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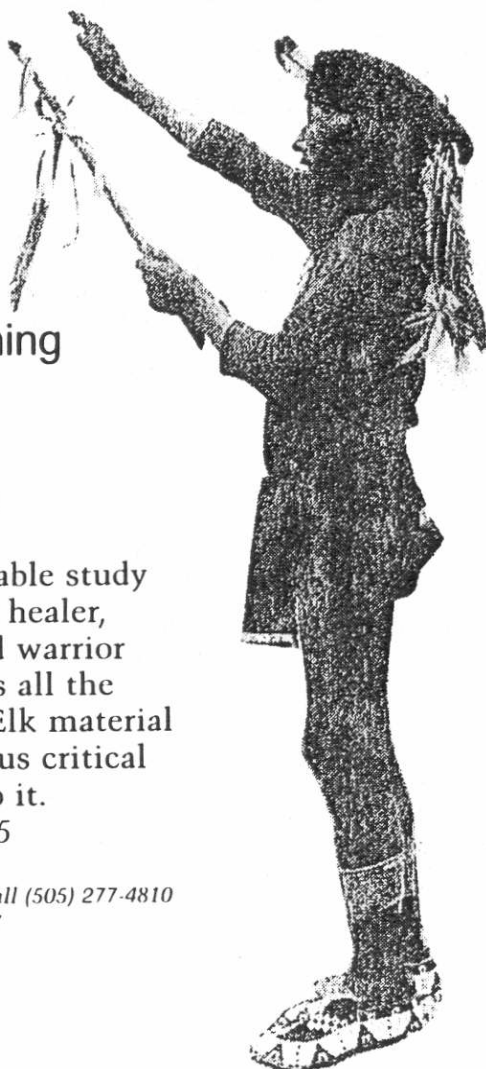
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INTRODUCTION

Lawrence Abbot

Along with the obvious revolution in thinking about what constitutes the canon in American literature, there has been a parallel, if quieter, revolution in pedagogy, about *how* we teach what we teach and *why* we teach what we teach. Not only must previously devalued texts be incorporated into various curricula in schools and colleges, but there must also be acknowledgment that these newly valorized materials (from the academy's perspective, of course; the texts were always valued by the People) require new ways of reading. Past problems with inclusivity and exclusivity may have had more to do with the *reading* of Native literatures than with the literatures themselves.

Pedagogy, properly defined, extends well beyond what is done in class for fifty minutes three times a week for fifteen weeks. Effective pedagogy involves personal valuing of the works taught, openness to the responses of others, an ongoing willingness to question working assumptions about what one is doing, and a desire to create a learning community. Pedagogy, like education (*educare*), rejects foreclosure of students or texts.

This issue of *SAIL* highlights the diverse nature of pedagogy. Joseph Bruchac reminds us of right ways of approaching Native texts. His essay illustrates the need for teachers to ground their teaching in respect and care for what is taught. Lucy Maddox and Gary Griffith discuss important challenges facing education today: the forming of partnerships with schools, especially schools serving reservations. Relationships and exchanges with schools can become a powerful force for change in American education generally. Kenneth Roemer's essay raises valuable questions about authorship, suggesting that explicit teaching about the concept of authorship can be a useful starting point for the study of Native literatures, and can in turn lead to new ways of reading. Bill Brown's analysis of the use of stories in *The Surrounded* reveals that the meaning of stories and the storytelling tradition can help elucidate texts for readers and provide textual coherence to students new to Native works. Roger Dunsmore's deeply felt response to his Navajo students' insights leads to the kind of re-examination of all literature that Ken Roemer theorizes about. Finally, David Sudol makes the all-important connections between rhetoric, literature and personal experience in his outline for an autobiography-based writing course.

Where scholarship is "global," teaching is often "local," teachers working with students and texts in relative isolation. Such books as *Studies in American Indian Literature: Critical Essays and Course Designs and Approaches to Teaching "The Way to Rainy Mountain"* (among others) indicate that teaching methods and approaches can be "globalized." This issue of *SAIL*, we hope, will continue that trend.

FOUR DIRECTIONS: SOME THOUGHTS ON TEACHING NATIVE AMERICAN LITERATURE

Joseph Bruchac

My own first experiences in teaching American Indian literature came after three years in West Africa. I returned to the United States in 1969 and found myself at Skidmore College near my home town of Greenfield Center, New York, an instructor with little chance of tenure who had been given a job because there was a last-minute opening at the school. That was okay with me. My main objective had been to come home to my Abenaki grandfather in whose house I'd been raised. He lived only three miles east from the college, an easy ride on a bicycle through the hills and backroads at the edge of the Kaydeross Range. As I rode from the dawn towards the west I passed fields which had been filled with Mohawk corn, and within my line of sight to the north were the mountains and the old, still hidden burial places of some of my own ancestors. The road passed a stone's throw from samp mortars worn deep into bedrock where corn and acorns had been ground into flour for thousands of years. Just south of that road were streams where my grandfather and I caught trout and said words of thanks to the fish spirits. Somehow, being home made it easier to be a "low man on the academic totem pole"—one of *their* favorite images, no irony intended—teaching freshman composition and little else. It was in 1970 that the first Native American literature course was taught at Skidmore, during their one-month winter term. I wasn't allowed to teach it, though by then I was being allowed to teach a single course in Black Literature. "Topics in American Indian Literature" was taught by a senior faculty member who used a lot of work from anthropologists and a little contemporary Indian writing. He used Kroeber's *The Inland Whale*, some creation stories, threw in a few poems by poets who were Indian. He tried his best and he consulted with me—with apologies.

"You ought to be teaching this, Joseph, but you know how it is."

"Totem pole?" I said.

He nodded, without irony. "You understand."

Along the way he set up a reading. One of those who spoke was Harry W. Paige, whose book, *Songs of the Teton Sioux*, had been his Ph.D. thesis at the State University of New York at Albany for his doctorate in English—the first doctorate in English from SUNY/Albany. Harry's book wasn't bad, and it was a result of a lot of time spent among the Teton Sioux. He gave his talk, followed by Duane McGinnis (not yet Niatum) and myself. Duane had been invited to campus to talk to that special one-time-only Native American literature course and I was, after all, of Indian descent and had published a few things here and there. In the audience that night was William Fenton, whose lifetime of study of the Iroquois was evidenced by many books and articles and the emeritus chair of anthro-

pology at the same SUNY/Albany that gave Paige his degree. In fact, I'm pretty sure Bill Fenton was there for Paige—not Duane and myself. After the readings and talk, the question and answer session got around to such things as vocables in traditional songs—"non-sense words," as Fenton put it—and storytelling traditions. "There are," Fenton said, "no more traditional Iroquois storytellers. I knew the last one and he died some years ago." There was some disagreement that night, and I leave it to your imagination as to which two people were the most vocal in their disagreeing.

I begin at Skidmore and with those details because I feel it sets the scene for my own directions as a writer of Native American literature and a teacher of the literature of Native Americans. Those details also lend themselves well to some points I'd like to make about teaching Native American literature. First, however, another story.

Not long ago, I was invited to do a storytelling program at a college in Vermont. While there, I had dinner with several people who have been teaching Native American literature in college. Our conversation was an illuminating one for me, because it pointed out how widespread the teaching of Native American literature is becoming and just how needed are some directions in HOW and WHAT to teach in such courses. One of the people said that he was having a hard time finding texts. Another said that he was using Frederick Turner's 1973 volume *The Portable Native American Reader* and beginning with Creation myths, but that he had some misgivings about the accuracy of the translations, though he didn't know enough to know for sure how good they were. The third teacher of Native American literature mentioned taking a course in how to teach Native American literature from a certain professor. Someone else at the table knew that professor and mentioned that when she taught Native American literature as a visiting professor at their school the few Native American students on campus had signed up for the course but all dropped it because they found something objectionable about it. No one knew what.

I do a lot of listening in such conversations. Partly because I was raised to listen and partly because when academic conversations start it isn't that easy to break into them. Even when people ask you a direct question they often try to answer it themselves before you can open your mouth. So I waited. These people I was having dinner with were good folks and their interest and their concern were very real. *When you're ready to listen*, I thought. *When it is quiet enough*. And when it was quiet enough, I began to say a few words about how I have approached the teaching of Native American literature. And unless you've lost patience by now with my slow developing style, you're about to read some of those words.

When we speak about Native American literature today it is, in many ways, like speaking of African literature. More accurately, it is how speaking about African literature would be if we were living

in an Africa which had lost 90% of its population in the last 500 years and was being run as a single united continent by European colonials. As is the case with Africa, when we speak of "Native American Literature," of "American Indian Literature" or (as they say in Canada) "Native Literature," we are speaking of many literatures, especially when we refer to that work which comes from what might loosely be called (though there were, in fact, a number of writing and mnemonic recording systems in North America) "Oral Tradition." Just as Zulu oral poetry from southern Africa is very different from the traditions of the griots of Mali in the northwest of Africa, the Haudenosaunee (as the "Iroquois" call themselves) epic of the founding of their Great League of Peace is not at all like the deer songs of the Yaqui.

When you approach the totality of "Native American Literature," you are confronted by an incredibly vast body of work. It comes out of (in just the area now called the continental United States) more than 400 different languages and distinct cultures. It is thousands of years old. Yet, without any special preparation, without any real grounding in the cultures which produced those many literatures, without any familiarity with the languages from which they were translated (seldom by native speakers and all-too-often translated in very slipshod and inappropriate ways) teachers on the university (and even high school) level are expected to teach this "Native American Literature." Not only that, most of those teachers have never visited a Native American community or spoken with a single Native American. It is, to say the least, daunting. To put it another way, as one of my friends and teachers, a Pueblo elder known to the world as "Swift Eagle," said, "It's dumb!"

The first full-fledged Native American literature course I taught was in a maximum security prison. I was, by then, no longer in Skidmore's English Department. My terminal contract had been terminated. Other job opportunities in other parts of America had been possible, but I wasn't about to leave my native soil again. Eventually, I'd been rehired by Skidmore's external degree program to develop and direct a college program at Great Meadow Correctional Facility. I stayed with that job for eight years. In addition to being an administrator, I taught a course now and then. African Literature, Black Literature, and finally, in 1975, Introduction to Native American Literature.

If I'd had my druthers, I would have begun any Native American Literature course not in the classroom, but in the woods. (That would have been *just fine* insofar as the men in my class at Great Meadow went. They understood what I meant, but that got almost as big a laugh from them as the proposed course in Astronomy at the prison which was nixed by the Deputy Superintendent in charge of Security when the professor said that field trips outside at night would be necessary.) It was important, I told that class, to have a sense of the American earth, of the land and the people as one. I

divided the syllabus into four directions and focussed on the literary traditions of one particular Native nation from each corner of the continent. To the east we looked at the People of the Long House, the Haudenosaunee. We began with poems written in English by Maurice Kenny and Peter Blue Cloud before turning to the epic story of the Founding of the Great League, listening to recordings of Mohawk social dance songs as we did so. To the south, we began with poems by Leslie Silko and Simon Ortiz and we read Silko's *Ceremony* and Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* in the context of the healing traditions of Navajo and Pueblo cultures. To the North we looked at James Welch's novel *Winter in the Blood*. To the west we focussed on translations of Lakota and Cheyenne traditional songs while we read Lance Henson's poetry. Again, as with the Iroquois material, we listened to the music of the people, including not just grass dance songs, but also Floyd Westerman singing "Custer Died for Your Sins." We looked at maps of America (and allowing any maps into the prison was a major struggle), and we talked about history, from east to west, from north to south. It was one of the best classes I'd ever taught, and I still have some of the papers written by those men.

Although there have been other courses in Native American literature that I have taught since then—in seminar courses for senior citizens, at Hamilton College and at the State University of New York at Albany—and a great deal of new Native American work and work about Native American literature has come into print, I have not really changed my approach to teaching Native American literature. There are four simple directions that I follow (in addition to those cardinal ones) and I would suggest them as applicable for others who wish to teach Native American literature.

1. Clearly define what you mean by "Native American Literature." Remember the breadth and diversity of what we call "American Indian." Remember that we are referring, in fact, to many nations within this nation; to many literatures, literatures which each come from a national identity and a strong sense of place. You might make a good case that contemporary Native American writing in English is one continuous literary body, but when you look at the influence of the old traditions and then look at those traditions themselves, you recognize that you're seeing just the tip of the iceberg.

To my mind, it is best to teach introductory courses focussing on the work written in English, to think of these courses as only the beginning and to hope for both the knowledgeable instructors and the opportunity for schools to offer more advanced studies—a course in Haudenosaunee Literature 301 or Momaday 405—just as we offer introductory courses in British Literature and then give our advanced students a chance to study the Victorians or Shakespeare.

2. Teach the work in context. The Native American view of life as reflected in literature (whether in English or originally in an earlier native language) is holistic. Remember that, if you are teaching Native American literature well you are not just teaching literature, you are also teaching culture. To understand the work—or to begin to understand it—it must be seen as it was *used*. The word is regarded as alive, not just syllables and symbols. An understanding, for example, of the traditional Navajo Night Chant is impossible without knowing the place of the Night Chant in the practices of healing, without recognizing that it is only one part of an event which involves the participation of dozens or even hundreds of individuals, that it is meant to be sung in a certain place at a certain time and that the making of a sand painting depicting a particular event in Navajo mythology is intimately connected to it. Similarly, it is difficult to teach a modern work such as Silko's *Ceremony* without some awareness of the place and purpose of similar healing and storytelling traditions among the Pueblo people.

3. Pay attention to continuance. Be aware of the strong connections in all Native American writing between what the western world calls "past" and "present." I am not just talking about the awareness of literary tradition—though that works at least in part as an analogy—but of something more than that. Many of the native languages deal with "time" in a very different way than does English. Similarly, the time sense of many contemporary Native American novels can seem strange, circuitous, even circular. Continuance is an important word for me in dealing with Native American writing. I stress this continuance by constantly linking contemporary Native writers to their roots, to their people and their places, their traditions.

4. Be wary of work in translation. My own approach is, for introductory courses at least, to place the strongest emphasis on contemporary work written in English and to use a few *carefully* selected translations from the old traditions in direct relation to those newer writings. A great many stories, songs, ceremonies and the like which can be found in books are flawed in many ways. In some cases, the translations are bowdlerized or inaccurate. Imagine what it would be like if Shakespeare's plays had been written in Lakota and we only knew his work in English through a single translation of *Othello* done by an 18th century puritanical and racist Baptist missionary with a tin ear who transcribed the play from a verbal recounting of it by a slightly senile octogenarian who never liked the theatre that much. From my own knowledge of certain Native American languages and some of the translations that have been foisted off as legitimate, I can assure you that I am not exaggerating the injustices that have been done. In some cases, in fact, rather than translations, the so-called myths and legends that we find in

any number of places are sometimes made up from the whole cloth—oft involving a tragic love between a boy from one tribe and a girl from another and either a lover's leap or a canoe going over whatever high waterfall is handy to the translator's fevered imagination.

Another point about work in translation to keep in mind is that some things which have been recorded or translated have been recorded or translated without the permission of the native people who own that work. Much of Native America's traditional culture is *living* in the strongest sense of that word. Revealing that culture to the uninitiated is sacrilegious. A good teacher of Native American literature needs to know enough to be able to know which works need to be shown special respect. I cannot emphasize that word *respect* strongly enough. In some cases it may even mean NOT discussing something. That is a hard direction for people with the western mindset to follow, that western mindset which says "tell it all, show it all, explain it all." I feel that those with that mindset would be better off avoiding the teaching of Native American literature.

When using Native American literature in translation, it is safest to use work which has been translated by Native scholars themselves. Alfonso Ortiz and J. N. B. Hewitt are two examples. There are also a number of ethnologists whose reputations and whose relations with the people whose work they translated are quite reputable. Dennis Tedlock and Frances Densmore represent some of the best in contemporary and early 20th century work. I also like to have access to both the English translation and the original language. Then, even a non-native speaker can have some sense of the sound and rhythms as they were meant to be. But, again, show respect. Walk slowly. *Listen* to Native people.

Native American literature, as we now have the chance to offer it, is more than just an extra area, more than just a little diversity for the curriculum. It is the literature of a continent (of two continents, in fact, but I'll confine myself to the area north of Mexico for now), and it is a literature continually growing, being created and rediscovered. It is said that when Columbus touched onto the island of Hispaniola he didn't know where he really was. He didn't have, you might say, a good sense of direction. I certainly hope that future teachers of Native American literature will at least avoid that mistake of a European coming into contact with something new. I hope they will see where they are, see which way is south, which way is west, which way is north and which way to look if they want to see the light of dawn.

* * * *

THE HEURISTIC POWERS OF INDIAN LITERATURES: WHAT NATIVE AUTHORSHIP DOES TO MAINSTREAM TEXTS

Kenneth M. Roemer

I

Teachers begin the 1990s with greater access to Indian literatures than ever before. A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff's *American Studies International Bibliography of Indian Literatures* (32-52) and her new MLA book, *American Indian Literatures: An Introduction, Bibliographic Review, and Selected Bibliography*, list videotapes, numerous collections of narratives, songs, ceremonies, and speeches, as well as hundreds of works by individual poets, novelists, playwrights, essayists, autobiographers, and historians. Influential publishing houses like McGraw Hill, St. Martins, and Norton include Native American works in their American literature anthologies. The editors of *The American Experience*, a high school anthology (Prentice Hall 1989), *The Harper American Literature* (Harper 1987), *American Literature: A Prentice Hall Anthology*, 2 (Prentice Hall, 1991; which includes all of *The Way to Rainy Mountain*), and especially *The Heath Anthology of American Literature* (Heath 1990) have made strong efforts to offer Indian oral and written texts to students. But availability doesn't solve an essential (and essentially disturbing) problem for teachers who want to include examples of Indian literatures in American or World literature courses. These instructors must strive to achieve two apparently contradictory goals: the articulation of fundamental differences between Native and mainstream texts; and the delineation of significant ways that Indian and non-Indian texts can speak to one another.

Teachers and scholars who ignore the cultural, historical, aesthetic, linguistic, and, in the cases of oral literatures, the performance contexts of Native texts risk making ludicrous or even sacrilegious mistakes. And their students will unwittingly be participating in a form of racism that permits the entrance of "different" perspectives only if they are reformulated into familiar images and concepts. Indian texts become red apples with conveniently thin veneers of the exotic that, once pierced, reveal familiar white (and often male) themes of Man vs. Nature, Man vs. Society, Alienation, etc., rendered accessible by established New Critical or other commonly used interpretive strategies.

A consistent emphasis in the separateness—the different-ness—of Indian literatures can lead to equally serious academic and ethical problems: forms of literary ghettoization and tokenism, or, to borrow Peter Carafiol's phrase, transformations of tokens into totems (632). In the latter case, teachers present Indian texts as being so different that they become incomparable to mainstream works and inaccessible to criteria routinely applied to non-Indian

literatures. Students may leave such classes perceiving Native American texts as curious objects on the American literary landscape—exotic anomalies to "get through" and then "forget" because they don't "fit." Colleagues who are aware of this process can, furthermore, ridicule the teacher (and by implication the Indian literatures) for not having the courage to let the Native texts "stand next to" familiar classics and "stand up to" established literary standards.¹

Elsewhere, I have suggested several ways to negotiate the frustrating demands of fostering students' awareness of fundamental differences, while still creating opportunities for Indian texts to become part of dynamic intertextual and cross-cultural dialogues.² In this essay, I will focus on an approach that deserves more attention: the provocative, heuristic potential of teaching Indian literatures in surveys of American or World literatures.

Pretend that Native American literatures are not ignored or peripherally situated on the margins of the American literary canon, but instead are placed right at the center of literary surveys and critical debates. What types of questions would the Native texts generate? How could the "Otherness" or "differentness" of Indian literatures sensitize scholars, teachers, and students to important issues that they should be asking about all texts but may not have been, or if they asked they were content with familiar or superficial answers?

For example, who really is the author? Or on more fundamental levels, who "speaks" a text and what are the "origins" of texts? Despite attempts of some New Critics to teach texts in a vacuum and some post-structuralists to transform radically standard concepts of authorship, most English teachers and students still perceive the "validity and value" of literature" in terms of texts and [individual] authors" (Hegeman 271; for a provocative critique of selected post-structuralist concepts of authorship, see Vitanza 15-23). Unfortunately, in lower-level survey courses, these teachers (myself included) typically answer the question of authorship by drawing attention to a brief headnote or by offering a few "biographical facts" in a lecture. These minimal efforts can reinforce simplistic notions of individual acts of creation—images of isolated and inspired authors dashing off clusters of brilliant phrases that become our Classics.

Powerful alternative images of the origins of literature, capable of transforming, replacing, or at least complementing romantic notions of authorship, can be discovered by students introduced to several examples of Indian literature in a survey course. The *variety* of the concepts of textual origins is so great and the nature of those concepts often so *different* that teachers and students are practically forced to consider basic questions about authors and origins that they may have ignored previously. Once this questioning has begun, it should be easy to carry the process of discovery over to discussions of non-Indian texts.

To suggest how this process can work, I will offer several examples that I have found particularly useful for raising questions about authorship in survey courses. Anthology tables of contents and course book adoptions suggest that most teachers who include Indian texts in surveys tend to select works by twentieth-century Native American poets and novelists who publish in English (Wiget, "Identity" 4), selections that reflect their training. I will, therefore, focus on modern, written texts. I will, however, conclude by examining a well-known as-told-to autobiography and a famous ceremony. Even though these forms of literature may be unfamiliar and even threatening to survey teachers and students, they represent the most profound challenges to simplistic notions of authorship.

I hope my brief examples will encourage teachers and scholars to reverse or at least modify an understandable but limiting process: approaching Indian literatures by consistently imposing themes from non-Indian literatures on to the Native texts or by routinely using non-Indian theoretical orientations to interpret Native texts. Both approaches can be useful, but, when practiced exclusively, they can also lead to confusion and to literary colonialism. Using Indian texts as central paradigms and as sources of important questions can, on the other hand, enhance the study of Native American literatures while also transforming our views of non-Indian literatures in stimulating ways.

II

Love Medicine (1984), *The Way to Rainy Mountain* (1969), *Storyteller* (1981)—titles on book covers that ride above the names Erdrich, Momaday, and Silko that seem to answer the authorship question. Yet, as most specialists in contemporary Indian fiction would agree, each of these works and names raises intricate questions about authorship in general and specifically about "Indian" or "Native American" authorship.

In several interviews, but especially in one conducted by Kay Bonetti for American Audio Prose Library in 1986, Louise Erdrich has explained authorship as partnership. Before and during drafting stages she and her husband, educator and author Michael Dorris, discuss potential characters, narrative strategies, and themes. Like method actors and actresses, they even act out characters. In restaurants, for instance, they might try to imagine what and how a Nector Kashpaw or Lulu Nanapush would order, wear, or act. The actual drafting is more of a solitary business. "Michael works in one room and I work in the other"; "[w]e're collaborators, but we're also individual writers" (Bruchac interview 83, 85). The initial drafter gets his or her name on the cover. Thus, Erdrich's name is on *Love Medicine*, *The Beet Queen* (1986), and *Tracks* (1988), and will be on the forthcoming *American Horse*, even though it was Dorris's idea to make a four-book series out of their twentieth-century narrative of the Plains. After the first drafting, the non-drafter goes over every page, paragraph, and word alone and in

consultation with the drafter. Possibly the most concise and most moving expression of their authorship appears in the dedication of *A Yellow Raft in Blue Water* (1987), which Dorris drafted:

FOR LOUISE
Companion through every page
Through every day
Compeer

The Erdrich-Dorris collaboration raises fascinating questions about co-authorships. To what degree do the texts gain or lose "authority" as feminine, masculine, or androgynous texts because of the collaboration? Do early stressful situations mold long-lasting composition processes? In this case, did the trying circumstances under which "The World's Greatest Fisherman" was written (see Bonetti interview) and the quick and striking success of that story (including a \$5,000 prize) establish a psychological/creative pattern—a paradigm fashioned under fire and then set by a glow of recognition? After all, that story played a key role in generating *Love Medicine*, and that book began the four-book series. Or to what degree was their writing relationship influenced by family habits and tribal traditions of consultation?

Despite his stay at Taos, I doubt that D. H. Lawrence's concept of authorship was radically altered by tribal traditions. Nonetheless, in comparative literature courses, the Erdrich-Dorris relationship could be used to sensitize students to the influence of Frieda on D. H.'s writing. In an American literature course, an Erdrich-Dorris book could encourage questions about the Zelda-F. Scott Fitzgerald relationship or about the literary, gender, and cultural implications of the many times, in their correspondence, Twain and Howells noted the roles of their wives as editors and censors. Of course, these investigations need not be limited to husband-and-wife teams. The Erdrich-Dorris instance could stimulate discussions of the Eliot-Pound collaboration on *The Waste Land* (1922) or of many other collaborations that examine the origins and results of two relatives or close friends co-creating a written text.

The case of Momaday's authorship of *The Way to Rainy Mountain* includes and goes beyond relatives, friends, and writing. Momaday's "The Man Made of Words," chapters and articles written by Matthias Schubnell (140-66), Kenneth Lincoln, Hertha D. Wong ("Contemporary"), David H. Brumble (165-80), and me (e.g., "Survey"), and several parts of *Approaches to Teaching Momaday's "The Way to Rainy Mountain"* (e.g., 24-46) have outlined the communal acts of authorship that created the three voices of the book. The tribal and family storytelling voices grew out of childhood memories of hearing many family members, especially his father, tell him Kiowa stories as timeless as when the Kiowa e-merged from a hollow log and as recent as events in his grandparents' lives. These remembered tellings were reinforced during the mid-1960s when Momaday retraced the migration route of his

people, visited his grandmother's grave, and, with the help of his father, collected stories and history from the tribal elders honored in his acknowledgements. In an interview conducted by Charles L. Woodard, Momaday notes that only in a very limited sense can he be considered the author of the stories: "I can take credit for setting down those Kiowa stories in English . . . , but I didn't invent them. The imagination that informs those stories is really not mine, though it exists, I think, in my blood. It's an ancestral imagination" (57). In collaboration with D. E. Carlsen and Bruce S. McCurdy, 33 lyric versions of these stories appeared in the privately printed *The Journey of Tai-me* (1967). (See also Momaday, "Kiowa Legends.")

The historical and personal voices on the recto pages are closer to being Momaday's own creative acts, but they are still communally authored in several senses. The historical voices often draw upon Kiowa elders' memories and written sources; Momaday especially acknowledges the use of James Mooney's *Calendar History* (1898).³ Yvor Winters, Momaday's mentor and friend at Stanford, encouraged him to experiment with multiple-voices or, as he wrote in a letter to Momaday, "controlled associations" (Schubnell 143-44). Although to my knowledge it has never been noted in print, the personal voice is also collaborative. Natachee Scott Momaday, Momaday's mother, took an active role in helping him to remember many of the childhood experiences that he used in *Rainy Mountain* and *The Names* (Momaday, "Response"). Even the visual impact of the book had collaborative origins. As the title page announces, Momaday's father, Al, illustrated the book. Hidden on the back of the last page, we find an equally important announcement: "Designed by Bruce Gentry." This talented University of New Mexico designer selected the three type styles, placed the story voices on the verso and the two commentary voices on the recto pages, and sent the words "RAINY MOUNTAIN THE WAY T/O RAINY MOUNTAIN THE WAY" on their journey across the bottoms of facing pages. (In some paper copies, the "T/O" disappears into the gutter of the book.)

Does all this collaboration mean that we should strip Momaday's name from the cover and replace it with "A Host of Thousands Stretching Back to the Time Dogs Could Talk"? Of course not. If for nothing else, Momaday deserves the title author for the inventive genius it took to conceive of and execute the multi-voiced structure. (We might also allow him a bit of credit for crafting almost a hundred pages of lyric prose with framing poems!) But the "author" of *Rainy Mountain* clearly can not be defined by the isolated, individual writer model. Authorship in *Rainy Mountain* more closely resembles post-structuralist concepts of authors who speak "by virtues of conventions of discourse situations, contexts, interpretive communities" (Vitanza 19) or models of authorship that can be associated with tribal storytelling traditions (Brumble 168-80). Gary Kodaseet, an important contemporary Kiowa leader, recently defined

such a storytelling model as he articulated his response to *Rainy Mountain*. He noted that the structure reminded him of the familiar storytelling sessions of his childhood. Someone might tell an ancient story about "our beginning, [or] the stories of the ten bundles." But people also "told family histories" and personal memories (Roemer, *Approaches* 148-49). (It's interesting to note that one of the early reviews of Erdrich's *Love Medicine* compared the narrative structure of that book to a "family reunion in a crowded kitchen" [Sanders 7].)

Although Laguna and Acoma stories (including stories found in *Ceremony* and the "Estoy-eh-muut" narrative that unifies Silko's film *Arrowboy and the Witches*) are important parts of *Storyteller*, the communal tribal voice is not quite as obvious in Silko's book as it is in Momaday's. Nonetheless, in a survey course, *Storyteller* can become a paradigm for a concept of self defined communally and open to a great variety of different voices. The title of the book helps to define Silko as a storyteller. For her, storytelling is a communal role, not only because sharing a tale requires an audience, but also because Silko conceives of storytelling as a group activity: "Traditionally, everyone, from the youngest child to the oldest person, was expected to listen and to be able to tell a portion, if only a small detail, from a narrative account or story. Thus, the remembering and retelling were a communal process" (qtd. in Krupat, *Voice* 163).

Arnold Krupat (*Voice* 161-70) and Hertha Wong ("Orality") have argued convincingly that this process in *Storyteller* encompasses an exciting diversity of forms and voices. The forms include letters, short fictions expressing lyric, mythic, comic, and other tones (e.g., "Lullaby," "Yellow Woman," "Coyote Holds a Full House in His Hand"), poetry, Laguna responses to her work (110), childhood memories often in poetic form, and wonderful photographs taken primarily by her father but also by grandpa Hank and a friend, Denny Carr. The mingling of voices comes from many family storytellers like Aunt Susie but also from and to Indians (the Hopi storyteller Helen Sekaquaptewa) and non-Indians (James Wright) outside the family. And then there are the implied voices of the photographs. In captions (269-79) Silko gives voice to these images; several of the captions are actually stories in their own right (e.g., nos. 11, 271). The overall result is a sense of textual origins built out of a rich network of identifications with relatives, landscapes, and of course, stories.

Introducing students to authorship in *Rainy Mountain* and *Storyteller* can help them to understand several intricate Native American autobiographies written since *Rainy Mountain* appeared (e.g., Elizabeth Cook-Lynn's *Then Badger Said This*) and many of the recent Alaskan autobiographies and contributions to Brian Swann and Arnold Krupat's *I Tell You Now* (1987) (Brumble 178-80). Examining *Rainy Mountain* and *Storyteller* can also encourage students to

ponder the fine lines between translator and author in works by Ezra Pound, between teller/collector of stories and writer in novels by Faulkner, Sherwood Anderson, and Zora Neal Hurston, between individual and group voices in communities as small as the Black Mountain Poets and as large as Jewish-American writers. Students should also be more sensitive to the visual dimensions of authorship, whether visuals are a crucial part of the marketing strategy, as was the case with Mark Twain's books sold by subscription, or become more personal statements, as in William Blake's illustrated volumes.

Before we move from contemporary works written in English to as-told-to autobiographies and ceremonial literature, one other general authorship issue deserves emphasis, especially in the cases of Leslie Marmon Silko, Louise Erdrich, and many other poets and novelists with mixed cultural heritages. What constitutes an "Indian" or "Native American" author? The mid-1980s controversy over Jamake Highwater recharged this issue (see Adams and Anderson), but I've been haunted by the question ever since someone whispered to me in a conference hall that so-and-so didn't have "a drop of Indian blood" and when a professor blurted out at a 1970s MLA session that Momaday was not an Indian—"After all, he has a Ph.D.!"

In his introduction to an excellent collection of contemporary prose and poetry, *The Remembered Earth* (1979, 1980), Geary Hobson offers a variety of ways to define Indian authors but focuses on a sensible construct: "those of Native American blood and background who affirm their heritage in individual ways" (10). He also stresses the importance of the "tribe's, or [Indian] community's, judgment" (8). In many of his writings but especially in "The Man Made of Words" and *The Names*, Momaday adds the importance of how the writer imagines him or herself. One of his primary examples is his mother, a respected teacher and writer. As a sixteen-year-old, she decided to assert her (one-eighth) Cherokee identity over her Southern belle image and went on to Haskell College, marriage to a Kiowa, and teaching on reservations (*Names* 23-25; Brumble 174). As Erdrich has asserted, when you have a mixed heritage, "[y]ou must make choices" (Bruchac interview 83).

Questions about Indian authorship go beyond blood and background to include matters of audience, language, form and topic. A clear-cut response to audience definition comes from Jack Forbes: "Native American literature must consist in works produced by persons of Native identity and/or culture for primary dissemination to other persons of Native identity and/or culture" (19; see also Krupat, *Voice* 203-08). Despite the "and/or" hedging, this definition would eliminate from consideration as types of Indian literatures most of the works of contemporary Indian writers, including full-bloods like James Welch and Simon Ortiz, and many eighteenth- and nineteenth-century sermons, histories, poems, and stories.

Form and topic also raise questions. Because they employ repeti-

tion with variation to examine Indian identity, are Momaday's "Delight Song of Tsoai-talee" and Joy Harjo's "She Had Some Horses" more Indian than Harjo's free verse poem "Anchorage" or Momaday's poems about Russia? Or are all Momaday's and Harjo's poems informed by Indian perspectives? And if they are, is this perspective so broad that it is similar to perspectives used by many non-Indian authors? Along similar lines of query, how much difference is there between the landscape and small-town poems of Carter Revard and Jim Barnes and the poems that Anglo poets write about the Southwest? How do Erdrich's primarily white town of Argus and Momaday's all-white hero Billy the Kid figure into the Native landscape? And where does that landscape begin and end, considering the high percentage of mixed heritages among Indians and the fact that more than half of the Indian population lives in urban areas and speaks English?

Of course, all these questions, at least indirectly, provoke the basic question of the advantages and disadvantages—for writers and readers—of the concept of an Indian author. Writers often gain attention, authority, respect, and distinction because they are perceived as Indians, and readers often use their knowledge of an author's Indianness to allay knotty questions of authenticity (see Hegeman 269-71). Nevertheless, the label "Indian author" can, as suggested above, severely limit authorial freedom and readers' expectations and interpretations. In a performance context, the latter was dramatized at a big Indian arts fair in Arlington, Texas in 1990. A Kiowa "Indian performer," Thomas Ware, dressed traditionally and played ancient flute songs. A large crowd listened politely. Then he put on a hat and shades, plugged in his guitar, and played the blues (better than he had played the flute). The crowd departed. I doubt that type of audience would be interested in hearing Joy Harjo play the tenor sax (which she does well) if she had been announced as an "Indian performer."

Because discussing Indian authorship can be so frustrating and so sensitive, many teachers may be tempted to avoid the whole issue, and thus miss marvelous opportunities to raise questions about categorizing authors, authorial freedom, and reading conventions. After discussing the controversies over Indian authorship, wouldn't students be more likely to question both typical and currently fashionable characterizations by period, region, literary movement, ethnic background, and gender? How Southern is Faulkner when he uses Joycean techniques or writes about non-Southern locales? How do the labels "local colorist" and "feminist" help to gain literary reputations for Sarah Orne Jewett and Kate Chopin, and how do they freeze those reputations? Is Saul Bellow less of a Jewish writer because he doesn't write in Yiddish? How far would Conrad have gone if he had written only in Polish? Are women authors who focus attention on male protagonists traitors? Reading articles about canon reformation, feminist and post-structuralist theory certainly

can sensitize students into asking such questions. But often a direct encounter with a text by a contemporary Indian writer has as much or more of an immediate impact. One of Robert Coles' Harvard Business School students defines this type of impact (in a discussion of William Carlos Williams) in the following way: "Williams' words have become my images and sounds, part of me. You don't do that with theories. . . . You do it with a story, because in a story—oh, like it says in the Bible, *the word becomes flesh*" (qtd. in Flowers 19).

Indianness doesn't seem to be a problem when discussing as-told-to autobiographies or tribal ceremonies. Who would question Black Elk's Indian identity or the Navajoness of the Night Way? And yet, as compared to the modern fiction and poetry, texts such as *Black Elk Speaks* (1932) and Washington Matthews' translation of the Navajo ceremony, like the Kiowa myths in *Rainy Mountain* and the Laguna and Acoma stories in *Storyteller*, raise even more fundamental questions about authorship.

Raymond DeMallie, Sally McCluskey, Michael Castro, H. David Brumble, Clyde Holler, Arnold Krupat, and other scholars have addressed the complexities of the collaborative, bi-cultural authorship of *Black Elk Speaks*. On the way to becoming printed words in English, Nick Black Elk's spoken words passed from his lips, occasionally joined by the words of friends like Standing Bear, and travelled through his son Ben's ears and mind emerging as spoken English that was quickly transformed into the stenographic notes written by Enid Neihardt. She later transcribed these notes, which her father then reorganized and revised, sometimes barely changing a phrase, other times making paragraph-length deletions and additions. (See Neihardt's Preface xviii-xix. For a sympathetic response to Neihardt's editing, see Castro 83-97. For a negative view, see Krupat, *For Those* 126-34. For one of the most balanced critiques, see Brumble 6, 30, 36, 45.) As in the cases of *Rainy Mountain* and *Storyteller*, *Black Elk Speaks* can be used to examine the possibilities and limitations of collaborative authorship, translation, and the introduction of unfamiliar perspectives and topics (for instance, Cooper's and Longfellow's Indians, Melville's South Sea Islanders, or even Shakespeare's Moor, Othello).

Audience and authorship again become crucial but from different perspectives than we saw in the fiction and poetry. How important is it that Black Elk spoke his words in front of Oglala family and friends and Neihardt and his daughters? In the tradition of a Plains coup-telling audience, his friends clearly acted as "witnesses, to validate what [he] has to say" (Brumble 30). Neihardt and his daughters represented a different type of validation—an immediate proof that outside audiences were interested and would soon hear Black Elk's message. Other important questions relate to Black Elk's self image. For instance, in his performance situation, to what degree did he perceive himself as an individual defining himself or

as a communal voice of his people (see Bataille 29)? To put these questions in a comparative light, what are the differences between the ways word makers invent, narrate, anticipate, and respond when they are speaking before visible faces instead of writing to invisible readers, or differences between communication as a representative of a group instead of as an individual self? At the very least, these questions could stir students to investigate the authorship strategies of people like Jonathan Edwards, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Frederick Douglass, and Martin Luther King, who are recognized as speakers and writers and, especially in the cases of the latter two, known as representatives of their people who reached diversified audiences.

If Black Elk were asked to define the author of *Black Elk Speaks*, he might very well respond, "The Great Vision," a gift that was not his invention but was "given to a man too weak to use it" (2). That childhood vision gave meaning to his life, became his essential means of evaluating himself and his people, and created the exigency that compelled him to tell his life story to a non-Lakota writer of English. As logical as this answer seems from a Lakota viewpoint, it is bound to provoke liberating and troubling questions about authorship for literature students. How can an old man remember the details of a nine-year-old boy's vision? How much did he embellish the vision in anticipation of his audience's expectations? Is the dependency on a white writer to communicate the vision beyond Sioux country as a work of literature a final admission of the decline of Plains Indian cultures or a final triumph of those cultures and of the powers of storytelling and the imagination? In comparative contexts, to what degree can questions generated by *Black Elk Speaks* be applied to Isaiah's prophecies, John's Revelations, or Walt Whitman's visionary flights? And what might the comparisons imply about how different cultures define authorial roles on a spectrum of ideal word makers/senders ranging from the transformer of chaos, inventor of awesome words, and liberator of new perspectives to the ideal as the sensitive receiver, vehicle, conservator, and performer of word gifts? In Whitman's utopia the former would reign; in Black Elk's and the traditional Navajo's, the latter.

The Navajo Night Way (or Night Chant) remains one of the best-known Native American ceremonies. (Translations, excerpts, videotapes, films, and James C. Faris' recent book make it more accessible than many other ceremonies.⁴) Lasting nine days, its primary, though certainly not its only, function is to attract holiness that will restore a serious physical and/or psychological imbalance that is threatening one or more patients and potentially many other people and even the physical environment.

Many of the questions about collaborative authorship raised by *Love Medicine*, *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, *Storyteller*, and *Black Elk Speaks* confront readers of Washington Matthews' monumental translation/description, *The Night Chant* (1902). Andrew Natona-

bah's attribution of the origins of Night Way and other Navajo ceremonial songs to the Holy Beings can be compared to Black Elk's emphasis on his vision (see *By This Song I Walk*). And more than any other form of Native American literature, the ceremonial texts reveal the full extent of collaborative and communal concepts of authorship. There is divine-human collaboration. The success of the Night Way depends upon a sacred contract. If the ceremony is performed correctly, the Holy Beings must send the holiness that will restore balance, harmony, and beauty. And human collaboration. The success of the Night Way began with ancient word gifts, generations of teacher-apprentice relationships, and complex interdependencies among the diagnostician, chief singer, his assistants (including dancers), the patient(s), the patient(s)' family and friends, and the audience.

Certainly, an introduction to the origins and continuity of the Night Way can encourage students to ask questions about other great liturgical literatures. Furthermore, in any type of literature course, an acquaintance with the Night Way can undermine simplistic notions of the individual author's fixed text. This is especially true if the instructor introduces the ceremony early in the semester and continues throughout the semester to raise questions about the importance of community sources of literature, of apprenticeships, of collaborations, and of the co-creative forces that make the success of a literary text dependent upon much more than the performance of an individual author.

By emphasizing concepts of Native American authorship that can provoke questions about the authorship of non-Indian texts, I'm *not* suggesting that Indian literatures should be taught primarily as warm-ups for discussions of mainstream texts. As I indicated in my introduction, I'm asking teachers and scholars to consider placing Indian literatures at the center of the canon and of theoretical debates. Nor am I suggesting that the only way to make students in survey courses reconsider simplistic notions of authorship is to introduce Indian literatures. Reading post-structuralist criticism, comparing selected mainstream texts, and examining composition, publication, and reception processes can also achieve this goal. I do hope, however, that the few examples I've offered at least hint at the rich diversity of Indian concepts of authorship and the degree to which these concepts often differ from survey students' notions about authors. And I do maintain that this variety and these differences offer teachers numerous opportunities to jar students toward an awareness of questions that they should be asking of every assigned text. In my utopian American literature class, the students would leave appreciating the inclusions of Native American literatures because they would have encountered new forms of literary excellence, new perspectives on their country and their identities, and new questions about the authorship that they could carry into all their future reading experiences.⁵

NOTES

¹For a recent discussion of this dilemma, see Hegeman, especially 268-69, 280.

²See "Reconstructing" 437-38; "The Study" B1-B2; and "Survey Courses" 619-24.

³For other possible historical and anthropological sources, see Roemer, *Approaches* 9-11, Appendix A, 154-55. As indicated in the Appendix A headnote, the passages identified are not all sources. I listed many, especially those published after *Rainy Mountain*, primarily to encourage comparative studies.

⁴See Works Cited: Bierhorst 279-351, *By This Song I Walk*, Faris, Matthews, and *Navajo*.

⁵I delivered earlier versions of parts of this essay during Jan Swearingen's Summer 1989 graduate seminar at the University of Texas at Arlington, at the Conference on the Core and the Canon, Denton, Texas, 28 Oct. 1989, and at the Symposium on Native Writers in American Literature, Orlando, Florida, 30 Mar. 1990. I would like to thank all the respondents, especially Scott Momaday, for their questions and comments. I would also like to thank Professors Larry Abbott and Helen Jaskoski for their revision suggestions.

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TRUSTING STORY AND READING *THE SURROUNDED*

Bill Brown

As a non-Indian teacher of introductory courses in Native American literature, I find trust an important issue. I must encourage myself and my students—also non-Indian—not only to acknowledge the oral heritage within contemporary Indian fiction, but also to trust it. In order to appreciate these modern literary stories, we must trust story itself. We must, to use a phrase given to Larry Evers by a Hopi friend of his, "go along with the story" (72). Historical and cultural criticism can help one learn more about specific oral traditions, such as the Keres or Kiowa; "going along with the story," however, also means trusting it to give you its own guidelines for reading. Clearly in Native American fiction, those prescriptions demand legitimacy of oral stories. One must be ready to both read and listen.

McNickle's *The Surrounded* deserves continued critical attention and recommends itself to the teacher for many reasons. This essay will address just one, namely that the novel presents an attitude toward making stories which enables one to read not only this fictional work more fully but also many others which have followed since its publication fifty-five years ago. Studying some of the aspects of this attitude can provide students with tools for encountering other Native works, and non-Native works for that matter.

D'Arcy McNickle has embedded stories into his novel. Early on McNickle draws special attention to what I will call inset stories. There are four, and he groups them close together: "Big Paul," "The thing that would make life easy," "Coyote and Flint" and "Welcoming the Blackrobes"—in that order. The last three are told at the same tribal feast. "Big Paul," which we will examine later, occurs separately in the preceding chapter. Briefly before the insets and more fully after them McNickle offers a variety of comments which show some ways in which lives are governed by the acts of listening and telling. Characters remember, the narrator recounts, journals express; in each case McNickle uses specific language to remind us that someone is making a story.

Prior to the Big Paul story one can find hints of story experiences. These serve as preludes to the more concentrated attention that grows throughout the book. At the novel's very beginning Archilde feels annoyed and inconvenienced when his mother says she will hold a feast honoring his return. He recalls that at these feasts just "a lot of old people told tiresome stories" (4). Even on a first reading one can hear the suggestion that Archilde is probably wrong. The next reference occurs with Catharine's imagining her first memory: "It [the memory] began with that day at the end of summer when the missionaries came through the twisting defile which led from the Jocko River into the valley of Sniél-emen and planted their cross" (21).

Although not verbal, the next moment suggests this important link again between memory and story creation. Archilde is "drawing pictures [of a buffalo bull, an old cow and her calf, and a mare with her colt] on his hat, making pictures out of his head." The narrator does not know whether he is creating the pictures afresh, or "maybe remembering pictures he had seen somewhere" (23). The uncertainty demonstrates how much these two processes borrow from each other, and the ensuing argument among Archilde and his nephews (about what to draw on the as-yet-blank fourth side) looks more and more like a story-making scene as one rereads it. Archilde has drawn his nephews into the creating.

The section most directly introducing "Big Paul" begins in the following chapter with the arrival of Father Grepilloux who, we are told, "had come back [to St. Xavier] to write a history of his work and to sink peacefully into oblivion" (36). Max has come for some kind of help in dealing with his children and grandchildren. He cannot understand why he manages them so unsuccessfully. And he is upset by their lack of respect for "old and venerable ideas" (37). It is in the conversation between the two men that one finds clues to reading the inset stories and the novel itself.

The conversation actually contains a minor inset story when the priest starts reading his journal ("daybook") to Max, and Max hears from the entries that the Salish people invited the Jesuits "to come here and instruct them" (46). Grepilloux's story depicts indigenous people anxious to take on these Christian ideas and influences. Max, despite his inability so far to relate successfully to his Salish wife and to her people generally, finds these stories surprising. For Father Grepilloux, the narrator informs us, these stories were "first of all a testament of faith" (40). For Max, however, they create doubt. He cannot quite believe them; they do not sound true. He is skeptical; at the same time he has a growing interest. He combines the two reactions in a question which interrupts the Father's reading: "Then you think they understood your ideas?" (49). The narrator immediately follows the question by remarking that "Such doubts had never lived in the Priest's head" (49). By now one is gaining an appreciation for who can be more trusted to tell a story true to the Salish people. Father Grepilloux does answer the question: "They understood because they believed. Really it was not difficult to teach them. They wanted to know the right Faith, their hearts were inclined" (49). In doing so he echoes a comment by Roger Williams, the English missionary among the Narragansett people in the 1640s. In his phrase book, *A Key Into The Language of America*, Williams illustrates a similar blindness to cultural and religious bias:

They have no Clothes, Bookes, nor Letters, and conceive their Fathers never had; and therefore they are easily perswaded that the God who made the English men is a greater God,

because Hee hath so richly endowed the English above themselves. (A4)

In recognizing his own doubts and in questioning the priest's story, Max presents some qualities of an effective story listener. We should take to the hearing of Big Paul's story not only these qualities, but also the realization that stories occur in unexpected places; we must watch closely for them.

The novel also gives us qualities the stories themselves should have. Most of these qualities appear after the feast, therefore after the four prominent inset stories. Using this division of before and after invites us to see the stories themselves as pivotal events in the book and its main character. Such an interpretation seems supported by many of the following comments, which also identify features of a model story.

Just after Modeste finishes his story about the coming of the Blackrobes, one finds that effective storytelling has taken place.

For the first time he [Archilde] had really seen it happen. . . . He had heard the story many times, but he had not listened. It had tired him. Now he saw that it had happened and it left him feeling weak. It destroyed his stiffness toward the old people. He sat and thought about it and the flames shot upward and made light on the circle of black pines. (74)

The listener is ready to receive this time, and a successful story needs that readiness. The story itself—to the degree that one can separate it from the audience and treat it as a static object—apparently has some power to encourage, force or require listening. It catches his attention, but its influence continues beyond that.

The feast she had given in his honor, which he had attended reluctantly, really started him on a new train of thought regarding not only his mother but all the old people. He had really understood their struggle as it was told that night; he was moved by it. (113)

Here one begins to see what stories should do for people. After being caught, Archilde is moved—literally. He leaves his former position, and finds a new respect for the old people's stories. Their tellings have pushed him onto fresh ground. He does not think the same way any more. He has become, to however small a degree, a new person. Stories that his elders have made have, through his own listening and participation, helped him make something of himself. One cannot say such personal movement is entirely done to him; he has had a hand in it, also. The fact that the story makes him feel he understands it no doubt contributes to his sense of movement.

Implicit in the stories' ability to move Archilde is a humanness. The narrator identifies this quality later when Archilde watches over his ill mother: "Looking at her, Archilde felt again that nearness which he felt the night her relatives sat around a fire and told stories

out of the past" (182). In his mind he associates the human connection with the stories that moved him. He feels life in the stories, which helps him in this time of his mother's approaching death.

Worthy stories not only touch the heart but also speak to the mind. Archilde carries a closeness to others because of the feast, but he also continues to think about the stories.

Since that evening of feasting almost a year ago . . . he was frequently thinking of him [Modeste] and of the story he told that night. Modeste's story was the first one, and he had heard many, that Archilde had listened to with his mind. It was the first story about his people that he understood. He could not explain why he had listened and understood, but since it had happened he was continually thinking about the old chief. (194)

As he continues to think about Modeste's story, he naturally weighs its various parts. Something in the feast itself and something in the story require his retelling it to himself and sifting out portions at particular moments. For example, just before his mother dies, as he stands near her inside the house, "His mind called up a sudden image of Modeste telling his story of how the Salish people set out to find the 'new thing'—one stick laid across another: a great power was to come to them when they had that. Here it was staring meaninglessly at him" (257). Here he interacts with the story Modeste told. The empty stare of the cross serves as a counter example to successful stories which should have meaning for the person's life. Modeste's story gives Archilde something to use at an important moment. McNickle in his modest sensitivity has contrasted these two story models in an instance of simple description. Stories will receive testing. Early failures take them from memory. The surviving stories, because they contain life, ask us and pull us back; on our return we retest their validity and meaning. And this is a process which Archilde understands, perhaps because of his growing appreciation for the old people's stories.

When the doctor indicates Catharine's death is now only a matter of time, Archilde feels the need to allay, somehow, his nephews' fears. The question looms over them as to whether or not they will return to the school run by the Fathers. With considered attention to the nature of his audience, Archilde says:

"Myself, I have never seen a devil. . . . I've been told he would get me if I didn't watch out, but where does he keep himself? He never comes for me. I can't tell you if this is a lie or not. I just know that for a long time I've told myself that I can get along without that fellow and nothing has happened. I get along very well." (272)

Archilde is giving the boys instructions on how to test a story. Here again the novel offers standards for the maker of stories. In both

cases the story must be true—not real, but true. And Archilde's wondering "if this is a lie or not" demonstrates his knowledge that one must keep asking this question. If a storyteller expects people to carry his story around inside themselves, he should expect they will also continue testing it. (Notice that earlier Archilde tells Narcisse to inform Mike "it's all lies, what the priests say. It's all lies about the devil" [192].)

Some of the novel's implicit comments on how stories should be made and received can be applied here to the Big Paul story. The inset stories as a group provide interesting material for a separate study. Here I will suggest ways in which the novel's definitions and assumptions can illuminate the story people might overlook.

Truth in stories is an idea at the center of "Big Paul." The Judge is telling a story when a white guest claims he is telling a lie. All are insulted by the claim, for this man, the Judge, would not tell stories he thought untrue. In fact, the inset story itself, by reference to "guests" and their neglect of courtesy, suggests the ceremonial and important nature of the storytelling. One of the white men is killed later that night; we presume someone kills him as a reaction to the insult. The Judge is then stabbed in retaliation. Here the narrator, whose voice Father Grepilloux adopts as representing the various versions he has heard, states the white men who killed the Judge show stupidity in not asking how the earlier killing happened. They failed to inquire into character. Had they done so they would have discovered the Judge incapable of such murder. This neglect reminds us of Father Grepilloux's inability to question the basis of his story about the Jesuits' arrival—the story Max questions. Both Max's query and Modeste's story (about the Blackrobes) clearly indicate the priest's arrival story is missing important components. We must admit, however, that his narrating this Big Paul story does not leave him without any credibility.

Big Paul is described as more clear-headed than the others, which makes his eventual death that much more tragic. He more than any other character, besides his father, embodies courageous wisdom in this situation. He runs counter to the others. The whites, for example, injure and humiliate a band of Kootenai people who are not even involved in the dispute but who suffer because the whites cannot or will not make distinctions. On the Indian side, Big Paul's younger brother asks no questions when he leads a party to kill his own brother.

The whole inset story presents the sad inability of cultures to hear one another's stories, truly. It seems in this story as in the novel, "willfulness kept . . . them from understanding" (274). The novel offers as a model those people, like Max, who amidst this inter-cultural difficulty struggle to test the stories they know and listen to the stories they are beginning to hear. He tests the new and trusts the old. In the final paragraph of the chapter which contains all of the inset stories, Max is lying in his bed trying to sleep, but

he cannot (perhaps to his credit, for there is some moral suggestion in his restlessness). Instead he wonders once again why he cannot seem to understand his Indian family. Having examined some of the novel's advice, we can now hear resonance in his sad question: "Damn it! why couldn't just one of his sons have the sense and the courage to make himself a new way of life!" (75). We know that in some small (apparently unrecognizable) way Archilde has done this, and the stories at the feast have moved him in that direction. That makes all the sadder the chapter's last sentence: "He [Max] rolled away from the glow of the light, but still the voices reached him. What were they saying? Why didn't they talk to him?" (75). The hearer must be ready, yes, but even when he moves away from the story light, the "voices reach him."

Why do these reach him? How? Some of the answer may lie in the description of Catharine's preparing Narcisse for the dance ceremony. Although she is not telling a story with words, she is showing us the spirit which McNickle suggests lives in the center of the process:

She was pleased with her duties in the way that only an old art or an old way of life, long disused, can please the hand and the heart returning to it. She took up the folded garments of beaded buckskin and placed them on her grandchild in a kind of devotional act that derived satisfaction from minute observances; in a matter so simple, the least part has its significance or it is all meaningless. (215)

McNickle himself, as one can see by watching his comments on storytelling, treats his art with similar devotion.

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AMERICAN INDIAN AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND WRITTEN COMPOSITION: A COURSE PROPOSAL

David Sudol

I am proposing a composition course based entirely on American Indian autobiography. Although designed as an upper-level elective course for English majors, it may be modified for basic composition or for Advanced Placement English. Before I describe the curriculum, however, let me answer the obvious question: Why American Indian autobiography?

First, I'm interested in American Indian autobiography and want to share that interest with my students. Second, I wish to expand the canon. As critics point out, the voices of American Indian writers too often go unheard (Ramsey, Ruoff, Wiget). Third, I'd like to add my voice to those who have already suggested ways to use native autobiography in composition classes (Anderson, Hoehner, Lundquist, Roemer). Fourth, I believe the course has wide appeal. It will likely pique interest among students curious about Native peoples. It may also attract female students by including works of American Indian women; and I hope it draws minority students, especially Native Americans, who have few classes that acknowledge their ethnic experience. Finally, transcending gender and race, a composition course based on autobiography should appeal to young adults, so many of whom are struggling to find themselves. Indeed, high school and college are rites of passage, quests for self-identity. American Indian autobiography should be germane to these students because it typically records the experiences of individuals caught "between two cultures," struggling to survive in an alien world while clinging to the past. Although not to the same degree, many white students are themselves caught between cultures, adjusting to school, preparing for the world that awaits after graduation.

More than appealing to students, there are strong curricular reasons for teaching a composition course based on autobiography. It provides a unified, coherent thematic focus. Breaking away from the traditional modes-of-discourse approach, which frequently meanders through unconnected assignments, this course locates students in a specific place and maps out their journey. Further, the curriculum is grounded in established discourse theory. Students will work through a series of assignments spiraling them outward from self-expression to critical analysis (Moffett); and they'll write for diverse audiences: themselves, each other, and me (Britton).

I plan for students to write five 1500 to 2000 word essays, totaling about 10,000 words for the semester. They will also keep a journal in which they record responses not only to the readings but also to their composing processes. In effect, the journal will be a constant, driving our class discussions while promoting individual metacognitive and metalinguistic awareness.

I'll begin the class by asking everyone to compose an autobiography. No instructions. No models. They'll just write autobiography, in vacuo, in any way they please. They may draft their entire life story from day one to the present, or they may freewrite about their summer vacation. Next, we'll read and discuss their papers to arrive at some common understanding of what an autobiography is. To supplement our discussion, we'll read selections from Brian Swann and Arnold Krupat's *I Tell You Now: Autobiographical Essays by Native American Writers*. We'll continue our talk in light of these essays, modifying definitions, examining assumptions about content and form. My rationale for moving from practice to theory is to let students solve the autobiographical puzzle themselves, working inductively from known to unknown, extending their knowledge in the process. Moreover, by reading the autobiographies of Jim Barnes, Simon Ortiz, Wendy Rose, and Joy Harjo, I hope students will come to appreciate the difficulties many Native Americans have bridging cultures, as well as the enduring importance of tribal traditions. Hence my two-fold purpose is to raise consciousness about autobiography and contemporary American Indian life. Students will then revise the first version of their autobiography, possibly experimenting with sequence and multiple forms, developing (if applicable) the kinds of personal and cultural conflicts that epitomize the essays in *I Tell You Now*.

The second assignment asks students to recreate the type of American Indian autobiography most often published during the 19th and early 20th centuries: the as-told-to autobiography. This time, instead of jumping into the writing task, I'll provide direct instruction. We'll read Ruth Underhill's *Papago Woman* to acquire familiarity with the genre, and I'll talk about how as-told-to's are typically produced. As H. David Brumble III explains: "Ethnologist encourages informant to relate life history, asking questions along the way to guide informant and to ensure adequate detail; ethnologist then edits this great bundle of material (now usually in translation) into something like a chronological order, cutting repetitions and making other changes necessary to transform a collection of transcripts of individual performances into a single, more or less continuous narrative" (119-20). Because someone will doubtless ask how this is different from a biography, I'll stress that an as-told-to autobiography is presented as a first-person narrative. As Arnold Krupat says, the claim is that "the white man is silent while the Indian speaks for himself" (47).

Once students understand the task, they'll write an as-told-to autobiography of one of their classmates, following the procedure described above. My main role will be to pair them up. Adhering to the principle of bicultural composition, I'll encourage whites to work with Native Americans or other minority students or, if it's more feasible, males to work with females. First, they'll need to prepare a questionnaire, as any ethnologist would. They may formulate their

questions based on those that drive Underhill's study, or we might brainstorm a list of questions in class. What I would prefer, however, is that each student design his or her own questionnaire based solely on whatever he or she perceives as the most productive, interesting line of inquiry. Second, they'll conduct interviews with their informant, recording responses, if possible on a tape recorder or even on videotape. These interviews, to be done in class or at home, may include one long session or several short ones. Third, they'll transcribe and compile all their materials and make final decisions about how best to present their informant's life.

All through this process they should keep detailed field notes on why they asked specific questions, how they conducted their interviews, how they responded to being interviewed, what problems they encountered in assembling their material, why they decided to present the autobiography in a particular manner, and whether or not they captured the essence of their subject—whether or not they wrote a "true" autobiography. Ultimately, they'll turn in not only the final draft of the as-told-to autobiography but all their working papers and their journal. They will also present a copy of the autobiography to their informant.

Although Brumble and Krupat criticize the inferior methodology of the as-told-to autobiography, I believe the approach is nonetheless valuable because it will offer students an excellent opportunity to get inside composing processes, to become acutely aware of rhetorical situations, problems, and responsibilities. More than requiring knowledge of the genre, the assignment raises dozens of questions that each writer must answer if he or she is to complete the project successfully. From the start, these amateur ethnologists will face rhetorical problems. Soliciting the narrative, they must examine their purpose—to inform? to delight? to persuade? Organizing materials, they must consider their obligations both to their informant and their audience. Whereas Brumble says the ethnologist does not "impose a pattern, other than chronological, upon the material" (120), Gretchen M. Bataille and Kathleen Mullen Sands claim the recorder/editor usually structures the materials, "presenting them in a stylistically pleasing manner" (12). Whom do students believe? If they edit irrelevant details or fill in background context or change order for dramatic effect, do they violate their informant's rights? Are they falsifying data? Who or what ultimately determines content and structure? The informant's exact responses (no matter how confusing or boring) or the audience's expectations and needs? And what about voice? How do they make the autobiography sound like the informant? Is it a matter of simply transcribing responses verbatim, or is art involved? What if the informant stutters or babbles or uses profanity? And where do they stand in relation to their material? Do they present the autobiography solely as the informant's story, or do they place themselves in it? Should they, like Underhill, write an

introduction explaining their roles, or should they remain anonymous and mute?

In the past I've explained the complexities of the communication triangle and the aims of discourse, but always it seemed in isolation, as part of an assignment but somehow apart from it. I believe the as-told-to autobiography will foreground these issues, integrate and contextualize them within the assignment, enabling students to learn firsthand the strategies that expert writers use to define and solve rhetorical problems (Flower and Hayes). Moreover, students should move beyond self-expression or writing only for a grade. They'll write for each other, seriously and intimately, about the most important thing in their lives—theirself. This is one time when peer pressure may be a positive motivator.

The third assignment, a logical extension of the previous ones, includes two parts. First, students will compare their own autobiography to their as-told-to (not the one they wrote, but the one written of their life). For background, we'll read *Black Elk Speaks* and critical commentaries by Sally McClusky, Michael Castro, and Raymond DeMallie, focusing mainly on Neihardt's contribution to the text and the differences between his and Black Elk's versions. The students will then scrutinize the two versions of their autobiography, noting all similarities and differences. It may be a good idea to spend a class period discussing criteria, establishing the critical vocabulary necessary for such a comparison, although by now everyone should be familiar with rhetorical terms. Second, students will analyze how and why the two versions differ. They'll peruse their partner's field notes to search for reasons why discrepancies appear, and they'll interview their partners face-to-face to ask why the story about Uncle Casey and the pickled herring was left out, or how come "expletive deleted" is used instead of "bullshit." By comparing both versions and by analyzing both authors' intentions, students should gain valuable insights into the autobiographical process and deepen their understanding of how writers construct meaning. In a sense, the assignment is the equivalent of Black Elk's response to John G. Neihardt, not just setting the record straight, but better understanding Neihardt's motives.

My hidden curriculum will be to make students aware of the assumptions they brought to their as-told-to's and by transference to see how the cultural baggage Underhill and Niehardt carried to the reservation affected their texts and changed Maria Chona's and Black Elk's stories. Kathleen Sands says autobiography "offers us an insightful, complete, and varied means of entrance into the private and public worlds of the American Indian" (55). And that may be true. Arnold Krupat, however, argues that as-told-to autobiographies were often used as ploys to justify Western imperialism, support cultural evolution, and advance academic careers. If reading the essays in *I Tell You Now* can raise consciousness about contemporary American Indian life, then reading, writing, comparing, and

analyzing as-told-to autobiographies should expose hidden bias and prejudice, not only Underhill's and Neihardt's but the students' as well.

Essay #4 shifts from ethnographic to literary autobiography. Instead of writing about their own or their classmate's experience, students will now write a critical essay on a published autobiography, N. Scott Momaday's memoir *The Names*. The easiest way to handle the instruction would be to distribute handouts on literary interpretation and let everyone fend for himself, but that would be an invitation to chaos. For as long as I've been teaching composition, I'm always surprised by how difficult students find the transition to writing about literature. To avoid losing them at this stage of the semester, my approach will be manifold.

First, students may write a standard critical essay, focusing on setting, character, imagery, theme—the basic elements of literature. A similar approach would be to examine the work in light of Bataille and Sands' definition of a literary autobiography. Students may conduct small-group workshops on how well Momaday's memoir illustrates each of the characteristics Bataille and Sands enumerate: "dialogue, exploration of inner emotions and responses to events, a first-person omniscient point of view, latitude in handling time and sequence of events and an awareness of audience" and "informal, conversational language for stylistic effect" (11). Considering the last assignment, however, and hoping to bridge writing tasks, I'll encourage students to try a rhetorical analysis of *The Names*, exploring writer, reader, subject transactions. Also, with the personal writing focus of the first three assignments, I may urge them to analyze some element of *The Names* (perhaps landscape) in relation to their own autobiography, comparing and contrasting Momaday's use to theirs. Frankly, I like this approach best because it personalizes literature; N. Scott Momaday becomes a fellow autobiographer, not a great literary bear.

I'll also invite broader-based approaches that reflect personal or academic interests and involve additional reading or library research. Since *The Names* is a recent addition to a long list of American Indian autobiographies, students may wish to compare it to an earlier one, such as Charles A. Eastman's *Indian Boyhood*, or they may wish to trace a progression in 20th century American Indian autobiography. David Brumble claims that Momaday uses "preliterate" autobiographical traditions in *The Names* and *The Way to Rainy Mountain* (165-80). Students may explore the use of these traditions in the essays in *I Tell You Now* or in Leslie Marmon Silko's *Storyteller*. On the issue of gender, I'd encourage students to follow Bataille and Sands' lead by analyzing gender differences between Momaday's *The Names* and Silko's *Storyteller*, or by examining the influence of gender in their own autobiographies. Clearly, at this point in the semester I hope students will pursue individual interests and work more-or-less independent of me. Instead of their instruc-

tor, I'll become an adviser; we could even cancel classes for a week of independent research and conferences.

For the final assignment, we'll look at autobiographical fiction, either D'Arcy McNickle's *The Surrounded* or Momaday's *House Made of Dawn*, both of which draw heavily on personal experience and tribal tradition. We'll focus on (1) how the authors employ autobiographical techniques, and (2) how they transform life experiences into fiction. For those students who enjoy rhetorical or technical analysis, the first topic would be a natural, a chance to hone their critical skills in a new genre. For those intrigued by the view that autobiography, regardless of whether it's ethnographic or literary, is never a mere record of fact but is always an artifact—an imaginative, artistic creation—the second topic should prove fruitful. How do McNickle and Momaday turn actual events into fiction? If both autobiography and novel are artifacts, what distinguishes them? How does *House Made of Dawn* differ from *The Names*? What do we make of the "stories" that comprise *The Names*? A different approach would be to have the students write a short story based on their initial autobiography and then analyze the differences between them. They may not only gain insight into the two genres but also come to realize, in Momaday's phrase, that their lives are "made of words." That would be an exciting way to finish the class and bring it full circle.

American Indian autobiography and written composition make a good match, and I believe my proposed course has much to offer. At the level of writer, it will give students interesting, varied assignments and an emic perspective of composing processes. At the level of individual, it will provide an opportunity for personal growth, a school-sponsored way for students to explore who and what they are. Momaday says: "The greatest tragedy that can befall us is to go unimagined" (103); sadly, today many students would rather party than take the time to imagine, or else they imagine themselves behind the wheel of a Porsche. Here is an invitation to pull off the road for a while to discover where they're going. At the level of human being, the course will attempt to topple barriers between Indians and whites. If nothing else, it will introduce students to works by American Indian writers, and if I can teach my hidden curriculum it should break down stereotypes and nurture a better understanding of native cultures. It should also show white students that Native Americans are not "other," that they have the same hopes, fears, and doubts as everyone else.

In a recent article entitled "Censorship and Spiritual Education," James Moffett decries the dangers of exclusive literacy. Asserting that "youngsters need to experience *all* kinds of discourse and all kinds of voices and viewpoints and styles," he implores us "to encompass *all* heritages, cross cultures, raise consciousness enough to peer over the social perimeters that act as parameters of knowledge" (84). For too long the academy has imposed de facto censor-

ship on minority literatures, excluding them from the canon, our literary heritage, and our culture. A composition course based on American Indian autobiography will not eliminate institutional censorship, nor will it necessarily increase spirituality, but it will be a move toward higher ground.

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A NAVAJO HIGH SCHOOL AND THE TRUTH OF TREES

Roger Dunsmore

I had accepted an invitation to be Scholar in Residence for the Arizona Humanities Council at the largest Indian high school in the U.S.—on the Navajo Reservation. Fourteen hundred students, 95 percent Navajo, 3 percent Hopi, 2 percent Ute, Havasupai, Crow, Anglo. My charge was to infuse the humanities into the curriculum, with special emphasis on Navajo (and Hopi) culture. As part of my fulfillment of that charge, I relied on the poetry being written by young Indians now and in the last 20 to 25 years. The voice of beauty, pain, and power raised in this poetry is astonishing, is, as has been said, the voice of the land itself. During the year five Indian poets came to the school to reach and teach, and a poem by an American Indian was published each Friday in the school bulletin, which was read second hour in all classes. The administration was extremely sensitive about which poems appeared in the bulletin—I had to clear my choice each week with the principal, a Navajo, supportive of the project but not popular with his faculty, and fearful of being accused of being a racist if the Friday poems were too hard-hitting. The students were fed a steady diet of Anglo standards—Beowulf, Shakespeare, Wordsworth—and most had little sense of their own literature or history.

Second semester, in order to make it possible to include a wider range of poems in the Friday bulletin, I began to attend the weekly chairpersons' meeting—to read and discuss with them the poem that was to appear that Friday. This was a group of twenty or so persons, mixed male/female, Anglo/Navajo/Hopi. At my third or fourth session with them, I chose to work with Jimmie Durham's poem, "Columbus Day." It is an extremely angry poem, but he ends, as he must, in beauty.

Columbus Day

In school I was taught the names
Columbus, Cortez, and Pizarro and
A dozen other filthy murderers.

[At this point the white chair of the physical education department, a fundamentalist, married to a Navajo, jumped up and down in his chair and blurted out, "I protest, I protest." I read over the top of his protest.]

A bloodline all the way to General Miles,
Daniel Boone and General Eisenhower.

No one mentioned the names
Of even a few of the victims.
But don't you remember Chaske, whose spine
Was crushed so quickly by Mr. Pizzaro's boot?
What words did he cry into the dust?

What was the familiar name
Of that young girl who danced so gracefully
That everyone in the village sang with her—
Before Cortez' sword hacked off her arms
As she protested the burning of her sweetheart?

That young man's name was Many Deeds,
And he had been a leader of a band of fighters
Called the Redstick Hummingbirds, who slowed
The march of Cortez' army with only a few
Spears and stones which now lay still
In the mountains and remember.

Greenrock Woman was the name
Of that old lady who walked right up
And spat in Columbus' face. We
Must remember that, and remember
Laughing Otter the Taino, who tried to stop
Columbus and who was taken away as a slave.
We never saw him again.

In school I learned of heroic discoveries
Made by liars and crooks. The courage
Of millions of sweet and true people
Was not commemorated.

Let us then declare a holiday
For ourselves, and make a parade that begins
With Columbus' victims and continues
Even to our grandchildren who will be named
In their honor.

Because isn't it true that even the summer
Grass here in this land whispers those names?
And every creek has accepted the responsibility
Of singing those names? And nothing can stop
The wind from howling those names around
The corners of the school.

Why else would the birds sing

So much sweeter here than in other lands?

At the close of the reading the physical education chair began to explain his protest. He thought the poems presented things from the past that were too negative and that were best forgotten, that what we needed to do for our students was give them positive images and experiences, that they already had enough negatives in their lives. A short discussion occurred about whether or not the poem was negative and what the students needed from us as educators. One of the Navajo chairs said—"We've got three students here to make a presentation; why not ask them what they think?" We did, and one, a young woman, a junior, spoke for all three. "Of course there are things in our history as Indian people that are dark and very painful.

There are parts of our history that are difficult to know and to accept. But we students can endure our own history, we need to know it, because it's the truth. And that's our main need from you, our teachers—we need to hear the truth, no matter how hard that is."

That ended the discussion. She spoke so well, so cleanly, so to the point. "Columbus Day" was in the bulletin on Friday. I come back to this incident often in my mind. It has a classical structure to it—a young Navajo woman, sixteen years old, instructing twenty department chairs plus the principal plus the humanities scholar on the preeminence of the truth of their history—their hunger and need for that in order to know what they are (for their identity and self-esteem)—and knowing that Jimmie Durham, Cherokee, gives them some information on the so-called discovery of America that they haven't found (and probably won't find) in history textbooks or at Columbus Day celebrations.

How accurate is Jimmie Durham? What are his sources of information? Why isn't this viewpoint more widely known and taught? And if Navajo kids in Arizona need to know the truth of their history, Anglo kids in Bellingham or Chillicothe need it just as much for their identity as well, and so the ongoing holocaust perpetrated against all forms of life on this planet, that has been accelerating for centuries, may be slowed and redirected rather than intensified.

At an earlier meeting with the English Department to discuss including more Native American literature in the curriculum, there were teachers who said openly that to bring in the Native literature was an attempt to take us all back to the cave. "We all started in caves!" was the exact comment. And when asked about the environmental wisdom contained in that literature, we were told by this teacher: "We don't need it. When we ruin this planet, we'll get into our spaceships and go to another, and when we ruin that one, we'll go to another, and when we ruin that one, we'll go to another, and another, and another, and another. That's what technology is for." This person, whose father was reported to be a teacher of Shakespeare at a Canadian university, not only believed this, he taught it to young Navajos to prepare them for entry into the white world. *How many like him come through our existing schools to become teachers?*

The young woman who stood by her need for the truth of her history stays with me. I retell her story frequently. After one such retelling back in Montana I realized that I didn't know the meaning of that simple word, *true*. This drove me to Webster's, where I found *true*—akin to Greek *treu*: I.E., base, *derew*—a tree (see tree), basic sense, "*firm* as a tree." Here it was—an abstract word, *true*, leading straight back to a concrete word, *tree*, and to a specific attribute of tree—*firmness*. Like the *humus* in *human*: rootedness. No one had ever suggested in my hearing that the truth had anything to do with trees. I thought of the clearcuts in Montana, of the bodies

of those trees sunk in the harbors of Japan, of the 200 acres of virgin oak my great-great grandfather had burnt in Ohio to make his farm; I thought of the barren, rocky slopes of Greece denuded to build the Athenian fleets; I thought of the rain forest, cut and burnt to raise beef for "Happy Meals"; I thought of Gary Snyder's Wasco Indian logger who sold his chain saw, let his hair grow long, and apprenticed himself to a medicine man because he couldn't stand to hear the trees scream as he cut into them. I thought of the truth of trees: *Tree*—akin to Gothic *triu*; I.E., base, *derew*, a tree, see *dryad*. *Dryad*: Greek, *dryas*, *dry*s, an oak, tree, (see druid). In Greek mythology, any nymph (*or goddess or female spirit*) *living in a tree*. And so there it was—the word "true" having some strange origin in the female spirits living in trees in the earliest layers of memory in our own language heritage. And the word druid, or *dru-wid* as the I.E. base signifies, meaning, literally, "oak wise," from the same base as tree and true, *derew*; the spiritual leaders of pre-Christian Celtic Europe—their wisdom explicitly linked to the female spirits living in trees, to the truth contained there. *Dru-wid*—oak wise—tree wise—truth wise—tree, wise female tree.

No wonder one of the first things the Roman legions did when occupying the lands of Celtic peoples they wished to dominate was to cut down and burn the ancient, sacred groves of oaks (like Spaniards burning Mayan histories), oaks within which lived the female spirits of nature. (Was my great-great-grandfather in Ohio simply carrying on this old Roman tactic?) And no wonder that Robin Hood's mythic resistance to a later invader emanated outward from the ancient *oaks* of Sherwood Forest. I thought of the great totem spirits emerging from the carved bodies of cedar trees all along this coast northward. I thought of tribal people in India tying themselves to trees in an effort to save their forests and soils; I thought of young people sitting for days in old larch and fir and pine trees in Montana in order to protest or stop old growth timber sales. I felt as if my very own tradition were a magical thing, containing wisdom and knowledge of which one might be proud. But I wondered why no one had taught me my *own* tradition.

Native Americans know this truth of the female spirit residing in trees, have not broken with these spirits. And they know that other, allied truth—the historical/ecological terrorism emanating from those societies who have lost their memories of the interconnections to land. To forget that what's true emanates from things such as trees is to turn a reduced version of the truth into yet another weapon of the domination of everything. But on the brighter side of the true/trees link—Black Elk tells us that the cottonwood leaf—its shape—is the origin of the idea for the teepee, a correspondence of forms. And that the cottonwood tree sends the most prayers to Skan/Sky, oldest of grandfathers, because its leaves move in the slightest breeze. These and many other reasons are why the cottonwood tree is the center pole at the sundance.

Seven years ago I had the opportunity to witness a sundance on the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota. Perhaps 200 of us stood around the medium-sized cottonwood at its place in the forest as religious leaders prayed to/with it, made offerings to it, with a young woman, a virgin. And then each of those who had vowed to dance the sun were given, in turn, the ceremonial axe and took four strokes with it into the body of the tree, until finally the tree was severed. And eventually all two hundred people literally carried the whole body of the tree together, singing, the two miles back to the Sun Dance ground. More ceremony was done there, including placing buffalo fat in the purified hole that had been dug to receive the butt end of the tree—buffalo fat to feed it, to keep it strong. And before it was hoisted, all present were invited to tie into its upper branches their prayers—tobacco offerings wrapped in colored cloth—red, blue, yellow, green, white, purple—so that when the tree was hoisted, all its branches fluttered with the brightly colored prayers of the people.

The Sun Dance leaders spoke about the importance of the tree for the Lakota, as it was about to be raised: "We need the tree to pray for us; because of its innocence, an innocence we cannot recover, its prayers are pure and can get through to the Creator. So tie your prayer bundles onto the branches of the tree and let it pray for you." And in the afternoons the people would line up to give offerings of their flesh to be tied in small cloth bundles and offered to the tree—flesh prayers.

After four days of dancing, song, fasting, prayer—days in which young men had literally hung up in the tree from thongs pierced through their breasts, their arms flapping like wings in rhythm with 200 eagle bone whistles, blood pumping in jets from their open breasts, the Sun Dance ground was quiet. Most people had gone home. A small boy lay in the crotch of the tree, as in a nest, day-dreaming. The whole place hummed with the power of this ancient, solar generator. I watched small wind tears appear in the beautiful "Free Leonard Peltier" banner stretched over the east gate to the Sun Dance ground, and commented to a friend: "Look, that banner is starting to tear." "Yes," he said. "Next year at this time there'll be just a few scraps of cloth from it still tied to these poles. The rest will have gone on the wind to Skan, in the form of prayers for Leonard." "Yes," I answered, glad I had not spoken the rest of my mind—that we should take it down, fold it up, and store it away for safekeeping. The banner was like the leaves of the tree—and not to be separated from those processes of wind and weather that are the true way power moves in the earth. The winds and weather of history, too. And the clarity of a young woman in a roomful of educational bureaucrats.

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LETTING THEM TEACH EACH OTHER: AN EXPERIMENT IN CLASSROOM NETWORKING

Gary Griffith and Lucy Maddox

The authors of this article are participants in an on-going experiment in using electronic communication (via computers and modems) to link teachers and their students around the country. While the umbrella project in which we are participating involves at least one hundred classrooms, our sub-network is limited to about ten teachers and their classes (the number varies as teachers change jobs, take leaves, or find their access to computers limited by local circumstances); all of these teachers are in schools with significant populations of Native American students, and all teach English or language arts in grades nine through twelve. In some cases, the schools are located on reservations, while in other cases they are in areas—usually adjacent to reservations—where Native Americans make up a large percentage of the general population. (To date, we have had participants from schools in Alaska, Arizona, Montana, Nevada, South Dakota, and the state of Washington.) Both of the authors have been active on the computer network since its beginnings in 1988; Gary Griffith teaches English in a public high school in Arizona with a student body that is largely Navajo; Lucy Maddox teaches Native American literature at Georgetown University, and has been serving as an unofficial advisor to the network. She is the only participant who is not a secondary or middle school teacher and who does not teach Native American students.

From the beginning, the network has had two primary objectives: to allow teachers, most of whose schools are in isolated areas, to talk with each other about the special circumstances of their work with Indian students, and to allow students in their classes to "publish" their writing electronically and receive responses from students in other classrooms on the network. To keep these two activities separate, we have subdivided our network into an "NA" conference for conversations among teachers and an "NATalk" conference for the posting and exchange of student writing. On the "NA" conference, we have discussed a variety of issues of concern to all the participants: frustrations with school administrators; the relationship of non-Indian teachers to Indian students and parents; drugs and alcohol in the schools; the uses of dialect in teaching writing; the integration of Native American texts into school curricula; the problems of professional isolation. Our conversations, we all agree, have been both franker and more supportive than the conversations most of us are accustomed to having with our colleagues.

A third objective of the network, which has emerged in the course of the experiment and which is still (as of this writing) somewhat tentative, is the production of an anthology of student writing that has appeared on the network. If the anthology comes into being, our plan is to have students participate in all stages of the project;

we would like to have student editorial boards whose function would be to choose the pieces for inclusion and to work with the student authors in editing the selections for publication.

The project in which we are engaged originated at the Bread Loaf School of English, a summer M.A. program sponsored by Middlebury College; all of the participants have at some time been students or faculty members at Bread Loaf. The project was made possible by support from Middlebury College and by a foundation grant that allowed us to provide computers, modems, and operating expenses for some of the participants.¹ Ours is therefore a special situation, which may not be exactly replicable for teachers everywhere. However, we would not be reporting on the project here if we did not believe that many of the things we are doing can be accomplished by others who do not have a network of colleagues already in place; they can even be accomplished without computers. Using electronic mail simplifies and expedites things for us, but with a little more xeroxing and stamp-licking, the same sorts of exchanges could take place through the regular mail system (what we computer snobs have come to call "snail mail"). The important results of our project come from the *fact* of exchange, not from the *speed* of exchange. And while the number of participants on our network and their geographical distribution has made for lively conversations, we believe that a more concentrated exchange among only two or three classrooms (and teachers) could have its own advantages.

For the purposes of this article, we would like to concentrate on the ways in which we have been able to use the network in our own two teaching situations—at one southwestern high school and one eastern university. While the network was originally conceived as a way of linking secondary teachers and classrooms and encouraging student writing by widening the audience for the writing, one unexpected advantage of the network has been that the student writing published on the network has provided a fascinating body of collateral reading for the college students who have taken the course in Native American Literature at Georgetown in the last two years.

These students were reading primarily contemporary writing, including works by Momaday, Silko, Welch, Ortiz, Geiogamah, and Erdrich. Since many of them had never encountered any Native American writing before and knew little of Indian history, they struggled, especially at first, to understand the social, cultural, and political context out of which the literature emerged. While they were prepared to be sympathetic to the characters they encountered, they frequently found that their own experience (and even their knowledge of some experiences different from their own) gave them little context for understanding the behavior and motivations of Momaday's Abel or Silko's Tayo or Welch's unnamed narrator of *Winter in the Blood*. One student commented early in the course, "I find this material quite easy to detach myself from—this prevents me

from 'getting into' the works in the way I got into feminist literary criticism, for example." Another noted that "One of the greatest challenges/difficulties of the course is a feeling which tells me that I cannot have much to say to the texts we read. What is demanded of the student is a radical cultural shift—or even a leap."

In the class discussions early in the semester, it was clear that the students tended to see the characters they were reading about as exotic, as completely other. The students therefore tended to fall into the somewhat predictable trap of interpreting the stories of these characters as strictly allegorical. The easiest way for them to comprehend lives so different from their own was to assume that these fictive lives were constructed only to make some (didactic) point about matters the students were prepared to comprehend as typically Indian concerns: the importance of community, the power of ritual, and—especially—the centrality of nature in all Indian thought. They were, therefore, reluctant to acknowledge the humor in some of what they read. They seemed to fear that laughter was an inappropriate response to anything written by a Native American person, and they had to be encouraged to find the jokes.

The readings and the discussions helped to bring the students around to understanding that the texts they were reading were about real social and political issues as well as about philosophy, about daily lives as well as about tribal traditions, sometimes even about the conflict between daily life and tradition. They began, that is, to understand that a novel or a play by an Indian writer could be as deeply grounded in the quotidian, in the real circumstances of actual people's lives, as a novel by a non-Indian writer. They even began to recognize the jokes, and to laugh at them. It is in this context that the pieces of writing by the Indian students were most interesting to the Georgetown students and most helpful to them as a way of contextualizing the published literature they were reading.

We made no attempt to coordinate what the college students were reading with what the high school students were writing. The college students were simply given xeroxed copies of samples of the writing that appeared on the network, as it appeared. The nature of the writing varied according to the course plans of the high school teachers; in addition to fiction and poetry, there were autobiographical and biographical sketches and stories the students collected from parents and tribal elders. There were "tall tales," family histories, and even a complete one-act play. (The titles of some of the pieces suggest the range of subjects and approaches: "I'm Navajo, I'm Proud"; "My Grandpa"; "The Comedy of My Life"; "The Coyote and the Doe"; "My Child"; "Nigaleena, the Big-Foot Woman"; "Sundance at Crow-Dog's Paradise"; "Grandpa Wins the Lottery"; "A Russian Christmas.") Some of the samples, especially pieces of fiction and collected stories, were discussed in class, while others were not. In every case, however, the college students were encouraged to write short responses that could be sent to the high-

school writers; in one or two cases, these responses were composed collaboratively during class time. The students were also encouraged to see these pieces of writing as additional texts for the class rather than as school essays—to treat them as *literature* and consider them available to the same methods and strategies of interpretation they might bring to a story by Silko or a poem by Ortiz or Wendy Rose. The students were even urged to take one or two of the pieces as the subject for one of their required critical essays for the class.

The results of this experiment were, predictably, uneven. While a few of the college students had little or no response to offer, others found that the computer network opened up exciting possibilities, and they took full advantage of them: they wrote responses to the high school writers, asking questions about details and sometimes about sources and intentions, and some wrote critical essays about the student writing. (The best of these essays were sent, sometimes in full and sometimes in part, to the student authors.) For this group, the communication with the Indian student writers was very useful in helping them overcome their sometimes crippling sense of alienation from the texts they were reading and the people they were reading about. As one Georgetown student put it, the writing from the high school students "helped me to put the readings for the course in perspective and to realize that the heroes of *House Made of Dawn* and *Ceremony* and *Winter in the Blood* are not so far removed from recent Indian experience as I had believed."

From the college teacher's perspective, then, the most significant pedagogical advantage of the network has been that it has allowed her students to attach Indian writing to contemporary Indian lives and circumstances, to place the texts they read in a context that helps them to interpret the texts more responsibly, and—quite simply—to become much more interested and engaged in their classroom studies. From the high school teachers' perspectives, the pedagogical advantages of using the network have been more complex, more personal, and more directly related to the on-going problem of finding ways to motivate students to write and to take their education seriously. One way of recognizing how useful electronic networking can be for the high school teacher—sometimes in unexpected ways—is to consider the case of Tania, a sixteen-year-old Navajo, whose essay was one that the Georgetown students found especially interesting.

Tania is an athlete. She was on the girls' basketball team that went to the state playoffs and lost a close contest in the semi-final round. She and her teammates returned home heroes, even though they had lost. The basketball season closed and the other members of the team moved on to the usual spring sports, but Tania did not. Those who knew her well—her family, teachers, and counselors—had always recognized a certain detached, unpredictable quality in her, but for the first time she seemed simply to stop trying. She had

been offered at least one athletic scholarship to college, but she refused to take the standardized tests required for college admission.

Tania was in an English class that had been receiving writing from other Native American students through the computer network. The teacher had been using the computer in the classroom primarily as an adjunct to his regular assignments, knowing that if he tried to force his students to respond to everything that came through the computer or if he required them to publish their own writing on the network, they would resist; for the "NA Talk" project to work, it had to be presented to the students in a way that was nonthreatening and non-coercive.

Tania gradually became interested in the writing that was coming through the network, as did many of the other Navajo students in the class, and some eventually began to offer their own writing, although they would only rarely ask that it be published on the network. More often, they would simply leave the writing on the teacher's desk, with the comment that "This is for you." Among the pieces of writing that appeared on the desk was one from Tania—an account she had heard from her mother of the ceremony honoring a Navajo girl's first menstruation. Tania took the oral account and turned it into a first-person story, narrated from the point of view of the girl who is being initiated. Her story emphasized—through the voice of the narrator—the young girl's shift from confusion and fear at the onset of menstruation to eventual pride in having her entrance into "my womanhood" celebrated. Here is the full text of her story:

On a nice summer day, in the heart of the beautiful reservation, Asa'h Na'zhoni, meaning "Pretty Woman at the Prime of Her Teens," lived near Tsa' A Ba', meaning "Titty Rock." Asa'h Na'zhoni would herd her fat, plump goats and sheep from dawn until sundown on top of the fertile Tsa' A Ba', where there was endless amounts of green vegetation growing as far as the eyes could see.

I was sitting under a tree with sweat trickling off my face, scared and not knowing what was happening to me. Thinking whether or not I was alone with this unfortunate enigma upon me.

Leaving the sheep and goats unattended, I slowly walked home, making a decision to tell my mom about my problem. I entered the hogan feeling gloomy, trying to avoid my mom. As I entered the hogan my mom noticed something was wrong. "So," she asked me, "what is wrong?" I replied with a shaky voice, "I was scared to tell you that I had bled this morning, thinking it would stop." Right then my mom knew I had got my first menstruation. So, my mom told me about her first menstruation. I felt better knowing I was not the only one.

The next day my mom told me that I have to have a ceremony done for my first menstruation to enter me in my womanhood. My mom said the ceremony would take four days to complete. While telling me about the ceremony, my mom got me dressed in my traditional clothes that my grandma had made me. I got my hair brushed with a special kind of shrub used in this ceremony. My hair is then put up in a ponytail.

In the morning and at noon every day I had to run north, south, east and west for at least a mile. Every time I ran, my relatives followed behind me and other people followed behind them. If any person had passed me, they would age faster than I would. I also was not allowed to have sweet food or beverages.

In the morning of the third day I had a special singing done for me. The singing is done for me to help me better prepare myself while entering my womanhood. Before the singing is done, a group of men dug a hole five feet in diameter and six inches in depth. The hole is dug to bake a Navajo cake. Also, before the singing a fire is made and kept going all day long.

At the end of the third day the amber is cleaned from the hole, but a little bit of crushed amber is left at the bottom. Corn husks are placed on top of the amber and the large batter is then poured into the corn husks. The batter is then covered with corn husks once again. A fire is built on top of the corn husks, and the cooking takes place over night. This is all done by me with a little bit of help.

In the morning of the fourth day a special lady puts blankets on the ground outside the hogan for me to lay on. The special lady is a lady with special qualities and a nice body. The lady uses a flat stick. The stick is used in weaving. While laying on the blanket, the lady uses the stick to outline, shade, and massage my body. People say this will give me nice qualities and a beautiful body, while growing into my womanhood.

When the lady got done, I blessed each child by touching the sides of their cheeks with both hands and going upward past the head, so that they may grow tall, strong, and healthy.

Finally, I take out the cake with some help, but I cut the cake all by myself. Using a Navajo basket, I passed out the cake along with food, but I kept the basket and the food is kept by the people. This means I will always be generous to people.

In addition to being posted on the network, Tania's story was also published in the school literary magazine (which her English teacher advises). Some of the non-Indian students teased her for

writing about something they thought of as a taboo subject, but the Navajo students were genuinely interested in the piece. For the first time, the literary magazine became popular; the issue sold out. And for the first time, Tania was seen by other Navajo students as something more than a famous school athlete.

Tania's story became one of the texts used in the Georgetown course, and it elicited both good discussion and good writing. Three students wrote papers about the story, and the class as a whole discussed its treatment of the nature of ceremony in the context of what they had been reading in texts like *Ceremony* and *Black Elk Speaks*. In that class, Tania took her place beside Leslie Marmon Silko, Black Elk, N. Scott Momaday, etc. She became one of the Native American writers from whom the non-Indian students could learn.

Other classes on the network also responded to the story. This comment, for example, came from a ninth-grade class in McGrath, Alaska:

Your story reminds us a great deal of Athabascan traditions regarding womanhood. Instead of going through a ceremony, the young girls have to stay in an isolated corner of the parents home for a year and learn all the skills of being a wife. They cannot look at a young man during that time. We didn't know that young girls herded sheep. Do they still do that? Some girls here have trap lines, but not many. Could you explain the part about the cake further. Is the cake like cornbread? Do you still have any part of this tradition? Finally, at the end of the story, what happens? Why did she have to run north, south, east, and west for a mile? How did she know she had gone a mile? Were there any punishments or bad luck if the girl did not observe the traditions? Thanks for sharing your story. We really loved it.²

After Tania's story appeared, some of her classmates became more interested in contributing their work to the network. A dialogue of sorts had been established on the network among Indian and non-Indian students, and the Navajo students were interested. Some reluctant writers became motivated to write about themselves and their community by the prospect of publishing electronically—students who had previously thought of themselves as having only athletic or vocational skills. The students who published their writing were interested in all the responses they got, but they were especially encouraged by the responses from the Georgetown students; to have their writing taken seriously by college students, to find that college students were genuinely interested in what they had to say, and to receive electronic mail from a college across the country, was evidently exciting and energizing.

Our computer network is still in its experimental stages, and it may remain an experiment, no matter how long it lasts. We have

still not determined whether it is best to have rigid schedules, with teachers given dates on which they should be prepared to publish student writing, or whether it is best to have no schedules at all. We have discussed the possibility of choosing a text that all the teachers would have their students read and then using the network to let students exchange ideas about that text. One high school teacher has even suggested that he might try organizing an entire writing course around the network, using the students in the Native American literature class at Georgetown as the primary audience for his students' writing. If we tried this plan, the student writing could constitute a significant portion—perhaps as much as a third—of the assigned reading for the college students.

One problem with the way we have proceeded so far is that some teachers have found that the lack of consistency, the absence of a rigid schedule, has not given the students who write for the network a clear sense of their audience. As one teacher from Montana put it, in his classes the computer audience remained "the rather indistinct 'them' out there somewhere. Mostly strangers. We—my students and I—still don't have a sense of closeness to others on the network." This teacher suggested a "pen-pal" kind of arrangement, with computers accessible to students who could establish a regular correspondence with other Native American students or with college students. The advantage of this plan, as he sees it, is that "sending and receiving mail is fun, and using the equipment is fun, and I believe the kids would get right with it. A few more of them might hurry right on to English class if they had some correspondence going. Maybe attendance at our school this spring would be more like fifty out of a hundred enrollees per day instead of thirty."

We have learned a lot about computer conferencing from our network. One of the things we have learned about is the difficulty of putting together a schedule of participation and sticking to it. We have also learned that every plan for using the network has its theoretical virtues and its practical problems. And, unfortunately, we have learned that our enthusiasm for the network is not always shared by administrators and school boards, who are frequently suspicious of experimentation, especially when it comes to the teaching of writing. However, our successes have been encouraging enough, and exciting enough, for us to be able to recommend conferencing as a very useful pedagogical tool for both literature and writing classes. Electronic conferencing has several clear advantages over other kinds: it's fast, for one thing, and being able to send and receive messages by computer gives some students a reason to think of writing as fun. On the other hand, much that we have done on our network, especially the exchanging of student writing, could be accomplished without the computers and modems if the number of participating classrooms were limited, perhaps to two or three. The writing that we exchange over the telephone wires could almost as easily be exchanged through the mail.

In one sense, our computers have only allowed those of us on this network to see clearly what we *could* have been doing all along, before we even hooked up our computers and modems, and to recognize how much all our students have to teach each other, if we figure out how to give them the right chance.

NOTES

¹The "NA" and "NATalk" conferences are part of a larger network called "BreadNet." "BreadNet" consists of a series of asynchronous computer conferences, all of which are designed for teachers in grades K-12 who are involved in the teaching of writing. The network uses a commercial host computer and a conferencing program called "Participate." The software used by participants is either "Point To Point" or "Procomm," depending on the kind of micro-computer available to the individual participant (the one most frequently used is the Apple IIe).

The coordinator of BreadNet is Bill Wright, to whom we are very grateful for helping us to initiate "NA" and "NA Talk" and keep them going, and to whom we are also grateful for making sure we had our technical facts straight for this article.

²One of the McGrath ninth-graders, inspired by Tania's story, responded with her own story about a young girl who is put "in the corner." Since Roberta's story is too good to miss, we have included it here:

"A Buddy for Life"

Me and my buddy Kybuck were friends since we were babies in our mothers packs. Where you saw Kybuck you saw me and the other way around. Even though he was a boy and I was a girl. My elders always told me to watch out because soon I would be in the corner. That excited me, for it meant that I would be old enough to marry. But, on the other hand did I want to be in the corner. I wouldn't be able to go on those long wonderful hunting trips or play in the woods with Kybuck. I would have to sit in the corner for about a year counting by moons, and learn how to sew and cook. When I got a little older my parents wouldn't let me see Kybuck. I was very sad because I wasn't in the corner but in a way I wished that I would never have to be.

And then it happened. I was sent to the corner. I was scared. It was the sight of blood that scared me. I didn't know that it was going to be like this. When men came into my cabin, they were not allowed to look at me and I was not allowed to look up. It would be othlang. That meant there would be bad hunting for the family. In the day time my mother would come sit with me in the dreary corner and tell me stories, drink tea, and sew. On dark homely nights, I would lay still in silence and remember Kybuck and me

running through the woods and chasing rabbits and singing Dineje Tron' Dineje Tron' (Moose Dung). Sometimes I would start to cry when I remembered those things. When I had one more moon all I could think of was where Kybuck was and what he looked like. Finally, the last moon was up. My village was holding a big ceremony with native dancing and a potlatch in the kadjim. When my family and me got to the kadjim, to my surprise practically the whole village was there. Except Kybuck. Many thoughts ran through my head. Maybe he was dead or maybe he was sent away . . . or maybe he didn't care anymore.

Was he still my friend? That awful thought brought tears to my eyes. Then all of a sudden I heard a great big yell: "Dineje tron' . . . Dineje tron'."

I turned and looked . . . Kybuck was standing there with moose dung in his hands and a big smile on his face.

Editor's note: Lucy Maddox has offered to be a resource for teachers who would like help in setting up exchanges. She can be reached at the Department of English, Georgetown University, Washington, DC 20057-0001; telephone 202-687-7435.

* * * *

COMMENTARY

From the Editors

One student always comes to my mind when I reflect on teaching American Indian literature. We were studying Native American autobiographies that semester, and we began with Maria Chona and *Papago Woman*. My memorable student reacted to Chona's book with strong revulsion: she could not endure to read about vomiting. Her reaction to the accompanying selections from O'odham traditional literature in *The South Corner of Time* was more favorable: she pronounced them cute. We went on to Tom Ration's personal narrative in the same anthology; she conceived an intense dislike for Ration because he was "puffed up with pride." Other works received similar responses, until the unforgettable evening when she announced that the vision quest in *Black Elk Speaks* illustrated Native American worship of Satan. This was not a personal judgment, she said, but the teaching of her religion. It was difficult for any member of the class to think of a response that was at once civil and truthful, and I think we simply agreed to disagree.

A turning point in this class came when we read Charles Alexander Eastman's *Indian Boyhood*. The preparation for class discussion was to list examples of different kinds of teaching methods that Eastman describes and illustrates. My student was a teaching credential candidate, and she found common ground with this author when she recognized many familiar teaching modes in his book: lecture or explanation; modeling; induction and experiment; story or parable with interpretation. Here was the story of an education, and a compendium of educational methods. She could respect Eastman as a mentor, and she began to turn to the other authors with more respect as well. She reevaluated her earlier judgments, and when we came to discuss Emerson Mitchell's *Miracle Hill* she was able to see through initial contempt for "bad grammar" to the poetry and expressiveness of Mitchell's book (it also helped that she had read *Huckleberry Finn*, so a discussion of dialect rendering could make sense).

In her review of her own progress at the end of the course, this student noted that she had enrolled in the class expecting to read Cooper and Longfellow, because she could not have imagined that American Indians could write books at all—much less literature. Now she thought differently, and she had come to appreciate not only the literature but the people.

What is the moral of this story? I am not sure. I don't know how much of this student's new-found openness she carried into her career—if she now has one—teaching in the incredibly diverse California schools. If she does teach, I hope that her teaching is more informed and more open-minded as a result of the class. What I learned, myself, I think, is that teaching texts that turn out to be controversial (in my innocence I had not originally thought of any of these books as controversial) can make remarkable demands on one's patience. Throughout that term, arguments and elegant squelches leapt

to my mind; fortunately, these leaps generally occurred so long after I had been left speechless by some particularly egregious remark that I was prevented from marching headlong against her peculiar dogmas. I was forced to let the stories—the life stories and the traditional tales—speak for themselves, and of course they did so more eloquently than any defense or interpretation of mine could do for them. What I suspect and have no way of proving is that this student—like white voters polled regarding candidates of color—was more exceptional in her candor than in her attitudes. Maybe it helped that she was a re-entry student unversed in undergraduate cynicism; I like to think it helped her (I know it helped me) that many of her comments were recorded in the informal weekly journal all students kept, and not spewed to the class.

When I review the articles in this special issue of *SAIL* devoted to teaching, I look at them in relation to this experience, and I see connections and insights that are relevant to my story. Certainly the issue of respect for the texts and contexts, as Joe Bruchac brings up, was central to our experience. Like the students Lucy Maddox and Gary Griffith describe, my student learned from interacting very personally with the authors we read, even though she could not correspond with them via computer or mail. Like Bill Brown and Roger Dunsmore, I found that "trusting the story"—or poem—was important, and like David Sudol, I believe that the combination of writing as well as reading personal narrative was important. The experience confirms for me Ken Roemer's assertion that re-positioning literary studies around these so-called marginal texts can make possible an insight into all literature that may be available in no other way.

It has been a pleasure to receive these articles and to learn from them, and I hope they prove as stimulating to readers of *SAIL* as they have to me. My most sincere thanks go to Larry Abbott. Since he first brought up the subject of an issue devoted to teaching, through our discussion of the issue at MLA in 1989, through all the many editorial tasks of publicizing the call for material, receiving and critiquing submissions, and doing endless networking, Larry has worked energetically, perceptively, and with good humor. As this issue goes to press, he is enjoying a well-deserved sabbatical and an NEH teacher's fellowship.

Helen Jaskoski

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REVIEWS

Books Without Bias: Through Indian Eyes. Ed. Beverly Slapin and Doris Seale. Berkeley: Oyate, 1988. 462 pp., spiral. Available: Oyate / 2702 Mathews Street / Berkeley CA 94702.

Teaching the Native American. Ed. Hap Gilliland, Jon Reyhner, and Rachel Schafer. Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt, 1988. 196 pp. paper. Available: Four Winds, P.O. Box 3300, Rapid City SD 57709.

Despite Vine DeLoria's comment that America discovers its Indians every thirty years, courses in Native American Studies on the college level have proliferated and are on the increase. Books and scholarly essays on all aspects of native cultures abound; teaching positions for specialists in Native American literatures are available; no longer is Native American Literature "tacked on" to the "real" American literature, which commenced in the seventeenth century.

Even though there is much heat, if not light, generated in discussions about the literary canon, Native American literatures are recognized as distinct and important in their own right, as complex and as worthy of study as any other literature of a people. Yet this acceptance on the post-secondary level has not filtered down to English, Reading, and Social Studies programs in America's schools. Basal readers and literary anthologies, especially on the elementary and middle school levels, contain virtually no works by Native American writers; most selections are merely retold myths and legends or brief biographical excerpts.

Some (but by no means even many) high school literature anthologies include one or two Indian writers, usually subsumed under the "ethnic" chapter of the text. James Charles mentions in "For the Sake of a Fad," his study of literature texts used in North Carolina, "that these selections, when considered collectively, do not adequately represent the tribal diversity of American Indian people, nor the literature they produce" (*Journal of Ethnic Studies* 15.2 [1987]: 132). The situation in literature anthologies is also reflected in the lack of content considerations (even skipping the accuracy problems) given Native Americans in Social Studies texts, and is already well-documented by Costo and others.

With the fairly recent growth of Whole Language reading programs and a concurrent shifting away from basal readers, teachers in elementary and middle schools have a new freedom to use complete novels and other materials in reading instruction. But how do mainstream teachers, all but untrained in Native American studies (or any other "minority" literatures, for that matter) assess the value and truth of novels by and about Native peoples? How can teachers, accustomed to seeing Native literatures merely as quaint and charming little stories, select books which do not perpetuate stereotypical images? How can teachers even begin to undo the harm caused by false images of Native

Americans? The answer to these questions can be found in *Books Without Bias*.

Intended primarily for elementary and middle school reading and Language Arts teachers, the book is valuable as well for instructors in Teacher Education departments or those who teach children's literature. *Books Without Bias* contains five major sections: introductory and framing essays, such as "Thanking the Birds," on Native American upbringing, and "Storytelling and the Sacred" by Joseph Bruchac, "Taking Another Look" by Mary Gloyne Tyler, concerned with stereotypical imagery of Indians in children's books, and "Why I'm Not Thankful for Thanksgiving" by Michael Dorris, on the "unintentional" racism often found in school programs; a thoroughly illustrated checklist by which teachers can assess the content of picture books and novels; an excellent sampling from the diverse voices of contemporary poetry, including Paula Gunn Allen, Diane Burns, and Lucy Tapahonso; and a detailed final section of bibliographic and resource material, along with addresses of publishers and small presses. The three introductory sections challenge the reading teacher to rethink preconceptions about Native literatures and suggest alternatives to the standard content of most reading programs.

But the centerpiece of the book is some 100 book reviews, ranging in length from one paragraph to three pages. The reviews, done alphabetically by author, indicate publisher, nation (if specified in the book), and approximate grade level. Most of the novels reviewed were published from the late '70s through 1987 and are still generally in print. Written by Doris Seale, the reviews are personal responses to the novels and are in an informal tone. Where Anna Stensland's 1979 *Literature By and About the American Indian* was objective in its annotations, the reviews in *Books Without Bias* are refreshingly, and informatively, subjective. Books come in for either praise or blame. Her criteria are simple and are derived from the checklist developed by Seale, Beverly Slapin, and Rosemary Gonzales: "Does this book tell the truth? Does the author respect the People? Is there anything in this book that would embarrass or hurt a Native child? Is there anything in this book that would foster stereotypic thinking in a non-Indian child?" Readers may be put off by some of her assessments ("It makes the hair stand up on the back of my neck"; "This is a terrible book"), but will always know where she stands, and why.

Based on Seale's recommendations, and with the corollary materials offered, *Books Without Bias* provides the teacher serious about fair and honest representations of Native Americans in reading curriculums a wealth of material to build, or rebuild, a program. As Michael Dorris notes in another of his introductory essays, "'I' is Not for Indian":

It's no joke when a dominant group, with a sorry history of oppression towards its minorities, expropriates a shallow version of a subordinate, relatively powerless group and promulgates that imagery as valid. . . . So why should standards of respect

and restraint differ when it comes to Indians? Are Native peoples less worthy of consideration, less contemporary, less complicated? Is it any less demeaning or ridiculous to portray every Indian with feathers than it would be to present every Afro-American with a spear or every Hispanic with a sombrero?

Where *Books Without Bias* is concerned with the content of reading materials, *Teaching the Native American* focuses on method and technique. *Teaching the Native American* not only provides a cultural framework for approaching Native learning styles, but also furnishes specific teaching suggestions in numerous subject areas. Divided into twenty chapters, the first half of the book covers such topics as student self-image, classroom discipline, working with parents, and emphasizing Indian culture in all courses. The second part of the book provides approaches to teaching in such areas as English, math, science, creative writing—even computer studies and physical education. *Teaching the Native American* presents sound methodology when it suggests that instructional materials be relevant and derived from students' tribal culture and that local resources and people be used as much as possible in classes and in curriculum development.

Beyond having an obvious use for teachers of Native students, this book is important for all teachers, for the challenges facing the profession today must be met by each one of us. In this way, *Teaching the Native American* goes beyond being a book just for "teachers of Indians."

Larry Abbott

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Indian School Days. Basil H. Johnston. Norman and London: U of Oklahoma Press, 1989. 250 pp. hardback, ISBN: 0-8061-2226-9.

In *Indian School Days*, Basil Johnston ostensibly sets out a history of his years as a student at St. Peter Claver's, a Jesuit-run vocational boarding-school for Canadian Indian children in Upper Ontario, beginning in 1939 when he was 12. The school's purpose was to transform Indian children into socially-useful plumbers and electricians, though they also studied mathematics, literature, and other basic grade school courses. A high school program was added in 1945, and the vocational emphasis dropped. The real intent, of course, was to remove Indian children from their reserves and families to assimilate them into Canadian society and out of their Indian cultural heritage.

What Johnston actually provides in this autobiographical memoir is a faithfully-detailed example of Foucault's institutional paradigm in *Discipline and Punish* (New York, 1977). Here we can watch the

political power exercised on the soul by institutionalizing the body in order to transform it, a "technique of correction" which produces what Foucault calls the "obedient subject, the individual subjected to habits, rules, orders, an authority that is exercised continually around him and upon him, and which he must allow to function automatically in him" (128-9). The key to this transformation is institutional surveillance by guards, monitors, prefects: a "normalizing gaze . . . that makes it possible to qualify, to classify and to punish" (184-5). St. Peter Claver's seems to have been just such a place—or rather, all such places—with its strictly regulated routines of study, work, and social life, its clanging bells and shouted orders making the exterior surveillance develop over the years into an interior one. The Indian children thus substituted their tribal identity for places on the Western economic totempole, members of a "useful" work force.

What Johnston gives us in his own narrative of this transformation is an exactitude of dramatic detail in describing the boys' days and nights, the meticulousness of regulation Foucault points out as one of the conditions of discipline. Sent to the school as a child truant, Johnston came from a reserve family with an absent father and no power against the Indian agent who decided the boy should be sent to Spanish, the school's location on Georgian Bay. The first chapters are a record of surveillance: first a day at the school, from rising at 6:15 through Mass, breakfast, work, study, lunch, and on until bed-time at 9:30. A day given to following orders, cleaning toilets, being always hungry, being "broken in." The children learned what anyone thus institutionalized has learned: obedience, silence, pretended ignorance. Other chapters describe life at Spanish the year round: the summer "holidays" when those who couldn't go home worked for the school, Christmas when small presents only made those exiles more miserable away from their families. Johnston gives us the sounds of the time-regulating bells, the taste of the suppertime barley soup; and he notes what the boys resented most: the presence of the "eyes" "day after day, week after week, year after year." As Foucault reminds us, it is not the big crimes that are feared by the power-structure but the minor infractions of cellular rule: "Our treatment implied that we were little better than felons or potential felons" (138). There were pluses, of course: Father O'Keefe, who introduced the students to good European fiction, and Johnston is grateful. But this is not where his emphasis falls.

Ironically, the school did not graduate any plumbers or electricians, according to Johnston; nor any priests, another possibility. What it did produce was a counterculture among the boys, and it is the detailed anecdotes of subversion that dominate the story, a narrational breakdown into a more idiosyncratic and personal experience once the opening pattern of obedience has been established. The memoir should record the life of a "good citizen" in W. H. Auden's ironic phrase, a boy trained in the routine of the tailor shop, the stables and truck gardens, the chicken farm that helped support St. Peter Claver's

financially. Instead, Johnston's story is given over to Tom Sawyer-Huck Finn adventures paradoxically called into being by the squeeze of these disciplinary pressures and vocational ends. The narrative literally escapes from the chronological structure of the opening chapters and takes on the episodic rhythm of the boys' secretive and imaginative lives. Just as the story begins with the truant's act of rebellion in skipping school, its secret life continues with accounts of boys racing the farm horses at nights on the back roads, having rotten potato fights when they should have been at work in the kitchen, and slyly dumping the choir director out of her sled into the snow.

What escapes from the constant discipline is language. Forbidden to speak their own Mohawk or Ojibway, the boys develop their personal brand of English, the language of resistance. A new boy "escapes" and the prefect, asking for him, is told "'Betcha he runned away, 'cause he got a good thrashing t'other day for talking Indian. Father Kehl caught 'im. Betcha he runned away, when we were up at the farm today cutting wood. . . . But he's just a li'l guy, him; he'll get lost in the bush'" (104). Such "extempore" dialogue is complemented by everyone being given a nickname: Half Chick, Rusty Beans, Ti Bar Poot, Scumbag. Everyone complains about the food with the usual epithet "sad old" (as in "sad old mush"); male bonding results in language codes and verbal caricatures of the "others." But it is the structural opening-up of the school year into personal narrative that most effectively records rebellion, whether it is boys running away or smoking forbidden cigarettes, giving the discourse its true charm and immediacy. This is the most detailed account of Indian boarding school life I know.

According to Foucault, however, writing biography fits the disciplinary paradigm in its classification and objectification of the subject. Johnston leaves the school before graduating, returning to the reserve where he tries to make a living trapping animals for their skins. It is hard work with little pay, and he decides to return to St. Peter Claver's for the newly-instituted high school diploma, a not-so-subtle reminder of the triumph of an economic system which makes it impossible for Indians to live on their land and above poverty, a potent reinforcement for assimilation. But for all the delightful detail of the boys' small rebellions, for all their teasing of the prefects or their passion for that rare treat, baked beans, they finally come across not as Indians but as children of the hegemonic West, separated from their cultural base and transformed into "good citizens" of Canada. The "Indian" vanishes from the autobiography, save for brief references to the forbidden languages or the chapter on the reserve. Anyone of any background and culture who has served in the army or gone to a Western school will recognize the types and the experiences. Unlike Charlotte Brontë's Lowood, St. Peter Claver's has not been transformed into a more imaginative institution: it is solidly and stolidly an historical and determining object. And this keeps the memoir from becoming more than a deeply-felt record of an ambivalently-regarded

institution. The book's capture of the rhythms of institutional living and the bastardized English dialogue of its children confirm the success of the school's surveillance techniques. Foucault's "normalizing gaze" is in evidence long after its author has left Spanish and its "sad old mush."

Robley Evans

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Ojibway Heritage. Basil Johnston. Lincoln and London: U of Nebraska P, 1990. 171 pp., \$7.95 paper, ISBN 0-8032-7575-2.

My first contact with Ojibway culture was as a very young, very Anglo, and very naive teacher in a reservation school in the early '70s. My job was to teach literature to pre-teen boys, a difficult task at best in one's own cultural context. What I needed was one readable text that would serve several purposes: as background material for Native American literature, as a cultural initiation for non-Indians, and as a thoughtful collection of legends and myths to be appreciated on its own terms. I needed Basil Johnston.

I'd love to teach those boys now—there has been a virtual renaissance of Native American literature. And Ojibway writers are among the best—Gerald Vizenor, Louise Erdrich, and Basil Johnston himself, whose short stories are some of the funniest I have ever read.

However, Basil Johnston, a linguist and lecturer in the Department of Ethnology at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, is more than a writer of humorous short stories. *Ojibway Heritage*, his 1976 landmark study of the traditions and tales of the Ojibway people, has recently been reissued by the University of Nebraska Press. *Ojibway Heritage* provides the missing link between modern literature and culture and the past. In graceful, deceptively simple prose, he provides a text that can give Ojibway people a better understanding of themselves, and outsiders a deeper appreciation of the Ojibway, and by extension, other Native peoples. Non-Indians who grow up misinformed about certain traditions will be enlightened. For example, Johnston undercuts the myth of the savage, warlike Indian. Ojibway warriors, he writes, were considered a "necessary evil" and were not revered for their aggression.

Although Anglo teachers have often been cautioned that Indian students can work only in groups and that family ties take precedence over all other obligations, Johnston's research indicates otherwise. The totem, for example, could identify a person's family, but more importantly, it indicated a vocation or profession. People were born as members of various totems, but could adopt different totems when they seemed more suited to that way of life. The totem was considered "the most important social unit taking precedence over the tribe, com-

munity, and the immediate family." This bit of information could encourage people (especially teachers and other professionals) to avoid assumptions that would impose limitations on Ojibway students.

The book reveals some unique aspects of the Ojibway tradition. For example, Daebaudjimod the raconteur advised young people to curtail their facility with words because they won't be believed, even if they are telling the truth. In matters of privacy and the primacy of personal vision, it was believed that an attempt to "enter the inner being of another person was construed as an act of possession." And in a departure from western European thought, holy people were not revered for their otherworldliness, but earned their status as a medicine man or woman because of their proper use of gifts for physical healing, their "wisdom of curing."

The stories themselves can be appreciated as literature (especially in studying theme), as moral lessons or as well-constructed plots. The story of how the deer left the Anishnabeg because they had been mistreated by humans raises profound questions about morality and men's and women's relationship to the natural world. It also has an interesting twist to the plot. The Anishnabeg eventually found the deer, who remained willingly penned by a flock of crows because they were treated well. Before the deer agreed to return to the Anishnabeg, they reminded them of a vital truth: "Without you we can live. But without us, you cannot live."

Some of the tales are lyrical and poetic. An especially poignant story tells how the rare, delicate ladyslipper flower sprang up from the swollen and bleeding feet of a young woman when she ran through the crusty snow to get medicine for her sick husband and her people. In another story, Johnston recounts how Kitche Manitou ordered Nanabush to bring joy and happiness to children with the ancient multi-colored mountains. Nanabush collected all the colored pebbles at the base of the mountains, threw them to the winds and they became the "spirit of children's play," or butterflies.

Feminist scholars will find much food for thought. One fondly-held notion among some feminist historians is that traditional Indian cultures were matriarchal. Johnston makes an obvious attempt to cast the realities in a positive light, but the reality was obviously more complex than our modern-day assumptions. For example, he writes that women had no "comparable obligation" to seek a vision, but that a woman was "free" to do so. He explains the oft-criticized custom of solitary confinement at the onset of menstruation for young girls this way: "So unique and personal was the gift of life-giving considered that young girls were placed in solitude during the receipt of gift and empowerment." He describes how women danced differently from men: "While the men and the warriors leaped and bounded in dance, the women glided in rhythm to the drum beats, their feet not leaving the soil. . . . The life rhythm of women is slower and different from that of men." These customs can be interpreted in both positive and negative terms

by feminists, and Johnston's book can stimulate worthwhile discussion in this regard.

As a scholar, Johnston employs a deceptively simple approach. He offers the text as pure content, leaving the matter of interpretation and insight to the reader. This makes the book flexible enough to use in a variety of disciplines. Despite the thorny issues raised by transliterating an oral tradition to the English printed word, and admitting outsiders to the inside of a private culture, Johnston has filled a real need. He has provided a document that lets the Ojibway tradition speak for itself, and in so doing has left it for the reader to decide what he or she is willing and able to hear.

Louise Mengelkoch

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Ojibway Ceremonies. Basil Johnston. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1990. 188 pp., \$7.95. ISBN 0-8032-7573-0.

A reprinting of Basil Johnston's *Ojibway Ceremonies* in paper by the University of Nebraska Press not only extends the shelf life of this eloquent recounting of Ojibway ceremonial experience, but also offers a significant new preface which models a context for understanding the book's meaning from inside rather than outside the culture. On its surface, the preface Johnston has written for this Bison edition offers a useful description of how the book evolved—through a fortuitous series of encounters which sharpened Johnston's own comprehension of the origins and forms of his people's ceremonial practice. More profoundly, though, by illustrating the importance of the relationships among stories and of precise interpretation of meaning in Ojibway language, Johnston's work enforces once again the abiding coherence and continuity which words and oral traditions confer upon Native American lives.

In this edition's new preface, for example, Johnston recounts at some length a Kwakiutl acquaintance's description of an initiation ceremony, designated incorrectly by outsiders as the "Cannibal Dance." Viewed from the narrator's perspective within the culture, however, the account illustrates the true ceremonial significance of the initiation experience—as an enactment of the assumption of the deepest personal and community values in a form which is neither dance nor connected to the eating of human flesh. Although Johnston documents the extensive textual research which went into the book's preparation, he gives primary credit to other resources: his work with another tribal storyteller to discover the stories, relationships with one another, and his deepening appreciation of the precise distinctions which determine the meanings of words—and of culture itself.

What Scott Momaday has said about Leslie Silko's Ceremony—that it is a "telling" more than a novel—is in truth an almost universal descriptor of the process of American Indian expression in most of its forms. Johnston's book, using narratives extracted from oral tradition, ranges out from the ceremonial experiences of a single representative life to interweave, in the Indian way, spiritual and historical event. The narratives which convey these ceremonies, however, are neither *merely* ritual nor history. They actually present a people's world view by illustrating how ceremonies and the logic of their contexts and origins interpret Ojibway conceptions of existence and moral order.

That connection of ceremony and context leads the reader not only in a loose chronology from story to story, but through cycles of stories within stories. The naming ceremony, for example, is presented in a manner which shows much more than the ceremonial process itself. Johnston has troubled himself to describe the full meaning and significance of this "most important event in a person's life, the receiving of an identity through ceremony and a name" (15), by including the details of the preparation for the ceremony, the experience which credentials the namer, and the story which conveys the significance and gifts of the chosen name.

Johnston also gets at just how ceremonial behaviors influence values within the people's daily lives and evolve from their collective experience, as in the explanation of why "taking time" is a universal characteristic of Ojibway behavior. In the account of ceremonial courtship and marriage, Mishi-Waub-Kaikaik's initial declaration of his desire to marry a young woman from a neighboring village is initially ignored by his prospective father-in-law. This does not result, as Johnston relates, from

... misunderstanding, or from any disrespect of Mishi-Waub-Kaikaik's time. The Anishnabeg often took days, weeks, or even months to think about some matter before giving answer. They had long experience with the consequences of instant decisions. Even though an urgent issue, or another person's needs were involved, it was always better to take time.

There were many practical reasons for "taking time," but dominating them all was a reverence for "the word." To be able to make a decision was to be asked to give "word," irrevocable and binding upon him who pronounced it. It was an extension of someone, a test of "being true." Keeping word was the measure of a person's integrity. (80)

Much has been written about the sacredness of language among Native American people, but here Johnston provides an uncommonly concrete and succinct explanation of the logic which accounts for that reverence.

One may occasionally wonder about constraints of confidentiality and secrecy traditionally placed upon some ceremonial practices which Johnston has included in detail, e.g., those concerning the Midewiwin

and the Society of the Dawn. Ultimately, though, Johnston's voice and presence in this book are not unlike those of the tribal storyteller and historian whose ceremonial responsibility, recounted in the book's concluding section, is to relate in council the history of the Anishnabeg. This section, rich with significance and irony as a record of a particularly consequential point in the destiny of a nation, concerns a treaty signing which resulted in the loss of Ojibway homeland. The function of the storyteller in this portentous circumstance is to deal with ". . . truth—the core of history and the proper subject matter of speech" (162). In this, Mino-waewae, the ceremonial storyteller,

. . . spoke what he knew, and that was enough. He did not presume to go beyond his knowledge or to stretch or bend or warp it. . . . Of those who heard him speak, not one was ever heard to say: "He talks too much," or "He talks in circles," or "He is lost in his own mind." Instead everyone could agree that: "He talks directly," and "He speaks the truth," and "He is eloquent." (162)

Such could be a description of Johnston's own accomplishment in this important contribution to the much-overdue but growing body of work about American Indian lives by American Indian writers.

Carol A. Miller

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The Sun Came Down: The History of the World As My Blackfeet Elders Told It. Percy Bullchild. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990. 390 pp. \$12.95 paper, ISBN 0-06-250106-2.

In *The Singer of Tales* Albert Lord said transcribing oral performance was like "photographing Proteus." Call it what you will, Percy Bullchild has brought Blackfeet Literature to a meeting place with Euramerican written tradition with his book *The Sun Came Down*. In doing so, he has produced a work that is part living oral tradition and part literary tradition; a direct reflection of the adaptability of the Native American aesthetic being forged between cultures at the present time. This is important. It is an example of how Native American identity is kept alive; of how it is acculturated to the Euramerican culture, rather than being assimilated by it.

Bullchild accomplishes this by the vehicle of the Native American sense of narrative time as presented in creation stories, trickster stories, and culture hero stories. The principal characters in the stories are a series of mediators between the supernatural and temporal worlds: Mudman, Rib Woman, Napi, Blood Clot, and Scarface. Unique to this process, however, is a technique becoming more and more common in modern Native American Literature. In a good many

examples from oral tradition you see a narrator working back and forth in time and not following a strict time frame in the storytelling. In *The Sun Came Down* Bullchild utilizes this technique to jump from historical narrative (Napi and Two Ladies) into the present by interjecting a comment such as this:

Most of the time, Napi had much trouble in getting food. . . . Food was always plentiful until the coming of the whiteman. Now the whiteman makes us, the original owners of this country and all that went with this country, food and the likes, pay for our very own food and all. All originally belongs to the Native. (182)

The effect of this is right out of oral tradition, where performance of stories and the criticism of those stories was/is a simultaneous process. In other words, each time a storyteller tells a story, he tells his own version of it. Through this act of criticism traditional stories not only survive but are adapted to the present.

The Sun Came Down begins with creation stories from the Origin Period of Native American narrative time. In some Native American cultures creation begins with an asexual spirit being who creates by thought two sexualized sky parents such as Creator Sun (Sun Father) and Severed Leg (Moon Mother). As it plays out in Blackfeet narrative, Moon Mother's name, Severed Leg, results from the stormy relationship between Creator Sun and Moon. She takes up with Snakeman in an act of infidelity to Creator Sun, who in turn does away with Snakeman. In her guilt and rage Moon pursues Creator Sun and their sons, the stars of the Big Dipper, intent on doing away with them. Attempting to protect himself and the boys (especially the wonderfully named Rawman!) Creator Sun invents and throws the forces of nature at Moon, then eventually cuts off her leg, all to no avail. Indeed, she pursues yet in their heavenly cycle, and Blackfeet elders tell, "This life we all have will come to its end when Severed Leg the Moon catches Creator Sun and their seven sons, the Big Dipper " (36).

Meantime, Creator Sun's second or standby wife (!), Earth Mother, takes the place of Severed Leg the Moon as his new bride. This creation, which will eventually require further attention, or mediation, can be envisioned as a Descent originating the Earth-Diver myth complex common to Plains tribes, of which the Blackfeet are one. Prior to the time of mediation, however, is the time of Our Human Beginning. As previously mentioned, *The Sun Came Down* begins with a creation story that describes how Creator Sun brought all things into being in a manner not unlike the Genesis of the Old Testament. Here, too, there emerges a rebellious selfishness that involves initial deception, betrayal, carnal knowledge and a snake; here, too, Mudman has his mate, Rib Woman, pulled from his body by the Creator. And yet while the similarities are recognizable, the fusion of Blackfeet and

Christian cosmologies, as well as the Blackfeet differences, overcome in their unique approach to the problem of creation.

To some degree a book such as *The Sun Came Down* has come to be judged "authentic" to the degree that its content does not seek to fuse with Euramerican culture, or to the degree that its content agrees with the information disseminated by ethnographers or historians. Although such information is valuable to a certain extent, too often our search for what is Native American in texts is reduced only to these ethnographic and historical facts. In this sense we are very unaccepting of the living, evolving possibilities of Native American literature. Bullchild's fusions, then, including his fusion of Piegan and Christian cosmology, do not seem to me a tampering with sacred tales. Indeed, this combining of religion is representative of acculturation as it exists among Native Americans at the present time.

In addition, in a surprising and most welcome break from publishing standards, *The Sun Came Down* retains the less-than-perfect grammar of Bullchild's English, which he cautions "is still very foreign to me" (1). In permitting Bullchild to speak, the publishers evidence a movement away from monologic presentation initiated by Native American autobiographers of the thirties who strove to produce a text that would read as a smooth and seamless verbal object. Bullchild's language moves instead in the direction of—in the sense of Bakhtin—the dialogic.

With the advent of human beginnings in the book, responsibility for further creation is passed on to Napi in a choice collection of stories that focuses on Old Man (Napi), who has been sent by Creator Sun to help the children of Mudman and Ribwoman. Napi, however, spends most of his time satisfying his own selfish needs. Napi is followed by Blood Clot. Unlike Napi, Blood Clot fights evil in all of its manifestations. Finally, this wonderful mythic cycle concludes with how the warrior Scarface brings to the Blackfeet the rituals of the Sun Dance.

Percy Bullchild tells of a vanished world in such a way that cultural stories come to be understood as both created, historical realities and yet images of eternal verities. In doing so he creates a coherent view of a magical world that most will recognize as their own, Native American and Euramerican alike.

Sidner J. Larson

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Cross-Cultural Teaching Tales. Ed. Judith Kleinfeld. Fairbanks: U Alaska, 1989. 36 pp. paper, ISBN 1-877962-03-1.

This booklet contains twenty-three short (about one page each) essays by teachers, Dr. Kleinfeld's graduate students, recounting cross-cultural experiences. While most are from Alaska, there are also

examples with Black, Navajo, and Japanese students. According to the title page this is the fourth in a series, though no information is given on the first three publications.

These "teaching tales" involve working with students, other school staff, parents, and communities and deal with the misunderstandings and problems that can arise from intercultural situations involving such things as humor, grading, and preconceived ideas about minority groups. They can give new teachers valuable insights into working with different cultures and help them avoid some mistakes, though with the best of help, some mistakes will be made. The vignettes are divided into three groups, "Starting Out in a New Cultural Scene," "Clashes in Cultural Rules and Values," and "Across Generational, Class, and Institutional Cultures." Each tale follows the pattern of the teacher recounting a situation she was faced with and then telling what was learned from it. The common sense conclusion of the teacher from the second tale is good advice for any teacher:

I learned that experience is a far better teacher than any course.
From now on I plan on sitting back and taking note of things
before I jump to hasty conclusions. (5)

It would have been nice to read some of these stories before I started teaching on the Navajo Reservation, but the new teacher also needs to focus on the specific cultural practices of the community he is working in. However, the need for flexibility, responsiveness to one's surroundings, and a generally pragmatic approach are universal.

In my Issues in Indian Education classes at Eastern Montana College, I have my students read autobiographies of Indian students and teachers for the same reason one would have students read these cross-cultural teaching tales. It is helpful for new teachers to see themselves from the Native American student's point of view and for them to see how other teachers have adjusted to teaching across cultures. It would be nice to see a number of these teacher tales, along with student tales, collected in a larger book along with a discussion of the educational problems associated with colonialism and intercultural communication.

Jon Reyhner

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Coyote Stories. Mourning Dove. Ed. Jay Miller. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1990. 246 pp. cloth, ISBN 0-8032-3145-8; paper, ISBN 0-8032-8169-2.

Mourning Dove: A Salishan Autobiography. Ed. Jay Miller. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1990. 265 pp. ISBN 0-8032-3119-9.

University of Nebraska Press has just released two important works for those interested in Mourning Dove in particular, or in the roots of Native American written literature in general. Mourning Dove was a little-remembered figure until Dexter Fisher wrote a dissertation on Zitkala-Sa (Bonnin) and Mourning Dove in 1979, and then edited a reprint of her 1927 novel, *Cogewea, The Half-Blood: A Depiction of the Great Montana Cattle Range*, in 1981. Since then Mourning Dove has received passing notice from major Native American scholars, and in recent years thoughtful critical essays have begun to emerge.

Coyote Stories, first published in 1933, was so successful that a second edition was published in 1934. The collection includes twenty-seven stories, and they begin with the Spirit Chief naming the Animal People. From then on we journey through a chaos of monsters, and the comic, even selfish and violent acts, of those meant to prepare the way for the New People. Of course, these narratives include Coyote, but there are also Fox, Whale, Chipmunk, Owl-Woman, Flint-Rock, Turtle, Skunk, Rattlesnake, Salmon, Wind, Gartersnake, Mole, Spider, Badger, Marten, Crawfish, Grizzly Bear, Wood-Tick, Mosquito, Porcupine, Chickadee, and Kingfisher. This list has a random feeling, like the text, a journey of animals into new experiences in which they confront others, confront themselves, unwittingly reveal characteristics we laugh at, and ultimately, bumblingly create an order that we recognize as the world around us.

What is particularly striking about these tales in contrast to the extraordinary and godlike heroic adventures of early Mediterranean and Viking cultures is that the New People are so vulnerable that a way must be prepared for them to give these humans a chance to survive. Even the nebulous comic hero, Coyote, must rely on the squas-tenk' powers which reside in his feces, on coincidence, and on the ability of others to constantly revive him from deserved extinction, if the world is to be made ready. This vital, psychologically complex animal/human/monster world is also surprisingly nonhierarchical. The squat, stubby arrows of Chickadee can create a ladder to a higher world, while Bear, in his/her hunger and fear of loss, can weigh that ladder down until it breaks.

Moreover, these stories are rooted in the Columbia River Basin area which today includes parts of British Columbia, Washington, Idaho and Western Montana. To read *Coyote Stories* is to have the pleasure of connecting with a spiritual and a moral universe which derives its power from these inland Northwest lands—their rivers, their mountains, their animals.

It was Mourning Dove's two-pronged goal to preserve these Okanogan tales and to stimulate bi-cultural awareness and respect for Native cultures. She has succeeded. The reviewer for the *Oregonian*, December 24, 1933, said it well: "The 27 stories in this collection will help more than many heavy volumes of ethnological theorizing to reconstruct the vivid life of the Indian in the Pacific northwest." A. B. Guthrie, then a journalist for the *Lexington* (KY) *Leader* (December 17, 1933), highlighted what has yet to be acknowledged about Mourning Dove's work: "Mourning Dove, too, is a more effective storyteller than most of those who have attempted to preserve for us the myths of the American Indian, perhaps because her fine simplicity of expression makes less impossible the impossible events she recounts."

The publication of *Mourning Dove: A Salishan Autobiography* will enhance what these critics have already noted, for Mourning Dove's storytelling skill brings voice to a period of enforced assimilation that is difficult to grasp. This collection of personal reminiscences, the recording of the historical memory of her people, and her account of the daily activities and the rituals that she saw dying out, is a treasure-trove of information and response to a period of staggering change. Here we have a writer who not only preserves the legends of her people, but who also reflects on her times. Ultimately, because so few Indian voices speak from the dark side of "Manifest Destiny," her contemporary observations will be considered a most valuable contribution to American Studies.

Unfortunately, the title, *Mourning Dove: A Salishan Autobiography*, is misleading, for the focus of her anecdotal material is very narrow, from early childhood memories until she was a teenager, probably 1885 to 1900. The purpose of the anecdotes also is different from the Western notion of autobiography. She recounts remembrances to recollect a time and a cultural way of behaving. The stories tell us as much about a people as they tell us about her. This is intentional and fits well within the tradition of American Indian family stories. By her forties, Mourning Dove also had worked extensively with L. V. McWhorter and Dean Guie, and she had learned the Euro-American way of recounting history. Her final manuscript is a blending of two traditions, a counterpoint of Western academic ethnohistory and Native American oral presentation.

The creativity of her format is matched by the importance of the subject matter. Here is a woman writing clearly about women's lives, breaking through the deeply rooted sexism of male focused cultural analysis. She is also cutting through the racism of the dominant culture's perspective. Mourning Dove begins by telling us that she is grateful for two things: 1) to be born Indian, and 2) to have known those who were able to live life in traditional Indian ways. As she notes, she lives in a period of "readjustment," "a pathetic state of turmoil" (3). Her manuscript explores what traditional lives were like and how they unraveled. She focuses on the bewilderment of a people who tried to survive while accommodating to chaos.

The narration moves between the perspective of an Indian child growing up in the 1880s and 1890s, and the adult who adds the information that comes with reflection. Even though the Colville Reservation had been established in 1872, traditional life styles were still intact. There was seasonal migration depending on food supplies and hunting or fishing opportunities. Observation includes details such as watching her mother make pack saddles with forked thorn bushes, to the larger issues of taboos around hunting, the sharing of food resources, and the hard times when little or no food was left. She writes about Spirit Animal Power, about Shamans, about the sacred power dances. She writes about becoming a woman: menstruation, behavioral taboos and dress associated with coming of age. She writes about the traditional hardships of being a young wife, about infidelity, rituals of separation and of remarriage. She writes about death and modes of grieving.

She also notes the disparities that will lead to cultural breakdown. Game animals disappear because of over-hunting. Dams are built and the salmon run is affected. Reservation lands are cut in half. Indians are pushed into farming and into a cash nexus which means nothing to them. She illustrates their dilemmas by telling stories like the one about taking an older Indian into a restaurant to play a joke on him. When the older Indian is given a bill, he is shocked and replies, "You should be ashamed to ask for money when you feed a guest" (179). The practical joke is clear, but so is the conflict between cultural expectations. Moreover, in humiliating the old man, the younger Indians are ridiculing traditional values that have enabled Indian peoples to survive for centuries.

Mourning Dove's personal dilemmas also highlight the changing times. She is sent to a mission school in 1895. Punished for speaking Salish, she sees first hand that White children live in nicer lodgings, receive better educations, and are kept separate from Indian children (29). She also sees cousins with a White father receiving advantages denied to her (119-120), and she dreams of having a different future from the "slave" wife role she is being prepared for.

These disruptions become severe when the people must survive the devastating winter of 1892-1893. This season of famine and flood is quickly followed by an imposed allotment system, and a terrifying period when prime farm lands and mineral rights claims are opened up to a homesteaders' run.

One might expect more pathos, possibly more anger and social criticism, given the subject matter, but Mourning Dove's choice to enliven data with anecdotes keeps the reader focused on the human dimensions of extreme social change, and keeps the hearts and minds of her readers open. She is a skilled storyteller, knowledgeable and compassionate. The power of truth also lies in Mourning Dove's commitment to tell the Indian story from the perspective of one caught in both the Indian and White worlds. Hers is truly a voice from the frontier.

My discussion thus far has pointedly left out comment on the editing of the texts. That is because Jay Miller's editorial work has not only been insensitive to the significance of Mourning Dove's literary achievements, but he also has undercut her as a reliable narrator about her own life, and organized his comments and her final manuscript in such a way as to diminish the voice he pretends to bring to the fore.

Miller sees Mourning Dove as a neurotic personality. In his essay in *Being and Becoming Indian* (ed. James A. Clifton, Chicago: Dorsey, 1989, 160-182), he speaks of a woman who "managed to compartmentalize herself" (161), a woman who "feared the loss of her embryonic identity" (165). His Mourning Dove is filled with neuroses—fear of the dark, of snakes, and of the number thirteen. He uses a routine diagnosis, "exhaustion from manic depressive psychosis," often put on death certificates by Medical Lake Hospital personnel, to suggest that hers was a seriously disturbed "spirit" (180), although no records exist which would support such an assertion.

This misogynist portrayal of Mourning Dove is blended to a pedantic, patronizing air in the introductions and notes appended to *Coyote Stories* and the *Autobiography*. In the latter, consider such phrases as: 1) "her manuscript is not strictly accurate" (xii); 2) "When she was aware of such features of traditional cultures" (xxiv); 3) "It is just this paradox that Mourning Dove evoked with her awkward dramatics" (xxxix). In *Coyote Stories* he discounts her understanding of the sacred female power of the sweatlodge (it is male, of course), and comments that while "her overall arrangement may seem haphazard" he can assure us that it follows a vaguely appropriate order (xv). He also asserts that she knows better: "a belief known to Mourning Dove only too well, though ignored in print" (xv). Thus Jay Miller establishes himself as the authoritative male ethnographer who will guide us towards a correct understanding of her subject matter.

But how sound is this authority? My own research indicates that his introductions are filled with data inaccuracies and that he has little understanding about Mourning Dove's collaborations with L. V. McWhorter and Dean Guie. His unquestioning reliance on people such as Charlie Quintasket to correct the record (Charlie was born in 1910, and all of Mourning Dove's anecdotal accounts of her own life happened before 1900) also raises serious scholarly questions.

Yet, what I find to be the most distressing is Jay Miller's insensitivity to Mourning Dove's voice, purpose and audience. He is obtuse to her humor, careless of her personal situation, and devaluing of her female perspective. His insistence on ethnographic accuracy blinds him to the power of story and leads to that deadliest of all academic ills, the drive to be crushingly, narrowly right. He does not see that in correcting her English grammar he has wiped out much of the subtlety of her tone and voice, he does not see that those who reorganized her manuscript by subject matter (possibly Dean Guie, certainly Erna Gunther and Miller), have obscured *her* themes and *her* explorations of thought in their need for linear development.

I must also note that "The Red Cross and the Okanogans" article in the Appendix of the *Autobiography* was primarily written by L. V. McWhorter based on a much shorter essay sent to him by Mourning Dove in January 1919. Other McWhorter footnotes from *Coyote Stories* (pp. 24-26, 31, 33) are incorporated into the *Autobiography* as if they are Mourning Dove's, and personal letters and information from her introductions are not appropriately identified. Although he mentions two manuscripts, "Tipi Life" and "Educating the Indian" (they may have been parts of a whole for her), there is no way to work out which is which in the book he has created. At times, scholars will not know when they are reading McWhorter or Mourning Dove, the letters, the introductions to her books, or manuscript pages, unless they are very familiar with the primary documents. Miller also may have added material of his own, as he has altered the spelling of ten Okanogan words throughout the reprint of *Coyote Stories* without indicating the editorial changes.

I regret ending on a sour note, as the publication of both *Coyote Stories* and Mourning Dove's final manuscript are important events. They will stimulate interest in a writer who deserves much more careful attention than she has hitherto been given, and the power of her insights combined with her storytelling gifts will enable a wide range of readers to better appreciate what it was to be an Indian on the Northwest frontier at the turn of the last century.

Alanna Kathleen Brown

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Another View of *Coyote Stories*:

In case you doubt the power of Coyote, the great humorist and teacher, listen to this story of his achievement recently at a New York State park. I was carrying Mourning Dove's collection of *Coyote Stories* on a family outing to a park near Ithaca, not reading it so much as comforting myself for neglecting my reviewer's duties; it was late in the afternoon, almost too late to swim in the cold waterfall-fed pool, and my eye was caught by a sturdy, handsome child about a year old, fair-haired but warm-skinned, humorous-eyed and happy, leading his parents a merry chase, quite unfazed by the 62-degree water. It was hard to stop gazing at him in pleasure, until I noticed his small fair-haired agile mother and his unmistakably Indian father. I must have stared—and I was embarrassed to see that I was being stared at in return. Averting my eyes, I sat quietly, looking down at my book, and when I looked up, the child's mother had approached with the glorious baby under her arm.

"Are you reading *Coyote Stories*?" she asked, her eyes large and golden, a slight foreign accent to her English. "Yes," I confessed,

staring even more helplessly now as she proceeded to push her reddish-gold hair away from her forehead and put the active boy from arm to arm. The beauty and mobility of her face were surprise enough, but the story she unfolded! A Lappish woman, she and her husband, a Mohawk, were in Ithaca visiting his people on a year-long maternity leave from their theater in Lapland; they had met at a special acting school in Denmark organized for ethnic minorities, primarily Lapps who wished to use the energies and insights of their native traditions in performing new dramas. The astonishing child—a Lapp-Mohawk. The father's most special role—Coyote. Mourning Dove's book—one that they too had recently acquired as part of a collection of inspiring Coyote literature.

If the book has some special lustre, then, as I review it, ascribe that to its role in making possible this improbable meeting of strangers, now friends: to the handsome Mohawk incarnation of Coyote, a far more devoted father than his godly prototype (he explained to me how great a teacher Coyote is, influencing us by his mistakes); to his beautiful, articulate Lappish wife, possessor of her own proud tradition; and to their boy, as vibrant an image of ever-reborn, ever-hopeful godlike humanity as there could be.

And the book? I have vowed to carry it with me everywhere, displaying prominently its humorous expressive cover image of Coyote, as David Platt presents him: highlighted ears, penetrating eyes, human hands for paws and a tongue to taste and tell.

The stories retold by Mourning Dove from her Salish Plateau traditions, written down in the 1930s with the assistance of two friends, are endlessly fascinating. The commentator for this Bison Books edition, Jay Miller, qualifies Mourning Dove's claims for authenticity, for she "sanitized" the stories and recast portions that did not suit her tastes. But even so, who is to say that Mourning Dove's versions don't have an authenticity of their own?

When I look through my own library of coyote-trickster tales, I find nothing that exactly fills the place or offers the point of view of an American Indian woman writing in English in the 1930s. Perhaps only Ella Deloria, in her *Dakota Tales*, is comparable. Christine Quintasket (Mourning Dove, or Humishuma in Salish) had profound literary ambitions (Deloria was more of a linguist-anthropologist). Despite opposition and personal difficulty, she studied written English, wrote a novel called *Cogewea* (available, along with her autobiography, from the Native American Authors Distribution Project) and collected these "folklores." The form in which she found them interesting and important is good to have. The volume is also an addition to literature in English by Salish writers, a category that includes D'Arcy McNickle.

Hopi Coyote Tales, Istutuwuṭsi, collected and translated by Ekkehart Malotki and Michael Lomatuway'ma, and *Navajo Coyote Tales*, the Curly Tó Aheediłíni version recorded by Father Berard Haile, published in bilingual editions by the American Tribal Religions Series,

have greater linguistic importance. Zuñi Coyote stories as rendered by Frank Hamilton Cushing and Dennis Tedlock give, respectively, a Victorian literary man's version and a late 20th-century linguist-anthropologist's record of the art of a specific storyteller's performance. Jarold Ramsey retells Oregon country Coyote stories (no Colville ones though) from the standpoint of a 20th century American poet, and Paul Zolbrod makes a brilliant contemporary translation of Coyote's role in the Fifth World of the Navaho Creation Story. But Mourning Dove's is a literate woman's voice. Her stories reflect wonder at the history of all creatures. Were they always as they are? The stories suggest some memory of a time when human beings were not as they are now. They also show a sensitive ear for language. Without ever sacrificing simplicity and directness, without sounding arty or poetic, Mourning Dove uses words that satisfy. For example, as Coyote is pursued by Chickadee's scorned arrow, he says, listening, "Eh-ah! . . . That must be the spirits of other snows whispering to me."

Story II, "Fox and Coyote and Whale," offers a memorable vision of a visit to another world. Motifs familiar to me from other tellings, Paul Radin's *The Trickster* or Momaday's *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, appear in Story III, where Coyote is ultimately a benefactor. In all the stories, he is the miraculous unkillable one, juggling his eyes, greedy, loving the limelight, imitating others, surviving.

Of the twenty-seven stories, three are special favorites I have not found told in quite the same way elsewhere. "Crawfish and Grizzly Bear" (XVIII) is a classic story of true authority. Crawfish, physically weaker than Grizzly Bear, the bully who has monopolized all the resources of the forest, calls for strong medicine and finds his prayers answered. Thereafter there is no contest: each threat of the bully is met with the quiet authority of two red fingers, powerful as trees. Crawfish's medicine power infiltrates the landscape and the tree-animal-human continuum is reasserted against the greedy sour-tempered one. What a rich story for imagining the power of the weak, true moral courage and authority to which even the landscape responds.

Story IV, "Chipmunk and Owl Woman," interests me for its portrait of Owl Woman, eater of children, so like the Clackamas Chinook Grizzly Woman. Four female figures struggle in the story: the young one, the true grandmother, the ambiguous Meadowlark and the evil, consuming figure; when the contest proves equal, Coyote steps in as benefactor to vanquish the child-eater. Pretending to be her colleague, he invites her to dance, and through flattery dances her into the fire. So perish the wicked, in the fire of their own evil desires. One wonders what experience of envy and malice among women could create such a story in the imagination of a woman teller.

Story XXI, "The Gods of the Sun and the Moon," is remarkable, too, as it portrays the loneliness of Mole, Coyote's abandoned wife, her creation of two sons for comfort, Coyote's return when the handsome sons are grown and their repeated abandonment of Mole. She is forgotten after the first half of the story: after the boys attend

a council with their father, an old ugly Frogwoman takes the role of the rejected one. But, unlike Mole, Frogwoman is powerful and clings to the face of the son she loves, who, ashamed of his blemished appearance, takes charge of the Moon Lodge and travels the night sky. One can appreciate the skill of Mourning Dove, who evidently encountered her share of suffering, shaping this story of the emotionally needy. We are struck too, in the delicate story, by the universality of human imagination, whether incarnated in Sir Philip Sidney or Mourning Dove or John Keats, all three dreaming of that steadfast "bright star."

As we close the book, deeply satisfied, we remember that the son of Coyote, Sweet, travels in the Moon Lodge across the sky of Lapland, too, where he must look down with pleasure at the beautiful actors of the Dalvadis Theater, as their Coyote stories are brightening the long winter.

Bette S. Weidman

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Circle of Motion: Arizona Anthology of Contemporary American Indian Literature. Ed. Kathleen Mullen Sands. Tempe, Arizona: Arizona Historical Foundation, 1990. xviii, 165 pp. \$21.95 cloth, ISBN 0-910152-14-4; \$15.95 paper, ISBN 0-910152-15-2.

The title comes from Joy Harjo's "Eagle Poem":

To pray you open your whole self
To sky, to earth, to sun, to moon
To one whole voice that is you.
And know there is more
That you can't see, can't hear
Can't know except in moments
Steadily growing, and in languages
That aren't always sound but other
Circles of motion.

This *Circle of Motion* is a collection of contemporary writing—poetry, essays, and short fiction. Kathleen Mullen Sands, a literature professor at Arizona State University, needs no introduction to *SAIL* readers who will know her previous work: as editor of Refugio Savala's *Autobiography of a Yaqui Poet* (1980) and Edward Spicer's *People of Pascua* (1988), as co-author with Gretchen Bataille of the indispensable study, *American Indian Women: Telling Their Lives* (1984), and as author of many valuable essays on American Indian literature. Sands writes in her acknowledgements that Allison Sekaquaptewa Lewis and Cynthia Wilson "served as editorial assistants throughout the work on the book." Adrian Hendricks, an O'odham

student at Arizona State University, contributed the art work that graces the anthology.

In a substantial introduction, Sands notes that the aim of the collection is to represent "Arizona as it is known and experienced by American Indian writers." Moreover, she notes that "contemporary American Indians are highly mobile like all Americans" and that "many have made their homes in urban areas or have settled on tribal reservations other than their own." Sands' desire to represent this mobility and diversity shapes the anthology. The thirty-four writers that she chose to include come from diverse backgrounds: some urban, some rural; life-long residents along with more than a few who just pass through now and then; members of tribes that have been here for centuries along with those who have established communities in the State of Arizona much more recently. It is an impressive collection of contemporary Indian voices.

Circle of Motion is a first publication for twenty-three of these writers. The others are familiar names to readers of contemporary American Indian poetry: Lance Henson, Adrian Louis, Peter Blue Cloud, Joseph Bruchac, Maurice Kenny, Jim Barnes. Five dazzling poems by Joy Harjo, all from her book *In Mad Love and War* (Wesleyan University Press, 1990), anchor the collection in her Arizona, a complex landscape defined by rhythms of saxophones, javelinas, and love. Lance Henson contributes a pair of powerful poems on the loss of an uncle from the San Carlos Apache community. His Arizona is a landscape of loss and death:

we are just indians lost in the blur
of america
and again
we have come to bury our dead

These final lines of "This Is No Arizona Highways Poem" evoke powerfully a continuity with the slaughter that took place a hundred years ago at San Carlos during the "Apache Wars." Adrian C. Louis takes us "Shopping At Metro Mall" as he tries to force himself to "envision Christmas in Phoenix." In that Arizona place and time he finds that his "fists are itching" and a "warrior craziness" returns. For Maurice Kenny Arizona is a place written in exquisite "sherds" of memories, a place "a Mohawk traveled through."

For other writers Arizona is a place defined by warm family memories, deep and continuing connections. Barbara A. Antone recalls her "Uncle Sam, the Storyteller," a Quechan elder who "lived a long life full of mischievous adventures." For Marlinda Kaulaity "Arizona is the only home I know." She celebrates the first steps of a nephew. Mercy Molina-Whilock sets down her recollections of working in the cotton fields with her father, "a little Yaqui girl" doing "men's work." Dorothy T. George takes on the voice of a Hopi grandfather at Hotevilla who reflects on the ordinary things—family, work, home—as he

goes about his day. Geri Keams' "Belly Button Blues" defines her relation to the place with a sparkling humor:

i thought of all our belly buttons
where they were buried
on the land near winslow
i thought of all nine belly buttons
grandma said it was part of the old ways
they buried your belly button in the
sheep corral if you were a boy
and under the house if you were a girl
well . . . mine got lost in a suitcase
that's why my mom says
i'm always travelin' and
maybe never settle down
i call it the belly button blues.

Kay Sands and her assistants, Allison Sekaquaptewa Lewis and Cynthia Wilson, have done a superb job of gathering new writing that represents the mobility and the diversity of contemporary Indian experience in Arizona. *SAIL* readers can order copies through the Arizona Historical Foundation, Hayden Library, Room 403, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona 85287. When you order, commend Dick Lynch and the Arizona Historical Foundation for supporting this very worthy project.

Larry Evers

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Word Ways: The Novels of D'Arcy McNickle. John Lloyd Purdy. Tucson: U of Arizona P, 1990. 167 pp. ISBN 0-8165-1157-8.

The publication of *Word Ways* is a milestone in the study of D'Arcy McNickle's work and in the development of Native American literary studies. It is the first book-length study of McNickle's novels. As such, it will set the tone for much of the future work done on McNickle. Also, it indicates a growth in the field to the point where a variety of Native writers are being discussed as our appreciation of the complex and extensive nature of Native American Literature expands.

McNickle's literary reputation rests on three novels, *The Surrounded* (1936, rpt. 1978), a juvenile novel, *Runner in the Sun* (1954), and *Wind from an Enemy Sky* published posthumously in 1978. While his literary influence may only date from the late '70s, he was a noted Indian activist who worked for years with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the National Congress of American Indians, which he cofounded, and with many scholars and leaders. During the eighties,

some research started to appear on McNickle. While mentioning these studies, Purdy chooses to strike out in his own direction to establish how tribal and oral life ways influenced the goals and structure of his novels. Purdy sees two plots running through most of McNickle's work: an Indian one founded on oral antecedents which support an Indian perspective on knowledge and meaning, and a White one which focuses on the tragic historical consequences of Indian-White miscommunication and misunderstanding. As macrostructure, Purdy sees his book and McNickle's life in terms of a vision quest, a journey for knowledge. More specifically, he perceives McNickle's life as a search for knowledge he can bring to bear on his own emerging sense of identity and on the appreciation of Native cultures. Purdy is on target when he concludes that McNickle's novels and his life have the historical renewal of native consciousness from the 1920s to the 1960s as their subject.

Purdy's first chapter outlines McNickle's life with special attention to the Salish people and Salish verbal arts, which Purdy suggests influenced McNickle's Indian plots. He describes McNickle as a tribal storyteller and then later analyzes the novels for the elements identified from Salish verbal art. While Purdy is insightful here, the fact that we have so little biographical information on McNickle makes his claims a bit stretched, especially when he chooses to speculate on McNickle's childhood experience of oral storytelling and selects three Salish stories to serve as the basis for oral perspectives developed in McNickle's novels. We know from Alfonso Ortiz that McNickle's mother tried to keep him away from other Indian children, and Ortiz refers to him at that time of his life as not "culturally" Indian. McNickle himself remembers the time, saying, "As 'breeds' we could not turn for reassurance to an Indian tradition, and certainly not to the white community." To tack down an influence of Salish verbal arts as opposed to Cree, or even Indian as opposed to French, will take a great deal more support. Purdy's insights are more firmly grounded as he explores McNickle's growing awareness of Indian culture and McNickle's research for *The Surrounded*.

Central to Purdy's book is the story of how McNickle wrote his novels. Using McNickle's journals and correspondence along with manuscript drafts of novels, Purdy deftly explores McNickle's sources and methods, and speculates on his goals. His chapter on *The Surrounded* is especially useful in this area. The many extensive revisions McNickle made in the years he wrote the book (some on the advice of picky New York editors) illustrate and punctuate the decisions he made in the published novel. Purdy's discussion of the changes in Archilde's character seem well-reasoned and perceptive, and his discussion of McNickle's incorporation of a published coyote tale into *The Surrounded* is particularly illustrative. This technique works less well in the two chapters devoted to McNickle's other novels, for which we have much less manuscript information.

The strongest chapter contains his fine discussion of *Wind from an Enemy Sky*. Purdy suggests that in *Wind* McNickle implicitly asks "how do they [Indians] make the 'adjustments' that are necessary [to assure survival]? Where do they gain the knowledge of how to direct their future?" (108). Purdy sees McNickle's answers as lying in myth, in dream, and in connections between primal forces and humankind. Based on a close explication of the book, Purdy explores the ideas of movement, growth, journey, and traditional knowledge with great clarity and precision. While these ideas have been central to Purdy's analysis throughout *Word Ways*, it is in *Wind from an Enemy Sky* that McNickle foregrounds their pivotal importance in appreciating a Native perspective on the text, and Purdy's analysis strikes home. Purdy has a more difficult task in showing this level of self-reflexive narrative signification in the other novels. However, these two strong chapters are the heart of the book, and for what they reveal about McNickle and the creation of his novels, Native American literature scholars should be thankful.

While the last chapter explores the common ground between McNickle and other contemporary Native American writers, it does not show his influence as a man or a writer, and thus ends up being a little anti-climactic.

Purdy has given us an intelligent and valuable book. It may be weakened by its atheoretical approach. For instance, he is not clear in his use of the word "plot"; sometimes it seems to mean event, at other times something like organic movement. Also, he tends to use the terms "plot" and "story" interchangeably. He discusses perspective, but not in the way that Iser uses the term. Perhaps his explorations of the two plots in McNickle's novels might benefit from Bakhtin's analysis of dual-voiced narratives, or his discussions of the cultural wisdom in oral stories would be enriched by reference to Hymes, Toelken, Kroeber, Tedlock, and others. However, Purdy's strength lies in his close explication and correlation of manuscript versions with printed texts. He argues that McNickle's work deserves wider attention because of "the innovations he brought to his novels, the mythic quality of their narratives, and their thematic complexity and potential for multileveled interpretation" (xiii). I agree completely. Purdy should be commended, for he has done some extremely important research, making a significant contribution which will serve as groundwork for many other scholars.

James Ruppert

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Narrative Chance: Postmodern Discourse on Native American Indian Literatures. Ed. Gerald Vizenor. Albuquerque: U of New Mexico P, 1989. \$29.95, ISBN 0-8263-1117-2.

In setting up a series of commentaries linking passages from *The Way to Rainy Mountain* by N. Scott Momaday and critical insights of Carlos Fuentes, Jacques Derrida, Julia Kristeva, and Donald Pease, Elaine Jahner suggests the fruitfulness of dialogue between writers and thinkers who regularly engage in critical inquiry into Native American texts and those European and American figures who have been in the vanguard of a new critical discourse that questions basic assumptions about knowledge and ways of knowing. Jahner's essay, "Metalanguages," is one of eleven essays that Gerald Vizenor has collected, and with the others it opens up additional possibilities for discourse about Native American literatures, liberating Native American texts from the historical and social science approaches that Vizenor observes are isolationist and reductive.

In the preface to the essays Vizenor identifies four postmodern conditions in critical response to Native American literature; the essays in the collection have been selected according to that typology. One group of essays is focussed on narrative chance in the novel: fiction by Louise Erdrich, Leslie Silko, D'Arcy McNickle, and James Welch, among others. A second set is concerned with the translation and representation of tribal literature: for example, Kimberly Blaeser, using Wolfgang Iser's reader participation theory and Umberto Eco's study of form, imagines *The Way to Rainy Mountain* as a text that the reader co-creates with the author. A third group of writers discerns the trickster in tribal literature; and the fourth is devoted to comic and tragic views of the world. Vizenor himself encloses the work with his introduction to postmodernism and the final essay, "Trickster Discourse: Comic Holotropes and Language Games."

Among the essays that focus on the novel is Robert Silberman's piece, "Opening the Text: *Love Medicine* and the Return of the Native American Woman" (101-120). In his reading of Louise Erdrich's first novel, Silberman calls on Jacques Derrida and Walter Benjamin to illuminate Erdrich's multivoiced narrative method and her use of language, which he describes as "just plain talk—kitchen table talk, bar talk, angry talk, curious talk, sad talk, teasing talk" (112). He acknowledges that the opposition between speech and writing in Native American literature is not directly applicable to the relationship between speech and writing in Derrida's theory, but at the same time he finds in Erdrich's particular way of addressing the reader an intimacy and directness that presents some relevance to the dialectic between speaking and writing. The play of language that Silberman implies in his discussion of the various kinds of talk in *Love Medicine* has perhaps more impact than he records in his essay. In juxtaposing Erdrich's novel with the work of Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Silberman suggests an ahistorical, comic perspective in *Love Medicine*.

Several essays in the collection focus on the word as the means to imagine. In "Tayo, Death, and Desire: A Lacanian reading of *Ceremony*," Gretchen Ronnow employs Lacan's paradigm of the young child who discovers that he can compensate for the loss of the mother by learning to use language. The Lacanian resonance in Tayo's experience is the focus on the word as a way to reorder the world. Thus, according to Lacanian theory, Tayo exists because he desires to recover what is lost—the mother. Ronnow demonstrates an additional dimension to Tayo's experience of loss in her use of Lacan's work in *The Language of the Self*.

The transmission of the idea through storytelling contains within it the means to teach new ways to imagine. This concept is one that Kimberly Blaeser explores in her demonstration of the performance of the text, what one may call the configuration of author—text—reader in a variety of patterns. As Blaeser uses Wolfgang Iser's reader-response theory to illuminate performance in *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, James Ruppert adapts Iser's work to deconstruct D'Arcy McNickle's text, *The Surrounded*. In Ruppert's reading of the novel, the perspective of the reader undergoes continual adaptation and adjustment through the agencies of implied reader, plot, characters, and implied author.

The trickster as a postmodern condition is fully represented in Louis Owens' piece, "'Ecstatic Strategies': Gerald Vizenor's *Darkness in St. Louis Bearheart*" (141-153). Owens sees in *Bearheart* a refutation of the attempt to see Indianness in the static definition offered by Hollywood and endorsed by the overwhelming majority, including some of Owens' mixedblood students who objected to his including *Bearheart* in a course in the American Indian novel. *Bearheart*, in Louis Owens' interpretation, is Vizenor's effort to confront and overturn the depiction of Indian as victim, as a set-up for doom, a model that has endured in American literature from James Fenimore Cooper onward. The ability to imagine new selves, particularly for mixedbloods, is tantamount to survival, Owens argues. He exposes the "terminal creeds" named in Vizenor's novel, those doctrines that create artifacts of Indians. Owens' essay directs attention to the author as trickster who must mediate between chance as liberating force and chance as an invitation to change and adaptation.

Decrying anthropological approaches to tribal literature that result in monologues with science, Vizenor calls for the willingness to believe in the possibilities of liberation that the trickster offers for readers and listeners. This means that one needs to see trickster as "a sign and a patent language game in a narrative discourse" (194). Further, the world is deconstructed through that discourse. Vizenor refers to Mikhail Bakhtin's premise that all utterances occur in relation to other utterances; the notion that trickster can be found as the center of that dialogue is his extension of Bakhtin's work.

The willingness to see Native American literature in relation to other work from both oral and written traditions, regardless of its

origin, may be the essential gateway that needs to be constructed in order to find the way into the texts that can enrich our lives. The collection of essays in this volume assists us in this endeavor.

Pauline Woodward

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Another view of *Narrative Chance*:

Narrative Chance comprises eleven essays whose common desire is to locate and identify the interrelations of Native American narrative and postmodern literary discourse. The first and the final essays, both by Vizenor, elaborate on trickster figures—of discourse and in narrative—as a primary nexus: by freeing up language, postmodern discourse liberates an archetypal mode of Native American narrative earlier imprisoned either by the discourse of modernism or the discourse of social science, so that it is now possible to write about these narratives in a way that more accurately honors their intricacies of language, myth, and consciousness.

Of the nine essays framed by this elaboration, one offers an informative overview of the value of this interrelationship. The other eight seek, by employing various strands of postmodern discourse, to honor *House Made of Dawn*, tribal narrative, *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, *Storyteller*, *Ceremony*, *The Surrounded*, *Love Medicine*, and *Darkness in Saint Louis Bearheart*.

At their best these essays offer what Elaine Jahner ("Metalanguages") terms an "informed attentiveness." In addition to thematizing insights to be drawn from specific narratives—e.g., that truth is not knowledge but recognition (Gretchen Ronnow, "Tayo, Death and Desire: A Lacanian Reading of *Ceremony*"), they draw valuable connections between narratives. They remind us that although cross-cultural contradictions of form and technology may be imaged as textual agony, they may also work toward cultural affirmation (Karl Kroeber, "Technology and Tribal Narrative" and Arnold Krupat, "The Dialogic of Silko's *Storyteller*"). They indicate ways in which Native American narrative teaches us new ways of reading (Kimberly Blaeser, "*The Way to Rainy Mountain*: Momaday's Work in Motion" and James Ruppert, "Textual Perspectives and the Reader in *The Surrounded*"). They work even more directly toward identifying a Native American tradition by conceptualizing various fictions as a collective history (Robert Silberman, "Opening the Text: *Love Medicine* and the Return of the Native American Woman") or by emphasizing the centrality of the trickster figure (Alan Velie, "The Trickster Novel" and Louis Owens, "'Ecstatic Strategies': Gerald Vizenor's *Darkness in Saint Louis Bearheart*"). Both in reference to specific narratives and in identifying the often elusive connective tissues of a literary tradition, these

essays deserve attention from anyone interested in Native American writing.

At the same time, there is something troublesome about *Narrative Chance* that needs to be acknowledged and, in the reading, accommodated. One comes away (I came away) nodding one's head: yes, indeed, there are illuminating connections to be made between Bakhtin, Iser, Eco, Lacan and Native American narrative. The essays, often highly original, demonstrate that connection.

What is troublesome is not the implicit Eurocentrism, at least not if one accepts the book's own protocol. The cover illustration shows a poker game in progress, the players identifiably Anglo, Hispanic, and Native American. The title is "How the West was Lost." The Anglo has an ace in the hole—an extra card tucked into and mostly hidden by his gunbelt. Theory in *Narrative Chance* is ammunition. What is troublesome is a certain sameness of pattern in the discourse of the essays themselves. Theory, accepted at face value, is privileged by being brought rather unquestioningly into play. Its connections with Native American narrative are drawn self-consciously enough that a text sometimes emerges as something like an illustration of a theory, with Bakhtin and the others cast as ringmasters who set the narratives, who are mostly obedient, into motion. I looked for more occasions when the narratives might be allowed to interrogate the ringmaster.

There are a few. Krupat, for example, notes that what he takes Bakhtin as suggesting—the novel's capacity for infinite extension of dialogism—does not hold in *Storyteller* because there is a "normative voice": "For all [its] polyvocal openness, there is always the unabashed commitment to Pueblo ways as a reference point." *Storyteller* is dialogic—up to a point. Although my own preference would be to go even further and perhaps to recast the question being asked, it seems to me that more of this kind of questioning would have enhanced the task that this collection sets for itself.

It is likely that the longterm usefulness of postmodern literary discourse, in general as well as in reference to Native American narrative, depends on its being more rigorously interrogated than it has been in *Narrative Chance*. This shortcoming, however, is secondary to the book's value and may be only a necessary part of its historical identity: *Narrative Chance* has taken an initial step in what promises to be an illuminating journey.

Bonnie J. Barthold

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Native American Literatures. Ed. Laura Coltelli. Pisa: Servizio Editoriale Universitario, 1989.

[Editor's Note: *Native American Literatures* may be ordered directly. Send check or money order for \$22 (American) to: Cooperativa Libreria Universitaria / Via S. Maria 7 / 56100 PISA / Italy.]

As a non-specialist with an interest in the field, I see the first issue of Laura Coltelli's new series, *Native American Literatures*, as a most significant publication. It ranks with the best half dozen collections that have appeared since 1975, critical essays edited by noted scholars such as Abraham Chapman, Dell Hymes, Karl Kroeber, Arnold Krupat, Jarold Ramsey, and Brian Swann. A professor at the University of Pisa and also co-editor of a series of Italian translations of contemporary Native American writings, Coltelli has assembled seventeen contributions that range from essays on individual authors to essays on broad themes and topics, including a provocative proposal by Karl Kroeber that could fundamentally alter not only Native American and Comparative studies but literary theory in general.

N. Scott Momaday contributes a brief self-interview and five of his watercolors and etchings. Unfortunately, the black-and-white reproductions of the art work look like faint photocopies. Preceding Momaday's work is a tribute to the late Carol A. Hunter. Then, in a "Foreword," Coltelli says: "twenty years after the publication of . . . *House Made of Dawn*, the time is ripe for a first assessment of what has been done so far. The present collection aims to be one of the contributions in this new wave of scholarship" (iii). Coltelli's contributors include not only American scholars but also four of her European colleagues. One of the latter, Fedora Giordano, surveys "Italian Images of the American Indians" and lists (for 1976-1988) seventy-one Italian studies and translations of Native American writings.

Of the essays on individual authors, James Ruppert draws upon D'Arcy McNickle's ethno-historical writings to help us understand McNickle's *The Surrounded* and *Wind from an Enemy Sky*. Ruppert explains that since McNickle "does not propose a static definition of culture," his novels point to the necessary but "seemingly paradoxical situation of retaining culture and still allowing change" (128). Louis Owens also explores the problem of cultural identity and finds that "The distinction between [an earlier manuscript version of *The Surrounded* and the published novel] might well be compared to that between a conventional romance and a naturalistic novel" (139).

McNickle influenced James Welch, and A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff locates another source of inspiration: "The Influence of Elio Vittorini's *In Sicily* on James Welch's *Winter in the Blood*." In discussing humor in *Winter in the Blood*, Kenneth Lincoln also calls attention to the novel's cultural focus. The cultural variability of knowledge gives rise to much of the novel's dark humor, a bizarre comedy which "anchors both vision and hallucination in reality . . ." (155). Rachel Barritt Costa argues that Welch's Jim Loney "has deliberately laid the plans

for himself to be hunted to death, no longer to die ingloriously like the doomed animal he previously felt himself to be, but dramatically like a warrior . . ." (170).

Following the essays on Welch, there are studies of the work of two contemporary Native American women. Coltelli explains how and why Leslie Marmon Silko blends myth and reality in *Ceremony*; and Andrew Wiget introduces us to Joy Harjo's "Otherself," that "part of her person she names Noni Daylight" (187). Using this persona, Harjo crosses borders, boundaries, and horizons, taking risks in order "to explore the multiple universes and selves within her" (195).

Coltelli's collection also includes essays on broader themes and topics. Bo Schöler surveys Native American fiction to see how it deals with the theme of the young and restless, and he finds "that the writers emphasize the tremendous pool of communal resources in the anticipation that its inherent healing and prophylactic qualities be activated" (81). Judith Mountain Leaf Volborth explains the Native American conception of the relationship between power, sound, and words. Hartmut Lutz discusses "The Circle as Philosophical and Structural Concept in Native American Fiction Today." Michael Castro points out "American Indian Influences in Modern Poetry." And Jack D. Forbes gives a penetrating critique of *Brave New World*, analyzes the Mbyá creation myth, and argues that a truly humanistic education must include the study of Native American literature.

Three essays deal with the oral tradition. Larry Evers and Felipe S. Molina present songs of the Yaqui Coyote society to illustrate that a renaissance has "been happening within native communities as well as in the pages of academic journals and literary magazines" (9). Kathleen M. Sands discusses the collaboration of Ruth M. Underhill and Maria Chona and then Underhill's novel *Hawk Over Whirlpools*; such narrative opens "the world of other cultures" (64).

It is the world of other cultures that Karl Kroeber wants us to take seriously. He argues:

... [D]ifferences between literatures—which manifest themselves vividly as soon as one leaves the Western tradition—require a critic to rethink what have been assumed to be fundamental principles of literary art, as well as appropriate methods for criticism. Genres such as pastoral, romance, epic, tragedy, lyric, for example, are modes of generating works in the Western tradition, but these modes are irrelevant in American Indian literatures. The cause is not aesthetic impoverishment of Indian cultures but that Indian literary art was articulated through an entirely different set of generative forms. Once we leave the confines of the Western European literary tradition we can no longer compare; we must contrast, for we confront art incommensurate with our own. (40)

Kroeber convincingly illustrates the possibilities of his suggested approach "by contrasting some 'translations' of Native American

poetry . . . " (40-41), and he concludes that "We need to put the critical horse before the linguistic cart" (49).

Pursued seriously, Kroeber's suggestions could profoundly transform our understanding and study of literature. Perhaps that possibility has always been implicit in Native American studies, but Kroeber makes it explicit. With Kroeber's and the other essays, *Native American Literatures* illuminates a tradition that should be moved from the margins of American literature much closer to the center.

James H. Maguire

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Another view of *Native American Literatures*:

Native American Literatures, the first volume of *Forum*, edited by Laura Coltelli and published in Pisa, offers a most interesting range of essays celebrating the richness and diversity of American Indian literature. These seventeen essays address most of the issues of American Indian literature, many of them in thought-provoking ways.

American Indian literature may not be a part of every English department's offerings in the United States, but there is a general awareness of its existence and a public recognition of its importance through the number of prestigious literary prizes awarded to American Indian writers and poets. Momaday's Pulitzer Prize was only the first. The revised Norton anthology of American literature also shows a greater sensitivity towards ethnic writings in general and includes some fiction by American Indians. Though much work remains to be done, it is a first step toward the opening of the canon that Laura Coltelli advocates at the end of the Foreword. Several essays contributed to this collection by American scholars offer some interesting reflections in regard to reassessment; they deal primarily with language, versions and translations. There is a strong sense throughout that American Indian literature, whose most important structural element is the oral tradition and, thereby, the mythical past, is neither static nor does it exist within a vacuum. The sense of the ever changing, ever powerful, ever present oral traditions is nowhere stronger than in Larry Evers' and Felipe Molina's multi-voiced text on Yaqui coyote songs. They show how the power of language and the oral tradition helped the Yaquis to create a new space for themselves in southern Arizona and to learn the stories that help them understand the world they are living in. "But over the more than eighty years they have lived in southern Arizona, Yaquis have named and imagined the landscape around their communities in ways that echo their homeland. The revival of the coyote society may be a sign that they are ready to take a role as stewards of the space they have been imagining" (15).

While many of the American scholars contributing to this collection are reassessing their methodological approaches to American Indian literatures or experiencing new dimensions of the oral tradition, most of the European contributors are preoccupied with the TEXTS. Admittedly, the physical distance from the oral traditions makes it impossible for them to arrive at such sensitive insights as Evers and Molina. Also, it must be said that any work with oral traditions is usually hampered by the lack of versions; very few European libraries contain the kind of material provided in the bulletins of the Bureau of American Ethnology. Consequently, scholars feel more comfortable within a historical context. Essays like Fedora Giordano's are instructive and interesting, but they do not support Laura Coltelli's demand for a reassessment of scholarship in regard to American Indian literature or an opening of the canon.

The texts are carefully analysed, as for example in Rachel Barritt Costa's interesting linguistic analysis of Jim Loney's "conversations" and Hartmut Lutz's discussion of the circle in contemporary American Indian literature, but, with the exception of Bo Schöler and Laura Coltelli, the essays do not offer new insights into American Indian literature. They lack the extra dimension that Karl Kroeber demands in his essay: "the crux of understanding literary art is determining how it displays the *creative* use of its culture's myths. As critics it is our task to remind others that art is as important a means of comprehending culture as culture is to comprehending art" (45). Kroeber demands an extra dimension in criticism here; not only is the critic required to know the mythical and historical context of the American Indian writer whose work he is discussing, but he must also take into account the shape the American Indian writer gives to his or her material. Bo Schöler, for example, shows the statistic reality of contemporary American Indian novelists' central theme, the alienated protagonist, traces it to its various mythical origins, and then discusses the various ways American Indian writers individualize the theme within their tribal contexts.

This sense of varying tribal contexts and infinite ways of solving conflicts is rarely present in the essays of the other European contributors. In Hartmut Lutz's essay for example, the reader is led to believe that the creation story of the Iroquois, the world built on turtle's back, represents all Native American creation stories. As Andrew Wiget discussed in *Native American Literature*, this is not the case. Even though all tribes seem to share the idea of the circle as a structural element, it is not necessarily established in the creation story. Take, for example, the Navajos who believe that they emerged into this world through a hollow reed. As we would do in more traditional literary fields, Hartmut Lutz looks for the similarities contemporary American Indian novels share without taking their varying tribal backgrounds into account, in the process losing the multi-voiced quality of the text. The very structure of his essay denies the creative force of American Indian fictions; "the oral tradition" is

a separate section rather than an integral part of the discussion of contemporary American Indian novels. Hartmut Lutz mentions D'Arcy McNickle's *The Surrounded*. How does McNickle employ the oral tradition of the Salish to deal with Archilde's alienation from his mother's people? What makes that novel Salish beyond its setting in Montana? American Indian writers, as shown in Laura Coltelli's discussion of Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*, are more than mere literary historians preserving their tribes' oral traditions in writing.

The canon of American literature is much more rigidly defined in Europe than in America. With some exceptions European students and scholars regard William Faulkner's work as much more representative of American literature than D'Arcy McNickle's *The Surrounded*. Only when talking of post-modern American literature will they allow diversification and the validity of ethnic literatures which, in turn, are used as contrast to mainstream American literature or as an exotic exception to same. The richness of contemporary American Indian novels tends to be inaccessible to European readers who lack a knowledge of the cultural contexts and the oral traditions. Here the European contributors to *Native American Literatures* face great educational challenges. The essays in this collection, especially those dealing with methodological problems and those showing the richness and ever changing quality of oral traditions, should contribute to a more ready acceptance and understanding of American Indian literature by a general audience.

Birgit Hans

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Another view of *Native American Literatures*:

The anthology is an especially vulnerable genre of text. The reviewer can always point to some area not covered, some prominent author or subject matter unattended to, some knowledgeable critic (like oneself!) unrepresented. The conditions for reviewing an anthology, this is to say, require that the reviewer not be included in it—for all that she is presumed to be sufficiently aware of the materials presented to be competent to comment on it. If the editor's selections have been ordered on the basis of some particular principle or set of conceptual categories, these can always be shown to be less than fully adequate; if the selections, as in Professor Coltelli's volume, appear in no discernible order, one may claim—as I do—that something more than apparent randomness might have been useful. And there is always the likelihood that some of the essays are stronger than others to complain about. And so on.

So let me begin with some more or less neutral descriptives. *Native American Literatures* contains seventeen essays by various hands. Only

one of these (Evers and Molina) deals with (contemporary) oral literature. Two (Ruppert, Owens) focus on work by D'Arcy McNickle; three (Ruoff, Lincoln, Costa) deal with James Welch's fiction (but because Costa's subject is "Incommunicability" her essay might be placed among the theoretical group I consider in the paragraph below); one (Coltelli) is on *Ceremony*. Thus six, or over a third of the selections, attend to twentieth-century Native American fiction in English. One essay (Wiget) is on Joy Harjo, one (Castro) on "American Indian Influences on Modern Poetry," and one (Giordano) presents a historical account of "Italian Images of the American Indian" in art and, to some extent, in literature (this piece includes a bibliography).

Of the remaining essays, four are more nearly theoretical and so their subject matter cannot so easily or neutrally be named. Karl Kroeber attends to ". . . the Problem of Translating American Indian Literatures," Kathleen Sands examines "Ethnography, Autobiography, and Fiction Narrative Strategies in Cultural Analysis," Hartmut Lutz considers "The Circle as Philosophical and Structural Concept in Native American Fiction Today," and Jack Forbes "The Humanities without Humanity" In these essays, any readings of specific texts are offered primarily to provide illustrations of the particular issue(s) under consideration, not strictly as contributions to the understanding of these texts in themselves (so far as this distinction can be maintained).

Three more essays remain. One is Bo Schöler's "Young and Restless." One of the finest essays in the book (I drop, here, all pretense to neutrality and objectivity), Schöler's study invokes the statistics on age, alcoholism, suicide, homicide, and life expectancy of contemporary Native American people as these, on "quick analysis" (71), would seem to leave "shattering impressions of the lives of young Native American men" (71). But, of course, as Schöler writes, "statistics do not really signify anything in and of themselves" (71), and so he proceeds to consider some of the ways these "shattering impressions" are worked out in some contemporary Indian fiction. Although Schöler includes the already-overabundantly commented upon *Ceremony*, and makes reference to the highly visible work of Erdrich, he also considers fiction by Barney Bush, Janet Campbell Hale, and Anna Lee Walters. Would that other critics would attend a little more to work by lesser known, but extremely fine contemporary Native American writers! Where are the studies of Carter Revard's poems, of Ralph Salisbury's and Elizabeth Cook-Lynn's poetry and fiction, of the much loved but not-so-often-written-about Maurice Kenny, among others?

Second of the three pieces to account for is the two page contribution of Judith Mountain Leaf Volborth called "Pollen Beneath the Tongue." I have no idea what this is about. Inasmuch as Volborth is one of the Native American contributors to the volume, and I am not a Native American person, anyone so inclined may choose to explain my failure of comprehension as reflecting my blindness to some

essentially-Indian epistemological and discursive mode of proceeding. Perhaps so: yet, Volborth is here participating as a contributor, writing in English, to a critical volume of essays. Thus it may not be utterly unreasonable to suggest that she needs either to adopt the conventions of Western critical discourse or—and far better, though much more difficult—she needs to find some way to mediate Indian and Western discursive modes.

Last of the three pieces to account for is the one that comes first in the book (after a tribute to Carol Hunter and the editor's Foreword). Here we have N. Scott Momaday making "Only an Appearance," in which he talks about himself, quoting, at the end—himself. For the rest, we have three extremely bad reproductions in black and white of some of Momaday's water color and ink paintings, as well as two blurry (to the point of real unfairness to Momaday's art) reproductions of his etchings.

Perhaps it is here that I should note how badly edited and printed this book is overall. It was done in Pisa, and one would hardly expect the typesetters to be fluent in English. But, still, isn't it the editor's responsibility to attend to proofreading? The number of typos, not to mention real howlers (e.g., in Fedora Giordano's interesting piece, a reference to "the Near or Fast [sic] East" (197): but Giordano seems particularly to have suffered from misprints), is really extraordinary. I don't want to seem tight-assed on this matter, but it seems to me that if Indian literatures deserve the highest level of critical attention (and they do), they also deserve the highest degree of material attention: they should be designed and printed with more care than this volume and its editor have provided.

At this point, it isn't possible to say much more without continuing in the the report-card mode. That is, having awarded an A+ to Bo Schöler, and a D, if not an outright flunk, to Judith Volborth, I might, here, grade some of the others I have neutrally and not so neutrally described. So: the Evers and Molina essay is very fine; it does (briefly) for Yaqui Coyote songs what these two writers' earlier work did (at length) for Yaqui Deer Songs. Kroeber seems to reverse positions he had formerly taken (e.g., in his introduction to *Traditional Native American Literatures*), but he offers here a thoughtful consideration of the principles of what I have elsewhere referred to as Identity and Difference in the translation of Native American song. Although Coltelli's brief Foreword to this volume is, to my mind, a tissue of cliché and confusion, her essay on *Ceremony*, for all that it offers little new, is extremely careful both in detail and statement. Ruppert, Ruoff, and Wiget are sensible and helpfully insightful. Finally, let me single out the essays by Rachel Barritt Costa and Hartmut Lutz as unfortunate instances of inanity (Costa) and muddleheaded obfuscation (Lutz) in the criticism of Native American literatures.

Costa's essay takes every example of a potential speech act it can find in Welch's *Jim Loney* as presenting the options of successful or

failed communication in order to come up with a virtually statistical case of ultimate Incommunicability. This is the sort of thing that gives social science a bad name; it will prove, I think, of no use whatever to the literary critic. Even worse is Lutz's essay which seems to me useful only as a negative example: this is how NOT to write the criticism of Native American literatures. I haven't the space (nor the perversity) to do a paragraph by paragraph account of this egregious essay. It opens with random references to the roundness of turtle's back as a lead in to the circularity business. Woe to one who is looking at bluejay, buffalo, or deer! It then moves to such things as: "The earth's pattern [?], then, is round rather than linear or square, continuous rather than disrupted, encompassing rather than segmenting" (85). At this point, almost anyone who has been around the block a couple of times can take over, for Lutz misses no one of the clichés of Native American literary criticism.

One of the more recent clichés is the regular reference to the term "alienation" as applicable to the situation of some of the better-known protagonists of contemporary Native American fiction, an odd term to employ, one might think, for critics who regularly point out the problems with using Western terms for Indian literatures. Alienation: Marx, Durkheim, Freud, Kierkegaard, Sartre? others? What Tayo or Abel or Jim Loney feel may be something like what "alienation" in its Western history tries to denote—but of course what is interesting is how that term does not quite account for what they feel. Such considerations would not trouble Lutz who concludes by offering two "tables," one of "The Circle in Fiction" (this is actually an annotated drawing, not a "table"), the other of "Novels considered" (98-9). The categories of the latter "table," except for such things as dates of publication and "Time Setting," are highly contestable—for all that they are offered in "table" form as simply *there* for the critic to represent. This is a truly dreadful piece of work.

So: Coltelli's book has some good essays, some excellent essays, some average and o.k. essays, and as I think, at least two extremely bad essays. But, of course, the reader should see for him- or herself.

Arnold Krupat

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