contrasts L. Frank’s minimalist black-line drawings. In the context of California Indian and Indigenous histories invoked on these pages, the expansive white space, coupled with spare narration, sets into motion particular kinds of collaborative, generative meaning making. For example, it is tempting to read all that white space as a visual nod to the whitewashing of California history, especially mission history. Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas, the Haida artist and graphic novelist known for his innovative fusion of manga, the Asian comics genre, and formline, the iconic visual language of Northwest Coast Indigenous arts, strikingly likens this convention of the comics medium to the mindset of settler colonialism: “In a comic book you have the moment . . . and before you move on to the next image there’s a white space that tells you time and space between the action. It reminds me of . . . a very helpful theory for Europeans when they came over to this place. . . . Someone came and said, ah the land is empty. Therefore, if the land is empty I get to describe it myself. And I get to control it, I get to cut it up, and I get to own it and sell it” (University of British Columbia lecture).

In his graphic novel *Red* and other works, Yahgulanaas replaces white space with the formline’s sinuous, shifting black line. Miriam Brown Spiers, in her essay “Creating a Haida Manga: The Formline of Social Responsibility in *Red*,” addresses how Yahgulanaas continually varies the size, shape, and dimensions of the formline in his graphic novel to signal shifts in plot and thematic concerns. Yahgulanaas’s work serves notice that Indigenous comics artists draw from diverse visual storytelling lineages. By indigenizing that white space with his innovations on Haida formline, Yahgulanaas also epitomizes the moving practice of Indigenous literary, comics, and graphic arts, one that confounds limiting conventions of genre and form.

If we consider that *Acorn Soup*, like *Red*, presents an Indigenous comic aesthetic, we might read its white space for what it is *not* showing. In other words, like that Coyote painting, how might we see white space directing us toward what is “purposely not in view”? In *Acorn Soup*, white space, rather than black lines, frames each cartoon and, as such, creates “open space” for readers to unfold stories, memories, and lessons. This open space is especially powerful in chapter 2, “Mission Times.” This

sequence of seven single-frame panels compresses the history of the mission era, unraveling the mythology of helpful padres and acquiescent Natives that remains stunningly, tenaciously intact, whether on mission tours or in far too many elementary schools in California. In the Fall 2001 issue of *News from Native California*, “Acorn Soup” dispenses with its typical line-drawing format and reverse captions. Instead, a bright yellow box frames a sepia-tone image of seated priests lapped by red flames. The bold black-lettered opening phrase above the image—“All that is left”—is completed by the words directly beneath it: “of the padres who founded the missions of California.” With a sentence that sentences, this provocative pairing of text and image extends the incendiary portrait of Spanish missionizers in the panels of “Mission Times.”

Acorn Soup unmask the lies at the heart of the pastoral mission myth beginning with its opening panel. Its recognizable mission-style building, reproduced throughout southern California and anywhere there is a Taco Bell, is here revealed as a house of horrors. The front of the building is lined with skulls and flanked by a cross, and its doorway leads into a deeply recessive interior framed by a welcome mat. L. Frank’s reverse captions achieve their most provocative impact in this panel not only through their perverse invocation of home (“welcome”) but most notably through a sign that reads “Franciscan Showers.” Functioning as the panel’s caption, this sign casts the twenty-one Spanish missions that occupied coastal California as extermination camps. A descendant of survivors of the missions, L. Frank makes the forceful case that “the missions were our camps” (personal interview, 16 June 2008). The panel’s explosive visual argument—interlinking the Spanish missions and Nazi concentration camps—resides in and relies on readers’ ability to make connections across time and space. In other words, it compresses multiple temporalities and references while positing a relationship between religious, social, and political ideologies and their shared endgame of genocide.

Three panels later, we see Coyote at the far edge of an expansive white space in flight from the mission, a recognition of all those who escaped or tried to escape mission grounds. Poised on the literal frame between the Indigenous world, signified by an oak tree, and the world the missions wrought, Coyote hears a disembodied voice whose words reach out from the mission’s interior, shouting, “hey! come back, didn’t you like the food?” (29). Here we can adapt the comics lexicon to see how the frame “can become part of the story itself.” In famed comics

II. MISSION TIMES



Fig. 3. L. Frank. Untitled. *Acorn Soup*. Berkeley: Heyday Books, 1999, 26.

artist Will Eisner's description of how frames can function as a narrative device, he notes that "a frame's shape (or the absence of one) gives it the ability to become more than just a proscenium through which a comic's action is seen: it can become part of the story itself. . . . The intent of the frame here is not so much to provide a stage as to heighten the reader's involvement with the narrative, much like a play in which actors interact with the audience, rather than merely performing in front of it" (45).

As a photographer and cartoonist, L. Frank demonstrates a keen awareness of framing's ability to "heighten the reader's involvement." Although the single-panel cartoons of *Acorn Soup* are not boxed in or framed by lines, most do feature one or two lines that serve the story line. For example, on the adjoining page (a recent version of which you see on the cover of this issue of *SAIL*), two lines frame and contain Coyote, who is in the foreground but within the space of the mission as demarcated by the two lines. Microphone in hand, Coyote looks backward at the mission building and says, in backward English: "take my wife no really please" (28). The reverse caption just underneath the bottom line of the panel reads: "coyote theater." The juxtaposition of these staged elements of line, white space, and caption requires an interpretive pro-

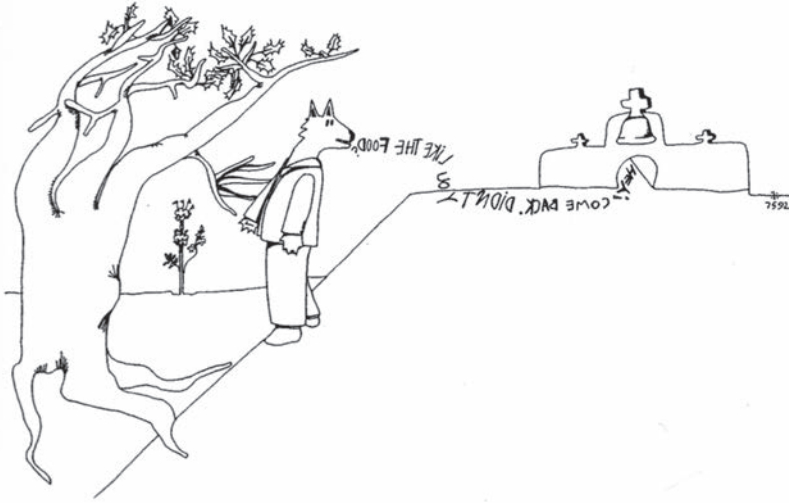


Fig. 4. L. Frank. Untitled. *Acorn Soup*. Berkeley: Heyday Books, 1999, 29.

cess akin to painter Jaune Quick-to-See Smith's description of her layerings of text and image: "If I can be Coyote and practice my sneak-up, I can engage the viewers from a distance with one image and lure them in for exposure to another layer, which changes the initial view into quite a different reality" (qtd. in Abbott 219). Like Smith, L. Frank reels readers into a complex relational encounter, challenging us to make connections between the discordant couplings of text and image. For example, the appendix adds crucial information that reframes how readers might approach this particular panel: "All unmarried women and girls were incarcerated in monjerios [confined housing] at the missions. Many did not survive this experience" (Frank, *Acorn Soup* 62). This understated statement about enslavement and gendered violence endemic to the missions chafes against the seemingly disjunctive humor in the panel.

In an interview on the radio program *Native Pulse*, L. Frank addressed this particular panel, noting, "I've done a lot of cartoons about genocide; they [these histories] are so incredibly painful to me all I can do is laugh." Holocaust as humor? Consider Gerald Vizenor's meditation that "the tricksters were with me in stories, and we remembered how to turn pain and horror into humor" (*Interior Landscapes* 74). When my students asked the artist during a class visit about wielding sardonic

humor in the face of such horror, she simply replied, “Laugh or die” (lecture, 23 March 2009). These painful and provocative scenes enact her claim that “remembering Indian history is a dangerous and painful thing, but they (the dominant culture) want you to forget your culture” (Sorensen). Through layered text and image, juxtaposed lines and white space, L. Frank’s explosive mission cartoons refuse amnesia and obfuscation, hallmarks of California state origin stories. Such efforts “to jog the memories” (lecture, 23 March 2009) align with affiliated efforts to shift public discourse around state mythology, historical memory, and Indigenous trauma in California.

For example, in the fall of 1990, Hachivi Edgar Heap of Birds engaged in public art activism by placing thirty red-on-white signs on the sides of transit buses in San Jose. The signs read: “MISSION GIFTS GIVEN TO NATIVE PEOPLE IN CALIFORNIA / SYPHILIS / SMALLPOX / FORCED BAPTISMS / MISSION GIFTS / ENDING NATIVE LIVES.”¹² Deborah Miranda’s *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir*, published by Heyday Books, offers a searing account of intergenerational violence and trauma unleashed by the Spanish occupation. Composed of shards—of family history, photographs, poetry, testimony, her “very late fourth-grade mission project,” even one of L. Frank’s panels from *Acorn Soup*—*Bad Indians* is a product of “collaboration” with her ancestors (Miranda, Skype talk). Most recently, the Winter 2014–15 special issue of *News from Native California*, “Saying Our Share: Surviving the Missions,” guest edited by artist James Luna (Puyoukitcum/Ipi/Mexican), offers a milestone Indigenous response to the mission legacy. Pope Francis’s announcement on 19 January 2015 that he would canonize Junípero Serra, the founder of the California missions, made the timing of this issue all the more vital. Through essays, visual art (including L. Frank’s work featured on the cover of this issue), photography, poems, and Indigenous history lessons, the issue’s contributors, in Luna’s words, “have a say in how we have or have not survived the historical period of the missions” (n.p.).¹³

The final three panels of “Mission Times” have their say in addressing the unfinished business of the mission era. Two adjoining cartoons visually echo each other: on the left side, Coyote in a death mask faces us, juggling crosses and stars. The mission, with crosses strewn on the ground, is in the far background. Notably, Coyote juggles in a narrow gap between two lines demarcating the division between mission and Indigenous worlds. One foot steps on a cross, the other on a star. A

flock of stars hovers on the Indigenous side of the panel, far outnumbering the crosses. The caption reads, “stop the dance,” while the appendix adds, “The years of missionization have left contemporary Indians juggling now with then” (Frank, *Acorn Soup* 30, 62). On the opposite but not opposing page, the mission building has disappeared. Against a white background with one wavy line, a woman faces forward, clutching a basket of acorns. Oak leaves and acorns dance around her shorn head, replacing those crosses and skulls. Originally appearing on the back cover of the Fall 1994 issue of *News*, this panel is captionless, its meaning relying on readers *recognizing* the short hair and acorns. In the book’s introduction, the artist registers the gap between the scene and the unseen: “I was so surprised to hear people thought it was an expression of hope and abundance. What they don’t realize is that her short hair means she is mourning. She’s holding tightly to what is left of her way of life” (14–15). This assumption that the cartoon will mirror back what “outside” viewers can see should remind us of that famous tricky mirror scene in *Duck Soup*. Sight, after all, is not necessarily vision. It also underscores the fact that images are not universal. In the book, the appendix directs readers how to access its culturally informed visual language: “a woman mourning the old even as the magic continues around her” (62).

And those acorns? On the book’s title page, Coyote nestles against an oak tree, hands grasped around an acorn. “AN ACORN IS AN ACORN IS AN ACORN” reads the reverse caption. This affirming message of “acorns all the way down” resonates throughout the book.¹⁴ Acorns, like L. Frank’s *Acorn Soup*, signify California Indian relationships to land, community, memory, survival, and continuance. The message embodied by acorns, however, comes with full recognition of the potential for bitterness, as the lessons of acorn soup preparation can teach us. Although a sustaining Indigenous food for millennia, acorn soup, if not prepared with knowledge and care, can be very bitter to the taste, even toxic in large amounts. And *Acorn Soup* abounds in bitter lessons. The final panel in “Mission Times,” also captionless, shows Coyote dressing up a scarecrow in Franciscan robes. The appendix provides the caption: “Be afraid. Be very afraid” (Frank, *Acorn Soup* 62). This cautionary admonition, worthy of a Coyote story, accompanies Coyote’s shifty forms and disruptive disguises in “Mission Times.” In an interview, L. Frank described her relationship to Coyote as equal parts painful and eye-opening: “Coyote

to me is my sharp stick in the eye” (“California Indian Artists’ Dialogue” 54). Coyote’s presence throughout *Acorn Soup*, abetted by L. Frank’s visual-textual provocations, delivers that “sharp stick in the eye”: edgy, transgressive, vital lessons, all necessary ingredients to communicate the scary world set into motion by the arrival of Spanish colonizers in 1769.

JUMPING THE FRAMES: NATIVE LITERARY STUDIES

Painfully wry humor ripples through the four ensuing chapters of *Acorn Soup*, which offer variations on the theme of Indigenous survival and continuance in the long wake of cataclysmic change. Through these chapters’ ruminations on the complexities, ironies, and compromises of contemporary California Indian and Indigenous experiences, L. Frank shares the core message of *Acorn Soup*: sustenance. Like acorn soup, *Acorn Soup* affirms and replenishes relationships that sustain Indigenous peoples in California and beyond. Those relationships encompass time, memory, place, and the arts. In panels that address relationships between art, audience, and location, L. Frank encourages us to join a conversation that is both locally situated and broadly relevant to contemporary Indigenous arts and interpretive practices.

In his discussion of photographers’ roles in defining Indians as vanquished and vanishing, as commodities and curiosities, Louis Owens once quipped, “We was framed” (191). In chapter 4 of *Acorn Soup*, “Now about Then,” L. Frank harnesses this pun and its communicative power with a sequence of six interrelated panels set in galleries and museums. By repeatedly drawing, and drawing attention to, frames within panels, she offers useful lessons for how to productively engage the moving practice of Native literary and visual arts. The sequence begins with a two-page panel that recontextualizes an earlier story from “Just after the Beginning Time”: “Coyote biting the heart of the slain Wiyoot” (62). In this panel, we see a series of moments in this story staged within different wall frames and settings: sequential, close-up, three-dimensional. In one frame, Wiyoot is flying outside it, a playful punning on *Acorn Soup*’s form and message. Like that bird, Coyote is also in motion, alternately eyeing, chasing, reaching, and grabbing at his prey. Readers are also in motion, making connections among these multiple representations of the story.

The diverse ways of telling and visualizing this core story of Coyote and Wiyoot suggest the capaciousness and fluidity of Indigenous

cosmological narratives. At the same time, these multiple story scenes make visible shifting frames of understanding and multiple points of view, as does the mirroring (or doubling) of the caption, “no greater love hath any coyote for his father” (Frank, *Acorn Soup* 42–43). This caption functions as a refrain in this panel, appearing both in conventional written English and in reverse. Readers must also consider the relationship between audience, art, and artist, as we see two gallery visitors, looking partly away from the art, stand on the far left side of the panel while Coyote-artist looks toward them from the right side of the panel. Equipped with ladder, hammer, and nails for installing the exhibition, the artist is in motion. The captions in both panels, together with the appendix, communicate L. Frank’s self-reflexive concerns about Native arts and artists, their relationship to ancestral stories and to contemporary audiences. On the left side, the reversed caption jests: “I hope the wine and cheese are good” (42). In the appendix, L. Frank expresses, “I worry that at my art shows the refreshments are more refreshing than my art and I hope the show [w]as worth the parking structure fees” (63). This stated concern with being framed by the expectations of others, with trying to adequately translate across cultural chasms, underscores the challenges Indigenous artists such as L. Frank confront away from the pages of *News from Native California* and other Indigenous-centered venues. By way of response, the reverse caption anchoring the panel’s right side—“working on a love letter”—underscores the interactive relationship the artist sustains with ancestral knowledges. Or, as L. Frank restates in the appendix, “artistic homage to an ancient belief” (63).

The continuing vitality of Indigenous cosmological story extends to the following two pages, which also form one extended museum scene. Although the “frame” signifies a “box of time” in the comics lexicon, it also can refer to the curatorial methods historically used to represent Native peoples in museums, those colonial repositories of Indigenous bodies, knowledges, and arts. Curatorial practices that extricated Native material items from their lived contexts and living histories, and the attitudes of ethnographic salvage that informed them, linger still today. This extended panel remembers those practices as it refuses them: we see two large framed images that also retell cosmological scenes from “Just after the Beginning Time.” Both frames feature a representation of Tuuvit (Rabbit), who “used a rattle of cocoons to sing a mourning song,

and that initiated dance” (Frank, *Acorn Soup* 13). L. Frank quips in the introduction that “where he’s unclothed and dancing around logs and stuff, and more physically a rabbit, that’s the Indian-times rabbit. And then later on, when he’s going to art galleries, he’s still the rabbit, but contemporary. He’s filled out a bit, because our diets have changed” (13). On the left side, a museum visitor with brochure in hand looks upward at the work entitled “the first song” (in reverse). Placed underneath a set of lights and cordoned off from viewers by a rope, this framed work epitomizes a worldview of Native pasts as separate, distant, and unknowable. Yet the right side reframes this stance of separation: the rope has been removed, and the light fixtures resemble showers of raindrops rather than a harsh glare. The framed work of a dancing Tuuvit is captionless, save for the statement below the adult and child who are viewing the image: “This is your great uncle Toovit” (45).

In the appendix, L. Frank’s note encompasses both sides of the panel: “I was walking through a museum with Lucy Parker looking at early, large photos of California Indians and she was related to several of the subjects” (*Acorn Soup* 63).¹⁵ With this second conjoined panel, she repositions Indigenous relationships to museums, recasting them as spaces of familial and cultural (re)connection rather than estrangement and separation. The caption and anecdote are familiar ones for Native visitors to museums and Native viewers of Edward Curtis-era photographs who experience cognitive dissonance between their own ongoing family stories and the distancing, impersonal language of standard curatorial representation. Rejecting the perpetual past tense foisted on them, the viewers in this scene instead celebrate relational moments of recognition.

This strategic act of reframing prepares readers for the next two pages, whose interlinked scenes emphatically refuse containment for Indigenous artists, arts, and lives. In the first panel, Coyote sees stars in this suggestive reframing of Van Gogh’s signature work, as the reverse caption “starry night” indicates. By forging affiliations between L. Frank’s favorite artist and her brand of Coyote aesthetics, this panel makes a visual argument that culminates on the next page. In this adjoining panel, L. Frank busts the frames assigned to Indigenous peoples and the frames that surround and separate Indigenous arts and artists from their many relational lives. In the panel, we see a rope physically separating potential museum visitors from a framed image of land, dancers,

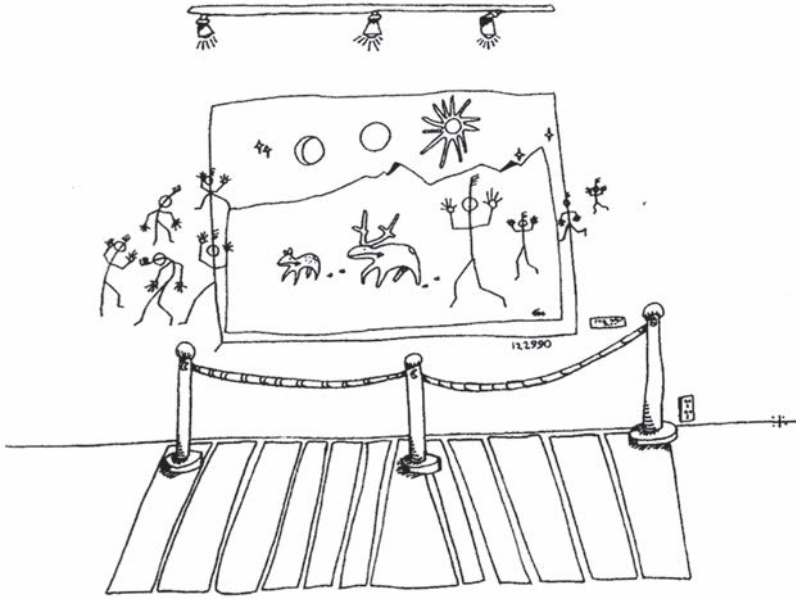


Fig. 5. L. Frank. Untitled. *Acorn Soup*. Berkeley: Heyday Books, 1999, 47.

and animals. Yet above the rope, the inhabitants have ignored the rules of staying put, whether in the past or in static conceptions of indigeneity and Indigenous arts. They have jumped the frame. These exuberant figures dance across, out of, and back into the frame. Although there are no visitors to the museum in this panel, readers stand in their place, witnessing the dancers' visual refusal of the confining space assigned to them. In the appendix, we can find both the caption and the sustaining message of *Acorn Soup*: "The museum dance. The magic goes on all around us" (63). These lines extend and echo the appendix's description of "starry night," which reads: "the magic goes on all around us" (63). L. Frank not only explicitly entwines these two panels but also moves us to consider the broader implications of that interrelationship. With starry Coyote and moving dancers, these panels affirm the vitality of Indigenous peoples and arts while engaging us in broader conversations about Indigenous arts practices. Through their formal and thematic interventions, this sequence of six panels also imagines how Indigenous artists might reclaim the spaces typically assigned to the exhibition and

curation of Indigenous arts and histories. At the same time, L. Frank's appendix notes remind us that these are her stories as well.

With this final playful act of unframing and reframing, L. Frank ultimately reimagines frames as sites of possibility rather than as boxes of containment. In a related vein, Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas favors the word "frameline" instead of the standard term "formline" to describe his reinvention of classic Haida visual iconography "because a frame is a device that opens a window to limitless opportunities. . . . And so the frame suggests that there is any number of things hidden within it. So, it's a call for us to go deeper into the work. As opposed to thinking there it's fully presented to me; I'll move on to the next piece" (artist's talk, 22 November 2014). In other words, rather than closing off interpretive possibility, the moving black lines that form Yahgulanaas's comics and graphic art instigate imaginative and collaborative play. For Yahgulanaas, the concept of the "frameline" invites us into the conversation instead of shutting us out. L. Frank's acts of unframing and reframing similarly "call for us" to collaborate as readers and as viewers, to "go deeper" by asking questions, forging connections, and finding diverse entryways into her work.

After a two-year hiatus from "Acorn Soup," L. Frank returned to extend the conversation between Indigenous visual and literary arts. In the Spring 2008 issue of *News from Native California*, she launched a new series appropriately called "Second Serving." Part memoir, part photo-journal, part California Indian and Indigenous reportage, "Second Serving" collates L. Frank's photographs and paintings with informal narrative (complete with misspellings, abbreviations, lowercase lettering, and shorthand). In her inaugural serving in the Spring 2008 issue, L. Frank shares her So-Cal urban Indian story, punning and playing on the contradictions of growing up in Los Angeles. A lyrical passage of warm summer nights with the rustle of palm trees shifts to a sly description of playing "indians and airports" (49). This narrative journey into childhood, into the pain of separation, is healed by reconnection with family and the startling recognition of seeing her language on a street sign in Santa Monica: Moomat Ahiko. Like a Heap of Birds installation made permanent, moomat ahiko "is the name of our canoe. It is us. For years I have said to calif. ndns that we should put our signs in our languages next to the signs in english. and here a politician has

done this. The hawaiians see their language everywhere. americans see their language every day. to see yourself, in your own homeland, is very powerful. topanga, cahuenga, tujunga and now moomat ahiko, breath of the ocean” (49). The piece closes with the affirmation: “with one sign, two words, a world view is further revealed. we are not extinct.”

Since 2008, installments of “Second Serving” have appeared periodically in *News* and serve—in the artist’s words—as a “travelogue” moving through memory, place, and experience (personal interview, 16 June 2008). If “Acorn Soup’s” power in part derives from its moving collaborations of frame, caption(s), and drawing, from the interpretive collaboration required of readers, then “Second Serving’s” power derives from its collaborative mixed-media format and dynamic layering of personal and collective experiences. No need to find a mirror with “Second Serving”: its photographs—of the artist, of relatives and friends, of places in and outside of California—invite other kinds of decodings of relationality and recognition. For example, in a 2010 installment, L. Frank frames a two-page photo-collage with a set of honorings: of the unions of friends and of her long-standing union with her partner. In between, she travels to Washington to push for Language Accreditation Bill AB 544 in California, to the Pride Day Parade in San Francisco, to Indigenous Australia for collaborative language work, back to California for the language revitalization workshops, and up the coast to see a young Karuk/Pomo friend compete in a surfing contest. As peripatetic as Coyote, L. Frank measures what’s been lost with what is still here. The connective tissue linking this visual narrative is love: for Indigenous homelands and languages; for youth who “look out for their people”; for the solidarity of friends who marched with her under the two-spirit banner; for the shared hard work of cultural revitalization. In the last panel, she writes: “tongva, luiseno and desert cahuilla in d.c., wappos at pride, karuks in oz and karuks in the ocean. we lead interesting lives while working for our cultural futures, we ca ndn activists have become family” (43). The collaborations she celebrates here through photos, narrative, and drawings reinforce what *News from Native California* has done so well: bring people together to imagine and create new possibilities for California Indian futures.

By modeling collaboration as both aesthetic and activist value, as both methodology and interpretive practice, *News from Native Cali-*

fornia, “Acorn Soup” and its successor, “Second Serving,” encourage us to extend the conversations we have about Native literary studies. The many moving parts of L. Frank’s work—its affiliations with Native and non-Native visual, literary, and comic arts; its shifting locales and audiences; its localized and broader reference points—demand an equally capacious, equally flexible set of interpretive practices. Those practices extend from how we categorize Native literature to how we recognize the many lives and locations of Native literary and visual arts production. If we do so, we must then ask more purposely why so many Native writers and artists have, like L. Frank, embraced the interrelationship of visual and literary forms. In slyly involving readers in questions of access, viewpoint, perspective, and point of view, “Acorn Soup” compels us to think about the role, purpose, and design of Indigenous arts. In other words, figuring out her work means we are also finding ourselves in a conversation about the place and power of Indigenous arts. As we keep working to identify connections between text and image or between panels, we are also engaged in collaborative processes of meaning making. And yet, there is no end to that process. The proliferation of relationships instigated by “Acorn Soup,” relationships that are ongoing, complex, and dynamic, argue for the primacy of imaginative possibility as an index of Indigenous continuance.

That imaginative possibility extends to thinking about how “Acorn Soup” and other Native texts make different kinds of moves in diverse locations. For example, *News from Native California* has recently moved into digital and social media. How do these extended networks reframe how we access, understand, and interpret Native visual and literary works? Lindsie Bear, former editor of *News*, notes that the magazine has approximately three thousand subscribers, but their blog and social media sites “reach about 30,000 folks per week.” How does this digital strategy for “jumping the frame,” for eluding the limitations posed by diminishing subscribers, extend the reach of California Indian artists and writers? As L. Frank’s activist art finds new homes in digital spaces, what new relationships emerge in collaboration with those audiences?

Why is acorn soup so nutritious? And why is a second serving, carefully prepared, worth eating? Like Moomat Ahiko, both serve as vitalizing signs: of California Indian resilience; of the fluidity and expansiveness of Native literary and visual arts; of the productive potential of collaborative interpretive practices.

NOTES

1. See, for example, Heid Erdrich's suite of poem-films on her website, <http://heiderdrich.com>, or LeAnne Howe's "Noble Savage Learns to Tweet," <http://movingpoems.com/poet/leanne-howe/>.

2. L. Frank Manriquez typically signs her artwork with the lowercase l. frank. For the sake of clarity, this article uses the name L. Frank. L. Frank is also a two-spirit activist and artist whose life defies the binarisms of the English language and its delimiting gendered pronouns. Following consultation with the artist, I have used the gendered pronoun "she" throughout this article while recognizing its limitations as a designator of identity.

3. See, for example, Costo and Costo; Heizer; Trafzer and Hyer; and Lindsay.

4. *News from Native California* was originally launched as a bimonthly magazine in 1987 and then in 1989 became a quarterly. It has approximately three thousand subscribers, most of whom are in California. In a special section, "25 Years of California Indian Publishing," in the Summer 2004 issue, Malcolm Margolin wrote, "Because the publishing of *News* renders us so visible, we get called upon to perform all kinds of services and we try to accommodate whenever we can. . . . We function in many ways like a public agency, a library, directory assistance, something that goes far beyond the mechanics (and economics) of producing a quarterly. *News* is also a community, a community of subscribers, contributors and friends" (28). The changing digital world of publishing is enlarging the range and reach of the quarterly. According to *News* editor Lindsay M. Bear, "the blog and social media sites reach about 30,000 folks per week." She adds that a forthcoming new digital edition will also enhance the network of readers.

5. This pairing and juxtaposition of Indigenous arts—of poems and photographs, of mixed-media installations and visual arts—is also a signature feature of many Native-curated exhibits. Consider, for example, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith's curatorial history, including the 1992 Submuloc Show / Columbus Wohs Show, which paired visual artists and writers. Also consider works such as *Strong Hearts: Native American Visions and Voices*, edited by Peggy Roalf, which pairs poems, photographs, and essays on visual sovereignty by Native writers and photographers.

6. See, for example, Tolley et al., "Beautiful Tree: California Indians and Oak," on acorn harvesting and preparation, poems and stories about California Indians' ancient and continuing relationship with oak trees and acorns. Also see Gendar, Ortiz, and Margolin's collaborative section, "Acorn Power: A Special Report on Food and Fitness in Native California."

7. Also see Vizenor's discussion in the epilogue to *Manifest Manners* where he states, "Coyote simulations, the kitschy crusts of the deverbative trickster, are the mechanisms of consumer representations" (173).

8. In L. Frank's photo-collage column, "Second Serving," in the Winter 2007–08 issue, she writes of a trip to Amsterdam: "Vincent was my first. His brush strokes captured my soul and I have remained enthralled ever since. So I went to his homeland to heal my self by looking at his paintings, looking at the same physical landscapes his eyes looked at" (41).

9. See Hearne's nuanced discussion of these questions.

10. As a contemporary example, consider the speaker of Sherman Alexie's poem "Crazy Horse Speaks": "I am the mirror / practicing masks / and definitions" (62).

11. McCloud's definition is not the last word, however, on whether single-panel cartoons or gag cartoons fit the scope of comics. For example, Robert C. Harvey counters: "I realize that the gag cartoon falls outside most definitions of comics because it is not a sequence of pictures. In fact, gag cartoons fall outside most definitions. But not mine. In my view, comics consist of pictorial narratives or expositions in which words (often lettered into the picture area within speech balloons) usually contribute to the meaning of the pictures and vice versa. A pictorial narrative uses a sequence of juxtaposed pictures (i.e. a 'strip' of pictures); pictorial exposition may do the same—or may not (as in single-panel cartoons—political cartoons as well as gag cartoons)" (qtd. in Heer and Worcester 26).

12. This public art installation, in place from 15 November 1990 to 15 January 1991, was sponsored by the San Jose Museum of Art in connection with his retrospective *Claim Your Color*.

13. On its Facebook page and on its pages, *News from Native California* has proved a crucial nexus for activism and education around Serra, the missions, and their catastrophic legacies for coastal Indigenous peoples. The cover art for this issue of *SAIL*, L. Frank's acrylic "no, really, please take my wife," appears on page 16 of the issue.

14. I am referencing King's sly punchline to a story he retells in varying versions at the beginning of each chapter in his book *The Truth about Stories*. With the punchline, "it's turtles all the way down," King re-Indigenizes a much-circulated story from the oral tradition of Western scientific discourse. For example, a similar turtle anecdote opens Stephen Hawking's *A Brief History of Time* as a means of addressing a long-standing philosophical and scientific question about tracing first cause, about our cosmic origin stories. At the same time, King's invocation of "turtles all the way down" references the story of Sky Woman, the core of Haudenosaunee and other Native cosmologies. As King models through his storytelling practices, the meanings of Sky Woman's story cannot be contained or fixed. In other words, there's no getting to the bottom of their ongoing power and vitality.

15. Lucy Parker (Kashaya Pomo / Coast Miwok) is a well-known basketweaver and daughter of legendary basketweaver Julia Parker.

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Slippery When Wet

Music, Footnotes, and Film in
Stephen Graham Jones's *Demon Theory*

CHRIS LALONDE

Pre-credit

Exterior: Night

Very early winter; snow-covered countryside; a two-story farmhouse, white, set at the end of a half-mile dirt drive that crosses a cattle guard midway, then sways left, right, left again before arriving at a fence, also white, that runs parallel to the front of the house; copse of hardwoods, mixed, mount a modest hill some fifty yards behind the house. The house is not dilapidated so much as tired. Front door slightly off-center.

Interior: Night

Living room, weak light from floor lamps beside well-worn sofa and reading chair, end table between; remote control and a single book, closed, on top; small TV, on, set before sofa and chair: INXS's "The Devil Inside" running, low sound. A woman, sixtyish, skin pasty gray with the season and an adult life spent mostly indoors, crosses the room, camera following; goes through a doorway opposite the front door and into the kitchen. Again weak light, here from a single unshaded bulb over the sink; avocado appliances; cupboards painted white—clean but not fresh; she continues straight through the kitchen, through a third doorway, and down an unlit hallway, camera still behind; two doors on one side of the hall, one on the other, so they are staggered: left, right, left. The first door is open; darkness within as we move past, following the woman; stairway to the second floor dead ahead, dimly seen so that by the fourth step there is only darkness. "There's no music at this point, only a pensive strain to hear, to be warned. Anything. Even more laboring over the silent tracks" (*Demon Theory* 9).¹

Footnote 1. The woman moving through the at best dimly lit interior of the house is Hale's mother from Stephen Graham Jones's *Demon Theory* (2006), described in the text's first epigraph as "a three-part novelization of the feature film trilogy *The Devil Inside*" (*Demon Theory* n.pag.). Jones's text traces a group of six young healthcare professionals—medical students and EMTs—as they return to the family home of one of them, Hale, called there by a phone call from his mother. At the home in the country, years earlier, Hale was driving a three-wheeler on which his sister Jenny was riding, there was an accident, and she was crippled. Sometime after, Jenny and Stan, the father, die, and Hale tries to kill himself. Now, years later, demons haunt the home in classic horror fashion. The quotation from *Demon Theory* tacitly reminds us early in the text that music can communicate a message, a warning.

An exploration and articulation of genre, language, and writing, *Demon Theory* has an afterword by Jones in addition to its three sections. Over the course of the first three sections of the text there are 406 footnotes; those notes lead, in turn, to an additional 297 footnotes for a total of 703 footnotes in *Demon Theory*. There are no footnotes in the afterword.^A

Footnote A. That is not to say that the afterword has nothing to say about footnotes, mind you. Quite the contrary, for there Jones calls the reader's attention to them by quoting Noël Coward, who said of footnotes that they "were like 'having to go downstairs to answer the door while in the midst of making love'" (*Demon Theory* 435). Coward's comment may conjure in one's mind union and its interruption, who am I to say, but what we really need to see is the imperative. The door must be answered. In short, then, *Demon Theory* would have us pay attention to and take the measure of footnotes. Strange things, footnotes, as they confound the border, the edge, of the text proper, the body of the text. They are both within and without, and their presence takes us beyond where we are, beyond where we want to be as readers following a narrative, an argument, a flow. We may not like them, may curse Chicago style and the journals and presses that hew to it, but they are a necessary evil. The footnote is where we turn for the information, the context, that helps us fully understand and appreciate what we are reading. The devil, as they say, is in the details.^a

Footnote a.^D As should be clear already, this piece is written in the spirit of *Demon Theory*, a text whose deconstructive impulse is articulated via songs, in footnotes to those songs, and in footnotes in which other songs and music are articulated.[&]

Footnote D. Recall, if you please, “I will speak, therefore, of a letter.”

Footnote &. In the spirit of *Demon Theory*, then, three parts that take seriously the three sites *Demon Theory* would have us take seriously: language, song, and film—what they communicate, how, and why.

Slippery When Wet²

Interior: Night

A living room, sparsely furnished: sofa, reading chair, floor lamps, a television set, on, showing a corpse that “falls for nearly ten art-house seconds—delicate orchestral music coming through, butterfly-type associations twittering in the unconscious” (*Demon Theory* 150).³

Jump cut to

Interior: Night

A dark hallway, narrow, ending at a stairway leading up into darkness. Three doors off the passage. The first door is open, the room dark. POV is as if you have entered the room, sit down;

Jump cut to

A screen onto which is projected the falling body as it “finally crashes through the trees, craters into the ground, the thin nose-cycle breaking off with impact, twirling back up in high-res, slow mo counterclockwise. It falls too and shatters” (*Demon Theory* 150),⁴ the orchestral music replaced by “Wanted Dead or Alive.”⁵

Footnote 2. “Slippery When Wet” is the title of Bon Jovi’s third album (1986), which according to *Billboard* magazine was the best-selling album of 1987.⁶ *Demon Theory* is laced with references to 1980s popular music, in particular, from various subgenres. There is dance music, for instance, Murray Head’s 1984 “One Night in Bangkok” and Sheena Easton’s “Strut,” also 1984; there is Midnight Star’s 1983 hit “Freak-A-Zoid.” From the same year, the thrash/speed metal of Metallica’s *Kill Them All* and the art rock of Yes’s *90125*. There is the alt rock of The Dead Kennedys and, at least back in the day, R.E.M. Still, the dominant subgenres are the arena-oriented, FM-radio-tailored anthematic hard rock of Bon Jovi, The Scorpions, and Van Halen, hair bands like Great White (although one can make a case for Bon Jovi in this category as well, at least the early Bon Jovi of “Runaway” renown), and the heavy goth rock of Ozzy Osbourne.

Long associated with an antiauthority stance, rebellion, and darkness—think of the arm raised, sign of the horns salute “created” by former Black Sabbath and Rainbow frontman and then solo artist the late Ronnie James Dio and offered up by rockers to their fans and, in return, by concertgoers to their performing rock antigods—hard rock, particularly but not exclusively metal, is an especially apt music for horror. A footnote to a footnote to a footnote in *Demon Theory*’s third screenplay reminds the reader that, as is true of slasher films, glam rock had a set of conventions that were “ironclad”: “Open with a power ballad, tease your hair up, slither into spandex, tear up your hotel room, etc” (*Demon Theory* 323). Those, too, were the conventions of 1980s hair, metal, glam metal, and hard rock bands. *Demon Theory* signals an awareness of the connection between glam rock and hard rock in a Part II footnote to a footnote linking Marc Bolan’s Tyrannosaurus Rex, later shortened to T. Rex, and Led Zeppelin.

Footnote Δ. 1987 was also the year of the Athens, Georgia, band R.E.M.’s *Document*, the closest *Demon Theory* will get to southern rock, which is to say nowhere close at all; Bruce Springsteen’s *Tunnel of Love*, its hit “Brilliant Disguise” containing lyrics that Jones will turn to for the epigraph to another text that has 1980s rock on its mind, *All the Beautiful Sinners*; INXS’s *Kick*, containing the hit “The Devil Inside,” which features prominently in *Demon Theory*; and Guns n’ Roses’ *Appetite for Destruction*, which is nowhere to be found in *Demon Theory*.⁷

Footnote ?. Which is not to say that GnR is absent from *Demon Theory*; far from it. The third footnote in the text, and the first concerning music, articulates the connection between Jon Bon Jovi and Guns n’ Roses when it notes that the latter played on the former’s recording of a Bob Dylan classic, “Knockin’ on Heaven’s Door.”⁸

Footnote †. Guns n’ Roses had its moment in a horror film, or rather a film within a film. Slash, Axl, Duff, Izzy, and Steve have cameos in *The Dead Pool* (1988), the fifth and final Dirty Harry movie, in which murders are connected to the on-location shooting of a slasher film, *Hotel Satan*: tagline, “You check in. You die.” The GnR boys attend the funeral of a rock singer, played by Jim Carrey, who was killed during the filming of a music video for *Hotel Satan*, directed, in character, by Liam Neeson.

Footnote 3. The body is Stan’s, Hale’s father, falling to earth early in the second film of *The Devil Inside* trilogy. He will rise.

Footnote 4. Stan again, of course. Beyond the careful and striking, one might go so far as to say poetic, use of language and phrasing, “craters” just the

right word and “crashes through the trees” finally balanced by “craters into the ground,” beyond the verisimilitude of the nose-cicle, beyond even the counterclockwise rotation of the nose-cicle after it breaks off on the body’s impact, tempting though it be to read that spin as signaling a return to the event in Hale’s and his family’s past from which issues each of the three films in the series and leave it at that, the passage’s significance is in its calling attention to the apparatus of film and its relationship to what we see and to meaning. Lest we miss this, in addition to footnotes in Part I offering definitions of filmic terms and abbreviations used such as POV, est., OS, insert, inset, voice-over, cut, match cut, and so on, there are footnotes to Panaglide, or Steadicam, technology, what it means to “overcrank” a shot and to dolly shots in the opening thirty pages or so. In short, the footnotes ask us to be aware of the screen and how what we see is constructed.

Footnote 5. “Wanted Dead or Alive” is the third single released off of *Slippery When Wet*, a song that portrays rock and rollers as contemporary outlaw cowboys who ride into town on tour buses, or limos from the airport; make their mark before, during, and after the concert; and then leave. Not strictly a power ballad, à la Night Ranger’s 1984 “Sister Christian,”^F for example, there being no love object or romantic interest in the song, unless one counts the road itself as that. “Wanted Dead or Alive” does have the musical trappings of a power ballad: opening with acoustic guitar work, on a twelve-string to boot, and shifting midway through the song to driving power chords pumping through Marshall stacks.

A footnote to the first song referred to in *Demon Theory*, on just the second page, brings Jon Bon Jovi and his interest in cowboys into the text.^c There we read that he turned to Bob Dylan’s soundtrack for the Sam Peckinpah film *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid* (1973) for inspiration as he worked on the soundtrack for *Young Guns II* (1990) and therefore, one imagines, on the orchestral music that accompanies the clichéd death of the “Mexican-Indian” Jose Chavez y Chavez, played by Lou Diamond Phillips.^m

Footnote F. “Sister Christian,” which is on the soundtrack for *Friday the 13th* (2009), and Night Ranger appear in *All the Beautiful Sinners* via the concert T-shirt Mica Jones has as a memento from his first kill. Amos, called “the indian” in the novel, wears a Def Leppard “Hysteria” concert T-shirt.

Footnote c. The connection between Jon Bon Jovi, cowboys, and the western is writ large in the video for the song that closes *Young Guns II* and carries over into the end credits, “Blaze of Glory.” He performs the song in an abandoned drive-in movie theater on a mesa, the obviously con-

structed set built with materials helicoptered to the mesa top, set amidst the sandstone towers outside Moab, Utah. There is nostalgia pictured here for the West of the American imaginary, of course, without a shred of irony in the fact that the place where the West is being screened is abandoned and decayed.

Footnote m. The clichéd tom-tom beat signaling the *indian*, that sign—as Gerald Vizenor has long noted—created and perpetuated by the dominant society, is not appropriate for the death song here.^v Claudia Gorbman notes the prevalence of the tom-tom beat in her essay on music, the western, and the *indian*. K. J. Donnelly takes note of the same beat at the end of John Carpenter's *The Fog* (1980). *Demon Theory* will have none of it on its extensive soundtrack.

Footnote V. See, for instance, *The Everlasting Sky* (1972), *The People Named the Chippewa* (1984), and *Fugitive Poses* (1998).

Slippery When Wet II: Pas de Deux⁶

Exterior: Night

Establishing shot of a two-story white farmhouse, the unpaved drive leading up to it, copse of trees behind. POV has you on the road as it sways left, right, left, and then the POV tracks down from bare trees silhouetted against dark sky, to roofline, and, finally, to the front door.

Jump cut to

Interior: Night

Living room, you've seen it before; reading chair, sofa, floor lamps, the one beside the sofa off. A book on the end table next to the reading chair, open. Television on: in black and white, a man sits on the steps of a building, devastation all around, stacks of books on the steps beside and in front of him, a large clock face in front of him as well.⁷

Jump cut to

Interior: Night

A dark hallway. This too you have seen before. The stairway at the end beckons, but the door to the right is open. Inside, spotlight, a SLIPPERY WHEN WET caution sign, two parallel swerving lines, hovering above the words "So I got me a pen and a paper / and I made up my own little sign" as a song plays.⁸

Footnote 6. The double entendre of the Bon Jovi album title, meaning that, so the story goes, was too much for the record company executives to bear when it was made abundantly clear in the original album cover art,^s harks back to Coward's remark about footnotes, obviously, in both senses, and to horror, of course.^h Desire, particularly sexual desire, can be deadly.[†] Jones's text plays on this convention right from the get-go, to be sure, when in the opening scene of Part I, a Halloween party, there is a cut from the contents of Con's bag to "a door crashes open down the hall. A female skeleton and a male flasher emerge, holding hands, running the other way, disappearing into the elevator, already all over each other" (*Demon Theory* 1).^{s&f} They will be fine. The same cannot be said for the six who go to Hale's childhood home to answer what they take to be his mother's call for help; pair up, mostly, for Seri will have none of Egan's advances; and, well, do not have happy endings.^s

If the footnote interrupts, if its knocking demands answer, then the footnotes to certain songs are revealing because they remind us of the slipperiness of meaning, the play of and inherent in signs, and the ways in which signs are always already culturally determined. Double meaning and play in 1980s rock and roll are phrased, without commentary, in a footnote to Con's singing of a Yes lyric from "Leave It"—"one down, one to go / another town, one more show"—off the album *90125* (1983). Fittingly, at least for *Demon Theory*'s purposes and for ours, the instrumental introduction to "Leave It" on *90125* is entitled "Cinema." The note tells the reader not to confuse the Yes album title with Van Halen's 1988 *OU812*. What goes unremarked is the digging joke of the title. Eddie, Alex, and Michael Anthony make light of former Van Halen frontman David Lee Roth's first full-length solo effort after leaving the band, entitled *Eat Em and Smile* (1986), with Oh you ate one, too.^p

The play of signifiers, of signification, begins with the band name INXS, of course.^o Together, the arbitrary nature of the sign and the play of metonymy make for the always already slippery state of play in excess of any attempt to fix the sign and meaning once and for all.^{p/Q} Footnotes of footnotes of footnotes, and on and on, accentuate this play. Fitting, this, for Jones takes pains to point out in his afterword that "in Cervantes' day and for a long time after, the preface and the prologue had been the legitimate way to layer meaning, to introduce 'play.' Now it was the footnote" (*Demon Theory* 431).^R

Footnote S. While the original cover art slipped in for the album's release in Japan somehow, the cover for the US and European release replaced the image of a woman's bosom straining against a too-small T-shirt with the words "Slippery When Wet" against a mottled gray-black background.

Footnote h. While the sexual connotations of the double entendre of the phrase are wonderfully nonspecific, the original, nixed, album cover of *Slippery When Wet* is blatantly sexist and, given its target audience, heteronormative.

Footnote †. In this case a weapon—to stab, to pierce, to penetrate (yes, yes, isn't it obvious)—grows slippery with the victim's blood.^w

Footnote w. In Part I of *Demon Theory*, Egan sings lines from “The Devil Inside” to Hale, including “makes you wonder how the other half died.” In the song's first verse, the line immediately preceding “makes you wonder” accentuates the fact that words, too, are weapons: “Words are weapons, sharper than knives.”^m

Footnote m. The shot of the song title on the Balboa Theatre's marquee at the beginning of “The Devil Inside” music video brings together words, music, and the cinema, of course.

Footnote s&f. The two figures are revealing, of course, for with them the text early on calls our attention to both that which lies beneath, that underpins, and to something revealed, something to be revealed.

Footnote s. Or so it would appear, for the text is more playful than that. Virginia, for example, is attacked by a demon, “the next to last moment is tight on the weave of her no-longer-taut T-shirt, and then, in a rush of flapping and skin tearing and longindying os screams, she's forced out of the shot” (*Demon Theory* 48–49), only to return, very much alive, in the last scene of Part I (*Demon Theory* 142).

Footnote p. With its 1991 album title *For Unlawful Carnal Knowledge*, Van Halen takes its serious play well beyond a personal squabble with David Lee Roth in order to make a point and take a stand against censorship.

Footnote o. A footnote devoted to Real Life's 1989 hit “Send Me an Angel” highlights and has fun with the metonymic signifying chain and the play of meaning when it reminds us that Philip K. Dick noted that deleting a single space in the phrase “God is now here” yields “God is nowhere.” Similarly, with one less space the admonition to “send me an angel” becomes “send *mean* angel” (*Demon Theory* 265).

Footnote P/Q. Or, to put it another way—and taking the liberty of using as the identity of this footnote the title of the journal in which were published the case notes, transcriptions of recorded interviews that led to an unauthorized biography, that led to screenplays, that led to the novelization of screenplays—there are no simple statements. Statements are never simple.

Footnote R. In his essay on music in *The Shining*, David Code argues that the film's interest in writing and visual media is signaled by the reversed D and second R in REDRUM and, in a note, calls the reversed letters “the

graphic game . . . [that] is new to the filmic version” (151). *Demon Theory* introduces this particular, playful, sign from *The Shining* in a footnote (*Demon Theory* 84).

Footnote 7. Pictured is the last scene of a typically chilling *Twilight Zone* episode, “Time Enough At Last” (1959). Nuclear devastation gives Henry Bemis, played by Burgess Meredith, time to read, only to be devastated himself when, at the end of the scene, his glasses broken, he is unable to see well enough to do so.^{RS}

There is a certain resonance between “Time Enough At Last” and the R.E.M. song “It’s the End of the World as We Know It (and I Feel Fine),” invoked and footnoted early on in Part II. The descant sung against the title phrase is, in this regard, particularly, painfully poignant: “Time I had some time alone.” The free associative nature of the song lyrics, decried by some, makes R.E.M.’s hit an apt choice for *Demon Theory*, of course.

Footnote RS. Midway through Part I, *The Twilight Zone*^{TZ} appears when Con, trying to convince Seri to join him in dashing to the SUV and escaping together rather than leaving it to Hale and Nona to drive off and bring back the cavalry, says, “In the morning him and Noan are going to ride out of here.”^W You know that’s how it’ll go down. Leaving you, me, Egan, and mister Rod Serling” (*Demon Theory* 71). Described in the accompanying footnote as host and possible citizen of *The Twilight Zone*, Serling’s introduction into the group serves both to call into question all that we have seen, all that we will see, and, critically, to call our attention to narrator and narration.ⁿ

Footnote TZ. The 1960s television show, moving image, and rock and roll come together at the end of Part II as Golden Earring’s hit “Twilight Zone” plays, “pounding in louder and louder, an apt song for the state of the hospital” (*Demon Theory* 302) at the end of the second movie. The footnote takes pains to give us the revealing title of the album from which the song comes: *Cut. The Twilight Zone* returns, fittingly in music, midway through Part III of *Demon Theory* when Con “se-ques smoothly into the *Twilight Zone* theme” (*Demon Theory* 370) while he first points a remote control at a blank TV screen, pretends to run through the channels, and then directs the remote up the stairs, which is to say up above, where the demons are.

Footnote W. It is worth remarking that Con’s description of what will happen contains language right out of the western.

Footnote n. *Demon Theory* makes explicit its interest in narrative via a footnote in Part III to *rashomon*, “a fractured, multivocal mode of ac-

cretive storytelling” (*Demon Theory* 378) that takes its name from a 1922 short story that Akira Kurosawa would in turn take for the title of his 1950 classic film. A note to the note offers telling context, letting the reader know that 1922 was also “the year King Tutankhamen’s tomb was finally plundered, the year *Ulysses*, Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., Charles Mingus, and *Reader’s Digest* were born, the year a television signal was first transmitted, the year Albert Einstein was awarded the Nobel Prize for Physics” (*Demon Theory* 379). High modernist and postmodern narratives are sounded in the list of events from 1922, as are jazz and play, mass media and communications, physics and, I dare say, temporality. Sounded, too, is a note of difference, activism, and artists of color. And violation.

Footnote 8. “Signs” is the sole hit for the Canadian group Five Man Electrical Band (1971), referenced and footnoted in *Demon Theory* (175).

Slippery When Wet III: Strum⁹

Interior: Night

Living room: position of the camera has you nearly across the space, as if you’ve a place to get to, POV from somewhere beyond the reading chair and floor lamp, on, and the television, on: western movie set, medium shot of saloon door, man exits, pauses on boardwalk, takes off his apron, hands his clipboard and pen to a boy sitting beside the door, moves right out of shot.¹⁰ Curtains over the front window move a bit, just a wee bit.¹¹

Match cut to

A dark hallway, stairs at the end, you want to get there; closed first door off the hallway, you pass it; second closed as well, you pass without a sideways look; third door is open, room dark save for light from a moving image projected on a screen. Captain James T. Kirk, Dr. Leonard McCoy, and a crewman, not in a red uniform, beam down to an alien planet, are greeted by an earth woman, each member of the landing party seeing her differently.¹² You glance inside, hesitate, turn, enter. Music plays: David Lindley and El Rayo X’s “Werewolves of London.”¹³

Footnote 9. Strum, the word as poetic line, plays a prominent role in Edward Dorn’s *Gunslinger: Book I* (1968, 1989), of course, serving, perhaps before all else, to sound a note of music, of movement, of vibration, of play. Like *Demon Theory*, *Gunslinger* has theory on its mind, what with a talking horse going by the names Claude Lévi-Strauss and Heidegger accompa-

nying the Gunslinger/Slinger/Zlinger, and it has music as a feature of the text. Like Stephen Graham Jones, Dorn was a member of the English Department faculty at the University of Colorado, Boulder.^b

Footnote b. The nickname of the University of Colorado sports teams is the Buffaloes. Jones's "Last Success," published in his 2005 collection of stories entitled *Bleed into Me*, brings together buffaloes and rock and roll. Warren Zevon's "Werewolves of London," quoted in the story and used as an anthem for both sides in the not-so-little matter of what happened to Horse Devilkin, appears in a footnote in *Demon Theory*, a footnote that, it should come as no surprise, contains a footnote in turn.^c

Footnote C. *Demon Theory*'s first of four footnotes linked to its 131st footnote speculates that Zevon had a *Star Trek* television episode and two of the show's main characters in mind when he growls out "He'll rip your lungs out, Jim" in, the note postulates, Zevon's "best Bones voice" (*Demon Theory* 123). While the note giveth, going so far as to point out that "anything's possible" (*Demon Theory* 123) and reminding the reader that in a 1966 *Star Trek* episode Kirk is "stabbed in the lung" by an Andorian (*Demon Theory* 123), the note to the note both taketh away and giveth by recognizing that "Zevon could have just as well had this *The Hills Have Eyes* line still lodged in his mind from the year before: 'I'll rip his lungs out, Papa'" (*Demon Theory* 123). *The Hills Have Eyes* is a 1977 Wes Craven film in which a family car trip through New Mexico en route to California goes, in typical horror fashion, horribly wrong.^f

Footnote r. The moral of the story being, if you ignore the advice to stay on the main road and instead hie off into the desert, whatever you do, do not swerve to miss a rabbit.^g While "Sister Christian" finds a home in horror when included in the soundtrack for *Friday the 13th* (2009), "Runaway," Bon Jovi's first hit back in the band's full-blown big hair and tight spandex early days, resonates with *The Hills Have Eyes* by opening with images of a case file and newspaper clippings of a radiation accident in New Mexico. The female runaway who ends up dancing provocatively behind the band at video's end bears no resemblance to anyone in the "wild" family of Craven's film, however.

Footnote R. Jones will have no little fun with rabbits in *It Came from Del Rio* (2010).

Footnote 10. The scene is from *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid*. The character, a frontier journalist played by Bob Dylan who goes by the name of Alias,^x

leaves behind the tools of his trade to ride with Billy the Kid, a knife his weapon of choice. It is worth noting that giving up his printer's apron in addition to his writing instrument and paper serves to highlight the technology and apparatus of writing and of mass media. Dylan also provides the film's soundtrack.^K

Footnote X. To be sure, alias yokes identity, misdirection, uncertainty, covert action, play. In the world of physics and information and communication technology (ICT), alias signifies a mistake in reproducing something because one has not adequately sampled that which is to be copied. The copying of analog to digital, digitally sampled sound, and sampled film and video are instances when aliasing can occur if your sampling does not hew to Nyquist's sampling theorem. *Demon Theory* takes pains in Part III to bring up sound technology linked to the cinema, DTS, and to define that technology, of course, in a footnote that emphasizes the quality of digital recording (*Demon Theory* 377).

Footnote K. The most famous song on the soundtrack is "Knockin' on Heaven's Door," sung not when either Pat or Billy is dying but when Sheriff Baker, played by Slim Pickens, gets shot. His wife is there as he dies. It both is and isn't the first song referenced in *Demon Theory* when, on the text's second page, one reads "the song [that is being played] is a slow and sadistic remix of 'Knockin' on Heaven's Door'" (*Demon Theory* 2).^{GnR} The song, sans lyrics, returns at the "end" of the third screenplay, "coming on strong" as Nona's POV goes "rushing through the concave glass, across miles and years of dry, yellow cornfields, back to the house" (*Demon Theory* 426). What follows, to close Part III, is a final footnote, number 406, that runs across three pages: 430–32.

Footnote GnR. The slow and sadistic remix is quite possibly Guns n' Roses' cover of the song, not to be confused with "November Rain," the music video for which, in addition to being monumentally expensive to shoot, includes Slash playing a lengthy solo, one of three on the track, in front of a church in the New Mexico desert. Nor should it be confused with Zevon's cover of "Knockin' on Heaven's Door" to be found on his final album, *Wind*; it is nowhere near a slow and sadistic remix, although knowing why Zevon chose to cover it when he did is sad and sobering, to be sure.

Footnote 11. In the spirit of horror's play with and on audience expectation, the movement of the window curtains does not signal impending trouble, or worse, for either the viewer or Hale's mother. It is just motion caused by a wind strong enough to work through the window's seams and cause a

bit of movement. Picture, if you will, the pennant aflutter in Mark Tansey's *Constructing the Grand Canyon*.

Footnote 12. From season 1, episode 1 of *Star Trek*, "The Man Trap." Nancy Crater, once Bones's love interest and twelve years later married to archaeologist Professor Robert Crater, had been killed by a creature a year earlier. The "creature" has the ability to appear as anyone. According to Crater, who did not kill the creature after it killed his wife, the alien needs both salt and love.¹ He twice likens the creature to the earth buffalo, the last of its species.

Footnote 1. He's wrong. Or, if right, salt trumps love. Crater is the creature's final victim. The episode's first victim, the unnamed landing party crew-member, undoes the "red shirt" convention of the show from in front.²

Footnote e. *Demon Theory* invokes the convention of the expendable "red-shirted crewmember," the expendable "red man," if you will, in a footnote early in Part I.

Footnote 13. A remix, of course. David Lindley and El Rayo X offered their playful, ska-inflected version of "Werewolves of London" in 1988 on the album *Very Greasy*. The album title comes from their version of the song, where, while Jack Nicholson's hair was perfect—surely a joke, even in 1988—Lindley's hair was, "well, very, very greasy. / Very greasy indeed."³

Footnote a. Any reference to Nicholson is absent from Zevon's original, but his presence in Lindley's remix is apt, even inspired, given his role in the horror classic *The Shining*.

"THE MUSIC CRESCENDOING, MISLEADING"
(*DEMON THEORY* 211): AN AFTERWORD

Contra the music accompanying the moment in Part II of *The Devil Inside* when Vangelisti, looking for Cat, cautiously pushes a door open with his foot without first knocking and leans in to see what the room holds (*Demon Theory* 210–11), music in *Demon Theory* and, especially, the footnotes accompanying and riffing off it lead to a recognition of what is in play and at stake in the text. *Demon Theory*'s first three footnotes, after all, or rather before all, serve to emphasize, respectively, screenplay, book, and song. The particular song "Knockin' on Heaven's Door" serves to do more than link together the films in the trilogy, more than provide a certain telling resonance with Coward's comment about footnotes, and more than introduce the western into the text early on,

important though these be. With a single apostrophe, like the super-scripted footnote marker, “Knockin’ on Heaven’s Door” signals that something has been left out.

Like Vangelisti, we need to be careful now, both because *Demon Theory* displays a knowledge of horror that is at once deep and catholic and because we know what is omitted in “Knockin,” just as we know what is left out, sans apostrophe, from “Everything That Rises,” the title of Jones’s afterword. Similarly, if we know horror, then we know that one of its stock tropes is the *indian* burial ground. Carol Glover notes that, to use her phrasing, “an extraordinary number of horror films” include burial sites disturbed with disastrous consequences, “the corpses not infrequently representing Indians” (106). *The Shining* and *Poltergeist* spring to mind. In *The Devil Inside* Part I, Hale dismisses “Indian curses” and “disturbed graveyards” when Egan—invoking *Poltergeist*, as a footnote is there to point out—asks him if they might be the origin of the demons threatening them (*Demon Theory* 90). Thus, while *Demon Theory* is happy to deploy all manner of horror conventions across the three films, it invokes the *indian* burial ground only to leave it out as having a role in them. That is to say, *Demon Theory* opts *not* to bring into play that which, sotto voce, announces, so the old and painful saying goes, “the only good indian is a dead indian”—that is left alone to rot.

We are schooled to supply the “g,” schooled to supply “must converge,” schooled, that is, to make whole and complete word and phrase. Here too we would do well to take care, for in the final footnote to the final footnote *Demon Theory* cautions us against that which purports to be complete by telling us that the Library of Congress’s materials concerning *The Devil Inside*, the trilogy not the song, are “catalogued-in-process” (*Demon Theory* 431). The archive, here tellingly linked to authority and the nation, is not complete. However, the gap in the record, if you will, opens up a space that can be filled, completed, in the name of something other than Authority with a capital A.

The *indian* is part of the novelization of the screenplays proper just once, tellingly in the form of a “Plains Indian” Halloween costume worn by an “albino-blond” child at the beginning of the text (*Demon Theory* 11). Early on, then, *Demon Theory* lets the reader know that *indian* is a construction, a costume that speaks precisely to the desires of the dominant society. The sign continues to exist early and late throughout the text below the line, however, in the footnotes.

In Part I Con says “kimo” to Hale, the rest of the phrase “kimo sabe” (*Demon Theory* 63) to be understood and completed by the reader, and the accompanying footnote provides the context for Tonto’s phrase. In Part III the movie *Firestarter* is referenced, and the footnote tells the reader that George C. Scott plays an “Indian” (*Demon Theory* 380) in the film. In addition, fittingly, two capital A footnotes from below the line cross the border, rise, and converge to sound a note of caution concerning the sign *indian*. The first, from Part I, tells us that Warren Zevon could have had on his mind not *Star Trek* but Craven’s *The Hills Have Eyes* when he wrote “he’ll rip your lungs out, Jim,” ripping someone’s lungs out twice being phrased in the film. Whatever was on his mind, Zevon’s next line, “huh, I’d like to meet his tailor,” is prescient, as it anticipates Glover’s observation that the clothing of the desert wild family in *The Hills Have Eyes* codes them as *indian*. To her recognition of the moccasins and headbands and their significance (Glover 136), one can add the family’s crude weapons and the bone and shell necklaces and amulets worn by Jupiter, his wife, and their children.

Two years after *The Hills Have Eyes*, *Prophecy: The Monster Movie* (1979) submits for the audience’s approval not a family of whites gone wild, the implication is as the result of radiation poisoning, and coded as *indian* in costume and in actions, but reel *Indians*, to invoke both Michele Raheja’s *Reservation Reelism* (2011) and Neil Diamond’s documentary *Reel Injun* (2009). John Hawks, played by Armand Assante, the leader of the protest against a lumber company’s paper mill and what it and logging are doing to the *indians* and their land, is first seen in profile to the camera, standing ramrod straight. He will have the same position before the camera and the same posture again and again in the film. He does not look at the white person with whom he is speaking for much of the film, instead looking askance with an off-in-the-distance gaze. He never smiles. He fires arrows at the monster in the film’s climactic scene. He dies. In short, he is the stoic, doomed Red Man.

The monster is named katadan, from, in the language of the film, an “Opie,” or original people, legend, come, the second in the pair of capital A footnotes tells us, “either to defend them or to exact revenge for them . . .” (*Demon Theory* 282, ellipsis in the original). Characterized as “Native-owned” in the footnote, the creature and its story are co-opted by a film that lumps the Abenaki, Maliseet, Passamaquoddy, and Penobscot together in a whole that sacrifices cultural specificity for the sake

of generic convention. In *Prophecy: The Monster Movie*, it is a painfully easy move from OPS to tepees.

Mind you, if we have attended to the footnotes closely we should be prepared to recognize what *Prophecy* shows us, what we see, for there is an earlier footnote to the film, itself a footnote to a footnote to a Sam Peckinpah movie, *Convoy*, adapted from a song with the same title by C. W. McCall. The first note tells the reader that McCall was a spokesman for a baking company in a series of award-winning television ads prior to hitting it big with “Convoy” and becoming “an American icon, the rugged individual, the modern-day cowboy without any of the biker saddlebags” (*Demon Theory* 222). The note adds that McCall’s real name was William Dale Fries and tells the reader not to confuse him with Espera De Corti, an Italian American who “became” Iron Eyes Cody, shedding tears in antilitter commercials. In short, the note tells us not to believe our eyes, that when it comes to the screen *indian* all is not as it appears, and with a note to the note lets us know that what holds for the “Crying Indian” of the TV ads holds too for the stoic *indian* played by Assante, attempting “an Italian-to-Indian shuffle” (*Demon Theory* 222) as well.

An emphasis on eyes, on seeing, is a stock convention of horror and indeed of film itself. Think of all those tight shots and extreme close-ups of eyes, be they human or otherwise, so it is telling that *Demon Theory*’s first footnote, its twelfth, engendering other footnotes, nine of them, ends with a footnote to a Phil Collins song, the aptly titled “In the Air Tonight,” that stresses presence, sight, and eyes: “I was there and I saw what you did / saw it with my own two eyes” (*Demon Theory* 5). What is in the air in *Demon Theory* is a serious, playful articulation of signs, of conventions, of genre. Critically, footnotes rise from beneath the line to converge on the matter of signs, and texts, that are linked to race and racism, the subject of Flannery O’Connor’s short story “Everything That Rises Must Converge” (1961).

Although the note does not give its title, “In the Air” is the second song referenced in *Demon Theory*. The text will send us back to the note, and thus to the song, more than three hundred pages later in one of nine footnotes to footnote 310, a group that includes the footnote establishing a connection between slasher movies, the origin of that term itself the subject of one of the group of nine footnotes to footnote 12, and glam rock. Footnote 12, it bears noting, also brings both *Star*

Trek into *Demon Theory*—tellingly in the form of a Captain Kirk mask repurposed, remixed, as it were—and, via a note it engenders, the apparatus of the cinema. That is to say, far from being random, incidental, or simply clever for clever's sake, the footnotes are constructed to bring the reader to an awareness of what is at stake in the text. Even as the second Phil Collins note sends us back to the first, back to eyes and seeing, it sends us forward to Collins's title track for the movie *Against All Odds* (1984). Not a horror film, *Against All Odds* is significant because it is a remake of *Out of the Past*; significant too is the fact that Collins's title song, the note tells us, is a "rerecording and retitling of a ballad" left off of Collins's album *Face Value* (1981). The re-dos return us to the remix of "Knockin' on Heaven's Door" and together remind us that a re-vision that is not merely a copy is possible.

Reading not so much with or against as beneath the grain of *The Shining*, Jack Nicholson's hair is anything but perfect because the *indian*, which is to say the construction created and perpetuated by the dominant culture, drives his character, Jack Torrance, insane. If Stephen Graham Jones offers us a soundtrack for the end of the world, then *Demon Theory* would have us imagine the end of the world in which the sign of *indian* exists, with all its damning and delimiting force. The footnotes to the *indian* in *Demon Theory* arrive and knock in order to interrupt once and for all the union between texts and audiences that perpetuates the damning sign. It is no wonder, finally, that Jones takes as the epigraph for his afterword John Carpenter's statement "but it seemed fun to take it one step further" (*Demon Theory* 435). *Demon Theory*, indeed the whole of Jones's corpus, also tacitly asks the reader to imagine and embrace a world in which Native literature is not narrowly defined in subject and in genre.

Away at the top of Tansey's 1990 large oil on canvas *Constructing the Grand Canyon*, looking down on a world being made not simply of words but of typescript, of print, stand two buffalo. They unsettle the already revealing, unsettling scene. The same holds for the work of Stephen Graham Jones.

Stinger

Interior: Night

A familiar living room, lit by a single floor lamp beside a chair and an end table; camera draws in and down on the book lying there; the cover resolves: *Demon Theory*, by Stephen Graham Jones.

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“A World Where Butchers Sing Like Angels”

German Poetry, Music, and (Counter)History in
Louise Erdrich's *The Master Butchers Singing Club*

NATALIE EPELSHEIMER

Mit Gesetzen ist es wie mit Würsten. Man sollte nicht zusehen, wie sie gemacht werden.

(Laws are like sausages. It is better not to watch them being made.)

—Otto von Bismarck

In his famous “law and sausage quote,” Germany’s Iron Chancellor, Otto von Bismarck (1815–98), commented on the parallels between politics and the sausage-making process. Whereas a number of different versions of this quote are in circulation, they all share the idea that, for one’s own comfort, one should not inquire too deeply into the secrets of either butchery or politics.¹ In her 2003 novel *The Master Butchers Singing Club*, which revolves around the German American immigrant, ex-soldier, master butcher, and talented singer Fidelis Waldvogel, Louise Erdrich clearly disregards this advice and invites her readers to do the same. One could certainly classify this novel, to which Silvia Martínez Falquina attests “a notably solid historical texture” (13), as “counterhistory” or “a tale of silenced history,” because in its telling of alternative or, to use Jean-François Lyotard’s term, “little narratives” (60) and in its depiction of multiple wars and their aftermaths through personalized, fictional accounts and songs, *The Master Butchers Singing Club* manages to narrate excruciatingly painful, unofficial versions of history that challenge cultural “grand narratives” and that one would not find easily in history books.² With this work, Erdrich tackles the “double burden—to write both literature and history” (Peterson 3) and grants deep insights (literally and metaphorically) into both the bloody butchering and meat-processing business per se and the likewise dirty and bloody details of

politics and genocide on both the European and the American continents of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

In *The Master Butchers Singing Club*, much of this history is transmitted (both among characters and to readers) through songs that are sung, heard, or remembered by the multiethnic and multinational assemblage of characters. These songs include “foolish ballads, strict anthems, German sailor’s songs and the paddling songs of voyageurs, patriotic American songs, . . . Cree lullabies, sweat lodge summons, lost ghost dance songs, counting rhymes, and hymns in the snow” (388). This rather unconventional, multilingual, and multicultural list of songs generates the image of the world as an interconnected, transcultural chorus of voices devoid of national and geographical borders in which “not a single note is ever lost” (388). In fact, singing constitutes an important leit-motif in this novel. Singing can both unite and divide people, and songs often function as (emotionally laden) carriers of cultural heritage and collective memory. Music is also characterized by its intrinsically paradoxical nature, which is aptly expressed in the image evoked in the last sentence of the novel, which describes “a world in which butchers sing like angels” (388).³

The lyrical writings of the expatriate Heinrich Heine as well as those of World War I veterans Georg Trakl and Rainer Maria Rilke play a similarly important role in *The Master Butchers Singing Club*. The works of these authors not only function as decoration on the young Fidelis Waldvogel’s bookshelves but also have a deeper, underlying meaning for the story and for the characterization of the novel’s protagonist. Moreover, their integration into the novel attests to Erdrich’s extensive knowledge of German literary traditions. Scholars like Thomas Austenfeld, Peter Beidler, and Ute Lischke have already written about Erdrich’s German background and her profound interest in the German side of her ancestry. Specific influences of the German literary tradition on this author’s work remain to be explored, though.

Today, Erdrich is widely known as an author “who has written about the American experience in all its diversity” (Blades), and considerable scholarship exists—for example, by Maria Cornelia, Claudia Egerer, Silvia Martínez Falquina, Bärbel Höttges, and Susan Perez Castillo—on Erdrich’s multiethnic background, the construction of American ethnicity in her work, and the author’s view on ethnic labeling. Rather than repeating what has already been explored by these and numerous other

scholars, this article will focus on the German side of the author's ancestry. It will look at, to borrow from Lee Schweningen, Erdrich's "claiming" Germany and show that Erdrich's work has involved far more German cultural material than has previously been recognized.⁴ The article will also take into account what Erdrich herself said in various interviews about her German heritage and provide a brief overview of the German characters who populate Erdrich's literary work. It should be emphasized here that my focus on Erdrich's German heritage is by no means an attempt to engage in ethnic labeling or to argue that works like *The Master Butchers Singing Club* are written by the author's "German half." Rather than reading Erdrich as an author with "identity troubles," I read her as a writer who embraces her mixed background, who complicates concepts of cultural (and national) identity, and who in many of her books displays vast knowledge of Anishinaabe, French, and German history, language, and cultural traditions.

This article takes the novel *The Master Butchers Singing Club* as a point of departure and establishes, on the basis of close readings, Erdrich's understanding of "Germanness" as exemplified by the protagonist, Fidelis Waldvogel. Clearly, Erdrich is highly familiar with German history, culture, and literary traditions. Starting at the end of World War I and concluding after World War II, the novel offers small yet insightful glimpses into important events in twentieth-century German history and attests to Erdrich's knowledge about German ways of thinking, societal structures, and gender relations during the Wilhelminian era (1890–1918), the Weimar Republic (1919–33), and the Nazi Regime (1933–45). Likewise, it affirms her familiarity with German poetry.

GERMAN HERITAGE AND GERMAN CHARACTERS IN ERDRICH'S NOVELS

Considering Erdrich's background—French Ojibwe on her mother's side and German American on her father's side—her interest in and writing about Native American, German, and immigrant American culture and history do not come as a surprise.⁵ Early in her writing career, in an interview conducted in 1987, Erdrich explained to Abenaki scholar Joseph Bruchac that writing for her is a kind of identity search and that this search includes more than her Native American background: "There's a quest for one's own background in a lot of this work. . . . One

of the characteristics of being a mixed-blood is searching. You look back and say, 'Who am I from?'" (101). In the same interview, Erdrich mentioned her grandparents' butcher shop, which not only plays an important role in *The Master Butchers Singing Club* but also found entry into several of her other writings: "I have a very mixed background and my culture is certainly one that includes German and French and Chippewa. When I look back, running home might be going back to the butcher shop" (Bruchac 96).

While at times Erdrich regards her mixed ethnic background as a blessing, she sometimes also calls it a curse. In an interview with Mickey Pearlman in 1989, for example, she calls the "'triple whammy' that she got from [her] background—in regard to place and home and space . . . an 'awful mix'" (Pearlman and Henderson 151) and then explains how she tries to resolve it through writing: "There is just no way to get away from all this, and the only way to resolve it, without going totally crazy looking for a home, is to write about it" (151–52). Interestingly, it is not being mixed-blood per se that seems to be necessarily problematic; instead, problems are caused by the combination of being German and Indian—that is, if we take seriously Callie Roy's comment in *The Antelope Wife*.

Callie Roy, who is also known as Blue Prairie Woman, or Ozha-washkwamashkodeykway, argues that whereas mixed-bloods of, for example, French and Ojibwe descent feel whole and as "one person," the combination of German and Indian can be destructive and lead to a split personality reminiscent of Goethe's character Faust, who is plagued by the two souls dwelling in his breast: "You make a person from a German and an Indian, for instance, and you're creating a two-souled warrior always fighting with themselves" (Erdrich, *The Antelope Wife* 110).⁶ Some scholars might be tempted to read this passage as self-referential and consider Erdrich's writing as therapeutic and as a means to overcome her "split self" (Litschke and McNab 195), as, for example, Ute Lischke does, who argues that "writing, for Erdrich, is much like the process of attempting to re-create the Blitzkuchen. When it is baked, there is healing" ("Blitzkuchen" 70).⁷ However, instead of focusing on the mixed-bloodedness solely as problematic and a curse, one could also point out the blessing, that is, the advantages. Erdrich does this in several interviews, as, for example, in one conducted by Nancy and Allan Chavkin, who asked the writer whether she was ambivalent about her Native American origins. "Of course, I'm ambivalent. I'm human,"

Erdrich responded. “There are times I wish that I were one thing or the other, but I am a mixed-blood. *Psychically doomed*, another mixed-blood friend once joked. The truth is that my background is such a rich mixed bag I’d be crazy to want to be anything else” (238). Likewise, in Michael Dorris and Louise Erdrich’s novel *The Crown of Columbus*, Vivian Twostar stresses the advantages of being mixed-blood: “Out beyond the normal bounds, you at least know where you’re not. You escape the claustrophobia of belonging, and what you lack in security you gain by realizing—as those insiders never do—that security is an illusion. . . . ‘Caught between two worlds,’ is the way we’re often characterized, but I’d put it differently. We are the *catch*” (124). Earlier, Erdrich had expressed in another interview with John Blades of the *Chicago Tribune* her “fondest hope that her second novel, *The Beet Queen*, [would] establish her as an American writer—not just a writer about American Indians [and] that people will be reading [her] 10 or 20 years from now as someone who has written about the American experience in all its diversity.” Yet despite the fact that her poetic, fictional, and nonfictional writings have always been influenced by both her Native American and her European ancestry—and notwithstanding that novels like *The Beet Queen* (1986) and *The Bingo Palace* (1994) focus strongly on European American characters and extend beyond the borders of her fictional Ojibwe reservation, which readers have known since the publication of the first version of *Love Medicine* in 1984 and *Tracks* (1988), to the likewise fictional town named Argus—Erdrich has for most of her writing career been read and discussed mainly as a Native American writer or writer about American Indians.⁸ Not surprisingly, it was mainly German-speaking scholars like Thomas Austenfeld and Ute Lischke who, after the publication of *The Master Butchers Singing Club* in 2003, started noticing and examining the influence of Erdrich’s European—and particularly her German—heritage on her writing.

The Master Butchers Singing Club builds on family stories and songs Erdrich heard from her father and other family members.⁹ While some critics have interpreted the story of the German master butcher and immigrant Fidelis Waldvogel as Erdrich’s new turn to her German side, Peter Beidler’s and Thomas Austenfeld’s analyses of Erdrich’s early poetry as well as Ute Lischke’s work—particularly her interviews with the author and family members—prove that her German ancestry had occupied Erdrich for quite some time even before she started writing this novel.¹⁰

Erdrich confirmed this in a 2010 interview conducted by Lisa Halliday during which, when asked about the genesis of *The Master Butchers Singing Club*, she emphasized that the idea for the book had been with her for many years and that she had “always wanted to write [it].”

How much Erdrich's writings are inspired by her family's history also becomes evident if one takes a closer look at the cover picture of *The Master Butchers Singing Club*'s first American hardcover edition, which is adorned by a photograph of Erdrich's paternal grandfather, the master butcher Ludwig Erdrich, in his butcher's outfit at his store's counter. This is also the picture that, as Lischke (Lischke and McNab 197) explains, Erdrich had kept on a wall beside her desk while working on the novel.¹¹ Like the fictional Fidelis Waldvogel, Erdrich's paternal grandfather had emigrated from Germany to the United States and, as Erdrich explains in the novel's acknowledgments, had also “fought in the trenches on the German side in World War I. His sons served on the American side in World War II” (389). Yet despite these similarities between her protagonist's experience and that of her grandfather, Erdrich emphasizes that “this book is fiction except for snout salad, the bull's pizzle, and [her] grandmother's short stint as a human table in a vaudeville act” (389).

Faithful readers of Erdrich's poetry, fiction, and nonfiction will be able to piece together a lot of information about her German heritage from remarks and explanations interspersed throughout her writings. In her memoir *The Blue Jay's Dance: A Birth Year* (1995), for example, she explains that “on [her] father's side, the Erdrich family was established in Pforzheim, near the Black Forest, as Metzger Meistern [*sic*]. 1882. They raised a Bauernhof that still stands in the Renchtal” (99). She does not leave it at this, though, but adds information that links her German with her Ojibwe ancestry and the European immigrants' history with that of the North American Indigenous population. Hence, she writes that at the same time that her father's family had established themselves on their farm, “the last of the Indian treaties were signed, opening up the West. Most of the Anishinabe were concentrated in small holdings of land in the territory west of the Great Lakes” (99).

In addition to numerous German figures in Erdrich's works of poetry, we find many German families populating her novels—families like the Waldvogels, Mauses, Mannheims, Schmidts, and Buchers—most of whom have left their home country and settled in the Minnesota and North Dakota contact zones that Erdrich creates in the fictional, mul-

ticultural town of Argus and the nearby Chippewa reservation. Naming every German character would certainly go beyond the scope of this article, and therefore I will narrow my selection to five who carry evocative names and who are widely known by Erdrich's readers. To begin with, in *The Master Butchers Singing Club* we encounter the "faithful forest bird," as his name translates, Fidelis Waldvogel, as well as his first wife, Eva Waldvogel, née Kalb, which means "calf." In the same novel we meet Fidelis's mean spinster-sister with the similarly suggestive name of Maria-Theresa Waldvogel, whom we might assume to be named after the only woman ruler in the 650-year history of the Habsburg dynasty, the archduchess of Austria, Holy Roman empress, and queen of Hungary and Bohemia, Maria Theresa (1717–80).¹² Maria-Theresa Waldvogel's proper name, however, appears only sporadically throughout the story, and she is mostly called "Tante" (aunt). Tante's callousness and unkindness are emphasized by a direct reference to the witch in the German fairy tale *Hänsel und Gretel*, written by the Grimm brothers, when she utters the phrase "Nein . . . gib mir deinen Finger" (No . . . give me your finger) in her sleep (284). Another well-known German character in Erdrich's works is Klaus-the-German, who makes an appearance in a chapter with the German title "Blitzkuchen" (lightning cake) in the 1998 novel *The Antelope Wife*.¹³ Klaus is a young German soldier who is first held in a Canadian POW logging camp and then taken captive by the Ojibwe to avenge the death of one of their own people.¹⁴ After he baked his famous blitzkuchen, his captors decide not to kill but instead to adopt him. Finally, there is Agnes de Witt, a.k.a. Sister Cecilia and later Father Damien Modeste, perhaps the most prominent German figure in Erdrich's work, a cross-dressing, trickster-like woman-priest who for a short time lives with the German farmer Berndt Vogel (bird). S/he is an important character in Erdrich's North Dakota saga and appears in as many as three novels: *Love Medicine*, *Tracks*, and *The Last Report on the Miracles at Little No Horse*.

Fidelis's "Germanness"

The Master Butchers Singing Club's protagonist deserves special attention. With him, Erdrich has created a figure who displays a number of character traits and attitudes typical for a boy raised in Germany at the turn of the century. Whereas critics like Alan Brooke find Fidelis

a rather stereotypical figure, it is my contention that this character is based on Erdrich's meticulous historical research, that he is well drafted and by all means "credible."¹⁵ Disciplined, obedient to authorities, patriotic and thus loyal to his "fatherland," attempting not to display any emotions or weaknesses, the person whom we encounter at the beginning of the novel—that is, the young man who went to fight for Germany as a sniper in World War I—represents a typical young man of Wilhelminian Germany.¹⁶ The relationship to "his forbearing, kind mother, and his father, strict and distant" (178) is equally typical of this time. Distanced from his father by "a wall of reserve" (212), Fidelis "had never spoken to his own father about personal things, not even when he was a grown man" (212).

Having returned from the war, Fidelis feels extremely bitter and disillusioned about his "patria," particularly once he realizes the arbitrariness in the drawing of borders in postwar Europe. On the novel's very first page, we learn that after the Armistice, "on Clemenceau and Wilson's redrawn map," Fidelis was "only a few centimeters away from becoming French" (1), that is, from belonging to a nation against which he had been fighting for three years. Undoubtedly feeling betrayed, he turns his back on his "fatherland."

The chaos of World War I and the disorienting shifted borders in postwar Germany create in Fidelis an existential need for order. Ironically, it is precisely this hope for rigid order—which he sees in the industrially produced American "Wonderbread" that a neighbor shows him—that makes him immigrate to the United States in the first place. When the young and disillusioned Fidelis notices the great precision that was involved in the making of this bread, he takes its shape and consistency as an indication that it must have come "from some place that must adhere to an impossibly rigid order" (7). And since order is what Fidelis is longing for, he decides to go to the place where this bread is made.¹⁷ One should note at this point, however, that Fidelis's attraction to the United States because of this American bread is likely to make most Germans smile. After all, bread is considered an important part of German culture (*Brotkultur*) and typically the first item that Germans living abroad mention when they are asked what they miss most. Erdrich is certainly aware of this, and we can assume a certain irony in her choice of bread as lure. Had Fidelis tasted the bread, he might have never wanted to find its production site. But it is only after his arrival in

the United States that he learns that appearances are often deceiving: the bread is inedible, and nobody in Argus adheres to a rigid order.

Fidelis comes to the United States by choice, and while he embraces many aspects of his new life in the Midwest, he often does not trust Americans to do things “the proper way” (278). His decision to send his sons to be raised in Germany, for example, shows his untainted belief and trust in discipline and in the effectiveness of the strict German educational system. Fidelis thinks that “the boys were not raised as he had been—no discipline, very little learning, and a wild sense of entitlement to freedoms that he never thought existed” (257). The master butcher is convinced that “in Germany they learn the proper way to do things” (278).¹⁸ Fidelis also keeps very close ties to his native country. One might say that although he turned his back on “Germany as a political nation”—defined by geographical borders and political systems—he never cut his ties to “Germany as a culture nation” (*Kulturnation*), that is, a nation defined by cultural commonality through music, literature, and art rather than a political system. In other words, in the United States he can—at least until the outbreak of World War II—easily identify binationally: politically as American and culturally as German.

During the interwar years, staying connected with Germany poses no difficulty, for his frugal, efficient, and orderly wife, Eva, adheres to many German traditions in her household and does most things “the German way.”¹⁹ The most important means of maintaining the bond to the Old World, however, is singing and the German musical tradition.

SINGING, SINGING CLUBS, “THE LORELEY,”

AND THE PARADOXICAL NATURE OF MUSIC

Music and singing clubs constitute a central element in *The Master Butchers Singing Club*. Music—or, to be precise, German *Lieder*, which are songs based on poetic models—is undoubtedly Fidelis’s strongest tie to his German heritage. He has a beautiful voice (hence his name), and before he left Germany in search of the perfect wonderbread, he had been a member of a typical German institution, a men’s singing club, or *Männergesangsverein*, in German. Once established in Argus as a master butcher, he founds a similar singing club with male members of the Argus community that eventually “was to become a town institution” (42).

In fact, the singing club looks back at a very long tradition in Ger-

many. As Dietmar Klenke points out in his contribution to a study on German *Erinnerungsorte*—that is, places and objects of remembrance, which Pierre Nora termed *lieux de mémoires*—male singing clubs played an important role in the creation of a German national identity. Klenke writes: “There is no other folk-institution in the 19th century that embodied as strongly a feeling of national identity as the male-voice choirs in the form of church-independent, men’s singing clubs” (392). The emotional aspect of the singing tradition is considered particularly important because, as Klenke explains, “in the community-generating rite of choral singing, the German fatherland did not remain an abstract term, but was instead experienced emotionally” (392). Singing clubs thus already functioned as “carriers of the nation’s cultural memory” (393) in the time before the official founding of a German nation-state in 1871.²⁰

In *Argus* the singing club offers a comparable communal and unifying experience. Unlike traditional German singing clubs, however, which were organized according to profession, the one founded by Fidelis brings together men from across the entire social, ethnic, and national strata of *Argus*.²¹ Such an image of a multinational, multilingual choir of voices that Erdrich creates in her narrative certainly underlines the fluidity of cultural boundaries, the transitional nature of cultural identity, and the constructiveness of American ethnicity. Operating as a carrier of the musical tradition and thus the cultural memories of the numerous countries that are represented (the men sing songs in German, English, French, Polish, and Métis [337]), the *Argus* singing club promotes transculturality and the blending of diverse cultural practices. Communal singing is portrayed as a bonding experience and emotional outlet; it can help overcome disputes (as between the two butchers Fidelis and Kozka), but at the same time it is a contested space and occasionally leads to animosity (such as between the choir members Chavers and Roy).

Music and the regular, community-generating singing practice play an important role in Fidelis’s life and for his psyche. Music is repeatedly described as “light” and appears to be this character’s only means to express his affection and to help drive away the darkness and the shadows of the past that have haunted him ever since he fought in the war. At the onset of the novel, we are told about a phenomenon that Fidelis experiences upon his return from the war and that brings to the fore a connection between music, light, and emotions—a connection that the novel in fact makes at several points. We read how, back in his

childhood room, Fidelis perceives “the light pouring through the curtains” as making “a liquid sound . . . an emotional and female sound” (2).²² At a later point, music and brightness are brought together again when we are told that “in song [Fidelis] was a happy man. There was no darkness in him, no heaviness. He was weightless light, all music” (42). With music being his safe haven and his only means to express his emotions, it makes sense that Fidelis cannot give up these tunes even after the start of World War II, when it was considered unpatriotic—or “treasonous activity” (336), as some of Argus’s new, European-born patriots and members of the singing club call it—to sing German songs. While avoiding German tunes in the singing club, Fidelis cannot refrain from singing them in private, for these songs form an essential part of his cultural heritage and thus of his cultural identity. Hence he cannot give them up, even if singing them fills him with “shame” (338).²³

As Fidelis’s only means of articulating his feelings, music is furthermore his sole emotional bond to his sons, whom he raises in the authoritarian style that he knows from his own upbringing in Wilhelminian Germany. We are told that it was only when he “sang to them” that he “showed a certain tenderness to his sons” (290) but that this apparently did not happen very often: “When they had trouble sleeping, when they were very small, when Eva asked him to, and when they were ill, he sang the old German lieder to them in a restrained voice that filled the room with comforting resonance in which they felt protected” (290).²⁴ Singing is, as his son Markus discovers one night (133), also Fidelis’s way of expressing his feelings to his first wife, Eva. Yet if we believe Erich, who in a POW camp remembers being frightened of “the bull’s pizzle hung on a nail behind the door,” of “his father’s arm [that] had once been hot iron,” and of “his father’s blue glare [that] had ruled him” (363), these displays of affection were very rare, and the four boys’ upbringing was marked mostly by discipline and obedience. In retrospect, and after Erich’s indoctrination into Nazi ideology, which made him replace his real, biological father with a fatherland that had “a boundary on the map” (364), Erich loathes Fidelis for these rare moments and blames him for some of his weaknesses; in his opinion, this “gentleness, occasionally, that his father showed had made his sons slaves to its possibility” (363). Yet father and son are not as different as it seems: just as Fidelis prefers singing to talking, Erich attracts attention in the POW camp because “he never talks, but sings” (360).

One of the favorite songs of the Waldvogel family is "Die Loreley." It is a song that Fidelis regularly sings to his children and his cancer-ridden wife, a song that Eva "loved most" (133) and that, after Markus discovers his father singing to his wife at night, also becomes the boy's favorite. Even Delphine Watzka, the novel's strongest character, who is from Argus and becomes Fidelis's second wife, and who does not speak any German, quickly learns about its meaning. This song, written by Heinrich Heine (1787–1856) and printed in his *Buch der Lieder* (Book of Songs), is about sailors being lured to death by the singing of a beautiful maiden named Loreley who sits on a rock towering above the Rhine River.²⁵ In its expression of the ambivalence of beauty and cruelty it must surely be read as one of the novel's leitmotifs.

Obviously it is no coincidence that Erdrich selected Heine, this German Jewish author whose name stands for homelessness and exile, and his most famous work, "Die Loreley," for her novel about a German emigrant who feels uncertain about his ethnicity. Heine had left Germany in 1831 for political reasons and spent the last twenty-five years of his life as an expatriate in Paris. His ambivalent relation to his "beloved fatherland" Germany, which he misses in his poem "Ich hatte einst ein schönes Vaterland" (I once had a beautiful fatherland) and criticizes in his famous satirical verse-epic *Deutschland, ein Wintermärchen* (Germany, a winter's tale), and the impossibility of returning there at least one more time caused Heine tremendous suffering.²⁶ Although the author spent most of his life in France and openly admired this country (which gained him the scorn of many Germans), he always identified as German and continued writing in German. In a similar vein, Fidelis continues singing German songs even after the onset of World War II and despite the fact that the singing of German songs is considered unpatriotic.

The Loreley song and its image of the maiden killing sailors with her songs express the same paradoxical nature of music that is evoked in the last sentence of the novel describing "a world where butchers sing like angels" (388). As exemplified in the ex-sniper, master butcher, and talented singer Fidelis, as well as in the singing of American and German soldiers in the wake of war atrocities, human beings, who are able to produce the most beautiful notes, can be cruel killers.²⁷ It is this paradoxical nature of music that Delphine notices when she listens with both admiration and horror to a concert by a men's singing club during

her visit to Germany.²⁸ Whereas many years before Delphine had been puzzled by her discovery that “a slaughterhouse could have the acoustics of a cathedral” (106), she now comes to the shocking realization that despite her knowledge of the violence committed by the singing men (or their fellow countrymen, who acted, to use Daniel Goldhagen’s words, as “Hitler’s willing executioners”), she enjoyed their music: “She thought of all that had happened here, the burning and the marching, an enormity beyond her, a terrible strangeness in which things unbelievable were done. And yet, now, here were these butchers singing. And these songs were lovely to the ear” (375).

With the term “butchers” the novel certainly alludes not only to Germans but also to the atrocities committed by Europeans against Native Americans, as remembered by Step-and-a-Half (Minnie), a survivor of the Wounded Knee Massacre who has vivid recollections of American soldiers singing during the night before they attacked the Lakota camp at Wounded Knee in December 1890.²⁹ Like Delphine, who takes pleasure in listening to the singing of the German butchers, Step-and-a-Half perceives some of the soldiers’ singing as very melodious: “Sometimes rough, sometimes smooth as whiskey, the harmonies of male voices had seemed mellow and oval in the freezing December air” (387). Clearly, barbarism and beauty often do not lie far apart.³⁰

POETRY: RILKE AND TRAKL

Fidelis went to war as a young man who enjoyed reading poetry and who even “cherished the vision of himself as a poet” (3). Traumatized by three years of fighting as a sniper and by losing his best friend in the war, however, he believed upon his return to his parents’ house that staying away from poetry would help him control his emotions. This strategy had proven effective during the war, too, when in order to survive he learned to suppress any emotions and to “shut down his senses” (2). After his homecoming as a changed man and upon seeing “his shelves . . . stacked with volumes of his heroes, Goethe, Heine, Rilke, and even Trakl, hidden beneath the others,” he can only look at these volumes of poetry “with a dull curiosity” (3).³¹ At this point in his life he asks himself: “How could he ever have cared what such men said? What did their words matter?” (3). Poetry has lost its meaning for Fidelis as he comes to the decision to focus only on rational, practical things such

as "his diplomas and guild papers framed on the wall," because "these things did matter. These papers represented his future. His survival" (3). Fidelis is also convinced that in order to maintain his sanity he has to maintain the stillness that he had acquired on the battlefield and suppress any memories of the war. His way to deal with this issue is to make a "pact with discipline" (220) and to radically block out his feelings: "There was far too much to feel, so he must seek, he thought, only shallow sensation" (2).³²

Goethe, Heine, Rilke, and Trakl are without doubt famous names that will be recognized even by readers who are not familiar with German literature. One might argue that these books (and most definitely works by Goethe) could in all probability be found in almost every German household of that time, but, as the previous discussion of Heine's "Loreley" has shown, that would be a too-superficial reading of the text. I find it particularly intriguing that Erdrich lets her protagonist cherish the work of Rilke and Trakl, and I want to claim that, rather than choosing the names randomly, Erdrich has purposefully put books of these poets on Fidelis's shelves.

As with Heine, the embodiment of exile and homelessness, it cannot be a coincidence that Erdrich names the works of Georg Trakl (1887–1914). Trakl is one of the most important Austrian expressionists and widely known for his antiwar poems "Grodek," "Im Osten" ("On the Eastern Front"), and "Klage" ("Lament"), which portray war from its most dreadful side. Like Fidelis, Trakl had experienced the horrors of World War I. As a medical officer, he had served on the Eastern Front, witnessed the battle of Grodek, and had to take care of severely wounded soldiers. Heavily traumatized by his war experiences, Trakl suffered a nervous breakdown and eventually committed suicide in November 1914. In his lyrical work, this Austrian poet captures the destruction, horror, and death, the "fragmented mouths" and "bloodied heads" ("Grodek"), "blood-spattered doorsteps" and "heaving ghost casualties" ("On the Eastern Front") that he witnessed at the front. Erdrich's depiction of the cruelty of war in *The Master Butchers Singing Club* and the "grandeur of horror" (177), which we witness through the memories of Fidelis and the ex-soldier Cyprian Lazarre, is undoubtedly as honest and unsettling as Trakl's. Both deconstruct the idea of war as an honorable or glorious event.

Poetry by Rainer Maria Rilke (1857–1926), which Fidelis also dis-

cards, is similarly important in the novel. One reason for choosing Rilke could be that he, too, served in the military during World War I. Similar to Fidelis's second son, Markus, who is not sent to fight but instead assigned a desk job at the Officer Candidate School, Rilke was assigned a desk job at the Military Record Office. Although he never had to participate in combat, the war experience left Rilke traumatized and silenced him as a poet for an extended period of time. These are not the only parallels, though. Considering Erdrich's word choice and the imagery she creates in her depiction of Fidelis's emotional reactions at different points throughout the novel, I am led to the assumption that in her drawing of *The Master Butchers Singing Club's* protagonist, Erdrich was inspired by Rilke's work, and particularly by his famous poem "Der Panther" ("The Panther"). It is especially Fidelis's three repeatedly emphasized, outstanding attributes, namely, his "phenomenal strength" (5), his exceptional "talent for stillness" (2), and his "power of quietness" (2), that recall the image Rilke evokes in his description of the animal trapped in its cage in the Jardin des Plantes in Paris.

At this point it might be helpful to summarize briefly this three-stanza poem. The first stanza describes a caged panther's gaze, which has become exhausted and empty. For this animal, there seems to be no world beyond the bars ("Und hinter tausend Stäben keine Welt"), and it appears to have completely succumbed to a state of paralysis. Yet the panther's pacing in circles inside the cage—described in the second stanza as a powerful "dance of strength around a center, wherein there stands benumbed a mighty will"—points to the phenomenal strength that this panther still possesses. The last stanza evokes a similar image of strength by describing how the trapped animal still reacts to some stimulation. Walter Arndt offers a good translation of this passage:

Only from time to time the pupil's shutter
Will draw apart: an image enters then,
To travel through the tautened body's utter
Stillness—and in the heart to end. (Rilke 69)

How can these words and images be applied to the character Fidelis Waldvogel? First, as indicated above, Fidelis and the panther share several attributes, such as a phenomenal strength, a strong will, and a talent for stillness. Second, both are trapped: the panther in its cage and Fidelis in his past and his rational self, which has been split off from his emo-

tional side. Fidelis is furthermore imprisoned in his "Germanness," in his inability to free himself from ideals and beliefs he acquired during his upbringing in Germany. Moreover, just as the panther's gaze has become empty, Fidelis has "shut down his senses" and allows only "shallow sensation" (2). The young man has made a "pact with discipline" (220), and he is almost always successful in controlling or, rather, suppressing his emotions. But just like the panther, through whose pupil an image enters from time to time, Fidelis is occasionally caught off-guard and lets his emotions be stirred by "a picture, a sound, a word. Something would enter, and [he] would pause, wage a small interior struggle, and go on" (176).³³ This happens very rarely, though, as, for example, in his confrontation with Cyprian Lazarre or when he receives letters from his parents, which he usually "set[s] aside before they penetrated to the still center of his person . . ." (178).

Lastly, Fidelis shares with the panther a state of paralysis, which in Rilke's poem is described as "a dance of strength around a center in which there stands a mighty will, benumbed" ("Ist wie ein Tanz von Kraft um eine Mitte, in der betäubt ein großer Wille steht"). In fact, Fidelis remains in this benumbed, emotionally paralyzed state until very late in his life. It is only after Delphine's disclosure of her own tragic story and her confession of being the daughter of a murderer that something "shifts" (333) in Fidelis. This moment of honesty and openness created by Delphine triggers in him the sudden release of emotions and images that he had successfully repressed and locked up for almost his entire adult life in his inner picture album, or "keepsake book of death" (332), containing faces of enemy soldiers he had killed as a sniper in the war.³⁴ In this moment of honesty, he finally "lost his stillness, his capacity for utter cessation, the talent he'd once possessed for slowing his heart and drawing only the slightest breath. That was disarranged. He couldn't do it anymore. That was finished" (334).

HISTORICAL TRUTH(S) AND COUNTERHISTORIES

The Master Butchers Singing Club is meticulously researched and tells us a lot about history that would be hard or impossible to find in history books. Yet Erdrich's writing is not didactic but, as Nancy and Allan Chavkin note, instructive, as it "'instructs' in subtle ways without seeming to instruct. That is, it enables the reader to see the world through

the eyes of people from different cultures, different classes, and different historical periods” (235). Catherine Rainwater also comments on Erdrich’s treatment of history and notes how “Erdrich moves beyond the need merely to address familiar injustices” and how “her works call on us to develop a new historical consciousness” (277). “This revised awareness,” Rainwater suggests, “might enable us to see how dominant societies have constructed their own versions of history that have passed for objective truth” (277–78).

The atrocities depicted in *The Master Butchers Singing Club* span German, Native American, and Jewish history. Besides the two World Wars and the Holocaust, the novel talks about the US Army’s massacre of Lakotas in 1890, also known as the Massacre at Wounded Knee, which has received much less attention in history books. Memories of this event are transmitted through the survivor Step-and-a-Half (Minnie) and through Roy (the only person with whom she shares her experience). When Roy tells “his daughter” Delphine the story of her alleged mother, he advises her to “put these things down for posterity or posteriority” (322) and warns her of the version(s) of this event she might find in history books: “Well, you can read about this in the history books if you want to, though rarely is the full extent of its pity told or believed” (325).

Roy’s words of caution regarding the unreliability and inadequacy of history as a discipline and a genre are very important and affirm the categorization of *The Master Butchers Singing Club* as a form of counterhistory. That literature is often better suited to adequate documentation of historical events than historical accounts has already been shown by many scholars, such as Nancy Peterson, who in *Against Amnesia: Contemporary Women Writers and the Crises of Historical Memory* discusses the contemporary work of women writers like Erdrich and Morrison. In her study, which is partially informed by Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub’s advice to turn to literature to read tragic and traumatic moments of American history,³⁵ Peterson illustrates that these women writers’ work “not only seeks to document what has been occluded in feel-good American history, it also turns to literature as a genre because ‘what really happened’ is often so excruciatingly painful that to articulate these events as American history would be to invite utter disbelief” (7). *The Master Butchers Singing Club* could serve as another example for a work of literature that narrates excruciatingly painful history in the form of personalized and fictional accounts. In addition, this novel is a

piece of literature in which Erdrich has managed to tackle, to use Peterson's words, the "double burden—to write both literature and history" (3) and to produce a narrative with a "historicist dimension" (5). "Such texts," the scholar explains,

attempt to intervene in official versions of American history and identity by bringing to consciousness counterhistories that trouble the conventional narrative. But it is also significant that literature is an unofficial, unauthorized site for writing history. As unofficial histories, literary texts can address issues and events that are marginalized or ignored by the rules of safe politics and clear evidence that underlie official historical accounts. (Peterson 5)

Erdrich's novel not only addresses the difference between official and unofficial histories but also illustrates differences in the perception and recording of experiences, which vary strongly between groups of people. Several times the novel foregrounds the limits both of representation and of imagination and directs the reader's attention to what cannot be articulated. Yet the images that Roy describes are graphic enough to have an effect on the reader. Full of human cruelty and truly unsettling, they counter official US histories of Wounded Knee. What is also significant is that Roy gives us a personalized account of the event, witnessed by an eight-year-old Cree girl and retold by her confidant, Roy. Following the oral tradition, Roy then passes the story on to Delphine. He tells her how the girl Minnie had "see[n] sights that she [could] never get out of her mind" as, for example, "grown soldiers [rode] down women and then fire[d] their guns point-blank as the women hold their little babies in the air" (325); how Minnie saw a woman who kept nursing her baby "even after she was struck and killed," how this woman "slump[ed] down with that baby still drinking and now covered in its own mother's blood" (325); and how "a grown soldier on horseback chase[d] down a skinny, weeping, stumbling boy" (325).

For her entire life, the girl, who is later identified as Step-and-a-Half, is haunted by these images. Her way of coping with the pain is to continue walking in order "to outdistance all that she remembered and did not remember" and to find a "space . . . comfortably empty of human cruelty" (385). When Step-and-a-Half as an old woman is lying on her deathbed, and she is unable to walk off her memories any longer, they catch up with her, and the images of Wounded Knee surface one last

time. These are the exact images we already know from Roy's "telling the tale"—images of "the baby, eyes shut, nursing faithfully at the breast of its killed mother," as well as that of "the little boy throw[ing] his arms to his face, a toddler who thought the gestures would make him invisible" and whom "the gunfire cut . . . in half" (384).

The fact that these atrocities are described twice and that Step-and-a-Half's memories form the final chapter, thus giving the old Cree woman "the last word," emphasizes the importance of this historic event in the story of European immigration to North America.³⁶ The novel thus implies that these events are interconnected and that therefore one cannot tell one without the other. Moreover, it turns out that although Step-and-a-Half/Minnie, who represents a living history of the event, might be the last one to tell the tale from the perspective of the survivor, her version of history does not die with her but is passed on via Roy to Delphine and via the text to the reader.³⁷ Ultimately, one could also say that by transferring this memory to a community of readers, the text itself creates the potential for (re)constructing history.³⁸

Erdrich's novel thus shows what Fredric Jameson once declared in *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*, namely, that "history is what hurts" (102). *The Master Butchers Singing Club* challenges our own notions of historical truth, calls into question heroic narratives of wars, and is honest and unsparing in its depiction of silenced, repressed, and altered histories of war atrocities and human cruelty that took place on both American and European soil. Whether Step-and-a-Half as survivor of the Wounded Knee Massacre, Cyprian and Fidelis as ex-soldiers in World War I, or Franz, Markus, and Erich as soldiers in World War II, they all have "sustained injuries graver than the obvious ones, hidden by their clothes" (177). These injuries, however, are generally not told within the dominant histories of Europe and the United States and mostly remain silenced. In *The Master Butchers Singing Club*, Erdrich brings this silenced history to the fore. She shares with her readers those traumatizing experiences and thoughts that occupy and haunt survivors like Step-and-a-Half and ex-soldiers like Fidelis and Cyprian and about which nobody ever talks because they "are not the kind men built into stories and repeated at drinking tables with other veterans" (177). Stories commonly told by soldiers "were of times behind the lines, usually, of women and of other men, and if there was action of killing involved it was short and glorious" (177). But "neither Fidelis nor

Cyprian had known glory, and though both had known the grandeur of horror, there was nothing to say about it" (177).

"The grandeur of horror" that is described in *The Master Butchers Singing Club* is as honest and unsettling as the horrendous images in Georg Trakl's antiwar poems. Both portray the "chaos and the dying" (289), the "reek, screaming, cursing, groans, and insane shouts" of wounded soldiers, as well as the "blown guts, dysentery, and filthy wounds" that Fidelis sees in the final days of the war (288). Cyprian is haunted by similar memories. He, too, had "heard the sounds of the dying on the battlefield, the huge collective hell shrieks the mud gave after bloody encounters" (222), and, like Fidelis, he is traumatized by his experiences. That the war is not "done with, finished" (211), as Fidelis says to Cyprian, becomes apparent every time these two veterans meet and when the rising tension eventually leads to a clash. Clearly, their injuries go much deeper than the physical scars, which Cyprian ironically refers to as "beauty marks" (211). Franz, Fidelis's oldest son, has been affected by war too and is shown struggling in his "effort of not remembering" (357). As a pilot for the US Army, he was shot down, almost died, and saw his friends die. Franz also comes back from the war a changed man: "Returning from the war, he felt tremendously strange, dislocated, even menacing, like a ghost that comes to spy on the living" (355). Even the young Markus, who never had to participate in combat and whose job was to write condolence letters, which he ironically calls "creative fiction" (359), realized that Delphine's warnings were right all along and that there are no heroes or heroism in wars. Delphine is notably the only person who sees behind "the hypocrisy, the cheerful façade, the lies" (340) and who aptly observes that in the United States, "destruction is a way to sell gum" (341).

The Master Butchers Singing Club takes a surprising and thought-provoking turn when Cyprian is brought together with the Lithuanian Jew Vilhus Gast, with whom Cyprian eventually decides to tour the United States and perform shows in which they ridicule Adolf Hitler by portraying him as a person suffering from intestinal gas and mock Nazism by juggling swastikas set on fire (319–20). The first encounter between Cyprian and the Jewish man with the evocative name, which could be translated as "guest in many houses" and which indicates a diasporic life, is depicted rather comically, because it reverses the classic situation in which a "real Indian" would be an attraction for a person from

Europe. Here, the Jew is the attraction, and this is why Cyprian decides to take Vilhus back home with him to the reservation. He explains to Delphine: “There’s no Jews on the reservation. . . . I never knew one when I was growing up, any more than he’d known an Indian” (317). But even though Vilhus had never met an Indian, Cyprian notes in surprise, “He did know about us [Indians]” (317). Erdrich addresses a phenomenon here that Hartmut Lutz, when describing Germans’ interest in and fascination with Native Americans, has coined “Indianthusiasm” (167). It is a fascination that Fidelis shares with Vilhus. Once he finds out that Cyprian is Indian, Fidelis becomes very curious “about the whole way of life—he’d heard about that back in Germany and hadn’t seen much of it here” (219).

In Vilhus’s view, Jews and Native Americans have a lot in common. He believes that American Indians like Cyprian “were one of the lost tribes of Israel doomed to wander, too, like his people. Always to be on the edge of things. Hounded and hunted” (317). Interestingly, Cyprian does not comment on this analogy at all. While it would be tempting to read his response, “Well okay . . . so let’s roam around together,” as an affirmation, we might as well read it as ironic or humorous. After all, the diasporic metaphor is one of the least applicable ones when comparing the fates of Native Americans and Jews. As Lilian Friedberg notes:

If anything sets the American Indian apart from other victims of genocide or oppression in *this* country, it is this: Native Americans are not, in the strictest sense of the word, a “diasporic” people. While the policies of Indian Removal certainly served to disperse, displace, disparage, and dislocate Native cultures and identities from coast to coast, imposing upon Native North American peoples conditions of existence that might be described as “diasporic” in a Judeo-Christian or postcolonial context, I would caution against the appropriation of the diasporic metaphor with regard to the state of Native North America. (371)

The fact, however, that Cyprian is willing to travel and perform Hitler satires with Vilhus and that together they juggle symbols of Fascism in front of their American audiences suggests that Cyprian does see a certain common cause. It is also possible to read Cyprian’s behavior as a way of demanding the American audiences’ recognition of the racism in the country and the devastation brought upon Native Americans.

The question of whether their audiences actually detect the irony and become aware of the atrocities committed on American soil under the auspices of the US government remains unanswered, though.

Of course, one could also read Cyprian's participation in anti-Nazi performances as an unjust appropriation of symbols of Jewish suffering, but that would, in my view, neglect two much more important aspects of these joint performances: humor and "survivance" (Vizenor). *The Master Butchers Singing Club* stresses survival rather than victimhood and therefore does not allow figures like Cyprian, Vilhus, and Step-and-a-Half to become passive victims. Moreover, the story of Cyprian and Vilhus, and certainly also that of Step-and-a-Half, contains the same "inherent humor of survivance" (78) that Peterson detects as a thematic thread in Sherman Alexie's short story "What You Pawn I Will Redeem." In this story, the protagonist, Jackson, makes a joke that connects Jews and Indians: "The two funniest tribes I've ever been around are Indians and Jews, so I guess that says something about the inherent humor of genocide" (186–87). These "two funniest tribes" are now joined in *The Master Butchers Singing Club* and express their "humor of survivance" by making fun of Fascism and the Nazi regime. This is certainly a provocative image.

CONCLUSION

The Master Butchers Singing Club offers a lot of "history and politics [that] intrudes to muddy the well of pure necessity contained within language itself" (Silko 179).³⁹ Erdrich grants her readers deep insights (literally and metaphorically) into the bloody butchering and meat-processing business, as well as the likewise dirty and bloody details of politics and genocide on both the European and the American continents of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. She writes about the "American experience in all its diversity," conjoins European American and Native American narrative and cultural traditions, and thus creates a new, broadened, multifaceted conception of identity and a new, fluid, and more realistic version of the concept of self.

With *The Master Butchers Singing Club*, Erdrich also fulfilled a task that she describes in an article titled "Where I Ought to Be: A Writer's Sense of Place" that she wrote in 1985 for the *New York Times Book Review* and in which she points out what in her view is the task of con-

temporary American writers. “In the light of enormous loss,” Erdrich argues, “they must tell the stories of contemporary survivors, while protecting and celebrating the core of culture left in the wake of the catastrophe” (23). Fidelis, Cyprian, Step-and-a-Half, and Vilhus are such survivors. Their stories show that our personal, intimate histories are not isolated but interconnected on a global scene and that at some point, silenced history always finds its way into the open. Centering on Step-and-a-Half’s thoughts on the nature of songs, the last scene aptly generates the image of the world as a chorus of voices:

La-la-la. Foghorn of chords. Adeline est morte. Elle est morte et enterrée. Ina’he’kuwo’ Ina’he’kuwo’. Ich weiss nicht was soll es bedeuten. . . . Foolish ballads, strict anthems, German sailor’s songs and the paddling songs of voyagers, patriotic American songs. Other times, Cree lullabies, sweat lodge summons, lost ghost dance songs, counting rhymes, and hymns in the snow. Our songs travel the earth. We sing to one another. Not a single note is ever lost and no song is original. They all come from the same place and go back to a time when only the stones howled. (388)

It is a world in which no national boundaries exist and in which everything is connected through and united in songs. It is also a world in which different nationalities, ethnicities, and languages become a “we” that “sing[s] to one another.” And finally it is a world in which no history is silenced and every narrative, no matter how grand or little, is heard.

NOTES

Epigraph. All translations in this article are mine.

1. Another frequently quoted version is: “The less people know about how sausages and politics are made, the better they sleep” (Je weniger die Leute wissen, wie Würste und Politik gemacht werden, desto besser schlafen sie”). Note, however—as Fred R. Shapiro points out in *The Yale Book of Quotations*—that while this comment is “today usually credited to Bismarck . . . much earlier evidence appears in the *McKean Miner* (Smethport, PA), 22 April 1869.” Shapiro writes that a person named “Saxe,” who may have been the lawyer and poet John Godfrey Saxe, “says in his new lecture: ‘Laws, like sausages, cease to inspire respect in proportion as we know how they are made’” (86).

2. By “unofficial” I am referring to dominant US narratives told from privileged positions. In Chippewa/Ojibwe communities, these stories will most likely be the most recognized, “official” versions.

3. All references to *The Master Butchers Singing Club* are from the 2004 Harper Collins Perennial paperback edition.

4. I am referring to Lee Schweninger's insightful article "Claiming Europe: Native American Literary Responses to the Old World."

5. Louise Karen Erdrich was born in Minnesota and is the daughter of a Chipewewa Indian mother and a German American father. She grew up in North Dakota and is today enrolled as a member of the Bird clan in the Turtle Mountain band of the Ojibwe.

6. Another reference to Goethe's *Faust* can be found in *The Last Report on the Miracles at Little No Horse*, namely, in the figure of the black dog, who not only represents the Christian devil but also speaks to Agnes de Witt (a.k.a. Father Damien) in German. Like Faust, Father Damien makes a pact with the devil.

7. In a similar vein, Lischke argues, "Clearly, the telling and recording of such stories [of her family history] became, for Erdrich, part of the healing process in resolving her own crises of multiple identities and belonging . . ." ("Blitzkuchen" 201).

8. For Erdrich's view on such labeling, see her interview with Nancy and Allan Chavkin (esp. 230).

9. It is worth mentioning here an interview that Lischke conducted with a "family friend" who had grown up with Louise Erdrich (see Lischke and McNab). This friend described Erdrich's father as "really German" (197), an attribute that she based on his being a "penny pincher" and a person who "always lived by his rules which made things difficult for his children" (197).

10. One critic who spoke of Erdrich's "turn to the other side of her ancestry" is Michiko Kakutani. For comments on Erdrich's interest in her German ancestry, see Chavkin and Chavkin.

11. For sources that Erdrich used, see her 2002 interview with Anthony Rolo of the *Progressive* (esp. 38). Today, Erdrich has the privilege of choosing cover illustrations herself. In her interview with Halliday she remembers how "a publisher once sent [her] a design for *Master Butchers Singing Club* that was all huge loops of phallic sausages. They were of every shape and all different textures, colors, sizes." Erdrich remembers: "I showed it to my daughter and we looked at it in stunned silence, then we said, Yes! This is a great cover!"

12. Note that there is also an elderly woman by the name of Mrs. Waldvogel in *The Beet Queen*. She is Sita Tappe's roommate in the state mental hospital and believes herself to be a cannibal.

13. While the literal translation for *Blitz* is "lightning," it must certainly also be read in the context of the German Blitzkrieg against the United Kingdom.

14. Note the parallel between this story, in which Klaus-the-German is kidnapped from a POW camp, and Fidelis's threat to kidnap his son from a Minnesota POW camp, hoping that this would help break Erich's stubbornness (365).

15. Here I disagree with Alan Brooke, who wrote in his *New York Times* book review of the novel that Erdrich "has created an array of colorful people but not one credible character, except possibly for the troubled, appealing Cyprian." In Brooke's opinion, Fidelis and Delphine are "pure nonentities."

16. Curiously, Angela Laflen did not include *The Master Butchers Singing Club* in her study of masculinity in Erdrich's fiction. Fidelis would certainly be a good example of "self-made manhood," which, as Laflen writes (quoting Michael Kimmel), "is based on principles of self-reliance and stoicism" and which "can never be established absolutely but must constantly be proven, and proven not to women . . . but to other men" (207).

17. The square, mass-produced, white American bread is mentioned twice more in the story. It first appears when Eva voices her opinion about this bread: "Pity about the bread, she often teased Fidelis. He had come to this country on the evidence of bread, machine bread, a slice of it sent in a package as an example of an everyday American marvel. He'd never tasted that preserved slice, of course. She despised the stuff—it was thin and salty. It crumbled. You could not get it fresh and it turned hard by noon if by chance you did. It wasn't real bread. The crusts were soft and the interior tough. Everything about the bread was backward, said Eva, so she made her bread herself" (95–96). The bread is mentioned again toward the end of the novel, when we watch Erich eating in the POW camp: "Although famished, he ate slowly, with a combination of reverence and shame, wiping the plate with white bread sliced into a soft, square page" (350).

18. Eventually, however, only his two youngest sons, the twins Erich and Emil, return to Germany with Tante. I shall mention here that these two names remind me of the German author Erich Kästner, whose famous novel *Emil und die Detektive* was published in 1929.

19. "Eva's household, which she strictly divided off from the butcher shop, was based on order, rich baking scents, cleanliness, and life" (41).

20. All translations are mine.

21. The *Gesangsverein* to which Fidelis belonged in Ludwigsruhe, for example, was solely for master butchers.

22. This same light is later referred to as "silky music of sunlight" (30) and mentioned once more at the end of the novel, when Fidelis is dying: "As when he had first come home from the war, he experienced, once again, the strange singing of the light" (378).

23. This dilemma underscores how loyalty and identity are under constant strain for immigrant and first-generation Americans.

24. The comfort that others draw from his singing is emphasized when Markus is described as falling asleep "safe in the rise and fall of his father's voice" (133).

25. Although *Lied* is commonly translated just as "song," Heine's *Lieder* are lyrical songs. For a discussion of "Die Gedanken sind frei" as a similarly important song in the novel, see Austenfeld.

26. Note that Heine was of Jewish background and that his works were forbidden in Nazi Germany. However, the Loreley song, considered part of the national heritage, continued to be sung after 1933. But instead of naming Heine as the author, lyrics simply stated "author unknown." Heine is also commemorated at Yad Vashem in Israel and at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC, for his famous statement in his 1821 work *Almansor*: "This was only a prelude. Where

they have burned books, they will end in burning human beings" (Das war ein Vorspiel nur. Dort wo man Bücher verbrennt, verbrennt man auch am Ende Menschen).

27. We should also not overlook that one of the reasons Roy gives for closing the latch to his cellar and thus killing the Chavers family was his competition with Chavers in the singing club. Roy remembers yelling at him: "Hey, Chavers, you can come up again after you quit singing over me in practice!" Then he explains to Delphine: "You know, he was always puffing his chest and inching forward, singing over me" (328). Thus the singing club not only promotes unity but also creates competition.

28. This concert takes place before the unveiling of a monument to commemorate the victims of the Allied bombings of Ludwigsruhe. Note that Ralph Erdrich's grandparents died in the Allied firebombing of Pforzheim in 1945.

29. The Wounded Knee Massacre took place on December 29, 1890, on the banks of Wounded Knee Creek in South Dakota. It is estimated that three hundred Lakota men, women, and children were violently killed by American troops.

30. This closeness of barbarism and beauty has occupied scholars for a long time. Today we know that many German guards and officers who worked in concentration camps and lived a "rather normal" life with their families on the grounds directly bordering these sites of atrocities were avid listeners to classical music or even played instruments themselves. The fact that selections on the parade grounds in the camps took place while classical music played in the background has been widely known ever since it was shown in Spielberg's feature film *Schindler's List*.

31. The fact that he has to hide these books says a lot about Fidelis's relation to his parents and their opinion of Trakl.

32. While I do not want to read more between the lines than there is space, one could read Fidelis's "pact with discipline" as a reference to Faust's pact with the devil. Note that there are quite a few allusions to Goethe's work also in other novels by Erdrich, as, for example, in *The Last Report on the Miracles at Little No Horse*. Here, Agnes de Witt / Father Damien has several encounters with a black dog, representing Satan. While not specified as a poodle, like the one in Goethe's *Faust*, the dog speaks German. As already pointed out, *The Antelope Wife* also contains a Goethe reference.

33. Note that this passage refers to both Fidelis and Cyprian. The latter is also a severely traumatized World War I veteran. As former enemies, the men feel uneasy in each other's presence. We learn that they "never spoke of the war that they shared, yet it lay between them very like the Belgium mud once terrible and now grassed and green" (176). The war is omnipresent to both men, and "neither of them ever passed a day or several hours of the day without remembering the war" (176). Yet, they do not speak about their experiences but try to control their emotions whenever war memories surface. Both men apply similar coping strategies to deal with their war traumas, which enter their bodies in the form of "a picture, a sound, [or] a word" and which result in the waging of "a small, interior struggle." Once this has passed, both men simply "go on" (176).

34. This scene certainly lends itself to a closer look at the consequences of unresolved trauma, the creation of intrapsychic secrets or "crypts" (see Abraham and Torok) and to a discussion of the characters in the context of their "inability to

mourn" (see Mitscherlich and Mitscherlich), but this would go beyond the scope of this article.

35. Peterson refers to Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub's influential work *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*. These two scholars emphasize the inadequacy of history for understanding the Holocaust and turn to literature, film, and survivor testimony. They argue that to address "the consequent, ongoing, as yet unresolved *crisis of history*," one must turn to literature, for "literature becomes a witness, and perhaps the only witness, to the crisis within history which precisely cannot be articulated, witnessed in the given categories of history itself" (xviii).

36. This is, of course, not to suggest that Erdrich seeks to create a hierarchy of victims or perpetrators of violence in this work.

37. Roy says to Delphine: "Minnie was the only one left to tell the tale" (321).

38. The fact that Delphine becomes the carrier of the story of Wounded Knee is a significant aspect of *The Master Butchers Singing Club* and emphasizes the key role that this figure plays within the story. In fact, Delphine evolves into one of the strongest, most reliable, and most sympathetic characters. Moreover, even if Step-and-a-Half turns out not to be Delphine's biological mother, the novel, through Roy's sharing Minnie's story with Delphine, establishes a symbolic link between European immigrants and the Native American land on which they settled. This link is reinforced through her first, albeit sham marriage to Cyprian and her second, "real" marriage to Fidelis, representing Native America and Europe, respectively.

39. I am quoting here from Leslie Marmon Silko's much-cited, negative review of *The Beet Queen* (1986), which started what was to become known as the "Silko-Erdrich controversy." The Laguna author denounced the novel for its Western focus and its disregard of political issues.

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Finding Dawn and Missing Women in Canada

Story-Based Methods in
Antiviolence Research and Remembrance

ALLISON HARGREAVES

In the opening sequence of her 2006 National Film Board documentary, *Finding Dawn*, Métis filmmaker Christine Welsh asks: “What is it about numbers? What do they tell us? Do they help us understand?” As the camera surveys a fragmented succession of rainy nighttime streets, Welsh’s voice-over intones: “One woman goes missing. Then another. And another. For a long time, only those who know and love them pay attention. Until the numbers start to add up.” The camera then shifts our gaze, leaving the darkened streets of Vancouver behind in order to resituate us, if only momentarily, at the site of the excavated Pickton farm—a locale that remains significantly unnamed in the film itself.¹ Our encounter with this site begins from above, by means of a broad aerial pan of the farm and its surroundings, and then shifts to the ground below, where forensic investigators search for “traces of missing women.” It is here, in February 2004, that a twenty-third woman is identified from DNA found at the farm. “But like all the others,” Welsh emphasizes, “she is much more than a number. She has a name. Her name is Dawn Crey.” This is how *Finding Dawn* begins.

An expedient point of departure that establishes the statistical gravity of a situation too frequently ignored—with, the film tells us, over sixty women missing from Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside—this opening does more than expose an empirical “truth about violence against [Indigenous] women” in Canada (Bourrier-Lacroix 8); it also pries open, at the outset, a series of broader questions about how public knowledge about this truth gets made. Addressed to a present moment characterized not only by an ongoing epidemic of gendered and racialized violence but also by proliferating representational treatments of it (Stone and Dean 9), *Finding Dawn* constitutes an intervention into both the social issue

of violence itself and the representational politics that contour its expression in dominant public discourse. For instance, in naming Dawn, and in unnamng the Pickton farm, the opening to Welsh's film performs a conceptual break from the representational strategies that characterize much of the recent mainstream media coverage of the missing and murdered women cases—including, namely, the tendency to render disappeared women as anonymous figures whose lives and livelihoods are made to signal an apparent willing vulnerability to violence (Ferris 16; Jiwani and Young 899, 902). *Finding Dawn* overturns this and other mainstays of the missing women representational inventory, provisionally offering in its opening sequence the well-worn trope of a lone woman on a rain-slick, darkened city street only in order to replace it with the story of a woman who, like many of the missing women, “started out somewhere else” (*Finding Dawn*). Similarly, the aerial pan of the unnamed Pickton farm site is offered not so much as a vision bearing the truth of “what really happened [there]” but rather as an image that deliberately queries the fiction of definitive knowledge and closure underlying some representations of the police investigation into the missing women case (Blaney 162).² As Welsh puts it, finding Dawn's DNA perhaps generates more questions than it does answers; it cannot tell us who she was or why we lost her, nor can it account for Dawn's story as “part of a much bigger picture” of ongoing colonial social suffering (*Finding Dawn*). In efforts to attend to this “bigger picture,” *Finding Dawn* tells the stories of several women whose lives (like Dawn's) are shown beyond their relation to the often individualized and pathologizing accounts of mental illness, poverty, sex work, and addiction associated with Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (DTES) and are instead rendered relative to the intergenerational impacts of residential schooling and assimilative child welfare policy, to the state-sponsored invasion and expropriation of Indigenous lands, and to an ongoing history of gendered racism and sexual violence against Indigenous women. Moreover, in telling these stories, the film takes care to position these women *not* as isolated, culpable, or victimized figures but as each belonging to, and now senselessly missing from, a broader network of familial and community relations whose present work it is, in the words of Dawn's sister Lorraine, to “let it not be forgotten” (*Finding Dawn*).

In the context of the missing and murdered women, then, what might it mean to remember? More specifically, what might it mean to make public knowledge about the missing and murdered through the critical processes of remembrance here evoked by Lorraine Crey and as

theorized by the film itself? In this article, I discuss *Finding Dawn*'s contributions to our thinking about these questions and to Indigenous feminist theorizations of gendered colonial violence more broadly, in part by analyzing the film's representational strategies as intervening into dominant forms of knowledge and memory about violence. Since its 2006 Vancouver premiere at the Amnesty International Film Festival, where it won the Gold Audience Award, *Finding Dawn* has become an influential documentary resource on the issue of missing and murdered women. In addition to its international success on the film circuit—enjoying official selection status at the San Francisco Annual American Indian Film Festival and at the imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival in Toronto—Welsh's film has been shown at the United Nations headquarters in New York, where it was screened during the fifty-first session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, as well as in public libraries, lecture halls, and independent theaters across Canada. It is available for streaming through the National Film Board's website (www.nfb.ca) and is accompanied online by a thirteen-page "Guide for Teaching and Action" written by antiviolenence activist and educator Fay Blaney. Given the film's popularity as a teaching text and as an awareness-raising tool, then, I want to add to the conversation an analysis of how the film actually models Indigenous research methodologies of storytelling that honor communal expressions of agency, activism, and resistance. I argue that *Finding Dawn* performs a politically engaged Indigenous feminist research practice, wresting the stories of missing and murdered women from their individualized expression in extractive modes of knowledge making in order to provide a more capacious and holistic analysis *through story*. In taking my methodological and analytical cues from Welsh's film, I want to emphasize the significant but often overlooked analytical capacity of Indigenous-authored cultural production in modeling Indigenous research methodologies, in furthering Indigenous survivance, and in contributing vitally to matters of policy, policing, activism, and law.

VIOLENCE AGAINST INDIGENOUS

WOMEN IN CANADA AND BRITISH COLUMBIA

As is the case across Canada and particularly in western Canada, violence against Indigenous women is a matter of urgent material and

political concern. In my own home province of British Columbia (BC), the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) has documented 160 cases of women and girls who have gone missing or been murdered since the 1960s ("Fact Sheet" 1). This means that Indigenous women go missing and are murdered at a higher rate in BC than in any other province or territory in Canada. With now nearly six hundred missing and murdered Indigenous women nationwide over the last thirty years (1),³ BC also has the highest rate of unsolved murders of Indigenous women (5). Amidst tacit and official forms of indifference, often with scarce police resources and other supports being devoted to the cause, a number of BC cases have recently attracted sustained local and national media attention. These include the many cases of women who have gone missing or been murdered along the eight-hundred-kilometer stretch of the northern Highway 16—known locally and in the media as the Highway of Tears—and the more publicized example of the Vancouver missing women whose disappearances would later be yet more widely known because of the Pickton case. Robert Pickton, a pig farmer from Port Coquitlam, was charged with the murders of twenty-six women who went missing from Vancouver between the early 1990s and 2002 and was found guilty in December 2007 of the six charges with which the Crown initially proceeded. A disproportionate number of these women were Indigenous, as is the case with the some thirty women who have disappeared along the Highway of Tears since the late 1970s and whose cases remain largely unsolved (*Highway of Tears Symposium* 9). The challenge of whether and how to link these disparate sites from which so many women have gone missing in BC—the urban lower mainland and Vancouver's DTES, on the one hand, and the northern Highway of Tears, on the other—is an ongoing matter of debate amongst community and family members affected by this loss, as well as the advocates, researchers, and policy-makers who now add their efforts to the long-standing grassroots work of these communities to address gendered violence of colonial origin.

Often articulated as a difficulty in addressing—whether through front-line advocacy or larger-scale policy initiatives—localized, interpersonal expressions of broader *state violence*, the challenge of linking the disparate BC cases throws into relief a number of questions vital to local and national discussions about antiviolence. For many activists, it is a question of how best to support women at immediate risk of interper-

sonal violence in ways that are responsive to particular socioeconomic and geographical contexts. For others, responsiveness to local contexts is meaningless without also theorizing gendered violence as systemic in nature and often colonial in origin—that is, as disproportionately affecting *Indigenous* women whose social and spatial “risk” factors are overdetermined by colonial policies dating back to before confederation (Beads 224). In the example of BC’s prominent cases, the specific conditions under which women have gone missing are, in each instance, distinct and thus require different community-based responses. The DTES is an urban setting in which Indigenous women’s vulnerability to predatory violence is informed by their overrepresentation in street-level sex work; the Highway of Tears, by contrast, is a remote stretch of highway along which women of various northern communities are compelled, by poverty and limited transportation options, to travel by hitchhiking. In each case, however, the circumstances under which women have gone missing are contoured by a common history of displacement, marginalization, and gendered aggression that has targeted Indigenous women specifically. These circumstances, though expressed differently in the DTES than along the Highway of Tears, thus urgently require analyses that are holistic enough to envision both site-specific interventions—or “band-aids,” as Vancouver-based Indigenous feminist activist Tina Beads puts it (224)—and broad-based, radical policy change. As Christine Welsh states in *Finding Dawn*, Canada is a country whose history is “steeped in violence against Native people”; Indigenous women are at risk of violence “no matter where we live, our circumstances, or our lifestyles.”

For instance, Indigenous women experience gendered violence at much higher rates than non-Indigenous women and in ways that are marked by colonial relations. As the Standing Committee on the Status of Women recently reported to Parliament, Indigenous women and girls “are as likely to be killed by a stranger or an acquaintance as they are by an intimate partner” (5). Citing this research finding in her opening statement at the 2011 Missing Women Commission of Inquiry evidentiary hearings in Vancouver, independent counselor Robyn Gervais went on to articulate a connection between this statistical gap in the experiences of Indigenous and non-Indigenous women and the specific “legislative and policy decisions that have paved the way for the missing and murdered women to end up on the Downtown Eastside and eventually in the hands of a serial killer” (114). Emphasizing the systemic ori-

gins of violence that merely appears interpersonal (violence committed by and against individuals) but that is, in fact, made possible only by *state-sponsored* conditions of marginalization and displacement, Gervais makes an important intervention into the work of the inquiry and into public perceptions of the missing women cases. That is, women were not vanished from the DTES by the hands of a serial killer alone, nor are women responsible for their vulnerability to violence because of “poor lifestyle choices.” Rather, this violence occurs (can *only* occur) with the collusion of the police and the justice system and with the indifference of the public.

For Robyn Gervais, then, as for many scholars of gendered colonial violence, the reasons for Indigenous women’s higher vulnerability to violence adhere in Canada’s history of colonization: as a settler-colonial nation-state, Canada is premised upon historical and ongoing invasion, displacement, settlement, and expropriation, the result of which has been the dispossession of Indigenous peoples from ancestral land, language, and identity. The processes by which this dispossession has been carried out—whether in state-authored assimilative legislation, in physical acts of violence, or in the violence of demeaning misrepresentations—have been both gendered and colonial in their origin and expression. As Grand Chief Edward John states in his October 2011 submission on behalf of the First Nations Summit to the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry, women were “specifically targeted” in federal policies of forced removal and assimilation designed to undermine the political and familial structures of Indigenous communities (13). Beverley Jacobs and Andrea Williams similarly comment on the deliberate dispossession of Indigenous women in the colonial bid to weaken Indigenous nations, and they point to the genocidal commitments of the residential school system and of the Indian Act in particular. Both the Indian Act and the residential school system, they argue, have a “direct link to the disappearance and murder of hundreds of Aboriginal women in Canada” (Jacobs and Williams 121).

The Indian Act is a piece of legislation that structures all aspects of the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the federal government and that defines “Indian status” under Canadian law. Though legislative efforts to define status—who was and was not “Indian” under the law—predate Canada’s formation as a federal state, with Confederation and the 1867 British North America Act the federal government

claimed sole legislative jurisdiction in all matters related to “Indians, and Lands reserved for the Indians” (sec. 91, p. 24). In 1876 the newly formed Canadian government consolidated preexisting legislation into a single federal Act Respecting Indians; the 1876 Indian Act, with its many subsequent amendments, continues to define Indian status today. Paternalistically appropriating Indigenous peoples’ “right to identify themselves,” this legislation would also establish the reserve system, delineate the band government structure, and define band membership and rights (Episkenew 28). In this way, the Indian Act was the legislative expression of the colonial government’s long-standing goal to efface Indigenous modes of governance, nationhood, and belonging, replacing them with a colonial structure administered by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (now Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development). The Indian Act’s intentions were thus assimilative from the outset. And although this legislation is sometimes misinterpreted as a “seeming affirmation of band rights to self-government and territories,” it was always designed, as Joanne Barker points out, “with the explicit intent of assimilating Indians into Canadian society as hard-working, tax-paying, Christian citizens” (261). Perhaps no aspect of the act was more clearly assimilative than the gendered provisions by which generations of Indigenous women and their children were systematically disenfranchised from Indigenous identity and rights as encoded in the Indian Act.

As Shari M. Huhndorf and Cheryl Suzack explain, colonial legislation deliberately “reordered gender relations to subordinate women” (5). The Indian Act did so in many ways: by promoting and normalizing male-dominated forms of political organization, by privileging Euro-Western family structures, and by imposing restrictive identity categories that removed Indian status from women who married nonstatus or non-Indigenous men. This legislated sex discrimination not only imposed patriarchal modes of familial organization, inheritance, and descent but also denied women community resources and political participation if they “married out” (Green, “Balancing” 145). With the 1876 Indian Act, the federal government consolidated the discriminatory provisions of earlier legislation and enshrined in law “Indian status” as defined by patrilineal descent: any woman who married a non-Indigenous man would lose her status, whereas an Indigenous man could confer status, through marriage, upon his non-Indigenous partner and her children.

Indian status entitles one to voting in band elections, living in reserve housing, and accessing other band resources. In defining women's status as entirely dependent on men, the 1876 Indian Act was thus integral to the colonial state's gradual displacement of tens of thousands of women from Indigenous identity and community over the following century (Amnesty International 8). It also disenfranchised women from participation in political governance while promoting the authority of men in this realm. The result, as Winona Stevenson remarks, was a "major disruption of traditional kinship systems, matrilineal descent patterns, and matrilocal, post-marital residency patterns" (68). Although the Indian Act was amended in 1985 to remove its discriminatory membership provisions, the amendments themselves embed "continuing discrimination by differentiating between section 6(1), 6(2), and 6(3) categories of membership—framing a status hierarchy prejudicial to reinstated women and their children and thus perpetuating the sex discrimination of the pre-1985 Act" (Green, "Balancing" 149–50).

With similarly assimilative goals, Indigenous children were removed from their families and communities for over a century in order to attend church-run, government-funded residential schools. From the time that residential schools were first operated according to this partnership in the early nineteenth century until the last government-operated facility closed its doors in 1996, over 150,000 Indigenous children are estimated to have attended.⁴ These boarding schools had as their expressed purpose to "civilize and Christianize" (*They Came* 10), a goal often manifested in terms of the "imposition of European gender relationships" and roles (A. Smith, "Native" 100). So while the Indian Act subordinated women by displacing them from Indigenous identity, community, and rights via legislative means, the residential school system accomplished a related assimilative agenda by means of forced removal and "reeducation." The government's hope was that—after a few generations of children had been dislocated from their community, language, and culture—Indigenous peoples' own languages, knowledge systems, and governance structures would disappear. The genocidal intent of this system—but one part of the broader colonial project meant to both justify and hasten the imagined inevitability of Indigenous assimilation—is memorably captured by the words of confederation-era poet and superintendent of the Department of Indian Affairs (1913–32) Duncan Camp-

bell Scott, who said: “The happiest future for the Indian race is absorption into the general population” (qtd. in Episkenew 30–31).

It was under Scott’s direction that amendments to the Indian Act in 1920 made attendance at a residential or day school compulsory under law for all status children between the ages of seven and fifteen (*They Came* 17). Before this time attendance was strongly encouraged, with some parents reluctantly sending their children out of financial duress or in hopes that their children might attain the promised benefits of a formal, Euro-Western education. However, these benefits were rarely delivered. Schools were typically underfunded, overcrowded, and reliant in their daily operations on the physical labor of students whose work in such vocational capacities meant that less than half their time was spent in the classroom. After 1920, when attendance laws were increasingly enforced, parents who refused to send their children could be threatened with arrest. In many cases, Indian agents (sometimes with the assistance of RCMP officers) would forcibly take children from their families in the fall (18). While in the schools, children were often subject to psychological, physical, and sexual abuse, as well as known health hazards, malnutrition, and neglect. When they returned to their home communities as young adults, they did so often having lost not only their language and cultural knowledge but also “life skills, parenting skills, self-respect, and, for many, respect for others” (Jacobs and Williams 126). Women and men were denied the opportunity to take up traditional roles and responsibilities; transgenerational family and community bonds were disrupted; and survivors of residential school suffered these and subsequent traumas in concert with a host of related social ills that Stephanie Irlbacher-Fox and others note as the direct consequences of “inequality, injustice, and oppression within social and political norms and institutions” (28). In short, many former students returned home after years spent in the austerity, violence, and privation of residential school with few skills and many traumatic memories.

As this history makes clear, interpersonal expressions of violence against Indigenous women have at their root a legacy of state-sponsored violence in the form of colonial displacement and assimilation meant to evict Indigenous peoples from the land and to naturalize settlement. Women whose economic and social marginalization has been structured through centuries of oppressive legislation and policy thus arrive on the streets of Vancouver or on remote northern highways *not* as a matter of

individual choice alone but often by economic necessity or as a result of fleeing other abusive conditions. Similarly, the men who exploit these conditions, who seek such women out, and who lure women into situations of further vulnerability and isolation do not act alone but with the full force of this history at their backs. As Sherene Razack comments, such violence is not only informed by a long history of colonial policy but also constitutes in the very moment of its expression the “making of the white, masculine self as dominant through practices of violence directed at a colonized woman” (128). The challenge of analyzing and of resisting these “practices of violence” as the very specific assertions of colonial domination that they are thus requires an accounting for how gendered violence has been *legislated* as a tool of colonialism and racism. Indigenous feminist theory and practice offer such an analysis—one that can understand the missing and murdered women cases in Vancouver and along the Highway of Tears as the logical and anticipated outcome of legal directives intended to attack Indigenous women as *Indigenous women* in their home territories.

“Indigenous feminism” is often defined in terms of its constituent parts, and although there has been significant debate as to “what term—*Indigenous* or *feminism*—should take precedence” in projects concerned with gendered decolonization (Huhndorf and Suzack 12), I argue that *Finding Dawn* tacitly advocates the inseparability of these terms when it comes to holistic interventions into violence against Indigenous women. *Finding Dawn*, for instance, never uses the language of Indigenous feminism to describe its project, but it performs this analysis implicitly by accounting for the simultaneity with which gendered and racialized forms of violence have been mobilized against Indigenous women throughout Canada’s colonial history and present (A. Smith, *Conquest* 8). Hence Indigenous feminism’s mutually constituent commitments: as an analytical project and as a methodology, it both “takes gender seriously as a social organizing process” that—within the “context of patriarchal societies”—has systemically subordinated women to men and also “confronts the dominant myths and political, social and economic practices that dignify, deny or perpetuate colonialism” as the “enforced appropriation of Aboriginal nations’ land and resources” (Green, “Taking” 21, 22). A key strategy in the colonial appropriation of land and resources has been the deliberate dismantling of Indigenous kinship relations through the targeting of women and children

for forced dislocation and assimilation. This is seen clearly in the examples of the Indian Act and the residential schools system, as well as in the subsequent gendered violence these forced removals make possible. In analyzing these and other state-sponsored assaults on women and children as the calculated means by which colonial governments have undermined Indigenous peoples' sovereignty on their lands, and, moreover, in theorizing the centrality of gendered and racialized forms of oppression to these assaults, *Finding Dawn* performs an Indigenous feminist analysis of violence that sees gendered justice as integral to the struggle for sovereignty. And while colonial governments have sought to evict Indigenous peoples from their lands, languages, and nations in part by dismembering "strong kin relations in which women had significant authority" (Anderson 83), *Finding Dawn* purposefully *re-members* missing and murdered women to the territories and familial networks from which they have been violently removed. Significantly, this process of remembering is pursued through story as a methodology that can both contextualize these removals historically and affirm missing women's relations to one another, to their communities, and to their ancestral lands in the present.

Part of *Finding Dawn*'s analytical contribution to feminist antiviolence, then, is to position the seemingly disparate stories of missing and murdered women in *relation* to one another and to the families, communities, and territories from which they are missing, foregrounding not only Indigenous women's shared vulnerability to violence across different material circumstances but also the politically resistive ways women are actively remembered within and across different familial and community-based networks. Interviewing the families of missing women, as well as activists, scholars, and survivors of violence in different territories across western Canada, Welsh enacts a qualitative research practice rooted in what Cree-Saulteaux scholar Margaret Kovach has called "story as Indigenous methodology" (94). For Kovach, story functions as a way of advancing holistic, contextualized knowledge in terms of both content and method (96). In this understanding, story both *makes* meaning and *reflects* upon the ways in which we come to know. In drawing together a series of oral histories—that is, "personal narratives of place, happenings, and experiences" of the missing and of those who work daily to remember (95)—*Finding Dawn* uses story to promote broader public awareness around violence and its historical roots while exploring ques-

tions of method, memory, and representation as central to this project. Through story the film tells its audience empirical facts, but it also theorizes different community-held knowledges about violence as constituted in part by the methods through which this information is sought, told, organized, and represented. In short, the film theorizes—through story as an Indigenous methodology—that what we can know about violence depends upon the form taken by our research and dissemination endeavors. This applies in the realms of activism, commemoration, scholarship, and teaching, as these are all sites of inquiry and intervention explored reflexively throughout Welsh's documentary.

FINDING DAWN: RE-SEARCH AND REMEMBRANCE

In many ways, *Finding Dawn* is about what Anishinaabe scholar Kathleen Absolon would call “re-search,” that is, “journeys of learning, being and doing” that center the seeking and gathering of knowledge from an Indigenous perspective (10). Thematically, it follows family-led searches for three missing women: Dawn Crey, Ramona Wilson, and Daleen Bosse. It thus takes viewers on a journey of sorts—one that begins in Vancouver's DTES, from which Crey disappeared; travels north to the Highway of Tears, where Wilson was last seen; and then pushes east across the prairies to Saskatoon, where Bosse went missing. The journey, however, doesn't end there: in the film's final sections, Welsh completes the search in all four directions, first heading south from Saskatoon to Regina, where she interviews Indigenous literary scholar Janice Acoose, and then finally traveling west to the coast, where she interviews anti-violence activist Fay Blaney. In these concluding sections, Acoose and Blaney are interviewed about their own journeys of “learning, being, and doing” by which they transformed personal histories of violence in order to become educators and leaders in their communities. In this way the film positions these women not as objects of research to be better known and understood, nor as victims of colonial violence in need of assistance or intervention, but as “agent[s] of change” who impart teachings in antiviolence analysis and protocol (Blaney, in *Finding Dawn*). The film brings us into Acoose's First Nations University classroom, where students discuss the work of Cree-Métis poet Marilyn Dumont, and into a boardroom, where Blaney leads a community action group in developing an antiviolence response protocol. These examples bring

a crucial balance to Welsh's re-search process by documenting not only the search for missing women but also the diverse forms of antiviolence work undertaken by Indigenous women across Canada. *Finding Dawn* thus models through the stories of Acoose and Blaney several pathways of hope, resilience, and transformation. As Welsh states: "I set out on this journey to find Dawn, but I also found Fay. I found Janice. I found the people who strive and search and hope" (*Finding Dawn*). While Crey, Wilson, and Bosse are the primary biographical subjects whose stories lend an initial organizing principle to the film, each missing woman's story is held in the broader nest of relations created by Welsh's own journey of re-search—to seek and assert methodological interventions into the issue of gendered colonial violence and its remembrance.

Methodologically, then, this documentary film reflects upon responsible research practices where gendered colonial violence is concerned. It is about how our chosen modes of inquiry impact our findings and affect the terms on which we might then imagine or pursue social transformation. When Welsh asks at the opening of the film, "What is it about numbers? What do they tell us? Do they help us understand?" she is importantly asking questions not only about the prevalence of violence—that "relentless adding up of numbers" (Welsh, qtd. in Bealy 31)—but also about the means by which we make public knowledge about this. She signals with these framing questions a tension between the quantifying rhetoric of fact-finding missions and a kind of knowledge that cannot be known, counted, or studied in a Euro-Western, empirical sense. After all, the empirical facts of Dawn Crey's case can tell us some things—that she went missing in November 2000, that her name was added to the missing women's list in February 2001, that her DNA was found on the farm in 2004—but there are so many things these facts cannot tell us. For instance, the numbers alone cannot impart how a history (and present) of colonial displacement could make possible such unfathomable violence, how the terms on which we seek and make knowledge of this history impact how we conceive of its transformation, how Indigenous frameworks for seeking and remembrance might offer a much-needed critique of Euro-Western research paradigms while also asserting the sovereignty of Indigenous ones. It is these sorts of details that the film seeks to tell. Offering a counterpoint to the quantitative rhetoric of statistical reports and the extractive logic of some government-sponsored research practices, Welsh instead interrogates

the analytical potential of story as a method of inquiry into violence and into *how* we come to know.

In *Kaandossiwin: How We Come to Know*, Kathleen Absolon elucidates a “wholeistic framework for Indigenous methodologies” as observed through her work with a series of graduate student researchers who center Indigenous worldviews and knowledge to their work in the academy (50). She does so through the metaphor of the petal flower—a diagram she first develops after it arrives to her in a dream. The petal flower framework is a holistic approach to showing the relationship between different but interdependent aspects of Indigenous research (49): the roots (foundational principles), the flower center (the self as located in the research), the leaves (process and journey), the stem (methodological supports), the petals (different ways of searching), and the environment (the broader research context) (51). Through this framework Absolon emphasizes, like Welsh, the important connections between the researcher’s knowledge-seeking paradigm, purpose, and findings.

This all begins at the roots—the foundational paradigm from which a research project is developed. Shaped by worldview, the roots provide the invisible but ever-present grounding of a research project as “manifested in actions, behaviours, ethics and methods” (Absolon 53). Though unseen and existing below the surface, the roots necessarily inform the entire research process and all of the choices made by the researcher. As I’ve discussed, in the case of *Finding Dawn* one of the foundational paradigms for its research is an Indigenous feminist approach to the issue of missing and murdered women, one that puts apparently interpersonal forms of violence in the context of systemic, state-sponsored violence while connecting but never collapsing the different women’s stories that it tells. It thus highlights the interdependence of gendered and colonial forms of systemic dislocation and violence and affirms women’s agency in remembering, analyzing, and transforming this violence from an Indigenous perspective. In her account of Indigenous methodologies, Absolon begins with “the roots” in order to describe research as a “search for congruency with the re-researcher’s own worldview” (50). With this in mind, a discussion of *Finding Dawn* might seek congruency between the film’s project of critical remembrance and its repertoire of specifically Indigenous methods for this. This entails distinguishing between the film’s *received* project of remembrance and that which I argue the film does at its roots.

At its roots, *Finding Dawn* remembers missing women in interviews with family members whose storied reflections highlight the connections between honoring memory and asserting sovereign Indigenous presence and resilience. But because this involves, on the surface, putting “a human face to what has happened” to so many Indigenous women in this country (Welsh, *Finding Dawn*), the film’s project is often popularly received as a “humanizing” one wherein the faceless or nameless women who populate dominant public discourse are ostensibly reframed by the documentary’s effort to put “faces to the names” (Berg A17). In putting “a human face to the mounting number of victims” (Withey A2), it is argued, the film “forge[s] awareness of the violence” while reminding viewers that “these women existed in the lives of all who loved them” (Lewis 14). Indigenous women have been denied dignity and humanity throughout Canadian colonial history—the argument goes—and the film restores women’s fundamental humanity by “tak[ing] viewers into the lives of these women and young girls” (Suthers 18). Through the details of these women’s lives and deaths, viewers are introduced to this issue of “national disgrace” (Fleras 47) and are thus presumably transformed—by the act of watching the film itself—into more caring and socially responsible citizens.

This line of argument has enormous intellectual and affective appeal, which I’ve seen at work in popular and academic reception as well as in teaching settings where I’ve shown the film. As one reviewer notes of *Finding Dawn*’s pedagogical potential, “I can’t imagine a single student who would be unmoved by the eloquent testimonials of strong parents and caring siblings as they struggle to cope with the devastation of lost daughters and sisters” (Fleras 48). While I wouldn’t discount the complex pedagogical value of affect nor the evocative role of family testimonials in the film, I do want to complicate the root ends to which this affect is presumed to work and for whom—that is, toward the affirmation of Indigenous women’s inherent dignity, or toward the affirmation of non-Indigenous viewers for their “discovery” of this dignity? The problem I observe is this: if we understand the film as primarily an exercise in uncovering how Indigenous women have been dehumanized by “widespread attitudes in our society” (Welsh, *Finding Dawn*), then its pedagogical value rests in how it positions viewers to *verify* Indigenous women’s true humanity and in doing so to validate (as a *fait accompli*) their roles as allies in the project of antiracism. The discovery and veri-

fiction of Indigenous women's humanity become the primary work the film is assumed to facilitate, which not only assumes a uniform non-Indigenous viewer for whom this humanity was formerly in question but also dramatically flattens out the complex forms of storytelling and of response that are modeled (for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous viewers) by the film itself. As Andrea Smith points out, an argument that presumes that "the problem facing Native peoples is that they have been 'dehumanized'" invites as its solution only the attainment of more knowledge and better understanding: "Antiracist intellectual and political projects are often premised on the notion that if people knew us better, we too would be granted humanity" ("Unsettling" 265–66). This overlooks the ways in which "the human"—as a universal, self-determining subject—is a particular ideological project that has been historically constituted through the oppression of others (266; L. Smith 27). Moreover, I argue, this formulation locates political agency and the potential for social transformation *not* with Indigenous women but with the non-Indigenous interlocutor or viewer who becomes, again, the arbiter of humanity—and whose own humanity (mobility, agency, and capacity to change and then affect others) is what has always been at stake. Indigenous women's humanity and worth are positioned by this logic as objects of discovery to be uncovered by the universal seeking subject who, through the seemingly personalized connection with the missing and murdered made possible by the film, moves from ignorance or indifference toward awareness. In this Enlightenment model of social change, it is the non-Indigenous viewer's "humanity" that is ultimately affirmed, whose knowledge is centered, and whose transformation is presumably sought and attained.

Instead of understanding *Finding Dawn* within this extractive and "discovery-driven" paradigm, however, I argue that the film embeds critical Indigenous strategies through which to imagine research, remembrance, and social transformation differently. Looking at the film through an Indigenous methods framework, we can see how its *root* project is not one merely of raising awareness, of "humanizing" victims of violence, or of adding valuable memorial reflections to an existing body of statistical data (de Vos; Fleras 47; O'Connor 51). Rather, the film seeks to model and enact possible research and storytelling practices within an Indigenous framework of knowledge making. These practices locate knowledge and authority with Indigenous peoples them-

selves and demonstrate through Indigenous-led examples a range of activist responses to the issue of gendered colonial violence. In this way the film focuses on acts of “resilience and strength” (Fleras 47) not only as an awareness-raising endeavor meant to humanize Indigenous peoples in the face of colonial victimization but, more importantly, as a way of modeling responsive action from an Indigenous perspective. This doesn’t discount the value or possibility of raising awareness among non-Indigenous viewers but instead centers as fundamental to this learning process a reckoning with Indigenous principles of research and resistance. As Linda Tuhiwai Smith notes, “Non-indigenous research has been intent on documenting the demise and cultural assimilation of indigenous peoples. Instead it is possible to celebrate survival, or what Gerald Vizenor has called ‘survivance’” (146). It is this assertion of Indigenous survivance that is at the root of the film’s work.

Vizenor’s notion of survivance articulates “an active sense of presence over absence, deracination, and oblivion” (1). As the “continuance of stories, not a mere reaction” (1), survivance is about the ongoing acts of resistance that work by asserting the continued persistence of Indigenous peoples and knowledges. *Finding Dawn* documents several examples of this persistence as asserted by family members in remembrance of loved ones lost and then models for viewers how they might *read* for presence rather than seeking only stories of dehumanization, disappearance, and demise. In the BC context, the stories of Dawn Crey and Ramona Wilson are meant in *Finding Dawn* to reframe common public perceptions about the prominent missing women cases of Vancouver and the Highway of Tears, respectively, while foregrounding the survivance work of family members and activists in each site. And unlike public knowledge-making initiatives like the BC Missing Women’s Commission of Inquiry, which was publicly challenged by some of its participants for its inattention to the significant grassroots work already undertaken by women organizers in each of these sites, the film is premised fundamentally on demonstrating pathways of antiviolence action and remembrance from the perspective of family members and activists. *Finding Dawn* begins this work with the case of Dawn Crey.

Following immediately from the film’s opening sequence, Dawn’s story begins for us on the streets from which she disappeared. From the vantage point of a moving vehicle, Welsh’s camera offers a series of fleeting tracking shots of the DTES streets. This is a familiar set of images for any

viewer with a passing knowledge of Vancouver's inner city and its representation in local and national media; as Dara Culhane points out, these streets have been a "favorite focus" of media photographers and researchers alike, whose cameras capture spectacles of social suffering for the "virtual voyeur" (594). This is one of Canada's poorest neighborhoods, where Indigenous peoples and women are overrepresented and where declared public health crises related especially to intravenous drug use, street-level sex work, and HIV/AIDS are often met with a pathologizing rhetoric of intervention and "treatment" that is predictably inattentive to the ongoing realities of settler colonialism that condition the terms on which many people arrive and live in the DTES (594–95). Here, "exotic and spectacular representation[s] of drugs, sex, violence, and crime" offer the preferred visual backdrop against which women are often shown "hurry[ing] back and forth . . . in and out of cars, alleyways, and parking lots" (595, 594)—a common image of subsistence-level sex work as constructed and consumed by the touristic gaze.

Of course, these are not impartial images. They are not merely objective documents of street-level life. Rather, it is through such images that settler Canadians come to know themselves in the colonial geographies of their present; it is through such images that the spatial aspects of gendered colonialism are naturalized, that the paired strategies of "spatial containment" and of the "violent expulsion" of Indigenous peoples from urban space are symbolically exercised (Razack 129). A material history of colonial displacement brought Dawn Crey and others to these inner-city streets, and a history of colonial violence is responsible for their predatory removal. Yet it remains a most pernicious and pervasive colonial fantasy that Indigenous women have a kind of ill-fated agency in this—that they are in part authors of their own demise. In the *Vancouver Police Department Missing Women Investigation Review*, for example, it is stated that "Downtown Eastside sex trade workers were *willingly* visiting the Pickton property in Coquitlam and some were being murdered there" (LePard 18, emphasis added). In this rhetoric, women's disappearances and murders become both predictable and provoked, on the one hand (because these women are shown living so-called high-risk lifestyles and to have gone "willingly" from the street corner to the site of their death), and sensationally anomalous, on the other (because the daily social conditions of oppression that made their removal and subsequent murder possible are individualized, as is the figure of Pick-

ton himself). According to the Vancouver-based Aboriginal Women's Action Network, this is just one example of "the victim blaming that pervades . . . stories on the 'Missing Women'" in the news media and in official institutional responses ("Statement"). By opening her segment on Dawn Crey in the way that she does, Welsh draws attention to (and *critiques*) this victim-blaming rhetoric implicitly. The opening set of tracking shots by which she introduces the DTES streets thus perform a kind of citational gesture, offering familiar documentary images of decontextualized and presumed despair against which her comparatively relational and story-based form of knowledge making will unfold: "For the women who vanished from this community," Welsh says, "life here was a daily struggle, and they did what they had to do to survive. Each of them had a story. And, like Dawn, most of them started out somewhere else" (*Finding Dawn*).

This is a story that neither begins nor ends on the streets of Vancouver. With a very different set of tracking shots, this time from a coastal mountain highway, Welsh purposefully replaces the streets from which Dawn disappeared with the traditional territory of the nation from which she came: the Stó:lô Nation. In a voice-over accompanying the visual footage of her eastward highway travel, Welsh explains: "I'm going to Chilliwack to meet Dawn's brother, Ernie Crey—a long-time activist for Aboriginal rights in BC." While tracking shots of the highway traffic put immediate distance between Welsh and the streets of the DTES, subsequent wide shots convey a living landscape of the Stó:lô Nation, whose traditional territory "starts at the mouth of the Fraser river and extends deep into the canyons of the coastal mountains" (*Finding Dawn*). It is through this frame that Welsh positions Dawn in relation to both her tribal ancestry and her immediate family, thus subtly modeling for viewers one of the central tenets of Indigenous research methodologies: the importance of location and of situating the self.⁵ As Kathleen Absolon and Cam Willett put it, "Location is about relationships to land, language, [and the] spiritual, cosmological, political, economical, environmental, and social elements in one's life" (98). More specifically, it is a way of explaining these relationships in order to create grounded and accountable knowledge. For theorists of Indigenous methodologies, then, situating yourself means more than saying who you are and where you come from (Absolon and Willett 104); it is also a means of "clarifying [your] perspective on the world" in land-based,

community-specific, and historically grounded ways (Kovach 110). As Craig Womack says, “Stories take place” (44), and the geography of Dawn Crey’s original homescape *matters* for the story Welsh seeks to tell. By this knowledge, Welsh signals a broader ancestral network from which Dawn is missing, one that is shown in both geographical and temporal dimensions to include but extend beyond the DTES (a community unto itself, formed and lived in traditional Coast Salish territory) and into the Stó:lô Nation’s past and future. Against the comparatively decontextualized representations by which the public has become aware of Vancouver’s missing women, then, Welsh produces a situated and relational account of Dawn Crey. This treatment serves both as a pointed means of reshaping dominant public perceptions and as a subtle way to model Indigenous methodological interventions into antiviolence research and public knowledge making.

Dawn’s brother, Ernie Crey, observes this protocol in his own interview with Welsh when he positions himself and his sister within a tribal history that predates the arrival of colonial interferences. “We are the Stó:lô people,” he says by way of introduction, “the people of the river. We’re a fishing community, a community that has lived here . . . probably for as long as nine thousand years. Certainly since the last ice age. This is the place we call home. And we grew up here” (*Finding Dawn*). By observing this principle of self-location, Ernie sets forth a particular epistemological lens through which viewers might interpret Dawn’s personal history. Significantly, this is not a biographical portrait meant simply to remember Dawn more fully as “human” for an imagined viewer’s benefit of understanding (A. Smith, “Unsettling” 270). Rather, Dawn is here re-membered into a specifically Stó:lô genealogy to which Ernie has lived responsibilities when telling his sister’s story. As Stó:lô scholar Jo-ann Archibald says of storywork—or the use of stories and storytelling for educational purposes (ix)—speakers must “identify their kinship and speak from their experiences” (4). Ernie’s interview thus instructs viewers in Indigenous research and teaching methodologies while also providing an important narrative of Stó:lô survivance, told as the continual occupation of traditional territories in the Fraser Valley as captured visually by Welsh and explained in Ernie’s oral account. This re-visioning of Dawn within her nation’s past and future provides the communal context necessary to a more holistic understanding of her life and loss than that which could ever be conveyed by an account

of life in the DTES alone, replacing what is too often a rhetoric of victimhood with one that honors presence, agency, and resistance from a Stó:lô perspective.

Significantly, while emphasizing survivance over victimhood, Welsh nonetheless offers a trenchant analysis of colonial policy and its effects. As Absolon and Willett suggest, “We need to know how we got into the mess we’re in” (111), and accounting directly for the genocidal impacts of colonial policy is part of this process. This is not to focus on stories of demise at the expense of promoting survivance but is rather to illuminate the past and present impacts of colonization in ways that can “make sense” of the current reality of missing women (111). For Welsh, this means locating Dawn’s personal history in relation also to the “much bigger picture” of European colonial settlement (*Finding Dawn*), the processes of this settlement having had both historical and ongoing effects for multiple generations of Stó:lô people, including the Crey family. As Welsh explains, four generations of settlement displaced the Stó:lô from “their land, their livelihood, and even their children, who were taken away first to residential schools and then to foster homes.” Dawn and her siblings were themselves taken from their mother and placed in foster homes throughout the Fraser Valley, and the telling of this detail serves to make Dawn’s own story resonate within a broader colonial history of forced dislocation that has brought so many women to the DTES. While much public knowledge making about the missing women cases diagnoses this dislocation in a descriptive sense, *Finding Dawn* additionally performs a kind of healing remembrance through the method of locating the self. As Absolon states, locating oneself and others “connects us to family, community and nation. In that sense . . . the research process cultivates a healing movement of being reconnected and remembered from the dismemberment and disconnections created by colonial policy and actions such as the *Indian Act* and residential schools” (69).

One of the delicate challenges involved in this kind of survivance storywork, then, is the necessary balance that such work must seek between an empowering account of “presence over absence, deracination, and oblivion,” on the one hand (Vizenor 1), and an unflinching account of the real, lived effects of colonial violence, on the other. Settler colonialism continues to mandate deracination and oblivion, after all, and many documentary and truth-telling projects now seek to challenge this mandate

and to show its devastating effects.⁶ This emphasis can, however, have the effect of constructing for public consumption stories of victimhood that feed easily into the long-standing national myth of Indigenous peoples as in need of intervention or rescue. These are images primarily of despair and “deficit” (Cook-Lynn 179–80)—images of a “problem-ridden, broken existence serving to confirm stereotypes offered as explanations for the marginalization of native populations within Canadian society” and as *justifications* for further state interference into Indigenous lives (Simon 132). *Finding Dawn* suggests instead that a responsible and justice-based representation could engage a robust critique of colonial violence while always acknowledging the agency, knowledge, and leadership of Indigenous peoples in directing this critique and in envisioning practices of dignity and freedom. Working from within an Indigenous intellectual paradigm, Welsh performs not just “an evisceration of colonial thinking” or a description of colonialism’s effects, then, but what Leanne Simpson would call a “visioning process where we create new and just realities in which our ways of being can flourish” (*Dancing* 52). For Welsh, this visioning process includes modeling methodological strategies for representing the stories of missing women in such a way as to foreground the larger web of relations from which they are missing, short-circuiting what could be a colonial fantasy of Indigenous victimhood and instead showing how women are re-membered to their families, communities, and territorial homescapes.

The film also performs this critical remembrance through its documentation of annual memorial walks for the missing and murdered. From the Annual Women’s Memorial March taking place in the DTES every 14 February, to the Take Back the Highway demonstrations coordinated in communities along Highway 16 every year, memorial walks are shown in each of *Finding Dawn*’s case studies to enact an embodied assertion of collective action that turns our focus “away from the regimes of disappearance to resistance, survival, and possibility” (Culhane 600). That is, walking is shown as a strategic political expression and as a form of knowledge making that connects the strategies of research and remembrance employed in the DTES and along the Highway of Tears; it serves not merely as a way to mark a passing or to document discreet instances of disappearance and “demise.” Drawing from Indigenous traditions of social movement, *Finding Dawn* frames walking as a kind of “community procession” (to use Leanne Simp-

son's phrase), as a kind of mobilization that takes place over time and space and that involves "persistence, patience and slow, painful movement" (*Dancing* 67). This is shown both in relation to annual memorial walks themselves and in community-coordinated searches for the missing that take place in northern BC and on the prairies, and that *Finding Dawn* renders in contrast to the specialized search for DNA evidence conducted by authorities on the unnamed Pickton farm site at the film's outset. Of one communal search effort, for example, Terrace radio host Lynne Terbasket comments: "The effort put into that was tremendous. I've never seen anything like it. It was an amazing effort. It was not successful, but we tried" (*Finding Dawn*). Terbasket's words serve as an important reminder in the film that "large-scale mobilizations" leading to "discernable immediate change" are not the only ways in which to understand resistance and "result" (Simpson, *Dancing* 101). Her comments further suggest, as Simpson does, that matters of "intent, commitment and vision" are at the heart of many community-led activist initiatives, the impacts of which may be incalculable and unknown at the time of their enactment but that constitute significant forms of resistance nonetheless (102).⁷ Like the communal search effort that may yield nothing of clear evidentiary significance, the memorial walk is valued in *Finding Dawn* as a strategic and collectivized manifestation of vision and of intent: family members are joined by friends and allies in claiming their inalienable connection to territory, in caretaking the memory of loved ones they've lost, and in setting forth a new vision for the future. The memorial walk is thus a way to "nurture life, motion, presence and emergence" (143).

Matilda Wilson's annual walk in honor of her daughter Ramona's memory is one of several examples offered in *Finding Dawn* and might be the clearest instance in which the film articulates walking as a form of knowledge making about survivance. Here, walking becomes a kind of story that is told about the missing in northern BC and also a communal ceremony through which the responsibilities of the living are exercised and sustained. Ramona Wilson went missing from the Highway of Tears near Smithers in June 1994 while hitch-hiking to a nearby town where she had plans to join up with friends. The annual memorial walk traces the last known steps Ramona took along Highway 16, and in following these steps together, family and community members are able to "feel closer to her" (*Finding Dawn*). Ramona's older sister Brenda explains:

“It’s a healing process for us. And to have the support from other people makes it even better—gives us strength to go on and try to find answers of what happened to my sister.” Walking is here theorized as a *way to know*—a method or technique by which to search for answers and to gather strength from others in carrying this search forward. Close-up footage of walkers on the highway captures the footfalls of participants as they move forward along the route together, while audio content from home interviews with Brenda and Matilda accompanies this visual detail. Welsh’s interviews serve to tell Ramona’s story from her family’s perspective and to explain the purpose and vision of the annual walk. In this way the film gives us an interpretive frame through which to understand the memorial walk as a form of critical Indigenous remembrance.

In her list of “twenty-five Indigenous projects,” for example, Linda Tuhiwai Smith defines “remembering” as a research process that works by “connecting bodies with place and experience” (147). At its roots, the memorial walk enacts just this sort of connection, re-membering women to their territories and in relation to one another. Rather than an act of commemorative awareness raising premised upon the accumulating *disappearances* of Indigenous women, then, the walk is presented as a way for families and communities to assert an embodied Indigenous presence on the land. Footage of Ramona’s mother, Matilda, approaching the roadside memorial at the walk’s end is accompanied by this voice-over, in which Matilda pointedly explains the continued presence the walk is meant to demonstrate:

We are showing people that we are not afraid. We will never be afraid. That we are here. We will always be here. If it’s not me, it will be my children. And if it’s not my children, it will be my grandchildren. And if it’s not my grandchildren, it will be my great-grandchildren. I am fighting. I’m fighting for the loved ones. I’m fighting for the unsolved murders. I’m fighting for everything that I have. I never back down. I will always be here. This face will always be here.

Through the rhetorical use of repetition and the evocative choice of the auxiliary verb “will,” expressing future-oriented notions of choice, determination, and persistence, Matilda Wilson’s oral commentary annotates Welsh’s visual footage of the walk with a powerful statement on intergenerational sovereignty and survivance. Reorienting our

understanding of remembrance to include a forward-looking process of envisioning new futures, Matilda argues for the annual memorial walk as claiming Indigenous peoples' inexorable connection to the land over time: what "we are showing people," she says, is that "we will always be here." Like Leanne Simpson's account of *biskaabiiyang*—the Nishnaabeg concept of "looking back" in order to move forward (*Dancing* 49)—Matilda's statement articulates remembrance as an active process of reclamation and vision that affirms Indigenous *presence*. The annual walk is the lived, embodied expression of that vision; it asserts a multi-generational resiliency that Ramona's murder deeply wounds but cannot break. Thus, while many dominant, mainstream interpretations of the missing women problem take "the disappearance of Indians as inevitable" (A. Simpson 208), the only inevitability expressed in this section of *Finding Dawn* is that of a continued Indigenous presence: as Matilda says, "This face will always be here."

Leanne Simpson emphasizes that "as long as [there] has been colonialism on our lands, there has been resistance" (*Dancing* 101). Colonialism has attempted the "obliteration of memory" as a "deliberate strategy of oppression" (L. Smith 147). It has done so through land theft, by way of legislated dispossession through the Indian Act, and in sequential policies of child removal (residential schools, contemporary child welfare policies) designed to fracture the multigenerational transmission of knowledge. *Finding Dawn* affirms critical Indigenous practices of remembrance that resist the calculated obliteration of memory these policies were designed to produce. In so doing it asserts Indigenous-led research processes by which colonial histories are named and ongoing resistances are acknowledged, demonstrating the multigenerational connections that exist (despite colonial attempts to sever them) between Indigenous knowledges and their living, fluid expressions in the present. Matilda Wilson's memorial walk performs this connection as an embodied practice that not only makes visible the past story of Ramona's disappearance but also constitutes an act of protest that will be carried forward for generations to come. Similarly, Ernie Crey's interview re-members Dawn to the Stó:lō Nation's history and future. Through these processes of research and remembrance, Welsh, like Absolon, emphasizes the "methodological concepts of reconnection, remembering, learning, recovering and reclaiming" (92). Through these concepts, Welsh rethinks with others what it means to remember the missing and what it means to make

public knowledge about this remembering—that it is not about making definitive, quantitative knowledge with questionable “reliability in Indigenous contexts” (98). Rather, it is about making a different kind of knowledge, about communally held practices of remembrance and resistance. As she says in closing, “We may never know what happened to Dawn or to so many other women we’ve lost. But I do know that right across this country there are people who will not give up hope. We will continue to honor the dead and learn to take better care of the living. We will search for the missing and call them home.”

NOTES

1. Adrian Chamberlain of the *Victoria Times Colonist* points out that Robert Pickton is not once “mentioned by name in *Finding Dawn*” (c5).

2. Fay Blaney further suggests that the tone of acquiescence and closure accompanying some responses to the police investigation into the Vancouver missing women actually occludes the fact that police had “mismanaged these cases for years” (162) and that Indigenous women *continue* to go missing in BC and across Canada. For instance, in the *Vancouver Police Department Missing Women Investigation Review*, Doug LePard asserts that “disappearances of the Missing Women began in the mid-1990s and ended when Robert Pickton was arrested in February 2002” (18). Moreover, this tone of closure—the sense that the culprit has now been caught—fixates on the figure of Robert Pickton, individualizing his crimes and obscuring this case’s place in a much larger pattern of gendered and racialized violence.

3. NWAC’s 2010 report, “What Their Stories Tell Us,” states: “As of March 31, 2010, 582 cases of missing or murdered Aboriginal women and girls have been entered into NWAC’s Sisters In Spirit database” (i). According to the University of Ottawa doctoral researcher Maryanne Pearce, whose 2013 thesis research included the creation of a publicly accessible database, the number is much higher: Pearce puts the number of missing and murdered Indigenous women at 824 (Welch A6).

4. As the interim report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada notes, “What existed prior to 1883 was not a residential school system, but a series of individual church-led initiatives to which the federal government provided grants” (*They Came* 6). 1883 marked the year that Sir John A. Macdonald’s cabinet first “authoriz[ed] the creation of three residential schools for Aboriginal children in the Canadian West” (5), although earlier incarnations of the system certainly existed (fashioned on the existing church-run models as well as the industrial schools system in the United States).

5. Welsh models this principle herself when she reflects at the outset: “Like Dawn,” she says, “I too am a Native woman.” In this way, Welsh clarifies her personal stakes in the research journey.

6. As contemporary reimaginings of those documentary practices undertaken in

the tradition of salvage ethnography, practices that fantasized with nostalgic hope and regret about the inevitability of Indigenous peoples' disappearance, some of these accounts arguably fixate on images of despair and deficit at the expense of more empowering visions.

7. Simpson further elaborates on this concept by explaining the teaching that was shared with her by Métis elder Maria Campbell: "She told me that acts of resistance are like throwing a stone into water. The stone makes its initial impact in the water, displacing it and eventually sinking to the bottom. There is the original splash the act of resistance makes. . . . But there are also more subtle waves of disruption that ripple or echo out from where the stone impacted the water . . . [and that] remain in the water long after the initial splash is gone" (145).

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BOOK REVIEWS

Gerald Vizenor. *Blue Ravens: Historical Novel*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 2014. ISBN 978-0-8195-7416-9. 300 pp.

Billy J. Stratton, *University of Denver*

Gerald Vizenor knows the importance of memory and place. His writing has often drawn from the experience of the Anishinaabeg and their storied connection to the lands emanating from the White Earth Reservation and the surrounding lakes and woods, but also from the active presence of Native people in urban spaces. In previous novels Vizenor has told tricky stories of Native survivance that take place “between Minnesota and New Mexico” (xxi), as in the case of his groundbreaking first novel, *Darkness in Saint Louis Bearheart*,¹ to more specific locations such as Tianjin China, Lake of the Woods, Oakland, Berkeley, Hiroshima, and, of course, Minneapolis and the White Earth Reservation in novels such as *Griever*, *The Heirs of Columbus*, *Dead Voices*, *Hotline Healers*, *Hiroshima Bugi*, *Chair of Tears*, and *Shrouds of White Earth*. It is clear from these stories that Vizenor is attentive to what N. Scott Momaday terms “the remembered earth” wherever his travels have taken him.

Spanning the tumultuous postallotment period in Anishinaabe history from 1907 to 1924, *Blue Ravens* tells a story of solace and survivance through the experiences of Aloysius and Basile Beaulieu, a pair of brothers from the White Earth Reservation. That they are also artists, a painter and writer, as well as soldiers in the American Expeditionary Forces during World War I imbues the narrative with historical and artistic vitality. Known equally for his explorations in narrative chance and the creation of a new lexicon for Native American literary studies, Vizenor contributes to this venture in *Blue Ravens* with an elaboration of what he calls “totemic associations,” which are defined as “the chance

associations of native memories in the natural world” (1). As with many of his other stories, *Blue Ravens* accrues meaning through an interpenetrating web of historical, literary, and artistic relationships that may not be immediately apparent but are made accessible through the recurring play of irony and visionary perception conveyed in the Beaulieu brothers’ writing and art. The thematic effect is exemplified in scenes that take place between White Earth and Minneapolis whereby the lives of characters take on cosmopolitan import through chance associations with literary figures Mark Twain and Oscar Wilde, as well as interactions with the Japanese artist Yamada Baske and the trader/storier Odysseus Walker Young, who also invokes the presence of his namesakes in Homer’s *Odyssey*, Joyce’s *Ulysses*, and a Union general who became president. It is by these interactions that Basile and Aloysius gain a deeper understanding of the capacity of word and image “to confront the obvious and create stories by natural reason” (90).

The horror of World War I, which “continues forever on the White Earth Reservation in the stories of veterans and survivors of combat” (140), serves as a natural frame for the articulation of Vizenor’s creative insights. It is also imperative to note that the choice to set the story within this intensely traumatic “epoch of memory” also reveals a deep personal investment, one that is informed by his own family’s connection to the war, whereby the actions of two great uncles, Ignatius and Lawrence Vizenor, are honored. The work’s dedication to the memory of Ignatius Vizenor, who “was killed in action on October 8, 1918, at Montbréhain, France,” as well as relatives Augustus Hudon Beaulieu, Ellanora Beaulieu, John Clement Beaulieu, and Lawrence Vizenor, brings the theme of *Blue Ravens* into clearer focus.

It is apparent that Paris is a city that Vizenor holds dear, a place where he is well at home, with its cosmopolitan charm and renown as a sanctuary for artists, poets, lovers, novelists, tricksters, and philosophers. Vizenor draws on the creative synergy of the City of Lights to illuminate “visual scenes of memory and imagination,” in contrast to the “federal occupation on the reservation,” as one of the primary settings of *Blue Ravens* (111, 170). While the scenes set at White Earth and Minneapolis are handled with all of the insight and wit readers have come to expect from Vizenor’s pen, it is in the restrained but evocative depictions of the war (the narration of the combat spans only thirty-three pages) as “the silent ruins of merciless rage” (111), as well as the Beaulieu brothers’ subsequent adventures in Paris, that *Blue Ravens* truly shines. In scenes involving Basile’s and Aloysius’s visits to such celebrated locales as the

Pont des Arts, Café du Dôme, Les Deux Magots, Café du Départ, and Le Chemin du Montparnasse, the “famous alley of raggedy ateliers of great artists” (158), the descriptions are rendered with such clarity and exuberance that readers often feel as though they are there in Paris with them (and him), sharing in the bread, wine, and stories. These scenes also further reinforce the cosmopolitan nature of the novel through the brothers’ chance associations with such luminaries as Marie Vassilieff, Max Jacob, James Joyce, Gertrude Stein, Malcolm Cowley, and Marc Chagall within a storied landscape in which the memories of Alfred Dreyfus, Pablo Picasso, Joyce Kilmer, Georges Braque, Guillaume Apollinaire, Georges Danton, Tecumseh, Little Wolf, Crazy Horse, and Great Sun are also honored. Such is the “magical sleeve of visual memories” that Vizenor fashions in this narrative, prompting Basile to observe at the close of the novel: “Paris was my best story, and no other place would ever be the same” (260, 285).

In addition to the Beaulieu brothers and their (and *his*) kin, the triumph of presence over absence, motion over inertia, memory over forgetfulness, art over ideology is best exemplified in Vizenor’s sensitive and affecting portrayal of the *mutilés de guerre*, Henri and André, as well as the other mutilated veterans of the war “who wore masks to camouflage broken faces” (244). The inexplicable, but also indispensable, association of Aloysius and Basile with Henri and André along the river Seine provides the context through which the achievement of the novel, and Aloysius’s paintings of the totemic blue ravens, exemplifies the capacity of literature and art “to create a sense of presence with the perceptions of motion, a native presence in the waves of memory, and in the transience of shadows” (247). Like all of the works in Vizenor’s oeuvre, *Blue Ravens* is at its most direct a story of survivance and a celebration of “*terre, visage humain, esprit, coeur, memoire*” but also “*liberté*” (265). It is an enduring narrative from a master storiier, a novel that readers won’t soon forget. For most writers, a work of such passion and grace would well be considered the crowning achievement of an exceptional literary career, but I suspect that Gerald Vizenor has more great stories to share with us. I, for one, certainly hope so.

NOTE

1. First published by Truck Press in 1978, this work was revised and rereleased as *Bearheart: The Heirship Chronicles* in 1990.

George Kenny. *Gaawiin Mawisiwag Anishinaabeg: Indians Don't Cry*. Trans. Patricia M. Ningewance. Winnipeg: U of Manitoba P, 2014. ISBN 978-0-88755-769-9. 190 pp.

David Groulx. *Bi-Gishkoziitwin Biidaanzhed Biidaabang*. Trans. Shirley Ida Williams. Toronto: Bookland, 2015. ISBN 978-1-926956-99-2. 96 pp.

David Groulx. *Rising with a Distant Dawn*. Trans. Shirley Ida Williams. Canadian Aboriginal Voices. Toronto: Bookland, 2011. ISBN 978-1-926956-05-3. 79 pp.

Margaret Noodin, *University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee*

The only appropriate literary response to the emerging trend of publishing modern poems and stories in indigenous languages, including Anishinaabemowin, is *gegapii* . . . finally. This actually translates more literally as “some when” without any connotations of finality and much allusion to tangible possibility, which is appropriate for the three titles reviewed here. The bilingual edition of *Gaawiin Mawisiwag Anishinaabeg: Indians Don't Cry*, along with the companion publications *Bi-Gishkoziitwin Biidaanzhed Biidaabang* and *Rising with the Distant Dawn*, mark an important shift in linguistic and poetic diversity. Any readers of American Indian and Aboriginal literature should find in the English poems a gesture toward postcolonial times and, in the Anishinaabe version of each poem, a compelling invitation to learn a language alive with ever-shifting compound verbs and descriptions of people and places centered in networks of relationships.

The volumes feature poems and stories written in English by Anishinaabe authors and subsequently translated by Anishinaabe language teachers. *Indians Don't Cry* was first published by George Kenny in 1977. A fluent speaker of Anishinaabemowin from Lac Seul First Nation in western Ontario, Kenny attended boarding school and received many years of education in English. When he began writing he continued using English and became one of the prominent voices among First Nations authors. The translation of his first book was done by Patricia Ningewance, a teacher and translator from his home community. By contrast, David Groulx began publishing much later, when most Anishinaabe people were speaking exclusively English. *Rising with a Distant Dawn* was published in 2011 and translated by Shirley Williams in 2014. With Groulx from Elliot Lake in northern Ontario and Wil-

liams originally from Manitoulin Island in southeastern Ontario, these books are also evidence of the Anishinaabe diaspora that surrounds the Great Lakes and reaches into the north-central United States.

Since the publication of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *Song of Hiawatha* in 1855, the Anishinaabe language (which can include Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi dialects) has been a part of the American poetic tradition. Based on Henry Schoolcraft's *Algic Researches* from 1839, *Hiawatha* belongs to the tradition of romantic dissection. The "songs" of many nations were collected and preserved in English by specialists and enthusiasts who favored a backward gaze, assumed no future for the languages and cultures of the precolonial world. For much of the past two centuries indigenous narratives were viewed as static, spiritual, and outside the canon. For example, *The Path on the Rainbow*, published by George Cronin in 1918, contains the "songs" of many nations, including the Anishinaabe, but they are not presented in a bilingual format. One cannot be sure of the translations, and there is no conversation between languages. By contrast to this indifference, in her translator's note to *Indians Don't Cry*, Ningewance describes many of the specific dilemmas she faced moving between languages and using Anishinaabemowin in a contemporary context. She notes, "In the Anishinaabe world, there is usually not much verbalization of a woman's looks. She either looks good or she does not look good." Meanwhile, "Anishinaabemowin has an infinite vocabulary to discuss nature in all its forms" (x).

The slippage between languages and cultures has been recognized more recently by literary critics who understand the need for inclusion. Following the Native American literary renaissance, first in the 1970s and then in the 1990s, Native and Aboriginal stories and poems became more visibly part of the canon, often at the beginning of an anthology, often serving as a gateway to transcendental modernism or continental literary history. Occasionally, indigenous languages were included in stories and poems, but most typically as a semiotic device deployed by authors and editors who knew their audiences would not read entire untranslated texts. Authors writing from the perspective of Native and aboriginal communities frequently used English because they were no longer learning heritage languages at home, and these languages had long been banished from the schools. Important recent collections have traced this path of syncretic linguistic resistance and assimilation. Armstrong and Grauer's *Native Poetry in Canada*, Robert Dale Parker's poetry collec-

tion *Changing Is Not Vanishing*, Cox and Justice's *Oxford Handbook of Indigenous American Literature*, and many more books focus on specific spaces, times, and voices of indigenous poetics. The very recent *Centering Anishinaabeg Studies* is a perfect companion volume to the work of Kenny and Groulx. The story of how American Indian and Aboriginal literature finds creative continuance in English, and eventually also in indigenous languages, is an important literary lesson.

Projects of translation like *Gaawiin Mawisiwag Anishinaabeg: Indians Don't Cry* and *Bi-Gishkoziitwin Biidaanzhed Biidaabang: Rising with the Distant Dawn* represent a legacy of historic reconsideration. In the United States the Native Languages Act declared that Native Americans had a right to use their heritage languages in 1991. In Canada the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was formed in 1998. Many have debated the impact of both, but slowly, in recent years amidst great struggles with educational and economic policy, language revitalization has begun to produce modern texts in languages indigenous to North America. Ofeilia Zepeda was one of the first poets to work in language documentation and education while writing creatively in Tohono O'odham. Her work is included in the anthology *Sing* with several other authors who write in Lenape, Comanche, Cherokee, and Anishinaabemowin. With these new volumes by Kenny and Groulx readers have full texts in specific indigenous languages that extend outside the language revitalization classroom and cross over into the world of literary publishing.

Reading the stories and poems by Kenny and Groulx, with their translations by Ningewance and Williams, scholars of literature and language have more to examine: the vocabulary available in each language, the patterns of grammar that vary with aesthetic choices, the contrasting phonetic syncope, and ultimately the absences in both languages where one language fails to even approximate the other. Consider the translation of Kenny's poem "I Don't Know This October Stranger," which becomes "Gaawiin nin-gikenimaasii awe Biiwide Gaa-dagoshing Binaakwewi-giizis E-bimangizod." The translation more literally says, "I don't know this stranger who arrives at the time of the falling leaves following." The depth of what is happening in his haunting introspective poem is conveyed differently in Anishinaabemowin. Later in the poem Kenny mentions his muse, and the description of his chosen profession in both languages has a cross-cultural significance that an English-only version simply wouldn't contain.

Gaawiin nin-gikenimaasii awe Binaakwewi-giisoo-biiwide gaa-
 ozhibii'ang odibaajimowinan
 gaye odoozhibii'iganan
 daabishkoo gete-wemitigoozhi Chaucer dazhi-
 gaakaanjiwebishkaagod
 Gaawiin e-bagidinigosig ji-gibichiid ji-anweshing,
 Aapiji e-andawendang awe Anishinaabe
 Ji-onji-ozhichigaadenig mazina'igan odoozhibii'iganan.

I don't know this autumn stranger
 that writes his stories
 and poems
 as if Chaucer himself was kicking
 him along, never letting him rest,
 this Indian dedicated to becoming
 published. (54)

The connections between the words “writing” (*ozhibii'ige*) and “poems” (*odoozhibii'iganan*) imply that poetry is a construct of writing, while “stories” (*odibaajimowinan*) are related to the act of “telling” (*dibaa-jimo*). Additionally, the Anishinaabe version shows that Chaucer was a European, perhaps technically British but called French in this poem by a wise translator who reminds us to consider that his name may stem from the French word for “shoe” (*chausneur*).

A similar expansion of meaning takes place when Williams translates Groulx's poems. Together the two languages teach multidimensional lessons with power and grace. In the poem “This River,” “Maanda Ziibi,” Groulx writes of a river and words.

Soft spoken river
 tall handsome river
 that comes down to us

 listen to the river
 rumbling through Okanagan
 carrying the voices of our people

 over the white water
 over white/water
 power of words/sounds

 carrying the hearts
 of the people
 into the next generation.

As Williams translates the poem, readers hear the sound “bi” woven through the poem and are invited to consider where connections are made of meaning and where they are simply sound. The “bi” in *ziibi* (river) and *nbi* (water) relates directly to the concept of liquid, while the “bi” in *bimowidoon* (to carry through motion) is the artistry of poetry connecting a constant rush of water to the experience of transmitting knowledge to the *mashi-ebiyaasgwaa* (the ones not with us yet, the next generation), which brings yet another “bi” into the poem.

Negaaj e-giigidomgak ziibi
 genowaak menowaabminaaagok ziibi
 ebi-niisjiwang yaaying nekeyaa

 bzindaagaadek ziibi
 e-baagnigemgak biitweying Okanagan
 bimowidoon giigidoowinan gibimaadiziiwinan nji

 baashji-waabshki-nbi
 baashji-waabshki-nbi
 e-piichiyimgak kidowinan / noondaagewinan

 bimoodood ode'en
 bemaadizijig nji

 oodi nekeyaa mshi-ebiyaasgwaa. (24)

These are fine writers supported by talented translators, which exponentially increases the layers of meaning in these books. Kenny is articulate, intuitive, and honest. Groulx creates multisensory poems that reach out to readers. A few publishers specialize in indigenous poetry. For example, Lost Horse Press has the Regenerations: Indigenous Poetry Series. Many presses, including the publishers of these volumes, are now considering indigenous language translations. There is hope. Poetry is *waawaagaa*, a back and forth. Readers and writers are both part of the equation. Read these poems, encourage speakers of indigenous languages to write, and consider learning an indigenous language being revitalized somewhere near you.

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Lawrence W. Gross. *Anishinaabe Ways of Knowing and Being*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014. ISBN 978-1-4724-1734-3. 316 pp.
Mark Freeland, *Ilf School of Theology*

In *Anishinaabe Ways of Knowing and Being*, Lawrence W. Gross seeks to demonstrate the ways in which a traditional Anishinaabe worldview has continued throughout the colonial period. His thesis is that “the Anishinaabe are using their traditional worldview to help them overcome the effects of postapocalypse stress syndrome” (6). To this end he begins with a description of what postapocalypse stress syndrome (PASS) is and then works to articulate what constitutes an Anishinaabe worldview, discussing how it is helping the Anishinaabeg to overcome the effects of PASS.

In chapter 2 Gross develops his theory of PASS by connecting it to the already established theories of posttraumatic stress disorder. He extends this concept of PTSD to a communal level to more clearly articulate the communal problems associated with trauma that settler-state colonization has imposed on the Anishinaabeg. In this theoretical extension of PTSD to PASS he demonstrates that the individuals dealing with the trauma of colonization not only have their own problems to deal with but that with colonization there is also a weakening of the institutional structures that help individuals to heal from trauma in a society. As these institutional structures are weakened or fully collapse, the worldview of the people is then called into question and needs to be modified.

While there have been successful efforts in developing programs to help individuals overcome PTSD, Gross suggests that more work needs to be focused on the development of new institutional structures to help communities effectively heal from the communal aspects of PASS.

Much of this book is focused on discussing the constitutive elements of the Anishinaabe worldview. He discusses a number of important cultural attributes, beginning with the role of silence in the culture. According to Gross, silence is a practice associated with seeking a vision and provides the space to properly comprehend relationships to the rest of life. Therefore, the importance of relationships, which he calls “heart strings,” is grounded in the practice of silence. From this foundation of silence, Gross builds a picture of Anishinaabe culture that includes Anishinaabemowin, the traditional Anishinaabe language, a comic vision, storytelling, Anishinaabe rhetoric, *bimaadiziwin* (the good life), and spirituality. The chapters discussing the comic vision demonstrate both the importance of laughter and jokes as a method of overcoming PASS, as well as the role of the trickster figure of Wenaboozhoo as a cultural buffoon and hero. This discussion of Wenaboozhoo helps to highlight the essential role of storytelling within Anishinaabe culture and the differences that are associated with Anishinaabe rhetoric and the digressions (side-bar stories) that are often used as a teaching methodology by elders. Rather than the direct question-and-answer format used in non-Indian culture, Anishinaabe rhetorical and teaching methods often rely upon the telling of stories that address the issues at hand. The final section of the book discusses the role of *bimaadiziwin* as a cultural teaching that is followed throughout the life of the Anishinaabeg and the role of spirituality as grounded in myth. According to Gross, spirituality and the associated Anishinaabe religion help to ground the culture in a system of values that are associated with living the good life of *bimaadiziwin*. Each of these Anishinaabe concepts demonstrates what constitutes an Anishinaabe worldview and shows how that aspect of the worldview functions to help heal the people from PASS.

I would suggest that the most effective articulation of the Anishinaabe worldview comes in chapter 4, on Anishinaabemowin and its association with quantum physics. In this chapter Gross demonstrates how the verb-oriented language of the Anishinaabeg is best thought of as effectively articulating the constant motion of the world they live in. He gives the example of a translation about singing and healing from

a related Algonquian language. In this example from the Montagnais, he analyzes a phrase about healing that is translated as “the magician/sorcerer sings a sick man” (105). This translation was given for a healing ceremony where the healer sings a song to heal a sick person. He suggests that from the perspective of a verb-based language like Anishinaabemowin the translation demonstrates a very different relationship between the healer, the song, and the person being healed. Instead of a linear trajectory, which the English translation suggests, in Anishinaabemowin the verb of singing centers what is being communicated. In this sense, the song is considered an integral part of the healing process, since in Anishinaabemowin the song is considered animate, or having qualities of its own life. It is not the healer who sings to heal the patient, as in a linear trajectory, it is the song as given to the healer as a gift of healing that holds the primary action and power in this process. The song as an action holds the healer and patient in a dialogical bond for the purpose of healing. This quantum method of understanding this process helps to keep the cultural and linguistic integrity of Anishinaabemowin and culture intact. In this example, Gross helps to push the envelope of the cultural differences evident in the language as represented in Anishinaabemowin and culture.

He also follows this exposition of the differences of a verb-based language like Anishinaabemowin with a discussion of the different cultural responses around the respective criminal justice systems. Unlike Euro-Western cultures, the Anishinaabe spend little time on the inherent characteristics of a person but instead are concerned with what a person does. Hence, if someone steals from another person, that person does not become a thief, he or she is not identified by that act. Instead, he or she is someone who has stolen from someone else. The actions of a community are then oriented toward returning to social harmony, not toward punishing the individual. This example helps to demonstrate the ways in which Anishinaabeg quantum thinking is manifest in social institutions. In dealing with criminal behavior, the integrity of the larger community is what is at stake with a criminal act, and that is what must be brought back into harmony after a crime is committed.

However, Gross runs into some problems in attempting to negotiate this difficult translational terrain of communicating Anishinaabe concepts in English. While it is a challenge to negotiate these cultural differences, it is important when doing this type of comparison to resist

falling into the trap of misleading dichotomies. In discussing his methodology, he suggests that “good writing and clear thinking” come from his traditional academic teaching methods, and the use of “storytelling and the oral tradition, forgiveness and providing a second chance” come from an Anishinaabeg teaching tradition (10). He suggests that clear thinking is not a part of an Anishinaabeg pedagogical tradition. He sets up a similar dichotomy in the discussion of Anishinaabe rhetoric as intended to speak “from the human heart to the human heart, not the logical mind to the logical mind” (169). This analysis buys into the Euro-Western mind/body dualism that is used in the process of colonization to demonstrate the supremacy of the Euro-Western civil mind and culture over the naturalistic and passionate Indigenous person. Furthermore, it would seem as though Anishinaabe rhetoric is oriented toward both by necessity. Another difficulty that this book has is the inconsistency with which Anishinaabemowin is used in the analysis. As I have suggested above, chapter 4 on the quantum nature of the language is a useful discussion; however, this in-depth analysis is not consistently used, nor are common methods of translating Anishinaabemowin, like the use of etymologies. For example, he discusses the problems of attributing the concepts of animate and inanimate to Anishinaabemowin and correctly names that there are problems when these linguistic concepts are applied to Anishinaabemowin. However, rather than delving into the Anishinaabemowin and discussing *maaba* and *maanda*, which are supposed to correspond to these translations, he does not mention the Anishinaabemowin at all. He makes a similar move in the discussions of Anishinaabe religion, calling into question the relevancy of the term as applied to Anishinaabe culture, instead suggesting the term *lifeway*. However, no mention is given to any Anishinaabe word or concept that may bring some clarity to the *issue*. The concept of religion is called into question in chapter 5 and then allowed to stand later in chapter 9, which discusses *bimaadiziwin*. Again, it would seem that an application of the quantum nature of Anishinaabemowin would shed some much-needed light on the problems of translating a concept like religion. His analysis allows for the continued presumption of religion as a useful category in Anishinaabe culture rather than more deeply calling into question the application of a Euro-Western institution that may not have an Anishinaabe equivalent.

While this book is not without its faults, it is important to name that

the trouble I believe that Gross exhibits here is a problem that we all have to deal with. This problem is the sometimes extraordinary difficulty in effectively communicating in English concepts and methods of negotiating relationships that are grounded in the quantum nature of Anishinaabemowin and culture. With this in mind, *Anishinaabe Ways of Knowing and Being* is a welcomed addition to Anishinaabeg scholarship, as it can help us to further negotiate these difficult translations.

Lisa Tatonetti. *The Queerness of Native American Literature*.

Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2014. ISBN 978-0-8166-9279-8. 277 pp.

June Scudeler, *University of British Columbia*

In her introduction to *The Queerness of Native American Literature*, Lisa Tatonetti situates her book as “both literary map and critical lens” (ix). She links together queerness, Indigeneity, and relationship, “whether such affiliations are acknowledged or ignored, (re)claimed or disavowed” (ix). Tatonetti’s book examines how Native American writers such as Maurice Kenny (Mohawk), Janice Gould (Koyoonk’auwi Maidu), and Louise Erdrich (Anishinaabe) and films by Sherman Alexie (Spokane / Coeur d’Alene) and two non-Indigenous filmmakers provide differing ideas about queerness in Indigenous literature and film.

Tatonetti, who coedited *Sovereign Erotics: A Collection of Two-Spirit Literatures* with Qwo-Li Driskill (Cherokee), Daniel Heath Justice (Cherokee), and Deborah Miranda (Esselen/Chumash), astutely notices that the rise of the study of Native literature as a scholarly field and the publication of early queer Indigenous texts occurred at roughly the same time. I appreciate her assertion that writing by Two-Spirit, gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans, and queer (2GLBTQ) people “can evade anticipated literary trajectories by failing to fulfill the ancestor-centered, buffalo-littered, landscape-focused expectations of Native writing” (29). But Tatonetti was surprised to discover that those images are still important to Indigenous writers, including 2GLBTQ writers. While these images can fall into the cliché of the Hollywood Indian, Indigenous writing doesn’t have to be either ancestor centered or urban but can be both at the same time.

Using archival materials, Tatonetti chronicles Mohawk writer Maurice Kenny’s writings in 1970s gay newspapers and magazines such as *Fag Rag*. As Tatonetti notes, Kenny’s work is an important intervention

in the largely white milieu of gay men's magazines and journals, especially as he is the first known gay Indigenous published author. While Kenny's writing, particularly his 1976 essay "Tinselled Bucks: A Historical Study in Indian Homosexuality," had to depend on anthropological accounts, "Tinselled Bucks" is a critical beginning to 2GLBTQ writing back to dominant conceptions of the Indigenous erotic. Similarly, Tatonetti uses the queer diaspora to discuss how the fluidities of identities and family in Gould's poetry are active entities that aren't bounded by linear mappings. In "Waiting for a Miracle," Gould's mother wishes her daughter would change her queerness, "take something out / or put something in / to make me right." Instead of seeing her queerness as a liability, Gould writes: "I keep saying, Mama, / it's enough of a miracle / for a person to accept herself / the way she is" (157). Building on Jasbir Puar's "unstable assemblages of revolving and devolving energies," Tatonetti positions Gould's mother's lack of acceptance as territorialization, which is more temporally and spatially fixed than Gould's dynamic assemblage of diasporic family and sexuality.

In "Queer Relationships and Two-Spirit Characters in Louise Erdrich's Novels," Tatonetti queers novels by Erdrich, who may be the most canonical Native American writer. Tatonetti argues that Indigenous texts have always been queer, using several of Erdrich's novels, including *The Beet Queen*, *Tales of Burning Love*, *The Antelope Wife*, and *The Plague of Doves*. In contrast to the problematic depictions of queer men in Lesley Marmon Silko's *Almanac of the Dead* (1991) and James Welch's *The Heartsong of Charging Elk* (2000), *The Beet Queen* (1986) early on opened up positive portrayals of queer Indigenous peoples, particularly women. Tatonetti uses queer theorists Judith Butler and Jack Halberstam and female masculinity to describe the gay and feminized Karl's unlikely romance with the masculinized Celestine, an example of Erdrich's "articulations of queer affiliation through the lens of erotic, familial, and community relationships" (68).

In decided contrast to the centrality of queerness in Erdrich's texts, the films *Johnny Greyeyes* (2000), a Canadian film that focuses on lesbians in prison, and *The Business of Fancy Dancing* (2002), directed and written by Sherman Alexie, which tells the story of a queer Spokane man's journey home to his reserve for a funeral, fracture Indigeneity and queerness. All three films fracture queer Indigenous people to choose between queerness and reserve life. Queer Indigenous people cannot be

queer on reserve or Indigenous in queer communities; queerness is subsumed by Indigeneity.

The first chapter, “A Genealogy of Queer Native Literatures,” is essential to understanding the trajectory of queer Indigenous literature. Tatonetti’s research is exhaustive, providing an overview of queer Indigenous drama, poetry, fiction, and anthologies. Tatonetti notes that in the United States, Native studies scholarship has glossed over the differences between Indigenous peoples’ experiences in Canada and the United States. She acknowledges that as a non-Native scholar based in the United States, she has tried to avoid this erasure by focusing on writing in English and being published in both the United States and Canada. As a Métis scholar living in what is now Canada, I was excited by mentions of Tomson Highway (Woods Cree), Beth Brant (Bay of Quinte Mohawk), Kent Monkman (Swampy Cree), and Gregory Scofield, who is Métis and not First Nations, a sore spot for Métis people. Tatonetti’s inclusion of Indigenous writers from what is now Canada illustrates how the Canada-US border does and doesn’t matter to Indigenous peoples. For example, Tatonetti’s assertion that Craig Womack’s (Muskogee) gorgeous *Drowning in Fire* is the most well-known queer Indigenous novel is certainly not applicable north of the border, where Tomson Highway’s *Kiss of the Fur Queen* (published in the United States by the University of Oklahoma Press), is certainly better known. Of course, nobody can be aware of all the queer Indigenous writing in English in Canada and the United States, and I hope that one day Tatonetti explores writers like Highway, Brant, and Monkman with the archival and intellectual rigor she applies to other texts. *The Queerness of Native American Literature* illustrates the need for similar books in Canada, México, and beyond.

Linda LeGarde Grover. *The Road Back to Sweetgrass*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2014. ISBN 978-0-8166-9269-9. 194 pp.

Bryce Stevenson, *University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee*

My hand resting on her soft hair, I begin in my old man’s whisper to recount the story as in my daughter’s eyes the Anishinaabe ancestors listen and nod *mii gwayak*.

—*The Road Back to Sweetgrass* (194)

Knowing the connection to this earth through one's history, friends, family, loved ones, and a community's dejectedly brutalized past, deeply complicated present, and inspiringly promising future is the most powerful and stimulating feeling any person can experience. Sensations of revitalization and understanding are reached through stories and traditions, dances and songs, love and art and are passed down from mother to daughter, father to son, elder to child. These stories can be rare but are irreplaceably valuable when discovered and experienced.

Linda LeGarde Grover's *The Road Back to Sweetgrass* explores these stories and the interconnected experiences of three Anishinaabe women from the Mozhay Point Indian Reservation, a band of Ojibwe set in northern Minnesota. While they exist only as well-written works of fiction, these women can be recognized as parallels to the loved ones of any individual, Native or not.

Grover's novel first introduces us to Margie Robineau, who in the very first sentence is described as that iconic reservation figurehead, "the hands-down best frybread maker on the entire Mozhay Point Indian Reservation." As the novel moves along, it doesn't fall sequentially into the common rhythm of "and then, and then, and then" but instead takes a journey backward to understanding and realization. Margie's story is revealed through eloquently wrought moments. Her story explores the complicated way history, love, lust, hatred, fear, acceptance, tradition, and family place a person in a particular place at a particular time, changing everything in an instant—a condition we all eventually find ourselves trying to figure out.

While Margie Robineau might be the best frybread maker on the reservation, she is hardly the only woman with a story. Grover's striking prose continues on to introduce the reader to Theresa and Dale Ann, who are discovered to be as full victims of brutalized Native American history as the next reservation resident. At first Theresa and Dale Ann appear in snapshots of Margie's story, but the novel loses no opportunity to be turned around and find these women the focal point of their own historical transcription.

Grover, an associate professor of American Indian studies at the University of Minnesota–Duluth, weaves some of the most important and damaging policies of American Indian history into the lives of her characters: Dale Ann falls victim to the Indian Relocation Act, which takes her on a journey to find work in Chicago; Theresa's infamously bulky

spectacles are provided by the Indian Health Services; and Margie's entire family history centers around the LaForce family allotment.

The aftereffects of the US government's handling of American Indian people are not Grover's only subjects. No great human story exists without the pains and joys of romance, regardless of the culture. Journeying through time with Margie, Theresa, and Dale Ann are Michael Washington and his father, Zho Wash, who illustrate that matters of the heart can be as complicated and damaging as government policy.

The adhesive that binds this novel together is the LaForce family allotment. Despite their different paths through life, each character is enticed by the mysterious and elusive smell of sweetgrass, pulled by the power of the land. Throughout the story, the allotment becomes a character with its own complex, unpredictable history. The concept of the LaForce allotment is the concept of home. It is a place where experience connects the human mind through every sense of the body—the smells, the tastes, the sounds, the textures, and the exquisite sights of one's home, the location of one's personal history. It is the timeless connection between humans and the living earth, and Grover's final chapter explores just how connected those two elements can become.

What Linda LeGarde Grover's novel does is invite readers to reflect on the unending journey to find identity, purpose, and a connection to place. More than the typical exploration of indigenous connection to nature, the novel explores the way time and place create layers of history that divide humanity, indigenous or industrial, from primordial existence. Each culture on this earth has its own method of documenting its origins and keeping track of its progress, whether through written accounts, spoken stories, dances, songs, or art. It is this basic human desire to question and understand how life on the land began that is the core of Grover's novel.

The Road Back to Sweetgrass is a journey we all must take at some point in our lives. It is a road back to our beginnings, in this case, the struggles of three Anishinaabe women and their fight to survive in a country that was very carefully designed to exist without them or their culture. Despite the very much appreciated use of Ojibwemowin within its text and the mention of important historical events, this novel is not just an Ojibwe novel. It is not just a novel of the Anishinaabe diaspora, nor even an American Indian novel. It is a human novel. It transcends those basic brands of cultures that constantly divide neighbors from one

another and focuses on the effects of humans and their interaction with one another and the land. It focuses on what humans do to one another, what humans experience alone and with each other, and, above all, it focuses on who we humans become as a result of who we once were and everything we have experienced. Linda LeGarde Grover's *The Road Back to Sweetgrass* is an experience.

CONTRIBUTOR BIOGRAPHIES

SUSAN BERNARDIN is chair of women's and gender studies and professor of English at SUNY Oneonta. She has published on foundational and contemporary Native writers, including Gertrude Bonnin, Mourning Dove, Sherman Alexie, Eric Gansworth, Gerald Vizenor, and Louis Owens. She is a coauthor of *Trading Gazes: Euro-American Photographers and Native North Americans, 1880–1940* (Rutgers UP) and facilitated a new edition of *In the Land of the Grasshopper Song* (Bison Books) in collaboration with Andre Cramblit and Terry Supahan, Karuk tribal members. She served as guest editor for *Western American Literature's* special issue on Indigenous westerns in 2014 and has new publications on contemporary Indigenous comics / graphic arts (*Routledge Companion to Native American Literature*) and Indigenous Wests (*Cambridge History of Western American Literature*).

NATALIE EPPELSHEIMER is assistant professor of German at Middlebury College, where she also teaches courses in comparative literature. Her research interests include Holocaust and exile studies, the environmental humanities, and methodologies of teaching language, literature, and culture. Currently she is working on a book on German-Jewish exiles who fled Nazi Germany and settled in the British colony Kenya between 1933 and 1945.

MARK FREELAND is a citizen of the Bahweting Anishinaabe Nation (Sault Sainte Marie Chippewa Tribe). He recently earned a PhD from the University of Denver and the Iliff School of Theology in Religious and Theological Studies. His primary research is in the area of cultural theory, language, and relationships to land, and he is critically defining worldview as an analytical lens to effectively articulate cultural differ-

ence. He has coauthored with Tink Tinker a demographic analysis of the Columbian landfall published in *Wicazo Sa Review* and a chapter titled “American Indian Ethics” in *Ethics: A Liberative Approach*, edited by Miguel de la Torre.

ALLISON HARGREAVES is an assistant professor and a non-Indigenous teacher of Indigenous literatures working in the Department of Critical Studies at the University of British Columbia, Okanagan Campus, in unceded Syilx territory. Her research investigates literary and policy interventions into gendered colonial violence in Canada, looking to Indigenous women’s writing as an intellectual contribution to the contemporary antiviolence debate.

Chris LaLonde is a professor of English at SUNY Oswego. His publications include a book on Louis Owens’s novels and essays on the works of Anishinaabe writers, on Native American literatures more generally, and on Native film and hip-hop.

MARGARET NOODIN is currently an assistant professor at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee. She is the author of *Weweni*, a collection of bilingual poems in Anishinaabemowin and English, and of *Bawaa-jimo: A Dialect of Dreams in Anishinaabe Language and Literature*. She is also editor of www.ojibwe.net, coeditor of the Papers of the Algonquian Conference, and book review editor for *Studies in American Indian Literatures*.

JUNE SCUDELER (Métis) is a doctoral candidate in English at the University of British Columbia, located on the ancestral and unceded territory of the Musqueam people. Her dissertation, “oskisihcikêwak / New Traditions in Cree Two-Spirit, Gay and Queer Narratives,” uses Cree methodologies to examine how Kent Monkman (Swampy Cree) and Tomson and René Highway use their art to new traditions in urban settings. June has published essays in the collection *Queer Indigenous Studies: Critical Interventions in Theory, Politics and Literature* and in the journal *Studies in Canadian Literature*. June is also a collective member of the Vancouver Indigenous Media Arts Festival society.

BRYCE STEVENSON is a student at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, a member of the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, and the assistant book review editor for *Studies in American Indian Literatures*.

BILLY J. STRATTON currently teaches contemporary Native American / American literature and film in the Department of English at the University of Denver. His writing has appeared in *Cream City Review*, *Salon*, *Red Ink*, the *Arizona Quarterly*, *Rhizomes*, *Common-place*, *Weber*, and the *Denver Quarterly*. His first book on the Indian captivity narrative, *Buried in Shades of Night*, was published in 2013. He is currently working on a critical volume on the fictions of Stephen Graham Jones to be released in the spring of 2016.