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FROM THE EDITOR

Material and Materialisms, Old and New

The four essays in this issue of *SAIL* expand our understanding of Leslie Marmon Silko's extraordinary 1991 novel of activist revolution, *Almanac of the Dead*; Geronimo's enigmatic 1906 as-told-to autobiography, *Geronimo: His Own Story*; and Gerald Vizenor's sly 2012 novel of trickster liberation, *Chair of Tears*. What makes the essays especially congruent and timely is how each interrogates contemporary modes of literary and cultural analysis—from so-called new materialisms and material ecocriticism, to pairings of law and literature, to studies of genre and representation, to rhetorically, philosophically, and ontologically based close reading and contextualization—in the service of furthering our knowledge of specifically Indigenous texts and textuality. In particular, these thoughtful, compelling essays by Kyle Bladow, Jane Griffith, Anita Huizar-Hernández, and Geoff Hamilton help articulate the ways Indigenous self-representation actively intervenes in dominant settler understandings of time, materiality, and human *being* in a living and interconnected world.

SAIL 29.2 also marks a personal milestone for me as editor: it is the twentieth issue of the journal under my guidance, and it will be the final issue I submit to the University of Nebraska Press and see through the process of production. I have thoroughly enjoyed editing *Studies in American Indian Literatures*, and, as they do in any period that is full and busy, the years have flown by. I took over the submissions process in autumn 2011. In addition to teaching, at the time I was serving as director of a large graduate program in English and coordinator of a small interdisciplinary program in American Indian studies at Ohio State University; I was being reviewed for promotion to full professor; and I was preparing to host the Society of American Indians Centennial Symposium on the OSU campus and in the broader environs of central Ohio. When heavy boxes of *SAIL* editorial files arrived at my office, I admit to experiencing a moment of panic. Had I taken on too much? By autumn

2012, however, when copies of *SAIL* 24.3 arrived in the mail—the first issue I had shepherded all the way to print—I felt like I had things more or less under control, or at least in balance. There is a rhythm to putting out four issues of a journal each year, and it is a highly collaborative dance involving serial negotiations with authors, reviewers, board members, book review editors, graduate editorial assistants, copyeditors, and production and marketing staff at the press. I am fortunate to have had terrific partners.

Indeed, there are many people to thank. I am grateful for the inspiration and mentoring provided by my immediate editorial predecessors, Daniel Justice and Jim Cox, as well as for the camaraderie of the two book review editors with whom I have shared *SAIL* duties these past nearly six years, my good friends Lisa Tatonetti and Meg Noodin. I am also grateful for the insights of our talented *SAIL* editorial board—Lisa Brooks, Jodi Byrd, Robin Riley Fast, Susan Gardner, Patrice Hollrah, Molly McGlennen, Kenneth Roemer, Christopher Teuton, and Jace Weaver—and for the support of the ASAIL leadership, perhaps especially recent president Jill Doerfler. Ken Roemer deserves a special shout-out in this group: along with LaVonne Ruoff, he was one of the senior scholars who encouraged me to become involved with ASAIL when I was still a graduate student, and he has been an unfailing advocate of my work as a scholar, as an ASAIL president, and as an editor of *SAIL*.

I need to thank the no fewer than 111 authors who collaborated with us to produce such a wide range of engaging, often innovative, sometimes truly groundbreaking scholarship published in *SAIL* between autumn 2012 and summer 2017, as well as the several visual artists who lent us beautiful and provocative works to grace the covers of our special issues and the many faculty, emeriti, independent scholars, and graduate students who wrote book reviews. Collaborating with guest editors and individual authors has been a highlight of this experience, although assisting graduate students and newly minted PhDs toward a first publication particularly stands out. Another highlight was my collaboration with Amanda Cobb-Greetham, then editor of *American Indian Quarterly*, and Beth Piatote, who agreed to serve as my guest coeditor, for a special combined issue of *AIQ* and *SAIL* as a follow-up to the SAI Centennial Symposium; that combined issue appeared in summer 2013 and featured sixteen highly accomplished essays across multiple disciplines,

plus high-resolution reproductions of original documents and photographs from the SAI's first multidisciplinary meetings at Ohio State in 1911. Moreover, I need to thank our cadre of anonymous *SAIL* reviewers (you know who you are), who deserve special acknowledgment for the essential service they provide to individual colleagues and to the broader profession. Peer review cannot happen without them, and their high standards and frank commentary push all of us to do our best work. And I need to thank the helpful editorial, production, and marketing team in the journals division at the University of Nebraska Press: working with them has been incredibly easy and enjoyable.

Serving as editor would not have been possible without financial support from the College of Arts and Sciences at Ohio State University, autumn 2011 into summer 2015, and then from the Office of the Provost at the University of Washington, autumn 2015 through summer 2017. This funding allowed me to hire, mentor, and learn from three top-notch graduate editorial assistants: Anne Jansen (now an assistant professor at the University of North Carolina Asheville), Josh Anderson (completing his dissertation at Ohio State), and Lydia Heberling (beginning her dissertation at the University of Washington). With their efficient help and good cheer, we were able to streamline *SAIL*'s editorial processes, move the journal closer to twenty-first-century technologies, and completely abandon those heavy boxes of paper files.

Finally, I am extremely pleased to be handing over the editing of *SAIL* to my respected colleagues and friends Michelle Raheja of the University of California Riverside and Siobhan Senier of the University of New Hampshire. One of my goals when I became editor in 2011 was to build on the good work of my recent predecessors, not only Daniel Justice and Jim Cox but also Malea Powell, Jim Purdy, and Bob Nelson, to encourage scholarship on American Indian literatures into more expansive and inclusive areas of study, into more robust configurations for comparison, and into more diverse formats for academic presentation—and I am happy to say we have been successful in that. Michelle and Siobhan will bring fresh energy and insights to the journal, along with new goals, and I know that their vision and their efforts will help secure a dynamic future for our collective work in Native American and Indigenous literary studies.

Chadwick Allen

Timely Objects and the Revolutionary Formerly Known as Marcos

Rereading *Almanac of the Dead*

KYLE BLADOW

Published in 1991, the novel *Almanac of the Dead* by Leslie Marmon Silko became a significant work at the time of the Columbus quincentennial. Reviewers were quick to comment on the prediction made by multiple characters about the arrival of Europeans in the Western Hemisphere and the ultimate disappearance of all things European. The expansive 763-page work evades definitive categorization. Silko has described writing the book in terms of receiving transmissions and being guided by spirits: “The spirits had a sense of time and things about dates and time. It’s like *Almanac of the Dead* did everything it wanted, that’s how it’s been” (qtd. in Arnold 8). Though a difficult read—many reviewers looked at it unkindly after her career-launching, more commercially successful novel *Ceremony*—the novel continues to offer keen political commentary well after the historical moments of the quincentennial and millennium. What began as a shorter novel about the drug trade in Tucson, where Silko was living at the time, soon expanded as she found connections to Latin America. More than a novel, it belongs in many ways alongside the almanacs it references.

Contributing to the scholarship on almanacs and temporal scales of *Almanac*, I revisit the prophetic, revolutionary spirit of the text. Specifically, I argue that three material objects in the novel (the stone figures, opal, and stone snake) index these multiple timescales and inform its prophecy, one that continues to resonate with the Zapatistas in light of their recent mobilizations. As Silko’s novel apprehends these politics with prophecies manifested through these physical objects, her work invites dialogue in literary studies between material ecocriticism and Indigenous relational ontologies.

The Zapatistas are best known for their uprising on January 1, 1994, the same day NAFTA went into effect, when they seized government offices and declared war on Mexico; however, their arrival on the Mexican political scene was anything but spontaneous, having emerged over decades in response to land reform policies that continued to disadvantage the (mostly Indigenous) *campesinos* who were trying to settle in Chiapas (Collier and Quaratiello). After a short-lived military campaign and ensuing diplomatic agreements, the Zapatistas emphasized building autonomy in part by establishing schools and clinics. While their efforts have prioritized local autonomy, their engagements with media and state power have also endured, making a particularly striking appearance in December 2012, the same month the Idle No More movement gained steam, when thousands of Zapatistas staged marches in five Mexican cities, and again more recently with their engagement in the upcoming July 2018 Mexican presidential election. Returning to Silko's novel offers relevant opportunities to reflect on these political developments. In addition, the intervening years and development in Indigenous and ecocritical scholarship offer new insights for thinking about *Almanac*, particularly its narrative temporality as supported by material objects.

Attending to significant objects in the book and to the materiality of the almanac form itself supports arguments that the work disrupts settler colonial narratives. *Almanac* exemplifies, for instance, Mishuana Goeman's concept of "(re)mapping," the process by which Native authors draw on traditional stories and create new ones in order to contest settler colonial geographies that have mapped themselves on the land. Goeman is "concerned with producing decolonized spatial knowledges and attendant geographies that acknowledge colonial spatial process as ongoing but imbued with power struggles" (11). With her focus on maps and (re)mapping, Goeman reads "how patterns in *Almanac* reveal ongoing disruptions of normative geopolitics" (160). In line with this argument and other criticism on the book, I argue that *Almanac*'s narrative patterns also disrupt normative chronopolitics: the shaping of time into units and rhythms that serve the flow of commodities and the accumulation of capital within global economic systems predicated on settler colonial histories. Such strategies emerge through narrative patterns but also through the three key objects examined below. In analyzing them, I draw from material ecocriticism and its focus on the narrative agencies of matter. As Serenella Iovino and Serpil Oppermann

write, “The new materialisms suggest that things (or matter) draw their agentic power from their relation to discourses that in turn structure human relations to materiality” (4). Material ecocriticism thus observes how human and material assemblages produce “configurations of meanings and discourses that we can interpret as stories” (7). Bringing material ecocriticism together with insights from preceding Silko scholarship, I investigate the ways objects in *Almanac* further upset settler spatiotemporalities. The book’s objects help manifest the prophecies within the plot, but they also herald a prophetic tone that invokes disruptions to the settler colonial status quo beyond its pages. For instance, the stone snake and its real-world counterpart express narrative agency captured by Silko’s attunement to the liveliness of matter, an awareness featured recently in her memoir *The Turquoise Ledge*. Silko details in the memoir her sensitivity to the nature and life of her desert home, including the rocks and boulders of a nearby arroyo; she worries about the “violence committed against the arroyo” by a neighbor and his bulldozer (307), and when she encounters abandoned grinding stones, she brings them back with her, noting that they have “a presence of their own” (12). Silko’s attention to the liveliness of matter (here, the grinding stones) reasserts the long inhabitation of the land; likewise, the objects in *Almanac* unsettle colonial timescales.

The functioning of these objects reflects the text’s unique condition as a composite novel-almanac. Joni Adamson considers how almanacs are used thematically and formally in the novel, observing that “Silko has repeatedly observed that those who would understand her project must put aside ambiguous notions of ‘novelistic merit’ and read her book—as the title clearly indicates—as an almanac” (*American Indian* 133). Adamson capably examines the way almanacs function and their influences on American literature. I extend the study of the novel as almanac by considering its agency and complex deployment of temporality. Almanacs, given their multivocality and multiple functions, resist the authority associated with individual authorship and, according to Silko, are “designed so that you don’t have control when you confront [them]” (qtd. in Adamson, *American Indian* 134). If almanacs are instruments for use by subjects, they also exhibit curious agencies themselves.

Besides their polyvocal, aggregative nature, the almanacs Silko used as a model influenced the plot structure of her novel-almanac. Previous criticism points to the book’s largely unresolved ending, which is

focused on the protagonist Sterling's return to Laguna Pueblo and which fails to show any result of the plot's civil unrest and anticipated hemispheric revolution. Critics have suggested the ending leaves the book open for optimistic interpretations about the potential for progressive social and environmental change.¹ However, this ending also suits the reading of the novel as an almanac, especially the kind from which Silko drew inspiration: Mayan codices that represent cyclical time.

Silko's almanacs allude to and resemble classical Mayan works like the *Popol Vuh*, which serve, as Dennis Tedlock describes them, as a "complex navigation system for those who wish to see and move beyond the present" (qtd. in Adamson, *American Indian* 141). Adamson further argues that the books served as cultural resistance in the face of colonialism because they helped promulgate Mayan knowledge and that Silko takes a similar stance in her presentation of the keepers of the almanac in her novel. Combining mythopoetic wisdom with historical events, the almanacs are instruments for aligning multiple temporalities. The novel-almanac serves as a meeting place for multiple world-views by depicting multiple dimensions of time, and this perspective helps us better apprehend an ending that fails to satisfy the expectations of either rigidly linear or circular plots.

Key to understanding the kinds of time represented in Mayan codices and re-created in *Almanac* is the book's emphasis on time's material being. Rather than nonexistent measurements, units of time exist as forces or entities with particular attributes.² In a fragment from the Snakes' Notebook, which *Almanac* keeper Yoeme claims is key to understanding the rest of the almanac, the Spirit Snake states, "I have told you the names and identities of the Days and Years" (135). The narration later recounts, "The only true gods were all the days in the Long Count" (257). A later almanac fragment tells a story in which "Month was created first, before the World. . . . Then the Month began to walk. . . . Month spoke Day's name when Day had no name. So the Month was created, then the Day" (570–71). Perhaps the most significant units of time for *Almanac* are the larger epochs. The novel pre-occupies itself with the narrative present's epoch, called the Death-Eye Dog, though recognized with different names by people around the world. Death-Eye Dog represents a particularly violent era and "has been seated on the throne for five hundred years" (252), recalling again the Columbus quincentennial. But like the cycles of Mayan calendars,

the reign of each epoch is limited. One of the book's Sacred Twins comprehends this cyclical nature: "El Feo daydreamed about the days of the past—sensuous daydreams of Mother Earth who loved all her children, all living beings. Those past times were not lost. The days, months, and years were living beings who roamed the starry universe until they came around again" (313). The cyclical understanding of time is echoed in the persistent anticipation of the characters that a new time with different attributes is coming, suiting the tenor of the book's foremost prophecy: that land will be restored and things European will disappear.³

Silko's *Almanac* ultimately does not render a clashing or succession of temporalities or worldviews so much as it does a more inclusive depiction of them. The collected stories connect disparate communities into an Indigenous alliance against colonization, as seen in Escapía's long chronology of Native rebellions (527). To use the almanac as a seeing instrument, one must avoid extrapolating a linear history from its compiled lists and fragments, however tempting chronological lists like Escapía's might make that interpretation. Rather, one should consider how the almanac includes such lists as part of multiple notebook fragments that link together multiple temporalities horizontally. Threading the fragments together with the narrative conventions of the novel, Silko achieves her original presentation of time: "I knew that I wanted to shape time inside my *Almanac*," she writes. "I wanted to use narrative to shift the reader's experience of time and the meaning of history as stories that mark certain points in time" ("Notes" 140). Overlooking the novel-almanac's careful attention to time and its depiction likely contributes to some readers' frustration with the book and the sense of an unresolved ending. An expanded sense of time offered by the text's prophecies and reinforced with key material objects recalibrates these expectations. The following two sections explore each in turn, the first detailing the political struggles at work in the book's representation of time, the second explaining how three of the book's objects (the pair of figurines, the opal, and the stone snake) reinforce these conceptions through their dis/appearing and other actions. The strands of both sections intertwine, as political efficacy depends on spatial, temporal, and material alignments. Looking differently at matter and time—or maintaining multiple perspectives simultaneously—better equips us to witness long-standing Indigenous resistance and to appreciate the multiple nonhuman resources from which that resistance draws strength.

TIMELY PROPHECIES AND POLITICAL ACTORS

Silko has encouraged the observations made about the plot's premonitions, particularly the arising of the Zapatistas. Indeed, when she writes that in the book "somehow the characters would foretell the future" ("Notes" 140), it is debatable whether she means the future within the book or the future of the wider world. Elsewhere, she presents the fictional almanac in Lecha and Zeta's possession as a legitimate almanac belonging alongside extant Mayan codices: "Recently this old almanac of theirs correctly predicted the Zapatista uprising. Their old almanac even purports to explain the unfortunate assassination of Señor Colosio in Tijuana" ("Books" 158). Continuing my examination of the novel-almanac while entertaining its prescient potential,⁴ it is worth extending its prophecy into the twenty-first century. That is, *Almanac* continues to resonate not only with the ongoing actions of the Zapatistas but with other massive grassroots movements like Occupy Wall Street and Idle No More, which resemble the book's movements in featuring diverse, nonhierarchical coalitions of actors. These mobilizations employ political strategies that take advantage of matter's vitality and its interventions on the social (e.g., Occupy's congregations of physical bodies, Idle No More's emphasis on water and women's traditional roles in keeping it).

Writing after the 1994 Zapatista uprising, Adamson uses the popular Zapatista spokesperson Subcomandante Marcos to explain parallel attempts to delegitimize Native voices. Adamson points out how criticisms of Silko's novel as being insufficiently Native mirror similar critiques of Marcos as "inauthentic" for being non-Mayan. These are both instances of the colonial imperative to maintain power by authorizing only those Native voices and images that reinforce settler nostalgia and do not trouble the status quo. Both Silko and Marcos consistently defy these hegemonic expectations. Adamson notices the strategies Marcos uses to subvert expectations and gain attention, including an interview for *Vanity Fair*, "a savvy act of twentieth-century political articulation aimed at garnering international sympathy for the Zapatistas" (*American Indian* 135). Called a postmodern Che Guevara, Marcos deployed an even savvier act of representation when, in 2014, he dismantled his existence after pointing out how its political relevance no longer served the Zapatistas.

In a communiqué that could have come from the pages of *Almanac*, Marcos briefly recounts the actions of the EZLN (Zapatista Army of National Liberation) since its emergence: “When we erupted and interrupted in 1994 with blood and fire, it was not the beginning of war for us as Zapatistas. The war from above, with its death and destruction, its dispossession and humiliation, its exploitation and the silence it imposed on the defeated, we had been enduring for centuries” (“Between”).⁵ While describing the ongoing struggles of the Zapatistas, Marcos also portrays his own celebrity as a tactic. Marcos explains his prominence as a strategy the EZLN undertook to gain more attention; the media would only engage the Zapatistas if they had a figurehead. He describes their construction of the character Marcos as “a complex maneuver of distraction, a terrible and marvelous magic trick, a malicious move from the indigenous heart that we are” (“Between”). Their ruse of using a figure has garnered them attention, but it has also fooled people: “Those who have loved and hated SupMarcos now know that they have loved and hated a hologram.” Marcos mentions how the media creates and destroys celebrities to suit itself, but he also says that social media and the continued growth of the Internet have displaced that power. Similarly, in *Almanac*, El Feo “laughed whenever he saw newspapers or satellite television because the government thought the saboteurs, rioters, and looters were part of a single group or organization. . . . But this time the story was going to be different because the people no longer believed in leaders. People had begun to gather spontaneously” (513). Such gathering can be seen in flash mobs and mobilizations inspired by social media. For the Zapatistas, who recognized the potential of social media, the figure of Marcos has outlived its usefulness: “It is our conviction and our practice that in order to rebel and to struggle, neither leaders nor bosses nor messiahs nor saviors are necessary. To struggle, one only needs a sense of shame, a bit of dignity, and a lot of organization” (“Between”). Marcos ended the communiqué by announcing the termination of his existence, signing off and renaming himself Galeano to commemorate Compañero Galeano (José Luis Solís López), a teacher at a Zapatista school who had been murdered in May 2014 (Oikonomakis).

The “Galeano” whose name the former Marcos adopted had in turn borrowed his nom de guerre from Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano,

who composed his own almanac-like work, *Memoria del fuego* (Memory of fire), recounting the history of the Western Hemisphere from Mayan and Aztec histories to the twentieth century. Virginia Bell notes how several of *Almanac*'s main characters "engage in counter chronicling projects rather similar to the one *Memoria del fuego* constitutes" (7). Like these characters and Silko herself, Eduardo Galeano contends with settler colonial timescales. His visionary writing has influenced Latin American writers and Zapatista revolutionaries alike. Galeano contends with hegemonic narratives that deny or erase lived realities, which his writing restores to historical consciousness: "Galeano's testimonial approach to chronicling belongs to the same democratic vision shared by writers like Marcos and Poniatowska, whose stories combine personal artistic vision and multi-voiced participation in the act of storytelling" (Fischlin and Nandorfy 230). Silko's methods echo Galeano's in promoting an expansive vision that notices deeper timescales and the host of actors who reside within them.

The retirement of Subcomandante Marcos and transferal of the Galeano namesake well suits the continued alignment of the Zapatistas to Silko's *Almanac*. The symbolic action of dissolving a recognized spokesperson for the EZLN recognizes the collective, autonomous nature of Zapatismo, and it befits Silko's predictions in *Almanac* that the revolution will be leaderless, despite the fact that the novel features several revolutionary, potential leaders. For instance, although the Barefoot Hopi is one of these characters, attracting large groups as he travels, he sees himself as a messenger more than a leader and believes that people would on a single day rise up "everywhere at once, spontaneously. . . . The urge to rise up would come to them through their dreams," not through select leaders (617). This spontaneous organizing suggests an alternative to the easily co-opted iconography of leaders. Given that "*Almanac* foregrounds the role of visibility in colonialist and capitalist destruction" (Huhndorf 150), a visual media politics is equally evident in the Zapatista communiqué. Media's exertion of power via the construction, manipulation, and destruction of celebrity is deliberately subverted by the hologram of Marcos, much in the way that the novel describes the use of photographs of Geronimo in the nineteenth century: rather than capture this figure and pinpoint Apache resistance to the U.S. government, photographs of Geronimo "only generate further confusion" (153). Marcos describes himself as hologram, while Silko depicts the

photographs of Geronimo as a protohologram. David Moore also comments on the “Geronimo joke”: “After her shell game of signification, after pages of play with the reader, Silko’s narration unravels the semiotic comedy and dismisses the question of Geronimo as an abstraction that obscures the heart of the issue: power” (170). Likewise, the EZLN communiqué announcing the end of Subcomandante Marcos refuses to accept the power relations entrenched in traditional media, proclaiming instead the autonomy of the Zapatistas and embracing newer forms of social media that complement their horizontal organizing.

While the characters and events in *Almanac* anticipated the Zapatistas and continue to resonate with their visual politics, the novel-almanac further anticipates the sporadic, leaderless movements that have continued to emerge since 1994, hallmarked by protests like the 1999 World Trade Organization protest in Seattle, Occupy Wall Street, and Idle No More. By explicitly linking the expectation of uprisings to traditional prophecies, Silko underscores a layering of contemporaneous worldviews. If the prophecy leaves us with “nothing” at the book’s conclusion, it is a potent “nothing” of vast potential. The revolution could come tomorrow or in a hundred years; the text’s apocalypse does not lift a veil to reveal the conclusion to a fixed, determined plot of a single world but instead acknowledges a pluriverse with multiple temporalities.⁶ By refusing a strictly linear, universal temporality, Silko frustrates utopian and dystopian anticipations alike.

Silko’s techniques in this regard are again in step with Eduardo Galeano’s, as he “multiplies the possibility of story and interpretation as a form of action that makes history an active, material process, resistant to reductive historiographic methods that foreclose anything but spectatorship and distance from the making of history” (Fischlin and Nandorfy 289). Indeed, Galeano’s and Silko’s use of almanac forms to chronicle multiple voices and historical actors has presaged nascent Indigenous activism that incorporates nonhuman beings and matter into its political articulations. Adamson, in her most recent scholarship on *Almanac*, zeroes in on the effects of the book’s plurality, connecting Silko with anthropological and political turns toward Indigenous cosmopolitics: “The novel helps make visible some of the dynamics of contemporary Indigenous ‘cosmopolitics’ in which Indigenous leaders . . . summon a plurality into visibility that does not stop at a politicized multiculturalism, but is a project that might more properly be called

‘multinaturalisms’” (“Cosmovisions” 182). Distinct, coexisting natures are increasingly acknowledged, Adamson argues, evinced in the passage of such documents as the Ecuadorian Constitution, Bolivia’s Law of Mother Earth, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Mother Earth. Cosmopolitics dovetails with material ecocriticism in demonstrating viewpoints that take seriously the vitality of matter, including the liveliness of natural features and ecosystems.

This pluriverse is reflected in *Almanac*’s characters as well, who occupy roles within both mundane and mythic realms. Menardo’s driver, Tacho, for instance, is simultaneously Wacah, keeper of the macaws, and twin to El Feo (alluding to the Sacred Twins of the prophecy and also to the twins in the Popol Vuh): “Only Tacho and a few others knew about the macaw spirit beings that followed him, always roosting in nearby trees. . . . The blue-and-yellow macaws shrieked Tacho’s new name over and over from dawn to dusk: ‘Wacah! Wacah! Wacah! Wacah! Big changes are coming!’” (339). Tacho/Wacah serves as Menardo’s chauffeur but also interprets his dreams. The unease with which Menardo and his mistress, Alegría, regard Tacho intimates their semiconscious recognition of his belonging to these other realms. Characters’ multiple affiliations are also intimated through the sense many share that prophetic changes are afoot, evident in the preceding quote and also in Menardo’s thoughts: “*Changes were all around*. The phrase repeated over and over inside Menardo’s brain. The old man had always put the phrase at the beginning of the story about Prince Seven Macaws, who had been undone by two sorcerer brothers” (494). This story of two sorcerer brothers seems to repeat when Menardo dies soon afterward while attempting to prove the safety of his bulletproof vest, because Tacho/Wacah, twin brother to El Feo, “undoes” Menardo by shooting him. While Menardo’s allegiance to European American imperialism ultimately seals his doom, he is able to use his partial awareness of these multiple temporalities to his advantage; knowing that big changes are coming supports his Universal Insurance business, but he can only arrive at such knowledge if he “combines political and prophetic modes of reasoning” (Irr 235). As I have argued, this reasoning includes recognizing and learning from different scales and kinds of time.⁷

References to prophecy link the disparate plots and ideologies of the characters; in their passing thoughts and comments on changes afoot, they use prophecy to comprehend their sociopolitical actions and to

build solidarity. The constant exposition of characters' beliefs and theories about these changes ultimately connects their diverse philosophies. The text uses a lot of "noise," a lot of seemingly random plot, to re-create the cacophony of globalized life and to build the reader's suspicion that something is certainly going on underneath it all, some occult maneuvering that the characters only catch in glimpses, dreams, and memories, that the almanacs record in notebook fragments, and that readers better comprehend when they recalibrate their attention to encompass wider timescales and multiple worldviews. Such altered perceptions required in reading the fictional revolution in *Almanac* are also those, in Silko's understanding, that support real-world revolution: she states, "The only kind of revolution I really believe in is one of awareness of perception" (Kelleher). The din of the rambling plot and the shared sentiments of the cast of characters are two formal narrative strategies for representing a diffuse and leaderless global movement that, at its most abstract, represents the movement of life against death caused by the Destroyers, figures the novel casts simultaneously as supernatural entities recognized by multiple tribes and as some of its corporeal villains. The movement also urges coalitional activism. According to the character Clinton, a revolutionary descendant of Cherokee Freedmen, "Nothing could be black only or brown only or white only anymore. The ancient prophecies had foretold a time when the destruction by man had left the Earth desolate, and the human race was itself endangered. This was the last chance the people had against the Destroyers, and they would never prevail if they did not work together as a common force" (747).

The best tactic of the Destroyers (also called Gunadeeyahs) is their ability to separate people, aided by essentialist conceptions of identity.⁸ Silko resists such conceptions by subverting all struggles to one of life versus the Destroyers, a theme repeated throughout her work. This dichotomy might appear to reinforce essentialized identities; however, although Destroyers might seem more keenly associated with particular identities (i.e., white, European), Clinton's sentiments above are echoed throughout Silko's fiction: anyone could be (or become) a Destroyer, or they could work on the side of life and "the people."⁹ This latter category includes those concerned with integrity of the earth, entailing diverse kinds of environmentalism, from deep ecology to green anarchism. Even here, being an environmentalist doesn't guarantee one isn't aligned with the Destroyers; as Sarah Jaquette Ray astutely notes, "Despoilers use the

environment as a rhetorical device to support the colonial-capitalist status quo" (129). Ray rightly reads Silko's ironic engagement with environmentalism in *Almanac*. As conservationism and other environmental histories have readily shown, environmentalism is not automatically aligned with Native causes and can just as readily oppose them. As Ray writes, "*Almanac* illustrates how environmentalism can both support and thwart social justice, and that environmental discourses accomplish the latter by treating colonialism's others as *ecological* others" (93). More progressive environmental movements recognize the intersections they may have with decolonization efforts without assuming they are identically situated.

Such approaches are in evidence in recent campaigns against resource extraction, fossil fuel development, and climate destabilization. Coinciding with these developments in activism is the increased recognition that multiple worldviews can productively cohabit the same space. Silko has presaged these developments with her ambivalent depiction of environmentalism. One of the clearest instances of this ambivalence in *Almanac*, and one quite popular in its scholarship, is the International Holistic Healers Convention. Reinforcing the meeting of multiple temporalities, the convention scenes offer equal measures of prophecy and humor at New Age white shamanism; however, they also anticipate the plurality of worldviews that increasingly manage to coincide. As Adamson has pointed out, the transformations in recent Indigenous environmental mobilizations show new alignments that do not biologize identity and that underscore the vitality and integrity of other-than-human entities: "This helps to explain . . . why the Holistic Healers Convention brings together ragtag characters who believe that mountains are sentient with others who do not, but who meet despite these differences, because they agree that protecting the earth is key to the survival of all living beings" ("Cosmopolitics" 189). Likewise, movements such as Idle No More and the resistance to the Dakota Access pipeline show cooperation of people with disparate ideological or ontological stances working together. Material ecocriticism helps capture these kinds of emerging coalitions; exploring the narrative agencies of matter provides a fuller picture of both Silko's literary vision and the Indigenous environmental movements it marks.

ENVIRONMENTAL COALITIONS AND LIVELY EARTH-OBJECTS

However ambivalent Silko's portrayals of coalitional activism might be, she does write scenes portraying the potential for mutual understanding between Native and non-Native people and for their forging an alliance against the Destroyers. An early instance occurs in the book as the white protagonist, Seese, and the Laguna protagonist, Sterling, become acquainted. At first, they exchange stories about their pasts. Soon after, Sterling guides Seese through a tour of downtown Tucson and gives her a bit of a history lesson on John Dillinger, Geronimo, and others. When Sterling points out that Dillinger's extradition from Arizona was illegal, Seese waves it off as irrelevant, given Dillinger's crimes. Thinking of his own banishment from Laguna by the tribal court, Sterling gently points out to Seese that justice is sometimes served unfairly; Seese apologizes and confesses that her bias comes from her time spent with "scum" (79). Soon after, Sterling tells Seese about how Tucson merchants profited off the Apache wars. This time Seese says, "Now I know what you meant a little while ago. About judges and courts" (80). Considering the racism and injustice pointed out by Sterling's revisionist history, Seese begins to review the factors in play in her life's primary ordeal: the loss of her son, for which she largely blames herself. In this moment she begins to question her guilt and sees the old Tucson mansions as evidence of larger systemic evils. This moment, beyond showing a preliminary bonding between two characters, suggests that the injustices they experience have a shared culprit, the Destroyers, further conflating the mythic and historic temporalities at work in *Almanac*.

If the Destroyers are difficult to pin down, so too are those who resist them. A few characters deliberately and explicitly oppose them, like Clinton and the Barefoot Hopi. Others inadvertently resist the Destroyers in their pursuit of other goals, such as the Green Vengeance group in attendance at the Holistic Healers Convention, who according to Zeta "would make useful allies at least at the start" of the coming revolution (726). The Destroyers also feature in the prophecy of the arrival and disappearance of all things European when Montezuma and Cortés are described as fellow Destroyers (760). The resistance to the Destroyers intensifies the revolutionary fervor and the apocalyptic anxiety that Heather Houser identifies as an affect of the text (and an affect in apocalyptic environmentalist rhetoric more widely).

Houser compellingly argues that *Almanac*'s importance as an environmentalist work derives from its depiction of how such anxiety hinders change, and she rightly identifies the recurrent idea that the earth itself as a geophysical force will effect the revolution. She reads the anti-climactic ending (Sterling's homecoming to Laguna) as a way to banish the anxiety the text produces, writing, "The novel's account of the geophysical agents of revolution fulfills one wish: if humans are not the arbiters of the future, there is hope that the Earth itself will bring about regeneration. 'Home' expresses another wish: that the text's own story will melt into air, leaving only a conventional protagonist as the sentimental locus of redemption" (215). Although I agree with Houser's reading, I would like to expand the interpretation of the "geophysical agents" she describes and associates with the planet Earth itself. Specifically, I wonder if Houser's interpretation suggests a planet that is more separate from human action and agency than the book intends. Although Silko is clear on several occasions in her writing that the earth has its existence apart from human beings, she nevertheless uses "Earth" to signify more dynamic assemblages of human and nonhuman action. Surely the earth can work on its own, but it also works with and alongside humans. These forces of the planet often appear interchangeable with spirits—ancestors or deities whose interactions with humans are prominently featured in the text.

Spirits are equally responsible for the revolution. When Angelita speaks about the changes to come, her words "filled El Feo with rapture. The Earth, the Earth, together they would serve Earth and her sister spirits" (468). El Feo blurs the distinction between the earth and spirits. Near the end of the book, Lecha observes how "affluent, educated white people" come to her with a sense of loss: "Lecha knew the loss was their connection with the Earth. . . . Once the Earth had been blasted open and brutally exploited, it was only logical the Earth's offspring, all the Earth's beings, would similarly be destroyed" (718). Reading this line in light of Silko's observations that humans only desecrate themselves when they degrade environments, the reciprocal nature of the human relationship with the earth becomes clear.

In this sense, the earth, the land, and the spirits are related agencies influencing collective human action. Reading the earth as arbiter of change does not necessarily absolve humans of action; indeed, sharing the view of the earth as an agent might spur people into deeper commit-

ments to the lands in which they live. El Feo notes, “People had begun to gather spontaneously and moved as a mob or swarm follows instinct, then suddenly disperses. The masses of people . . . no longer believed in so-called ‘elected’ leaders; they were listening to strange voices inside themselves. . . . voices out of the past . . . voices of the ancestors” (513). Describing these gatherings—uncannily reminiscent of flash mobs made possible by social media—El Feo attributes them to the participants following their intuition and the voices of spirits; when compared to his statement above about the people serving the earth, it is not a leap to suggest that these voices mentioned are also the earth’s voice. Silko herself takes the view that humans belong to the earth, writing, “Human beings also are natural forces of the Earth. There will be no peace in the Americas until there is justice for the Earth and her children” (“Expression” 154).

The intimately interwoven agencies of humans and the earth are well illustrated in three significant material objects in the book: a pair of stone idols in the first third, the opal in the middle, and the stone snake at the end.¹⁰ Each object demonstrates a vitality of its own, though each is also tied to human agencies in both its fashioning and its use.

The third chapter of the book, “The Stone Idols,” recounts the theft of two small basalt figurines from Laguna Pueblo by anthropologists and their eventual rediscovery. Told from Sterling’s perspective, the story helps explain his present banishment. The theft is an instance of cultural exploitation, and another instance occurs when the Hollywood film crew Sterling is charged with supervising photographs a sacred stone snake. This third chapter and its featured objects also establish the narrative’s multiple temporalities and the prophecy announced by the opening map. Tying together the Laguna people, the earth, and longer timescales, the idols are an example of the “storied matter” Iovino and Oppermann champion as the hallmark of material ecocriticism, “a material ‘mesh’ of meanings, properties, and processes, in which human and nonhuman players are interlocked in networks that produce undeniable signifying forces” (1–2).

Called Little Grandmother and Little Grandfather, the figures “had been given to the people by the kachina spirits at the beginning of the Fifth World” and “lived in buckskin bundles” (31). The figures are fed offerings, held as tenderly as babies, and given to different elder caretakers each generation. “Old as the Earth herself” and called “esteemed and

beloved ancestors” by their caretakers (31), the figures simultaneously connect people to preceding generations and to the land, emphasizing the unity of ancestors and the earth. Given these descriptions, histories, and relationships, the figures resist the ontological category in which Western anthropology places them: “These were not merely carved stones, these were *beings* formed by the hands of the kachina spirits” (33). The anguish resulting from their loss remains for generations, so that when the figures are rediscovered at a museum in Santa Fe after being bought from a private collection in Washington DC, the tension between the white curator and the Laguna delegation is palpable. The idols in this moment enmesh with the earth and ancestors, as they indicate wider legacies of dispossession and anticipate the book’s prophecies and persistent contestation of land claims: the curator “looked around at all of them as if he were afraid they had come to take back everything that had been stolen. In that instant white man and Indian both caught a glimpse of what was yet to come” (33). Soon after, another reference to prophecy relates to the uranium mining at Laguna: “The old ones had stuck to their predictions stubbornly. Whatever was coming would not necessarily appear right way; it might not arrive for twenty or even a hundred years. Because these old ones paid no attention to white man’s time” (35). While this expectation is linked to the mine, it echoes the book’s wider prophecy that the disappearance of all things European occurs on ambiguous timescales. “White man’s time” is that of the curator, who insists the delegation must undertake expensive legal-bureaucratic proceedings to sue for the return of the idols, an approach that also safeguards colonial amnesia, while the delegation holds to timescales that ground their legitimacy as a people. The loss of the idols and the arrival of mining are related disturbances that the older Laguna see producing long-term disturbances. The stone idols are thus the first objects to index the multiple temporalities of the book.

The stone beings influence Sterling’s life as well. Although throughout the rest of the book (and even this third chapter) readers understand Sterling is banished due to the incident with the film crew photographing the stone snake, the second paragraph begins, “The stone idols had got Sterling banished” (31). Though the sentence refers more to the events involving the stone idols than to the idols themselves influencing the banishment, the grammatical construction prepares

and reinforces the chapter's later insistence on their liveliness. The chapter goes on to describe how frequently the idols were mentioned during Sterling's hearing; even though they had been stolen decades before, the theft remains clear in the minds of the council members, reinforcing the understanding of both events as related colonial transgressions as well as the power of the stone idols to sustain the deep memories of the people.

After the theft of the idols, the tribe draws on its knowledge to determine their whereabouts, including calling on "all those able to gaze into blurry opals to identify enemies" to use their skill to search for the stolen figures (32). Scrying with opals reoccurs later in the book, when the next object, an opal carried northward by Peruvians, comes into Tacho's custody.

When Mexican police arrest the Peruvians, they are more interested in the plants, roots, and seeds they carry, overlooking a newspaper-wrapped bundle left in the weeds nearby. Tacho inspects the bundle closer once the police leave: "The bundle was waiting for him to pick it up; Tacho could feel this more strongly than he had ever felt anything before. Tacho felt an urgency as if a beloved or person of great importance were waiting for him, *expecting* a welcome, expecting hospitality" (477). Tacho senses in the opal a vital subjectivity akin to what the Laguna perceive in the stone idols. He immediately attributes this material stone with spiritual importance, once more linking earth objects with spirits; he checks himself before picking up the bundle, believing he "must not go to the bundle if his motives were selfish" (477). The opal catalyzes Tacho's transformation in *Almanac* from Menardo's cab driver to one of the Sacred Twins.

When Tacho and his brother, El Feo, examine the opal later, they note that it "had been 'dressed,' wrapped in red wool string and downy, white feathers. Twelve big coca leaves and a pinch of cornmeal had been packed with the opal to feed it" (478). The brothers also note, "The opal did not appear to be a fake, wrapped up to fool rich society women. They both knew the danger of looking at the opal unless they were prepared; the eye of the opal might show them anything; the 'eye' might take them anywhere" (480). Given the emphasis on the wrapping here, the question of the opal's authenticity is not whether it is an authentic semiprecious gem but whether it is an authentic fetish. Not all opals

qualify as lively scrying tools; perhaps, like this particular opal and the stone idols and snake (who are also fed cornmeal and pollen), they require being invested with story and spiritual significance.

Like the spirit macaws in his charge, Tacho finds the opal reassuring his sense that important changes are to come and that he will play a role in them, especially when it shows him visions and begins to secrete bodily fluids: Tacho breathes on the opal “to feed the opal’s spirit his own breath” and sees the entire western hemisphere, “the coastline of the Pacific all the way from Chile to Alaska,” with cities burning (480). Later, Tacho discovers the bundle emits sweat and urine: “He was not sure if the opal or the coca leaves had been responsible for the night sweat and urine. Tacho worried the police had killed the bundle’s Peruvian caretakers and the bundle had been angered and desired revenge. The twelve coca leaves belonged to a powerful spirit” (502). After he shoots Menardo dead in Menardo’s test of his not-quite-bulletproof vest, Tacho soon discovers that “[b]lood was oozing from the center of his bedroll where he kept the spirit bundle. . . . Tacho had been chosen by the macaws’ and the opal’s spirits; for better or for worse, he had to take the spirits with him, like wives” (511–12). The spirits are attached to their material objects. This moment “expresses an urgency for Tacho” to reconnect with tribal elders and his brother (Olmstead 469). As the opal moves northward, it inspires Tacho’s own movement. His sense of matrimonial duty shows the deep kinship he feels to forces and materialities that extend beyond the conventionally human.

The idols and the opal fit the same category as arguably the most significant object in the book, the thirty-foot-long stone snake that appears near the tailings of Jackpile Mine at Laguna Pueblo. All three objects are connected to spirits who are fed with offerings, and each demonstrates broader (geologic and mythic) temporal scales. The various dressings of the figures and the way human characters *address* the figures through cultural stories illustrate their material-discursive being. While their use and treatment by human characters in the novel invest them with liveliness, their strange actions and agencies emphasize the vitality of materiality beyond exclusively human agency.

The stone snake is the most significant object because it looms large in Sterling’s story, which frames the book, but even more so because it appears both in the book’s narrative portions and in its almanac fragments. Its prominence in Silko’s imagination may relate to the fact that

a similar real object was discovered at Laguna Pueblo in 1979. Silko has written about this discovery in *Artforum* (later reprinted in *Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit*), which inspired a snake mural Silko painted while she was working on *Almanac*. Silko writes, "In a way, one might almost say that I had to write this novel in order to figure out for myself the meaning of the giant stone snake that had appeared near the uranium mine" ("Notes" 144).

Silko's search for the meaning of the snake is replicated in the almanac fragments of her book, particularly the Snakes' Notebook that Yoeme tells Zeta is key to understanding the rest of the almanac but that Zeta thinks is just Yoeme's "madness" (134). Yet this fragment tells in verse the story of the serpent messenger spirit Maah' shra-True'-Ee, who lives in the lake near Laguna village until it is cracked and drained by jealous neighbors. This fragment echoes the same story told in an earlier narrative portion focalized through Sterling: "The giant water snake that had always lived in the lake and that had loved and cared for the Laguna people as its children could not be found after the jealous ones had drained the lake" (92).

The snakes in the Snakes' Notebook hint at the novel's recurrent syncretism between various serpent messengers, one that links together Maah' shra-True'-Ee with the Mesoamerican Quetzalcoatl and the Afro-Caribbean Damballah. The correspondence between these mythic snakes suggests global revolution. The spirit snake's message in the notebook informs people of the identities of the days and years and announces the revolutionary prophecy, and it appears before a much-discussed portion of the almanac that begins, "One day a story will arrive at your town" (135).¹¹ This story and the stone snake at Laguna are both attached to the prophecies that Sterling recognizes by the end of the novel. Materiality and story infuse each other; as with the other objects, the snake at Laguna is storied matter.

The snake, in choosing to appear so near to the degraded, mined landscape, reaffirms for Sterling (and for Silko) that the earth is inviolable and will outlast human desecration. While other characters speculate that the snake appeared in order to escape the mine and pointed itself toward the next planned mining location, Sterling realizes, "The snake didn't care about the uranium tailings; humans had desecrated only themselves with the mine, not the Earth" (762). Rather than casting spirit in purely immaterial terms, as a spirit/matter dichotomy would

insist, the snake represents both spirit and land as unified. It points itself not in the direction of the next mine but in the direction from which the Sacred Twins will come and toward the emergence of the Sixth World that titles this final part of *Almanac*.

Focusing on the multiple temporalities of the novel-almanac offers another way to read its ending. Rather than perceiving the final chapter, “Home,” as narrowing from an epic level to a comforting personal level of Sterling’s life story, we can read the final lines as radically expansive. That is, the lines focus on the stone snake in order to indicate a geologic timescale befitting the snake’s lithic materiality as it signals the turning over of the Death-Eye Dog epoch and the coming of the Sacred Twins. The snake, comprised of both human story and stone, confuses any neat boundary between human agency and geophysical forces. Closing the novel-almanac with the stone snake explains why no prophesied global revolution occurs explicitly in its pages. The snake demands that readers take a longer view, one that accommodates multiple dimensions of time and recognizes the spiritual dimensions of revolution. These material objects all influence the actions of the characters; similarly, the text bears down relentlessly on readers, causing readers and reviewers to squirm.¹² As a novel-almanac, the book is itself a seeing instrument, provoking the changes it promises but does not guarantee.

THE TIMELY MATTER OF COSMOPOLITICS

The Columbus quincentennial has passed, as has the much-discussed completion in 2012 of the Mayan calendar’s baktun cycle, ushering in a new epoch. Groups with members as diverse as the attendees of *Almanac*’s Holistic Healers Convention have seized upon this moment to promote their causes, interpreting its prophetic potential for signaling global awakening and change; the moment has galvanized much activist organizing in the twenty-first century. These movements continue to be strongly influenced by their use of social media and less hierarchical organizing, as the Zapatistas acknowledge in their dissolution of Subcomandante Marcos. Prophecies, meanwhile, serve as “organizing fictions” in the sense that their “reality” need not be guaranteed fact for them to be persuasive; they are persuasive as narratives. Less about predicting the future than about marshaling the present, prophecies organize. As Mishuana Goeman remarks in her reading of *Almanac*, “The

prophecy referred to . . . is not a magical happening *but rather the processes of language and communal sharing*" (199, emphasis in original). As prophetic as it was upon its publication, *Almanac of the Dead* continues to offer a relevant message to movements that utilize both the rhetoric of prophecy and the innovations of social media while organizing for social and environmental justice.

Meanwhile, the book's vision remains consistent with the continued actions of the Zapatistas. The EZLN has proposed that the National Indigenous Congress (CNI) run a collective presidential campaign; it has agreed to put forth a female candidate for the 2018 Mexican election. Building from the CNI's advancements in Indigenous self-governance, they aim for their presidential bid to lead to "a Mexico that is governed by a council of hundreds of indigenous people from all nations and tribes guided by the wisdom of their ancestors" (Keppler).

CNI's desire to govern Mexico without accumulating power confronts traditional politics while supporting the transmission of grassroots power from below. The same impetus was apparent in the emergence of the Idle No More movement, which "adopted a radically decentralized character, having no single individual or group 'leader,'" and which recognized the leadership roles of Indigenous women (Kino-nda-niimi Collective 23). Both express the spirit as the vast, open activist networks in *Almanac*.

Insofar as these movements defy traditional leadership hierarchies, they also question the role of time. As the revolutionary formerly known as Marcos recounts of the Zapatistas, "We don't think it's a linear movement, with precedents and consequences, or that it has to do with geographic situations or calendars, dates like first Chiapas, then Seattle, then Genoa, and now Cancún. It isn't that one precedes the other and inherits it. We conceived of our movement . . . as a symptom of something that was happening and was about to happen" (Muñoz-Ramírez 304). The statement seems contradictory to the organization of the book in which it appears, a linear chronological account of the movement dubbed by Marcos himself as "the most complete version of the public history of the Zapatistas." However, these assertions about temporality for alternative globalization indicate, as *Almanac of the Dead's* preoccupation with timescales similarly does, the plurality of worlds and timescales.

These political and artistic deployments of time and materiality use their plurality to waver strategically between presence and absence, substance and ether. The agility is advantageous to the life of these movements: as the figure of Marcos shows, forces seeking to unmask, pin down, and contain the Zapatistas and Indigenous resistance find it dissolving before them and re-forming elsewhere. The mutable, aleatory spirit of the resistance (as bodies amass in protest yet retain a degree of anonymity behind balaclavas and handkerchiefs) takes place and material form in ways unexpected by dominant political rationality. Material ecocriticism enhances cultural-political analysis by foregrounding the ways in which materiality impinges on the social and by observing how the stories in matter narrate the cosmopolitical vitality of the pluriverse. It improves as a field by better acknowledging and engaging Indigenous relational ontologies—at work in ongoing movements and scholarship—which offer similar teachings about the other-than-human forces entwined with human agency. To this end, the arrival of cosmopolitics and its attention to nonhuman matter and entities could not be more timely.

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NOTES

1. For instance, Arnold Krupat sees in the south-facing position of the stone snake, featured prominently in this final scene, “a metaphor for change of cultural and political value” (53).

2. Silko writes of her research on Mayan culture, “What interested me about the Mayas was their notion of time; they believed time was a living being that had a personality, a sort of identity. Time was alive and might pass, but time did not die; moreover, the days and weeks eventually would return” (“Notes” 136).

3. Other scholars have insisted on the animate quality of time and its influences in the novel. For instance, David Mogen writes, “Ultimately, this revolution cannot be entirely explained through conventional political or economic theory (hence the elaborate commentary on the limitations of Marxism). Its force comes from Mayan metaphysics, from the angry energies of the returning days” (162). Although the days returning after the Death-Eye Dog epoch might actually be more peaceful than an-

gry (as El Feo's words above suggest), Mogen's aligning of the revolutionary spirit with time complements Heather Houser's observation that the ultimate source of the revolution is the earth itself as a "geophysical agent" (215). That is, both temporal and geologic entities serve similar roles in bringing about the revolution.

4. The goal here is not to assert the prescience of the book's prophecies but to examine how they reorganize spatiotemporal relationships and (re)affirm the responsibilities of community members to one another. In this regard, prophecy itself is less about predicted events coming to pass than it is about the influence it has on people and actions in the present. According to Lee Irwin, "Native prophecy is a creative and constructive metaphor for the reimagining and reinterpretation of religious meaning from a Native point of view" (8).

5. This statement echoes Silko's praise for the Zapatistas. In "An Expression of Profound Gratitude to the Maya Zapatistas," she writes, "This is no new war; this war has a five-hundred-year history; this is the same war of resistance that the indigenous people of the Americas have never ceased to fight" (153).

6. I use the term "pluriverse" as Marisol de la Cadena defines it (borrowing from Eduardo Viveiros de Castro and Marilyn Strathern), referring to "partially connected heterogeneous socionatural worlds negotiating their ontological disagreements politically" (360).

7. Similarly, Alegría's creeping paranoia in the narrative present resonates with the madness of Charlotte, wife of Emperor Maximilian; these two historically distinct time periods are woven together closely in the narrative to further emphasize the continuity of imperialism and the legitimacy of the prophecies.

8. We might read the grim depictions and evils in this book as part of its prophetic hermeneutics. Take, for instance, the persistent alignment of the book's Destroyer characters with homosexuality. While I ultimately agree with Huhndorf that these depictions are "indefensible" (159n12), the depictions are doubly abhorrent because they promote the same kind of essentialism so favored by the Destroyers to separate and alienate people. That is, besides reading the depictions as indicative of homophobia on Silko's part—an argument perhaps not easily dismissed—we might understand the book's tone aligning with the character of the Death-Eye Dog epoch, in which essentialism aids the ongoing exploitation of people. Though *Almanac* might hold fast to these portrayals of essentialized identity, it also subverts essentialism in its calls for collective action that draws upon and recasts the identities of many kinds of people. I also acknowledge Dorothea Fischer-Hornung's criticism that scholarly discussion of *Almanac's* homophobia gets relegated to footnotes (111). Alas, space prohibits further discussion here.

9. AnaLouise Keating suggests how "whiteness" associated with the Destroyers is not an essentialized racial category but an identity position that maintains its privilege through generations of oppression of others.

10. Though other "lively" objects qualify for analysis, including Clinton's knife and Menardo's vest, I choose these three because they are all fashioned from stone or minerals and best exemplify the connection between the spirits and the earth.

11. The same sentence repeats in a later portion of the almanac, connecting the story to a call for slaves to rise up against their masters (578).

12. Houser astutely notes this verb being used by Malcolm Jones in his *Newsweek* review to predict the reader's experience. Squirming, a motion that demonstrates anxiety even while it "strap[s] the reader to his chair," illustrates well Houser's argument about the immobilizing influence of *Almanac's* hyperbole even as its affect of anxiety spurs environmental activism (206).

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Law, Literature, and Leslie Marmon Silko

Competing Narratives of Water

JANE GRIFFITH

In *Almanac of the Dead*, Leslie Marmon Silko introduces the Lakota character Wilson Weasel Tail, a poet and ecowarrior. Weasel Tail “abandoned law school because the deck was stacked, and the dice were loaded, in the white man’s law” (714). For Weasel Tail “the law crushed and cheated the poor whatever color they were,” so he turned from law to literature. Though he is arrested for it, Weasel Tail reads one of his poems live on a TV talk show. The third stanza begins:

We say, “Adios, white man,” to
Five hundred years of
Criminals and pretenders
Illicit and unlawful governments
.....
Worcester v. Georgia!
Ex parte Crow Dog!
Winters v. United States!
Williams v. Lee!
Lonewolf [sic] v. Hitchcock!
Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe v. Morton!
Village of Kake, Alaska v. Egan!
Gila River Apache Tribe v. Arizona! (715)

Weasel Tail’s poem offers several layers through which to consider the interdisciplinary project of law and literature. Examining law as a text to be read with narrative qualities prevents the law from being treated as hermetically sealed or ideologically blank. Law and literature analysis can include how law gets represented in literature, as well as how literary devices get used in legal writing (Dolin, *Critical* 10–11). N. Bruce Duthu

argues that Indigenous literature can help “examine anew the historical meanings ascribed to various legal texts” and “inform and sharpen our understanding of present-day Indigenous claims for self-governance” (145). Sabine N. Meyer, too, observes how Indigenous literary texts intervene in colonial legal discourses, “sometimes appropriating and at other times subverting and decentering the language of the law” (128). Cheryl Suzack does not view literature as “one side of an opposing cultural idiom structured by law and literature’s incommensurability” but instead identifies how they are mutually constitutive (451).

The first three stanzas of Weasel Tail’s poem decry the “doubtful title” and “wrongful possession” of colonial law (714). The poem continues listing various breaches of fiduciary responsibility and trust but also of conscience and peace. It then goes on to name specific treaties. And the stanza quoted above not only invokes legal language and describes legal cases but also *consists* of them—some of the most important in federal American Indian law. What is more, Weasel Tail and his poem are featured in Silko’s novel—an additional intertextual layer. Eric Cheyfitz has paid close attention to Weasel Tail’s poem and its invocation of the so-called Marshall Trilogy—the three opinions in 1823, 1831, and 1832 of John Marshall, a U.S. Supreme Court chief justice.¹ These three decisions continue to dictate the relationship between Indigenous nations and the United States today. This article instead pays attention to the third legal case Weasel Tail cites: *Winters v. United States*. Also known as the “Winters Doctrine,” it is the single most important court case for Indigenous water rights in the United States.² Argued in 1907 and decided in 1908, *Winters* was the first federal case to firmly uphold the water rights of Indian reservations. The case states that Indigenous users of water have the right to whatever water they may need, and only surplus may be taken by non-Indigenous users.

I argue that though Silko only mentions *Winters* by name once and does so among other equally important court cases, tracing her entire career so far—her fiction, nonfiction, novels, poetry, short stories, early work, and most recent novella—reveals a sustained devotion to narratives of water. Hardly any of her texts (or sometimes even pages) neglect careful discussions of water as generative, powerful, spiritual, and gendered. Silko paints scenes of river water, ocean water, rain, and the emerging water of springs. My analysis cuts across Silko’s fiction and

nonfiction rather than treating them as separate, as Silko herself states that topics dictate her genre and mode (*Turquoise Ledge* 99).

Though little scholarship has focused exclusively on Silko and water, it flows as a topic, symbol, metaphor, and character throughout her career.³ This article understands Silko's texts as responses and retellings of Indigenous water from a literary, female, and Indigenous perspective rather than the legal, male, and non-Indigenous viewpoint of *Winters*. I begin describing *Winters* and its narratives of water, including its ambiguities and assimilationist language, which have both helped and hindered Indigenous access to water. I then offer the various narratives of water that Silko presents throughout her career and conclude with specific instances in which she highlights the limits of U.S. law. In this article, I argue that *Winters* is indirectly cited throughout much of Silko's writing, revealing ideas of whose water stories are heard, valued, privileged, and closest to truth (and whose are not), undercutting any claim to a mononarrative or to the ownership or commodification of water.

WINTERS AND ITS DISCONTENTS

Winters v. United States is named after a white settler, Henry Winter—the s was a typo (McCool 12). In 1905 the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation experienced its first water shortage. On behalf of the reservation, the Department of Justice sued Winter and another settler named Mose Anderson for irrigating the Milk River upstream of the reservation and contributing to the shortage (*United States v. Mose Anderson et al.*, 1905). The department also named sixteen other irrigators and three irrigation companies (Shurts 69). Once Anderson lost he dropped out and left Winter to appeal, first to the Ninth Circuit and then to the U.S. Supreme Court. The final decision maintained the water rights of the A'aninin (Gros Ventre) and Nakota (Assiniboine) peoples on the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation. The Court decided that though the white settlers upriver were entitled to the water on their legally owned property, they were not the priority water users: the people of Fort Belknap had priority, a decision that appeared to be a victory for Indigenous users. Though *Winters* is today sometimes viewed as anomalously favorable to the interests of Indigenous peoples, John Shurts in fact argues that Indian Affairs officials, as well as Justice Department attorneys, often

attempted to protect Indigenous water rights—it was states, settler water users, and their congressional advocates who tried to oppose them (102).

Yet because of the ambiguities in *Winters*, Indigenous peoples have been fighting for water using the case with limited reprieve, leading to years, money, and water wasted. One of the case's obscurities stems from the two different codes of U.S. water law. In the eastern states water law is riparian, which is a code borrowed from England that means if a landowner's property is next to water, the landowner can use the water unless it interferes with a neighbor's use (Burton 19). Under riparian law, a water right remains regardless of whether it is exercised. Western states, though, borrow Spanish and North African water law, called prior appropriation, known colloquially as "first in time, first in right" (DuMars, O'Leary, and Utton 3). With prior appropriation, senior users have water rights over junior users, who may enjoy any surplus left from senior users (Weaver 85). Unlike riparian law, if a water right under prior appropriation goes unused, the right can be extinguished (Hundley 18; Burton 4): use it or lose it.

But with *Winters*, the win for Indigenous water rights is unclear, resulting in a "jurisprudential puzzle" (Tarlock 477) that contributes to its narrative qualities. Some of the lack of clarity stems from the fact that the *Winters* doctrine borrows from both riparian *and* prior appropriation codes. The right could have been awarded at Fort Belknap under riparian law, as the land belonged to the A'aninin and Nakota peoples along the river. It was never clear whether the Court understood the land along the river as belonging to Indigenous peoples because it has always been their land or whether the Court understood ownership of their land only by way of a reservation owned through title in fee by the government. But water rights through *Winters* may have instead been issued through prior appropriation: the Court may have been recognizing that A'aninin and Nakota peoples were the senior users of the water in relation to the non-Indigenous users upriver. The Court did not acknowledge other Indigenous peoples who used the water even earlier. *Winters* never clarified whether Indigenous users at Fort Belknap were considered senior users because their reservation was created in 1888, before the non-Indigenous people upstream began irrigating, or because Indigenous users' seniority stretched to "time immemorial"—a critical distinction for Indigenous nations whose reservations were cre-

ated after non-Indigenous people began using their water. However, unlike prior appropriation, the water rights issued by *Winters* would not be extinguished if unused (Weaver 86). This unusual mix of riparian and prior appropriation did not matter at Fort Belknap, but most water rights cases require these clarifications. Therefore, future cases concerning Indigenous water rights could be argued in many ways because of this lack of clarity (DuMars, O'Leary, and Utton 16).

Another ambiguity of *Winters* and ensuing water law in the United States includes bureaucratic tensions. Though the Bureau of Indian Affairs should protect Indigenous water rights, it has a conflict of interest, since it is part of the Department of the Interior. This department is also responsible for the Bureau of Reclamation, whose role is to promote rapid development and water use. Traditionally, the Department of the Interior has privileged its role of promoting western water development projects instead of protecting Indigenous rights (Burton 23). This conflict of interest is reminiscent of Silko's discovery that Pima County's environmental protection and development are the same entity (Silko, *Turquoise Ledge* 202). The Department of the Interior's duality is not coincidental: it stems from the Newlands Reclamation Act (1902), which, among many other sweeping changes, dictated that a percentage of money made when public land was sold would be set aside for irrigation works that were required by the government to grow large-scale crops and generally "settle" the land (DuMars, O'Leary, and Utton 9).

Ambiguities also exist between federal and state levels of government. The trend in Indigenous water rights is for the federal courts to uphold reserved water rights stemming from *Winters* but for Congress and state legislatures to ignore or circumvent the law. Because of these cases of loggerheads, Indigenous peoples are often unable to convert their water rights into actual use of water (Burton 23). Since *Winters*, the government has been paying Indigenous peoples to relinquish their "theoretical" right to water for "real" water (also known as "wet water") and money (63)—Congress and the Executive Branch consistently claim that non-Indigenous users hold prior appropriation rights, tending "either to ignore the Indian right or to subvert it indirectly" (33). *Winters* clearly outlined that the doctrine was relevant even if it meant a loss of water for white settlers; however, a "no-injury-to-whites rule was imposed via funding restrictions" (McCool 22). Phyllis Young views this wresting of water rights as genocidal (90). Consequently, as Shurts argues, *Winters*

was not viewed as a threat by downstream settlers at Fort Belknap: they and others learned ways that *Winters* could in fact benefit them (34). *Winters* was an interruption to the otherwise strict application of the prior appropriation rules, and it also reified the power of the federal government to reserve water for federal purposes; settlers used this to their advantage in various ways (166). Shurts notes an absence of Indigenous perspectives on *Winters* in the early twentieth-century archival record despite the profound effect it had and would have on later generations (10). Because of such dynamics, “effective control over and use of significant amounts of water by western Indians did not follow in the wake of the *Winters* decision” (7) despite its promise to do so.

Pueblo water presents an even further complication: if *Winters* is interpreted as a treaty or reserved right, the invocation of the *Winters* doctrine is tenuous, because the only treaty Pueblo peoples have is between the United States and Mexico through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which does not explicitly name Pueblo people or their reserved rights (DuMars, O’Leary, and Utton 27). Almost all other treaties are directly with the United States; Pueblo people, in contrast, hold fee simple title and can make the argument that because Congress issued them a land patent they preserved water rights under previous agreements with Mexico (Britton 64). Every time Pueblo water rights are asserted, how they were first defined by Spain and then by Mexico must be established, because the treaty stated that the United States would maintain whatever was originally promised.⁴ The amount of water in Pueblo territory is also contentious. Pueblo people argue that the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo means the amount of water should expand as needs and populations change; a non-Indigenous perspective is that the amount of Pueblo water is inflexibly based on historical use (Colby, Thorson, and Britton 13).

Finally, *Winters* is a difficult legal narrative upon which to build water rights because its expressed purpose is to support assimilation through agriculture—the original text discusses neither the inherent rights of Indigenous peoples nor their own definitions of water. In *Winters*, Milk River—which cuts across the colonial border between the United States and Canada—is figured as a life-giving body of water that feeds cattle, crops, and Indian agents and officers (*Winters* 566). Lewis and Clark named the river Milk after its white silt, which for them was “the color of a cup of tea with the admixture of a tablespoonful of milk.” James

Welch's *Winter in the Blood*, which is set on the Fort Belknap Reservation, paints the Milk River as instead milky because of factory pollution (6). *Winters* states that water at Fort Belknap was necessary because its lands, "without irrigation, were practically valueless" (576). The assimilationist thrust of the legal doctrine continues: "The reservation was a part of a very much larger tract which the Indians had the right to occupy and use, and which was adequate for the habits and wants of a nomadic and uncivilized people. It was the policy of the government, it was the desire of the Indians, to change those habits and to become a pastoral and civilized people" (576). The judge's opinion recognizes an extinguished Indigenous ownership of land that was too big, aligning government policy with Indigenous choice and "desire."

Winters attempts to dictate what Indigenous peoples' relationship is to water through legal narrative. The case states that the reservation is "well fitted and adapted for pasturage and the feeding and grazing of stock" (566), as well as "farming and cultivation and the pursuit of agriculture, and [is] productive in the raising thereon of grass, grain, and vegetables" (566); however, Fort Belknap lands are "of dry and arid character, and, in order to make them productive"—the terms of production here dictated by the government—they require water (566). According to *Winters*, the reservation was conceived as able to "advanc[e] the civilization and improvement of the Indians, and to encourage habits of industry and thrift among them" (567). This could only be accomplished if "all of the waters of the river flow down the channel uninterruptedly and undiminished in quantity and undeteriorated in quality." The impetus behind this forceful push toward farming is assimilation.

A. Dan Tarlock argues that these ambiguities have played to Indigenous peoples' favor. For much of the twentieth century, *Winters* did little to assist Indigenous peoples. This is not to say the doctrine lay dormant: many incorrectly argue that *Winters* went largely unused until 1963, when in *Arizona v. California* the promise of water rights in *Winters* first became quantified (Nuñez and Wallace 36–37). But as Shurts points out, *Winters* was indeed invoked throughout the first half of the twentieth century (8, 165). However, *Winters* limited water use to on-reservation, agricultural purposes only (Tarlock 483–86). These restrictions changed in the 1970s for several reasons. For one, tribes were newly able to hire their own lawyers. As well, 1973 saw the publication of the report of the National Water Commission. The five-year commission was an attempt

at a comprehensive federal water strategy with a focus on water quality, finances, and water challenges. Instead of framing *Winters* as only a right, Tarlock argues that the 1973 commission in some ways saw *Winters* as an opportunity to right wrongs. Which wrongs are limited: rather than addressing a longer history of settler colonialism, the commission narrowly focused on the failure of *Winters* to protect Indigenous water rights before 1973.

Tarlock argues that these changes—access to lawyers and the commission's view of *Winters* as redress—allowed Indigenous peoples in the 1980s to negotiate for “wet reservation water, green money, and a broad range of water uses better suited to the culture and actual needs of individual reservations” (497). Tarlock attributes the ability of *Winters* to be of benefit to Indigenous peoples because it was a property, not a human, right (485). He states that despite non-Indigenous attempts at diminishing the power of *Winters*, “tribes used the threat of enforcement of their *Winters* rights to broker deals with the western water establishment,” pushing beyond the need of water only for agricultural purposes (475–76). Tarlock's main argument is that “the creation of ‘hard’ or full property rights can sometimes do more to redress a historical injustice than the creation of constitutional rights” (476). Shurts, too, views *Winters* as more complicated than the other more overt land grabs of its time, especially considering that *Lone Wolf v. Hitchcock*, which declared that Congress could force allotment, was decided only five years before *Winters* (5, 123). Silko's perspective on water—haunted by *Winters* without directly citing it—complicates views of the case as being either simply beneficial or harmful to Indigenous interests.

SILKO AND THE LIMITS OF *WINTERS*

While *Winters* is lauded as a beneficial right by some legal scholars, the literature of Silko provides an alternative perspective. First, her literature goes far beyond the wrongs of *Winters* beginning in 1908; much of her work takes a far longer view of settler colonialism. As well, Silko indirectly mentions the failed protection of *Winters*, despite the high regard with which the case has been viewed. In *The Turquoise Ledge* Silko describes her shock at the destruction of an arroyo because it stands so close to a national park, which she knows federal water law should protect. But Silko writes of “how easily the wealthy in Pima County can

flout laws intended to protect the desert terrain and groundwater” (170). Rather than working through the law, Silko seeks justice for the destruction of the arroyo through narrative. She tells a story in which she imagines the perpetrators “squashed into the humble desert earth” (171). Silko also demonstrates the failure of *Winters* in *Sacred Water* with her description of a neighbor who prevents flooding: “He diverted the water with an intricate network of small stone check dams which he carefully engineered so that the rain water fed small ditches. . . . Later, the U.S. Government engineers spent months, and many thousands of dollars to install giant storm drains which dump the run-off into the river” (42–46). Silko uses the word “engineer” in the context of both the neighbor’s work *and* the government’s. Silko takes further aim at the Bureau of Reclamation in her critique of the “hundreds of miles of concrete canals costing billions of tax dollars [that] carry salty Colorado River water uphill to Phoenix and most years, to Tucson” (52). Silko, unlike the Bureau of Reclamation’s largely nationalist and utopian rhetoric of water management, explains coolly that “the river must be shared.” As Silko lists major cities in the United States and their lack of water, she states in *Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit* that “maybe the newcomers need another five hundred or even a thousand years to learn how to live with the earth here, but when the water has run out, their time will have run out too” (185). Throughout her work, Silko points to how federal water law will never be able to protect Indigenous water.

Silko more fully develops her critique of federal water law in her fiction. The backstory of *Gardens in the Dunes* includes the building of a dam, which changes the land but provides jobs for Sister Salt and company. The narrator explains how most of the land on the reservation of Mojave and Chemehuevi peoples “was above the fertile river bottom, on old floodplains impossible to irrigate” because “white farmers claimed the best river bottom land” (206). Sister Salt describes the effect the new dam has on her land:

After the river’s course was diverted, she was saddened to find silver-green carp belly-up, trapped in water holes in the empty riverbed. . . . She felt sad but resentful too, at the workers who channeled the river away from its bed. . . . [T]he Mojave people were terribly upset because their beloved ancestors and dead relatives dwelled down there under the river. . . . Angry tears filled her eyes. (214)

This pain is contrasted with a white settler named Edward, who becomes excited by the prospects of cheap water (282). *Gardens* does not mention *Winters* and is set nearly contemporaneously with the case's creation in the early twentieth century. Yet Edward's profit and Sister Salt's devastation reveal the failure of federal law to protect Indigenous water.

Silko elaborates on the limits of *Winters* most strongly in *Almanac of the Dead*. The villain, Leah Blue, circumvents (or uses?) the law to build a housing development—Venice, Arizona—in the desert, with artificial lakes, fountains, and canals. She builds her development around water, even though it is not naturally occurring, because Leah believed that around water “people felt more confident and carefree” (374). Leah does not actually believe her own rhetoric, referring to her realty plans as “the water gimmick” (374). But Leah's designs require a way of convincing investors to forget Arizona's previous water crisis (660). In Leah's mind, Arizona's “water problem” is in the past, exaggerated by the media and avoidable if “federal water-management officials had not allowed too much of the Colorado River to escape to Mexico” (660). Besides the humor of Leah protesting water “escaping” past a colonial border, her words reveal what she believes federal water law should protect. Leah purchases the land for the subdivision cheaply because “it had been worthless without water” (750)—language similar to *Winters*.

Rather than the protection *Winters* is supposed to offer, *Almanac* reveals how any barriers that characters may face in commodifying water are in fact smoothed away by the law. Leah refuses to accept reclaimed sewage or Colorado River water and instead opts for water from deep wells (375) and imported glacier water for drinking (660). Leah is in denial that her deep wells will harm existing wells and springs, incredulous as to why “the Indians or the environmentalists had bothered to sue,” because for her, the desert was repulsive and ugly (750). Indeed, Leah's entire vision for Venice, Arizona, is for people to forget they are in the desert. To build these deep wells, Leah requires the law to work for her, as she knows her critics have identified that her wells may ruin what remains of Arizona's potable water (660). As her lover, Trigg, points out, Leah faces the resistance of Indigenous peoples and also environmentalists, who could appeal to federal water rights. Leah believes that “Indian tribes or ecologists might try to sue to stop her deep wells later, but by then the deep wells would be flowing” (376).

Recognizing federal water law's potential to block her plans, Leah goes to work: she instructs her gangster husband to play golf with Judge Arne to convince him to stop an injunction prohibiting the deep wells. Leah cannot approach Judge Arne directly but requires the formal relationship between her husband and the judge on the golf course—the maintenance of which, not unironically, exacerbates Arizona's very real water problems. Silko's inclusion of the golf course as the backdrop for the collusion between Leah's interests and the law exists amidst a larger history, too. The golf course proposal that precipitated resistance at Kanehsatake (Oka) and Sherman Alexie's "The Trial of Thomas Builds-the-Fire," in which the main character seeks justice for those who died protecting land slated for a golf course, are but two examples.⁵ Golf courses are also found on many Indigenous sacred sites and have a long history in the United States of exclusion based on race. Judge Arne is already sympathetic to Leah's claims, because for him "water for golf courses was top priority because tourism was all the industry Arizona had left" (650).

For Leah's company to press on, she requires that Judge Arne throw out a cross-suit issued by an Indigenous group in Nevada against a subdivider in Bullhead City. Though Silko provides scant details, it seems the Bullhead City subdivider's goals are similar to Leah's, and if the Indigenous suit against the subdivider is thrown out, Leah may begin her wells. She feels safe in her request of her husband, as "no link would ever be made between the outcome of an obscure water-rights suit brought by some Nevada Indians against a subdivider in Bullhead City, and Blue Water Land Development's applications for deep-water wells in Tucson" (376). The injunction against Leah's well is denied, thanks to Judge Arne and Leah's attorneys, who argue that her "deep wells were Arizona's last hope for precious water. Leah Blue was a visionary, her attorneys said, because her deep wells would pump water even during drought" (660). Her lawyers argue that "since the US banking collapse and the crash of Arizona land prices, Arizona had been losing population," and Leah's wells therefore were safe, because water in Arizona was now "plentiful" (749). Though "the environmentalists and the Indians had brought in their own experts" who claimed that "Leah Blue's deep wells would destroy shallow wells throughout the valley," her connections to Judge Arne still ensure the injunction's denial. Leah gets "a kick out of watching Judge Arne pretend to weigh both arguments" (749),

knowing that his careful consideration of Indigenous claims to water and land is contrived. Importantly, Silko writes that Judge Arne has read “a hydrologists’ report in court and knows Arizona’s groundwater is finite” (651) but still permits Leah’s wells. Judge Arne, Leah, her lawyers, and to a lesser extent her husband view water as commodifiable, and they directly profit from its sale, whether through subdivisions, golf courses, or just by continuing to live in Arizona.

Though Silko shows how U.S. water law does not benefit Indigenous peoples, she occasionally includes scenes where those who commodify water are punished. In *Gardens in the Dunes*, Edward (who stands to profit from the dam) eventually dies, his character vilified for most of the text. Big Candy, who foolishly chases the money earned from the dam’s construction, nearly dies of dehydration (422), not unlike the scene in *Almanac* in which Alegría almost dies in a desert. In *Ceremony*, water is not treated as a commodity save for a scene in which Tayo is drinking a beer. Tayo admits a thirst “deep down, somewhere behind his belly, near his heart” that he needs to quench:

[Tayo] looked at the picture of the cascading spring on the bottle. He didn’t know of any springs that big. Did they ever have droughts in Colorado? Maybe Emo was wrong: maybe white people didn’t have everything. Only Indians had droughts. . . . He drank the beer as if it were the tumbling ice-cold stream in the mountain canyon on the beer label. (56)

Although Tayo is aware that what he is drinking is not what the label purports, he valorizes northern systems of water.⁶ Though Tayo consumes a signifier for water, leading him to associate Indianness with drought and whiteness with water, the text ultimately refutes water’s commodification through both the destroyers’ drought-related compunction and the spiritual water ceremonies in which Tayo partakes, discussed below. The narrator of *Ocean Story*, too, considers buying oceanfront property in Mexico but abandons the idea, because “someday all the beach front real estate, all the land, would be reclaimed by the ocean,” and even before that, “the tall wave of the indigenous people would reclaim all the land” (74). So throughout much of Silko’s texts, *Winters* figures in unusual ways wherein Indigenous peoples seldom gain anything from the commodification of water. If they do (like Sister Salt’s profiting from dam workers), the benefit is temporary.

SILKO'S NARRATIVES OF WATER

This final section argues that Silko not only reveals the limits of federal law but does so by privileging the power of narrative when it comes to representations of water. Silko often writes of law versus literature, revealing the more powerful role of the latter. Many of the failings of law she learned firsthand. Silko's Auntie taught her about the limits of Marshall's rulings and the Supreme Court on her porch (*Yellow Woman* 83). In *The Turquoise Ledge*, Silko recounts her father's role as the Laguna tribal treasurer in the 1950s. She remembers her father carrying "piles of manila envelopes" to a hearing in the U.S. Court of Federal Claims to defend Laguna claims to millions of acres of land that the federal government had labeled national forest and public land at the turn of the century (25–26). At this trial, elders told stories in the Laguna language, and "together they stood the test in a high court of an alien culture." Silko remarks that although the case included evidence of "Laguna's ancient, continuous occupancy" in the form of archaeologists, anthropologists, and manila envelopes, proof also included "the stories and accounts of the old folks." But as Silko explains, the end result was that "Laguna Pueblo got back none of their precious land" and instead were paid out meagerly. She writes about the same lawsuit in *Yellow Woman*, naming the elders "expert witnesses" alongside the lawyers and archaeologists. For Silko, "the old folks were going up against the State of New Mexico with only the stories" (18). Despite the failure of the law to protect Pueblo land, what survives are the narratives and testimony of the elders in their own language. Silko ascribes this experience to her "notion that if I could tell the story clearly enough then all that was taken, including the land, might be returned."

After these early experiences, Silko has continued to encounter the law's limits and to underscore the power of literature. In her non-fiction, she writes that in university she became an English major but later entered law school because she decided it was "the place to seek justice." Once there, though, she realized she should have heeded the Laguna Pueblo lessons passed down to her, understanding that "injustice is built into the Anglo-American legal system" (*Yellow Woman* 19)—words not unlike Weasel Tail's. Silko left law school, wanting nothing to do "with a barbaric legal system" (20)—a sentiment similar to that espoused by the character Zeta in *Almanac of the Dead*: "There was not,

and there never had been, a legal government by Europeans anywhere in the Americas. Not by any definition, not even by the Europeans' own definitions and laws. Because no legal government could be established on stolen land. Because stolen land never had clear title" (133). Similarly, in *Yellow Woman* Silko concludes that because of the corruption and hollowness of U.S. law, "the only way to seek justice was through the power of the stories" (20). Silko sets up law and literature as mutually exclusive in places, stating that in law she "could feel the curriculum suck the life out of [her] imagination and out of [her] writing," but once she quit law school and resumed writing, the power returned (193). Her encounters continued as Silko grew up: in her collection of letters to and from James Wright, Silko describes how she subsidized her income from writing with "readings and technical writing work I do for some Indian lawyers" (91), and in her latest novella, *Ocean Story*, the narrator translates legal documents. Silko explains that early in her career she had rented writing space from a lawyer, where she encountered parts of the United States that "no one wants to talk about" (*Yellow Woman* 141). Silko also recognizes the barbarism of law *through* story: in law school, Silko's professor assigned Dickens's *Bleak House*, which details a family estate whose settlement becomes so protracted through law that by the end no money remains (19). Law and literature scholars frequently cite *Bleak House* as a central text of the field (Posner; Dolin, "Bleak House"; Dolin, "Continuing"). But for Silko, Dickens's novel led her *away* from law and toward stories.

This push away from law and toward stories appears in Silko's oeuvre through her Indigenous and nonlegal representations of water. Rather than working from within *Winters*, she writes of water and its cyclical connections to drought, its beauty, spirituality, genders, and generative properties. Many of Silko's texts focus on rivers that sustain communities (*Gardens* 215; *Yellow Woman* 31). Occasionally, Silko features oceans. In *Storyteller* Silko offers a prayer to the Pacific—"big as the myth of origin" (179–80). Indigo in *Gardens* also encounters an ocean that takes her away from her family; for her, "all water was alive, she knew, but this dark salt water was bigger and more powerful than any freshwater" (225). *Ocean Story* focuses entirely on the ocean of Mexico.

Rather than the ownership of water described in *Winters*, Silko insists on her characters' and her own *dependence* on it, reversing the power inscribed in the legal doctrine. Silko's own house still depends on

wells “for all its water”—the first sentence of *Yellow Woman* (13). Silko continues, explaining that “natural springs are crucial sources of water for all life in the high desert and plateau country” (36). Silko describes one water spring as “literally the source and continuance of life for the people in the area” (36). Plainly put, for Silko, “without water there can be no life as we know it, and no turquoise” (*Turquoise* 229). For Silko, “rain water pools are cherished even now, because long ago in times of drought, the survival of the people depended on the rain water stored in the sandstone pools” (18). Water signals both dependence and interdependence. In *Rain* Silko states, “The behaviour of one being affects the welfare of all creatures; misbehaviour leads to imbalances and disharmonies, manifested by too little rain or too much.” Interdependence and water also figure into those who came before: throughout many pieces, Silko writes of respecting frogs and toads because they are the children of rain clouds; disrespecting them could trigger floods (*Yellow Woman* 69). In *Rain* Silko makes repeated references to ancestors who reemerge in the form of rainclouds. As she explains, “They love us and they bless us when they return as rain clouds.” For Silko, “rainfall is a double blessing: precious moisture and a visit from beloved departed ones” (n.p.). *Winters* presents water as a substance harnessed by law and its representatives—available to some and not to others; for Silko, everyone and everything instead depends on water.

Unlike *Winters*, Silko represents water from multiple cultural perspectives. *Gardens* describes Italian hot springs from the perspective of their current iteration, from a preceding Celtic history, from a capitalist vantage, and from Indigenous dancers (257–58). Indigo also learns the symbolism of Italian water: “[T]he wavy lines symbolized rain; Vs and zigzags and chevrons symbolized river meanders as well as snakes and flocks of waterbirds; goddesses of the rivers transformed themselves to snakes and then waterbirds” (293). Indigo also learns of British understandings of water as she lingers “over books with pictures of gardens with water splashing from fountains and statues and even a long stone wall covered with spouts of gushing water” (180). In Silko’s texts, water is many things to many people. Though *Ceremony* and countless disasters around the world connect death with uranium and water, Silko offers a preceding history: *Sacred Water* recounts how the uranium-bearing minerals in Pueblo water were a source of healing for the patients of medicine people (76). She further explains that the Spanish interpreted

petroglyphic snakes as a sign of buried treasure. The snakes were actually created by Pueblo hands to signal the existence of water below—the real treasure (29). Rather than *Winters's* monolithic, uncultural declaration of what water is, Silko embeds several cross-cultural understandings of water.

Silko also presents the spirituality of water beyond the Christianizing effects promised in *Winters*. In *Yellow Woman* Silko cites a small Pagate spring as operating “on a spiritual level, recalling the original Emergence Place” (36). Through her verse and images in *Sacred Water*, Silko describes how Pueblo water—the natural springs and lakes—“possess great power,” and “beneath their surfaces lie the entrances to the four worlds below this world” (20). Silko’s handmade prose-poetry-photo essay *Rain* also considers how a Pagate spring both sustains the people there and “functions on a spiritual level.” In *Almanac of the Dead*, among competing narratives of water for profit, the fragments from ancient notebooks describe the spirituality and history of water. They detail a twenty-year drought, prompting priests to come and “sprinkle corn pollen and meal and bits of coral and turquoise” (576). In *Gardens* black rocks simultaneously represent fresh water as well as the Messiah’s visit for Indigo (267). In the Sand Lizard origin story the Messiah and his family escape into a river: “His wife and children stepped into the river first, then the Holy Mother and he followed them; the fierce river currents of muddy water closed around them but they were not swept away. Their shoulders and heads remained above the muddy water, and they moved across the river effortlessly” (35). In *Winters* water is a colonial tool that, like Christianity and agriculture, is used to civilize; for Silko, water instead holds multiple spiritual purposes.

Spirituality in *Ceremony* uses the framing narrative of the fifth world and Tayo and T’sseh’s participation in water ceremonies. The seemingly extradiegetic poems interwoven throughout *Ceremony* recount creation narratives that center on drought and water, with one story prophesying that white people will one day cause a drought (136). The story of the Gambler also shows a past in which “the land was drying up” (172). Within the diegesis of *Ceremony*, characters must also confront dialectical water: drought. Tayo’s friend Emo proclaims that “the Indians’ mother earth” is an “old dried up thing” (25), a “dried-up country” that is “blowing away, every day” (55). Emo’s anger contrasts with the cyclicity of water and drought that the creation stories promise. Drought also

figures into the plot, as Tayo and his uncle Josiah are able to purchase water-hunting cattle cheaply because of a dry spell (74). Tayo explains that Indigenous people “were left with barren land and dry rivers” (204) by destroyers (249). For Tayo, such drought demands a spiritual resolution: “[H]oly men had their ways during the dry spells. People said they climbed the trails to the mountaintops to look west and southwest and to call the clouds and thunder” (93). Rather than a permanent lack of water, drought and thirst are portrayed in *Ceremony* as parts of a cycle that also includes water. Josiah explains that frogs (“the rain’s children”) are able to hibernate in dry sand for years until rain returns (95). As well, there is a reliance by Pueblo people on the springs that come “from deep within the earth . . . even when the sky was barren and the winds were hot and dusty” (94). Indeed, “even in the driest years nobody could ever remember a time when the spring had dried up” (45). The return of rain, initiated by Tayo’s imitation of the holy men, attracts Spider Woman, frogs, Hummingbird, and dragonflies—the spiritual worlds of *Ceremony*. *Ceremony* emphasizes how “wind and dust . . . are part of life too” (46). Water also frames the fifth world in *Ceremony*, as well as Tayo and T’sseh’s healing ceremonies.

But Silko’s scenes of spiritual water are not always mutually exclusive with Christianity. This point is made most forcefully in the short story “The Man to Send Rain Clouds.” In it, the family of an elderly sheep farmer prepares for his funeral. At first, two characters uninvolve the local Catholic priest as the community stealthily prepares the farmer’s funeral with candles and medicine bags, cornmeal and pollen. But one community member decides to contact the priest eventually, asking for holy water. Rather than a scene in which Pueblo traditions are eventually written over by Christian ones (which *Winters* forecasts), the community invites the priest’s participation on their own terms. They require the holy water for Teofilo to ensure “he won’t be thirsty” (5). They also desire the holy water because “the old man could send [the community] big thunderclouds” (4). At first, the priest refuses:

“Why didn’t you tell me he was dead? I could have brought the Last Rites anyway.”

Leon smiled. “It wasn’t necessary, Father.” . . .

“For a Christian burial it was necessary.”

His voice was distant, and Leon thought that his blue eyes looked tired.

"It's O.K. Father, we just want him to have plenty of water."
(6-7)

In this dialogue, Leon and the priest have different understandings of the holy water. For the priest, the holy water and the Christian burial go hand-in-hand; for Leon and the community, the holy water provides water for both Teofilo and themselves. When Leon smilingly tells the priest "it wasn't necessary," he is telling the priest that the Last Rites are not necessary for the funeral *and* that the Last Rites are not necessary for the community to require the holy water. In Silko's story, water's competing narratives erupt in this exchange, ending with the negotiation of water's spirituality on Pueblo terms.

Silko continued this thread thirty-six years later in *The Turquoise Ledge*. Silko states that San Juan Day, at the end of June, is during the rainy season and is likely a Christian celebration, which she attributes to the fact that "John the Baptist sprinkled water on people" (240). But like Teofilo's funeral, Silko explains that "long before San Juan, traditional Pueblo and Nahua peoples used to attract the rain by sprinkling precious water on everyone" (241). Silko complicates the history of San Juan Day with Pueblo presence and spiritual connections to water that are not a wholesale rejection of Christian implications but a carefully historicized negotiation. Silko's nuanced approach is more helpful than the line of argument presented in *Winters*, which decided that the creation of the Fort Belknap reservation implied the use of the water, because just allotting the land would be nonsensical: "It would be extreme to believe that within a year Congress destroyed the reservation and took from the Indians the consideration of their grant, leaving them a barren waste, took from them the means of continuing their old habits, yet did not leave them the power to change to new ones" (n.p.). *Winters* in this sense advocates for Indigenous access to water, arguing that the United States would never have created a reservation without also implying access to water; yet it presents "old habits" and "new ones" as mutually exclusive. Silko instead presents methods of adaptation, survivance, and resistance in terms of perspectives on water.

How do Silko and her characters *know* about water? Many texts feature examples of water knowledge through narrative. Instances include

Silko clipping articles “about rain, about the El Niño weather systems that cause floods in some areas and droughts in others” (*Yellow Woman* 13). She also describes in both *Sacred Water* and *The Turquoise Ledge* water knowledge recorded in rain journals. The practice stems from the San Pablito people, who in times of drought would bring “a small handmade foldout book of amate paper to ask for rain” (*Turquoise* 246).⁷ Silko describes the history of the rain book, originally written in Nahuatl. When the rain book is written in Spanish, Silko figures that accoutrements are required to “compensate,” as “the Nahuatl words are much more powerful for rainmaking than the Spanish” (246–47). Silko also offers water knowledge in her fiction. Sterling in *Almanac* reflects on stories passed down to him of his ancestors’ migrations based on water (759). In *Gardens* water knowledge is imparted by Grandma Fleet, who instructs her granddaughters clearly: “[F]irst thing, go to the spring” (37). Grandma Fleet’s water knowledge continues, offering didactic lessons on “which floodplain terraces were well drained enough to grow sweet black corn and speckled beans. The squashes and melons were water lovers, so they had to be planted in the bowl-shaped area below the big dune where the runoff soaked deep into the sand” (49). Grandma Fleet also explains to her granddaughters that a water spring belongs to its resident snake, who must be respected lest “the precious water disappeared” (38). In *Winters* the ability to know water begins and ends with the law. It argues that law took away “old” Indigenous relationships to land and water, and it is the law’s responsibility to offer the means by which to convert to “new ones”; for Silko, teaching and learning water are narrative based.

CONCLUSION

As Weasel Tail sees it, “[T]he people didn’t need more lawyers.” Instead, “poetry would set the people free; poetry would speak to the dreams and to the spirits, and the people would understand what they must do” (*Almanac* 713). Throughout her oeuvre so far, Silko brings her readers to think about water in ways that actively push against *Winters*, despite how all-encompassing the legal narrative may claim to be. Rather than recentering *Winters*, my focus here is to show Silko’s life-long challenges to its supremacy and power. While this article focuses on water, Indigenous water rights are more largely related to land and minerals as well.

Today, Indigenous nations are fighting with non-Indigenous private and governmental representatives for water in administrative hearings and courtrooms across Turtle Island. As Indigenous peoples fight against boil advisories and water contamination and debate golf courses and fracking, pipelines, and dams, the zoomed-out scope of water narratives continues. Currently, settlement among users of a particular water source has been offered as a stronger solution to acquiring “wet water” than litigation (Nuñez and Wallace 35), particularly in Pueblo territories: the Zuni Indian Tribe Water Rights Settlement (2003) and the Taos Pueblo Water Rights Settlement (2008) are two recent examples. But as Austin Nuñez and Mary G. Wallace argue, settlements might not always encompass all dimensions of a water right, which may also include quantity, management, economic aspects, and spiritual qualities (36). *Winters* hinges upon distinctions of riparian law, prior appropriation, and Indigenous rights, all the while commodifying water; Silko’s texts view drought as cyclically connected to water, which is spiritual and uncommodifiable, resisting and rewriting the legal narrative. While the legal narratives may be held up as avenues offering “real” change concerning water, Silko’s writing reveals otherwise in promoting the power of stories to create deeper understandings of the possibilities of justice.

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NOTES

I am indebted to Cheryl Suzack for first introducing me to thinking about law and literature. I am also thankful for the feedback of my anonymous reviewers and John Shurts.

1. For a law and literature reading of the Marshall Trilogy in Gerald Vizenor’s *Chair of Tears*, see Meyer.

2. *United States v. Shoshone Tribes* (1938), in which the court found that the Shoshone people’s Indigenous right to land included the timber and minerals, also concretized the economic value of water, though later than *Winters*. For monographs and edited collections on Indigenous water rights and the United States, see Shurts; Colby, Thorson, and Britton; Thorson, Britton, and Colby; and Cosens and Royster. For Indigenous water rights and Canada, see Matsui.

3. See Nelson(5) and White (145) for brief exceptions.
4. Some cases include *Pueblo of Laguna & Acoma v. City of Grants New Mexico et al.*, *New Mexico v. Abbott*, and *New Mexico v. Arellano*. For a case study of regional water planning in New Mexico that touches upon these cases, see Natcher, Walker, and Jojola.
5. See Alanis Obomsawin's film *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance* for further context on golf courses and colonialism.
6. Robert Alexie writes a similar scene of two Indigenous men commenting on the label of bottled water (324) in *Porcupines and China Dolls*.
7. An Indigenous form of paper making banned by Spanish colonizers and recently revived.

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“The Real Geronimo Got Away”

Eluding Expectations in *Geronimo: His Own Story; The Autobiography of a Great Patriot Warrior*

ANITA HUIZAR-HERNÁNDEZ

If you had to pick a single person to stand for *Indianness*, you could do worse than Geronimo, the iconic Apache leader who stands in American popular memory for resistant warriors everywhere and the defeated prisoners we imagine they became.

—Philip Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*

Of course the real man they called Geronimo, they never did catch. The real Geronimo got away.

—Leslie Marmon Silko, *Almanac of the Dead*

The name Geronimo conjures up a wide variety of images, from World War II paratroopers to children jumping off the high dive to the code-name for the U.S. military's covert operation to kill Osama Bin Laden. Well over one hundred years after his surrender to the U.S. military in 1886, Geronimo's image remains a prominent part of the national imagination as a free-floating signifier for bravery, daring, and danger. Of the many things Geronimo is associated with, however, his own autobiography is not usually one of them. The hypervisibility of Geronimo's name and face is contrasted with the comparative invisibility of what the man himself had to say in *Geronimo: His Own Story; The Autobiography of a Great Patriot Warrior*.

Why is Geronimo so much more prevalent than *Geronimo*? Though Geronimo's autobiography has not been completely ignored, particularly by interested academics, there is something about the text that is at odds with the dominant representations of Geronimo, positive or nega-

tive, that have become so frequent and familiar within U.S. popular culture. In this essay, I argue that *Geronimo*'s relative obscurity is due to its generic constraints and enigmatic content, both of which frustrate the reader by eluding easy interpretation. This interpretive opacity is all the more exasperating given the pervasive nature of Geronimo's image, for since its publication in 1906, *Geronimo* has been defying readers' expectations. By refusing to tell either extreme of the Geronimo mythology, that is, by rejecting the image of both "the iconic Apache leader who stands in American popular memory for resistant warriors everywhere" and "the defeated prisoners we imagine they became," *Geronimo* challenges our ability to make such a straightforward distinction in the first place (Deloria, *Indians* 136).

GERONIMO, IN HIS OWN WORDS?

One of the reasons Geronimo's autobiography has received surprisingly little attention is the complexity of its authorial voice. The title *Geronimo: His Own Story* would seem to make the authorship of this text clear and simple: the reader expects the story of Geronimo as told by the man himself. As is always the case with Geronimo, however, the reality is much more complex than first impressions might suggest. In actuality, *Geronimo*, like other late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century narratives of the lives of Native American people, is a hybrid text somewhere between a biography and an autobiography.¹ R. D. Theisz refers to this canon as "bi-autobiographies" and defines them as texts that present "segments or all of the life of a Native American man or woman, narrated orally or in writing, which is then recorded by a non-Indian editor, generally from among social scientists or literati" (66). Arnold Krupat identifies a third party within this collaboration: a translator (*For Those* 45–46). The end result, then, is not a straightforward telling of one's own life but an opaquely polyvocal narrative. *Geronimo: His Own Story* is no exception, narrated by Geronimo to Oklahoma school superintendent S. M. Barrett through Apache translator Asa Daklugie.

The first step in analyzing *Geronimo*, then, is a careful examination of the specific workings of this culturally, linguistically, and epistemologically complex collaborative process. As Krupat cautions, any analysis of this genre "requires consideration of the language, culture, and history both of Native Americans and of Eur-americans [*sic*]" (*For Those* xi). In

order to emphasize this inherent cultural duality, he proposes using the term "original bicultural composite composition" in lieu of autobiography (31). Untangling how this duality operates, as Hertha Dawn Wong warns, is no easy feat. Analyzing these texts requires readers to attend to how they "construct a coherent singular identity" from an often incoherent mixture of various cultural identities, often in exceedingly opaque ways (Wong 9).

Exactly how the Native American narrator, translator, and non-Native American editor work together to construct this coherent singular identity thus becomes a central yet frustrating question for those studying this genre. The terms of this collaboration are and should be of interest to scholars; however, in many cases the specifics are unknowable. Where, then, to begin? Instead of focusing on what is not knowable about a specific narrator-editor relationship, Krupat shifts the conversation to a broad discussion of what is knowable about the collaboration, framing their relationship as "the textual equivalent of a frontier" (*For Those* 33). Of course the Native American narrator, translator, and non-Native American editor all come from different positions of cultural and political power, and this disparity must be foregrounded in the textual analysis. Just as different cultures did not meet on equal footing on the physical frontier, it is necessary to analyze the power dynamics that define and shape the uneven textual frontier. Nevertheless, acknowledging that the textual frontier is uneven does not necessitate disregarding the text itself. On the contrary, because the textual frontier is "a collective as well as an individual encounter," studying a specific narrator-editor-translator relationship opens up a window to study the asymmetries that define the collective encounters these texts describe (9).

Geronimo is, then, more than the individual encounter of Geronimo, S. M. Barrett, and Asa Daklugie; it is the collective encounter of Apaches and U.S. settlers along the southwestern frontier before, during, and after Apache removal from their homeland. Still, to understand this collective encounter it is necessary to first investigate the individual encounter that produced *Geronimo*. Though there is no extant transcription of their recording sessions or original manuscript showing Barrett's edits, in the preface, "Introductory," and footnotes throughout the text Barrett does give some information about the collaborative process by which he, Geronimo, and Daklugie produced the text. Of course, these explanations are solely from Barrett's perspective. Following Krupat and

Wong, a more complete analysis of this collective encounter must consider the mindset and potential motivations of each contributor.

Stephen Melvil Barrett saw *Geronimo* as a chance to bolster his self-proclaimed status as an expert on the West, particularly when it came to Native Americans. Barrett grew up along the frontier; his grandfather moved with his family to Indian Territory in the 1830s, and his father worked as a wagon-train boss (Krupat, *For Those* 62). Barrett became an educator but also took an interest in historical and ethnographic writing, particularly about Native Americans. *Geronimo* was just the beginning of his foray into writing about Native Americans. In addition to editing *Geronimo* (1906), Barrett also authored *Mocco, an Indian Boy* (1911), *Hoistah, an Indian Girl* (1913), *Shinkah, the Osage Indian* (1916), *Beaver, the Pawnee Indian* (1918), and *Sociology of the American Indians* (1946).

Eager to strengthen his credentials as an expert on all things Native American, Barrett was the driving force behind the recording and publishing of *Geronimo*. In 1905, when Geronimo was in his eighties, Barrett approached him about publishing the story of his life.² Barrett describes his motivation in soliciting Geronimo's story in his preface: "The initial idea of the compilation of this work was to give the reading public an authentic record of the private life of the Apache Indians, and to extend to Geronimo as a prisoner of war the courtesy due to any captive, *i.e.*, the right to state the causes which impelled him in his opposition to our civilization and laws" (1). Barrett anticipates that Geronimo's story will contest, contradict, and even condemn the official version of his pursuit, capture, and subsequent imprisonment. As an educator, Barrett saw the educational and ethical value in capturing the other side of the story. Surely the government records, official correspondence, newspaper articles, and military leaders' accounts of Geronimo's escapades in the U.S. Southwest were well known, and now it was time to hear what the man himself had to say. As an aspiring author, Barrett also undoubtedly understood the other value, in terms of both sales and notoriety, of producing a text about the most recognizable Native American in the country.

Barrett was, after all, trying to build a reputation as an authority on Indian affairs. A decade after the publication of *Geronimo*, in the prefaces to both *Shinkah* and *Beaver*, Barrett declares himself an expert, writing in his preface to *Shinkah* that being "born among the west-

ern Indians" and having "lived for many years in close proximity to various tribes" enables him to accurately "recite some Indian lore . . . and indicate the nature of the sociology of the Osage Indians" (n.p.). Whether he is describing the lore of the Osages or the home life of the Pawnees, his investment in documenting this information is clear: as an educator Barrett wanted, as he states in the preface to *Geronimo*, to increase "the general store of information regarding vanishing types" (1). Appealing to the common trope of the vanishing Indian, Barrett affirms the urgency of recording information about these purportedly disappearing peoples. What Barrett does not acknowledge is that this vanishing was not a natural process but rather a purposeful genocide. As Gerald Vizenor writes, "Natives were first simulated as savages in the common cultural binaries of savagism and civilization. Then, by chicanery, federal treaties, and military means natives were removed to reservations and nominated the vanishing race at the end of the nineteenth century" (197). Though Barrett expresses some sympathy toward Geronimo's individual story of hardship and survival, he is ignorant of how this story fits within a larger critique of the pernicious effects of U.S. settler colonialism.

Geronimo was a prisoner of war, and his investment in writing and publishing his autobiography was notably different from Barrett's. The autobiography, intended for Anglo readers, provided Geronimo with a rare opportunity to address his captors and build a case as to why he and his people should be allowed to return to their land in the Arizona territory. Despite his celebrity, as a prisoner of war Geronimo had few legal rights or recourse to the courts for the wrongs suffered by his people. His autobiography, then, became an alternate avenue to justice, allowing him first to inform U.S. readers from an Apache perspective about the injustice of the tribe's displacement and relocation to Florida and Oklahoma, and second, to ignite U.S. readers and their government to bring justice to the Apaches by allowing them to return to their land.

This intent to inform and ignite is evident from the first pages of the autobiography in Geronimo's "Dedicatory" to President Roosevelt:

Because he has given me permission to tell my story; because he has read that story and knows I try to speak the truth; because I believe that he is fair-minded and will cause my people to receive justice in the future; and because he is chief of a great people, I

dedicate this story of my life to Theodore Roosevelt, President of the United States.

Dedicating the story of his life to the man responsible for his imprisonment is an unconventional choice, to say the least. However, these lines definitively establish the strategic tone and structure that shape Geronimo's autobiography. In this "Dedictory" Geronimo makes justice the inevitable end of telling and publishing his story. The explicit praise for Roosevelt as a great leader who can discern truth and administer justice and the implicit praise for the "great people" of the United States are meant to help Geronimo achieve his goal of an Apache return. Geronimo acknowledges Roosevelt's and his people's positive qualities to strengthen his own position; according to the "Dedictory," Geronimo's telling of his own story can have only one outcome: to "cause [the Apache] people to receive justice." In other words, after reading his story, the president and his people would have no other choice but to allow the Apaches to return to their native land. Establishing the validity of their claim to that land is the subject, either implicitly or explicitly, of each part of Geronimo's text.

Unsurprisingly, publishing such a text was the source of much controversy. Not everyone agreed with Barrett's estimation of the educational and ethical value of Geronimo's testimony. Lieutenant Purington, the officer in charge of Fort Sill, where Geronimo was being held prisoner, flatly refused Barrett's request. Purington "explained . . . that the old Apache deserved to be hanged rather than spoiled by so much attention from civilians" (Purington qtd. in Barrett, "Introductory" 40). Barrett would not take no for an answer and instead asked permission to publish from the president himself. President Theodore Roosevelt, who had included Geronimo in his 1905 inaugural parade, granted Barrett the permission he desired, and the school superintendent turned transcriber quickly got to work (Clements 121).

Even with the appropriate permissions and clearances, Barrett still faced important linguistic and cultural barriers that further complicated his desire to transcribe Geronimo's narrative. Barrett knew he would need a translator and enlisted the help of another Apache, Asa Daklugie, "who had been trained in the famous Indian school at Carlisle, Pennsylvania" (Debo 4).³ Of his time at Carlisle Daklugie bitterly declared, "I learned much more from my own people than I did during the many

long years I spent at Carlisle" (Ball, Henn, and Sánchez 14). Based on the hostility with which he remembered his boarding school days, it seems unlikely that in his translations Daklugie would have softened Geronimo's indictments of U.S. crimes committed against the Apaches. If anything, Daklugie would have been motivated to strengthen Geronimo's strategic and veiled accusations, as *Geronimo* presented a rare opportunity to denounce their mutual captors.

It is impossible to know the exact nature or extent of the influence Daklugie and Barrett had on Geronimo's narrative, but Barrett's disclaimers in the "Introductory" and in footnotes throughout the text suggest that at least with respect to certain aspects of the content and structure, he tried to maintain Geronimo's voice despite not agreeing with or understanding his testimony. Barrett describes their writing and transcribing process in his "Introductory," telling the reader, "Geronimo refused to talk when a stenographer was present, or to wait for corrections of questions when telling the story. Each day he had in mind what he would tell and told it in a very clear, brief manner" (41). In terms of content, Barrett did not shy away from including Geronimo's criticisms of the U.S. government and military leaders who betrayed the Apaches when they negotiated their surrender.⁴ Though Barrett almost certainly made many editorial changes to *Geronimo*, he nevertheless insisted that "Geronimo has told the story in his own way" and that "is doubtless the only excuse necessary to offer for the many unconventional features of this work" (46).

GERONIMO, STORY OF THE INFAMOUS OUTLAW?

In his disclaimer regarding *Geronimo*'s "unconventional features," Barrett was likely referencing the structure and content of the text, which defied the arrangement U.S. readers had come to expect from an autobiography ("Introductory" 46). As Tyra Twomey writes, the traditional Western autobiography recounts "the chronological story of the writer's life as first the development of his or her own individuality and then the unique accomplishments and perspectives this individuality allowed for" (27). Though *Geronimo* does describe some of Geronimo's most infamous accomplishments, it also includes extended passages about Apache customs and traditions, beginning not with Geronimo's birth but with the creation story of the Apaches as a whole. *Geronimo*

is not unique in this, as many other Native American autobiographies also begin with this communal frame.⁵ Nevertheless, what distinguishes *Geronimo* from these other texts is the tremendous notoriety of its subject and, consequently, the existing expectations of its readers. Contrary to its readers' anticipations, *Geronimo* is not a tell-all about one infamous Apache but rather a powerful denunciation of the Apaches' removal from their land and forceful argument for their return.

In part 1, "The Apaches," *Geronimo* describes the Apaches' historic claim to their land in the Arizona territory. Readers at the time who had not read other Native American autobiographies (though they were quite popular) would have been surprised to find that this first section began not with Geronimo's own birthdate and place but rather with the creation of the Apache people. Contemporary readers who are less familiar with the genre are even more likely to expect an individual narrative, not the nearly anthropological description of the Apaches with which the text begins. Whether or not Geronimo himself was responsible for choosing to begin the autobiography in this way is a difficult question to answer, thanks to the aforementioned opacity of the narrator-editor relationship. David Brumble cautions that while many have interpreted the inclusion of tribal history, a common trope of Native American autobiographies, to the Native narrator, "It is, of course, possible that all the tribal history in the book[s] arose from the editor's questions" (54). Because Barrett explicitly states in the preface that his goal in publishing *Geronimo* is to increase "the general store of information regarding vanishing types," Brumble's argument is compelling (1).⁶ Regardless of who chose to begin the autobiography in this way, the impact on readers is a subversive affirmation of the Apaches' territorial claim.

Geronimo begins, "In the beginning the world was covered with darkness. There was no sun, no day. The perpetual night had no moon or stars" (49). This imagery would have resonated with the U.S. Anglo readers *Geronimo* was petitioning, who would recognize many similarities to the biblical creation narrative. However, onto this familiar blank canvas Geronimo paints a different picture. A dragon makes life on earth impossible for mankind, and very few humans exist, that is, until a young boy defeats the dragon and paves the way for mankind to increase and progress. "This boy's name was Apache," and Geronimo ends this first chapter of his autobiography, declaring: "Usen [the Creator] taught him [Apache] how to prepare herbs for medicine, how to

hunt, and how to fight. He was the first chief of the Indians and wore the eagle's feathers as the sign of justice, wisdom, and power. To him, and to his people, as they were created, Usen gave homes in the land of the West" (53). Here, Geronimo uses the same justifications that U.S. settlers offered for occupying Apache land to support his people's claim to the territory, affirming the Apaches' long-held claim to "the land of the West" (53). Though subtle, this claim is a direct challenge to one of the basic tenets of U.S. westward expansion: that the land was an unoccupied *terra nullius*. Not only were the Apaches already living in the land, but they built a thriving community with a means of support (hunting), security (fighting), a government (chief), laws (justice, wisdom, and power), and health care (medicine).

When set within its early twentieth-century context, this seemingly innocuous description of Apache tribal history becomes a direct refutation of the rhetoric surrounding U.S. Manifest Destiny and westward expansion circulating at the time. Only six years before *Geronimo* was published, in his infamous 1900 speech to the U.S. Congress entitled "The Divine Mission of America," Senator Albert Beveridge voiced the long-established link between westward expansion and divine providence. Just as Geronimo builds the Apaches' claim to the land on their divinely ordained ability to establish a successful society, Beveridge states that God "has made [the United States] the master organizers of the world to establish system where chaos reigns" and "to overwhelm the forces of reaction through the earth" (705, 711). Geronimo's implied response to Beveridge and his fellow proponents of a uniquely U.S. Manifest Destiny is that, long before any ancestor of the U.S. settler colonialists set foot within the Southwest, a different god gave a different people the same right to the same land.

This description of the Apaches and the land they inhabited starkly contrasted with the popular representations disseminated through newspapers, magazines, and dime novels at the time.⁷ In these pervasive images, Apaches were bloodthirsty savages, and the Arizona territory was unforgiving and uninhabited (at least, not by civilized people). Part 1 contests this image, demonstrating that the Apaches had a long and complex history within this territory, which was not an empty desert but rather home to thriving communities of people.

Part 2 continues this project to transform the popular conceptions of the people and the place to which Geronimo belonged by focus-

ing on what earned the Apaches in general and Geronimo in particular their notorious reputation: raids against Spanish, Mexican, and U.S. settlers. The local, regional, national, and international press portrayed the Apaches as dangerous criminals and a threat to civilized society in the Southwest. Nevertheless, in their book *Daily Life of Native Americans: From Post-Columbian through Nineteenth-Century America* Alice Nash and Christoph Strobel affirm: “Both the Apache and the Navajo raided their neighbors as a means of subsistence when necessary. Raiding gave young men a chance to demonstrate bravery and establish their reputations. They took foods . . . and in the post-contact years, livestock. . . . Sometimes they also took children, who were then adopted” (150). There were moral codes that governed raiding. Raiding allowed the Apaches to establish an ethos of bravery, provide for their families, and, in some cases, add to their community by adopting children into their society.⁸ Although “the raiding way of life caused tensions and animosity between raiders and nonraiders,” there was a marked difference between how other Native American tribes reacted to Apache raids and the way Spanish, Mexican, and U.S. settlers reacted to these raids. Despite the tension caused by raiding, the Apaches still engaged in regular trade with other tribes, actively participating in the intercultural exchange among the communities of the Southwest (150). There was, however, no reciprocity among the Apaches and the Spanish, Mexican, and U.S. settlers.

Part 2 attempts to explain the rationale behind this raiding to Geronimo’s U.S. Anglo readers by depicting non-Apaches, particularly the Spanish and later Mexicans, as intruders and aggressors on Apache land and Apaches as defenders of their homeland, thus flipping the dominant aggressor/defender dichotomy. The Apaches experienced tremendous change as a result of contact with European cultures, which brought new threats as well as new technologies and initiated many centuries of transformation in the Southwest. Referring to this tumultuous history, Geronimo in this section focuses on the disastrous consequences of Spanish and then Mexican rule in his homeland.

The Apaches resisted Spanish colonization within their territory from the beginning and raided Spanish settlements to weaken and deter them (Dilworth 11).⁹ They continued their resistance to outside encroachment upon their territory through Mexican independence and U.S. westward expansion, never retracting their claim to the land.¹⁰ As

seen in part 1, their right and connection to the territory remained a central part of their identity.¹¹ Though his Anglo readers read and saw images everywhere that depicted Apaches as senselessly cruel and violent, in part 2 Geronimo attempts to give his readers a sense of the reasoning that informed these actions, emphasizing that the Apaches were simply protecting what they believed was rightfully theirs.

Geronimo importantly offers these motivations in part 2, "The Mexicans," stirring U.S. readers to empathize with the plight of the Apaches at the hands of a different foreign enemy. It is Spanish and Mexican settlement, not U.S. expansion, that becomes the main focus of Geronimo's attention. Indeed, throughout the text he emphasizes that he harbors a special hatred for Mexicans, motivated by the brutal killing of his family. His description of the massacre at Kas-ki-yeh, where Mexicans murdered his wife, mother, and three children, is both devastating and strategic, providing a moral explanation for his raiding that avoids a direct denunciation of his other enemy, the United States.

Geronimo uses this tragic story of loss to explain to U.S. readers why he personally set out on the warpath. Contrary to his reputation, Geronimo here affirms that he was not a criminal nor an aggressor but rather an avenger. Unlike the press's characterization of him as a coldblooded killer, Geronimo portrays himself as provoked into action; the murder of his family, not the desire for wealth or a thirst for violence, was the *only* motivating factor that led him to raid. This recasts Geronimo not as an outlaw or savage but rather as a family man pursuing justice for himself and his people. In this light, he is no different from the many Anglo men who in countless captivity narratives employ extreme violence in order to avenge the death or disappearance of loved ones.

It is no coincidence that Geronimo dedicates more pages of his autobiography to his raids against Mexican as opposed to U.S. settlers. He never apologizes for his hatred of the Mexicans, ending part 2 by saying, "It has been a long time . . . but I still have no love for the Mexicans. . . . I am old now and shall never go on the warpath again, but if I were young, and followed the warpath, it would lead into Old Mexico" (110). At first it may seem difficult to reconcile why Geronimo's hatred for Mexicans was so extreme while his relationship to the United States remained much more ambivalent. He offers the murder of his family at the hands of Mexicans as an explanation, emphasizing that the magnitude of his loss explains why the ensuing battle at Kas-ki-yeh did not provide him

with acceptable retribution. He writes, "Other Indians . . . had lost in the massacre, but none had lost as I had, for I had lost all" (78).

While this explains his hatred for Mexico, it does not explain his magnanimity toward his current captor, the United States. Though it is possible that something was lost or altered in the chain of translation and transcription, it seems most likely that Geronimo strategically displaced his anger for all the injustices he and his people suffered (at the hands of Mexico *and* the United States) onto Mexico in order to more effectively make his appeal to the U.S. people and their president. Whether or not Geronimo could have harbored the same anger toward the United States is unknowable, but one thing is certain: no matter what his true feelings were, Geronimo's ultimate objective of returning to his ancestral home made revealing a complete hatred for the United States impossible. By 1905 the national borders were fixed, and the land Geronimo desired directed his attention, and his argument, to the north.

Though Geronimo does not speak against them as directly or with the same passion, the drawing and shoring up of these borders eventually led to an even greater battle than avenging the massacre at Kas-ki-yeh. Part 3, "The White Men," tellingly begins with different instruments of war: surveying tools. In this section, Geronimo focuses his critique on the U.S. government's practice of removing Native Americans, in this case Apaches, to unfamiliar reservations far from their homes where they could not survive. Geronimo begins, "About the time of 'Kaskiyeh' (1858) we heard that some white men were measuring land to the south of us" (113). While the massacre at Kas-ki-yeh led to Geronimo's greatest personal tragedy, the measuring of the land led to an even greater collective tragedy for the Apaches. Although Geronimo's description of the surveyors is fairly innocuous, for "they were good men. . . . They were not soldiers," their arrival portends the eventual expulsion, division, and betrayal of the Apaches (113).

The Apaches at first thought the United States would be their ally against Mexico (Dilworth 12). That hope was dispelled at the end of the U.S.-Mexico War with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Far from assuring the Apaches of a new ally in the region, the treaty that ended the war guaranteed just the opposite (12). Part of the terms of Mexico's surrender included a promise of protection on the part of the United States to curtail Native American, particularly Apache, raiding on Mexico's northern frontier. Article XI of the Treaty of Guada-

lupe Hidalgo stated that "incursions" by "savage tribes" upon Mexican people would "be forcibly restrained by the Government of the United States whensoever this may be necessary . . . and with equal diligence and energy, as if the same incursions were meditated or committed within its own territory, against its own citizens." Nevertheless, the United States did not have any more success than the Spanish or Mexicans in controlling the movement of the Apaches. Unable to protect its own people, much less Mexicans, from Apache attacks, in 1854 the United States repealed Article XI of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in the Gadsden Treaty. Clashes between Apaches and U.S. settlers, however, continued.

Geronimo describes the hostility that resulted from U.S. military occupation of the Southwest. Despite the fact that "[t]he Indians always tried to live peaceably with the white soldiers and settlers," neither soldiers nor settlers were interested in living peaceably with the Apaches (Geronimo 116). While some may here question Geronimo's neutrality on the subject, U.S.-Apache relations did steadily deteriorate as Apache land in the Southwest became increasingly valuable to the U.S. government. Although "[i]nitially, most Americans who came into the area were just passing through on their way to California or the Oregon Territory," the discovery of mineral wealth as well as investments in infrastructure increased the value of Arizona's territory, causing settlers to become more "interested in colonizing the lands of the Southwest" and "increasing pressure on Indian lands" (Nash and Strobel 166). As mines, ranches, railroads, and mail routes increased, so did military action against the Apaches. By 1871, anxiety about the Apache threat to U.S. interests in the Southwest provoked Congress to appropriate money to remove the Apaches to reservations (Debo 80). The government established reservations in southwestern New Mexico and central Arizona and placed Gen. George Crook in charge of removing the Apaches to these reservations (Dilworth 12; Debo 81).

From the beginning, Geronimo stresses that the Apaches thrived as an organized, self-sufficient, productive, and spiritual people, that is, until U.S. settlers removed them from their native land. In part 3, he offers an explanation for why at the time the Apaches on the reservations were "vanishing": "For each tribe Usen created He also made a home. In the land created for any particular tribe He placed whatever would be best for the welfare of that tribe" (57). The Southwest pos-

sessed a natural order; the Apaches and their homes were “each created for the other by Usen himself” (57). When the United States government removed the Apaches from their homes, it sentenced them to total annihilation. In a foreboding passage, Geronimo asks, “When they are taken from these homes they sicken and die. How long will it be until it is said, there are no Apaches?” (57).

In part 3, Geronimo describes his own realization of and resistance to the reality that the reservations were in fact prisons. Geronimo at first did not view the reservations as prisons, affirming his own agency in deciding to go to Fort Bowie, saying, “When I went to Apache Pass . . .” (124). As easily as he came, he went, “deem[ing] it impossible to keep the different bands together in peace” and therefore leaving to rejoin Victoria, another Apache leader, in Hot Springs, New Mexico (125).¹² In a recent edition of *Geronimo*, Frederick Turner clarifies in a footnote, “This is Geronimo’s laconic description of his break from the Fort Bowie Reservation in June 1876” (125).

For Geronimo, however, this was not a break, because he did not consider himself to be in prison. When asked to meet with officials in New Mexico, he goes and is surprised when he finds himself under arrest: “Scouts conducted me to the guardhouse and put me in chains. When I asked them why they did this they said it was because I had left Apache Pass. I do not think that I ever belonged to those soldiers at Apache Pass, or that I should have asked them where I might go” (126). This passage unequivocally exposes the duplicity of the U.S. government and the harsh reality of removal. Though Geronimo understood his decision to go to Apache Pass as a choice, the U.S. soldiers confronted him with a different reality, that of complete captivity. He now belonged to them, and they controlled his every movement.

The Apaches did not submit to this complete control without a fight. For nearly twenty years, just as they had long ago resisted the Spanish mission system, they resisted the U.S. reservation system. When in 1876 the U.S. government removed the Apaches to the San Carlos reservation in Arizona, the people quickly grew to despise it (Ragsdale 54). According to John W. Ragsdale Jr., “San Carlos . . . was a barren, treeless, low-lying, torrid site, loathed by the mountain-dwelling Apaches” (54). Asa Daklugie, the translator of Geronimo’s autobiography, described San Carlos as “the worst place in all the great territory stolen from the

Apaches. If anybody had ever lived there permanently, no Apache knew of it" (Ball, Henn, and Sánchez 37).

Despite their resistance, the Apaches, including Geronimo, were all eventually removed from their land. San Carlos was just the first in a series of disease-ridden, destitute reservations assigned to the Apaches. In 1886 the U.S. government deported the last group of resistors, including Geronimo, to Fort Marion, Florida (Sheridan 71). At Fort Marion, malaria, dysentery, bronchitis, and tuberculosis plagued the Apache prisoners, who lacked food, clothing, and sanitation (Turcheneske 15). At Fort Marion 119 Apaches died before the U.S. government removed them yet again, this time to Fort Sill, Oklahoma (Sheridan 71). Four years later, in 1913, the government allowed a group of Apaches from the Fort Sill reservation to return not to Arizona but to the Southwest, relocating to the Mescalero Reservation in New Mexico (71). Geronimo, however, never returned, dying in captivity at Fort Sill in 1909 (Dilworth 13).

Instead of describing the wicked and daring escapades of an outlaw imprisoned for dangerous criminal behavior, in the first three parts of his autobiography Geronimo offers the story of a patriot imprisoned for defending the honor of his family and the integrity of his homeland. Geronimo's depictions of Apaches (part 1), Mexicans (part 2), and white men (part 3) certainly differ from what readers at the time and even readers now might expect. In these sections he builds the Apaches' claim to his people's traditional homelands, defends the methods they used to protect their homelands against intruders, and argues for their rightful return. His autobiography becomes an appeal to the U.S. government and its people to be just in their dealings with the Apaches, that is to say, to let them go home.

GERONIMO, THE INDIAN WHO WOULD NOT VANISH

It would seem natural for *Geronimo* to end here, following this critique of the Apaches' removal to reservations, with one final appeal to the U.S. president and people to allow the Apaches to return to the Arizona territory. Yet, *Geronimo* does not end here. Instead, it continues with what at first seems to be an inexplicable conclusion. In the concluding part 4, "The Old and the New," Geronimo juxtaposes the Apaches' "unwritten laws" with his apparent admiration for U.S. culture, embodied by his

positive characterization of his experience at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. Though the preceding pages only included strategically veiled criticisms of U.S. conquest, this section's sudden ebullient esteem for U.S. culture still seems out of step with the tone and subject matter of the previous parts. Geronimo affirms, "I am glad I went to the Fair. I saw many interesting things and learned much of the white people. They are a very kind and peaceful people" (161–62). This passage seems to directly contradict his critique of unwarranted Apache removal and imprisonment. In these words, it appears as if the fair, with all its modern advancements and celebrations of imperial achievements, changed his estimation of the United States.

This interpretation, however, seems too simplistic and out of character. Even Turner acknowledges the dubiousness of taking Geronimo's comments at face value, cautioning the reader with a footnote to this passage that says, "The reader should recall here that Geronimo was not without guile. His statements about white culture often have the appearance of cutting several ways" (Geronimo 162). Barrett, in his own footnote to the same passage, offers a different explanation, writing: "Geronimo was also taken to both the Omaha and the Buffalo Expositions, but during that period of his life he was sullen and took no interest in things. The St. Louis Exposition was held after he had adopted the Christian religion and had begun to try to understand our civilization" (162). In a way, both Turner and Barrett are correct. At age eighty, Geronimo, ever the pragmatist, most likely did acknowledge the necessity of understanding the civilization that controlled whether or not the Apaches would ever return to their homeland. However, this understanding was probably less about acceptance and more about strategy. Clearly, Geronimo was well aware of his audience. On the one hand, an outright rejection of the fair and the U.S. imperial exploits it celebrated would only alienate readers and would not help further his cause. On the other hand, Geronimo's purpose in telling his story was to resist the Apache removal and imprisonment that resulted from that imperialism. Geronimo needed to strike some sort of careful balance between offending his readers and compromising his message in order to conclude his argument to allow the Apaches to return to their land.

Geronimo's description of his experience at the world's fair strategically strikes this balance by reframing the relationship he implies in the title to this section, "The Old and the New" (145). Again refuting

readers' expectations, the implied dichotomy between Apaches as the old and the United States as the new is not the story that Geronimo has in mind to tell. Instead, Geronimo's descriptions of the world's fair assert that he was not an external observer but rather an internal participant within the future the fair was celebrating. Though he was supposed to be passively on display with other vestiges of a primitive past, he soon began to actively profit off of the fairgoers, selling his clothing, his photographs, and even his autograph to eager customers. Conquered captives and vanished Indians lacked the agency to capitalize on their own celebrity; they were artifacts, not actors. Yet, Geronimo asserted his own agency, underlining that the shift of his iconic status "in American popular memory" from "resistant warrior" to "defeated prisoner" was indeed more imaginary than real (Deloria, *Indians* 136). Though the fair meant to celebrate and reinforce a final defeat, in Geronimo's autobiography, his description of his experience at the fair highlights a sustained resistance.¹³

The 1904 St. Louis World's Fair celebrated and connected one hundred years of U.S. continental expansion to current and future U.S. imperial projects overseas.¹⁴ At the fair, these newly acquired territories were on display via the people who populated them. In *All the World's a Fair*, Robert Rydell writes, "The Louisiana Purchase Exposition featured the most extensive Anthropology Department of any world's fair" (160). Under the direction of prominent anthropologist W. J. McGee, the department gathered together hundreds of Native peoples from across the globe and put them on display, Geronimo being one of the most notable attractions (160).

These exhibits, in addition to their purportedly scientific and educational value, also served a particular cultural purpose.¹⁵ As Rydell argues, these exoticized displays distracted domestic fairgoers from their own unstable social reality, marked by industrialization and economic depression, "offer[ing] . . . an opportunity to reaffirm their collective national identity in an updated synthesis of progress and white supremacy that suffused the blueprints of future perfection" (4). The domestic unification and progress that the expositions championed was "predicated on the subordination of nonwhite people" like Geronimo who were gathered to represent a savage and primitive past that the United States as an emerging imperial power had surpassed (4).

Geronimo, however, did not play into this national fantasy. Certainly U.S. nationalism, not global diversity, was what was actually on display at the St. Louis World's Fair and other expositions like it. Still, Geronimo was as much spectator as spectacle. As Jimmie Durham affirms in his reflections on Geronimo as a prisoner of war, "[E]ven the tightest system is not completely closed" (56). Geronimo quickly realized the economic opportunity available to him and began to capitalize on his own celebrity:

I sold my photographs for twenty-five cents, and was allowed to keep ten cents of this for myself. I also wrote my name for ten, fifteen, or twenty-five cents, as the case might be, and kept all of that money. I often made as much as two dollars a day, and when I returned I had plenty of money—more than I had ever owned before. (155)

Geronimo, the conquered warrior reduced to touting souvenirs, was also a shrewd businessman at the helm of a profitable enterprise. While collecting, buying, and selling Indian goods were not new, an Apache and prisoner of war making a successful living for himself by controlling this commodity flow was. In Durham's words, Geronimo "had his wits about him, and understood more of your culture than you would have understood of his" (57). Despite his prisoner-of-war status, he was able to survive, adapt, and even economically thrive as a successful capitalist in his captors' culture.

Although the United States hunted them down in deserts, cordoned them off on reservations, and vanished them rhetorically in the national imagination, the Apaches were diminished but not decimated. Those like Geronimo who survived became a part, albeit unrecognized, of the U.S. future that was so prominently on display at the world's fair. In his autobiography, Geronimo asserts his and his people's sustained participation in the "New" of "The Old and the New." Whether the U.S. government was willing to acknowledge it or not, in the "New" world order following westward expansion the future of the country would forever be bound up with that of Native peoples. As Philip Deloria argues, "[S]ome Indian people—more than we've been led to believe—leapt quickly into modernity . . . because it became painfully clear that they were not distinct from the history that was even then being made" (231).

Geronimo's sustained celebrity even after his capture and imprisonment and his active participation in celebrations of U.S. nationalism reveal that the effects of conquest and continental expansion ripple out in both directions, always changing the lives of not only the conquered but also the conquerors.

BEYOND GERONIMO

Geronimo fortunately does not live up to expectations. The stereotypical extremes that popular culture has conditioned readers to expect of Geronimo, whether brave warrior or ruthless savage, do not appear on any of its pages. Instead, readers are faced with an autobiography with more than one author, a text dedicated from a prisoner of war to his captor, and the story of a supposedly vanishing culture that refuses to disappear. *Geronimo* is an important text precisely because it so insistently reminds its readers of how misguided their expectations are when it comes to narratives about the settlement of the western United States.

In the end, *Geronimo*'s insistent refutation of its many generations of readers' expectations leaves them, like the characters in Leslie Marmion Silko's *Almanac of the Dead*, faced with the reality that "the real man they called Geronimo, they never did catch. The real Geronimo got away" (224). *Geronimo* forces readers to confront how much work remains to be done to unlearn the expectations of U.S. settler colonialism that understand Geronimo as either resistant warrior or defeated prisoner, and certainly not both at the same time. Just as *Geronimo* eludes easy interpretation, so too does the complex history of displacement and relocation that it describes. In not providing the anticipated narrative, *Geronimo* challenges readers to reevaluate their assumptions and consider how much not only of Geronimo's story but of the story of western settlement has gotten away from them.

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NOTES

1. For an extensive list of other Native American autobiographies, see Brumble.
2. Barrett states in his "Introductory" that he "first met Geronimo in the summer of 1904, when [Barrett] acted for him as interpreter of English into Spanish, and vice versa, in selling a war bonnet" (39).
3. Though some say Daklugie was Geronimo's nephew, according to Angie Debo, Daklugie was actually Geronimo's second cousin (4). The discrepancy seems to be over the relationship between Geronimo and Ishton, Daklugie's mother, who was either Geronimo's sister, half-sister, or cousin.
4. Barrett does include the official memo from the U.S. War Department disproving of Geronimo's characterization of the government's treatment of the Apaches and some footnotes recusing himself of weighing in on the government's purported treachery.
5. Krupat describes the distinction between Western autobiography, which he describes as metonymic (part to part) and Native American autobiography, which he describes as synecdochic (part to whole). That is to say, Western autobiographies describe the lives of individual people in relation to other individuals, while Native American autobiographies describe the lives of individual people within the context of the larger tribe. He attributes this different perspective partially to the oral roots of Native American autobiography, as "[s]peech always assumes a present listener as opposed to writing, where the audience is absent to the author, the author absent to the audience" (Krupat, "Native American Autobiography" 178).
6. Others argue that Native narrators might have been able to maintain more control over the form and content of their narratives. See Sands; and Twomey.
7. For an in-depth discussion of these representations, see Clements.
8. For an in-depth discussion of Apache raiding and warfare practices, see Opler.
9. See also Sheridan.
10. See Jacoby.
11. For a discussion of how Western and Native American attitudes toward land and cultural identity differ, see Deloria, "Out of Chaos"; and Duthu.
12. The name of this Apache leader appears as both Victorio and Victoria in various accounts. In their history of the Warm Springs Apaches, *In the Days of Victorio*, Eve Ball and James Kaywaykla use the former. Because Geronimo in his autobiography uses the latter, that is the spelling I follow here.
13. It should be noted that this resistance was a commercialized one that brought Geronimo substantial individual wealth (Debo 417–18).
14. The fair celebrated the centennial of the 1803 Louisiana Purchase, the first large territorial acquisition west of the original thirteen colonies, and the more recent U.S. victory in its war with Spain in 1898, which led to its first overseas acquisitions in the form of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines (Rydell 157).
15. McGee's racialized theory of human progress informed the mounting of the exhibits. He said, "It is a matter of common observation that the white man can do more and better than the yellow, the yellow man more and better than the red or black" (Rydell 160).

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Continents of Liberty

Emerson and Gerald Vizenor's *Chair of Tears*

GEOFF HAMILTON

Ralph Waldo Emerson protested what came to be known as the Trail of Tears in a public letter to President Martin Van Buren in 1838. The Cherokee Nation, he argued, had been cheated by a “sham treaty” (Emerson, “Letter” 50), the will of the people ignored, and a false acquiescence to removal written into law. In making a passionate appeal to the highest “chair” of the land, Emerson underscored the great political and moral stakes involved:

In speaking thus the sentiments of my neighbors and my own, perhaps I overstep the bounds of decorum. But would it not be a higher indecorum coldly to argue a matter like this? We only state the fact that a crime is projected that confounds our understandings by its magnitude—a crime that really deprives us as well as the Cherokees of a country—for how could we call the conspiracy that should crush these poor Indians our government, or the land that was cursed by their parting and dying imprecations our country, any more? You, sir, will bring down that renowned chair in which you sit into infamy if your seal is set to this instrument of perfidy; and the name of this nation, hitherto the sweet omen of religion and liberty, will stink to the world. (51)

Though Emerson was clearly sympathetic to the plight of the Cherokees and ashamed of what removal policies suggested about his nation, his understanding of Indigenous peoples did not posit their cultural equality in relation to European Americans. As he suggests early in his letter, what recommends the Cherokees, in particular, are their efforts to throw off “primitive” habits and surrender to assimilation:

Even in our distant State some good rumor of their worth and civility has arrived. We have learned with joy their improvement in the social arts. We have read their newspapers. We have seen some of them in our schools and colleges. In common with the great body of the American people, we have witnessed with sympathy the painful labors of these red men to redeem their own race from the doom of eternal inferiority, and to borrow and domesticate in the tribe the arts and customs of the Caucasian race. (49–50)

Emerson's letter did not, of course, halt the removals, and Van Buren became the latest "chair" to blaze the Trail of Tears.

Gerald Vizenor's novel *Chair of Tears* (2012)—an elaboration of a short story included in *Earthdivers: Tribal Narratives on Mixed Descent* (1981)—is set in the present on a university campus in Minnesota, but the historical trauma of cultural destruction and "sham treaties" and indeed the implications of Emerson's ideas as expressed in his letter to Van Buren and elsewhere seem very much at play in its imaginative world. The novel repeatedly cites the toxic machinations of federal agents, and its second epigraph is actually drawn from Emerson's seminal essay *Nature* (1836). One may be tempted, perhaps, to take this invocation of an ostensible ally more or less straightforwardly, especially given the at least superficial correspondences between these authors' philosophical assumptions. In this and other works, Vizenor would seem to affirm Emerson's reverence for a natural order animate with spirit, along with the creative possibilities of communion with it. Both *Chair of Tears* and *Nature* are intimately concerned, moreover, with the question of how to *see* rightly and similarly insist, with characteristic optimism, on the possibility and moral urgency of an endless process of revelation in human understanding.

And yet, Vizenor's deployment of Emerson here appears much more complicated than a simple avowal of affinity and respect. It is, in fact, illuminating to read *Chair of Tears* as a profound *critique* of Emerson (who would save the Cherokee people, but not as Cherokees) and a radical revision of his exuberant assertions in *Nature* of a gigantic, effectively deified self that might fully comprehend and subordinate its environment. This European American version of autonomy ("self-rule") is, Vizenor's work implies, not only blind to the actual relations between humans and the rest of creation but also implicated—as an informing

principle of settler culture—in an enduring tyranny over Indigenous peoples. Against Emerson’s vision of a masterful self capable of comprehensively seeing, identifying with, and finally exploiting a fixed divine order beyond the flux of Nature, Vizenor proffers an Indigenous alternative that insists on the self’s systemic exposure to mutability and chance, its humility before an animate but finally unruly natural world, and its fundamental interconnection with an interplay of other selves as well as nonhuman presences.

In what follows I take up Vizenor’s novel as if it were, in effect, the author’s own impassioned letter to an imagined Emerson—one that illustrates a contrary, Indigenous model of the self and the kind of “rule” it would properly assume. This model might well be thought of, I suggest, as a fictive complement to the definitions of tribal autonomy Vizenor helped articulate as the principal author of *The White Earth Nation: Ratification of a Native Democratic Constitution*, on which he worked while also composing *Chair of Tears* (both were published in 2012). As the preamble of the constitution declares in its appeal to the liberating possibilities of an autonomy defined and invigorated by communal practices and a relational understanding of the “self,” “The Anishinaabeg of the White Earth Nation are the successors of a great tradition of continental liberty, a native constitution of families, totemic associations. The Anishinaabeg create stories of natural reason, of courage, loyalty, humor, spiritual inspiration, survivance, reciprocal altruism, and native cultural sovereignty” (Vizenor and Doerfler 63). In dramatizing some of the characteristics of Indigenous autonomy invoked in the constitution, Vizenor links Emerson with the destructive legacy of European American conceptions of “self” and “rule,” and his novel ultimately purports, we might say, to elect a new “renowned chair” from the Anishinaabe tradition, one who would make visible a “continent of liberty” obscured by settler culture.

Chair of Tears explores the following outrageous scenario: The Department of American Indian Studies at the University of Minnesota (from the Sioux word *minisota*, “sky-tinted water”) has been turned over to a trickster figure named Captain Shammer, who inaugurates a series of disruptive reforms derived (ostensibly) from Anishinaabe tribal values. Professors’ private offices are replaced by large communal rooms, the library is converted to a casino, and, in the most surreal turn in the

narrative, so-called irony dogs participate in all public lectures, barking madly (and with ultimate seriousness) at any utterance that does not suggest its own semantic multiplicity, thus reminding their auditors of the conceptual fluidity—the “sky-tinted water”—beyond the rigid, terminal structures of European American rationality.

Vizenor has explored similar territory before, in similarly challenging narratives, over roughly half a century.¹ *Chair of Tears* is exemplary, however, of the author’s recurring concern with “native liberty” and “survivance,” forms of self-rule that counter not just constrictive European American definitions of Indigenous identity, but the very bedrock of European American understandings of what constitutes a self and how that self is related to the natural (and indeed spiritual) world. In his preface to *Earthdivers*, Vizenor approvingly quotes Georges Gusdorf’s reminder about the historically and culturally bound notion of “individualism”:

This conscious awareness of the singularity of each individual life is the late product of a specific civilization. Through most of human history, the individual does not oppose himself to all others; he does not feel himself to exist outside of others, and still less against others, but very much *with* others in an interdependent existence that asserts its rhythms everywhere in the community. (xix)

The “self” in Vizenor’s conception of self-rule reflects this interdependency: it is a fluid, creative entity with vast potential powers, yet it remains, in contrast to what Emerson implies during especially self-aggrandizing moments in *Nature*, emphatically subordinate to natural (and finally unpredictable) “rule,” through which it is linked to an interplay of other entities just as fluid and potentially (self-)creative.

Set against this potential autonomy (in both its personal and communal forms) are what Vizenor calls “terminal creeds.” The phrase covers the presumptions, understood to be central to the European American tradition, that suffocate the expression of Indigenous selfhood (especially according to racist or sentimental notions of “authentic” cultural values), as well as, more broadly, any ideologies that impose inelastic categories on experience and tend toward an ethic of domination. During an interview in 1981, Vizenor located a source of these terminal creeds in American Christianity, which he linked with the impulse to “illuminate and annihilate evil” and contrasted with his own, tribal

sense of “balance . . . which grows out of trickeries, of outwitting, or the modulation of experience” (qtd. in Bowers, Silet, and Vizenor 44). Vizenor’s writing has continually explored variations on this essential spiritual commitment to continually modulated openness over limiting termination, and to balanced coexistence over one-sided authority and control. As he explains of his artistic ambitions in his haiku poems, “My poetic images create a sense of survivance not victimry, a signature of natural reason. I write to creation not closure, to the treat of trickster stories over monotheism, linear causality, and victimry” (Vizenor, *Native* 6).

Chair of Tears opens with two intriguing epigraphs that bear directly on these assumptions. The first, from William Warren’s *History of the Ojibway People*, links the flight of a totemic bird with the stories told by obliging Native Americans to their white interlocutors:

This bird [the crane] loves to soar among the clouds, and its cry can be heard when flying above, beyond the orbit of human vision. . . .

Their innate curiosity and politeness often carry them so far that they seldom, if ever, refuse to tell a story when asked by a white man, respecting their ideas of the creation and the origin of mankind.

These tales, though made up for the occasion by the Indian sage, are taken by his white hearers as their *bona fide* belief, and, as such, many have been made public and accepted by the civilized world.

Vizenor’s construction of this quotation brings together passages from different chapters of Warren’s text (on either side of the ellipses) and in fact reverses their order. This apposition encourages an identification of the distant bird with the storyteller, who is himself “carried far” in his creativity and whose narratives suggest, like the bird’s cry, a telling indeterminacy of origins.² The epigraph thus underscores ideas central to Vizenor’s work: the spontaneous, flighty, oral quality of Native American storytelling (as opposed to the visual “fixity” of written language), the misinterpretation of those stories by white audiences (who attach their own static and hypostatized definitions to them), the creative potential in manipulating “traditional” materials (modeled in Vizenor’s own reworking of Warren), and indeed the blurring of boundaries between the human and nonhuman (in the linking of birds and storytellers). These ideas and insinuations are, to say the least, radically

unsettling. Attentive readers must wonder, in advancing through the text that follows, about their own positioning as “white hearers” listening to the capricious tales of an “Indian sage.”

The novel’s second epigraph—“Nature is made to conspire with spirit to emancipate”—comes from Emerson’s *Nature* (though, significantly, it drops the final word, “us,” from the original text). This statement’s placement here might, on first appraisal, appear less complex, and less interesting, than what precedes it. Emerson’s affirmation of the natural world as a liberating reservoir of the divine is well known, and one may be tempted to assume a rough correspondence between the authors’ ideas. That assumption would, however, miss some striking and profound divergences, toward which Vizenor’s use of the quotation seems—with a playful slyness—to be gesturing. Emerson’s neo-Platonic idealism insists, for instance, on the ontological primacy of mental or spiritual phenomena, which form a stable, intelligible structure beyond the flux of material appearances: “Man is conscious of a universal soul within or behind his individual life, wherein, as in a firmament, the natures of Justice, Truth, Love, Freedom, arise and shine” (*Nature* 14). In the section of *Nature* immediately following the sentence quoted by Vizenor, Emerson goes on to suggest that the natural world is a sort of obliging playground for the self, which easily and rightly manipulates it:

Nature is made to conspire with spirit to emancipate us. Certain mechanical changes, a small alteration in our local position apprizes us of a dualism. We are strangely affected by seeing the shore from a moving ship, from a balloon, or through the tints of an unusual sky. The least change in our point of view, gives the whole world a pictorial air. . . . Turn the eyes upside down, by looking at the landscape through your legs, and how agreeable is the picture, though you have seen it any time these twenty years!

In these cases, by mechanical means, is suggested the difference between the observer and the spectacle,—between man and nature. Hence arises a pleasure mixed with awe; I may say, a low degree of the sublime is felt from the fact, probably, that man is hereby apprized, that, whilst the world is a spectacle, something in himself is stable. (26)

That stable “something” points, at last, to a divine order that is not at all capricious: “God never jests with us, and will not compromise the

end of nature by permitting any inconsequence in its procession. Any distrust of the permanence of laws would paralyze the faculties of man. Their permanence is sacredly respected, and his faith therein is perfect. The wheels and springs of man are all set to the hypothesis of the permanence of nature" (25). As Emerson counsels early in *Nature*, our encounters with the natural world can (and should) lead us to apprehend the mind of God: "Undoubtedly we have no questions to ask which are unanswerable. We must trust the perfection of the creation so far as to believe that whatever curiosity the order of things has awakened in our minds, the order of things can satisfy" (3). Having apprehended this hypostatized order, one may go to work manipulating the environment through which it is expressed. The natural world exists *for* humans, we are told, as a fabulous resource awaiting disciplinary control:

Nature is thoroughly mediate. It is made to serve. It receives the dominion of man as meekly as the ass on which the Savior rode. It offers all its kingdoms to man as the raw material which he may mold into what is useful. Man is never weary of working it up. . . . One after another, his victorious thought comes up with and reduces all things, until the world becomes, at last, only a realized will,—the double of the man. (21)

Vizenor's work typically assails versions of these assumptions, for his protagonists inhabit animate environments that are *always* jesting with them. Those who would eschew the natural world's playful fluidity and aspire to visionary mastery are, in fact, the greatest villains and dupes in the author's imaginative worlds—as in the European American "word-ies" from his novel *Dead Voices*, who "have overtaxed the cities with too much eye and not enough ears" (131). Trickster figures such as Captain Shammer adopt a liberatory jesting themselves as they target presumptuous efforts to rule both physical and conceptual entities. As Vizenor notes of his novel *The Trickster of Liberty*, "The native trickster teases the ownership of ideas and history, that long history of territorial dominance, and the reduction of imagination to serve the causes of cultural discovery and possession" (Vizenor and Lee 127). Such "causes" misapprehend, for Vizenor, a critical truth: the phenomenal world does not, as Emerson implies, simply lie between the self and a hypostatized divine order obligingly available for whatever uses we might make of it but *is* that divinity, in all its recalcitrant flux.

It makes sense to read the novel's second epigraph, therefore, as another cautionary commentary on misinterpretation: if Vizenor would seem to align himself with some of the possibilities articulated by Emerson in *Nature*—in particular, the notion that the natural world, teeming with divine potencies, provides an infinite source of self-renewal—he just as surely would reject that alignment, ironizing the notion of a hypostatized order set beyond the natural world's appearances, along with any human “conspiracy” that would identify with it and exalt individual agency in the pursuit of totalizing control. Nature may be emancipatory, that is, but it will not, finally, be *made* to serve us.

The most (in)famous passage in *Nature* seems to confirm such a divergence in regard to the kind of “self” Emerson posits (at least momentarily) in his conception of “self-rule.” Alone during a walk, he suddenly assumes a deific vision: “Standing on the bare ground,—my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space,—all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eye-ball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or particle of God” (Emerson, *Nature* 6). Multiple “terminal creeds” seem to lurk within this fantasy, since its revelation of the infinite dispenses with embodiment (and hence all contact with sensuous experience beyond vision) as well as interpersonal connectedness: “The name of the nearest friend sounds then foreign and accidental: to be brothers, to be acquaintances,—master or servant, is then a trifle and a disturbance” (6). Whatever we are to make of this moment (which has been celebrated, puzzled over, and mocked for nearly two centuries), the kind of self-augmentation it describes seems glaringly inconsistent with core assumptions in Vizenor's work. Efforts at human “containment” are a routine satirical target of both his fiction and nonfiction, which typically posit any “self” as contained *by* the natural world and embedded, ideally, within a web of kinship relations. (This relational dimension of selfhood is highlighted, for instance, in the preamble to the constitution of the White Earth Nation, which associates the “great tradition of continental liberty” with “a native constitution of families, totemic associations” [Vizenor and Doerfler 63].) Moreover, the historical erasures in Emerson's narrative of innocent spectatorship also strikingly contrast with Vizenor's commitment to making past traumas visible and opposing their enduring legacy: what goes unmentioned in *Nature*, of course, is that there would be no “bare ground” for European Ameri-

cans to wander over, no opportunity for transparent eyeballing, without the prior removal of Native peoples from New England.

As Vizenor has emphatically affirmed in his *revisionary* narratives, European American worldviews, sustained by immense social and military power, have tended to distort or completely efface the presence—and competing worldviews—of Native Americans. In his epilogue to *Manifest Manners*, he begins a discussion of European American “surveillance” of the Indigenous Other by quoting a journal entry made by Emerson in 1837.³ Emerson reflects here on a visit made to the Massachusetts Statehouse by representatives of the Sac and Fox Nation, who were being entertained in order to encourage their own signing away of land rights:

One chief wore the skin of a buffalo's head with the horns attached, on his head, others birds with outspread wings. Immense breadth of shoulder & very muscular persons. Our Picts were so savage in their headdress & nakedness that it seemed as if the bears & catamounts had sent a deputation. They danced a war-dance on the Common, in the centre of the greatest crowd ever seen on that area. The Governor cautioned us of the gravity of the tribe & that we should beware of any expression of the ridiculous; and the people all seemed to treat their guests gingerly as the keepers of lions & jaguars do those creatures whose taming is not quite yet trustworthy.

Certainly it is right & natural that the Indian should come & see the civil White man, but this was hardly genuine but a show so we were not parties but spectators. (*Emerson* 175)

As Vizenor notes of Emerson's positioning in the spectacle above, “[He] was a spectator, *unseen* at an overture of a chief who had come to *see* civilization. In that generation the tribes had been decimated by diseases; the cruelties of civilization had dispossessed the tribes of their land, but not their stories” (*Manifest* 162, italics in original). The malignant structural inequality of the event precludes mutual observation and interchange, generating instead a one-sided exhibition of exotica. (Tellingly, in Vizenor's summary it is oral expressions—“stories”—that resist the degradations confirmed by the Sac and Fox' “show.”) However concerned Emerson was with the fate of Native Americans, his assumption of the Cherokees' cultural “inferiority” in his letter to Van Buren,

and the self-exalting perception he describes in *Nature*, form uncannily parallels to the broader misperceptions that, for Vizenor, continue to structure white and Indigenous interactions. One specific consequence of these interactions is that Native Americans have come to see themselves not just as beleaguered aliens within hegemonic European American culture, but effectively as phantasms in their own: “The tribal other became the double other of surveillance, separation, and individuation; the final vocabularies and double other of the antiselves of dominance” (168). The Indigenous “self” that might aspire to a form of “self-rule” is pathologically set against itself, Vizenor implies, as it loses control over its own—and becomes fixed in others’—representations.

As Elvira Pulitano argues in regard to Vizenor’s citation of Emerson’s journal entry, an “imperialist ideology”—epitomized in the “transparent eyeball” passage from *Nature*—lurks within the totalizing tendencies of European American vision: “Subsuming everything that it sees, Emerson’s ‘I’ perfectly reflects the Euramerican colonizing impulse, an impulse originating in the Cartesian celebration of the infinite epistemological possibilities of the human subject” (166). Richard Poirier offers a similar critique in pointing out that Emerson’s fantasy of visual possession shares something, too, with more venal forms of exhilarated observation typical of his historical era: “Obviously, the eyeball as a possessor is an imaginative analogue to the great American enterprise of the period. To a man of the early nineteenth century in America, possessing landscape was necessarily more than a romantic commonplace of descriptive-reflective poetry. Possession was also a national goal entrusted to enterprising men who faced an opportunity for profit unique in history” (64). The Indian Removal Act of 1830 was one expression of this possessive ambition, and it reflected, and helped inspire, the consumptive hallucinations of thousands of “enterprising men” who imagined themselves into “empty” lands while imagining Indigenous peoples out of them. What helped blaze the Trail of Tears, in other words, was a vision that presumed to “see all” while voiding inconvenient presences. Gazing without being gazed at (in the manner of a transparent eyeball) confers and confirms enormous privilege, making possible every kind of abuse as “the world becomes, at last, only a realized will,—the double of the man” (Emerson, *Nature* 21).

Beyond merely rejecting the visionary possessiveness that finds expression in Emerson’s *Nature*, however, *Chair of Tears* sketches an

opposing, Indigenous model of the self and the “rule” it might assume. Though Vizenor would affirm the divinity and liberating power of the natural world, the self he posits does not presume to comprehend a stable order beyond that world, nor does it seek individuation or domination in its relationship with it; instead, it would embrace an embeddedness within, and ultimate subordination to, a community of other, interdependent presences. If European American “vision” would counsel division and mastery (along with the erasure of actual Native American selves), Vizenor seemingly endorses an alternative vision informed by ancestral traditions and an aleatory interplay of natural presences, without which one can hardly be a “self”: “The Anishinaabe have endured,” the novel’s narrator tells us, “by traces of descent” (*Chair* 3). Shammer’s trickster role is an extension of family tradition, represented in part by the figure of his grandfather Captain Eighty, a man whose name puns on the atomic number for mercury and thus invokes the Roman god of, among other things, luck, trickery, and the crossing of boundaries. Like the avian storyteller of Warren’s epigraph, Eighty extemporaneously builds narratives that posit an interplay of sentient beings. He lived, we learn, “with a necessary sense of the seasons,” for they “were the natural sources of his sense of presence, reason, and memory” (1–2). Formal surnames (which federal agents seek to “fix” in an archive) are abjured by the family in favor of multiple, fluid nicknames animated through storytelling and the layered connections forged between teller and audience: “Clearly [Eighty] was more appreciated by a nickname, several nicknames, and each familiar moniker created a sense of his native presence, an epoch of memories because the actual native namers were never separated from the tease and stories of the nickname” (12–13). Where Emerson’s transparent eyeballing would have him leave behind the “name of the nearest friend” (*Nature* 6) as he becomes everything and nothing at once, Vizenor’s Anishinaabe find their autonomy in a relational, ever-evolving nominative process, an affirmative binding of selves and generations.

As the novel’s primary trickster figure, Shammer rowdily deracinates terminal creeds—not casually, as *mere* delight in disorder (though undeniably he finds pleasure in his efforts), but as part of an earnest religiosity that takes mutability as the vital “groundless ground” or “rule-less rule” of existence and assumes the insidious absurdity of any human aspiration to totalizing control. He enacts, we might say, Warren’s own

interpretation of the Anishinaabeg's autonym, which posits that people's ultimate freedom from causality: "Respecting their belief of their own first existence, I can give nothing more appropriate than a minute analysis of the name which they have given to their race—An-ish-in-aub-ag. This expressive word is derived from An-ish-aw, meaning without cause, or 'spontaneous,' and in-aub-a-we-se, meaning the 'human body.' The word An-ish-in-aub-ag, therefore, literally translated, signifies 'spontaneous man'" (27). The Anishinaabe are, according to this "name-fate," not simply "uncaused" in a temporal sense—as in having "come from nowhere"—but fundamentally and finally aleatory, elusive of human efforts to pin down causal chains. Being, by this reckoning, is always and importantly a matter of chance.

After assuming the Chair of Tears in the Department of Native American Indian Studies, Shammer opens a sort of portal to aleatory being. He enacts a new "relocation" of peoples and borders, voids the "terms" or boundaries that fix identities, and invites indiscriminate crossings—building, as it were, an uncontained continent of liberty. Raised on a houseboat and "educated by natural reason, by the tricky course of the wind and seasons, by stories of native epochs and remembrance," he is, according to the assumptions of European American rationality, "uncounted, a reversal of civilization, . . . buoyed in obscurity" (Vizenor, *Chair* 11). The irony dogs he releases on campus, "mongrels of liberty" (69) trained by a woman named Chance "to bay over deadly sincerity" (17), are reminders of the contingency of language, the slipperiness even of semantic possession; one of them is named Derrida, for instance, in a nod to the poststructuralism that Vizenor often invokes as roughly analogous with the polysemous bent of Indigenous thought.⁴ More profoundly, however, the irony dogs seem like the symbolic instruments of Anishinaabe religious ritual, voicing an effectively preontological conviction about the inevitable indeterminacy of all creation, as well as its universal interconnectedness. Whereas European Americans have used such dogs for scientific experiments—severing their vocal cords in order to silence their "irony"—Shammer would encourage their barking and its affirmation of the linking and "leveling" of the human self with what is never quite distinct from it and what it can never presume to master: "The [Christian] monotheists forever separated animals as lowly creatures, as an unconnected creation, absent a soul or salvation, and with no godly significance as healers. Even so the trusty mongrels

persisted to bark and warn the world that the absence of irony is terminal and the treacherous end of civilization" (67). The *presence* of irony cultivated by the dogs leads, moreover, not to an endless, onanistic hermeneutics—as in, for some, the practices of deconstruction—but rather to a sacred imbrication of “individual” selves into communal wholes. As the narrator says of Shammer’s own playful (but deadly serious) narrations: “My cousin encouraged ironic stories about native houseboat captains, the songs and teases of moccasin games, visions, dreams, and thunderstorms late at night. Shammer coaxed and teased the students to run with the irony dogs and discover a continent of liberty” (109). For Vizenor, that continent was always there—flowing, like “sky-tinted water”—and it *survives* beyond the continental matrix of European American rationality and possession that has presumed to banish it from view.

According to Vizenor’s long-standing claims, a receptivity to this mode of being makes possible vital transformations—what he terms “the imagic scenes of nature” (*Native* 6)—that defy conventional (terminal) categories. Vizenor’s neologism “imagic” suggests, as Kathryn Hume has noted, a combination of “*image*, *magic*, and *imagination*”: “Through forming images and projecting oneself into those images, one achieves other selves and liberty of the spirit. One escapes the dead voices and creeds imposed by others, and some of the results—experiencing the world as a crow, for instance—can be called magical” (601). Beyond this shedding of external figurations and the (at least temporary) assumption of new ones, however, Vizenor’s imagic scenes suggest a thorough openness to the aleatory that undermines any sense of a masterful self in charge of its own definition: where Emerson would see through the world and discern (Latin, *discernare*, “to separate”) its fixed order, Shammer would *unsee* and spontaneously commingle past fixities. In affirming the potent and liberating—but effectively *selfless*—selfhood achieved in his trickster’s imagic enterprises, Vizenor reanimates, in fact, the deepest root sense of *magic* in the Proto-Indo-European **magh-* (to be able, to have power) while adding to it the sense conveyed in that root’s English descendant *may*.⁵ Shammer’s imagic scenes illustrate, that is, radical capability and ceaseless possibility. These qualities are suggested in the “laser holograms” (Vizenor, *Chair* 89–90) produced by Almost Browne (a recurring character in Vizenor’s work whom Shammer hires here as a professor), which project into the night sky ironic revisions

of European American and Native American authorities: “Christopher Columbus rising slowly over the white pine,” “the distorted faces of reservation politicians,” “hidebound tribal judge[s]” (90). Students take up the holographic craft under Browne’s tutelage, animating scenes of galloping horses from “native ledger art” (96): “The horses were in sublime motion with no vanishing point, and were not mere representations of realism or naturalism” (97). In a judicial hearing investigating the legality of Browne’s holograms, a judge rules, at last, that “the laser is a native pen, a light brush in the wild night, and the laser warriors are new creations, an instance of native communal rights, continental liberty” (92). The laser performances suggest, indeed, the primary characteristics of a vital Indigenous selfhood: dynamically ironic in expression, relational in its ties to other selves, informed by ancestral traditions but uninhibited in its creative use of them (extending, of course, to the appropriation of nontraditional technologies).

Many of Vizenor’s signature ideas—“imagic,” “terminal creeds,” “survivance,” “native liberty,” among others—are notoriously (and fittingly) resistant to static definition and can take on a shifting array of meanings depending on the context in which they are deployed. Such fluidity results from the practice of what Vizenor calls “natural reason,” a dialectical mode of thought resistant to absolute conceptual divisions. As David J. Carlson remarks,

For Vizenor, the natural reason of tribal consciousness involves a rejection of the premises of formal logic, especially the presumption that things or concepts must be *either* identical *or* different from one another, in absolute terms, but never both. Formal logic begins with an attempt to set and fix definitions of terms or concepts, while dialectical, natural reason seeks to emphasize how a single term may mean differently depending upon the set of “relations” in which it is placed. (18)

“Formal logic” is largely personified in *Chair of Tears* by “federal agents,” who oppose natural reason and its relational sensibility with an unyielding rationalization of experience. The effect of such logic is to fix and divide Indigenous peoples:

The agents scorned the stories and visions of hereditary flight, maligned the sovereignty of treaty citizens and the continental lib-

erty of our native ancestors by declarations of civil war, and by the cruel calculations of birth counts, blood rights, and cultural termination. The storiers and sentiments of family traces and the natural currents of our presence were turned to cold blood and racial fractions by federal separatists. (2)⁶

Though he wrote against federal removal policies, Emerson's own assumptions in his letter to Van Buren suggest an affiliation with the European American "rationalism" Vizenor critiques here. "Red men," for Emerson, may languish in "the doom of eternal inferiority" or "borrow and domesticate in the tribe the arts and customs of the Caucasian race" ("Letter" 50). Vizenor's notion of survivance opens a third, redemptive possibility—neither wholly "nationalist" nor assimilationist—in which Indigenous peoples would reject their positioning at the inferior end of a presumed cultural binary and mediate European American culture according to their own traditions. Shammer is, according to Vizenor's definition of him in the short story "Chair of Tears," a trickster and "earthdiver" (as in the land-flinging, world-creating hero of creation stories) who would defy fixed binaries and spontaneously negotiate evolving, liberating identities: "The trickster secures his earth, his urban places now, and then he dreams out of familiar time and space. Métis tricksters and earthdivers are the metaphors between new sources of opposition and colonial ideas about savagism and civilization" (*Earthdivers* xi). The negotiations themselves are disruptive and often outrageous; Shammer, for instance, upends departmental decorum (and the very idea of strict *departments*) by wearing "masks, bright hats, samurai surcoats, and academic robes at faculty meetings":

The first masks were wooden images, shamanic visions, and some with twisted faces. Flush, my father, carved the masks from living trees near the headwaters. Shammer wore other *synthetic* masks that resembled famous authors, native leaders, and politicians. His favorite masks were White Cloud, the eminent native mediator of the Anishinaabe, Chief Joseph, the spiritual diplomat, the white hair, nasty gaze, and heavy frowns of Elizabeth Cook Lynn, the tender mercies of Simon Ortiz, the lovely countenance of LaDonna Harris, Jesus Christ in a turkey feather bonnet, three presidents, Theodore Roosevelt, Harry Truman, and Richard

Nixon, and the mask of the movie actor, John Wayne. (Vizenor, *Chair* 30, italics added)

Shammer is involved here in an ironic synthesis of traditions, a playful (and, as ever, deadly serious) manipulation of Native and European American symbols (as well as attitudes toward Indigenous nationalism and assimilation). In wearing “the masks of his enemies,” he undertakes “a clever and imagic manner of resistance, and, of course, ironic survivance” (32). Beyond “survival,” “resistance,” and “endurance,” a number of other concepts seem aurally conjured by “survivance” as it is deployed in this context: Shammer would, in his shamanic role, maintain the active and liberatory potential of *-ance* in “deliverance,” but without the hope of (utter) delivery from the history of Indigenous relations with European America. His “imagic” performances—always emphasizing both capability and possibility—would *dance* in the face of that history and at least figuratively restore *chance* and *balance* to its oppressively one-sided weight.⁷ He points here, in other words, to a vibrant, aleatory *sur-vie*, a life beyond (order), an interminable sur-continent of liberty.

During Shammer’s tenure as Chair of Tears he will dramatically uproot human termini and the hypostatizing commitments of Emerson’s *Nature*. He is able to enjoy an extraordinary, transformative success in his academic appointment, becoming “the most original, inspired, admired, and productive chairman in the history of the department” (Vizenor, *Chair* 21). Previous chairs, it would seem, have simply reproduced European American prejudices, perpetuating terminal creeds: “The six past chairmen had been honored and decorated as learned, rational, theory haughty academics, and yet they flunked as innovative native executives. They had deserted storiers, practices of natural reason, and survivance, and disregarded the very emotive sentiments of a native presence” (24). Some Native professors have themselves been guilty of terminal credence in their “cultural chauvinism”: “These tedious doctrinaires favored ideology over research, theory, or creative literature. They simulated native traditions to oppose the notion of postindian conversions” (79). Universities themselves, Vizenor implies, often reflect a terminal or arrestive “vision” of Native Americans kin to Emerson’s in his letter to Van Buren:

Some anthropologists seem to have little appreciation for sacred games in tribal creations. Their secular seriousness separates the

tribes from humor, from untimed metaphors, and the academic intensities of career bound anthropologists approach diarrhetic levels of terminal theoretical creeds. The creation myth that anthropologists never seem to tell is the one where *naanabozho*, the cultural trickster, made the first anthropologist from fecal matter. Once made, more were cloned in graduate schools from the first fecal creation of an anthropologist. (Vizenor, *Earthdivers* xv)

Shammer, in contrast to Vizenor's derided anthropologists, is a "teaser of manners, missions, and conventions, and clearly more sensitive to chance and situational conscience than to customary academic practices" (Vizenor, *Chair* 34). One of his major innovations is the relocation of faculty to communal spaces: "[They] clearly had no tenure or treaty rights to private offices, an unnatural sentiment of absence and separation. Privacy was a denial of a native sense of presence. Private offices stimulated an elusive sense of nostalgia and melancholy" (40). Another signal act is the conversion of the "William Warren Memorial Library" (41) into a casino, which thus reanimates, if outlandishly (and with a nod to current debates concerning the economic and moral consequences of gaming), some of the tribal values described in Warren's *History of the Ojibway People*. Physical boundaries between selves are removed, and the resulting collective submitted to aleatory "entrepreneurship":

By the end of the semester the faculty had reversed their wearisome protests and participated in the communal feigns and games of poker. Straightaway over chance and a hand of cards the faculty renounced the sentiments of academic treaty rights of privacy, and instead celebrated survivance. The faculty embraced poker games, the traditional communal practices of moccasin games, songs, shams, teases, feigns, ironic stories, and the entrepreneurial adventures of higher education. (49)

If the university campus has fostered arrestive visions of Indigenous identity, Shammer's interventions would encourage the opening of new, provisional sight lines—always inclusive of and responsive to traditions, but never terminally bound by them.

Vizenor further illustrates his conception of a relational, "uncaused" selfhood in one of the assignments Shammer gives to his students. So-called stray visions are to be collected in a single book constructed out of multiple, interdependent presences:

Shammer warned that at the end of the semester every blank page in *Stray Visions* must be covered with notes, statements, literary perceptions, imagistic poems, original stories about natural reason and survivance, and the students must practice as storiers in the seminar. He meant that each student must contest historical representations of absence and create a sense of presence in a story, and other students would continue the same story with original scenes of natural reason and stray visions. (109)

Such vision counters any “individual” attempt at a mastering gaze with communal acts of creation. Though Vizenor’s narrator is (appropriately) resistant to defining what such an assignment finally aims to achieve, he affirms its essential affiliation with natural reason and resistance to terminal creeds: “Stray visions were always teachable by irony, by incongruity, and by the play of contradictions, but not by dead-bolt structural interpretations, the definitions of culture by anthropology, or the representations of absence in history” (108). In running with the irony dogs—themselves dubbed “stray and vagrant mongrels” (65)—Shammer’s students would claim some of the liberating potential inherent in the concept of a “stray,” a masterless creature free to roam, to wander beyond limits, as in one theory of the word’s origins in the Latin *extra vagare*, and to see without attempting fixity, as in a historical sense of the word’s verb form: “[To] cause (the eye) to wander (over something)” (“stray,” v., *OED*).⁸

Chair of Tears thus affirms a “stray vision” of Indigenous self-rule and the “continent of liberty” it would rediscover and explore. Captain Shammer barks down, like one of the narrative’s irony dogs, the “sham treaty” made with European American rationality and its affirmations of a fixed and wholly intelligible divine order, along with the mastering (and enslaving) selves sponsored by it. In its place Vizenor posits survivance: a redemptive, therapeutic “life beyond” that deracinates European American termini within its aleatory flow.

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NOTES

1. As Deborah Madsen remarks in reviewing the work, *Chair of Tears* is in part a “campus novel” and is perhaps closest in conception to *Chancers* (2001), though it redeploys a range of motifs and characters from such novels as *The Trickster of Liberty* (1988) and *The Heirs of Columbus* (1991). As she notes of the world inhabited by the trickster Captain Shammer, “Vizenor’s satire does not work to propose a utopian alternative to present realities; as elsewhere in his writing, his effort is directed into creative processes of disruption and dismantling through a militant style of satire” (Madsen 101).

2. As Vizenor notes in *The White Earth Nation: Ratification of a Native Democratic Constitution*, “The crane was one of the original five traditional totems of the Anishinaabe” (“Constitutional” 37).

3. This is Vizenor’s only published invocation of Emerson, beyond the epigraph to *Chair of Tears*, I have discovered.

4. As Lisa Brooks notes, an extraordinary feature of the constitution is its affirmation of irony as one of the Anishinaabe’s inherent rights: “While irony has often been invoked in Native stories, petitions, and essays, and humor has long been a powerful force in tribal communities for diffusing conflict and enabling everyday survival, the Constitution of the White Earth Nation is likely the first governing document to honor its citizens’ right to irony, making it wholly unique within the genre” (71).

5. A concept related to “imagic” in Vizenor’s work is “transmotion,” which he provisionally defines in *Fugitive Poses: Native American Indian Scenes of Absence and Presence* as follows: “The connotations of transmotion are creation stories, totemic visions, reincarnation, and sovenance; transmotion, that sense of native motion and an active presence, is sui generis sovereignty. Native transmotion is survivance, a reciprocal use of nature, not a monotheistic, territorial sovereignty. Native storiers of survivance are the creases of transmotion and sovereignty” (15). As Vizenor explains in a recent interview, “I really write about this everywhere: that Natives did have, should have, better have, must have this sense of continental liberty as transmotion. You can live anywhere and have a story of presence on this continent, have a connection to the stories that created this continent—this hemisphere, actually—not just the metes and bounds and treaty borders and territorial boundaries” (qtd. in Eils, Lederman, and Uzendoski 225).

6. These fractions are, of course, the “rational” determinants of so-called blood quantum, a means for establishing tribal citizenship according to the percentage of one’s Indigenous ancestry. The constitution affirms lineal descent over blood quantum as the grounds for White Earth Nation citizenship, suggesting the importance of fluid, relational notions of selfhood and communal belonging. As Jill Doerfler writes of the implications of this decision, “It is not only culture that is at stake; it is American Indian nations themselves. Based on current citizenship requirements, many tribes will have no new citizens in fifty years and even more will face the same fate in a century. Blood quantum is mathematical termination. . . . The White Earth Nation uses lineal descent as the basis for citizenship. This prioritizes family relation-

ships and ensures that the nation will never ‘disappear’ due to a lack of citizens. . . . Lineal descent will ensure that there will always be a White Earth Nation. It allows for growth and change but keeps the fundamental familial relationship as the base. Lineal descent puts our families first” (“Citizen’s Guide” 83–84, 86).

7. In the original “Chair of Tears,” Captain Shammer is explicitly described as a kind of oppositional dancer: “The episodes during his tenure in the department are tribal contraries in a satirical contradance” (Vizenor, *Earthdivers* 5). With trickster flourishes, Shammer also articulates his paradoxical understanding of balance and his efforts to restore it to the department he chairs: “Balance is not balance, no idea or event is what it is named, there are no places that are known but through the opposites, nothing is sacred but what is not sacred. . . . No thing is in balance but what is confused and in discordance. . . . The trickster seeks the balance in contraries and the contraries in balance; shaman tricksters avoid the extremes, but not with extreme humor or intense manners” (20).

8. See “stray” at the Online Etymology Dictionary, <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=stray>.

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Book Reviews

Delphine Red Shirt. *George Sword's Warrior Narratives: Compositional Processes in Lakota Oral Tradition*. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2016.

ISBN: 978-0-80328-439-5. 330 pp.

David Martínez, *Arizona State University*

Delphine Red Shirt (Oglala Sioux) has been exploring the depths of her Lakota heritage since her first book, *Bead on an Anthill: A Lakota Childhood*, appeared in 1999. In turn, her fascination with the Lakota writings of George Sword, James R. Walker's noteworthy collaborator, has persisted since her last book, *Turtle Lung Woman's Granddaughter* (2002). However, unlike her previous works, Red Shirt has switched from evoking the Lakota experience in the form of the novel to a work that combines the Indigenous perspective of American Indian studies with the analysis of literary criticism. As Red Shirt states, "The purpose of this study is to use the written work of George Sword to demonstrate the way in which oral narrative is composed by the Lakota people, to show how their practice produced a form distinct from narratives composed in the period after contact with Europeans, when writing was introduced" (xi).

What the reader encounters in the book's seven chapters and four appendices is an analytical portrait of the mind of an original Lakota writer who was, at the same time, an original oral historian. What makes Sword "original" in both respects is the fact that his rendition of Lakota narratives in the Lakota language, using alphabetic writing, straddles the boundary between two otherwise distinct forms, writing and oral history, thereby creating a hybridized genre. Using theories developed by Milman Parry, who did groundbreaking studies of the oral traditions embedded in Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, in addition to analyses of the Serbo-Croatian preliterate language tradition, Red Shirt seeks to comprehend the themes and formulas of Sword's writings, which are derived from the distinctly nonliterate Lakota oral tradition.

Like many unexpected contributors to the American Indian literary tradition, Sword did not intend to become a writer but rather turned to

writing as a means for preserving what he regarded as an endangered Lakota tradition, namely, its oral history. According to Red Shirt, Sword worked on his narratives at the behest of James R. Walker, the Pine Ridge Agency physician (1896–1914) who had taken up a request from Clark Wissler during his 1902 visit to the South Dakota reservation on behalf of the American Museum of Natural History. Wissler convinced Walker of the value of collecting Lakota stories and to use his position as agency physician to recruit informants, which, in addition to Sword, included Little Wound, American Horse, and Gray Goose. As for the narratives that Red Shirt examines, they consist of four narratives about going to war and one long narrative about the Sun Dance. Indeed, one of the more significant contributions of this book is that it provides readers fresh translations of Lakota narratives that were previously available only in older editions of Walker's work edited by Ella Deloria, Elaine A. Jahner, and Raymond J. DeMallie. With respect to what Sword thought he achieved in his Lakota writings, he is quoted as saying to Walker: "The young Oglalas do not understand a formal talk by an old Lakota because the white people have changed the Lakota language, and the young people speak it as the white people have written it. I will write of the old customs and ceremonies for you. I will write that which all the people knew" (77).

As for Red Shirt's analysis, she summarizes her methodology in three steps: "first, an analysis of the content of the original text of the narratives in the Lakota language; second, word-for-word and literary translations of the text into English; and third, an application of oral theory to analyze the Lakota text in order to determine the process of composition of these narratives" (6–7). Red Shirt then proceeds to examine 2,240 lines of Sword's Lakota narratives, in which the objective is to develop "an appreciation and understanding of the characteristics of Lakota oral tradition that have been passed from generation to generation and are inherent in the Lakota language in which George Sword told his narratives" (150). In one respect, as Red Shirt leads her reader through a linguistic and contemplative exploration of Sword's Lakota words, phrases, and composition, it becomes apparent that *George Sword's Warrior Narratives* is first and foremost a book for Lakota language specialists. With this in mind, Red Shirt mentions more than once her fluency in the Lakota language, in addition to her method of translation, which was done with a respect for the literary quality of the writing. In fact,

Red Shirt explains early on that portraying Sword's writing as literature was an important part of her work. Although Sword has long been a prominent personage in Lakota studies whose contributions to Walker's *Lakota Myth*, *Lakota Society*, and *Lakota Belief and Ritual* are regularly cited, his status as a literary figure has been overlooked. Whereas previous scholars, such as Deloria, may have examined Sword's Lakota narratives for their linguistic, that is, scientific, value, Red Shirt treats Sword's writings as more than linguistic samples to be analyzed. As she explains: "Reliance on the original Lakota language as the language of literature is important for this study." More specifically, "George Sword's text presents for one American Indian group that which is worthy of preservation, the literature of the Lakota people as recorded in his manuscripts through Lakota oral tradition. This is a start in the right direction in current efforts to develop Indigenous approaches to defining a tribally specific literature" (16).

For nonspecialists in Lakota linguistics, Red Shirt's approach to Sword's writings is most interesting as an intellectual biography of an important Lakota literary figure whose status has for too long been hidden behind the mask of Walker's "informant." Indeed, Sword is lifted eloquently out of Walker's shadow in chapter 3, "George Sword," in which the reader gets to see Sword as a Lakota elder who is part of a generation going through the difficult transition into reservation life. In the case of Sword, he was of the opinion, as were many like him, that the Lakota needed to accept the white man's ways if they were to survive. In light of this, Sword became an Episcopalian and a member of the Indian police force at Pine Ridge, even becoming police captain by the time of the 1890 Wounded Knee Massacre. The latter earned him a place in Charles A. Eastman's *From the Deep Woods to Civilization* (1916), who fondly recalled Captain Sword in his account of the Ghost Dance. What many, including this reader, did not know is that Sword "took a survivor [of the massacre], a young girl, age five, and raised her as his daughter" (73). Furthermore, Sword was a respected elder, eminently qualified to speak on behalf of his people: "I know the old customs of the Lakota, and all their ceremonies for I was *wicasa wakan*, and I have conducted all the ceremonies" (55). Sword also bore the scars both of the Sun Dance and of going into battle. He was also the son of a respected medicine man. Having said that, there may be readers who want to challenge Red Shirt on her portrayal of conditions at Pine Ridge during Sword's lifetime.

As I have seen in other Indian authors, such as Eastman, Red Shirt recounts extreme hardship with quiet dignity, never allowing her emotions to overtake her narrative, which is more elegiac than outraged. Also, for those who prefer their theory more complex and jargon laden, such a reader may find Red Shirt's utilization of Parry's theory less than gratifying. Nevertheless, readers may still appreciate the way in which Red Shirt privileges the Lakota language and oral tradition in her analysis of Sword's contributions to the study of Lakota culture and history. As a non-Lakota, but Indigenous, reader, I learned much from Red Shirt about how oral tradition, even under the duress of the nineteenth-century reservation system, can persevere in the hearts and minds of the people, remaining as an essential part of their survival and their ongoing identity as Indigenous people.

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Ma-Nee Chacaby with Mary Louisa Plummer. *A Two-Spirit Journey: The Autobiography of a Lesbian Ojibwa-Cree Elder*. Critical Studies in Native History Ser. Winnipeg: U of Manitoba P, 2016. ISBN: 978-0-88755-812-2. 264 pp.

Kai Pyle, *University of Minnesota–Twin Cities*

The telling of the story of Ma-Nee Chacaby's life begins not with Ma-Nee herself but with the story of her grandmother Leliilah. A Cree woman born in the 1860s in what would become Saskatchewan, Leliilah stands out as a major figure in the first part of her granddaughter's life. Leliilah, who is the only adult Chacaby remembers to have escaped the alcoholism that consumed her childhood community, seems to have provided one of the few sources of unconditional love for Chacaby in her early years. She is the one who gifted Chacaby with her first teachings about being two-spirit, recalled from the past into a present where such teachings appear to have been largely forgotten.

The tie between Ma-Nee and Leliilah is one among many in a book that is largely defined by relationships, both good and bad. The chapter titles are defined by time, place, and relationship, for example: “Losing My Grandmother and Mother, Becoming a Parent, and Surviving an Abusive Marriage in Auden (1965–1970),” “Meeting Grace and Building a Life Together in Kaministiquia (1991–2004).” It is through these relationships that the shape of Chacaby’s life comes into view.

The first half of the book follows Chacaby’s life from birth to early adulthood, a time characterized by the love of her grandmother and life in rural Ontario, as well as by the physical, sexual, and emotional abuse she received from family and community members. Memories of joyful times bonding with other children sit alongside frank descriptions of violence and alcoholism. Though Chacaby does not delve deeply into the psychology behind the abuse and addiction prevalent in her childhood community, she vividly depicts the effects of racism and colonization on Native people at large.

Moving from her childhood to her young adulthood, Chacaby recalls an abusive marriage followed by a period of intense alcoholism and homelessness in a chapter that is unrelentingly haunting in its despair. It is her involvement in Alcoholics Anonymous that seems to turn the tide, both through helping her get sober and by leading her into a career of counselling that allowed her to provide for her family. This in turn led to her work doing outreach to homeless teens and fostering them in her own home. Chacaby describes all of this very matter-of-factly, neither playing down nor overemphasizing the remarkable nature of the work she was doing.

The story of how Chacaby came to terms with her sexuality is woven throughout the book and appears at various moments throughout her life. In one of the most memorable passages, she quotes her grandmother’s words to her: “Little girl, you have *niizhin ojijaak* (two spirits) living inside of you” (64). Chacaby remembers her grandmother passing on to her teachings of how two-spirit people were accepted in the community long ago. In another childhood scene, Chacaby and her friend Shiigohbii exchange the secret knowledge that both wish they could marry someone of the same gender. After these early moments of clarity, however, Chacaby notes that she seems to have repressed her attraction to women for a long time. There is no clear moment of epiph-

any for Chacaby; instead, her realization that she is a lesbian comes as a gradual acknowledgment of what she has always known.

The second half of the book is suffused with the excitement Chacaby felt discovering life as a lesbian. While the exploration of her sexuality was clearly an enormous part of this discovery, Chacaby's memories show that just as important was the development of relationships with other gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people. She describes this experience as feeling like "a piece of a jigsaw puzzle that, until then, had been forced into the wrong spaces, even into the wrong puzzle. But at last I had found the right puzzle, and I fit very well" (142).

Although the book takes a lighter tone in the second half, Chacaby does not skate over the fact that parts of her life continued to be difficult even after becoming sober and coming out. She suffered several bouts of depression, dealt with breakups (including one after twelve years of coliving), and learned to cope with having post-traumatic stress disorder. Nonetheless, there is a clear sense of hope and healing that permeates the ending section of the book.

Mary Louisa Plummer has included a description of the methodology involved in the book's creation, as well as a more general exploration of the issues surrounding research collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and the place of Ma-Nee Chacaby's story in the broader literature. Plummer and Chacaby, who were friends prior to working on the book together, engaged in over a hundred hours of interviews, from which Plummer created a restructured text written in Chacaby's voice, which she then read back to Chacaby for corrections.

Plummer states that while she took notes and used Chacaby's exact words as much as possible, she and Chacaby did not record everything verbatim. As a result, the extent to which the actual wording of the book is Chacaby's is difficult for the reader to discern. However, Plummer shows a strong understanding of the issues surrounding exploitation in collaborative autobiographies between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and has clearly tried to do her best in rendering Chacaby's life.

The story that Chacaby and Plummer recount is truly an extraordinary one, but it is also one that will resonate with many people whose stories have not been often told. Plummer situates *A Two-Spirit Journey* within the context of other life histories collected from Native elders in Canada, but Chacaby is among the first LGBT elders to publish her life

story. The perspective of a lesbian Ojibwa-Cree elder is invaluable for LGBT Native youth and will be an enriching experience for many others, particularly those who have experienced abuse, disability, poverty, or the effects of colonization. Although Chacaby prefers to let her experiences speak for themselves rather than going into great detail about her internal thoughts and feelings, her book is nonetheless an emotional look at one person's life in the midst of the effects of colonial devastation from the mid-twentieth century to the present.

In the wake of great upheaval and violence, Chacaby is an inspiration in her optimism. She closes her story not with a sense of conclusion but with an awareness that she is still growing as a person. In the last paragraph of the book, she returns to her grandmother with the assertion that she has tried as much as possible to live up to the teachings with which Leliilah raised her, and she hopes her grandchildren will remember her as fondly as she does her grandmother. With the publication of this book, the rest of us will also be able to remember Ma-Nee Chacaby's "niizhin ojijaak bimose (two-spirit journey)" (208) and gain strength and understanding from what she has so generously shared with us.

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William J. Bauer Jr. *California through Native Eyes: Reclaiming History*. Seattle: U of Washington P, 2016. ISBN: 978-0-295-99835-0. 165 pp.

Terria Smith

A new direction in the telling of Indigenous California history has been established where voices of the state's first people are the authority. Leading the way is University of Nevada Las Vegas history professor William J. Bauer Jr.'s book *California through Native Eyes*.

Bauer, who grew up within his tribal community on the Round Valley Indian Reservation in northern California, has had a lifelong affinity for history. In his book he sources Native informants who were from tribes in the same region that he comes from and who were interviewed as part of anthropologist Alfred Kroeber's New Deal work relief proj-

ect, which was funded through a grant with the State Emergency Relief Administration (SERA) in the 1930s.

In Bauer's writing, he cleverly reverses the colonial narrative that has been used pervasively and unfairly when referencing California's Indigenous peoples. He does this early in the book's introduction by establishing an Indigenous frame of mind to the reader, referring to tribal origin stories as "Indian creation stories" and European colonizers' beliefs as "Settler creation myths."

Through citation of tribal creation stories told by those who were interviewed by Krober, Bauer lays the foundation of California's history before European contact: "Rather than subscribe to the idea that California was created in 1769 or 1849, California Indians advanced the idea that California was ancient" (24).

Bauer abandons the common historical and anthropological notions of Native Californians being docile people who led simplistic, primitive lives in "tribelets." Instead, he offers insight into the complexities of California tribal experience and consciousness. "Indigenous creation stories asserted that the Indigenous Peoples of California were not 'Indians of California' but Concows, Yukis, Paiutes, and members of other tribal nations. Creators made specific pieces of land for them," Bauer writes in the first chapter (27).

The foundation of Indigenous narrative holds throughout the book. In the third chapter, "Discovering," Bauer states that "California Indian storytellers discussed contact via prophecy. These stories were set in the historical moment before they had ever laid eyes on an American. California Indians discovered Settlers before Settlers discovered them" (53).

The strength of this book lies in how it exposes and deconstructs the way colonial history was crafted against California Native people as an elimination tool: "By portraying California Indians as simultaneously docile and savage, Settler historians transformed the violence of the 1850s and 1860s into a narrative of anticonquest. Either California Indians timidly surrendered California to American Settlers by failing to put up a fight, or they started the conflict with American Settlers, who were justified in cleansing the contact zone" (74).

It is important to note that *California through Native Eyes* should be read from cover to cover to get a real perspective on the author's intent. A reader who skips the introduction may be misled by the broad implications of the title, only to be left with the impression that the book aims

to give insight to the complete experience of California's extensive tribal societies. This is not the case. The book does not give a complete overview of the more than one hundred tribes across the state. Instead, Bauer has a specific focus on tribal groups in territories that include the Northern Pomo, Concow, and Maidu, as well as the Owens Valley Paiute.

Bauer's introduction lays the framework for the book as a collection of Indigenous California insights rather than a holistic perspective of the state's Native peoples: "The goal of this book is to put into print Lucy Young's [of Round Valley Indian Reservation] history and that of other California Indians from the Great Depression." Bauer further goes on to specify that the book focuses on particular California Native informants who were interviewed by scholars during the Great Depression: "This book is purposefully synchronic. These oral histories provide a snapshot of California Indian views on history in the mid-1930s" (6).

Though there are commonalities among tribal peoples across the state (which Bauer accurately ties together, such as the usage of songs for healing and gambling, as well as Round and Circle Dances), there are also some generalizations made throughout the book that do not apply to all California tribal peoples.

Beginning with the first chapter, "Creating," Bauer writes that "California Indian creation stories begin on the water" (10). Outside of the tribal groups that he focuses on in the book, there are a number of California tribal groups to whom this statement does not apply (e.g., the Cahuilla and Kumeyaay peoples of southern California).

Although he does not provide a complete overview of Native California, Bauer does do the important work of establishing a standard for other scholars to follow when recording California's Indigenous history.

Throughout the book, Bauer juxtaposes the California Native experience before and after European contact against the pervasive colonial historical narrative. In doing this, Bauer illustrates continuity of cultural practices and perseverance of tribal peoples from their creation, coming into contact with European settlers, facing the devastation of colonialism, to their persistent survival. In his chapter on fighting, he writes, "Unlike Settler histories of the Indian Wars, Pomo war stories empowered their communities. Settler histories used the Indian Wars to chart Native destruction" (79).

Beyond the historical period, Bauer cites how California Native belief systems were pivotal in political activism efforts. In the book's conclu-

sion, he writes, “Traditional stories expressed everyday Peoples’ politics” (122). As a specific example, he states that “Concows used oral narratives and histories of their homeland to reclaim the land from which they had been ethnically cleansed.”

Overall, *California through Native Eyes* takes a major step in the right direction for restructuring historical scholarship concerning the state’s Indigenous peoples. Bauer’s work rightfully gives equal validity to Native peoples’ oral tradition and worldview to that of written documentation of the European anthropologists and historians who observed their ways from the outside through a colonial lens. The publishing of this type of research will expectantly lead to the goal Bauer stated he had in 2014 to *Diverse Issues in Higher Education* of inserting “California Indians into the intellectual history of the United States in the early 20th century.”¹

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NOTE

1. Pearl Stewart, “Univ. of Nevada Professor Works to Preserve California Indian History,” 2014, Web, December 10, 2016, <http://diverseeducation.com/article/60090/>.

Alanis King. *3 Plays: If Jesus Met Nanabush; The Tommy Prince Story; Born Buffalo*. Markham ON: Red Deer P, 2015. ISBN: 978-1-927083-32-1. 148 pp.

Lisa Tatonetti, *Kansas State University*

Noted Odawa Nation playwright and director Alanis King offers a collection of three rich, funny, carefully crafted plays that collectively represent a strong addition to twenty-first-century Indigenous theater. King, the first Aboriginal graduate of the National Theater School in

Canada, has won much acclaim, and her previous plays include *Manitowlin Incident*, *Bye Bye Beneshe*, *Song of Hiawatha: An Anishnaabec Adaptation*, *Order of Good Cheer*, *Gegwah*, *Lovechild*, *Artshow*, *Heartdwellers*, *Storyteller*, and *Step by Step*. Along with serving as the artistic director for the Debajehmujig Theatre Group and Native Earth Performing Group, King has been a producer and director of numerous plays in First Nations communities.

King often credits her experiences growing up in the songs, stories, and dance of the Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve as the basis for much of her work, and the encounters in the three plays that form her latest dramatic contribution are no exception. They show the quick humor and surprising juxtapositions that so often characterize skilled storytelling and include Wikwemikong as a central locale.

The opening piece in the collection, *If Jesus Met Nanabush*, which was first produced by the Debajehmujig Theatre Group, brings the ever-serious son of the Christian God, who calls himself Godfrey, together with the irascible Anishinaabe trickster at the Grand River Champion of Champions Powwow on Six Nations. Jesus is on a mission to find his “living equal,” while Nanabush is heading out on the powwow trail. The two combine forces, heading south toward Albuquerque. Along the way Jesus sheds his robe, learns to drum and dance, and starts to drink, heavily. With quick moves through time and space, Godfrey (Jesus) and Nanabush verbally spar as Godfrey moves from innocence to experience in the world of the late twentieth century. Through their often-hilarious exchanges, King asks questions about belief and cultural perseverance. Both figures experience crises of faith, with Godfrey, who has time-traveled from eight years before the crucifixion, saying despairingly, “It’s all been a lie. Why should I go back? For torture, betrayal?” (30). Nanabush likewise experiences desolation, lamenting, “I’m still here. Right here before your eyes. Yet you don’t see me. You won’t see me, truly see me, until you’re ready to give up Jesus” (47). The play concludes with King’s overt claim for Anishinaabe survivance as Nanabush burns Godfrey’s Bible for warmth, promising to remain and await his people’s recognition in the last years of the twentieth century, which he terms “the decade of the Red” (53).

The second piece in King’s collection, *The Tommy Prince Story*, premiered in 1995. Thomas George “Tommy” Prince (Saulteaux, 1915–77) was born in Manitoba and served in both World War II and the Korean

War. Despite his eleven medals (Prince was the most decorated Aboriginal veteran of all time), his recognition for heroism both on and off the battlefield, and his work for Indigenous peoples, Prince died in poverty. King gives us both “Old Tommy,” living his final days in a Salvation Army room and remembering his life, and “Young Tommy,” who is first at Elkhorn Residential School, then in World War II, then having combat flashbacks that spur his wife, Vera, to leave him. King weaves back and forth in time, bringing in key figures and events from Prince’s life and family history, including his great-great-grandfather Chief Peguis. The play quotes the citations Prince received for his many acts of bravery and daring and emphasizes the ironic contrasts in Prince’s life as he is denied service at a bar because of his race in one scene, while in another instance he is feted at an event for decorated soldiers at Buckingham Palace. King’s overlaps of the young and old Prince serve to punctuate and comment on these contrasts. King’s reclamation of Tommy Prince’s life concludes with an honor song and recognition of Prince’s legacy. Overall, the play reclaims Prince’s legacy even as it recognizes the darkness of many of Prince’s experiences. While showing King’s range by offering a stark difference in tone from *If Jesus Met Nanabush*, *The Tommy Prince Story* also echoes the themes of the first play in the collection by, in the final scene, looking toward the future as a space of possibility.

The final and most recent piece in King’s collection, *Born Buffalo*, was an Askiy Production that premiered in 2011. King explains in the production notes that “this one-act play is an homage to the buffalo cultures of the prairies and was therefore performed outdoors” (116). In *Born Buffalo* King returns to the playful tone of *If Jesus Met Nanabush* as two tenth-grade twins on a school trip to a city zoo encounter Meshe, a talking bison who asks them to help her escape. The play contrasts the embodied memories of the buffalo with the dry, soporific facts spouted by Dr. Palen the Third, who shares the scientific history of the bison. The play posits a spiritual relationship between humans and bison that is made manifest when the twins, Jesse and Lucie, transform into buffalo. In another magical twist, Meshe takes over the position of knowledge keeper, even while the good doctor attempts to quiet her narrative, saying, “Don’t talk anymore, it’s not natural for bison to talk” (135). Rather than consigning Dr. Palen to the realms of the irredeemable, King suggests that transformation is possible for everyone. Thus Meshe’s healing song reminds the scientist of his felt experience of “want[ing] to

be one of you” (135), enabling him, like the twins, to complete a transformation into a buffalo. Though humorous, the play confronts serious topics, critiquing settler colonialism, the loss of connection to land and animals in the Anthropocene period, and the destruction of Indigenous land and habitat.

Together, the three plays in King’s collection constitute a wide-ranging and valuable contribution to contemporary Indigenous theater that would offer actors, students, and scholars a wealth of material and significant topics from which to draw.

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