

VOLUME 29 NUMBER 4 WINTER 2017

Studies in American Indian Literatures

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Published by the University of Nebraska Press

The book review editor thanks the Electa Quinney Institute for American Indian Education at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee for its financial support.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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FROM THE EDITORS

tânisi kiyawôw

June Scudeler nitisiyihkâson. nichâpanak Red River Manitoba, Batoche Saskatchewan êkwa Castelfrance-Veneto, Italy ohci niya. My maternal Métis ancestors come from Red River, Manitoba, in what is now known as Winnipeg, Batoche, Saskatchewan, and my father is from Castelfranco Veneto, Italy. I am honored to live and work on the ancestral and traditional territories of the Musqueam (xʷməθkʷəy̓əm), Squamish (Sk̓w̓w̓ú7mesh Úxwumixw), and Tsleil-Waututh (səlilwətaʔɬ) Nations. I am excited to be the new coeditor at *Studies in American Indian Literatures* and to work with Siobhan Senier; its editorial board; and its editorial assistants, Jeremy Carnes and Shanae Aurora Martinez.

My research is at the intersections of queer Indigeneity, Indigenous ways of knowing, literature, and film. My current project explores Indigenous Gothic, horror, and science fiction film and literature. Being the 2017–20 Shadbolt Fellow at Simon Fraser University and term assistant professor in First Nations studies enables me to pursue these various research and community interests. I have chapters in *Performing Indigeneity* (Playwrights Canada Press) and *Queer Indigenous Studies: Critical Interventions in Theory, Politics, and Literature* (University of Arizona Press) and articles in *Native American and Indigenous Studies*, *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, *Canadian Literature*, and *Studies in Canadian Literature*.

Although most Indigenous people do not acknowledge national boundaries, the reality is that there is often a disconnect between Indigenous literatures in the Americas. I hope to bring more linkage to Indigenous literatures in Canada to *SAIL*. In 2013 I attended the first-ever Indigenous Editors Circle workshop in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, on Treaty 6 territory and the homeland of the Métis Nation. We pondered how to “Indigenize” publishing. What does it mean to treat manuscripts like gifts? How do we center Indigenous literatures? What do ethical

approaches to Indigenous literatures entail? The Indigenous Literary Studies Association, founded in 2013 at the University of British Columbia on Musqueam (xʷməθkʷəy̓əm) territory, provides a motivating governing code on its website:

To honour the history and promote the ongoing production of Indigenous literatures in all forms; to advance the ethical and vigorous study and teaching of those literatures; to reaffirm the value of Indigenous knowledges and methodologies within literary expression and study; to foster respectful relationships within and between academic and non-academic communities; to facilitate mentorship and professional development; and to advocate for responsible institutional transformation.

The 1991 ASAIL bylaws state that the purpose of the organization is “to promote study, criticism, and research on the oral traditions and written literatures of Native Americans; to promote the teaching of such traditions and literatures; and to support and encourage contemporary Native American writers and the continuity of Native oral traditions.” While the field of literary studies has changed and evolved, the similarities between the principles, which are twenty-two years apart, still ask us to honor wāhkôhtowin, or the Cree concept of kinship or inter-relatedness. In other words, how are we good relatives to Indigenous literatures?

This issue questions how the past impacts the future and how stories of and by Indigenous people counteract dominant narratives. More importantly, rather than reacting to colonization, how are Indigenous people writing their own narratives? Of course, dominant narratives always need to be challenged, but some of the essays place the onus on non-Indigenous people to do the necessary work of decolonization.

Salma Monani’s “The Cosmological Liveliness of Terril Calder’s *The Lodge*: Animating Our Relations and Unsettling Our Cinematic Spaces” explores how bringing together ecocinema and Indigenous studies, particularly in animated works, illustrates how Métis filmmaker Calder’s stop-motion film asks us to rethink boundaries between the human and other-than-human worlds. Most importantly, Calder’s film is a specifically Métis film in its critique of the Eurowestern objectification of other-than-humans and its use of nonlinear narratives.

Similarly, in “Inhabiting Indianness: Sherman Alexie’s *Indian Killer* and the Phenomenology of White Sincerity,” Zachary S. Laminack employs an underutilized critical lens to argue that Alexie’s novel “takes aim” at white masculinity. Moving beyond the American “black/white binary,” Laminack argues that wounded whiteness, which works to screen out settler colonialism by white men’s effort to “be a good ally,” participates in violence toward Indigenous peoples.

Reflecting the growing scholarship about Indigenous speculative fiction, Bernadette V. Russo’s “Deconstructing the Master’s House with His Own Tools: Code-Switching and Double-Voiced Discourse as Agency in Gerald Vizenor’s *Heirs of Columbus*” considers how Vizenor used science fiction to reclaim Anishinaabe ways of knowing. Russo shows how Vizenor uses code-switching and the Anishinaabe language to highlight his ideas of transmotion and survivance as forms of textual subversion.

Although Craig Strete’s Cherokee ancestry is dubious, Kristina Baudemann asks how his science fiction both interrogates colonial tropes and includes romanticized representations of Indigenous people. “‘I HAVE SEEN THE FUTURE AND I WON’T GO’: The Comic Vision of Craig Strete’s Science Fiction Stories,” argues that Strete, who published an Indigenous-authored sf fanzine in 1974, writes texts as a way not only to experience the past but, more importantly, to reimagine the future.

Maarsee

June Scudeler

The Cosmological Liveliness of Terril Calder's *The Lodge*

Animating Our Relations and Unsettling Our Cinematic Spaces

SALMA MONANI

Hybridity is key; as I am Métis.

—Terril Calder, personal interview

I first saw Métis artist Terril Calder's 2014 stop-frame feature, *The Lodge*, an independently made, relatively small-budget film, at its premiere at the ImagineNative Film + Media Arts festival, held annually in Toronto, Canada. The feature-length animation played to a full house at the Lightbox Theater downtown. Many were there to attend the five-day festival, which is dedicated to Indigenous media made by and for Indigenous people. Others were there because as members of Toronto's general public they wanted to catch a movie during a night out in the city. Since then *The Lodge* has shown at various other independent venues. It isn't what you might think of as commercial fare. Its audiences are not huge.

However, for those who do view *The Lodge*, the film presents a creative space to rethink our sense of boundaries in a number of ways: boundaries between human/nonhuman, white/Indigenous, male/female, spectator/film-object. In this essay, I argue that the film is thus an invitation to question the "naturalness" of hegemonic identity assumptions that demarcate such boundaries. I interviewed Calder (via Skype and subsequent email correspondence) soon after I saw the film, and I situate a close textual analysis of the film within the context of her intent and the burgeoning scholarly dialogue between Indigenous studies and ecocritical studies. The scholarly dialogue, as Joni Adamson and I write in the introduction to our recent anthology, *Ecocriticism and Indigenous Studies: Conversations from Earth to Cosmos* (2016), argues for "clear sighted understandings of *multi-faceted* human/more-than-human rela-

tionships” that exist outside of binaries imposed by Western notions of “progress” (14–15, emphasis added). Similarly, Steven Loft, coeditor of *Coded Territories: Tracing Indigenous Pathways in New Media Art*, writes of an Indigenous “media cosmology” that is “replete with life and spirit, inclusive of beings, thought, prophecy, and the underlying connectedness of all things” and that is not predicated on Western foundations of thought (xvi). Calder extends such Indigenous worldviews of connectedness to cinema and animation in particular.

The essay, thus, extends current conversations in animation studies, ecocinema studies, and Indigenous studies.¹ It argues that there are two entwined elements that this film offers us for the critical project of rethinking ecosocial crises: the animation mode itself coupled with Calder’s Métis sensibilities. In animation, we are used to (1) seeing the inanimate alive (“objects” talk, transform, act, be) and (2) believing in their agency (at least as part of the film world) because (3) the form is invitingly playful. Thinking of animation with these three characteristics imbues it with a sense of what I would like to call its *cosmological liveliness*, where agential existence is recognized beyond human agents. While the notion of such agential recognition has marked European American ecocritical scholarship’s recent “ontological” or “cosmopolitical” turn, as Indigenous studies scholars such as Zoe Todd write, this turn does not necessarily acknowledge Indigenous cosmological worldviews, which have for centuries argued for nonhuman agency and vital materialism as a means to frame ethical relations with other beings—nonhuman, human, and the hybrid in-betweens.²

Thus, while various ecocinema scholars have argued for animation’s ability to imbue the “inanimate” environment with life, they have not considered how Indigenous worldviews can deepen such understandings.³ Specifically, existing ecocinema scholarship has not argued comprehensively how animation can prompt us to rethink the boundaries we commonly erect not only between human/nonhuman but also between human and human, whether these are racial, gendered, classist, or otherwise.⁴ *Cosmological liveliness*, I argue, with its roots in Indigenous thought, addresses these vital, entangled, and multifaceted aspects of our environmental relations. At its premiere *The Lodge* was billed as a film that “interrogates colonial concepts of savagery, critiques the dehumanizing of Indigenous peoples, and explores the powerful medicine of our animal relations” (ImagineNative). The film thus seeks to interro-



Figure 1: Still from Calder's *The Lodge* (2014) featuring its human and animal protagonists. Source credit: Terril Calder.

gate how understandings of human/nonhuman bleed into social categories that demarcate humans in hierarchical terms.

As a self-reflexive piece that implicates cinema as part and parcel of such problematic boundary making, *The Lodge* demonstrates how animation can be employed to retool cinema to resist the systems that erect such boundaries. Ultimately, *The Lodge* generates a cognitive dissonance that unsettles the cinematic space and by extension the extrafilmic space that contextualizes it. At the heart of this dissonance, through the meld of her Métis sensibilities and the animation mode, is Calder's invitation to capitalize on Indigenous animation as a hybrid agent of radical potential to rethink our entangled material *and* social relations with the world.

To elaborate on this central thesis of Indigenous animation's material-social agency, I organize my discussion into three parts. First, I begin by considering how Calder employs animation's multiple forms—cell, digital, and stop-motion—to weave an *intertextual* multistoried film world that disorients passive viewership, celebrates Indigenous traditions of nonlinear storytelling, and critiques Western ethnographic modes of storytelling that objectify animals and Indigenous peoples. Second, I draw on Calder's use of animation's *plasmaticness* (its ability to make the film world's environment mutable and malleable) to suggest how she uses the material presence of her stop-frame dolls as dynamic and flexible animal-human amalgams to confront the logics of this objectifica-

tion. At the same time, I show how Calder employs animation's playfulness to generate a double-coded trickster element that invites us to pay attention to the cinematic frame as an *embodied* presence that reveals modes of cinema production and labor. Third, I argue that through such a presence Calder makes us aware of cinema's complicity in systems of power that perpetuate the "naturalization" of problematic ecosocial entanglements. Awareness of such a presence is also a means by which such power can be resisted. Intertextuality, plasmaticness, and embodied understandings, as the sections below illuminate, are characteristics central to the *cosmological liveliness* of Calder's animation. I conclude by considering how we as viewers might recognize our own part in the cosmological entanglements of cinema's filmic and extrafilmic worlds.

STORIED RELATIONS: JUXTAPOSING PEARLS, DANDELIONS, AND BEAVERS

The Lodge is a multilayered story that exploits animation's various possibilities to generate a materially obvious and discursively complex intertextuality. Utilizing a mix of cell, digital, and stop-frame styles, as well as the juxtaposition of nonlinear story lines, this intertextuality serves three important functions that demonstrate how Calder's Métis sensibilities imbue her animation with cosmological liveliness. It disorients passive viewership, inviting instead an active engagement with a complex world of hybrid and dynamic in-betweenness; it privileges Indigenous modes of storytelling, and, at the same time, it critiques European American cinematic modes of storytelling that "objectify" animals and Indigenous people simultaneously.

The Lodge's protagonist is Pearl Simpson, a World War II British war bride who has come to live in the Canadian wilderness with her Métis husband, Hunter. She is played by a wire-frame doll with platinum blonde hair, heavily made-up eyelids, pencil-thin eyebrows, a painted mouth, long legs, and a slender figure; her neck is often adorned with a double string of pearls. We are first introduced to Pearl through the opening credits and dream sequence that weaves her personal backstory into a political landscape. Lasting seven minutes, this sequence includes no spoken lines. The audience must work actively to make sense of the montage of cell, digital, and stop-motion animation presented in various shades of black and white, in the rough sepia sketches of line draw-

ings, in the silhouettes of shadow puppetry with a marionette feel, and in textured etchings of dense tree trunks through which a searchlight moves. The musical score, blending into the hum of war planes and the rumble of exploding bombs (clouds of black and white brush-strokes that rush at us), brings the audience into the mid-twentieth century. Yet when these sounds merge into the jaunty beat of Edward Hamilton singing the World War I marching song “Pack Up Your Troubles in Your Old Kit-Bag, and Smile, Smile, Smile” the soundscape extends the time frame outside the era of World War II. The accompanying intertitle further extends this extension: “Immigrating to a new country is like jumping into a Void. It brings the potential of opportunity marred by the potential of utter devastation. Bewildered Colonists, Fur Traders, War Brides who found themselves cradled in the claw of the Canadian Wild reached for the aid of people who already called this place home.” The intertitle fades to “Bewildered,” which in turn fades out, leaving behind the word “wild.” Hamilton’s voice dissolves to the momentary returning hum of planes, which dissipates into sounds of breathing and the slow, steady thump of a heartbeat. From black screen we cut to an extreme close-up of Pearl’s sleeping face, latticed with shadows of branches. As we will learn, Pearl is a character bewildered by her circumstances—a woman caught between worlds, of past and present, Britain and Canada, whiteness and Indigeneity, “civilization” and “the bush,” and the various perspectives that mark these distinctions.

As my epigraph indicates, such in-betweenness and its accompanying hybridity are of central concern to Calder, who is Métis and identifies as being of mixed European and Indigenous ancestry. Despite their mixed ancestry, Métis people, like other Canadian Aboriginal peoples, have long presettler ancestral ties to North American lands and have also suffered from colonial histories of marginalization.⁵ In her 2015 interview, Calder noted that identification with Indigenous lifeways and experiences is central to being Métis: “We have a hybrid experience of culture as well as DNA, but we gain a sense of who we really are when a truly white person comes into our community and tries to ‘fix’ us.” Pearl plays the role of the “truly white person” in *The Lodge*. A recent immigrant from Britain, she wants to “fix” her new community. As the pioneering work of Métis scholar Kim TallBear shows, racist colonial understandings of biology (DNA) problematically shape(d) how settlers culturally conceive(d) Indigenous peoples.⁶



Figure 2: The story of Dandelion rendered in a composite of cell and digital animation. Source credit: Terril Calder, 2014.

However, *The Lodge* argues not for the “fixing” of her Métis community but for the “fixing” of Pearl’s perceptions. It argues for Pearl to see Indigenous identity not simply based on the genetically problematic notion of race but as a web of entangled ecocultural relations. Thus, Calder weaves the historical fiction of Pearl’s life in with two additional story lines—one that draws on legends and folktales, reaching back at least into the seventeenth century, and one that plays with the more recent twentieth-century natural history documentary film form. In rendering these stories distinctly, Calder fully exploits the stylistic possibilities of animation to counter “naturalized” narratives of settler cinema, including its fictional and documentary claims to Indigenous identities. The folktales (of the Anishinaabe legend of Dandelion and an early 1831 Scottish version of Goldilocks and the Three Bears) are interspersed into Pearl’s story in the form of animated shadow puppets—two-dimensional silhouettes against flat backdrops, composites of cell and computer wizardry. The natural history documentary (an “ethnographic” exploration of the Canadian beaver) pops up as interludes to Pearl’s story, with imagery that occupies about 50 percent of the screen. Centered within the rest of the screen’s black frame, the scratchy, flickering, black-and-white presentation of the Claymation-like animals has an old newsreel feel.

The presentation of these stories rejects the single narrative arc com-

mon to classical Hollywood cinema. Instead, in keeping with Indigenous modes of storytelling, Calder chooses the notion of “tradition-in-action.” As Joanne Hearne explains in regard to Indigenous animation, “The notion of tradition as material that can be stored in transcribed texts and ethnographic films has been supplanted by tradition-in-action, a set of living and dynamic cultural practices” (91). The stories of Dandelion and Goldilocks and the Three Bears become essential means to grapple with Pearl’s story and its suggested messages and morals. For example, the legend of Dandelion recalls the story of a man who, instead of choosing from the women in his own tribe, falls in love with a beautiful, yellow-haired creature who “invades” his heart, much as the European plant invaded North American lands. The inclusion of this legend foreshadows Pearl’s “weedy and invasive” presence in her husband’s Aboriginal community.⁷ The story of Goldilocks, when paralleled with Pearl’s own, also identifies Pearl as an intruder and outsider into the Métis community.

The newsreel interludes of natural history documentary are no less meaningful. As Calder explained in our interview, “It was [a] conscious [decision]. Part of it was a way to deal with time. I was dealing with the forties and also the fur trade, so I thought the interludes would be a good way to touch up on an earlier history and to help with that one additional context for Pearl’s situation: the idea of colonization.” In deliberately creating a story called “The Life of the Canadian Beaver: The Fur Trade” through these interludes, Calder reminds her viewers of the historical contexts that frame *The Lodge*. These are the ecosocial foundations of her own Métis identity and those of Canada as a colonial nation. At the same time, her aesthetic choice to present the beaver story as ethnographic cinema of the newsreel era deliberately “talks back” to cinema as part of the colonization project.⁸ As Calder further explained: “I thought it was really interesting to deal with the anthropological study of the species, like Indigenous people who are often studied as a species. . . . And I wanted to show how absurd it is, not educational; I don’t know, to me it’s just funny.” Calder consciously highlighted the absurdity of the colonial imperative to turn both Indigenous people and beavers into “objects” of study. By animating the beaver scenes in black and white, with vaudeville-style music, a soothing male voice-over, and the slower frame rate that recalls early cinema, she prompts viewers to chuckle at and reflect on the outmodedness of this ethno-

graphic approach. Calder's approach indicts a long tradition of filmmaking characterized by the Western natural historian / ethnographer adventurer filmmaker, including Robert Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* (1922).⁹ It subverts the simplistic perspectives on time characteristic of those films, which sought to "preserve" dying cultures (as in *Nanook of the North*) or offered static conceptions of nature's continuity (as is commonplace in much blue-chip wildlife documentary). Instead, she works, as Hearne might say, to "reinvent" the "visual codes and vocabularies" of this genre with an "especially flexible relationship to issues of historicity and tradition" (98). This relationship foregrounds dynamic systems in contrast to those perpetuated by a Western gaze that tends to "freeze frame" or essentialize Indigeneity and environment.¹⁰

In all, *The Lodge*, with its playful irreverence (of things like ethnographic authority and narrative linearity), which nonetheless addresses serious concerns—of human and nonhuman representation—illustrates what ecocritic Ursula Heise has suggested is animation's "effectiveness as a means of stimulating debate about complex issues" (301). It uses humor as a politicized mode of address to show how animality and racism are historically entangled in colonial narratives. More specifically, playful yet serious, *The Lodge*'s intertextuality seamlessly meshes Calder's Métis sensibilities into animation's cosmological liveliness. This mesh is further engaged via Calder's use of animation's "plasmaticness"—the mode's ability to make the film world's environment mutable and malleable. While the term *plasmaticness* is credited to Russian filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein, its characteristics, not surprisingly, are central to much Indigenous thought. For example, multimedia Mohawk artist Jackson 2Bears elucidates his idea of remix theory, where "we can consider technology as something alive and filled with spirit" (19). Remixing animated colonial imagery and tropes, such as Ten Little Indians, 2Bears imbues his work with new and different meanings. Similarly, Calder uses animation to mutate the film world's given meanings.

Not only are stories of beavers and dandelions juxtaposed onto Pearl's story line, but Calder places nonhuman characters alongside Pearl's in her reality. Played by wire-frame dolls, Hunter, Pearl's husband, embodies both a human body and that of a wolf; her clandestine Métis lover, Mukwa, is both handsome young human and bear; her Métis nemesis, Waggosh, who runs the local trading store and traplines, is both

a human woman and red fox. Pearl herself is both woman and rat. Through these transformational, “plasmatic,” dual human and nonhuman representations, Calder interrogates colonially imposed notions of animality that “dehumanize” Aboriginal peoples to help us rethink the ethics of animal-human relations. To suggest how, I engage *The Lodge*’s invitation to contemplate who its storyteller might be.

HUMAN/NONHUMAN RELATIONS: ANIMAL AND TRICKSTER STORYTELLERS

Animation is traditionally replete with talking animals, objects that perform self-propelled action, and environments that mutate and transform in delightful ways. Thus, in encountering the film world of *The Lodge*, viewers might not be surprised to see its various nonhuman characters or question their agency or their plasmatic shape-shifting as unusual. Animation’s invitation to suspend judgment on preconceptions of how the film world should resemble “reality” affords *The Lodge* the creative space to rethink the possible dimensions of “reality” itself. For example, Calder’s representation of the animated silhouette of a plant as the “character of Dandelion” imbues its nonhuman body with kinetic subjectivity. Even as non-Indigenous scholars begin to recognize its capacity in animation, scholars such as 2Bears, Loft, and Todd suggest that such cosmological liveliness is central to Indigenous worldviews. Dandelion’s copresence encourages viewers to extrapolate to “real” stories of contact between human/nonhuman, object/subject, and Indigenous/non-Indigenous and to understand that these categories are not exclusive but overlap. Calder uses Pearl’s role as the film’s protagonist in combination with animation’s plasmaticness to show us how.

As the film’s storyteller, Pearl is shown dreaming of her escape from wartime Britain, and she introduces us to the film world through her voice-over. Calder thus gives us a narrator who completely turns on its head the stereotypical expectation of Indigenous storytellers. Hearne writes that responding to the romantic “wise Indian characters who are forever imparting New Age wisdom to white protagonists,” Native animators work to “remember and reclaim the figure of the storyteller” (95). Pearl is clearly not the romanticized “wise [and often male] Indian” of recent Hollywood tropes; furthermore, her point of view does little to

romanticize the “Indians” around her. Instead, Pearl’s perception of the Indians is pejorative, one that, like the “wise Indian,” also sees its precedent in European American cinema, including the Hollywood fare that marked the industry’s mid-twentieth-century golden era and coincided with Pearl’s lifetime.

In Pearl’s point of view, the Métis are quite literally animals. Her husband, Hunter, appears as a wolf clad in overalls. Pipe stuck between his teeth, heading out to check his traplines or working assiduously with chainsaw or axe on expanding their wooden cabin (the lodge), viewers see him through her eyes much like a chastised wolf-dog. He is, in her words, in need of being “tamed,” much like the rest of Canada around her, which she proclaims somewhat grandiosely in her clipped British accent is the “middle of nowhere” and “the perfect place for the likes of me, the Queen of the Jungle.” Pearl, accoutered in heels, pearls, hats, and feathery ruffs, looks down on Hunter. She also looks down on Waggosh, the Métis woman who runs the local trading post and who appears as a wire-frame doll with plain clothes and mismatched teeth. Pearl suspects Waggosh of being Hunter’s lover; she refers to Waggosh as a “vixen” and an “immoral” and “precocious little fox” in need of a good “hunting.”

While Pearl accuses Waggosh of being immoral, she herself has taken a clandestine Métis lover, Mukwa. However, Pearl is also condescending toward him. She calls him a “stubborn, subordinate bloke” and sees him as a devoted but dumb bear. She describes the gifts of food, the bounty off the land—harvested fish, fowl, and beast—he brings her as “smelly, raw, though well-intentioned.” Discarding them unused behind the lodge, she cajoles him instead to get presents that connect her to white society, such as the *Winnipeg Free P.*

Though she doesn’t want to, Pearl also sees herself as a sniveling rat. In the opening dream sequence, we are introduced to Pearl-as-Rat when Pearl-as-Human (dressed to the nines) sits on a divan looking at herself in a gilded mirror. Instead of a human face looking back at her, there is a squealing rat wearing pearls. In extreme close-up, the rat’s whiskers and teeth engulf the space of the mirror. Pearl-as-Rat is a manifestation of a deep shame at Pearl’s own sexual misfortunes, articulated in her mother’s words: “I told you so, you filthy thing.”

Ultimately, Pearl’s understanding of animality is distinctly deprecatory. Such attitudes have characterized much of Canada’s official colo-

nial agenda throughout history. The 1870s Medicine Treaties, which came soon after the formation of Canada as a nation (in 1867), encouraged the “corralling of Native people onto reservations as if they were *wild animals* needing containment” (Goeman 21, emphasis mine). The Métis, considered “half-breeds,” were seen as even less worthy than First Nations Indians. The federal Indian Act of 1876 explicitly refused to recognize them in treaties (Hogue 121). Thus Pearl’s perspective echoes the official stance of Canada’s settler culture—Aboriginal people are demoted to something less than desirably human. As in the case of the beaver, their worth is purely utilitarian.

Yet, despite Pearl being the assigned storyteller, which would ordinarily encourage us to align our sense of the film world with hers,¹¹ Calder’s use of animation muddies Pearl’s colonial perceptions. As co-existent beings, the “animals” who live in her story line are scaled to Pearl’s size and physically occupy the same status as she does (see figure 1, for example). In addition, despite their animal appearances, they embody commendable “human-like” characteristics. Both wolf-husband-Hunter and bear-lover-Mukwa tenderly attend to Pearl’s well-being, their gentle and caring “humanity” challenging the understanding of animals as lesser. As Heise suggests of animation, “As obviously anthropomorphic as most of these highly individualized characters may be, they manage to unsettle the spectator precisely by making it unclear what exactly the categories of ‘human’ and ‘animal’ mean” (310). This blurring is consistent with Calder’s Métis sensibilities: “Pearl sees us as animals when she’s dehumanizing us. But that’s really part of our animal selves, which we don’t mind being. A huge part of my culture is to gain a clearer understanding of my animal self and to honor the connection. . . . When someone says we are connected to that side of animality, we feel that that’s a gift” (Calder, personal interview). The mischievous double coding of the characters as animal *and* human invites viewers to rethink Pearl’s colonial perspectives. For instance, though Pearl sees Hunter as an easily fooled animal, Calder makes it clear that he is aware of Pearl’s relationship with Mukwa. In one scene, Hunter-as-Wolf bathes Pearl in a tin tub shortly after Pearl has had a rendezvous with Mukwa. Unsolicited, Pearl explains that the red scratches on her back (left by Mukwa) are the result of tending her rose bushes. Hunter’s conspiratorial turn toward the camera and wordless eye roll suggest he knows, as the audi-

ence does, the true cause of the scratches. Thus the film aligns us with Hunter, subverting Pearl's point of view and exposing her as an unreliable narrator. Here, we also see Hunter's willingness to accept Pearl for who she is. Audiences can read this acquiescence as supporting Pearl's sense of Hunter as subservient, or they can read it as an example of his generosity of spirit, humanity in its quintessential form. This reading is upheld at the film's climax, where Hunter admits that "despite everything you [Pearl] have put me through, I don't want to see you destroyed."

This climax scene in particular reveals that Calder does not use animality solely as a metaphor for human states of being; instead, she invites us to think about animal well-being too. As Pearl reassesses her life, she sees Hunter for the first time in human form, which suggests a privileging of an anthropomorphic viewpoint. However, Calder's intersplicing of the beaver story here resists such a reading. Calder's decision to give human and beaver similar expressions of bewildered sadness levels the distinction between the two and invites our ethical consideration of both. *The Lodge* thus makes the audience aware of alternative narratives of humanity and animality. As Nicole Starosielski suggests of animation's blurring of human/animal agency, "Subject-object relations [can] become co-extensive" (150).

Calder's double coding also invites us to imagine a counterstoryteller to Pearl. Because this storyteller is technically invisible except as opposite audiovisual moves, its presence is instead *embodied* by the cinematic "body," that is, not just by what is *on* the screen but by the cinematic frame itself. We can think of the cinematic frame as a trickster agent. Such a reading capitalizes on animation's congeniality to Indigenous storytelling, emphasizing similar elements of "innovation, physical creation," and humor and providing alternatives to Western narrative forms (Hearne 91). It can prompt us to consider how human and nonhuman entities constitute animation's cosmological liveliness (versus that of characters in the frame). Recognizing cinematic frames reveals modes of production, racial and gendered oppression, and cinema's complicity (and agency) in these modes and oppressions—elements that are often invisible in mainstream cinema. To articulate what I mean, below I emphasize how the material presence of Calder's animation helps unsettle mainstream cinema and expose its ecosocial contexts—in particular its often pointed refusal to acknowledge the labors of human and non-human alike.

BODILY RELATIONS: FILM/MAKERS AND QUESTIONABLE
VIXENS-VAMPS/VICTIMS

To understand the cinematic frame as a presence is to become aware of it as a hybrid, entangled embodiment of nonhuman/human agency. Not only are “things” in the onscreen story imbued with a cosmological liveliness, but the cinematic “body” itself is enlivened. Recent work in Indigenous new media studies, while not specifically focused on animation, draws our attention to how the very act of recognizing the life breathed into “inanimate” technology is central to this awareness of a hybrid, agential presence, as suggested by Steven Loft’s notion of “media cosmology” or Jackson 2Bears’s remix theory. Of Indigenous new media work, 2Bears writes: “We often understand technology, as something alive and filled with spirit, something with which we are interconnected in what Little Bear called a ‘circle of relations’ and something that is part of a universe of ‘active entities with which people engage’” (14). Such agency is also central to work in animation studies.¹² As Ray Harryhausen and Tony Dalton write, “The animator is ever present, everywhere in the shot, an invisible spirit transforming the puppet into a living being” (9). While some scholars suggest that not all animation evokes such awareness,¹³ most point to stop-motion animation as a particularly evocative form. Hearne, for example, writes: “Nothing highlights the constructed nature of visual storytelling more than clay animation, which involves the painstaking work of creating and manipulating physical models that carry the actual fingerprints of their makers, foregrounding the physical traces of their artistic creation” (98). Calder’s stop-frame dolls also bear these traces. Repeated close-ups reveal the lines and gaps that attach Pearl’s mouth to her face and remind the audience that she is just a doll (see figure 1). Calder explained that “I never made my dolls talk before, and that took some learning” (personal interview). Though Calder’s statement might suggest a production flaw or a sense that Pearl’s “doll-ness” should not be visible, such a reading discounts her intent, which is to remind her viewers of the means of production: “You see the stage, and you see how the elements come together, but, bizarrely, you keep getting sucked back into the illusion, kind of like a punk rock aesthetic. You feel its means. You can feel the artist within the work” (Calder, personal interview). This is in contrast to the onscreen experience of mainstream Hollywood cinema, which often “feels like a roller coaster ride.

I'm buckled in, it's a dynamic thrill," but it is one that often steers away from pulling out of the onscreen experience. Calder wants us to "feel the labor" that grounds her film world (personal interview).

Reclaiming this sense of labor is a necessary and ecosocial challenge to the hidden mechanisms of mainstream cinema. We should think of human labor as inherently ecological, as it concerns the material bodies of workers and the environmental networks in which they are contextualized.¹⁴ Yet mainstream film industries often conceal both labor and material resources that undergird the fantasies of their screen entertainment.¹⁵ In cases where labor was acknowledged, as with that of Disney's animators, the acknowledgments glamorized the labor, concealing the drudgery of workers treated like cogs in the machine of Taylorized production processes.¹⁶ Today transnational Hollywood and other mainstream film industries (such as Bollywood) continue to perpetuate problematic labor practices. For example, it is common to consolidate film revenue in the hands of a few by outsourcing labor to countries where working conditions are less equitable than those in home countries; the impacts are felt at home too when workers are laid off.¹⁷

Central to problematic labor practices in the mainstream film industry are entangled continuing disparities based on gender and ethnicity. These disparities are perhaps best exemplified by recent criticisms of the Academy Awards' lack of diversity (e.g., Smith et al.). The animation industry is no stranger to such discriminatory practices. For example, regarding gender, Heather Hendershot writes: "Typically, the most monotonous, low-paying animation work is performed by women. And for the past fifteen years, the majority of US cartoon manufacturers have sent their most tedious work to Korea, the Philippines, and other countries where animation workers are cheap and not unionized" (117). *The Lodge* works actively to "talk back" to the industry's discriminatory practices and deliberately sits outside mainstream filmmaking.¹⁸ Calder exposes the cinematic frame to reveal histories of production and consumption that have converted human and nonhuman bodies into "objects" of racial, gendered, and speciesist oppression.

Audiences are alerted to cinema as a player in Pearl's story from the film's opening shot. In it, sepia-toned, charcoal-drawn silhouettes of a man and a girl sit in front of a giant movie screen featuring a close-up of a starlet's face. Furthermore, Pearl's life (like the lives of the beavers) is often projected through a flickering, black-bordered frame and what

resembles an old, scratchy, early twentieth-century film reel. In the scene immediately following the opening credits, we encounter Pearl through such a frame and in a film noir darkness. With her husband gone to “check his traps,” Pearl rises. Dressed in a revealing corset, her slender, hourglass figure seems to match her words, “I’m not really a hide-in-the-shadows kinda girl.” As violin strains reminiscent of classic film noir music envelop the scene, Pearl sits down at a typewriter, slips a cigarette between her lips, and searches for a light in her purse. Lamenting Hunter’s suspected unfaithfulness, she proceeds to compose a letter, the contents of which are revealed in a jazz number prominently featuring the words “with Valour, Vigour, Piss, and Vinegar.” While the opening dream sequence of war suggests that Pearl is a victim of grave trauma, here we get an added dimension to her character—she has spunk. One might argue that Pearl Simpson bears a strong resemblance to classic film starlets such as Jean Harlow and the animated Betty Boop.¹⁹ Like them, Pearl embodies a similarly sexualized and curvaceous body, big eyes, and long eyelashes. The jazz number also recalls the golden age of cinema, when actresses often performed songs to jazz tunes.

The callouts to early cinema also remind us of the sexual oppression inherent in this industry. Yet while the patriarchal narratives of shows such as the Betty Boop animation made light of such harassment, Calder portrays Pearl’s molestation as a troubling incident and one that foregrounds how she sees herself. In all, Calder’s presentation of Pearl offers a layered critique of the cinema industry that normalizes misogyny and racism through narrative and bodily representations of women and nonwhites. Like the women of her time (onscreen and off), Pearl must contend with a culture that asks her to be feminine but not “too feminine.”²⁰ The historical realities of wartime Britain encouraged women like Pearl to be “feminine” and to fraternize with soldiers, especially those from overseas, to help keep up their morale, yet women were blamed for sexual excesses while at the same time men were let off the hook (Friedman; Goodman). “War bride” was a derogatory term in Britain, where pregnancies often meant forced marriages, and in the United States and Canada, where such brides immigrated, they were also accused of being both immoral and motivated by better economic prospects in countries far from the homefront.²¹ At the same time, immigration to Canada (by nearly fifty thousand war brides) fed into European American discourses of nation building in which these

women were the mothers of the nation's future generations, homemakers making the New World (Melynda).

In casting Pearl as a war bride, Calder works to generate this sense of history with all its conflicted and problematic messiness. Pearl has experienced the trauma of war, rape, and then relocation, all the time fed by cultural narratives that are undeniably oppressive as they seek to regulate her (mind and gendered body). As a result, Pearl's coquettishness, self-loathing, loathing of the Métis and the lands around her, and defiance make sense to the audience and invite its sympathy. However, this does not make these characteristics right or just. Calder explained that in conducting research for her film, she found herself questioning the systems of power that perpetuate oppression: "The question of why and what they [Europeans] were leaving came up. And it usually was a system that failed them to a certain extent. So why come here to get a new life only to start imposing the same system in which you failed? It seems like a brand-new opportunity to learn to thrive. When you're offered a brand-new chance, a brand-new life, as Pearl is, why bring the very things that actually oppressed you in the first place?" (personal interview). In her European American contexts, Pearl seeks to elevate her own self-worth and escape her own persecution as a gendered being by claiming her white status and demeaning the Métis and others around her. Yet, paradoxically, in affirming the structures of power that define speciesist and racist norms, she perpetuates the gendered and sexist ones that bind her. Unable to curb her own sexual desires, Pearl will always be a "filthy" rat within such power structures even as she attempts to prove herself better than the "animals" around her.

The Lodge forces its viewers to confront this paradox of Pearl's relational engagement with her world. Through her aesthetic choices, Calder invites us to view Pearl's story within the cinematic frame of an older era of filmmaking; the various black-and-white images, the early century newsreel replications, the scratches onscreen all prompt us to contemplate the "unnaturalness" of Pearl's norms and to reflect on cinema's presence in the construction of such systemic power.

Yet while revealing the material constructedness of cinema, Calder also draws on her Métis sensibilities to reembody cinema with a different type of agency, a cosmological liveliness that resists problematic systems of power. *The Lodge* deliberately defies expected gender (as well as racialized and speciesist) hierarchies. In doing so, it articulates a sense

of Indigenous feminism and queer politics that challenges heteronormative hierarchies with recognition of complex colonial and Indigenous entanglements.²² While Pearl might be a white woman, Calder leaves the meanings of her womanhood ambiguous. Pearl's life resists essentialist narratives of domestic homemaker, as she is without children, and she is not monogamous. At the same time as Pearl's social status is up for grabs (victim, vamp, both? neither?), Hunter also confronts simple gendered binaries. Calder explained that he is a manifestation of the "country wife," a term that was often used to describe Native women who "paired with people who came over with the Hudson Bay Company" (personal interview). Despite the geographic and political importance of these alliances to the early fur traders and colonists, because of racial prejudice, the status of the country wife was often rescinded when white men moved back to Europe or when white women immigrated to Canada to marry them. In casting Hunter as the underappreciated country wife in Pearl's marriage of convenience (her means to escape her past), Calder deliberately queers gender expectations. Hunter may be the chainsaw-wielding husband, an image of stereotypical masculinity, but his ethics of care and his acceptance of Pearl's promiscuity fly in the face of heteropatriarchal privilege and control. As gender norms are challenged, Calder reiterates her careful attention to the ethics of labor, drawing the nonhuman into the sphere of such ethics. Hunter and other Métis like Waggosh and Mukwa all trap and hunt, and they demonstrate working relations with animals and the land. Among these characters, Pearl stands out as the problematically unethical one, throwing out and wasting the bounty that Mukwa offers her and remaining intent on "taming" the land.

What is key to note is that Calder's engagement with gendered and animal ethics of labor practices reminds us that her characters are enmeshed in both colonial and Indigenous systems of power. Hunter's own community is critical of his alliance with Pearl. In one of the few sequences where the camera leaves Pearl's space to follow Hunter, Waggosh relates the dandelion story to Hunter, suggesting he is foolish for having fallen for the false promise of a beautiful stranger who is an outsider to the community. At the same time, as Calder's documentary interludes suggest, Indigenous peoples have also been caught up in profligate land relations, speeding the demise of the beavers and playing a role in environmental destruction.



Figure 3: Hunter and Pearl, negotiating their relations. Source credit: Terril Calder, 2014.

The Lodge shows characters negotiating the systems in which they are enmeshed. It invites its viewers to contend with cinema's histories that constitute its role in such systems. In many ways, the lodge—in which the characters live, on which Hunter relentlessly works, and for which the film is named—seems to best symbolize this hybrid, dynamic, and contradictory space of negotiating such systems. Calder described it as “a place where she [Pearl] wants to have control, but Hunter is constantly chopping up the lodge”; the lodge is “something that was born out of the land, made from the land . . . and it has its own entity—the floorboards squeak at Pearl.” She also explained that, as a dollhouse set, the lodge exerts its sense of material agency on her—in determining how she is able to film her story, what lighting she can use, and how she places her dolls (personal interview).

Ultimately, in such a world of cosmological liveliness, Calder's Métis sensibilities conjoin with animation's possibilities to generate more flexible identity constructs of human and nonhuman to help breach the walls of conventional systemic thinking. Such reimaginings can prompt us to consider what it might mean to conceptualize a less hierarchical world, one that is more just and equitable for all.

CONCLUSIONS: MÉTIS RELATIONS, ANIMATION,
AND AUDIENCE INTERACTIONS

I began this essay by asserting that *The Lodge* exemplifies the radical potential of Indigenous animation. By situating the film at the intersection of Indigenous studies, ecocinema studies, and animation studies, I have argued that Calder's Métis sensibilities highlight animation's cosmological liveliness—its playful ability to enliven the nonhuman with subjective agency—to help us rethink the boundaries not only between human/nonhuman but also among humans. Through her use of intertextuality (of story types and of storytellers), plasmaticness (a sense of the film world as mutable and malleable), and the embodied presence of animation, Calder demonstrates how understandings of human/nonhuman overlie social constructions such as race, gender, sexuality, and resource consumerism (as with the cinema “body” itself).

Bringing her Métis sensibilities to animation, Calder helps collapse and hybridize binary distinctions of not only human/animal but also white/Indigenous, male/female. Such hybridization, I have argued, challenges structures of “naturalized” power. Central to Calder's critique is her awareness of cinema's agency in such systems of power. In employing animation as her medium, Calder reveals cinema's possible agency in rethinking our relations. From the opening scenes that deliberately “bewilder,” the film constantly invites a cognitive dissonance that in Calder's sense of “a punk aesthetic” works to disrupt easy or passive immersion. Instead, in drawing our attention to the cinematic frame, *The Lodge* insists on reminding us of the blurry entanglements of our discursive logics with corporeal, material things.

In doing so, the film actively implicates the spectator in the cinematic experience. To make sense of *The Lodge*'s nonlinear, multistoried dissonance, spectators “must hypothesize about the rules and operations of the animated world,” which, as Starosielski writes, demands a high level of cognitive interaction (151). In such interactions, Calder's Métis sensibilities invite us to what 2Bears describes as “a recombinant act that involves the slicing, cutting, and destruction of virulent colonial mythologies” (27). In recombining more holistic histories and stories, agency is afforded across the continuum—while *The Lodge* encourages interaction, audiences are prompted to actively engage.

How an audience engages is also important to animation's potentials.

As numerous film scholars since Stuart Hall have argued, filmmakers can encode messages, but audiences will decode those messages in ways that make the most sense to them. Ecocritic Chris Tong writes, “In fact, we often view the same film and arrive at different interpretations” (118). Such different understandings are part and parcel of film viewing, especially in animation films like *The Lodge* that actively encode high degrees of dissonance. Yet to think of the power of audience agency as part of the animation film experience, I find it useful to join Indigenous ideas of cosmological openness—what Daniel Wildcat has suggested in his seminal *Red Alert! Saving Our Planet with Indigenous Knowledge* are the ways we humans choose to listen and collaborate with others—to ecocritic Tong’s definition of “ecological viewing.” Tong suggests that viewing film “ecologically” is to take hold “of the meaning making process without accepting or rebuffing the film world” (119), an approach that is central to much Indigenous philosophy. To engage the meaning-making process, Tong further argues, requires an understanding of spectatorship not as a passive pursuit but as a “politically engaged practice” that involves opening “one’s mind towards other scholars, other viewers, and the otherness of films” (114). I suggest that such an approach becomes especially productive when the “other” constitutes that and those who have been oppressed by discriminatory systems of power that generate ecosocial inequities. To recognize such “others” not as one-dimensional stereotypes but as complex beings with layered identities, such as those evoked through *The Lodge*, opens up a space for inclusivity that demands analytical and ethical engagement without essentializing Indigeneity or environment. Ultimately, animated film worlds like *The Lodge* provide critical yet playful and imaginative spaces to practice the openness and interactivity of such viewing practices. As Indigenous activists at the frontlines of ecosocial struggles such as those of the Alberta Tar Sands or the Dakota Access Pipeline indicate, if we are to ensure sustainable futures, such awareness of the cosmological liveliness of other beings is essential. As a decolonial endeavor, Indigenous animation like *The Lodge* encourages us to reanimate our storied and material worlds with new imaginative possibilities of rethinking equity and justice for humans and nonhumans alike.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am deeply grateful to filmmaker Terril Calder for giving me the opportunity to write about this film and for sharing with me her own intentions and ideas regarding it. Thanks to ImagineNative Film and Media Festival and its organizers for allowing me to attend and participate in their annual celebration of Indigenous art. Joanna Hearne's and Miranda Brady's comments were invaluable in sharpening and broadening my thinking. Thanks also to the Rachel Carson Center for the Environment and Society, which afforded me the opportunity to write and workshop the essay; to the Linköping Seedbox seminar group; and to the editors of *SAIL* for their generous feedback. Finally, thanks to Matt Beehr for his, as always, sharp copyediting.

NOTES

1. There is a rich and growing scholarship in Indigenous cinema and media studies on which this essay and the larger project of Indigenous ecocinema I am working on build. There is also a growing scholarship in ecocritical animation studies. Though less attention has been focused on their intersections, and this is where my work lies, I am indebted to the foundations these two fields provide. In Indigenous cinema and media studies there is groundbreaking work, such as Beverly Singer's *Wiping the War Paint Off the Lens*; Barry Barclay's "Celebrating Fourth Cinema"; Michelle Raheja's *Reservation Reelism*; Denise Cummings's edited *Visualities*; and Dean Rader's *Engaged Resistance*. There are also more recent collections, such as Elise Marubbio and Eric Buffalohead's *Native Americans on Film*; Pamela Wilson, Joanna Hearne, Amalia Córdova, and Sabra Thorner's "Indigenous Media"; Gay Wendy Pearson and Susan Knabe's *Reverse Shots*; and LeAnne Howe, Harvey Markowitz, and Denise Cummings's *Seeing Red*. Despite this rich scholarship, there is still currently not much work in Indigenous studies on animation. Two articles that stand out for their focus on children's Indigenous animation are Jennifer L. Biddle's "My Name Is Danny" and Joanna Hearne's chapter "Indigenous Animation." There is also a large corpus of work on mainstream animation. Paul Wells's work is particularly

important, for example, *The Animated Bestiary*, *Animation and America*, and *Understanding Animation*. Because this essay especially engages environmental themes, I also draw attention to the large corpus of work on animation by ecocritics. These include David Whitley, *The Idea of Nature in Disney Animation*; Robin Murray and Joseph Heumann, *That's All, Folks*; Diedre Pike, *Enviro-toons*; articles in part 3 of Alexa Weik von Mossner's *Moving Environments*; and a number of articles such as Nicole Starosielski, "Movements That Are Drawn"; Ursula Heise, "Plasmatic Nature"; and Sean Cubitt, "Ecocritique and the Materialities of Animation."

2. The "ontological" or "cosmopolitical" turn is credited primarily to non-Indigenous science and technology studies scholars such as Karen Barad, Jane Bennett, Bruno Latour, Donna Haraway, and Isabelle Stengers, who have been particularly influential in shifting Western academia's focus to confront the dilemmas of planetary ecosocial crises in the age of the Anthropocene. Zoe Todd's 2014 blog post, "An Indigenous Feminist's Take on the Ontological Turn," which she republished with the added subtitle "'Ontology' Is Just Another Word for Colonialism" in the spring 2016 issue of the *Journal of Sociology*, helps articulate the perpetuating discursive violence through the absence of Indigenous philosophies in Western academia's ontological turn. Others such as Randerson and Yates and myself in our respective chapter contributions to Monani and Adamson's *Ecocriticism and Indigenous Studies* similarly draw attention to the problems of such absence when we discuss ecocritical scholarship. See specifically my chapter's footnote 2, which highlights why the concept of "vital cosmo-ethics," which I use to engage Navajo filmmaker Nanobah Becker's *The 6th World: A Creation Story*, draws on Indigenous worldviews as its frame, even though it might recall new materialist Jane Bennett's Western and secular idea of "vital materialism" (58). See also collections such as those of Steven Loft and Kerry Swanson, *Coded Territories*, and Gregory Cajate, *Native Science*, as examples of Indigenous studies scholarship that highlights these animated cosmological relations.

3. For example, Adrian Ivakhiv in *Ecologies of the Moving Image* draws on Sean Cubitt's work to write, "The distinct qualities of metamorphism and transmutation that the genre has at its core" can help "refigure viewers' perceptions of objecthood as well as subjectsapes" (214–16). See also Starosielski. In "Plasmatic Nature" Ursula Heise specifically considers Jane Bennett's ideas of vital materialism, though she is dismissive of Bennett's frame, stating that "nonhuman agency has been playfully explored [in animation film] long before new materialist theories arose" (308).

4. For example, Heise in her engagement with the Belgian animation *Panique au village* (2009) does little to explore the presentation of the feathered stereotypical portrayal of the character Indien, though she has much to say about nonhuman/human relations in this film. In "Movements That Are Drawn" Starosielski wrote, "Ideologies embedded in animated films are not only 'pro-environmental' but serve to reinforce hegemonic conceptions of race and gender" (149). One might argue that in general ecoanimation scholarship through its neglect of serious engagement with such concepts may be similarly criticized. There are a few exceptions, though. See, for example, Cubitt's "Ecocritique and Materialities of Animation" and Monani's "In

God's Land," which employ an ecocritical-postcolonial reading of independent Indian film.

5. Officially today Canada recognizes Métis people as one of the country's three main Aboriginal peoples (along with First Nation and Inuit peoples); however, the politics of Métis identity continue to be fraught. For a sense of some of the debates that mark Métis identity, consider Michel Hogue's *Metis and the Medicine Line* and Chris Andersen's "Moya 'Tipimsook ('The People Who Aren't Their Own Bosses')," as well as his recent book *Métis*.

6. For example, TallBear writes in her pioneering 2013 *Native American DNA* that "without 'settlers' we could not have 'Indians' or 'Native Americans'—a pan racial group defined solely in opposition to the settlers who encountered them" (5).

7. I'd like to acknowledge Miranda Brady, who is currently working on a 2016 Native American and Indigenous Studies Association conference paper that considers Indigenous feminism as a lens to analyze *The Lodge*, for her insightful comment on how the Dandelion story also subverts the typical "captivity narrative," where a European is made captive by Indigenous people.

8. Elise Marrubio and Eric Buffalohead use the term "talk back" as a framing means of understanding Indigenous cinema in their edited collection, *Native Americans on Film*.

9. While much has been written about the natural history and ethnographic film, good references include Michele Raheja's seminal 2007 *American Quarterly* article, "Reading Nanook's Smile." See also essays in Marian Bredin and Hafsteinsson Sigurjón Baldur's *Indigenous Screen Cultures in Canada*; Fatimah Tobing-Rony's *The Third Eye*; and Corinn Columpar's *Unsettling Sights*.

10. The term "freeze-frame" can be credited to Ann Feinup-Riordan, whose book *Freeze-Frame* plays on the cinematic and primitivism-preservation pun. Interestingly, Calder's presentation of the natural history genre as animation also creatively bypasses the inevitable environmental resource base that the "live action" of such ethnographic films needs (e.g., the resources to travel to distant places and shoot in unfamiliar conditions). Thus, one might argue that *The Lodge* also has a smaller ecological footprint than the films that she critiques.

11. There is a substantial corpus of work in film studies that articulates how particular points of view frame audience allegiance. For an overview of some of this research in the context of Indigenous studies, see Salma Monani's "Evoking Sympathy and Empathy."

12. For example, see much of Paul Wells's work. See also the essays in Susanne Buchan's edited collection *Pervasive Animation*. In "Indigenous Animation," Hearne also makes note of how animation often "manifest[s] the film's mode of production" (96).

13. Both Alice Gambrell ("In Visible Hands") and Sean Cubitt ("Ecocritique and the Materialities of Animation") argue that Disney's cell animation sought to represent an industrial standard of animation that "normalized" and "naturalized" the film world that assisted viewers to be forgetful of the contexts outside of it. There

is also debate regarding CGI (computer-generated imagery) animation, which in mainstream cinema has pushed so strongly toward simulating realism that it works often to conceal its own artificiality.

14. Recognizing how the film industry also hides unjust practices that govern the labor of animals makes this ecological dimension especially clear. See, for example, Gary Baum's particularly hard-hitting 2013 investigative piece, which draws attention to the problematic standards of animal welfare in Hollywood, "No Animals Were Harmed."

15. As suggested in articles such as Sean Cubitt "Ecocritique and Materialities"; Alice Gambrell's "In Visible Hands"; and Nadia Bozak's *The Cinematic Footprint*.

16. See in particular Alice Gambrell's "In Visible Hands." See also Heather Hendershot's "Secretary, Homemaker, and 'White' Woman." One might also make the same argument for today's films, which often include within their DVD supplements additional materials about the making of the film, though in immensely celebratory terms. For a thoughtful analysis on this topic, see, for example, Luis Vivanco's 2013 "Penguins Are Good to Think With."

17. For example, Michael Curtin and John Vanderhoef ("A Vanishing Piece of Pi") look specifically at the digital visual effects company VFX, which won the 2013 Oscar for Ang Lee's *Life of Pi*. They also provide a nice summary of recent scholarship that looks at the impact of globalization on labor markets (220–22).

18. Miranda Brady and John Kelly also touch on this aspect of *The Lodge* briefly in their *Indigenous Interventions*.

19. Calder mentioned Harlow as one example in her personal interview regarding the film.

20. The history of the evolution of the Betty Boop cartoons speaks particularly well to this tension, as Hendershot reveals of the shows' pre- and post-1935 series, which changed with the imposition of Hollywood's censorship code and resulted in a move to "revamp a vamp" (118). Hendershot writes, "Both the censored and uncensored Betty Boop are abused" (119). While early shows are overtly sexist and racist, the later ones are implicitly so.

21. In countries like Austria, which were on the losing side, war brides were described in even more derogatory terms in wartime propaganda and often referred to as "whores and traitors" (e.g., see Friedman 68). Much has been written about Canada's war brides. Along with Goodman's *Women, Sexuality, and War* and Friedman's *From the Battlefield*, see also Tim Davidson and Ruth Pierson's "War Brides"; Lisa Gabrielle's newspaper article "A Boom of Brides"; and Melynda Jarrat's web resource "Canadian War Brides."

22. See Qwo-Li Driskill et al., editors, *Queer Indigenous Studies*; Joanne Barker, "Indigenous Feminisms"; Lisa Tattonetti, *The Queerness of Native American Literature*; and Mishuana Goeman, *Mark My Words*.

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Inhabiting Indianness

Sherman Alexie's *Indian Killer* and the
Phenomenology of White Sincerity

ZACHARY S. LAMINACK

Have we somehow travelled back to the nineteenth century?

—Sherman Alexie, *Indian Killer*

On July 9, 1998, Spokane / Coeur d'Alene writer Sherman Alexie appeared alongside President Bill Clinton on *PBS NewsHour* as part of a series of panel discussions entitled "President Clinton's Dialogue on Race."¹ Turning to Alexie early in the broadcast, Clinton offered the following:

When I was running for President in 1992, I didn't know much about the American Indian condition except that we had a significant but very small population of Indians in my home state and that my grandmother was one-quarter Cherokee. That's all I knew. I spent a lot of time going around . . . to the reservations . . . to learn about this sort of nation-to-nation legal relationship that is supposed to exist between the US Government and the Native American tribes. . . . What I concluded . . . [was] that they have not been given enough empowerment or responsibility or tools to make the most of their own lives. . . . So they literally got the worst of both worlds. They weren't getting enough help and they certainly didn't have enough responsibility and power, in my view, to build a future. So what do you think the most important thing is for Americans to know about American Indians?²

Asked to maneuver within a narrow framework that confines Native American political sovereignty to the precarious status of a "sort of . . . supposed to" liminality and positions Indigenous peoples themselves as living in the "worst" of possible worlds, Alexie responded: "I think

the primary thing that people need to know about Indians is . . . that we really do exist as political entities and sovereign political nations . . . [and that] we are separate politically and economically. And should be.” Alexie’s “really do exist” pointed to the gap between Clinton’s notional “Indian” and the former president’s apparent inability to recognize the reality of Indigenous political sovereignty. Recounting the ways people talk to him about race, Alexie sharpened the point: “Usually . . . what [people] will do is come up to me and tell me they’re Cherokee. But that’s usually what it amounts to. Nobody talks about Indians.” Taken together, Alexie’s responses pointed out two related phenomena: on the one hand, how claims to Indigenous identity, particularly Cherokeeness in this example, work to open up affective space for sincere claims to solidarity; and on the other, how the sincere feelings those claims generate work for those who offer them to silence Indigenous peoples’ political—and affective—sovereignty, filling space instead with talk about themselves.³

At least for most of the panel’s hour, indeed no one was talking about Indians. The irony of this relative silence, especially given Clinton’s claims, is that Alexie needed to make the point in the first place. Alexie and Clinton’s conversation, and its quick fizzling out, reads like a scene-for-scene rewrite of the interactions between well-meaning but utterly unreflective white anthropology professor Clarence Mather and politically motivated Spokane student Marie Polatkin in Alexie’s 1996 novel *Indian Killer*. Throughout the course of their interactions, Mather repeatedly attempts to build bridges and gain Marie’s goodwill, only to not recognize how his efforts silence her abilities to respond from a position not already bounded by his discourse. While the stakes are different, the effect is the same. In both sets of interactions between white men and the Indigenous people they attempt to stand in solidarity with, what gets most in the way of seeing their sincere ambitions realized is the degree to which their whiteness colors their affects and, as a result, screens out the violence of their good intentions.

How is it that such sincere moments, good intentions, and well-meaning gestures at solidarity—in *Indian Killer* as well as on PBS—get in the way of genuine engagement with the core problem of actively silencing Indigenous peoples and dismissing Indigenous sovereignty? How do claims to “Indianness” position Indigenous identity, for the white men in these examples, as a supplement for their affective expe-

rience of whiteness? What does it mean to see Indigenous identity as an inhabitable subject position into which whiteness can expand and within which white men like Clinton and Mather can fail to recognize their ongoing complicity in settlement's enduring effects? Through his characterization of white masculinity in *Indian Killer*, Alexie takes up these questions and offers in response a critical phenomenology of white masculinity as the experience of prosthetic expansiveness lived as a feeling of sincere solidarity with Indigenous peoples and their "plights."

Arguing that *Indian Killer* offers a critical phenomenology of white masculinity is a stark departure from the majority of critical work on the novel.⁴ Why choose to focus on whiteness in the first place, given how Alexie's novel engages with challenges to Indigenous sovereignty that range from homelessness to identity and tribal belonging? Not focusing on how Alexie theorizes white masculinity, however, confronts readers with the equally knotty problem of marginalizing the narrative's critique and as a result propping up the unexamined centrality of whiteness at which the novel takes aim.⁵ In other words, taking the novel as representative of "Indian stuff," for lack of a more direct phrase, presumes that Native intellectual and creative work emerges from a predetermined representational context out of which springs the usual suspects of "Native American" fiction. Recent scholarship within Indigenous studies examining the relationship between whiteness and settler coloniality challenges this tendency to overlook whiteness. Aileen Moreton-Robinson suggests that the relative absence of Indigenous concerns within US-based whiteness studies scholarship stems from how thinking about race in the United States tends to evoke a "black/white binary" to the exclusion of the fact of settlement (93). Given that the primary analytic of race in the United States stems from historical legacies of enslavement, the primary axis of redress has historically been political enfranchisement into the cultural plurality of the nation-state. This logic is structured around relationships of positive recognition that take the desire for inclusion as a given.⁶ The forcible occupation of Native lands problematizes this presumption by throwing into relief the relationship between possession and recognition-based models of inclusivity. To the extent that this frame may characterize histories of African American disenfranchisement and the juridical extension of citizenship, it does not map equally onto US-Indigenous relations, because the axis of those relations is the space within which enfranchisement becomes a

possibility. The “black/white binary” may have thus rendered analyses of whiteness less apparently applicable for critiques of Indigenous creative work, but this does not also mean that this work is any less applicable to analyses of whiteness. If whiteness can be understood as “expressing a particular privileged position within the allocation of Native lands and resources among non-natives” (23), as Mark Rifkin puts it in *Settler Common Sense*, then we can read Native creative work’s engagement with settlement as engagements with whiteness’s privileged position *within* its manifestations.

Alexie’s novel suggests that sincere gestures toward inclusivity that presume that a recognition-based framework amounts to a fix for bad feelings constitute one of the ways whiteness articulates its privileged position within settlement. In what follows, I read Alexie’s phenomenology of white masculinity as characterizing, in phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s terms, a perceptual tradition emerging from the historical accrual of lived habituation to objects, spaces, and others as available elements of their everyday patterns of sense making—what Sara Ahmed refers to as “orientations.”⁷ Alexie characterizes white masculinity as an orientation in this sense but grounds whiteness’s orientations in the fact of settler colonial occupancy within a US frame. Construing the presumptive availability of “Indianness” as an affective prosthetic through which white sincerity and benevolence become possible, the text points out that white men’s lived habituation to everyday forms of settler occupancy works to screen out the history their bodies carry with them into the present from what for them becomes perceptible as the present. This process, however sincere it appears, is not always articulated through good intentions. Some of the men who populate *Indian Killer* want as little to do with “Indians” and “Indianness” as possible and, like Truck Schultz, wonder aloud if the world in which they find themselves hasn’t somehow been dragged back to the nineteenth century (209). Negative affects and their more directly violent results, as Alexie shows, are no less reliant on the notional “Indian” as an affective prosthetic. In both cases, I argue, the idea of the Indian becomes, to borrow from Jodi Byrd, a “transit” point for feelings of commonality, belonging, and emplacement that augment the otherwise disorienting feelings of displacement Schultz’s time-out-of-joint narrative belies (xv–xxxix). In other words, one is not dragged back to the nineteenth century; instead, one’s body—and its thickly complex attachments to

history—drags the nineteenth century into the present. Whether those modes of affect and relationality one would recognize as “belonging” to a prior time emerge as direct violence or as sincere benevolence, *Indian Killer* ultimately brings whiteness into focus as a double screen. Whiteness works, on the one hand, to screen out connections to settlement as its condition of possibility and, on the other, to screen out the degree to which white men’s sincere intentions to protect, vaunt, or otherwise “positively” engage with the problematics of continued settlement themselves participate in the direct violence of settlement to silence, remove, and indeed kill Indigenous peoples.

“A POSITIVE PORTRAIT OF . . . YOUR PEOPLE”: *INDIAN KILLER*, PROSTHETIC INDIANS, AND WHITE SINCERITY

How do white men’s claims to “Indian” identity enable sincere gestures of solidarity with Indigenous peoples? How does feeling “Indian” screen out feeling like a settler? Further, to what extent does the presumptive availability of “Indianness” as a mode of feeling, if not a mode of identification, form a part of the structure of feeling that “whiteness” might serve to name? In this section I chart *Indian Killer*’s presentation of anthropology professor Clarence Mather, who seems able to feel “Indian” and as a result to feel in a position to offer “positive portrait[s] of Indian peoples” (84). Despite his seeming ease at feeling Indian, he seems equally unable to sense how his “portraits” participate in settlement’s enduring violence. Although he does not directly participate in the race war between whites and Natives the novel eventually stages, and to which I will return in a later section, his felt detachment from that direct violence is made possible through “Indianness” as an affective prosthetic. Through inhabiting Indianness, Mather in turn feels as though his care, concern, and positive portraits of Native peoples are signs of his sincere solidarity, a structure of feeling that screens out the degree to which his whiteness produces a mode of attachment to the settler nation that enables him to feel like an “Indian” while not feeling like a settler.

Indian Killer imagines these dynamics to flow from white men’s sincere efforts to generate commonality and goodwill as a way to ground their otherwise contested relationship to physical and affective space. The tenuousness of this relationship becomes palpable for Mather as

the titular Killer begins to stalk and murder white men on the streets of Seattle. Within this context he feels it necessary to offer “positive portrait[s] of Indian peoples” as a way to reframe public perception (84). He feels able to do so, Alexie suggests, because he already feels like an Indian, claiming to have been adopted into a Lakota family while on a research trip (61). Upsetting his notion of Indianness and with it the relative imperceptibility of his whiteness, Mather’s responses to the Killer’s presence highlight the degree to which whiteness takes shape through negotiations over the meaning and stability of the notional “Indianness” of which he feels in possession. The ambiguity of the Killer’s identity—as in Spokane student Marie Polatkin’s words an “Indian killer” or a “killer Indian” (247)—dramatizes the instability of the referent grounding Mather’s attachments and points to the ease with which that instability can be taken up as a prosthetic for whiteness. In an effort to reframe and stabilize the meaning of “Indian” by grafting it into his performances of sincerity, Mather responds to the uncertainty the Killer generates throughout Seattle by engendering benevolent attachments to Indigenous peoples. Mather’s efforts to reframe the Killer’s violence, however, speak to the Killer’s unrecognizability within Mather’s liberal-inclusive framework. In denying the Killer’s materiality or later through reframing the Killer as a “construct” of this or that sociosystemic problem, Mather implicitly relies on theories of eventual extinction and tropes of “the vanishing Indian.” Mather’s reliance on these notions reflects what Jean O’Brien, writing of settler/Indigenous encounters in New England, calls the discourse of “lasting,” a “rhetorical strategy that asserts as a fact the claim that Indians can never be modern” (107). O’Brien’s compact definition puts into perspective how Mather’s “lasting” rhetoric yokes Indigenous peoples to a narrative of progression into modernity that can only find its condition of possibility within the boundaries of contemporary temporal frames wherein Native peoples are always already subjects of settler colonial history.

Mather’s claims to Lakota identity further complicate his attempts to wish away the Killer’s materiality. As much as the discourse of lasting posits living Indigenous peoples as the “last” of their kind, O’Brien suggests it also maps onto “temporalities of race” in locating “Indians in an ahistorical” frame that binds “Indian history” to theories of “blood purity” and cultural retention that positions “mixture” as “degeneracy

for Indians and progress for non-Indians" (107). Put a little differently, to become white/modern was to no longer be Indian, whereas to draw upon Indianness—configured as lineal, genealogical descent—was for whites a way of becoming progressively more attached to the modern nation.⁸

In this sense, Mather's claims to Lakota identity work to situate him within a progressive temporal frame wherein Indianness can be benevolently conferred by Indigenous peoples and can be lived as the experience of prosthetic belonging to a "common ground," in Circe Sturm's phrase (188), as the predicate condition for his arbitration of the Killer's presence. Specifically analyzing Cherokeeity, Sturm uses the term "racial shifters" to describe persons otherwise identified as white who claim Indigenous identity, arguing that their claims "evoke the logic of hypodescent" according to which "all it takes is one drop of Cherokee blood, one Cherokee ancestor in the family tree to make them Cherokee" (175).⁹ The inverse of this logic, however, allows white racial shifters to deny "their whiteness, for it reproduces the idea that whiteness is the one racial category that is pure and unadulterated" (175). The double valence of whiteness permits, on the one hand, claims to Indigenous descent regardless of "blood quantum" while, on the other, retaining the possibility of continuing to "pass" as white at will. Although Sturm reads racial shifters' performances, and President Clinton's in particular, as embodying a form of "neoliberal dissimulation" (188), Mather's performances complicate the scenario. Alexie suggests instead that claims to Indigenous identity appear available to white persons regardless of the degree of their descent while simultaneously making their denial of whiteness possible. To the extent that "race shifters must repeatedly perform their racial difference" from whiteness "using social and cultural markers" of Indianness in order to gain "recognition" (177–78), it follows that whiteness likewise relies on a similar pattern of stylized repetition that in *Indian Killer* becomes performative and iterative claims to Indigenous identity that set the stage for white men's sincere solidarity.

Alexie imagines the performances of racial difference Sturm describes to produce the experience of material difference manifest in the privileged position from which Mather feels able to arbitrate the meaning of "Indianness." He experiences this privilege as a sincere desire to help Native people while remaining unaware of the ways his efforts end up

dictating the shape of who can fit within his frames. Speaking to Marie Polatkin from this privileged position, Mather's sincerity marks the extent to which his whiteness screens out the violence of his intentions:

Don't you understand what I'm trying to teach? I'm trying to present a positive portrait of Indian peoples, of your people. Of you. I simply cannot do that if you insist on this kind of confrontational relationship. I mean, . . . don't you understand I am trying to do a good thing here? People actually think an Indian killed and scalped that young man. Despite all the evidence to the contrary, people still think that Indians are savages. Don't you understand that I'm on your side? (84–85)

Mather's brand of "help," however, appears less focused on changing the material circumstances affecting Native peoples than on capturing some "essence" he can configure and reconfigure at will.¹⁰ Mather's performance of sympathy and his attempts to do a "good thing" are rooted in the essence he imagines to remain fixed as a portrait he can present for his students' consumption. His feeling that he and Marie occupy the "same side" of the "battle" lines being drawn in the classroom and in the wider community connotes spatial demarcation, occupancy, and inhabitation; and if positioning himself alongside Marie on the "other" side of typical white reactions to the Killer's murders enables Mather's feeling of occupying "Indian" space, his proximity to Marie appears to authorize his occupation. From within it, he thus feels able to frame the meaning of Indianness "positively" against Marie's ostensibly negative opposition.

Mather's feeling like an Indian enables his attempts to reframe Marie's contentions as mere "antagonism" that clouds what is for him the essential fact of their occupying the "same side." Mather's notional Indianness thus converts Marie into what Ahmed calls an extension point through which Mather's affects can circumscribe the space of Marie's responses.¹¹ Alexie's portrait metaphor thus suggests that Marie becomes the focal subject of Mather's sympathetic recognition insofar as the whiteness of its background falls out of focus. Against this background, Marie becomes an "Indian woman in college" who is simply antagonistic toward what she does not yet understand (85). In this vein, Mather's interpellation of Marie into the subject of his positive portraiture traffics in what Byrd argues is the propagation of "empire not through frontiers but through the production of a paradigmatic Indianness" (xxxv).

Staged in this way, Marie's desire to make "every white man . . . disappear . . . to burn them all down to ash and feast on their smoke" (85) is inevitably framed as a "negative" sign of willful "savagery." Mather's effacement of her more overtly political arguments, and his reframing them into "antagonistic situations" of her own contrivance (84), position her as in need of his benevolent pedagogy as much as beyond the scope of the positive portraits he seeks to generate.

The scene's dynamics demonstrate that such sincere appeals operate through a disciplinary discourse of confinement that mirrors the spatial constraints of settler occupancy. The feeling of already inhabiting Marie's "side" screens out Mather's complicity in settlement's enduring manifestation and signals his habituation to inhabiting Indianness as an affective prosthetic. Mather is framed as a "Wannabe" and a "real Indian lover" (58), and his idea of Indianness seems already colored by these affective inclinations and by a tradition of misrepresentation and appropriation embodied in his reading list for his Native American Literature class, which is stocked with books by non-Native authors and biographies of questionable authorship. When Marie challenges his choice of *The Education of Little Tree*, infamously written by Forrest Asa Carter, former "Grand Wizard of Ku Klux Klan" (58), Mather again reframes the critique by leaning this time on the sentimentality and "beauty" of Carter's novel: "[P]erhaps we can learn that there are beautiful things inside of everybody" (59).¹² As a proud adoptee of a Lakota family, Mather nevertheless insists on positioning himself as able to "view the Native American world from the interior and exterior" and aims for the class to understand Native American literature through a bent Whitman paraphrase: "Every good story that belongs to Indians belongs to non-Indians, too" (61). Mather leaves off the famous line about containing multitudes, an absence that signals Alexie's framing of whiteness as a mode of conceptual and spatial givenness that takes its ability to consume and contain any form of difference as something that need not even be stated.

The democratic vision of Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* here becomes a vehicle for Alexie's critique of how Mather's sincere appreciation of the goodness within everyone maps onto the racialized dynamics of liberal affective inclusion that wind up nonetheless being unevenly applied to anyone who might actually be Indigenous. Among the things contained within the body of work Mather passes off as Native American

literature are the signs of “Indianness” that have become a part of the perceptual tradition he bodies forth as a performance of sincere inclusivity. However, what he seems completely unable to feel as embodied knowledge is the degree to which those performances enact an equally real and embodied form of violence against those he otherwise seeks to present and paint positively. Defending his inclusion of self-proclaimed Shilshomish writer Jack Wilson’s novels, Mather argues that Wilson’s work “[presents an] . . . authentic and traditional view of the Indian world” that flows from Wilson’s self-proclaimed membership among the Shilshomish (66). Mather’s measure of authenticity, however, takes *The Education of Little Tree* as its barometer. In response, Marie argues not only that Wilson’s claims to ancestry cannot be verified through research and records of tribal membership but also that Wilson has never contributed to the American Indian College Fund, that no one knows him at the United Council of All Tribes, and that few among the Indigenous community in Seattle know him other than those who frequent a bar Wilson regularly haunts downtown. “Wilson sure doesn’t have much to do with Indians,” Marie argues. “I mean, there are so many real Indians out there writing real Indian books. . . . Why teach Wilson? It’s like his books are killing Indian books” (68).¹³

Marie’s critique points to the fissures in Mather’s inclusive logic. Killing Indian books becomes equivalent to killing Indian people because in proffering signs of “Indianness” as equivalent to political solidarity Mather substitutes recognition for material redress. Later in the narrative, Marie confronts Mather with the direct connection between his enactments of liberal settler feeling and the Killer stalking the streets. Bluntly asking if Mather has ever “*lived* on a reservation” (246), Marie balks at his answer that he spent three months with the Navajo and smuggled food to American Indian Movement (AIM) activists during the occupation of Wounded Knee.¹⁴ Reminding Mather that he was able to access resources in ways that AIM activists, surrounded by US government forces during the occupation, could not, Marie points to the quotidian privileges and material access whiteness affords persons like Mather, including especially his ability to lean on liberal sentiment as a prosthesis for how his whiteness otherwise marks his disconnection from everyday life as an Indigenous person. As if to amplify the insularity of Mather’s whiteness and his inability to sense it, Marie takes another jab: “I mean, calling him the Indian Killer doesn’t make any

sense, does it? If it was an Indian doing the killing, then wouldn't he be called the Killer Indian? I mean, Custer was an Indian killer, not a killer Indian. How about you, Doc, are you an Indian killer?" (247). Mather's response is telling: "I'm certainly no murderer" (247). Reframing the dynamics of their earlier encounter, here Marie's framing controls the tenor of Mather's response through casting him into a "modern extension of that long tradition" of pointedly white Indian killers (61). That Mather is "no murderer" highlights the degrees of abstraction from that "long tradition" to which he has become habituated, despite the fact that for Marie, at least, his body betrays his good intentions by bringing the "tradition" of direct violence toward Indigenous peoples squarely into the present.

"THE VERY LAST SHILSHOMISH INDIAN": JACK WILSON'S
INDIAN KILLER, JOHN SMITH, AND THE VIOLENT FANTASIES
 OF PROSTHETIC ATTACHMENT

Up to this point, Mather's claims to Indian identity have largely been iterative. Despite the fact that those claims may feel benign to Mather, through his conflicts with Marie, Alexie demonstrates how claims to Indianness as a prosthetic for sincere engagement with Indigenous peoples and concerns produce material consequences. Through Jack Wilson, Alexie's critical phenomenology of whiteness turns to a consideration of how inhabiting Indianness manifests as a mode of felt belonging to a fictional world of one's own making. Within his series of mystery novels, Wilson invents private detective and "practicing medicine man" Aristotle Little Hawk, "the very last Shilshomish Indian" (162). Playing on the trope of the vanishing Indian while mocking mystery novelists like Tony Hillerman (299), Alexie casts Wilson as a sincere opportunist aiming to capitalize on the "new age stuff" and "shaman thing" his literary agent tells him "publishers are looking for" by combining it with a juicy murder mystery (162–63). After receiving leaked information from the Seattle police that they had now dubbed the Killer "The Indian Killer" (165), Wilson embarks on a new project that will become Little Hawk's last case, also titled *Indian Killer*. But his more personal aims for the book extend beyond mere market share. Despite knowing "it was all sort of ridiculous" but loving "the money and attention" playing "shaman" brought him (162), "Wilson felt he'd been chosen for a special

task" in writing *Indian Killer*: "[M]ore than a novel . . . [he] would write the book that would finally reveal to the world what it truly meant to be Indian" (338). When writer's block and vague dreams stall his efforts, his literary agent reminds him of a few things he seems to have lost track of, that he's the "Indian writer" and that as the creator of fictional worlds he gets to "make shit up" (339).

Wilson's fictional inventions mirror the fictionality of his perceptual world. He is introduced as growing up "white and orphaned" and having dreamed "of being Indian" in hopes of finding "some tribal connection with his eleven foster families," and his earliest and lasting ideas of being Indian came from reading "every book he could find about the First Americans." From his reading and felt disconnection he "recreated himself in the image he found inside those books" (157). As an adult, he merged his idea of "Indian" identity into a "complicated cornucopia of tribal influences," not realizing the importance of "tribal distinctions," whether for himself or for those "Real Indians" he seems to understand were some degree of difference apart from his fictional ideas of them (178–79). Frequenting an "Indian bar" downtown, Wilson also didn't realize that "white people who pretend to be Indian are gently teased, ignored, plainly ridiculed, or beaten, depending on their degree of whiteness" (179). Mick, the bartender, reflecting on Wilson's claims to Indian identity, "did not buy that shit. Mick's great-grandmother was a little bit Indian, but that did not make him Indian. Besides, who the hell would want to be Indian when you could just as easily be white?" (181). These last two details generate tension between whiteness as a stylized repetition of acts manifesting in degrees of visibility and effect and the notion of whiteness as an embodied marker of social privileges inaccessible to those visibly unable to pass. Whereas in Wilson's home or in his imagination, his whiteness can follow behind him because it rarely meets a stress point (in Ahmed's sense), in the "Indian bar" Wilson's whiteness manifests in degrees of visibility and affective influence that depend on the willingness of those around him to entertain his fantasies of belonging.

Having become habituated to a past of his own invention, however, Wilson takes up his imagined Indian identity as a way to navigate his perceptual milieu. What needs to be stressed here is that Wilson is not simply "playing" at being Indian nor "going Native" in a New Age sense.¹⁵ Alexie's characterization resists these readings precisely because

Wilson himself is unable to clearly discern the line between play and reality. Following Sturm's reading of racial shifters, it might be that Wilson is reacting to a perceived cultural emptiness in whiteness and so seeks a way to attach himself to a notional tradition in which he can feel rooted. However, his ability to shift positions at will owes to his inhabiting an otherwise recognizably white body. As Sturm puts it, "Whiteness . . . hides in the language of racial choice and marks the difference between those who have racial options and those who do not. . . . As a result, a strange racial alchemy is at work . . . a meaningful if somewhat delirious interplay between race, culture, and indigeneity" (60). Sturm reflects the theory of whiteness by degrees that Alexie voices through Mick, a notion Marie offers as a critique of white writers like Wilson who "thought they became Indian just by saying they were Indian" (Alexie 232). Marie suggests that for white men like Wilson, the ease of making claims become reality stems from their capacity to act as individuals, observing that "[o]nly white people got to be individuals" and that as a result "they could be anybody they wanted to be" (232). Extending Mick's observation, Marie's sense of the "racial alchemy" at work in race shifters' claims to Indian identity points to a phenomenology of whiteness as an infinitely expansive set of perceptual capacities made possible by making static the differences white persons like Wilson configure into prosthetic identities. If whiteness "hides" in these discourses and their embodied performances, as Sturm's evocative phrasing suggests, then it may be that those who feel able to conceal it find the possibility of its dislocation precisely in the ease through which they inhabit spaces already oriented around their whiteness.

Wilson's imaginative fantasies flag Alexie's staging of the spaces he inhabits as already oriented around whiteness. That Mather, a putative expert on Northwest Native peoples, reads Wilson's performances as authentic despite clear evidence to the contrary suggests that the logic connecting cultural iconicity to authenticity manifests through the ability of men like Wilson to take up Native space, whether on the literary scene or in everyday life. Alexie connects Wilson's felt expansiveness to material violence through contrasting his self-styled caricature of authentic Indianness against John Smith's forcible adoption out of his tribal community and into a white Seattle family. Daniel Grassian has observed the close parallels between Smith and Wilson, reading them as mirror opposites of one another.¹⁶ Yet if they appear as such, it is argu-

ably because Alexie uses Wilson's fantasies as the measure of "Indian" authenticity loosed from tribally specific connections and imagines the arbitration of Indianness through persons like Mather or novels like Wilson's to have direct material consequences for someone like John, who can't "be anybody [he wants] to be" because he can't pass as white (232).

The scene of John's forced adoption, recounted in the chapter entitled "Mythology" that opens the narrative, sharply contrasts to Wilson's memories of becoming Shilshomish. John's adoption is a "war," complete with a helicopter gunship that "[strafes] the reservation with explosive shells" (6). Though some have read Alexie's imagined warzone as the stuff of the opening chapter's myth, the focus of Alexie's mythos is arguably more directed toward the absence of tribal specificity within John's memories.¹⁷ He was born on "this reservation or that reservation. Any reservation" (3–4), ambiguities suggestive of a perspective from which "reservations" are synecdochic of tribal lands and "Indians" stand in for "Navajo or Lakota . . . Apache or Seminole . . . Yakama or Spokane" (4). His adoptive parents, Olivia and Daniel Smith, know nothing about John's tribal affiliation nor about his mother save that she is fourteen and, according to the adoption agent, "doing the right thing" by giving him up. "This child will be spared a lot of pain by growing up in a white family," the agent explains. Desiring to be a "good mother," Olivia takes it upon herself to fill in the gaps surrounding John's origin by reading books "about the Sioux, and Navajo, and Winnebago. Crazy Horse, Geronimo, and Sitting Bull rode horses through her imagination. She bought all the children's books about Indians and read them aloud to John" (12). John's sense of himself, derived from the stuff of myth circulated through the "Indian books" his mother purchases, in effect suggests that the violent suppression constituting the imaginative circumstances of John's birth bears out in the violence of his extrusion from tribal affiliation and resultant interpellation into the generic and mythicized "Indians" riding horses through his mother's imagination. In this sense, John lives within the interpellative schema that Alexie presents as Mather's metaphoric portraiture or Wilson's fantastical representations.

Without a sense of connectedness to tribal community or to a homeland, John is forced to invent an explanatory framework for his outwardly "Indian" appearance. When he first meets Marie at a protest she had organized at the university, the second question she asks him is "What tribe are you?" Knowing that "he was Indian in the most generic

sense,” John isn’t sure how to answer the question but tells Marie that he is “Navajo” because “that was what he wanted to be” (32). Marie, however, had seen him as “another urban Indian” who was, as “so many Indians were[,] . . . outcasts from their tribe” (38). In contrast to Wilson’s scenes in *Big Heart’s*, Marie’s quick acceptance of John into the community of urban Indigenous persons suggests another side of identity’s uneven application within a frame circumscribed by illusive measures of authenticity. She takes John to be an “Indian” because he looks like one—Alexie describes him as “tall and muscular . . . like some cinematic warrior” (32)—and interprets his confusion and difficulty at answering her question as a sign of his “outcast” status rather than of his dissimulation. Alexie suggests that part of Marie’s sympathy toward John and suspicion toward Mather and Wilson owes to her own background of feeling like an outcast. As a precocious child, Marie had always aspired to go to a university and leave the reservation. Because Marie “did not dance or sing traditionally, and because she could not speak Spokane,” she “was often thought of as being less than Indian” (33). Her parents had not taught her Spokane because they thought it would be of “no use to her in the world outside the reservation,” and, not unlike John’s parents, they had bought her “books by the pound” from which she might educate herself beyond the frames of traditional culture.

One could interpret both of these characters’ backgrounds as Alexie’s critique of the notion of “authenticity” and in particular its impact on Indigenous identity. However, reading them that way compounds rather than alleviates the imposition of a recognition-based framework wherein identity becomes dependent upon performance rather than expressive of connection to a community. John’s feelings of detachment, like Marie’s, stem from the logical circumscription of what counts as recognizably “Indian” performance. Within this framework, one’s performance of “traditional” authenticity becomes the measure of one’s belonging rather than, as Alexie suggests, one’s active involvement in collective action toward advancing Indigenous sovereignty. From the latter perspective, Marie’s acceptance of John may stem from John’s outwardly visible identity as an “Indian” but is motivated by an effort to mobilize his interpellation within settler frames toward counterframed collective action on behalf of the urban Indians with whom she feels in solidarity.¹⁸

I am not suggesting that Alexie’s sense of “Indian” identity rests

on participation in political action nor that anyone who might do so becomes Indigenous. Marie is in fact Spokane, and John was in fact born to an Indigenous mother within a tribal territory. These baseline conditions of belonging characterize their differences from Mather's or Wilson's appropriative stance precisely because they flag belonging to a specifically emplaced community the boundaries of which—physically and culturally—have been circumscribed by settler occupation. Mather and Wilson, conversely, claim a sense of “Indianness” that rests on iterative and performative affiliations with what they take to mean Indigenous belonging while remaining unaware of the extent to which such belonging depends on one's connection to place-based communities and equally place-based traditions. The sincerity of their claims, in particular, the depth of Wilson's fantasies, signals the whiteness of the space within which their claims can carry enough affective force to graft them into a feeling of unity with Indigenous peoples. The force of their claims equally as much does violence to members of Indigenous communities whose ties to land are effaced by Mather's or Wilson's performances of cultural authenticity and erased against their fantasies of “Indianness.”

Within this frame, Wilson's imaginative reproduction of the novel's titular mystery becomes a screen for the violence his representations of Indianness enact. Preparing for a public reading of *Indian Killer*, Wilson finds Marie has assembled a protest and is explaining to reporters that he is “a fraud” whose novels are “dangerous” and “actually commit violence against Indians” (264). When the reporters ask Wilson to respond to the charge that his “books might be a prime motivating factor for the Indian Killer” (264), he waves away the implication by falling back on his self-proclaimed Shilshomish ancestry. When Marie and John, who had followed him home after the reading, confront him as he steps out of his taxi, Wilson is awestruck not with fear but with the profundity of his “shamanistic” powers, “as if he'd brought Little Hawk to life through some kind of magic. Wilson had always felt magical, but he'd had no idea how much power he really possessed” (268). Through his vision of John, Wilson finds a vehicle for his imaginative entry into the Killer's perspective. Wilson had already vividly dreamed of the killings, yet once John becomes his affective prosthetic Wilson's dreams become far more personal. He begins “following John's eyes,” then sees “Smith pushing the knife into the white man in the University District,” “[slitting] the throat of the business man,” Edward Letterman, found dead in his car outside

an adult bookshop, and “smiling as he lifted” kidnapped boy Mark Jones “from his bed” (390). As if losing his grip on himself as the creator of these imaginative scenes, Wilson moves from “follow[ing]” to inhabiting the fantasy that John’s prosthetic body opens up, finally seeing “himself with that knife . . . pushing the knife into one white body, then another, and another, until there were multitudes” (390–91). Within the fantasy space Wilson’s prostheticization of John’s body allows, Wilson imagines himself as the perpetrator of violence against a “multitude” of white bodies. Through John’s representativity, circumscribed within a frame of recognition that takes his outward appearance as indicative of his “Indian” iconicity, Wilson gains fuller affective access to his fantasies of Indigenous belonging.

That those fantasies take form as violence toward white bodies throws into relief the ironic juxtaposition of savagery and positive portraiture Alexie works out through Mather’s more distanced affiliations. “Indianness” becomes equated with violence against whites for the sake of their whiteness, in other words, only within the fantasy space of settler affect articulated through the prostheticization of Indigenous bodies. Within this perspective, whiteness becomes the problematic sign of one’s inscription into frames of Indigenous violence, and removing it via sincere identification with Indigenous peoples becomes a fix that itself effaces the core problematic of occupation. Wilson’s whiteness in this regard becomes akin to a wound to his subjectivity that, in Merleau-Ponty’s terms, allows his hallucinatory fantasies to be experienced as an “affective entity” with the “*value of reality*” because they are made up of the “debris of a shattered world” (355–58). Wilson thus lives within whiteness as a doubled screen, on the one hand, configured as the affective mechanism through which he feels able to belong as an Indian and not as a settler and, on the other, as the screen through which his fantasies become felt realities that slide over his ability to perceive himself as implicated in the spatial occupation that articulates his whiteness as a privileged position. Wilson’s lived fantasies of Indian belonging are not, however, equivalent to “delusions” and the pathologies they imply.¹⁹ Rather, as Alexie insinuates through Wilson’s childhood background and adult dreams, Wilson’s notional and affective attachments to Indianness emerge from a fiction of his own making, one that works through the wound he imagines his whiteness to constitute. Cast as a function of his whiteness and the individuality it permits him, Alexie in

effect argues that whiteness becomes the screen through which Wilson and men like him filter their felt attachments to “Indian” identity and as a result leave the “debris” of violence behind them.²⁰

“HAVE WE SOMEHOW TRAVELLED BACK TO THE NINETEENTH
CENTURY?": WOUNDED WHITENESS AND SETTLER VIOLENCE
IN *INDIAN KILLER*

Up to this point, my analysis of Alexie's phenomenology of whiteness has been focused on the ways *Indian Killer* imagines whiteness to screen out the violence enacted by what feels like good intentions. To the extent that these dynamics play out on an interpersonal terrain, their connectedness to the materiality of violence and dispossession may still appear somewhat occluded. Mather's positive portraits and Wilson's fantasy frames, however, generate the conditions within which their complicity in direct violence remains an unacknowledged part of their affective milieu. The sincerity of their intentions causes them to experience their inclusive gestures as markers of their solidarity with Indigenous persons' "plight" without recognizing that the frames within which their visions of "Indianness" take shape convert the material dispossession of settler occupation into affective content about which they can feel sympathetic while doing nothing in particular. Alexie suggests that their deflective posture signals the felt givenness of their belonging to the contested space they occupy and through Wilson especially frames the self-evidentness of belonging as the wellspring of a wounded subjectivity in need of a prosthetic supplement. To demonstrate this dimension of Alexie's phenomenology of whiteness, I have intentionally held off a discussion of the direct violence *Indian Killer* stages. In this section, I turn to those representations to demonstrate the ways that Mather's and Wilson's affects emerge from the same set of experiential conditions that produce material violence as a marker of whiteness's prosthetic attachment to settler belonging.

Staging the material violence throughout the narrative as a race war touched off by the Killer's murders, Alexie demonstrates the relationship between the lived experience of settler belonging and whiteness's spatial and affective dynamics. The motif of mythicization returns throughout the novel's dramatizations of racially motivated violence, linking Wilson's imaginative fantasies of the Killer to the material vio-

lence their circulation engenders. The Killer's ambiguous identity spurs a series of imaginative mythologies within which the apparently inexplicable might become the affectively intelligible. In this sense, Alexie suggests that the stories through which whiteness narrates its attachments to space as a privileged position from which to arbitrate the inexplicable are ultimately more powerful than the facts that give rise to them.

Radio talk show host Truck Schultz thus becomes, alongside Wilson, one of the novel's prime mythmakers, the difference being that whereas Wilson feels like an Indian, Schultz feels like making "Indians" vanish, as he explains to the "citizens" his invective conjures up: "We should have terminated Indian tribes from the very beginning" (209). Those citizens, grafted into the affective collective Schultz imagines, are also undoubtedly white. Schultz continues:

And, now, through no fault of their own, two men are dead, and a little boy is missing, because they were white. If two black men had been killed because of their race, this city would be in uproar. If a black child had been kidnapped by a white man, the city would be up in arms. . . . This whole country cares more about the lives of young black teenage hoodlums than it does about law-abiding, God-fearing white men. . . . And now comes the news that an Indian savage is killing white men. Have we somehow travelled back to the nineteenth century? (208)

Positing the white body as the anchor point of historical continuity, Schultz brings about the travel back to nineteenth-century affects he locates in the "savage" now killing white men. Relying on tropes of innocence and abidance to add force to his incitement, he appeals to patriotism and citizenship as a means of mobilizing affect and galvanizing white men into a citizenry still fighting the Indian Wars for their rightful occupancy of territory. Reporting misinformation regarding David Rogers's death, Schultz adds fuel to the fire, suggesting that the Killer has "come to kill us because we have tried to help him. He has come to kill us because his children have moved beyond him. . . . He has come to violate our women. . . . We must defend ourselves, our families, our homes. We must arm ourselves and repel further attacks on our great country" (346). The level of hyperbole is matched by the elevation of Seattle to "our country," a move that within the scope of *Indian Killer's* staging of whiteness as the experience of prosthetic belonging to

national space appears as exactly the necessary justification for violence perpetuated in the name of home and country.

Authoring fictions that kill, Schultz becomes Wilson's mirror opposite. Utterly uninterested in inhabiting Indianness as a mode of belonging, Schultz proffers Indianness—through a discourse of savagery and a threat of sexual violence—as a prosthetic enabling the justified enactment of previously unavailable modes of affective redress. Schultz's incitement to racially motivated violence would not be possible were the "Indian Killer" not available as the anchor grounding his rhetoric in materiality. In this regard, wounded whiteness becomes the subject of an impassioned and sincere appeal articulated through the mythic invocation of Indigenous retribution against "whites" rather than against settlement—the terrain upon which whiteness stakes its claim to centrality. The wounds Schultz conjures are thus, like Wilson's, hallucinatory; whiteness can no more sustain the notion of racial victimhood than it can mark marginalization from the normative center. However, the effect of Schultz's sincere appeal to a wounded and hobbled whiteness carries the same force as Wilson's attempts to make up for the hollowness he feels as his orphaned vision of white identity.²¹ Despite the illusory framework, Schultz's incitement to violence takes on the value of reality for the white men who hear his messages, stirring David's brother Aaron and his friends Sean Ward and Barry Church to don ski masks and commit targeted acts of violence against homeless Native people throughout the city, nearly murdering a Makah named Cornelius (211–15). During the attack, one of them screams, "Get the fuck out of our country, man!" (215), suggesting the degree to which Schultz's mythic invective has stirred feelings of national attachment made all the stronger by viciously beating homeless Native people. Where the myths Wilson spins around the murders in his *Indian Killer* traffic in romanticizing the trope of "the vanishing Indian," Schultz's myths actively participate in the process of making "Indians" vanish because they generate sincerely held feelings of national belonging that require the violent removal of present-day Native peoples.

To the extent that Schultz's rhetoric invests in a discourse that reifies white male embodiment as metonymic of national belonging and citizenship, it stakes a possessive claim to the nation and invests that claim in white embodiment. However, the discourse of possessive investments does not quite capture how Schultz's argument actively engen-

ders affective belonging through incitements to violence.²² His appeals carry affective force because they draw upon felt “traditions” and orientations that, while not always recognizable as belonging to the present, remain effective elements of everyday perception and affective citizenship among the white men in his audience. Schultz’s appeals speak to, as much as create, wounded and victimized white masculinity as a structure of feeling that posits wounds and notional victimhood as residual elements of past cultural formations. These residual elements remain active and effective to the extent that they can be taken up at will.²³ In this vein, Alexie’s “portraits” of white masculinity position it as relying on two interarticulated prostheses: on the one hand, notional victimhood and felt but not quite actual wounds; and on the other, the availably threatening presence of Indigenous peoples who can be made to represent variably framed modes of victimhood at will, if they come into the frame of white male perception at all.

Positioning straight white masculinity as reliant on prosthetic attachments for its claims to normative citizenship, victimhood, woundedness, or racial identification, Alexie suggests that a fundamental powerlessness inheres in the presumptive center of power in the American array of identity positions. Where power appears, it accrues through habitually inhabiting others’ subject positions as a part of one’s perceptual tradition. These traditions are taken up as much as passed down, and throughout *Indian Killer* Alexie frames the ways that white masculine embodiment and orientation are actively made through taking up power over others. The effects of these perceptual traditions, once they filter into active awareness, prompt reflection and, often, sincere gestures soliciting absolution. As an example of the push-pull relationship between power, violence, and atonement, Alexie offers Sean’s change of heart as a case in point. Following his part in the spree of violence against the homeless, Sean heads to the Seattle police, searching for absolution. He explains that the trio “started doing this for a good reason,” or at least a reason “people would understand.” Yet he dodges a direct confrontation with the fact that he “almost killed” his victims by instead appealing to wounded whiteness:

This white-Indian thing has gotten out of control. And the thing with the blacks and Mexicans. Everybody blaming everybody. I mean, it’s like white people get blamed for everything these days.

I mean, I know we did some bad stuff. I know it. I know what me and Aaron and Barry did was wrong. But it was anger. Frustration, you know? David disappeared, and . . . somebody had to pay for it. Somebody was to blame for it. (387)

Sean's sense of the "bad stuff" he, Aaron, and Barry have done and his seemingly sincere belief that anger and frustration motivated by filial loyalty constitute a reasonable explanation hinges on his attempt to evoke solidarity through appealing to the wounded whiteness he now feels as a racial marker of his social identity. In other words, he knows he is complicit in something, but the scale of his complicity outstrips his capacity to feel it. He needs someone else to feel it for him. And those others become Indigenous peoples whose historical victimhood, in Sean's mind as much as Schultz's, makes them available receptacles for "bad stuff" and bad feelings alike.

Arising from a sense of powerlessness at the center of their social power, compounded by a fomented sense of anger and frustration at their lack of ability to confidently wield it, these men's inhabitation of wounded whiteness suggests the illusory, hallucinatory structure of whiteness as a modality of power. But the moments of powerlessness these men experience and that Alexie stages through them are small-scale and transitory. As Marie observes, because "only white people got to be individuals," they "could be anybody they wanted to be" (232). Part of the elasticity of white individuality, and owing to the "multitudes" whiteness contains, is the ability to inhabit illusory wounds at will and from within that inhabitation to perform woundedness while retaining power.

As Alexie theorizes, the ability to make others into emotional and affective prostheses is among the powers of white embodiment that seem to slip away into the self-made wounds of white phenomenology. Alexie's portrayals of white sincerity throughout *Indian Killer* demonstrate how white men's appeals to benevolent solidarity through inhabiting "Indianness" create the conditions within which sincere attachments to national space produce material violence against Indigenous people. *Indian Killer* suggests that the sincerity of these men's inclinations, whether toward physical violence or violent benevolence, is articulated through a prosthetic relationship to notions of Indianness that can cir-

culate as both supplement for and agent of whiteness's wounds. Thus we see Mather able to imagine himself the victim of Marie's intransigent refusal to become a feature of his positive portraiture; Wilson able to imagine himself as the very last of his tribe so as to supplement his experience of whiteness's emptiness; and Truck Schultz able to imagine Indians as engaged in a race war against whites so as to position whiteness as a wounded subject position in need of violent defense. To the extent that none of these men seems able to acknowledge his whiteness as the perceptual anchor for his active prostheticization of "Indianness," *Indian Killer* reframes whiteness as a wound through which fantasies of self-possessive autonomy are superimposed over the material conditions that give rise to them.

Indian Killer thus suggests that whiteness inhabits "Indianness" in order to inhabit itself. This claim is not merely metaphoric. It is descriptive of the process through which the experience of whiteness can feel like the experience of belonging and circulate as the background condition for the perceptual prostheticization of others' bodies. The felt alliances Alexie portrays between white men's inhabitation of "Indianness" and the Indigenous people with whom they imagine themselves in solidarity express the violence of whiteness's prosthetic engagements as a disciplinary demand to become a recognizable subject within whiteness's perceptual milieu. From within the privileged position to arbitrate the meaning and contours of "Indianness," white men fashion their belonging against the unrecognizability of Indigenous life and, through inhabiting its insensibility, reproduce themselves as continually in possession of the tools through which to shape its materialization. Wounded whiteness is thus a powerful fantasy, a fiction of its own making, and a performance of complicity with historical violence that renders the scale of settler violence illegible as well as imperceptible. Through the others who do their feeling for them, wounded white men orient themselves within the alliances their sincerity disciplines into existence; and within those illusory orientations, they build worlds across which their fantasies of belonging smoothly slide.

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NOTES

1. For the epigraph, see Alexie 209. The PBS dialogues were in support of a national presidential initiative dubbed “One America in the 21st Century.” As a part of the initiative, the president created a commission that notably excluded Native American representation. For a critical reading of this initiative in relation to whiteness and settler colonialism, see Moreton-Robinson. For a critique of the panel’s application of multiculturalist policies and its marked departure from earlier studies of racism in America, see Kim. For a substantive introduction to critiques of multiculturalism in the 1990s, see Gordon and Newfield.

2. All quotations from the dialogue reference the transcript available on PBS.org.

3. For an analysis of Clinton’s claims as they pertain to “shifting” into Cherokee identity and how they map onto neoliberal effacement of race, see Sturm 183–92.

4. Most readings of Alexie’s *Indian Killer* follow one of two related trajectories. Either readers contextualize the novel’s violence and focus on racism within Native American literature more broadly, or they position the novel within arguments over the content and practice of teaching Native American studies. For readings of *Indian Killer*’s focus on violence and racism and its position and significance within Native American literature more broadly, see Bracewell; Berglund and Roush; Carpenter; Christie; Cooper; Coulombe; Dean; Grassian, “*Indian Killer*” and *Understanding*; Krupat; and Van Styvendale. For readings of *Indian Killer* as an argument over the practices of Native American studies, see Herman; Hollrah; McFarland; and Owens. For *Indian Killer*’s engagement with settler narratives and pop culture, see Cox. For an overview of the critical reception of Alexie’s work more broadly, see Wahpeconiah.

5. The notion of whiteness as unmarked or invisible is a critical commonplace within whiteness studies. For selected elaborations of the notion, see Chambers and Lipsitz.

6. On the relationship between cultural and legal forms of recognition within settler colonial nations and Indigenous sovereignty, see Povinelli; and Coulthard.

7. Describing ordinary sensation and perception, Merleau-Ponty argues that “every sensation belongs to a certain *field*” and that as a result “there is always a horizon of unseen or even invisible things around my present vision” (224–25). The notion that sensation belongs to and constitutes a certain “field” and as such creates boundaries around the sensible that cannot include the “horizon of unseen or invisible things” around one’s active perception suggests that every act of perception involves *editing out* the “things around” one that become invisible. Developing the notion further, Merleau-Ponty considers how one can come to occupy the capacity to perceive: “My act of perception . . . occupies me sufficiently . . . that I cannot, when I am actually perceiving the table, perceive myself perceiving it” (247). In other words, in taking up a particular perceptual act one loses track of the act, *editing out* elements of the stream of sensory data that do not match the occupation. As a result, the act of perceiving supervenes one’s ability to remain consciously aware of it. The nonconscious act of perception, as Merleau-Ponty describes it, becomes the taking up of a “perceptual tradition. . . . In perception, we do not think the object and we do not

think the thinking, we are directed toward the object and we merge with this body that knows more about the object than we do about the world, about motives, and about the means available for accomplishing synthesis" (247–48).

Ahmed sketches the notion of "orientation" and what she calls "orientation devices" early in *Queer Phenomenology*. Orientation shapes "not only how we inhabit space, but how we apprehend this world of shared inhabitation, as well as 'who' or 'what' we direct our energy toward" (3). In addition to considering whiteness as a way of naming systemic sets of privileges afforded to persons identified as white, I also consider whiteness as it is lived to constitute an "orientation" toward the world of "shared inhabitation," as well as a way of describing how the "world," or, more specifically, spaces within the United States that white persons inhabit alongside persons of color, as itself oriented around whiteness in ways that shape how "energy and attention" are directed toward them. For more on orientations and racialization in *Queer Phenomenology*, see especially chapter 3, "The Orient and Other Others." For an earlier article covering a similar set of issues, see Ahmed, "A Phenomenology."

8. On this point, see Byrd.

9. On Cherokee citizenship and the politics and "paradoxes" of race, see also Russell. For an extended discussion of blood quantum, authenticity, and race, see TallBear, "DNA" and *Native American DNA*.

10. In this vein, Mather's character suggests Alexie's allusion to the self-serving anthropologists Vine Deloria mocked in "Anthropologists and Other Friends." For the essay, see V. Deloria 78–100.

11. In *Queer Phenomenology*, Ahmed considers whiteness as an "orientation" that becomes habitual to the extent that it "does not have [one's] attention" (131). Whiteness as a set of embodied powers and privileges also extends to the spaces that white bodies are able to easily and habitually inhabit. White bodies expand into space through the "objects, tools, instruments, and even 'others' [that] allow [the body] to inhabit space by" extending its reach, and in this way the "whiteness of space" takes form around "such 'points' of extension" (132).

Ahmed's sense of whiteness as a background born out of habitual inclinations toward spaces and others draws heavily upon the work of Merleau-Ponty and Linda Martín Alcoff. For Merleau-Ponty's considerations of space, orientation, and background, see 254–65. Alcoff theorizes identities more broadly in ways similar to Ahmed's framing of whiteness, as "horizon[s] of agency" constructed through "located lived experiences in which both individuals and groups work to construct meaning in relation to historical experiences and historical narratives" (42).

12. For an extended analysis of *The Education of Little Tree* and the life of Forrest Asa Carter, see Huhndorf, esp. chap. 3, "The Making of an Indian: Forrest Carter's Literary Inventions."

13. Marie's argument echoes arguments for reforming the canon of Native American literature around tribally specific concerns and experiences and grounding it solely in Native-authored texts. These arguments stand in stark opposition to Mather's whitewashed syllabus and position such approaches to Native American literature as participating in a broader project of assimilative erasure that overlooks

and silences continual Native-authored literary production. For two important arguments within this frame, see Womack; and Weaver, Womack, and Warrior. For readings of this argument as it pertains to *Indian Killer*, see Carpenter; Chen; Cox; and Hollrah. For a reading of Alexie's representations of authorship in other of his works, see Berglund.

Also see Alexie's brief essay on ethnic fraud, "When the Story Stolen Is Your Own," published in *Time* magazine and written in response to Timothy Barrus's *The Blood Runs Like a River Through My Dreams*, authored under the name "Nasdiij" and closely paralleling the characters and plot of Alexie's own short story "This Is What It Means to Say Phoenix, Arizona," and its later film adaptation, *Smoke Signals*.

14. From February to May 1973 Oglala Lakota members of the American Indian Movement (AIM) occupied Wounded Knee, on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, the site of an 1890 massacre of more than two hundred Lakotas. For a history of the American Indian Movement and Red Power activism throughout the period, including the occupation of Wounded Knee, see Nagel. For a collection of essays reflecting on the earlier occupation of Alcatraz Island by AIM activists, see Johnson, Nagel, and Champagne.

Indian Killer reflects ideas of Native nationalism and pan-Indigenous solidarity that formed cornerstones of AIM activism and the period of ethnic renewal Nagel charts, in particular with respect to Native peoples living in urban areas. For a consideration of the ways Indigenous peoples in urban areas live their connections to tribal homelands and form pantribal communities, see Ramirez.

15. On the interconnections between New Age spiritualism and the white co-optation of a menagerie of "Native" ways of life, see P. Deloria; and Huhndorf.

16. See Grassian, *Understanding* 121–24. Grassian's reading of the novel is largely centered on providing possible clues as the identity of the titular murder, and as a result the similarities he reads between Jack Wilson and John Smith are aimed toward resolving this core question.

17. On the mythos of John's adoption, see Grassian, *Understanding* 106–9.

18. On urban Indigenous communities, pantribal affiliation, and action, see Ramirez.

19. In *The National Uncanny*, Renée Bergland argues that "the ghosting of Indians is a technique of removal" and reads the "discursive technique of describing [Indians as] . . . spectral beings" as a part of the "interior logic of the modern nation [that requires] citizens be haunted" (3–4). The problem with Bergland's reading is that, on the whole, it presumes the actual as well as discursive ghosting of Indigenous peoples at the expense of facing the reality of continual Indigenous presence and suggests that participation in removal, conceived of as an event within American history, is repressed among American citizens rather than continually lived as the enduring, active participation in the ongoing occupation of Indigenous lands. My thanks to Jason Cooke for a thoughtful conversation that helped me develop this critique.

20. See Ahmed, *Queer* 132.

21. On contemporary appeals to white male victimhood, see Kimmel, *Angry*. For more complex readings of the phenomenon of white male victimhood, particularly as it applies to rhetorically inhabiting a victimized body, see Savran.

22. On the circulation of negative affects as means to engender national feeling or communal belonging, see Ahmed, *Cultural Politics*, esp. chap. 3, "The Organisation of Hate," and chap. 4, "The Affective Politics of Fear."

23. See Williams 121–23 for his explanation of the "residual" as it applies to cultural and social formations.

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Deconstructing the Master's House with His Own Tools

Code-Switching and Double-Voiced Discourse as
Agency in Gerald Vizenor's *Heirs of Columbus*

BERNADETTE V. RUSSO

Gerald Vizenor's *The Heirs of Columbus* is an inversion of the colonial tale of Columbus, portraying Columbus as a descendant of a Mayan and a Sephardic Jew who longs to return home—to America. Upon his landing in America, Columbus meets and has sexual relations with a healer, Samana, thereby producing the lineage that brings the story into the modern-future context. The heirs referred to by the title are the lineage of Columbus and Samana. The story progresses as Columbus's heirs endeavor to bring his bones home—back to America. Stone Columbus and Felipa Flowers are the primary protagonists who struggle to repatriate Columbus's remains. While obtaining possession of the remains, Felipa Flowers is murdered. Stone Columbus goes on to establish a free and egalitarian clinic of healing through genetic engineering that implements DNA from Columbus's remains. The section of text considered in this analysis is taken at the point in the story where Stone and Felipa enlist the aid of a young “city” shaman, Transom, in their efforts to appropriate Columbus's remains from a curator.

From the onset, *The Heirs of Columbus* ontologically challenges Eurocentrism through the creation of an alternative cultural memory. Within the borderless dimensions of science fiction, Gerald Vizenor's work comprises a richly woven tapestry of overt and subtle elements that serve to articulate and reclaim Anishinaabe identity and agency. I contend that Gerald Vizenor achieves a *linguistic transmotion* through code-switching and lexical marking in the text, a garnering of agency through transgressing hegemonic boundaries of language. Based in Vizenor's construction of survivance and transmotion, linguistic transmotion creates a Native linguistic sovereignty and empowerment.¹ This is in addition to the agency afforded in the implementation of code-

switching as discussed in Mikhail Bakhtin's concepts of heteroglossia and double-voiced discourse. Essential to the elucidation of Vizenor's code-switching of linguistic terminology is an awareness of the context of Vizenor's technique as an Anishinaabe writer, as well as an understanding of Vizenor's use of double-voiced discourse.

FRAMING THE HOUSE THAT VIZENOR BUILT

The use of humor, lexical subversion, and code-switching as a means of social criticism and social commentary is common within many Native American nations. Within the framework of scholarship supporting this contention, Kimberly M. Blaeser, who is of mixed German and Anishinaabe heritage, employs the term "Red English" to discuss a form of Native humor that indirectly expresses social criticism in her essay "Writing Voices Speaking: Native Authors and an Oral Aesthetic" (60). Blaeser points to Native "joking" and the subversion of English as a means of Native "struggle against established literary and linguistic structures, practices, and images" (57), which aligns with the analysis given here of Vizenor's use of "joking," lexical subversion, and code-switching. Further undergirding much of the theoretical framework surrounding Native "joking" as a form of agency, linguistic anthropologist Keith Basso's works establish the use of code-switching as a tool of textual analysis in Native American literature (Blaeser, "Writing" 60–61). In *Portraits of "the Whiteman": Linguistic Play and Cultural Symbols among the Western Apache*, Basso's consideration of context-specific use of Native "joking" and his assertion of Native code-switching and lexical subversion as intentional, meaningful forms of expression afford critics insight into a method of articulation within Native American culture that might otherwise be mistaken for a linguistic error (9–17). These works provide a basis for the analysis of the implications of code-switching and lexical subversion in *The Heirs of Columbus*. Given Vizenor's position regarding colonial Anglo America from his writings, one may reason the reinvention of the linguistic lexicon into nonlinguistic roles as a "joking" of formal English speakers and, perhaps more specifically, English grammarians such as those who might have instructed Native speakers in forced mission schools.²

Serving as further foundation for the analysis of Vizenor's use of "joking" and lexical subversion, a consideration of Drew Hayden Tay-

lor's edited collection *Me Funny* reveals a rich discussion of indigenous "joking." Kristina Fagan's, Taylor's and Mirjam Hirsch's contributions particularly resonate with the focus of this article. In "Teasing, Tolerating, Teaching," Fagan explains that most scholarly writing that examines indigenous humor focuses on the treatment of white society as a response to current and past experiences of colonization, and this focus omits other significant aspects of Aboriginal humor, such as humor depicting the complexities and inner dynamics of indigenous communities (24). The analysis of "joking" in *The Heirs of Columbus* does, indeed, fall under the scope of Fagan's assertion. The Anishinaabe humor considered in this analysis solely considers the subversion of the English language; however, in order to create a cohesive and coherent argument in the construction of the term "linguistic transmotion," it is necessary to focus on the use of "joking" as a form of engagement with white society. Taylor's own contribution to the collection, "Whacking the Indigenous Funny Bone," affords insight into the rationale of Aboriginal humor: "The only way left for Native people to respond to the cruelties of Fourth World existence is humor. It kept us sane. It gave us power. It gave us privacy" (69). Taylor's statement that humor gives Native peoples power and privacy coincides with the contention of this article that Vizenor uses "joking" through lexical subversion and code-switching in *The Heirs of Columbus* as a means of survivance. The subtle nuances associated with lexical subversion and code-switching that might easily be assumed as errors of language afford such agency and privacy to indigenous practitioners of Native "joking." In "Subversive Humour," Hirsch posits that Native authors employ the subversive form of humor to "challenge given power systems, lay open the relativity of all positions, subvert the process of domination, inspire social change, and promote a new consciousness" (104). My arguments regarding Vizenor's use of "joking" and linguistic transmotion put forth in this article clearly resonate with Hirsch's elucidation. The "joking" and linguistic transmotion present in *The Heirs of Columbus* signal Vizenor's subversion of one of the major implements of domination: language.

Implementing a framework of modalities as described in Christopher B. Teuton's "Theorizing American Indian Literature: Applying Oral Concepts to Written Traditions," the approach of this analysis aligns with Teuton's second and third modes. Teuton posits that the critical methodologies applied by academia in the study of Native American

creative works fall into three basic modes, with any particular endeavor spanning one or more of the modes (200–01). These modes, which run the gamut of epistemological shifts between non-Native centered to Native centered, are differentiated ontologically.³

Mode 1. This criticism is bound by the question “Who and what is a native?” (Teuton 201) and is predominantly grounded in ethnographic and anthropological discourse. As evinced by the question and epistemological approach, mode 1 is the most non-Native-centered of the three. Teuton places works such as Arnold Kupa’s *The Turn to the Native: Studies in Criticism and Culture* and Maureen Konkle’s *Writing Indian Nations* within this mode of criticism. Though mode 1 criticism does provide academically significant contributions to Native literary studies, this perspective presents a Western orientation (202).

Mode 2. Cultivated as counternarratives to American cultural portrayals of Native peoples, criticisms that fall within the mode 2 realm ask, “Who can say who and what is Indian but an Indian?” (Teuton 201). According to Teuton, the mode 2 form of criticism came to fruition during the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, coexisting in the time period usually referred to as postmodernism (202). Epitomizing examples of mode 2 critics include Paula Gunn Allen, Ward Churchill, and Gerald Vizenor. This mode is unique in that it includes two distinctly different approaches that strive to attain the same goal, to bridge the gap between Native American critical writing and real-world concerns of Native American communities (204). In one path of this mode, writers and critics such as Vizenor seek to focus on psychic liberation; the other path focuses on real-world assertions and struggles of sovereignty (203). The second path tends to incorporate colonial scholarship in the critique produced.

Mode 3. Unlike modes 1 and 2, which focus on issues of representation from a reactive position, mode 3 is more “speculative and process-oriented,” posing the question, “How are we Native people and nations to become who we want to be?” (Teuton 201). Perhaps more than modes 1 and 2, mode 3 is imbued with the most agency, turning from an emphasis on dynamics of external defi-

inition toward self-determination and self-assertion. Arising in the 1990s, mode 3 focuses on developing Native American discursive frames of criticism through which Native American art, culture, and politics may be explored. Embedded in the construct of tribal sovereignty, mode 3 engages with the building of Native American image and discourse through Native American perspectives (204). Among scholars who implement mode 3 forms of criticism are Craig Womack, Gerald Vizenor, and Robert Warrior.

Analytically, one may consider one, two, or all three modalities within a text; however, being aware of which mode is being used at any given point facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the critic's goals and perspective. Gerald Vizenor's writings essentially fall between mode 2 and mode 3, reclaiming and restructuring Native American identity through a Native American lens. Likewise, with regard to my analysis, my perspective is largely informed by mode 2 and mode 3. As I consider Vizenor's use of lexical subversion and code-switching through the text *The Heirs of Columbus*, I focus on the techniques Vizenor employs to create the psychic liberation as described in mode 2 and the construction of a Native discourse as explained in mode 3.

FACADES OF WORDS: CLOSELY READING A SLEIGHT OF HAND

The brief scene depicting an exchange between Stone and Felipa regarding the shaman Transom exemplifies linguistic transmotion. Felipa describes the shaman she has found in the city and her doubts regarding his authenticity: "Transom would be an intransitive verb at the headwaters, but out here his real means seem to be hidden in hesitations" (*Heirs* 54). The shaman's name is Transom. A transom, by definition, is a strengthening crossbar. Similarly, a shaman's role is to be an intermediary between the world of the present and the spirit realm, in effect, a crossbar of sorts. On the other hand, an intransitive verb has no object, no recipient. Intransitive verbs are unilateral and solely connected to the subject of the sentence, in effect, self-contained. Action does not progress through an intransitive verb. An intransitive verb is, therefore, the antithesis of a shaman and a transom, hence Felipa's skepticism regarding Transom's abilities.

This interpretation, however, only partially represents the implica-

tions of this statement. Felipa goes on to tell Stone that Transom graduated from UC Santa Cruz with a degree in "Gay Studies," to which Stone replies, "Survivors in the New World." Felipa responds, "Redwood metaphors and avuncular discourse," concluding with describing Transom as a "hesitation in graduate school" (*Heirs* 55). Holistically considering the exchange, the following may be gleaned: traditionally, tricksters are gender fluid, and shamans, as intermediaries, frequently are also. Transom, as a shaman, may be gender fluid or gay, yet in order to be a survivor in the New World he must hold himself back, refrain, hesitate from self-expression due to the constrictions of the New World. Felipa specifically states that "at the headwaters he would be an intransitive verb," meaning that in Native territory, Transom would be one with himself and not require an object—or any form of external validation. In essence, at the headwaters, Transom would not depend on others' perceptions or receptions of him; instead, he would be accepted for himself and would not need to justify his identity. This interpretation is underscored by the later gender-fluid environment at Point Assinika. It must also be noted that on two occasions Felipa describes Transom in terms of a hesitation: "His real means seem to be hidden in hesitations" (54), and she states that he was a "hesitation in graduate school" (55). The significance of this lies in the embodiment of Transom's fearful, insecure persona. This insecurity and fear are also indicative of Transom's restraint within the Anglo environment from living his true identity as a shaman and a gay man.

Also exploring the exact same excerpt from *The Heirs of Columbus* through an analysis of Vizenor's use of language manipulation, Rebecca M. Lush posits a somewhat different interpretation of its textual meaning and purpose. Lush's article "Turning Tricks: Sexuality and Trickster Language in Vizenor's *The Heirs of Columbus*" examines the representative construction of Native American identity through Vizenor's use of "trickster discourse" (1). Progressing through an explanation of Felipa's discussion with Stone about Transom as a potential shaman, Lush's argument focuses on the same lexical subversions and use of code-switching that my analysis examines. However, Lush does not explore the meaning of Transom's name in the context of his role as shaman, nor does she discuss the significance of Transom's implied homosexuality. Rather, Lush emphasizes the sexual implications and language manipulation as a means "to present a new vision of tribal life that is compatible with new technologies" and to consider the use of sexuality within the novel

as a means of “tribal survivance without male sexual performance” in order to “disavow the patriarchal past most associated with the historical Columbus” (14). On the other hand, I argue that Vizenor invokes aspects of the Anishinaabe language to lexically subvert the dominance of the English language in the phrase “an intransitive verb at the headwaters.” Vizenor appropriates the agency afforded in signification by reassigning signifier and referent as an assertion of survivance through linguistic transmotion. While Lush and I both focus on this particular excerpt as an example of Vizenor’s subversion of an institution of hegemony, Lush focuses on patriarchy, while I emphasize Vizenor’s engagement with language as a hegemonic instrument.

The character of Felipa Flowers code-switches and lexically marks specific dialogue through appropriation and reapplication of linguistic grammatical terms (lexical subversion) only in specific locations and in specific circumstances. This aligns with Basso’s discussion regarding the implications of this type of code-switching and lexical marking in indigenous texts as being situationally specific, thereby communicating the “phenomena that are ‘present’ in the situation themselves” (*Portraits* 9). The “presence” Basso refers to is an assertion of agency garnered by the manipulation and subversion of one of the most powerful instruments of the dominant culture’s hegemony: language. This construction of “presence” is very much akin to the Bakhtinian construction of “presence” and “absence,” which Vizenor acknowledges as an influence in his theoretical framework (*Narrative* 191–92; *Fugitive* 27).⁴ Vizenor’s use of code-switching and lexical subversion may be considered an assertion of “presence” and as such an act of survivance in this text. I contend, therefore, through the linguistic transmotion exhibited in the lexical subversion and code-switching in the double-voiced discourse of Felipa Flowers, that Vizenor asserts Native “presence” as an act of survivance.

Likewise, the implications of the discussion of Transom as “an intransitive verb” are situationally specific and must be considered as such. The conversation transpires over the phone between Stone and Felipa: Stone is at the headwaters, and Felipa is in a hotel in Manhattan. Felipa performs this specific lexical subversion only when speaking with Stone and only when she is in Manhattan. She does not employ lexical subversion or code-switching in her phone discussion with Stone when she is in London. Through the lens of Basso’s work regarding Native American use of joking as social criticism, the meaning of each instance must

be uniquely considered within its specific context (*Portraits* 9).⁵ Given the location, the contextualized meaning of this particular lexical subversion resides in the fact that Felipa is in Manhattan—the site of one of the most notorious thefts of Native land—speaking with Stone, who is at the reservation headwaters—an authentic indigenous location—about someone who purports to be a shaman but for all outward appearances is nothing more than an urbanized college student struggling to conform to the hegemonically enforced, heteronormative sexual binary. In applying formal grammatical terms to Transom, Felipa is “joking” Transom’s confused identity as a Native American and a shaman. The European/Western audience inculcated in linearity and prescribed expectations might intuitively anticipate a convention or consistency in application; hence, Felipa additionally “jokes” the mainstream audience. This continuous, situationally specific reinvention garners agency for the Native speaker through the subversion of expectations common to standard literary practice and mainstream audiences.

Furthermore, Felipa’s final remark about redwood metaphors and avuncular discourse signifies appropriations of Native culture and facades of kindliness that are prevalent in New World culture. Redwoods are associated with renewal and strength of spirit and body in Native culture. A metaphor is a figure of speech that uses the meaning associated with something to extend the qualities to something else unrelated to it. Metaphors that invoke the redwood may be frequently found in hipster or New Age discourse, trendy, fashionable attempts by colonial culture to call upon the “noble savage” stereotype of indigenous peoples. Likewise, avuncular discourse superficially appears to be kindly while in fact may be salacious or otherwise false.⁶

The third-person narrator performs a similar appropriation and reinvention of linguistic terminology and lexical subversion. Using the word “metaphor” while providing a contextual background of Pocahontas in the scene involving Felipa Flowers and the bookseller at the masque, the narrator quips in reference to Pocahontas’s tribal name, Matoaka: “Powhatan . . . and Winganuske named their daughter Matoaka, a tender metaphor” (*Heirs* 105). Here, the narrator uses the word “metaphor” dubiously, referring to either the name Matoaka or the child. The ambiguity of the referent for the signifier “metaphor” is an effective distraction for the subverted meaning. Using the adjective “tender” to describe the signifier “metaphor” connotes a sense of innocence, fragility, and

nascence, as one might describe a child. If, indeed, the referent “metaphor” is a subverted signification for the child, who is later referred to by the colonizers as Pocahontas, the narrator asserts the child is in fact a metaphor. The child’s experiences at the hands of the colonizers—rape, kidnapping, and cultural annihilation—reflect the treatment of the Native Americans by the colonizers, thereby serving as a metaphor for the experience of the Native people.

In yet another scene illustrating the dynamic between the third-person narrator, Felipa Flowers, and the use of linguistic transmotion, Felipa discusses the sale of the shaman medicine pouches and the bones of Columbus during a business dinner meeting with Doric Michéd. The narrator states: “Doric wiped the masticated sourdough from the rim of the wineglass and continued his lecture” (*Heirs* 49). The narrator’s sudden and abrupt code-switching between high and low registers through the word “masticated” is indicative of a “joking” of the character Doric and, perhaps more significantly, all that Doric represents as a cross-blood who only uses his Native heritage for financial profit, exploits tribal customs and sanctity, and attempts to affect all manner of high Anglo-American culture. Referencing Basso’s aforementioned analysis of code-switching as a form of social criticism (*Portrait* 9, 17), the identity of the speaker performing the code-switching and the relationship between the speaker, the person being joked, and the location of the event are essential elements in understanding the social criticism performed through the code-switching. In this example, Doric extols the virtues and values of his Anglo progenitor, Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, in bringing civilization and culture to the Native. Condescendingly, Doric states: “Schoolcraft explored the tribal soul at the end of the fur trade and discovered that there were more names for bears than numbers”; and then: “Their pagan language and the economic environment of the tribe had fostered moral depravities that resisted the wisest missions” (*Heirs* 49). Between these statements, the narrator injects the description of Doric wiping “masticated food from the rim of his glass” (49). The narrator does not have a direct relationship with the character; however, through the narrator’s voice, Vizenor’s relationship with cross-bloods who exploit and look down on Native culture—as represented by Doric—is articulated. In a description of Doric removing chewed food from the rim of a glass—an extremely uncouth, ill-mannered, low-class breach of dining etiquette, paradoxically while dining in the exclusive,

aristocratic, Anglos-only Conquistador Club—the narrator provides a commentary on the fake and pretentious behavior of Doric within the narrative context, which extends to Anglos in general.⁷ Although the narrator performs the code-switching in this example, Felipa Flowers is yet again an integral element of a scene involving code-switching and lexical subversion as forms of linguistic transmotion and acts of survivance. In fact, the only character other than Felipa Flowers who employs lexical subversion through the use of grammatical terms as referents for persons, places, or things, as well as code-switching between high register and low register, is the narrator. Even when the narrator performs linguistic transmotion, Felipa Flowers is always actively present in the occurrence.

What can be gleaned from the fact that only Felipa Flowers and the narrator use code-switching and lexical subversion by applying linguistic terms in nonlinguistic events? Vizenor employs double-voiced discourse as a function of heteroglossia in conjunction with lexical subversion to transgress the function of colonial textual domination in *The Heirs of Columbus*. Initially defined by the Russian philosopher and semiotician Mikhail Bakhtin in his text *The Dialogic Imagination*, double-voiced discourse “serves two speakers at the same time and expresses simultaneously two different intentions: the direct intention of the character who is speaking and the refracted intention of the author” (324). Therefore, by changing registers and code-switching in the dialogue of his characters, Vizenor articulates the message contained in the words of the character and, at another level, the refracted message of the author through the character’s pronouncement. For example, in the previous discussion of Felipa’s statement, “Transom would be an intransitive verb at the headwaters, but out here his real means seem to be hidden in hesitations” (*Heirs* 54), the analysis focused on an interpretation of the underlying meaning of Felipa’s remark within the context of the narrative. However, as the extended analysis reveals, Felipa’s comments also articulate Vizenor’s perspectives regarding the prescriptive contrivances of the dominant colonial language: English. This analysis of Vizenor’s voice through the double-voiced discourse of the character of Felipa Flowers is supported by Vizenor’s discussion of signification through Jacques Lacan’s admonishment regarding the illusion of reality in signification. As a platform for his discussion of semiotic manipulation and lexical subversion as trickster discourse and the comic holo-

trope, Vizenor quotes Lacan: “[Do not] cling to the illusion that the signifier answers to the function of representing the signified, or better, that the signifier has to answer for its existence in the name of any signification whatever” (“Trickster” 189). Through Felipa’s reassignment of signification regarding Transom, Vizenor gives voice to his assertion of survivance through linguistic transmotion and his identity as an Anishinaabe, as discussed in the next section.

Vizenor’s use of code-switching in the dialogue of Felipa Flowers reveals that the voice of the author resonates through Felipa’s words. The character is described as a moccasin-wearing-trickster-poacher-lawyer-former-cosmopolitan-model. Embodying the heights of colonial culture while simultaneously turning from them to embrace Native traditional culture, Vizenor uses Felipa as a personification of Native transmotion.⁸ I contend that her appropriation of linguistic terms into an Anishinaabe application is linguistic transmotion. This is exemplified in Felipa’s appropriation and reinvention of linguistic terminology to describe a human. Essentially, the idea that the author’s voice is refracted through a character’s dialogue (Felipa Flowers) augments the possibilities for analysis of this novel through the Bakhtinian lens of heteroglossia; however, the code-switching performed by the same character transforms critical insights to the true subversions (linguistic transmotion) occurring within the text.

THE INTRANSITIVE VERB WHO KEPT ON GIVING

Language is an integral element in imperialism, hegemony, and empire building. Though Vizenor addresses concerns involving the Native American experience through various techniques, his application of generative grammar terms, manipulation of language, and ironic use of textuality are perhaps most provocative. As Anishinaabe is an agglutinating language, the appropriation and reinvention of grammar both reflect and hark back to Vizenor’s ancestral language and the differences in cultural fluidity exemplified by language. By challenging established applications of rules and protocols of one of the most established and foundational elements of identity (language), Vizenor forces the reader to redefine and reconsider the construction of reality. This technique also brings attention to the use and abuse of language as a form of power, as well as the fragile, relative, and variable nature of construc-

tion. Supporting this contention, I cite the following quote, in which Vizenor overtly articulates indigenous appropriation and subversion of dominant texts and language as a means of deconstructing colonial hegemony and asserting agency: "Many native authors have actuated a literary giveaway in their stories and a narrative deconstruction of cultural dominance. . . . [They have] created a transmotion of native consciousness, a literature of laughter, tragic wisdom, and survivance" (*Fugitive* 55).

Familiar with Anishinaabemowin (the language of the Anishinaabe) syntax, grammar, and cultural rhetoric, Vizenor uses them to subvert the English language as part of the linguistic transmotion used in *The Heirs of Columbus*. Though born in an urban environment, Vizenor spent periods of time on the White Earth Reservation with his paternal grandmother (Madsen 3–5), eventually becoming a sworn delegate to two constitutional conventions of the White Earth Reservation ("Up Close"), which exemplifies Vizenor's connection to the Anishinaabe culture. An example of evidence supporting Vizenor's awareness and familiarity with Anishinaabemowin syntax, grammar, and cultural rhetoric is found in the following interview excerpt: "My memoir, *Interior Landscapes*, doesn't use the first person singular pronoun, which leaves the story more open. In Anishinaabe dream songs there is some use of first person, but it's elusive; the language doesn't cover it. My stories are told from multiple points of view in multiple scenes" ("Up Close"). In this excerpt, Vizenor's understanding of the uses of parts of speech in both Anishinaabemowin and English is briefly revealed. Therefore, assertions that Vizenor subverts the syntax, grammar, and linguistic terminology of English to mimic Anishinaabemowin are reasonable and supported.

Furthermore, a consideration of the Anishinaabemowin substantiates the interpretation of Vizenor's specific use of double-voiced discourse through code-switching as a form of transmotion. In *Bawaajimo: A Dialect of Dreams in Anishinaabe Language and Literature*, Margaret Noodin explains aspects of Anishinaabe and explores the writings of four Anishinaabe authors—Louise Erdrich, Jim Northrup, Basil Johnston, and Gerald Vizenor—through the lens of the Anishinaabe language. Though Noodin does not perform a highly technical linguistic analysis, as Lawrence W. Gross points out in his review appearing in *Transmotion*, her work sheds new light on otherwise unexplored elements of these authors' works. This critique of Noodin is especially

accurate, as Noodin does not engage in a discursive technical analysis of Vizenor's work or use of code-switching beyond stating that Vizenor invokes Anishinaabe elements; discussing reflections of origin stories in Vizenor's works; and quoting Vizenor from interviews in which he acknowledges his position regarding his works and connections to Anishinaabe. Noodin writes of Gerald Vizenor: "Reading his work in an Anishinaabe context, it is not hard to see he is familiar with the long shadows cast by Anishinaabe language and culture. . . . His stories also lead to taxonomies of knowledge that align with Anishinaabe noun classification and the dominance of verbs in the language" (xix-xx).

Initially, however, Noodin does provide a brief overview of the linguistic elements of the Anishinaabe language and a glimpse into the basic differences between English and Anishinaabe. There are four categories of verbs in Anishinaabe: transitive animate verbs, intransitive inanimate verbs, intransitive animate verbs, and intransitive inanimate verbs (10). Frequently, a noun in English is a verb in Anishinaabe (9-10). Significance and definition are contained in the verb, while the meaning and signification of the noun are extensively more fluid. Noodin explains that this variability is a primary characteristic of the language (12). As an agglutinating language, concepts and sometimes entire sentences that might require three or more words in English only require one word in Anishinaabe (7). Noodin states that this aspect of the language reflects the holistic, unified worldview of the Anishinaabe people. Moreover, the manner of agglutination and word relationships in the Anishinaabe language "complicates meaning in a way that reflects the origin stories" (11). Therefore, in analyzing the refracted meaning of the other voice in Vizenor's double-voiced discursive appropriation and code-switching, it is necessary to be aware of aspects of the Anishinaabe language. Underscoring this analysis, Noodin quotes Vizenor as saying of *The Heirs of Columbus* in his book *Postindian Conversations*, "Language is a game, not a rule" (158). Upon exploration of Noodin's work, the relevance to the interpretation of Vizenor's use of linguistic terms becomes evident.

With regard to the analysis of Vizenor's use of intransitive verb and hesitation as labels for Transom through the character of Felipa (*Heirs* 54), one may infer that Vizenor's code-switching is an invocation of an aspect of Anishinaabe language. While the character Felipa does not overtly state whether Transom would be an animate or inanimate

intransitive verb, the fact that the label is applied to a human being—a living, moving creature—implicitly designates the animate quality of the verb. Furthermore, through Felipa's describing Transom as a hesitation, Vizenor applies the Anishinaabe fluidity of noun use—another example of Vizenor's code-switching. In a "sleight of hand" trickster parody, the English reader is left to wonder at the uses of these terms instead of being overtly cognizant of the reference to and application of Anishinaabe grammar.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I contend that in *The Heirs of Columbus*, Gerald Vizenor employs code-switching and lexical subversion as assertions of Native American agency over one of the most profound tools of colonial hegemony: language. Through Vizenor's constructions of transmotion and survivance, the performance of this form of agency is a linguistic transmotion. Felipa Flowers affords Vizenor articulation through the vehicle of double-voiced discourse, serving as a significant site of linguistic transmotion and survivance.

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NOTES

1. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the term "survivance" derives from two specific uses originating in the 1600s: (1) as a noun referring to one who either is a survivor or has survived; or (2) a legal term referring to the "succession of an estate or office" to a predesignated survivor. Appropriating the term, Vizenor deploys the word "survivance" to indicate a thriving and growth that surpass mere survival despite the forces of manifest manners while invoking aspects of survivorship and ties to ancestral heritage connoted in the term's prior use. In his article "The UNMISSABLE: Transmotion in Native Stories and Literature," Vizenor explains the relationship between survivance and transmotion: "Native transmotion is directly related to the ordinary practices of survivance, a visionary resistance and sense of natural motion over separatism, literary denouement, and cultural victimry. Survivance and transmotion are original critical philosophies and ethical convictions derived from

personal experiences of ceremonies, critical examination of sacred objects in museums, and relative observations of natural motion and totemic associations in native art, stories, and literature.”

2. In addition to the body of work that considers lexical subversion and code-switching, there also exists extensive scholarship that considers the works of Gerald Vizenor as both a writer and a scholar. Among the works considered for this endeavor is Kimberly M. Blaeser’s *Gerald Vizenor: Writing in the Oral Tradition*, in which a discussion of Vizenor’s manipulation of historical contexts and literary practices is provided (95–99). In addition, Blaeser includes an illumination of the philosophical and theoretical influences that affect Vizenor, such as Bakhtin, Derrida, and Bau-drillard (10–11). Other works include Deborah L. Madsen’s *Understanding Gerald Vizenor*; A. Robert Lee’s edited collection *Loosening the Seams*; and Madsen and Lee’s collaborative effort, *Gerald Vizenor: Texts and Contexts*. Though these provide a multifaceted exploration of Vizenor’s works through an array of perspectives, none of them explores the possible relationship between Vizenor’s native language and his selection of lexical subversions nor considers the construct of linguistic transmotion within Vizenor’s works.

3. The term “Indigenous” is inconsistently defined and ambiguous. People groups as diverse as the Aztecs and the tribes of Mali are equally labeled indigenous, yet their unique identities are subsumed by the reductive and nebulous signification of indigeneity. On the one hand, from a nonindigenous perspective, such a grouping facilitates reference to a people group or person belonging to “those who inhabited a country or geographical region at the time when people of different cultures or ethnic origins arrived, with the new arrivals becoming dominant through conquest, occupation, settlement or other means,” as defined by the United Nations. On the other hand, as Jeff Corntassel explains in the article “Who Is Indigenous?,” Native people groups within the Americas are most often signified by dominant culture in terms convenient to the marginalization and oppression of Native peoples (76). Corntassel presents a variety of definitions and signifiers and a discussion of benefits reaped by the signifiers from the manner of definition of the term “Indigenous.” For example, the definition of indigenous used by the World Bank renders an individual indigenous only as long as the person does not relocate to urban areas: “The requirements of this policy do not apply to groups who a) have left their communities of origin and b) moved to urban areas and/or migrated to obtain wage labor” (87). Attributes most common to these definitions are the defining of indigenous in contrast to the dominant group, a slanting of the criteria defining the population so as to reduce those who may be considered indigenous (as illustrated by the example of the World Bank definition listed above), and the quality of disempowerment (i.e., being conquered). Though Corntassel acknowledges that a definition with clearly defined parameters would be unrealistic, as “group identity varies with time and place . . . [and] may obstruct the process of community-building” (76), Corntassel posits that a self-defining process may be more amenable. The salience of this discussion regarding indigeneity is tied to the agency of self-assertion, self-definition, self-identification, and, ostensi-

bly, sovereignty, which serve as points of interrogation and schema for this analysis. Though a non-tribal-affiliation specific, the signification of "Native American" will be employed as the referent for the people group discussed in this analysis.

4. Invoking Bakhtin, Vizenor states: "Natives are the native stories of their own diverse creation; the traces of native origins are intransitive, a tease of presence in the uncertain ventures of semiotic translations, and the transmotion of native sovereignty" (*Fugitive* 27). Vizenor contends that Native peoples are present, but the "Indian" is a simulated identity generated by the Anglo-American culture (*Fugitive* 26–27; *Narrative* 192–93).

5. Basso includes the following passage: "Jokers do not produce their imitations by adhering to some fixed and rigid formula. . . . [Humor/jokes are] more than just symbolic constructions. They are symbolic inventions as well" (*Portraits* 14).

6. The use of avuncular discourse is discussed in Sailaja Krishnamurti's "Uncles of the Nation" as sometimes a suspicious, dubious, and pretentious manner of discourse—the cumulative main thrust of the comment being the hypocrisy and falseness of New World culture.

7. Many scholars have interpreted the character of Doric Michéd as Michael Dorris; however, in the book *Postindian Conversations*, Gerald Vizenor specifically decries this: "Doric Michéd, a character who sues over a shamanic cue and a cultural tease, is not based on the manner of the late Michael Dorris, no matter the critical similarities that some readers might have contrived" (133).

8. Matthew D. Herman's "The Making of Relatives" explains Vizenor's construction of transmotion as a "[p]henomenological spatialization of survivance, an abstraction of real territory into a metaphor for the omnipresence of Native space and the unbounded, unrestricted movement. . . . As a relatively new component of Vizenor's long-standing program to liberate the individual Native consciousness from the prison-house of colonialist ideologies, 'Native Transmotion' clearly carries a revisionary sense of sovereignty as a state of mind and heart" (35).

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“I HAVE SEEN THE FUTURE AND I WON’T GO”

The Comic Vision of Craig Strete’s Science Fiction Stories

KRISTINA BAUDEMANN

I HAVE SEEN THE FUTURE AND I WON’T GO.

(popular folksong from 2074.)

(Crazy Horse, his dying words, 1876.)

—Craig Strete, “A Horse of a Different Technicolor”

Indigenous science fiction (SF) is not a new genre. In the 1970s and early 1980s, Indigenous speculative voices presented an Indigenous-centered take on time travel, apocalypse, and other worlds with publications such as Gerald Vizenor’s “Custer on the Slipstream” (1978) and *Darkness in Saint Louis: Bearheart* (1978), and Craig Kee Strete’s *The Bleeding Man and Other Science Fiction Stories* (1977) and *If All Else Fails . . .* (1980).¹ As Anishinaabe scholar Grace Dillon has pointed out, “Indigenous sf [science fiction] is not so new—just overlooked” (2). With her 2012 anthology *Walking the Clouds*, Dillon has introduced the term *Indigenous futurisms* for Indigenous-centered SF: spanning almost three decades of Indigenous speculative writing, from 1978 (Vizenor) to 2006 (Andrea Hairston’s *Mindscape*), the collection exhibits how Indigenous writers reimagine SF tropes and alter their audience’s perception of “what ‘serious’ Native authors are *supposed* to write” (3). Notably absent from Dillon’s canon, however, is Cherokee writer Craig Strete—arguably the first Indigenous author widely recognized within the science fiction community. Strete’s fiction was three times shortlisted for the Nebula Award and drew the attention and praise of renowned writers such as Jorge Luis Borges and Virginia Hamilton, who provided forewords to Strete’s short story collections.² Strete’s fanzine *Red Planet Earth* (1974) was the first SF magazine dedicated to Indigenous-authored speculative fiction. Since

the early 1980s, however, Strete has been largely forgotten: his collections are out of print, and mentions of his work in academic publications on SF throughout the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s are rare.

Strete's identity is hard to pinpoint, and not only because his fame as a writer ebbed away three decades ago. He has also admitted to using multiple pseudonyms ("Strete, Craig"), and the attempt to verify facts about his personality and works has proven to be difficult at best: his most successful book, *Burn Down the Night* (1982), in which Strete depicts a wild party night with the Doors frontman Jim Morrison, is either autobiographical or entirely made up; his biographical statement in *If All Else Fails . . .* indicates that Strete has been nominated for a Hugo Award, but Strete's name is not on the shortlists for any year; the introduction for Strete's short story collection *Death Chants* (1988) is attributed to Salvador Dalí, but whether this means that the poem was written by the legendary painter for Strete personally or whether "Salvador Dalí" is in this case one of Strete's pseudonyms remains unclear. Strete has been praised as brilliant and denounced as a fraud (Manzarek and Moddemann), which should make scholars cautious regarding the egregious issues of ethnic fraud currently under discussion within the Indigenous North American literature and arts communities. However, when attempting to unearth facts about Strete's Indigenous heritage one comes up equally empty-handed: Strete positioned himself as a Cherokee author during the 1970s but does not seem to be affiliated with one of the Cherokee tribes; his claims to an Indigenous ancestry have, to this day, been neither confirmed nor refuted. Strete's fiction was received as Indigenous-authored SF and was a source of inspiration to Indigenous scholars and writers of the 1980s and 1990s. The enigmatic identity of this author notwithstanding, I believe that his works and their reception require revisiting in light of the present turn within Indigenous literary studies toward Indigenous speculative fictions.

This article collects critical voices on Strete's SF and explores reasons for the academic silence that followed in the track of his acclaim as an aspiring SF author of the 1970s. Approaching Strete's fiction with the help of paradigms for Indigenous literature, most notably, Lawrence Gross's *comic vision*, Vizenor's *trickster discourse* and *survivance*, Dillon's *Indigenous futurism*, and Gross's, Daniel Heath Justice's, and Sidner Larson's *Native apocalypse*, I will explore what an integration of his work into the canon of Indigenous SF could look like. In his short stories "The

Bleeding Man” and “A Horse of a Different Technicolor,” Strete integrates the SF tropes of apocalypse and future worlds into an Indigenous-centered comic worldview that privileges irony and ambiguity over the colonial trope of the Vanishing American. While “Horse” is notable for its trickster discourse (i.e., a postmodern collage of empty signifiers of “Indianness”), “The Bleeding Man” subverts the conventional SF trope of the future end of the world, suggesting that the apocalypse, for Native people, has already happened.

Other stories such as “Time Deer” and “Ten Times Your Fingers and Double Your Toes” allude to colonial horrors, but they nevertheless confirm, rather than subvert, romanticized stereotypes of Native people, making Strete an author whose work should be approached critically: some of his stories repeat colonial tropes and offer readers an uncritical generic representation of indigeneity. In others, Strete subverts the SF tropes of apocalypse and first contact with wit and irony, pointing toward Indigenous subjectivities and a Native presence beyond traditional SF where Indigenous people are mere stylistic devices, complements to the white explorers. In his best stories, Strete’s techniques resemble those of the writers of the “emerging movement” (Dillon 2) of Indigenous futurisms such as William Sanders and Blake Hausman and should not be neglected in the current discourse on genre history and Indigenous-centered rewritings of SF.

One of the first critical voices on Strete’s fiction is *New York Times* reviewer Gerald Jonas’s appraisal of *If All Else Fails* . . . It was published on January 25, 1981, alongside reviews of two books that would become classics of SF: Douglas Adams’s *The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy* and Michel Jeury’s *Chronolysis*. Jonas’s comments on Strete’s short story collection capture the reaction of an experienced SF reviewer who finds himself confronted for the first time with an author whose SF work is explicitly framed as Indigenous-centered and therefore with the realization that the genre is rooted in colonial discourses and habitually uses the Indigenous as a racist trope. Jonas remarks, “In the classic [SF] treatment, aliens land on earth or earthmen land on some inhabited planet; the resulting culture-shock calls into question the assumptions that underlie the very word ‘civilization.’” Jonas alludes to North and South America’s history of colonial horrors by calling this trope “a pattern that is all too bloodily familiar.” Jonas’s review is notable for addressing a variety of difficulties an Indigenous writer of SF might face while

simultaneously demonstrating an incapability to see behind romanticized stereotypes and recognize humor—a characteristic Jonas praised in Adams's *Hitchhiker's Guide* and entirely failed to comprehend in Strete's stories. Instead, Jonas foregrounds the subtle yet riveting tragedy in *If All Else Fails* . . . and mistakes colonial tropes for historical reality: according to Jonas, Strete's stories present haunting literary images of a once-glorious culture that is now doomed to live in the memories of purer and better times.

Interesting about his appraisal is the fact that Jonas, although explicitly reviewing Strete's work as science fiction, fails to acknowledge the element of fiction, considering Strete's stories as thinly veiled expressions of "anger" and "pain" and as authentic, even "prophetic," insights into the Indigenous mind. On the one hand, then, Jonas is aware of a shift on the fact/fiction scale that happens when the SF story is Indigenous-centered: tropes such as the conquest of alien land are historical reality rather than fiction. On the other hand, he does not conclude that the fictional element must be located elsewhere: Strete's stories playfully explore what-if scenarios, for instance, by presenting the reader with an amusement park in outer space where tourists are given the full frontier experience (complete with a machine that resuscitates tourists after they are shot). The futuristic theme park in "Ten Times" is reminiscent of Drew Hayden Taylor's *Ojibway World* (*Berlin Blues*, 2007) or Blake Hausman's *Tsalagi Removal Exodus Point Park* (*Riding the Trail of Tears*, 2011) and mocks white mainstream culture's desire to "play Indian": the Indigenous protagonist, Stonecloud, is the cowboy now, operating the robo-clerk at the check-in counter and providing tourists with cinematic deaths.

Jonas's review offers an early insight into a bias that creators of Indigenous futurisms (and indeed Indigenous literatures in general) still face today: the expectation that Indigenous-centered stories must be stories of tragedy and victimry. This enduring prejudice might have something to do with the reason why, despite his praise for Strete, Jonas did not seem to expect a budding movement of Indigenous SF to follow in Strete's tracks. Rather, his review introduced Strete as "a man identified by his publishers as, 'the only American Indian writing SF'" and expressed Jonas's marvel at the very existence of an Indigenous SF writer—surely the last of his kind. Despite this romanticized (and erroneous) perception, Jonas's review is nevertheless noteworthy for

his remark that “epic histories . . . about the clash between colonizing Europeans and the native inhabitants of North America . . . can only be told today as science fiction.” Noting that the Indigenous perspective is silenced in U.S. historical texts, Jonas implies that Indigenous writers must take to other genres such as SF to make their voices heard. In *Walking the Clouds*, Dillon expresses a similar opinion when she states with reference to Taiaiake Alfred: “What better terrain than the field of sf to ‘engage colonial power in the spirit of a struggle for survival’ . . . ? What better mindscape from which to ‘look at traditions in a critical way, not trying to take them down, but to test them and to make sure they’re still strong?’” (3). In other words, there is an incredible potential to SF—a genre that, at its best, embraces experimentation, other worldviews, and attempts to translate cutting-edge scientific theories into text. Indigenous writers can use this potential to mediate their stories and “renew, recover, and extend First Nations peoples’ voices and traditions” (1–2).

Considering that SF tropes are rooted in colonialism, the turn to SF makes sense: by adapting stories of conquest and first contact, Indigenous writers reappropriate and reimagine oppressive narrative patterns. John Rieder explains in *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction* (2008) that colonial patterns such as the social Darwinian logic of war as a natural law and the necessary survival of the superior culture persist in SF stories about lost races and the discoveries of distant planets. “[E]arly science fiction articulates the structures of power and knowledge provided by colonialism,” Rieder argues, concluding that “some of the racism endemic to colonialist discourses is woven into the texture of science fiction” (97). This racism is at the heart of what Mick Gidley has termed the *vanishment trope*, the staging of North American Indigenous cultures on the brink of extinction for the reader to marvel at and lament. The vanishment trope finds expression in a tragic mode, especially in haunting images exhibiting that “[a]n essential component of the ontology of ‘the Indian’ was, precisely, his tendency to vanish” (Gidley 280):

Sometimes it [i.e., the vanishment trope] referred to the exemplary death of an Indian hero—as, for example, in Cooper or Longfellow. Sometimes it was applied to the loss of Indigenous languages or the acquisition of English, as in [Edward S.] Curtis’s

1911 exchange with Pinchot. Often it indicated the abandonment of traditional lifeways. Sometimes, as in Hartmann or D. H. Lawrence, it evoked a vague sense of dissolution or racial merging. . . . And always there was a whiff of the euphemistic about vanishing; it is a peculiarly intransitive word, as if Indians were here one minute and gone the next almost without good reason, as if they did, as we say, *just* vanish. (282)

The vanishment trope is a basic SF element: throughout the 1920s to 1960s, readers of the cheap and popular pulp science fiction magazines could regularly marvel at the adventures of human scientists in outer space, where they searched for elusive alien cultures and encountered lost human or prehuman races. As Rieder remarks, the pulp genre of lost worlds and lost races inspired by the adventure fiction of H. Rider Haggard (e.g., *King Solomon's Mines*, 1885) was "fundamentally grounded in and expressive of an anonymous, collective, colonialist, and imperialist ideology" (22). Sometimes, as in John Pollard's blatantly racist "Call Him Savage!" (*Amazing Stories*, March 1954), the Vanishing American would be moved to a literal level: in Pollard's story, a time-traveling "Native chief" from an all-Indigenous planet must learn the hard way that Native Americans on Earth were faced with a superior culture and had to die out. James Cameron's *Avatar* (2009) is a twenty-first-century example of the enduring popularity of the vanishment trope. *Avatar* relies on the audience's awareness of (and indifference to) the colonial implications of the vanishment trope in SF: the legend of Pocahontas and John Smith is relocated into outer space in a film that makes no secret of its celebration of colonial ideals, from the discovery and conquest of exotic landscapes to a white messiah's desire to "go Native" and his ensuing protection of a technologically inferior but morally superior Indigenous race. As a metanarrative, the vanishment trope implies a specific form of closure: the story unfurls in an atmosphere of impending doom brought about by the certainty that the portrayed Indigenous population is close to extinction.

It is not surprising that readers similarly considered Strete's fiction as tragic narratives—especially since stories such as "Time Deer" and "Ten Times" seem to ultimately offer no alternative plots to the vanishment trope. In "Time Deer" an old man has a mythic experience watching a deer by the roadside. The memory of this scene makes him backtrack

time to his youth. He thus escapes a harsh reality in which his assimilated son Frank Strong Bull and Frank's "bitch of a white wife, had tried to put him in a rest home for the elderly." The time travel element upsets the gloomy vision of the death of this elderly representative of uncorrupted Indigenous culture. Nevertheless, the imagery of the good deer signaling her empathy with the old man and taking the body of his dead wife into the woods evokes the romanticized stereotype of Indigenous people as spiritual, close to nature, and endangered by white civilization. Like the old man in "Time Deer," the protagonist of "Ten Times" seems to suffer from what SF writer Stephen Graham Jones, in *The Bird Is Gone*, has mockingly described as "Born Too Late Syndrome," or "BTLS" (164): Stonecloud is a stoic Native character who would better fit into the mythical, romanticized past. With his preoccupation with food and solid footwear he seems oddly displaced in the highly technologized future; he is a living anachronism and embodiment of the vanishment trope.

The generically tragic plot of many of Strete's stories raises the question of the value of his work for the current movement of Indigenous futurisms. Why even read him today? Why resurrect a writer who, much like many of his protagonists, seems so utterly displaced: with his romanticized tropes and dystopian futures past (Strete's future worlds are rooted in the 1970s popular SF future imaginary), Strete seems out of place in a budding literary scene steeped in a long history of sovereign, anticolonial Indigenous writing. The answer lies in the distinct shift of perspective that happens in Strete's work, away from the Indigenous as a metaphor and toward a heterogeneous representation of Indigenous themes within an Indigenous universe: while a part of Strete's fiction repeats colonial patterns without reflection, other stories such as "The Bleeding Man" and "A Horse of a Different Technicolor" are worthy of closer scrutiny for their SF satire, subversive humor, and similarity to other Native writers, particularly Vizenor, Sanders, and Hausman. Thomas King, in his 1990 essay "Godzilla vs. Post-Colonial," points toward the potential of Strete's SF to further loosen the generic seams of Native American fiction (190). As King points out, Strete's speculative stories "cross the lines that definitions—no matter how loose—create" (190).

To understand what King means with his comment about the border-crossing element of Strete's SF—and indeed to illustrate my sug-

gested grouping of Strete with Indigenous futurisms—one must first understand that Indigenous futurisms are speculative literatures of survivance. The tragic mode created with the vanishment trope and interlinked concepts such as the trope of passing time and an atmosphere of impending doom is dissolved in Indigenous literatures of survivance, that is, literatures that imagine pasts, presents, and futures within an Indigenous-centered universe. As various scholars have pointed out, humor is a major means by which this can be accomplished. "The Indian's unwilling role in the drama played out along America's receding frontier and upon center stage in the drama of America's mythmaking is inexorably epic and tragic," Louis Owens notes in *Mixedblood Messages*. "Once the Indian is free to imagine his own destiny or plot—and, incredibly, to empower himself through laughter at others as well as himself—he escapes the gothic dialectic that demands nothing less than his doom (and gloom)" (92). The tragic as major colonial mode is replaced with the comic in Indigenous literatures of survivance. Irony thereby becomes the major structuring principle. According to Northrop Frye, irony is "the technique of saying as little and meaning as much as possible" (40), which can result in the audience's laughter (as in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*) or horror (as in Sophocles's *Oedipus Rex*).

Instead of a mere reaction to tragedy, the comic mode in Indigenous literatures and arts therefore *subsumes* tragedy. While often contrasted with the tragic as one of the two possible solutions to conflict in drama,³ the comic mode in stories of Indigenous survivance derives from a different perception of the world that Lawrence W. Gross with reference to Anishinaabeg identity and stories has termed the *comic vision*: rather than suggesting that "Anishinaabe culture was or is laughable" (449), Gross's term refers to underlying principles he considers formative of a resilient worldview that stresses flat hierarchies and ambiguity while renouncing absolutism and fatalism. Gross lists concepts such as "Seeking out the unfamiliar," "Nonseriousness," "Willingness to change one's mind," "A high tolerance for ambiguity," "Antiheroism," "Pacifism," and "Sexual equality," and he especially emphasizes "A second chance" and "Forgiveness" (444, 445) as narrative principles of a comic worldview. Consequently, tragic tropes such as the Vanishing American are revealed as ultimately defunct, since the structuring principle they imply does

not offer enduring explanations. In the comic vision of Indigenous-centered stories, the plots of vanishment and victimry cannot hold.

The comic and the tragic thus rely on different structuring principles; they emplot narrative events differently. Vizenor, for instance, notes that “the tragic is causal” and works toward (narrative) “closure” (*Manifest* 14), whereas the comic subverts dominance and is an often-overlooked structuring principle in North American Indigenous literatures. In fact, the readerly assumption of a comic worldview profoundly alters the reading experience. As Alan Velie has remarked about James Welch’s *Winter in the Blood* (1974), “Once one abandons the idea that all Indian novelists must be angry, it is not surprising to find that *Winter in the Blood* has a strong comic [i.e., humorous] undercurrent” (qtd. in Vizenor, *Manifest* 79). Shifting the focus away from the gloomy atmosphere in Welch’s novel and toward the jokes and humorous scenes does not mitigate the novel’s statement about colonial horrors. Rather, it grants readers a sense of openness and (comic) relief despite tragedy.

In Indigenous futurisms, the comic vision is not limited to a readerly perspective that the text invites, but it becomes the text itself: the “world-building activities” (Gross 437) made necessary by colonialism take a literal form in Indigenous futurisms; Indigenous authors imagine entire worlds from scratch.⁴ In these imagined worlds, everything is possible; here might lie the potential King saw in Strete’s fiction. As Miriam Brown Spiers states, “indigenizing” SF tropes creates a space for alternate, Indigenous-centered plots: in *Riding the Trail of Tears*, for instance, technology “becomes an organic part of the world,” as well as “the opportunity to reshape a painful history,” rather than teaching readers the conventional SF “lesson about putting too much faith in machines or the disastrous consequences of tampering with historical events” (55, 56). Survivance is literalized in Indigenous futurisms: rather than hinting at Indigenous historical perspectives, time-traveling characters literally rewrite the past from an Indigenous perspective, turning it into a future of sorts; like the future, it can be reimaged. Rather than merely hinting at a possible future beyond the text, Indigenous future worlds are represented, and different what-if scenarios are explored.

Consequently, rather than merely reproducing familiar plots, writers of Indigenous SF alter the narrative fabric of contemporary SF itself—an umbrella genre that has come to be understood as having “no essence, no single unifying characteristic, and no point of origin” (Attebery and

Hollinger xv). A genre already characterized by narrative experimentation is further transformed in Indigenous-centered treatments of popular SF themes. As Dillon notes, "Writers of Indigenous futurisms sometimes intentionally experiment with, sometimes intentionally dislodge, sometimes merely accompany, but invariably change the perimeters of sf" (3). One of these changes is a switch from the narrative mode of epic, the telling of epic battles for survival in which only the superior culture can endure, to the comic and, as in Strete's 1970s SF, the postmodern. The latter is characterized by a fragmented vision, an experimental use of font and formatting, as well as a general turn away from hierarchy and monologism and toward plurality, parallelism, and alternatives.

The comic is not a singular feature of Indigenous-centered stories; it is a basic structuring principle of SF in general. Particularly with the publication of Darko Suvin's seminal work on SF and genre, *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction* (1979), SF famously came to be seen as "*the literature of cognitive estrangement*" (4, emphasis original), a form of writing that makes "use of estrangement both as underlying attitude and dominant formal device" (7). According to Suvin, the literature of cognitive estrangement emphasizes "the variable and future-bearing elements from the empirical environment" (7) and juxtaposes structural alternatives, often requiring readers to be versatile and generally open to the idea of alternate plots. Paradoxically, rather than reading Strete's work alongside the subversive and experimental SF of the 1970s by writers such as Thomas Pynchon, Ursula K. Le Guin, Brian Aldiss, and Philip K. Dick, Strete's stories were discussed as unique expressions of historical truth and tragedy. Scholars discerned the theme of passing time, underscored by the vanishment trope, in Strete's stories, but rather than considering the possibility of subversive estrangement, interpretive approaches cycle back to Strete himself, who is considered the living embodiment of the Vanishing American. In their discussions of Strete's texts, scholars thus applied the very rhetoric otherwise known from colonialist discourse and already had paved the way for the long academic silence on *The Bleeding Man* and *If All Else Fails* . . .

In his preface to *If All Else Fails* . . . Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges praises Strete's "collection of small nightmares" by applying a colonialist rhetoric. Borges claims to have "discovered" Strete—even though he grants that he might have been the one "who was discovered"—and calls his stories "prenightmares from the approaching Ice Age of the lost, the

damned, the cruelly assimilated, Los Indios,” whose reality is “both terrifying and beautiful. Perhaps it is even fatal.” He consequently marvels at the originality of Strete’s vision, which must stem from his belonging with cultures long lost: “What is before us?” Borges wonders. “What new thing in a world without new things?” This lament strikes one as heavily ironic when considering that in stories such as “The Bleeding Man” Strete deconstructs the vanishment trope by effecting a switch from the expected tragic mode to the comic and thus replaces vanishment with ambiguity, open-endedness, and nonseriousness. “The Bleeding Man,” Strete’s most highly praised story and a 1975 Nebula Award finalist, parodies the stereotype of the stoic warrior. It is especially this novelette, however, that struck reviewers so strongly as constructing the atmosphere of tragedy. In her introduction to *The Bleeding Man and Other Science Fiction Short Stories*, African American children’s book author Virginia Hamilton assures that “The Bleeding Man” distinguishes itself through “the controlled density of feeling and the touch of prophecy to be found in the best of Amerind literature.” However, rather than rendering a prophecy about the future of humanity, “The Bleeding Man” satirizes the SF trope of apocalypse, making a statement about colonial science and creating an Indigenous timeline, according to which the end of the world for Indigenous people is in the past, rather than the future.

The story is set in the research lab of Dr. Santell, whose only task is the maintenance and exploration of the so-called Bleeding Man. The latter is a young Indigenous man, who is handsome and naked and who has “uncut black hair [that] fell to the small of his back.” He does not seem in any way cognizant. He has been perfectly immobile since he was brought to the research facility so the scientists could investigate the steady and profuse flow of blood from a slit in his chest. So far, however, the nature of the young man’s affliction has remained a riddle. Miss Dow, a government official in the futuristic town of Intercity, is visiting the facility to report on the status of Dr. Santell’s research and on the possibilities of using “the Bleeding One” as a blood donor or a military weapon. She marvels at the fact that the young man can survive losing copious amounts of blood every hour. The initial atmosphere of impending doom quickly transforms into horror when the Bleeding Man suddenly awakes. After wreaking havoc in the facility, he walks out, the wound in his chest healed. The story ends on the ominous remark that “He Who No Longer Bleeds is gone. He will return. To bleed again.”

The only explanation for the Bleeding Man's existence is furnished by his uncle Nahtari, who has made it his habit to visit his nephew every week and who relates to Miss Dow a story laden with doom and destiny. However, it is the ultimate absence of a scientific explanation that prompted Virginia Hamilton to speak of a "meaning just beyond our reach" and an "other-worldli-ness" in Strete's story that represents the Indigenous existence "in desperation, without polite, civilized limits" (Borges). According to this reading, the Bleeding Man is the emblem of the Vanishing American, cultures beyond civilization and almost extinct, so close to the end they can speak dark, hidden truths. There is a sense of the apocalyptic sublime about the image of this mute, noble savage standing naked and tall and in stark contrast to the technologies surrounding him, which accounts for various reviewers' marvel at a certain prophetic quality.

"The Bleeding Man" might indeed be called a speculative tale of apocalypse. However, its meaning, I would argue, transcends the social Darwinian trope of the necessary demise of Indigenous peoples—the glimpse of an ending of time, terrible and unavoidable, yet epic. On the contrary, it is exactly the blatant arrogance of this plot that Strete's story foregrounds: what might be the end of their worlds for the scientists is neither scary nor surprising for Nahtari, since, to borrow Gross's words, "American Indians in general have seen the end of our worlds" (449). According to Gross, the condition of living after the end of the world can be partly remedied by a comic vision: "Along with many other Native American peoples, the Anishinaabe have seen the end of our world, which has created tremendous social stresses. The comic vision of the Anishinaabe is helping us overcome the trauma and helps explain how we are managing to survive" (437). Sidner Larson hence calls Indigenous people "postapocalypse people": "The ways in which American Indian people have suffered, survived, and managed to go on, communicated through storytelling, have tremendous potential to affect the future of all mankind" (18). Like Gross, Larson stresses the importance of a comic vision by stating that "the postapocalypse story of American Indians . . . must evolve in ways that can be helpful rather than disintegrating into pointless talk or simply dwelling in the past" (144).

"The Bleeding Man," then, integrates the trope of apocalypse in a fashion distinctly different from conventional SF: rather than the epic end of the world accompanied by a revelation of the true meaning of

history and civilization, the apocalypse is characterized by pointless violence, which has left Nahtari's world in ruins. Instead of lamenting his fate, Nahtari amuses himself with jokes and faces his nephew's affliction with fearlessness. Like Vizenor's tribal pilgrims in *Bearheart*, Nahtari is capable of survival because he has been living in a postapocalyptic world all along. As Dillon points out, "Apocalyptic tales usually portray a future scenario related to the abuse of advanced technologies. . . . [In contrast,] Native sf often points out that historically the apocalypse has already occurred" (149). Rather than a speculative element, as in classic SF, or the revelation of a divine meaning, as in biblical tales, apocalypse in Indigenous futurisms points toward historical horrors and toward the structures Indigenous people have created to overcome them.

Apocalypse as the catastrophic end of one's world moreover has special significance for Cherokee writers in the aftermath of the 1830s westwards removal and the Trail of Tears. As Cherokee writer Daniel Heath Justice explains: "During the late hot summer and early bitter winter of 1838–39, troops of the U.S. government, assisted by Georgia militia and white squatters, drove nearly sixty thousand Cherokees from their homes into ill-equipped concentration camps, then herded them onto cramped boats or wagons for a brutal, thousand-mile trek to the Darkening Lands of the West, where the spirits of the dead reside. The Cherokees were subjected to physical abuse, disease, malnutrition, and dislocation from the lands they had known as home for ages" (55). The ability for survival that the Cherokees showed on the Trail of Tears and later, during their life in this Land of the Dead, leads Justice to speak of them, similar to Larson and Gross, in terms of the postapocalypse: "But the story of the Trail isn't just one of tragedy, although it's unmistakably that, too. It's also a story about defiance, about enduring the unimaginable and still continuing on, living to rebuild and emerge from the ashes sadder but stronger than ever. We are those people, survivors in this postapocalyptic frontier" (58).

In *Walking the Clouds*, Dillon defines apocalypse as a historical trope in Indigenous futurisms that translates massacres and genocide into the text by using imagery that non-Native readers would understand. In Cherokee writer William Sander's short story "When This World Is All on Fire" (2000), for instance, the future world is devastated by fires as a result of climate change, and Native reservations have become safe harbors where white people try to seek shelter. With its juxtaposition

of a classic SF trope with Native historical reality, "When This World" is strikingly similar to "The Bleeding Man": in both stories, the apocalypse is brought about, in classic SF fashion, by an irresponsible use of Western science and technology; in both stories, however, apocalypse is also reminiscent of a past catastrophe of which the Native characters are acutely aware. Their humor and resilience counterbalance the tragedy currently happening and save the stories from "disintegrating into pointless talk or simply dwelling in the past" (Larson 144).

Sanders's story, however, might capture contemporary readers better than does Strete's highly symbolic "The Bleeding Man." The latter stands firmly in the 1970s pulp SF tradition, and the classic research lab setting, pages-long dialogue, and slightly misogynistic portrayal of a female scientist might strike twenty-first-century readers as obsolete. What might fail to capture students in a classroom, however, should exactly be the appeal of "The Bleeding Man" to current writers and scholars of Indigenous futurisms. Especially if the story is read within the context of pulp magazines and the conventional use of the SF trope of apocalypse during the 1960s and 1970s, the transformative element in "The Bleeding Man" is apparent, as well as the amazement of writers like Hamilton and Borges who noted a shift in Strete's story but failed to pinpoint what it is exactly that is getting shifted. With the help of Sanders's story, then, "The Bleeding Man" can be made sense of as an Indigenous futurism that mediates the theme of Native apocalypse through a comic vision, transforming conventional narrative patterns and denying readers closure and the catharsis that usually come with a postapocalyptic tale. The theme of apocalypse is now the story's anchor in historical reality, whereas the speculative element consists in Strete's and Sanders's reimagination of catastrophe as afflicting the Western world now, and Native people the ones who have seen it coming all along.

The Bleeding One is, moreover, a metafictional metaphor: the image of the young warrior whose ontology is to bleed and, while doing so, be as mysterious as possible is not so much prophetic as it is symbolic and metafictional. He represents the invention of Indigenous people as heroic signifiers in historical and science fiction discourses, muted and stoic, their sole purpose to imbue the story with a sense of tragedy and nostalgia. The research lab, otherwise a stereotypical SF setting, becomes integrated into the discourse on colonial abuse and Native apocalypse that "The Bleeding Man" evokes: scientists struggling to figure out the

deeper meaning behind their object's stoicism echoes colonial ethnography and anthropology. In the interest of science, Indigenous people were analyzed, classified, and monitored, their crania measured, and their skulls collected. In Canadian residential schools, Indigenous children were subjected to medical experimentation. As Andrea Smith states, "A 2001 report by the Truth Commission into Genocide in Canada documents . . . [that] church officials killed children by beating, poisoning, electric shock, starvation, prolonged exposure to sub-zero cold while naked, and medical experimentation, including the removal of organs and radiation exposure."

The Bleeding One embodies the scientific aspect of the vanishment trope, that is, the racist belief that, as members of an inferior race, Indigenous people were expendable. This belief manifested itself in various ways, from the self-righteous conviction of scientists to be working on behalf of the progress of humanity to the collection of Indigenous artifacts in museums to teach visitors a lesson about history. A hint at the validity of this reading is furnished by Miss Dow's name: the Dow Chemical Company has been linked to medical experiments (the so-called Holmesburg program) performed on mostly nonwhite prison inmates in the 1960s to gather data on the effects of dioxin, one of the main constituents of Agent Orange (Hornblum 163–66). Miss Dow's insistence that the Bleeding One's blood be put to good use, then, explicitly evokes the historical instances of medical surveillance and experimentation people of color had to endure. Miss Dow's eventual death at the hands of her scientific test subject imbues the story with a sense of resistance and revenge: unlike the prison inmates and residential schoolchildren, the Bleeding One can fight back, and by doing so he creates an alternate ending to the conventional plot of government surveillance and scientific abuse of Native people.

In "The Bleeding Man" the flow of Indigenous blood not only symbolically hints at the abuse, murder, and genocide inflicted on Indigenous cultures but also evokes blood quantum politics as an outcome of colonial racial profiling and further means to oppress and monitor Indigenous people. In Strete's story the scientists have been collecting and analyzing the young man's blood, and, as Miss Dow explains, injecting prison inmates with it has not had negative effects (here is another hint at the Dow medical experiments, during which inmates were injected with poisonous substances). The scientists now receive a green

light to "use his blood . . . and a lot more besides." The question of whether the Bleeding One is human, however, has been worrying the scientists, and the answer seems to exclusively lie in the anatomy of his blood. As Dr. Santell explains, tests run on the blood have yielded the following results:

There is biological evidence pointing to chromosomal differentiation. He has sixty-four paired chromosomes. I have been unable so far to determine their exact structure. He seems to have all the normal ones. Technically, that makes him a member of our species, I suppose. But it's those extra chromosome pairs that are so unusual. They seem to be entirely new structures unlike anything we are familiar with. It must be something outside our experience. I think I pointed this out in more detail in my report.

The SF trope of the other-than-human alien does not challenge the reader's notion of humanity and civilization in "The Bleeding Man." Rather, in the context of the Native apocalypse, the question of the Bleeding One's humanity appears ridiculous and misguided—it is another instance of the hubris of colonial scientists. More important than the Bleeding One's species is Nahtari's story of the Bleeding One's creation, chest wound, and revenge. This, however, the scientists are not interested in: they foolishly believe that the key to control the "Indian freak" (Jonas) lies in deciphering the deep structures of his blood. They are oblivious of the fact that the Bleeding One is, according to the oral story, by nature impervious to the scientific gaze: immune to poison, he will strike out at anyone who wants to oppress, kill, or use him. The Bleeding One has the means to overcome vanishment ingrained in his existence. The underlying message is clear: the government control of Indigenous people via blood quantum injures not only their abstract identity but also their bodies—a part of the latter, that is, their blood, is under constant surveillance, not entirely their own anymore. However, an obsession with Indigenous and non-Indigenous quanta of blood is merely a distraction, drawing attention away from the very real power, anger, and resilience of Indigenous people, who possess the structures to overcome trauma and survive regardless of their blood identity.

While "The Bleeding Man" addresses different layers of the Native apocalypse, from government surveillance to the poisonous belief—or wish—that Indigenous people have vanished, the story nevertheless

mediates a comic vision. Apart from a lack of closure, the latter is discernible in an element of nonseriousness, from the almost comical scene of the young man drinking his own blood to Nahtari's vulgar jokes, which disrupt the fateful atmosphere of his story:

"I just had a vision. I saw you and Dr. Santell embraced upon the ground and then suddenly crushed by a falling outhouse."
 "I'm not laughing," said Miss Dow. She wasn't laughing.
 "Somebody is," said Nahtari with a straight face.

Nahtari's remark implies that "The Bleeding Man" is a humorous and uplifting, rather than a tragic, story: there is a joke, and someone is laughing at it. Of course, neither of the scientists would understand Nahtari's sense of humor, which leaves not only Miss Dow confused as to the significance of his story. Readers who are used to having important truths imparted by refined speech in an atmosphere of stoic gloom might be similarly baffled. Indigenous SF stories such as "When This World" and "The Bleeding Man" rely on humor and irony to create a position of agency for the writer without repeating colonialist patterns. Laughing at the joke, then, is an Indigenous audience that "The Bleeding Man" evidently addresses: readers who would comprehend that the conventional SF treatment of science and technology is colonial at its core, whereas the Bleeding One represents the West's desire for a mysterious noble savage whose anatomy they can marvel at and exploit for their own benefit.

The Bleeding One as a tragic signifier of the Vanishing American becomes integrated into a comic code that teases the inexplicable presence of Indigenous people, for instance, when Dr. Santell claims that "I can give you ten reasons why he should be dead. Don't ask me why he isn't." Strete challenges readers to acknowledge the presence and endurance of Indigenous people while simultaneously refusing to resort to mimetic descriptions of culture, to scientific explanations, or to historical evidence, all of which readers of a generic 1970s SF story would expect. In this context, the concluding remark that the young man will come "to bleed again" becomes a comic utterance: the rhetoric that Hamilton identified as the "touch of prophecy" in this Indigenous apocalyptic tale becomes the humorous promise that even though devoid of reality, the tragic signifier will nevertheless continue to take its place in

the discourse of Western superiority that paints Indigenous people as eternal victims. Rest assured, dear reader, the Bleeding One will come back and bleed again, just for your entertainment.

It is ironic indeed that Borges, Jonas, and Hamilton would be intrigued by an imagined essence in a story that works to reveal the idea of the vanishing noble savage as fake: rather than a scientific and historical truth, it is a trope within colonialist discourse, an empty signifier filled with whatever meaning the scientists project upon it. The irony, of course, consists in the fact that Borges and other scholars, while realizing that Strete's SF did something unexpected, failed to see that his Indigenous-centered story transforms the very tropes it consists of. Confusing fact and fiction, they saw in Strete the embodiment of the vanishment trope, just as the scientists in "The Bleeding Man" deem the Bleeding One helpless, endangered, and less than human. Borges, Jonas, and Hamilton thus fell victim to the exact same ideology that Strete's story mocks and subverts. Their comments could be described as what Vizenor might call instances of unintended, historical "irony" ("Constitutional" 28, 31): whenever the continued existence of Indigenous people contradicts the verdict about their certain extinction in scientific theory or legal texts, irony and chance interfere with the preconceived narratives. Blinded by their own prejudice, Borges and others did not even consider the possibility of a comic vision. As Borges notes about Strete, "[I]n this writer's wanton lexicon, the idea of chance is absent, as it has been absent from the world of all children and all primitive peoples." Borges, despite being himself a postmodern writer, considered an author he perceived as Indigenous incapable of wit and complexity, and his statements are evidence of the tenacity of colonialist ideology—and of the preconceived notions that still today work to silence writers of Indigenous futurisms.

Next to "The Bleeding Man," "A Horse of a Different Technicolor" (1975) is one of Strete's stories most worthy of attention from current scholars. "Horse" deals with themes similar to "The Bleeding Man," such as the subversion of the vanishment trope, but it does so with a different focus: the story deals with the invention of the *indian* in popular culture.⁵ In its play with hollow *indian* signifiers, "Horse" not only is a distinctly postmodern story but also weds SF with a postmodern mode of Indigenous writing that Vizenor has called *trickster discourse*. Trickster discourse or trickster hermeneutics is Vizenor's term for the

humorous, narrative subversion of colonialist discourse and its terminal creeds, that is, the harmful preconceived notions about Indigenous people that assume the power of self-fulfilling prophecies. “In trickster narratives,” Vizenor points out, “the listeners and readers imagine their liberation; the trickster is a sign and the world is ‘deconstructed’ in a discourse” (“Trickster” 194). Trickster discourse is an important tool for the dissolution of tragic narrative structures, since it renounces absolutism. Rather, in trickster discourse colonialist ideologies are treated as codes that can be deconstructed, that is, understood and taken apart.

Trickster discourse is humorous rather than bitter or hateful, and its humor ranges from vulgar jokes on the content level to the level of familiar signifiers that are twisted around in order to construct a new story. The story, then, participates in the dominant discourse but invariably changes it, opens it up for other perspectives, leading the reader astray rather than toward closure and an unequivocal meaning. As a prime example of trickster discourse, Vizenor’s Indigenous futurist novel *Bearheart* uses familiar tropes, that of the U.S. westward journey, as well as the SF trope of postapocalypse, but then it introduces puns, trickster characters, jokes, vulgar scenes, and unexpected plot turns, indicating that the narrative pattern according to which Native people must vanish can be changed, and closure is never certain.

Similarly, Strete holds a mirror up to a non-Indigenous readership’s preconceived notions in “Horse”: a confusing narrative laced with vulgar jokes, “Horse” acknowledges injustices done to Native people but refuses to let the latter partake in a tragic narrative of vanishment. Instead, the reader is drawn into a fragmented, plotless story where parentheses and capitalized letters break the narrative flow and *indian* characters reveal their own, artificial nature. In “Horse” the Vanishing American is a metafictional trope: the “INDIAN” or “ethnic one” is a flickering image on a television screen, aware of being watched. This *indian* is a hollow signifier in a western or TV commercial, waiting for the screenwriters to use it, swapping genders at will, and “[falling] off horses so beautifully.” One of the characters in “Horse” is Iron Eyes Cody, the actor featured in the U.S. Keep America Beautiful campaign, an environmental campaign that called on the nation to reduce pollution. Cody’s teary-eyed face served as a romanticized signifier for Indigenous cultures, which, in turn, are representative of a pure and frail nature worthy of protection. Keep America Beautiful is mocked in Jones’s 2003 Indigenous futurist

novel *The Bird Is Gone*, in which the slogan is transformed into "keep off the grass" (167) ("what America says to INDIANS" [167]). With a dry, sardonic wit much like Jones's, Strete reveals the campaign's advertising as racist, a reproduction of the vanishment trope, and a means to further control and oppress Native people. As the narrative voice tells the on-screen *indian*: "The film can run, the tape can play without you. YOU CANNOT EXIST WITHOUT IT. We insure your existence." And, a little more explicitly, "Remember, we saved you as a representative of your race. We monitor, we pray, and we teach."

Like a conventional SF story, "Horse" portrays technology as something pleasant, as well as dangerous and potentially overwhelming: in the future world of Strete's story, media technology has taken over people's everyday life, from monitoring their sleep to telling them when to switch channels. Rather than a prediction of the future, this SF story is, in line with Ursula K. Le Guin's definition of SF, "a metaphor" (xviii): it extrapolates on the 1970s media-consumers' hyperreality by imagining a world in which the grasp TV has on society is literalized. The story starts out as the monologue of the *indian* on the screen, asking the viewer to give him, or her, an identity: "I can remember when the years changed; I can remember when I rode a horse of a different technicolor. . . . I rode across your screen. I danced for you. I fell off horses for you. I got shot for you. . . . You remember me, don't you? If you do, tell me who I am. Am I the book? The movie? I can remember when I rode a horse of a different technicolor." Soon the monologue turns into a frantic stream-of-consciousness of slogans from commercials, bits and pieces of news coverage, and phrases from prayers. The narration mimics the quick succession of images of viewers switching channels on their quest for superficial entertainment, addicted to instant gratification. Statements such as "FORGIVE US OUR TRANSMISSIONS" and "MAY ALL YOUR HOLOGRAMS BE HAPPY ONES" indicate that the succession of hollow but colorful images on TV has become the Western world's religion, an abundance of words and pictures without essence or depth. The tragic on-screen warrior voices over this quick-paced change of images. His soliloquy comically blends into the sad monologue of a toothbrush from a toothpaste commercial, vowing to score better viewer ratings in the future. A moment later, it becomes the voice of a high-tech toilet in yet another commercial, preaching to the viewer about health and bowel movements.

The crude humor of Strete's story causes a twist to the gloomy, dystopian trope of a highly technologized hyperreality. Despite the image of Crazy Horse as the *indian* warrior who, in the screenplay of an archetypal western, rapes the young fair girl, the reader is tempted to laugh at the remark that "THE PRODUCER AGREED TO IT ONLY ON THE CONDITION THAT JOHN WAYNE PLAY THE TWELVE-YEAR-OLD GIRL." Just as Crazy Horse's role can be rewritten into basically anything, his dying words emptied of meaning, the blatantly racist trope of the *indian*-as-savage-as-rapist is revealed to be devoid of meaning: it is fake, entirely made up to fill a void in an artificially simple TV world in which the white cowboy is always the good guy and the *indian* warrior the meek sidekick or bad guy. Strete's trickster discourse accounts for the added confusion of role and gender swapping: the male warrior becomes the female rape victim, then turns into John Wayne. Meanwhile, messages from sponsors or producers further bewilder the readers by attributing the convoluted screenplay to a row of different, ridiculous sources, first suggesting that all scenes are taken "FROM THE SUPPRESSED VIDEOPOEMS OF IRON EYES CODY," then that they are "SPONSORED BY THE EXERCISE WHILE YOU SLEEP CITIZENS ACTION COALITION," and finally that they are a "TOILET DISPENSER BROADCAST, WORDS AND LYRICS BY AMERICA'S FOREMOST VIDEOPOET—JAMES DEAN. Remember we touch you deeply."

Strete not only uses the SF tropes of future world and high technology to make a point about his contemporary society. By revealing the scripts of westerns and TV commercials as deeply fraught with colonial ideology, Strete also comments on the future Indigenous people are to have in their narratives. According to the ideology of the Vanishing American, Indigenous people have no future: they are either already extinct or on the verge of extinction, unfit for the highly technologized futures of the Western world. This narrative and its falseness, its blatant racism are subverted in "Horse." Indigenous people are inscribed into the past by Hollywood films and commercials such as the ads for the Keep America Beautiful campaign, portraying them as members of a pretechnological race that is dying because of white civilization's progress (and pollution). This denial of a future is translated into the actual halting of time in "Horse": afraid of the future, the entire U.S. society has decided to live in the romanticized, safe past. From what can be gath-

ered of this future society, the year 2074 was the year of choice because it "was the year of success"—apparently an unusually successful year for the media industry. Hence, in an instance of dystopian government control reminiscent of George Orwell's 1984, it was decided that, rather than move on into the next year, 2075, the media would let society relive 2074 over and over again—the seventy-second time in a row now—from news broadcasts to commercials and westerns that would be repeatedly reshot with only slight variations to the plot and cast. In order to appease potential protests, a voice from the TV keeps telling audiences that "[c]ivilization must not aspire for 2075. It is not on the program," and that "careful editing would make the meaning clear. It was wrong of you to want 2075." As the reader hurtles through the fragmented text, it becomes increasingly clear that the problem here is not the impending extinction of Indigenous cultures but rather a disappearance behind the play of signifiers, of fragments and intertexts. The gloomy image of the lonesome noble savage has nothing to do with reality—it is a signifier in a discourse controlled by the entertainment industry.

That this SF story deals with the denial of an Indigenous future is made evident with a central slogan broadcast once at the beginning of every new year to hammer the message home to TV audiences:

I HAVE SEEN THE FUTURE AND I WON'T GO.

(popular folksong from 2074.)

(Crazy Horse, his dying words, 1876.)

Speaking directly from the past—its veritable embodiment—the on-screen *indian* in the role of Crazy Horse tells TV audiences that it would be better for them to stay in the past with him. Crazy Horse's words reproduce the prejudice of the imagined audience in "Horse" that Indigenous people would prefer living in the past to the present and future. Crazy Horse's dying words might also be understood as defiance: TV audiences believe him to be a visionary character, and while he has seen the future, he would rather not go; the only future to be had for him, according to the TV narrative, is a tragic one in which Indigenous people are shot and abused. Hence his refusal: this is a future he would not choose. According to "Horse," the narrative of vanishment is indeed not without alternatives. With its wit, humor, chaotic scenes, and ambiguity, Strete's speculative story makes clear that the future can

be rewritten. Emerging from Crazy Horse's denial, then, is the idea of an alternate, Indigenous-centered future. Once Indigenous people have glimpsed behind the artificial, oppressive narratives and understood their mechanics, they can shake off the hollow signifier of the on-screen warrior; it is a commercial product not related to their identities. They *can* choose to leave 2074 behind and move on into 2075—or 1975, the year “A Horse of a Different Technicolor” was first published—and consider with Strete's speculative stories that, despite enduring colonial structures, the future is nevertheless wide open for them.

With “Horse” Strete acknowledges colonial horrors and the enduring tragic power of the oppressive trope of the Vanishing American while simultaneously pointing toward alternative narrative patterns. Both “Horse” and “The Bleeding Man” suggest that the narrative denying Indigenous people a future must be altered and that one might begin by revising colonial tropes in SF, the very genre usually tasked with if not predicting, then at least writing *about*, the future. Borges rightfully called Strete “a dangerous writer,” but rather than merely clothing historical horrors in destiny-laden metaphors, the danger of Strete's writing lies in the transformative power of his stories. From the perspective of the late 1970s and early 1980s, when scholars such as Darko Suvin provided unequivocal definitions for science fiction, Strete's Indigenous-centered worlds already dislodged a genre that was only starting to center around a set of techniques and fixed themes for its identity as high art. Strete's stories make use of conventional SF tropes, yet his trickster discourse and comic vision subvert colonialist patterns such as the vanishment trope and the invention of Indigenous people as tragic signifiers. Perceived as works by an Indigenous writer of science fiction, Strete's stories had already in the 1970s begun to transform the genre itself by altering its very fabric.

Although Strete's identity as a Cherokee author remains elusive, and scholars should approach his short stories with the necessary caution and critical appraisal any literary work should be met with, much can be gained from revisiting Strete almost four decades after the publication of *If All Else Fails . . .* and *The Bleeding Man and Other Science Fiction Stories*: steeped in the 1960s and 1970s SF tradition, Strete offers skillful revisions of generic tropes that might constitute an enrichment for a new generation of Indigenous futurists—as narrative blueprints or simply as pleasurable reading for SF aficionados. Readers of Indigenous-

centered literatures in general should feel inclined to turn to Indigenous futurisms, from short stories to graphic novels, films and comic books, for their potential to reimagine not only the past but also the future of Indigenous people. For these readers, even if they are unfamiliar with SF, Strete's stories offer easy access to generic tropes and Indigenous-centered revisions of the latter.

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NOTES

1. According to *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, *If All Else Fails* . . . was originally published in a Dutch translation in 1976, whereas Strete's "first two English-language collections, *The Bleeding Man and Other Science Fiction Stories* (coll 1977) and *If All Else Fails* (coll 1980), share most of the contents of the Dutch book, plus other material" ("Strete, Craig").

2. In 1975 Strete's "The Bleeding Man" was shortlisted for the Nebula Award for Best Novelette, and "Time Deer" was shortlisted in the category Best Short Story. Another listing in 1980 for Best Short Story, for "A Sunday Visit with Great-Grandfather," was withdrawn due to "prior publication" (*Nebula Awards*, nebulas.sfwa.org).

3. In *The Theory and Analysis of Drama*, Manfred Pfister remarks that in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, "Shakespeare invokes the mirroring principle . . . to contrast the two different solutions to this kind of [dramatic] conflict—one is tragic, the other comic" (228).

4. As Isiah Lavender III has pointed out, the "ability to literalize metaphors" (66) is a major characteristic of SF that harbors great potential for writers of Indigenous futurisms and Afrofuturisms, since it "heightens what is often in our societies submerged as invisible yet trenchantly remains, like divisive racial binaries" (66).

5. Vizenor suggests rendering the word *indian* in italics and with a lowercase letter *i* in order to refer to "the representation of the 'Indian' in popular culture and literature" (*Postindian* 156).

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BOOK REVIEWS

Karenne Wood. *Weaving the Boundary*. Sun Tracks. U of Arizona P, 2016. ISBN: 978-0-8165-3257-5. 78 pp.

Robin Riley Fast

Karenne Wood's second collection of poems, *Weaving the Boundary*, builds on some of the dominant themes of her first, *Markings on Earth*, to powerful effect. Land, history, language, loss and questions of recovery, the meanings of intimacy in contexts that redefine the personal and communal—these are the concerns that compel a collection both beautiful and disturbing in which the beautiful and the disturbing are sometimes breathtakingly merged.

The two books' titles suggest their common grounding—"earth" and "boundary"—but "markings" and "weaving," noun and verb, intimate a subtle difference. The "markings on earth" of the earlier book's title poem are material relics, ruins, traces of ancient mounds, "remains / of ancestors" (Wood 27). Likewise, the title poem locates the book historically and emotionally in a particular known and loved place, Wood's Monacan tribe's Virginia homeland. The poems that begin and end the book, as well as most of its explicit geographical and cultural references to indigenous experience, affirm that location. Describing the book in this way, I do not intend to circumscribe its range or energy, only to suggest one way in which *Weaving the Boundary* represents a somewhat different kind of project, albeit with important shared concerns.

The new book's epigraph, from a poem by Czesław Miłosz, identifies the book's "boundary" in terms that exceed any notion of physically mark-able signifiers:

*For from what could we weave the boundary
Between within and without, light and abyss,
If not from ourselves.*

These lines imagine a boundary as dynamic, movable, perhaps meditative; made of “ourselves,” it is both intimate and collective, and it is offered as a question. The boundary may be “between,” but it may shift, as the terms it presumably separates may shift. Thus the epigraph and title together suggest that this book will be less about memorializing or otherwise responding to “markings” and more engaged in a process of creating changeable possibilities. Again, rather than wishing to imply that *Weaving the Boundary* departs from the vitality of concrete, material experience, as it surely does not, I mean to suggest something of how its engagements with such experience might differ, subtly, from those of the earlier book.

This book doesn’t have a title poem, but it does have two poems named to echo its title. Each evokes a dynamic that plays on the possibilities suggested by the epigraph. “Boundary,” dedicated to Wood’s deceased father, turns on the interplay of geographic boundaries (“I map America / as homage to you”) and emotional ones: it speaks of “homage,” self-forgiveness (and implicitly, then, guilt as well as grief), and “Love: absolute and impotent” (14). “The Weaving,” one of the book’s most freely, fluidly formed pieces, embodies motion and the crossing of sensory and “genre” boundaries as it illustrates its epigraph, “A basket is a song you can see” (51).

Weaving the Boundary has four sections. The first, “To Keep Faith,” establishes the grounds for the book as a whole; its poems move from affirmations of life, continuance, and love to knowledge of loss, injustice, and oppression. Questions of language—its powers, meanings, tensions, constraints—and of recovery—its possibilities and limits—infuse these poems. “Heights,” the second section, turns toward an intensely personal focus, evoking moments in a relationship while at the same time insisting that the personal not be imagined as separate from recollected histories or the cosmos itself:

We, who have been here nearly
forever, have traced the other’s scars—
willing to do *anything* to celebrate this flesh
before saying yes to the dark iris sky,

the night in which enchanted words
swirl like fire sparks above those swollen
roots from which we rose. (29)

“Heights” serves as a bridge to part 3, “Past Silence,” which moves chronologically through indigenous histories, beginning with Powhatan and Haudenosaunee creation stories that establish the grounds of civilizations disrupted by Europeans. These stories recall the end of the book’s first poem, “Homeland”: “Nothing was discovered. / Everything was already loved” (8). Part 3 then moves through representative moments of invasion and colonization, from “Bartolomé de las Casas, 1542,” to “Remembering Ira Hayes,” “born in 1923, . . . who died alone at 32 . . . and whose death the coroner termed an ‘accident’” (45–46). The remaining poems of part 3 address language in the aftermath of such histories: “Apologies” offered, or not, by settler colonial states; the grief-stricken silence of

What Indians won’t say
in any language. We can’t
forgive ourselves, because
we lost the land (50)

and the perhaps restorative song of “The Weaving,” with its multivocal evocation of multifaceted beauty. Finally, what part 3 has moved toward, its title poem, “Past Silence,” with its at least doubly suggestive name, an accusatory dissection of linguistic colonization: “Homeland became wilderness; land virgin (read: *empty*). . . . Words were manipulated. . . . Words like *authentic*. *Fullblood*. No real Indians remained.” The poem’s catalog of distortions and denials substantiates its agenda of resistant reclamation, which moves from “We know this. . . . We had other kinds of stories,” to “The silences began when they ‘discovered’ us, when we became ‘Other,’” to “Revise narratives, insert absent voices. Speak words that resist erasure” (52–53). From the imperatives that conclude “Past Silence,” the book moves into its final section, “The Naming,” a long poetic meditation on diverse indigenous conceptions and practices of language, voice, and naming in which themes of repetition and reciprocity, and thus continuity, recur, even within knowledge of loss. Thus,

Through love you begin,
and something condenses—
through utterance you come into being (58)

And

Are the rocks dead? . . .
 they will turn into dust as we will.
 In the end we begin in the depth of the earth. (66)

Such passages, too, may constitute experimentation with boundaries.

Karenne Wood's poetry enacts foundational commitments shared with other Native writers. When Carter Revard writes, "Nothing can change what has happened, . . . but history is what we make of what happened" (142), he challenges readers, and I think especially other Native writers, to acknowledge what Joy Harjo has called "the psychic wound of the Americas" (139) and to use that knowledge creatively: in Harjo's words, "taking part in the healing of the people" (108); in Caskey Russell's, "to . . . aid in liberating American Indians from destructive epistemologies" (39). *Weaving the Boundary* joins and renews such projects, offering fresh evidence that "Language is . . . a resonant life form itself" (Harjo 99). Such poetry is always necessary.

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Carter Meland. *Stories for a Lost Child*. Michigan State UP, 2017. 164 pp.

Jane Haladay

I wonder if the most compelling literature doesn't always somehow address regenerating from loss; if it doesn't somehow celebrate—quietly or exuberantly—the impulse of humans and other-than-humans to consistently seek the reconstitution of parts of lives and selves that have in some way been deconstituted. Carter Meland's debut novel, *Stories for a Lost Child*, is certainly such a tale, one that tackles the pain of family and historical losses and the process of slowly finding the languages to speak into the long-standing silences created by that pain in order to re-member one family fractured by history and time. Meland addresses these themes with tenderness, grit, and humor through the story of Fiona MacGowan, a reflective teen about to enter high school who has many questions about herself as a young woman of mixed heritage and about the Indian grandfather her mother refuses to talk about.

The novel opens with the arrival of an unexpected package of stories and letters addressed to Fiona from a man she doesn't know named Jimmy. Fiona's goofily endearing friend, Strep, expresses disappointment with the contents of the package, saying, "It's nothing but paper, Fee. . . . And they're all just covered in writing" (3). Strep had hoped the package would contain "something useful" like "[g]ifts, candy, a video game" (3). Through Strep's comments on the novel's first page, Meland teases us about the irony of how valuable this package will end up being to Fiona because of the power of storytelling in print to remake pieces of lost worlds, to patch emotional potholes, and to perhaps answer at least some of Fiona's most lingering questions about who she is.

The stories Fiona receives were written by her mysterious Anishinaabe grandfather, Robinson, the very person Fiona's mother has stubbornly refused to discuss. "If I ask about him," Fiona explains to Strep, "just about all she ever says is, 'Your grandma and I were better off without him'" (5). Fiona's anger and frustration around her mom's dismissal of her questions about Robinson—which is caused by her mother's own anger and anguish over her father's early abandonment of her and Robinson's beloved wife, Rose—have created tensions between Fiona and her mom. Robinson's package of stories to "*the grandchild*," as he has dubbed Fiona, becomes the portal through which Fiona is able to gain

a deeper understanding of who her grandfather was, how he caused Fiona's mother pain, and his reasons for acting as he did. The stories guide her from being "[a]n Anishinaabe child with little sense of what it means to be Anishinaabe" (18) to becoming a young woman fully at ease with the teachings of Misaabe, or Bigfoot, who, as Fiona tells Strep and her other male friends, Dane and Chance, "says all we need to know about the world we can find by kneeling at a creek" (110).

Meland organizes the novel into four "parts": "Inside the Box," "Letters and Stories," "Putting Out the Light," and "Opening a Door." Part 2, "Letters and Stories," is the longest section, and it is here that Fiona reads, and we read with her, the variety of stories and letters her grandfather has written for his granddaughter's benefit and for his own peace of mind. "I'm working on this letter because death hears me skittering in the underbrush," Robinson writes to his granddaughter, "and I don't want it to get me before I've told you what you need to know about these stories" (48). The stories gradually reveal to Fiona the potential of writing to communicate what is sometimes too difficult to say out loud to those who most need the information. To underscore this point, the stories Robinson has written are told in a myriad of voices and from multiple perspectives, some fictional, some biographical, some other-than-human. These include Robinson's own father, Fiona's great-grandfather Dewey; a seventeenth-century priest who turned from his mission to convert Anishinaabe people to Catholicism to instead take up their ways and marry an Anishinaabe woman; two Indian space travelers, Wayne and Amos, members of NASA (Native American Space Adventuring); and Misaabe, the eloquent, hollering Saskwatch, a swamp-breathed eco-prophet intent on reeducating human males away from environmentally destructive strivings toward an ethics of embracing earth's "Warm Gravity," the title of one of Misaabe's stories.

These seemingly disparate "story-things," as Fiona comes to call them (110), accrue meaning over the course of the novel. Meland's technique of creating a story collage in a chorus of voices is extremely effective in forwarding what may be the novel's baseline message: the imperative for human beings to understand, respect, and nurture our interconnections with all life forms. This requires work, of course, and it is something Fiona herself is forced to work on to find forgiveness and emotional reconnection with her mother as she simultaneously connects through writing with a grandfather she never met. "For most people it's easier,

and less risky, to see the differences in things rather than the similarities between them,” Robinson writes to his granddaughter. “It’s easier to think that the city and the woods, Anishinaabe and White, priest and medicine man differ from one another—rather than seeing the ways they join along the river” (50).

Parallel to the theme of interconnection is the theme of transformation, which Meland expresses through stories such as “Blackbird Coffee,” in which a startled blackbird inside a suburban mall takes flight and briefly becomes a splash of hot black liquid. Similarly, in “The Horse Chrysalis,” General Custer transforms into horse, which transforms into glue, which transforms into book binding in the diary of a Native boarding school student named Yellow Bird, whose warm hands soften the glue, which gets on the nib of his pen, which, when he touches it to his tongue, tastes of the sugar and sweet grass once ingested by horse. It is delightfully easy to get lost in Meland’s always smart, often sweet, and consistently spellbinding romps within the space-time continuum he creates through many of Robinson’s stories, all of which are ultimately Fiona’s story. There are many more than the stories I mention here, and those told by Misaabe offering energetic advice to men about how to stop looking beyond the natural world for what they need are a literary tonic. “Turn to rain, men; make for the sky,” Misaabe urges. “Let the leaves of your waterspent bodies tumble down to the homeground, men. Spent leaf men feed the earth!” (62). Drinking in his words, Fiona absorbs the poetic earth language in “the Bigfoot revelations” (117) as it rains down on her and nourishes her becoming.

Part 3 of *Stories for a Lost Child* is where we see how Fiona has internalized Robinson’s stories in a way that has grounded her and allowed her to embrace her heritage even as she continues to have questions about it. The stories have helped her gain clarity and a more mature understanding of the reasons her mother has tried to erase Robinson from Fiona’s life and from her own: “Mom’s afraid concern might grow into something like forgiveness if she actually talks about him and his life,” Fiona realizes. “Mom wished she was different from her dad, but all three of them—Mom, Grandpa, and Fiona—were the same. They were hiding things that should bring them together” (99).

The ways in which Fiona experiences the bringing together of her living relatives and the ancestors who lived before her is through continuing acts of imagination: those she had even before receiving her grand-

father's package of stories, those that are the substance of the stories themselves, and those that are sparked by the stories into the fire of new imaginative acts. Partly for this reason, *Stories for a Lost Child* promises to be an enormously teachable novel: it represents honestly and sensitively the struggles one young woman undergoes in trying to understand herself within the context of family and historical constraints, while it champions the profoundly imaginative capabilities of youth to recraft their own identity narratives through storytelling and the reenvisioning of relationships. Meland accentuates female strength and autonomy through the character of Fiona as she negotiates her development as a young woman and is able to reweave and fortify the fabric of her personal and family history with threads that had previously been missing. *Stories for a Lost Child* at once acknowledges the reality of lost histories and lost people while it affirms the truth of stories and unpredictable, inexplicable transformations that have the power to help some lost things become found.

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Denise Low. *The Turtle's Beating Heart: One Family's Story of Lenape Survival*. U of Nebraska P, 2017. ISBN: 978-0-8032-9493-6. 200 pp.

Geary Hobson

The American Indian Lives Series of the University of Nebraska Press continues its outstanding growth with each new production, with now approximately forty titles in print. While the majority of the productions are standard biographies and autobiographies by and about American Indian (or Native American) people, and the authors or subjects are generally well known or well placed within their tribal milieu, Denise Low's *The Turtle's Beating Heart: One Family's Story of Survival*, the latest of the

press's offerings, is somewhat unusual. While the book is indeed both two biographies (of the author's maternal grandfather and her mother) and an autobiography (the author's), it is also a much-welcomed work of newly synthesized historical knowledge of the Lenape (Delaware) people, of their vast and numerous diasporas from the North Atlantic coast (New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware) to places as widely apart as Ontario, Ohio, Indiana, Wisconsin, Illinois, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Kansas—places where to this day Lenape (Delaware) people live on reservations or in rural and small-town communities. A map of the United States, drawn by the author, illustrates the numerous exoduses of Lenape people to the afore-mentioned states and provinces and thus provides excellent insight into these movements.

Denise Low's examination of three generations of her family's life in Kansas in the first half of the twentieth century is amplified with numerous photographs not only of her grandfather, her mother, and herself but also of numerous other relatives. The Bruners (her grandfather's generation) and the Dotsons (her mother's and Low's generations) are representative of a group of Lenape people who were and still are not legally Native American but who were and are nonetheless Native American and are undeniably so, now well into the twenty-first century. Low's depiction of her family members through her writing and photographs thus documents this group of Lenape people in excellent fashion. As well, the abiding notion of diaspora can also be seen in the depictions of the various moves within Kansas that her grandfather and his family experienced in the first half of the twentieth century and that is also evident in the lives of the author and her mother.

This, then, is a very important aspect of *The Turtle's Beating Heart*—the very well-presented depiction of a people who yet remain in various shades of tribalism, and most often without the sanctity of federal or state recognition. Sadly, too many people today, and most often Native Americans, base their criteria for Indian identity on legal recognition only while ignoring or disregarding other criteria such as blood, the social, and the traditional. Low's book makes a strong statement on behalf of the social and cultural categories, and for this it is to be strongly commended.

And the heart of the turtle—the universal symbol of the Lenape people—beats on within present-day tribal members, still on their various lands—or not—but above all, not vanished, still beating.

GEARY HOBSON (Cherokee–Arkansas Quapaw), recently retired from many years of teaching on the university level, is a novelist (*The Last of the Ofos*), short story writer (*Plain of Jars and Other Stories*), and poet (*Deer Hunting and Other Poems, From Deep Woods, and The Road Where the People Cried*) and the editor of anthologies (*The Remembered Earth* and *The People Who Stayed*). He lives in Norman, Oklahoma.

Mary Jane Logan McCallum. *Indigenous Women, Work, and History: 1940–1980*. U of Manitoba P, 2014. ISBN: 978-0-88755-738-5. 320 pp.

Patrizia Zanella

In *Indigenous Women, Work, and History*, Mary Jane Logan McCallum unveils part of the rich yet largely unacknowledged history of female Indigenous labor in Canada, taking into consideration both racial and gender oppression. She documents how extensive federal control distinguishes the labor conditions of Indigenous women from those of white women and other minorities. McCallum's study is designed as an antidote to the rhetoric of decline, loss, and absence in Indigenous historiography. She is careful to include the perspectives of female Indigenous workers drawing from a variety of sources, including interviews, literature, and oral histories. She also draws attention to the gaps in sources and the fact that this invisibility can signify resistance. The book reveals the perspective of the DIA (Department of Indian Affairs), Indian agents, school principals, and white employers and inserts their discourse in the larger rhetoric of the nation-state and of modernity. McCallum contributes to a historiographical understanding of modernity that includes Indigenous women and demonstrates that "Native women were not 'displaced' by modernity, but rather labored in modern Native ways from the 1940s to the 1970s" (20).

The first chapter reveals how Indigenous girls were pushed into domestic work by "limited access to education, discrimination in the workplace, and state policies that severely limited career options" (21). From the point of view of the DIA, agents, and principals, domestic work served as an extension of the girls' moral and religious education and provided continued supervision. The latter involved policing workers' leisure time and reproductive behavior. Chastity and obedience were expected, as the default terms "Indian girl," "Indian maid," and

“Indian maiden” make plain. Indigenous domestic workers were supposed to continue their education in white households while modeling domestic roles of docility for others and conveniently serving as a cheap labor force. One worker was moved to another family in order to separate her from her partner, which suggests how domestic work could function as another layer of removal. At the same time, domestic work was used by many Indigenous women as a temporary move to a place that would provide access to other job opportunities. They also crossed the border to the United States, where wages were higher.

The second chapter looks at the Indian Placement and Relocation Program. Founded in 1957 as the first organized labor program on a national level, it likewise aimed to permanently relocate Indigenous women to urban centers. Like enfranchisement, the goal of relocation was to ultimately terminate federal services to Indigenous people. Key justifications of the program include self-sufficiency and the transition to an industrial economy and modernity, which hint at the DIA’s belief that “Canadian wealth and Indigenous poverty were distinct and developed independently” (73). In fact, the program was paid for by Indigenous workers who either received no financial assistance or paid it back in full. Although it favored the relocation of men, especially in the North, more women ultimately relocated to cities through the program. Like the domestic placement program, it focused on women’s homemaking skills and jobs with low remuneration that did not require costly training and education. Indigenous women’s labor and bodies were subject to more supervision and less support than the labor and bodies of Indigenous men, and integration into society was code for compliance with society’s racial and patriarchal hierarchy. While hairdressing provided an opportunity for self-expression, hairdressers rarely became shop owners and did so only through the DIA, without whose support banks refused loans. McCallum also addresses the formation of Indigenous centers and discusses beauty contests, which reflected a patriarchal value system in which the female body was still “a site of surveillance” (116), but which, nonetheless, made political statements about Indigenous presence and cultural continuity. However, McCallum finds that pageant winners’ subsequent activism had more political influence than the contests themselves.

The third chapter offers another telling example of the additional gender discrimination Indigenous women were subject to. Although

spearheaded by a woman, the Community Health Representative (CHR) program envisioned a highly gendered division of labor that again paid significantly higher wages to Indigenous men, while Indigenous women were subject to a higher degree of supervision. The role of a CHR was to act as an intermediary between white health professionals and Indigenous communities. This time, married women were preferred to young, single women. The program did not remunerate the prerequisite skills, such as cultural competency and multilingualism. In fact, nurses perceived CHRs as their subordinates, and the program deliberately paid CHRs less so as not to alienate nurses from the community. The understaffed position was based on renewable contracts, contained no possibility for advancement, and entailed unpaid overwork. Despite the exploitative nature of the program, Indigenous women fought to serve in their home communities, and by 1973 more women than men worked as CHRs.

The fourth chapter stands out in terms of the number and quality of first-person accounts by Indigenous nurses because it constitutes a more recent and more extensively studied area of Indigenous history and because the Registered Nurses of Canadian Indian Ancestry (RNCIA), founded in 1957, gave Indigenous nurses an unmediated voice. However, McCallum also helpfully traces the long, unofficial history of Indigenous health care prior to the RNCIA. Once again, the chapter showcases Indigenous women's determination to act as caregivers for their communities and for others despite the discriminatory structural barriers with regard to both race and gender that were set in place during the professionalization of caregiving. They aimed to increase overall Indigenous health and change inferior services through Indigenous presence in and Indigenous control over health services, which ensued in the 1980s. Indigenous nurses also advocated for Indigenous self-determination even as increasing band control, which started in the late 1960s, added another layer of supervision. The history of Indigenous nurses reveals striking examples of community commitment and political engagement during and after their careers. Health care also became a gateway to other professions. While the DIA was increasingly interested in providing access to secondary education, the discourse of meritocracy and the admission process through individual assessment reveal that the selected candidates were considered the exception rather than the rule and that the department was not interested in making

postsecondary education available to the overall Indigenous population. Despite their emphasis on self-sufficiency, the DIA also remained in charge of all money transfers.

While specialized training programs increased in the postwar era, some important continuities emerge in the course of the book. The first is the high degree of supervision Indigenous women's labor was subject to. This is partly linked to the highly paradoxical discourse of Indigenous female modernity. Native women in the cities were considered backwards, naive, and in need of protection at the same time as they were perceived as forward and a credit to their race, modeling financial success and chastity. In short, under the right amount of supervision, they could be molded into ideal Canadian subjects. This was equally true in their home communities, where CHRs were subject to multiple supervision by the DIA, the Medical Services Branch, and the higher-ranking white medical staff. The fact that only the most educated Indigenous women were placed in these lower-paying positions speaks volumes about contemporary prejudices. Essentially, the federal government took care of its fiduciary duty by using Indigenous people as an underpaid or unpaid labor force to provide obligatory yet understaffed and substandard services, which they regarded as welfare rather than the fulfillment of treaty obligations. Nonetheless, Indigenous women persisted, and their labor history testifies to their extraordinary commitment, mobility, and political activism.

The book acknowledges the limitations of relying on federal identification of Indigeneity, which may explain the at times striking absence of Métis women, particularly in the third and fourth chapters, which focus largely on Manitoba and the Plains region. There is an unfortunate quote where Andrea Smith positions herself as an Indigenous scholar, a role that in her case has been contested by the Native community, but overall the US scholars and studies McCallum refers to provide useful contexts and parallels. Together with references to other settler colonial contexts such as Australia and New Zealand, these comparisons function as a challenge to a historiography that still largely revolves around the nation-state and concurrently obscures Indigenous history.

While McCallum's conclusion could have summarized her chapters' findings in more detail, it contains an excellent and thought-provoking extension of her overall analysis to history as an academic discipline and the way assumptions about modernity and the state obscure Indigenous

labor, including as historians. This conclusion is not surprising, as each chapter demonstrates how Indigenous people were actively discouraged and even barred from postsecondary education. McCallum stresses the need to change both history as a discipline and academia overall, whose current practices reflect “a re-articulation of Indian Act policies of segregation and assimilation” (238). In a significant way, *Indigenous Women, Work, and History* contributes to rescuing the field from the irrelevance it has brought upon itself by excluding and segregating Indigenous history.

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