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FROM THE EDITORS

tawa[^]w (welcome) to our second double issue. We head to press shortly after learning that poet Janice Gould (Koyoonk'auwi) has passed away unexpectedly. The grief is being felt across the Indigenous literary studies community. In this issue, writers Ruth Salvaggio, Malea Powell, Dean Rader, Lisa Tatonetti, and Daniel Heath Justice pay tribute to her profound contributions. She is very much missed.

In happier news, the twentieth annual Native American Literature Symposium, held earlier this year at Mystic Lake, recognized several recent *SAIL* publications: essays by Drew Lopenzina, Shannon Toll, and Anne Stewart were all nominated for the Beatrice Medicine Award for Best Essay. The winner was Shaawano Chad Uran for his essay "Policing Resource Extraction and Human Rights in *The Land of the Dead*," published last year by our friends at the journal *Transmotion*. Our warmest congratulations to everyone who was nominated and who won. We are so grateful for your good work.

We've been gratified by our recent transition to a twice-a-year publication schedule. Double issues allow us to create more sustained conversations among submissions and to make more room for special sections. In the issue at hand, for instance, we enjoyed juxtaposing articles hailing from either side of the forty-ninth parallel. We are looking forward, too, to an upcoming double issue devoted entirely to papers from ASAIL's sister organization in Canada, the Indigenous Literary Studies Association (ILSA). Meanwhile, we are also delighted by the influx of submissions on Indigenous literatures of Mexico, Central America, and South America. The resurgence of Indigenous literature is truly hemispheric and global. Stay tuned and stay involved: let us know if you would like to review submissions, and keep sending us your good ideas for special sections.

This issue begins with two theoretical articles representing First Nations and American Indian literatures and approaches. First up

is an essay by Pauline Wakeham, one of the foremost scholars on the Canadian project of reconciliation. In her contribution here, she looks specifically at the #IndigenousReads program, promoted in 2016 by Carolyn Bennett, minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada. On the face of it, this formal extension of Indigenous literature to the public sphere is so welcome, yet, Wakeham finds, the project is largely constrained by the state project of reconciliation and “relationship.” That in itself is perhaps not too surprising; what is fresh about Wakeham’s study is her rigorous attention to how Canada’s “symbolic reconciliatory gestures” in fact “hinge upon the appropriation and exploitation of Indigenous intellectual, creative, and testimonial resources and labor.” It is a model essay—well-researched, compellingly argued, and respectful of Indigenous scholars and philosophers.

Next, Matt Herman, a long-standing member of ASAIL, celebrates the twentieth anniversary of Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s influential *Decolonizing Methodologies*. Taking her “Twenty-Five Indigenous Projects,” he offers four more: continuing, reknowing, sociologizing, and valuing. In describing these projects, Herman ranges widely across canonical writers like Leslie Marmon Silko and Joy Harjo; lesser-discussed poets like Henry Real Bird and Kim Shuck; and visual arts, including the photography of Jolene Rickard and the documentary *Place of the Falling Waters*. This is exactly the kind of generous, dialogic reading for which *SAIL* has long been known.

The next two essays turn to late twentieth-century Indigenous poetry. Daniel Coleman, a settler scholar who has written widely on Indigenous literature, non-Indigenous Canadian literature, refugees, masculinity studies, and whiteness studies offers a riveting read of double-columned poems by Peter Blue Cloud. In a way, his essay is an implicit response to the critique offered by Pauline Wakeham: it uses formal analysis, tribally specific history, and James (Sa’ke’j) Youngblood Henderson’s theory of “trans-systemic” analysis not only to show how the poems themselves evoke Two Row Wampum philosophy and materiality but also to suggest how these epistemologies can “recalibrate relations between Indigenous and settler colonial regimes.” An equally welcome essay on a poet who also deserves much more critical attention is offered by Crystal Veronie, who gives a timely rereading of Chrystos’s address to violence against Indigenous women and to the erasure of Two-Spirit people. Offering new readings of the testimonial and erotic poems, as well as entirely

fresh readings of the drawings of feathers in Chrystos's first collection, Veronie shows how this work stands as a powerful critique of second-wave white feminism.

Two more essays consider First Nations narrative. Petra Fachinger surveys the history of the "Sixties Scoop" as represented in novels by Beatrice Culleton Mosionier, Robert Arthur Alexie, and James Bartleman. K. L. Killebrew also considers the violence done to Indigenous families in his study of Georgina Lightning's film *Older Than America*. Both of these essays return us, directly and indirectly, to the vexed politics of reconciliation as described by Wakeham in the lead essay.

As the above discussion should suggest, our stated interest in studies of newer and lesser-studied texts has yielded a rich trove of work: we are watching the field grow in attentiveness to pressing contemporary issues of Indigenous survival, as well as in inventive and thoughtful new reading methods. At the same time, we want to maintain *SAIL*'s long-standing commitment to publishing scholarship on older, more heavily studied texts. The last critical essay in this issue, then, is by another illustrious scholar, Mark Rifkin, who is now turning his critical eye to Sarah Winnemucca and the complexities of her claims to "representativity" on behalf of Piute nationhood.

We close on a somewhat lighter note, with Scott Andrews's interview of Tiffany Midge (Standing Rock Sioux). Midge has enjoyed an appreciative fan base among readers of Indigenous literature for some years, but she is poised to attract even greater attention with two books due out later in 2019: *Bury My Heart at Chuck E. Cheese's* (University of Nebraska Press) and a poetry chapbook, *Horns* (Scabland Books). In this interview, two humorous and down-to-earth Indigenous writers converse about bear marriage stories, the writing process, poetic form, and Native mother-in-law jokes. Enjoy!

June Scudeler and Siobhan Senior

A TRIBUTE TO JANICE GOULD

An Interview with Janice Gould on Her Book *Seed*

RUTH SALVAGGIO

Janice Gould, of the Koyoonk'auwi tribe in California, is the author of five books of poetry, recipient of awards from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Astraea Foundation, and poet laureate for the Pikes Peak region from 2014 to 2016. Also a photographer and musician, she earned her BA and MA degrees from the University of California, Berkeley, and her PhD from the University of New Mexico. She was associate professor emerita of women's and ethnic studies at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs. She died on June 28, 2019, barely two weeks after this interview was completed.

Ruth Salvaggio, professor emerita of English and comparative literature at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, is the author of several books on poetry and feminist studies, including *The Sounds of Feminist Theory* and *Hearing Sappho in New Orleans*. Her teaching has centered on poetry by women from across the globe and from diverse cultures within the modern Atlantic world.

RUTH SALVAGGIO: Your book *Seed* opens with a citation from Cherokee writer Marylou Awiakta: "Look at everything three times. Once with the right eye. Once with the left eye. And once from the corners of the eyes to see the spirit [essence] of what you're looking at." How did your poems in *Seed* grow from such spirit-infused vision?

JANICE GOULD: Our beings consist of body, mind, emotions, and spirit. I consider poetry to arise in the spirit, finding expression through the beating of our hearts, the rhythm of our breath, the strivings and satisfactions of the intellect, the experience of memory bathed in emotion. The smell of soil and growing things, the feel of sun and wind on my

skin is potent and pleasing. The sound of water pushing through the garden hose, the music of the wind chime enters my perception, gently and persistently. Writing poetry requires a certain repose. I'm engaged and making choices about language and sound. I can look from the left eye and the right eye and from the corners of the eyes, and when that happens, I'm looking inward, even if I'm seeing the world apart from me.

SALVAGGIO: Is the "smell of soil and growing things" a special site for spirit-infused vision and repose?

GOULD: We live in a 1950s neighborhood. The climate is dry. Water is tunneled east from the mountains. The soil is poor and has to be enriched for lawns and gardens to grow. There is nothing particularly lovely about my yard, so it is odd that some of my poems come from this "garden." However, when days warm up I'm usually outside weeding and watering. I nurture the roses as best I can. I am not a natural gardener; I don't have a "green thumb." But it gives me great pleasure to be outside among the weeds or flowers. After I finish, I sit outside and drink a cup of coffee and look around at my work. It is not an Edenic spot, but there is satisfaction; my mind is relaxed.

These things seem to feed those mysterious energies that enliven and nurture us inwardly. The spirit resides in the integuments of the body, but it can soar beyond us too. Similarly, there is spirit in the cells of plants that take their nourishment and growth from the sun, a transformation that goes on as stems reach upward toward the light and roots reach downward into the fertility of earth.

SALVAGGIO: Can you elaborate on these "mysterious energies"?

GOULD: I didn't know, when I started *Seed*, that I would be faced with a terminal illness as fall changed to winter last year. Now I am "reminded" that I have pancreatic cancer every time I go for chemotherapy, or don't go because my platelets or white blood cells are low, or as my body struggles to find a balance between eating and having no appetite for food, when my hair thins, my muscles shrink, and my weight drops, leaving me shaky and wobbly on my feet. Maybe psychically I "knew" something was manifesting inside me when I wrote *Seed*, but I was still feeling physically healthy. I did know, however, that I needed a few days by myself, and that's why I went to Chimayó, New Mexico.

I can't always respond to the land(scape) with words, even if I'm aching with its beauty. But this time was different. I was alone. I didn't have phone service. Even though there are "autobiographical" elements in some of my poems, my intent for *Seed* was different. I wanted a conversation with what's beyond me and within me at the same time, looking from the corners of the eyes to see the "essence."

SALVAGGIO: So at this crucial time, the silence and repose of Chimayó allowed that poetic conversation?

GOULD: Silence seems to be an essential quality of repose. But it's not truly without sound. Instead, we sound the depths of memory and understanding to get at what feels like an insight or revelation. There may be a long drift involved before the sounding brings anything to fruition.

Poetry is about play and playfulness. A child at play is absorbed in whatever fantasy and imagination is going on to make that play meaningful and enjoyable. A poem might occur once it has found the right shape for what is being expressed. The poet makes this out of language and images that seem to come from the unconscious world, where a different kind of vision takes place. Play is intense. It has an erotic and instinctual quality full of longing, of yearning. To write poetry is to find some balance between play and repose, discipline and freedom, and instinct and imagination that makes sense.

You can't make repose (or meditation) happen. You have to respect your own processes, for the quelling of mind-chatter, as well as for the long silence. Sometimes that can feel unbearable, and a person can berate herself for not writing. Other poets' writing helps me see the world instead of getting lost in despair, but the creative process is a mystery. The long silences surrounding the writing of poems are productive, a time of incubation.

SALVAGGIO: Does the seed itself somehow pull us into this "time of incubation" in poetry?

GOULD: The labor of gardening is tied to a more natural sense of time than the eight-to-five work that many people do. Teaching feels unnatural to me, since universities require joining committees, attending meet-

ings, going to talks, seminars, and conferences, doing endless evaluations, and meeting deadlines. It's important that we nurture our souls or spirits. Working in the yard, taking a hike, walking in a park, listening without thought, even cooking and cleaning—these activities can be restorative. Today everything moves really fast. When I am working in the yard, I don't worry about the time.

SALVAGGIO: Yes, I sense this suspension of time in the opening poem that unfolds in your "abdomen," in a "dream," threading back into "sacred land." In "Dream" you write: "I was nineteen, bereft and lonely / When I woke, I was sixty-nine."

GOULD: I'm not a very "linear" person. I suspect this has as much to do with working in the arts as being Native American. A good deal of our time is taken up by "scheduled labor," and I've often thought that this has only benefited the rich, the corporate/capitalists who created the time clock in the first place. Retreats and other ways of "getting away" no doubt help, because doing art takes concentration, focus, and a kind of mindfulness—the ability to be in solitude without distractions.

As I read back through *Seed* I see that some of the poems, like "Visitations," are concerned with death. I wrote that poem a couple of years ago, not as part of the spate of "garden" poems that "arrived" in September. The mild weather in Chimayó allowed me to sit outside on the flagstone patio near an old cottonwood tree. I could hear a burro braying, birds flocking, a rooster crowing. At night I sat under a comforter and wrote poems. A word would come to me, and I would follow it. I mentioned repose, but there is also a kind of intensity that drives a person to create. This does not mean to be in a place of stasis, though stillness may be involved, but it's not rigid. It's relaxed and open, allowing one to be adrift. There are so many ways the ego berates one for being adrift; the daydreaming state is not always easy to fall into. I am not usually aware of the drift of my thoughts, because whatever mind-work is going on is happening in some deeper, silent layer of the psyche.

SALVAGGIO: You mentioned "Visitations," a poem steeped in remembrances and the "drift of memories." How does memory inform your poems?

GOULD: Movement is one aspect of drifting; accumulation is another of its aspects. Memory is an accumulation of re-membered experiences and events that shape and form us. I drift into memory, image, and its coconspirator language as a way of seeking (and playfully seizing) the poem. I don't know where *Seed* came from. Some of it, like "Mrs. Ryder's Hands," was written maybe four or more years ago—out of memory and a need to describe what humiliation feels like. But "Black Hair," which takes place in the same time frame as "Mrs. Ryder's Hands," is a recent poem, something that incubated for a long time.

SALVAGGIO: You once mentioned to me a notion that art is produced from a place of pain, yet you also write about the astonishment and joy of poetic ways of seeing.

GOULD: The photographer Robert Adams believes that artists produce out of a place of pain, whether physical or emotional. I try to articulate this by asking myself what damages and hurt I endured and survived as a child that I continued to carry with me into adulthood and that made me act against my own conscience or what I professed to believe. As a young person I found it hard to understand how I could be a girl or a woman. I didn't feel that I was like what a girl or woman should be—as expressed by society and by my mother. I behaved in "androgynous" ways, sometimes being a tomboy and sometimes just being my own gentle, soft-spoken self. I wanted to wear jeans and T-shirts if given the opportunity. Being a "girl" was so restrictive—always in a dress on school days, always having to behave in certain ways, always supposed (even as a preteen) to want a boyfriend.

SALVAGGIO: Was growing up Native American ever a source of such remorse or pain?

GOULD: The feelings aroused by your question are complicated. I understood from stories my mother would tell about her own experiences that we would or could encounter hostility and racism. When we were little and would visit our English-born grandparents in Arcadia, California, our grandmother would say in front of our mother, "What a shame the children are so dark!" My own encounters with racism around my American Indian identity are subtle and strangely

mixed because of my mixed-blood status and how that informs how people see me. When I was a child, a little girl once turned on me and called me “a dirty Jap.” Another girl once asked me if my family only ate rice and eggs, because wasn’t I Chinese? As an adult I’ve been ignored but also followed around in stores, as if the shopkeeper had decided I was a thief. I have been pulled over by police a few times for essentially nothing. Some of my poems, like “Indian Mascot, 1959” (in *Doubters and Dreamers*), explore the complexity of being Indian in these United States. I’m not sure I’ve said everything I want to say about that, but I register my protest to that time in a less overtly “political” way in the prosody and form of that poem.

SALVAGGIO: There does seem inevitably this tension between intense expression and poetic form. Can you talk about navigating this process?

GOULD: The poems that feel most real to me are the ones where the words feel like they’ve chosen me. The “choosing” I do is intuitive; it isn’t simply an intellectual process. Clearly, the poem will have a final line, just as it will have a title and a first line—and content. Learning where and what those things are has to do with learning and practicing the craft. I think it’s mysterious, that “choosing.” As a writer, I’m always selecting words. I go back over what I wrote—in a letter, an essay, a poem—to find places where a better word would do or where a phrase or sentence seems particularly cumbersome or unclear. I tend to edit myself, and then I ask Mimi to edit my writing too. But this technical work is different from the selection of specific words that create a poem. Through reading poetry—and not just contemporary work but some of the older forms—you learn what lyric is and does. In free verse you can let go of the formal rules, but even a free-verse poem takes some kind of shape. Language and “music” help create the shape. Right now I’m working with a long, skinny shape. I could reshape the poems I’ve written, enjamb the lines differently. For now, it’s fun to find pleasure in the work. Making a poem requires one to accept a certain responsibility for truth—as well as for beauty. Maybe that comes from my more Native sensibility. I believe in beauty, in its power to move us, change us. But this raises all kinds of questions about how we define beauty, or power, or being “moved” or changed, even surprised.

SALVAGGIO: In “Beloved” you write beautifully about love and longing but also “hurt” and “fury.” Since many of your poems reference your “beloved,” talk about the love that infuses your poems—as when you write in “Rain,” “We love female rain, my beloved and I.”

GOULD: When do we begin to experience the beloved, to be awed by the mystery of loving and being loved? In lesbian friendships, there is sometimes an element of the erotic, the pull of attraction, a fascination with and excitement about the other. This is probably a subtle and typically silent, negotiated dance. The erotic is not always present, but I have silently and reverently loved many of my close women friends, whether lesbian or straight.

My poetry is a place where I can explore and express desire for another woman. I don’t know how it is for young lesbians today, but I never really learned to look at another woman. There was no “lesbian gaze” for me except in moments of intense intimacy. Are women allowed to look at other women with reverence and respect, with warm desire, with erotic happiness? There are so many taboos around this. Much of the “gaze” that women are allowed has been perverted into and claimed as envy, rivalry, or self-hatred. So it’s important to announce the beloved as a flesh-and-blood woman who may transform psychically and poetically into mother, sister, friend, goddess, Earth, or lover. It is important to develop the beautiful gaze that allows for intimacy and intensity, openly, without fear, without taboo.

Love is transformative and can include the natural world of forests, plants, rivers, clouds, mountains, animals, colors, and much more. Transformation is an aspect of power. It is our choice how we use or misuse power and the pleasures and perils of the erotic. I enjoy falling in love, and I enjoy seeing and remembering the beloved in all the women I’ve loved. But I have learned to be responsible in my choices and behaviors out of respect and care for the beloved’s feelings, her ways of living, believing, and being in the world.

SALVAGGIO: Your small, intense images in *Seed* do strike me as utterly transformative, infused with an almost radiant love. Earth becomes a “whirling planet, blue / and precious like a child’s marble.” You say you “much prefer” the “Little People / and Small Deer / of the Cherokee,” and you envision an illuminated world of “small truths”—among them

“ocean-washed agates” and “even a discarded cat’s claw, / shining on the hardwood floor.” What of this world of “small truths” and radiant images?

GOULD: I love seeing the cat’s discarded claw on the hardwood floor. It’s like the curve of a waxing or waning moon. She just leaves it there, and it shines, almost translucent, a discrete radiance. Years ago, a friend I was in love with taught me how to see and to taste. I’m not an unobservant person, but I was surprised by and enchanted at how many details of the natural world my friend would notice and point out to me. I began to look more closely at “things,” to take pleasure, then, in the color, texture, and complexity of what is around us, to pause, stop, contemplate, and observe. Walking anywhere became a different experience. What appeals to and attracts me are the small and ordinary things of life: the shape of a cup, the feel of a good pen to write with, the warm metal of a pocket watch or penknife, the smell of leather and clean tobacco and sweetgrass, the elegance of a feather, a flower, a well-written poem. Where does truth come in? Can we learn to see those inner places?

It’s good to be moved by the force of gratitude. Gratitude requires us to humble ourselves. Perhaps it enables grace and rains down “fierce tears.” If I am telling the truth—and, as Joy Harjo once pointed out, that’s the poet’s responsibility—then I feel most confident looking for truth in the small, humble, and obscure, strangely and ardently shining.

No Words for Good-Bye

MALEA POWELL

This is one of the hardest things I've ever had to write. Nothing I can think to say feels good enough for Janice, not poetic enough, not expansive enough, not real enough. It feels like all my words are living in that dark place where they lived before I met her, before I knew what was possible for me because of her. So . . .

Flashes.

1993. I'm reading pieces from Smith and Watson's *De/Colonizing the Subject* for a class I'm taking during my second year in grad school. Not in the actual book but in a reader made for us by our instructor, which includes the table of contents. In the TOC, I see an essay by Janice Gould, "The Problem of Being 'Indian': One Mixed-Blood's Dilemma." I go to the library and recall their copy of the book, read the whole essay, and feel seen. Totally, completely seen. For the first time, someone seems to be talking about me, about my positionality, about my struggles in academia. The details are different, but the anger, the struggle, the balance I've been trying to achieve and the desire to pull up the layers of "civilization" at my institution to reveal the blood and bones of colonization that are there just beneath the surface—those things are the same. There in her writing, in her voice, her quiet, calm voice, there is both fury and truth. "It is obvious that there is not a university in this country that is not built on what was once native land. We should reflect on this over and over, and understand this fact as one fundamental point about the relationship of Indians to academia" (81–82). And it's a truth that opened a path in front of me that I had only sensed but never seen before.

1995. I open the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) convention program (mailed to us prior to the convention, as they did in those days) and see that Janice Gould has been awarded a Scholars for the Dream Award. I am beyond excited. As a previous award recipient, I will get to meet her at the award breakfast at the conference! I tell everyone I know this news—the queer Native writer whose essay I love will be at the CCCC! I show up at the breakfast and wait for her to arrive. Then I have a total fan-girl moment where I don't leave her side during the entire breakfast. I say "I love your work" and "Thank you for that essay" at least fifty times each. She is gracious, slightly embarrassed, but very very kind. I invite her to our tiny Caucus meeting (at that time it's the Caucus for American Indian Scholars and Scholarship). She comes! She's friendly and generous, as Janice always was when meeting other Native writers. She and I exchange contact information. We correspond. I tell her that I'll be visiting New Mexico during the summer for a National Writing Project workshop at the Mabel Dodge Luhan house in Taos and ask her for advice about getting from Albuquerque (where I'll fly in) to Taos. She invites me to visit her, to stay a couple of extra days with her and her partner, Mimi, prior to the workshop. I am elated and excited. I feel seen, understood, encouraged.

During that visit we talk, walk along the Bosque, and begin to know each other better. Janice always assumed I was a poet first. She encouraged me to write, to think of myself not as a failed poet who could be a scholar but as poet and scholar and artist. More than that, she was a model for how those things could coexist. Remember, this was the 1990s—the theory wars and canon wars in academia. Boundaries were how they kept people *out*, so crossing them was only possible if you lived in a certain kind of body (not mine) with a certain kind of history (not mine either). Janice taught me those boundaries were imagined and that I could learn to not believe in them. I like to think that's a lesson I learned well and one that I've carried on to others.

I don't think it's too much to say that Janice's friendship changed my life. That summer in New Mexico was just after my mother had been diagnosed with lung cancer and given a year to live. I still didn't know what that would mean, but Janice did. Her book *Earthquake Weather* became a roadmap for me. I carried it and Harjo's *In Mad Love and War* with me for the next two years. Poetry became my navigation and

my guide as my mother made her journey toward the other side and after she walked on. Poetry became meditation and mediation—writing it and reading it and, yes, even just carrying it like the sacred space I now know it to be. And it's not like Janice lectured me about these things or provided tough-love advice or anything, she just listened to me, accepted me, shared her own stories, and became my relation. She was loving, humble but confident, and so generous. When I heard that Janice had walked on, my first thoughts were these first moments of our friendship. She was so patient with me, so gentle with the chaos of my feelings, so tolerant of my awkward attempts to follow that path I had just begun to glimpse.

Somehow it is true, this energy in which we exist,
 like the force of music that streams
 into and out of our hearts, the muscle itself
 clenching, releasing, converting one thing
 into another: anger into hatred, hatred into blood,
 blood into love. And none of this is easy.
 ("This Energy in Which We Exist" 16)

Today I want to write her a hundred poems, pour forth words of mourning so perfect that it hurts to read them, tell truths so sharp that they cut the muscle from my bones, describe beauty so brilliant that I am blinded by its existence. Instead, I sit inside this little casita north of Taos, stare at the Sangre de Cristos—the very mountains that Janice and I talked about all those years ago as we walked the Bosque near her house in Albuquerque—and think about the perfection of the hummingbirds fighting outside the window. I know that someone will write those poems, but it won't be me. Not today. And I know that none of what I've written here comes close to what I want to say about Janice, about what her loss means to this world or to me. How do I say good-bye to her?

How do I say good-bye to the person whose words were the first I read that made me think there would be space for me? whose poetry lived in/with me while my mother was dying? whose friendship comforted me after she passed? How do I say good-bye to the friend whose life showed me how to protect the creative center of myself amid the chaos of colonialism and patriarchy? who taught me how to flirt with girls without embarrassing myself? who showed me how to hold wom-

en's friendships close and dear? How do I say good-bye to a relative who bore witness to those moments when I was just imagining all I could become? How is it possible that Janice is gone from this world?

And I felt the words that came
from the other side of memory and knowledge.
They had less to do with justice
than tenderness,
less to do with love
than courage.
("Outside Language" 14)

The only thing I have is this, the words I put up in smoke every day.
Dear Janice—lovely smart talented beautiful mischievous gifted friend
and relative. Thank you. I love you. Be safe there. Be at peace there. I'll
see you when I get to the other side.

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A Tribute to Janice Gould

DEAN RADER

It is hard for me to imagine a world without Janice Gould in it.

Janice and I did not see each other that often, and we could go months without communicating, but I always felt close to her. Her death affected me more than I feel like I can express, adequately, here. In fact, I'm still coming to terms with the realization that she is no longer on this earth. She was kind, compassionate, patient, and crazy smart.

Composing a text about someone in close proximity to their death is beyond difficult. As I write this, Janice has only been gone a few days, and I am reminded so clearly of trying to compose my father's obituary on the very day he died—a task both impossible and necessary. I was on a plane, a United Airlines flight, back to Oklahoma to make arrangements for his body while trying to convey something about his essence to those who knew him and those who did not. Ironically (or not) I was also on a United Airlines flight when I learned of Janice's death, this time, though, headed the opposite direction—to Colorado, where she both was and was not. When I landed in Denver, I was aware that I was closer to my friend than I had been in a long while, and yes, also much farther away.

Time—Transit—Transformation. The great triumvirate of our lives.

I don't know where Janice is now, but I already miss her. I do not think of myself as a collaborative person, but it would appear that I have spent most of my academic career collaborating, and Janice was my first collaborator. Our work on *Speak to Me Words* was formative in the field but also for me personally and professionally. Working with Janice on that book changed my life in small and not-so-small ways. I still remember the first time we spoke on the phone about the project. I had proposed the book idea to the University of Arizona Press, and while they liked the idea, they recommended a coeditor. Our editor at

the press, Patti Harmann, and I discussed several different folks, but we both kept coming back to Janice, though Janice and I had never met. Some emails were exchanged between Patti and Janice, then the three of us, then Janice suggested she and I talk by phone. I was nervous when I dialed her number and more nervous at the beginning of our conversations. There were many pauses on her end. Was she being cautious? Did I sound stupid? Was the former because of the latter? In my memory, we had a lovely and fruitful exchange. That conversation evolved into a wonderful working relationship that went beyond *Speak to Me Words*. I have so many fond memories of the arc of our personal and professional lives: Janice sending me chapters of her dissertation. Me seeking advice for the special issue of *Sentence*. Janice sharing photographs. Me sending Janice poems. Janice sending me poems. Janice dissecting panels we were on. Janice emailing me to tell me that just yesterday she and Mimi had gotten married! Janice, Qwo-Li, and me reading at Powell's, Janice telling me about her MLS degree, her move to Tucson, her move to Colorado Springs. Janice as a poet laureate! Janice and I discussing what to include in *Native Voices*. Janice getting sick. Janice dying.

Janice dying.

Janice dying.

That sentence caused me to stop and reread what I've written.

I fear I have said too much about myself and not enough about Janice. But people are important to you because of how they make you feel, and Janice always made me feel good. She understood my writerly restlessness. She and I seemed perpetually to be wearing different professional hats—often at the same time. She was a brilliant poet, an amazing photographer, a gifted scholar, a badass musician, and an excellent essayist. And if that was not enough, she decided, right in the middle of everything, to go back to school and get a graduate degree in library science. Who does that? Oh, I almost forgot—she also earned a second-degree black belt in Aikido. When Janice and I met I was, less impressively, writing scholarly essays while also trying to publish poems while also writing about pop culture while also translating Latin American poetry while also trying to write about Paul Klee. Was I a poet? A critic? A scholar? If a scholar, was it of poetry? Painting? Fiction? Film? Janice understood my confusions, my ambitions, my disillusion. She is one of the few people with whom I've exchanged

both critical and creative work. We recognized in each other that desire to multitask. One genre was never enough.

That said, my favorite of her many genres is her poetry. I've long believed that Janice was and is underrated as a poet. Her poems were provocative spaces that, in retrospect, were ahead of their times. Her work engages lesbian erotics, land reclamation, Indian mascots, environmentalism, Indigenous genocide, and sexual violence. Her early poems were edgy but quiet. Maybe quiet but edgy. Smart. Sneaky smart. Her poems were autobiographical without being confessional—she never tried to mythologize the self or capitalize on trauma. Rather, she was able to connect with readers by way of candor, by way of truth. Reading her poems, you felt you knew her. Remember this passage from “Autobiography”?

After awhile, I manifested
a tendency to howl,
cry inconsolably,
and choose the wrong women.

The appendix may be consulted
for a list of lovers, pets
travels, etc.

How can you not love the poet who writes those lines?

Though her early poems like “Coyotismo” and “Day of the Dead” are the pieces most readers are likely to know, I think her best work is *Doubters and Dreamers*. That book is just brilliant. Her deployment of the sonnet is gorgeous, and her fluency with the villanelle is top shelf. Like very top shelf, where the best stuff is. I mean, how good are these opening lines from “XXI Villanelle”?

Because I hear the voices of the dead
at night (who call out in the circling storm),
I cannot cut the knot or loose the thread.

Earth opens; I see a faint trail ahead
but stay among the ones who laugh or mourn.
Because I hear the voices of the dead,

I smudge the air with sage, incense, and red
cedar and pray to see it all transform.

Beauty + darkness = unforgettable. Add truth and wisdom to that (as this one does), and you have a poem everyone should be reading. And by everyone I mean, like, everyone.

The poem I've been thinking about the most since I learned she passed is one we published in *Native Voices*. It is also the opening poem for her final book, *Seed*, which appeared earlier this year and which, fortunately, she got to see in print. It is one of those poems whose title is also its first line:

A POEM

is about to flower
full force from my abdomen,
my spleen, my wrists,

my ankles. I could feel the pip of it
in last night's dream
that kept threading its way
back to sacred land

It makes me happy—perhaps because it is some sort of victory over death—to think of a poem flowering from the totality of Janice's body. I think I'm just going to leave it at that.

Janice was, like her poems, gracious, generous, and giving. Working with her was a kind of base code for me in terms of collaborating with other artists and writers. She taught me more than she knew. My life—like this world—has been made richer because of her.

“A Language That Can Bear Our Truth”

Honoring Janice Gould

LISA TATONETTI

I have a vivid memory of making coffee as the sound of Janice playing guitar in my living room drifted into the kitchen when she was visiting Manhattan, Kansas, for a reading a number of years ago. It was already sunny, the windows were open, and the haunting sound of her playing entwined with the morning birdsong. The deep, embodied pleasure of that moment has long stayed with me. Her reading that night was interspersed with songs and stories. In the end, she brought the house down with her signature blend of quiet humor, gorgeous poetry, and music. The beauty of that lyricism, of her words, and, most importantly, of her as a person is what I hold in my memory as I join my voice with the others here to mourn her loss and celebrate her life.

Janice's family story is entwined with Manhattan, so her visit there was both a reading and a trip through a town that had been the home of the three white sisters, the Lanes, who would eventually adopt Janice's Koyoonk'auwi mother, Vivian. The details of that informal adoption are hazy, but the outcome is that after Vivian's mother (Janice's grandmother) died, Vivian was taken from her father, Harry Beatty, and moved from Concow land to San Francisco when she was somewhere between seven and ten years old. While Vivian would return to Beldon and the Feather River, she would come to adulthood, marry, and have her children, including Janice, in San Diego and the Bay Area. As Janice shared with me recently when remembering her mother, "The story of her mother's death, her father's abandonment of her, the break with her siblings, her apparent adoption by the Lanes, and much more were tales my mother imparted to us over the years. The land still had meaning because of my mom's memories."

This connection is seen throughout Janice's poetry and essays, and it is the power of that work, of her words, that brought me to immerse myself in her writing and, later, to have the privilege of calling her my friend. I first encountered Janice's writing in a graduate class on queer literature in the late 1990s. We read a selection of Janice's poetry alongside Bay of Quinte Mohawk writer/theorist Beth Brant's "A Long Story." This initial encounter would shape the course of the rest of my life, just as their own friendship would affect Janice's life—Brant introduced Janice to Gloria Anzaldúa, for example, as she was writing *Borderlands*, and, most recently, Janice edited a new collection of Brant's work, *A Generous Spirit / Selected Works by Beth Brant* (2019). The impact of their writing changed the shape of Indigenous studies and expanded the possibilities so many young Indigenous readers and writers saw in the world.

Janice, as most of you know, was part of the first generation of queer Indigenous writers to claim the intersections of queerness and Indigeneity in writing and activism. She recently shared a bit about her experience of coming to political consciousness. This blossoming was spurred by early college classes she attended in Berkeley: "My older sister and I attended Merritt Junior College, which was an old technical/vocational school on what used to be Grove Street and later became Martin Luther King Boulevard." There, she explained, "I took women's studies classes and began to acquire a language for what I felt, thought, and experienced." She alludes to this as well in "Integrity," a poem in which she remembers her teenage self:

I don't know
 why I want to be a poet.
 Perhaps because I need
 a language for
 the knowledge
 I have been accumulating
 lately, words that shine
 with the slow, steady glimmer
 of my heart
 (*Seed*, 22–23)

Janice wrote since childhood, and the "language" that she acquired as a young adult, which allowed her to claim and name her truth, would become a gift, a giveaway for generations to come. In the fifty years of

writing that followed those classes, Janice demanded voice and acknowledgment for queer/Two-Spirit Indigenous people and also shared her personal experiences as a non-cis Koyoonk'auwi lesbian who came of age in a world that was often both unsafe and cruel to such folks.

A sadness for me is that a writer of such incredible import had doubts about her legacy and reading base. She commented, "I imagine I have some small following among an older generation of readers, but I suppose that many younger writers, readers, and scholars have no idea who I am or what I write about." Janice looms so large in my mind when I think about the rise of queer Indigenous literature and its present-day impact that it's hard for me to hear those words and to imagine that young readers and writers might be unaware of her work, of her significance.

With that in mind, I want to honor Janice's memory here by turning briefly to her writing, because, as she told me, "It's hard to be a poet. The apprenticeship takes time. We learn from others, we experiment, but then we have to make our own way and find a language that can bear our truth."

These days, as I, together with so many others, mourn Janice's passing, I've been returning to the essays and poems I've cited and read aloud, thumbing through books and revisiting words that have traced paths through my heart and become an embodied part of how I see the world. While I could spend endless time talking about her work, especially her creative texts—*Beneath My Heart* (1990), *Earthquake Weather* (1996), *Alphabet* (1996), *Doubters and Dreamers* (2011), and *The Force of Gratitude* (2017)—I mediate here on Janice's most recent collection, *Seed* (2019), because it was so important to her to see this new book come to fruition.

In the fall of 2018 Janice contacted me about the upcoming publication of *Seed*, which she was excited to bring into the world. At the same time, she told me about her pancreatic cancer, as these two things were entwined—this physical challenge she was facing together with her long-time partner, Mimi Wheatfield, and this new collection of writing she was shepherding into the world. This email came at a time when I was dealing with the news that my mom had maybe six months to live. Both Janice's health crisis, which at the time seemed potentially surmountable, and my mom's illness and death backgrounded my multiple readings of *Seed* in early 2019. The sometimes-crushing intersections of

illness, fear, and hope allowed me to feel, so deeply, how Janice's poetry creates a grammar for loss, for possibility, and for love.

Among the many poignant and beautiful pieces in *Seed*, I returned to two intersecting poems over and over in those early readings of the book. In the first of these, "Weed," the maligned plant speaks, describing its hidden growth, its love for the rose that shelters it, and the way, despite its "unattractive" leaves, bees still find sustenance in its blossoms. The poem concludes with these words:

Creator made me for some
unstated purpose, perhaps
to annoy and displease you,
to disrupt your fundamental beliefs
about order and meaning.
or to offer you another way
to see beauty.
(*Seed*, 7)

In so many ways, this stanza epitomizes how Janice's writing honors change, allows for disruption. Though quiet herself and often, to use her own words, "seen as shy," Janice refused to be silent in the face of injustice. So many of her poems across the years share stories of what it meant to be a tomboy in a world that asked her to sew skirts, what it meant to be a lesbian in a time that demanded her straightness, what it meant to be a California Indian in a community that hung effigies of Indians for "fun." Like the weed she alludes to in *Seed*, Janice too would go where she was not wanted to push boundaries, shift perceptions, and disrupt fundamental beliefs.

In her last months of illness, Janice and I exchanged emails for a final interview (though it didn't start out as anything we thought would be "final"). Looking back through these interactions reminds me of what a big heart she had. Though her own health was waning, Janice regularly asked about my mother, and when my mom died in early April, even though Janice herself was at that point very weak, she sent me an email that speaks of who she was—a contemplative and deeply caring person. Noting how hard it is to watch someone "pass over to the other side," Janice named the double edge of death, the way "the loss may come like a blessing because one's loved one is finally released from suffering." She continued, "I think it takes a while to fully understand how heavy that

load can be, the weight of responsibility of helping to usher someone to the edge of her life with attention and compassion. It's not an easy job." I was incredibly touched by the depth of her compassion and by her ability to carefully, honestly, and thoughtfully describe the twinned beauty and pain of our confrontations with mortality—this insight and attentiveness, so characteristic of Janice, also marks the deeply contemplative and gorgeous poems in *Seed*. (As an aside, Janice would undoubtedly attribute some of this contemplative ability and attentiveness to her practice of aikido, which she referenced often. She said that for her, aikido "offers a kind of path, a way of living and being. It informs how I am in the world.")

I'll end here with Janice's words from her poem "Midnight." In it, the speaker is up late, wrestling with "the hard consonants of worry and despair" and the knowledge that "one day we will leave / this whirling planet" (*Seed*, 16). In the face of this reality, the poem calls the reader to shake off their fears and inhabit their body, to exist fully in this place at this moment. Janice calls us to smell the loam and the flowers of the new strawberry plants, to see the mountain, hear the water, and feel the echoes of heat held by the stones.

I wept as I read and reread these words from "Midnight" as my mom was dying, and here I am again as I read it after Janice's passing. But Janice left us a message: in the face of her death, of all death, she urges us to live more fully, to be more present. She calls us, saying, "Wake up, dear soul" (*Seed*, 16). And in that spirit—acknowledging her brilliance and her caring, being thankful for all she gave her fellow writers, readers, and scholars, and holding up all she shared with her friends and loved ones—perhaps the best way to honor Janice is to take up her offer:

Were we not invited to love this place
with tenderness and respect?
Were we not formed with the very dirt
we will have to one day bid farewell—
fragrant soil made of stardust
and rain? Let's walk in the garden
and feel the night wind on our faces.
Give me your warm hand to kiss.
(*Seed*, 16–17)

Memories of Janice

DANIEL HEATH JUSTICE

My first and most indelible memory of Janice was her laughter.

I was in my last year as an undergrad at the University of Northern Colorado—just as I was about to head to the University of Nebraska–Lincoln to do grad work in Native American literature—and I had volunteered to drive her somewhere during her campus visit. Janice was touring in support of her poetry collection *Earthquake Weather*, and my friend and fellow UNC alum Qwo-Li Driskill had suggested I participate in the visit. So I made my monster burnished-copper 1977 Chrysler Newport, with a massive dent in the driver's side panel, available for chauffeuring—and when I pulled in to pick her up Janice let loose a laugh of utter delight. I was incredibly nervous to be driving her around, as there was something almost supernatural to me about published writers, but she had a way of making others feel very much at ease. We ended up laughing a lot on that visit, and not just about my car. I'd only just started embracing my heritage and was still very much struggling with my sexuality. She was asking questions in her work that both fascinated and frightened me, but meeting her and experiencing her personal generosity gave me a hopeful sense of the good possibilities to come, both personally and professionally. *Earthquake Weather* would continue to be a touchstone text in the years that followed.

One of my first published essays appeared in *Speak to Me Words: Essays on Contemporary American Indian Poetry*, which Janice coedited with Dean Rader, and once again she demonstrated enormous intellectual generosity in her feedback on the piece. Later, and to our lasting gratitude, Janice contributed extraordinary work to a couple of coedited projects I worked on with other colleagues. The last time I saw her was in 2011, when Mark Rifkin invited Janice, Craig Womack, and me to the University of North Carolina at Greensboro for a symposium on the

intersections of sexuality and Indigeneity. It was a wonderful visit, and I was constantly reminded of our first meeting, because we laughed so much over those now-precious days. It never occurred to me that this would be our final visit together.

Janice would go on to teach in Colorado Springs, which was just an hour and a half from my hometown. We tried a couple of times to meet up on one of my many visits home over the past few years, but it just never quite worked out, especially as my parents' health deteriorated and my trips home were dedicated to hospital, doctor, and chemo appointments. But I'm sorry I didn't try harder to make it happen—I would have loved to sit down and laugh with her again, and thank her for helping a confused and frightened, queer, mixed-heritage Cherokee kid see something beautiful and strong in those embraided threads.

Keep a fire, Janice. You will be sorely missed.

A TRIBUTE TO JANICE GOULD

skin is potent and pleasing. The sound of water pushing through the garden hose, the music of the wind chime enters my perception, gently and persistently. Writing poetry requires a certain repose. I'm engaged and making choices about language and sound. I can look from the left eye and the right eye and from the corners of the eyes, and when that happens, I'm looking inward, even if I'm seeing the world apart from me.

SALVAGGIO: Is the "smell of soil and growing things" a special site for spirit-infused vision and repose?

GOULD: We live in a 1950s neighborhood. The climate is dry. Water is tunneled east from the mountains. The soil is poor and has to be enriched for lawns and gardens to grow. There is nothing particularly lovely about my yard, so it is odd that some of my poems come from this "garden." However, when days warm up I'm usually outside weeding and watering. I nurture the roses as best I can. I am not a natural gardener; I don't have a "green thumb." But it gives me great pleasure to be outside among the weeds or flowers. After I finish, I sit outside and drink a cup of coffee and look around at my work. It is not an Edenic spot, but there is satisfaction; my mind is relaxed.

These things seem to feed those mysterious energies that enliven and nurture us inwardly. The spirit resides in the integuments of the body, but it can soar beyond us too. Similarly, there is spirit in the cells of plants that take their nourishment and growth from the sun, a transformation that goes on as stems reach upward toward the light and roots reach downward into the fertility of earth.

SALVAGGIO: Can you elaborate on these "mysterious energies"?

GOULD: I didn't know, when I started *Seed*, that I would be faced with a terminal illness as fall changed to winter last year. Now I am "reminded" that I have pancreatic cancer every time I go for chemotherapy, or don't go because my platelets or white blood cells are low, or as my body struggles to find a balance between eating and having no appetite for food, when my hair thins, my muscles shrink, and my weight drops, leaving me shaky and wobbly on my feet. Maybe psychically I "knew" something was manifesting inside me when I wrote *Seed*, but I was still feeling physically healthy. I did know, however, that I needed a few days by myself, and that's why I went to Chimayó, New Mexico.

I can't always respond to the land(scape) with words, even if I'm aching with its beauty. But this time was different. I was alone. I didn't have phone service. Even though there are "autobiographical" elements in some of my poems, my intent for *Seed* was different. I wanted a conversation with what's beyond me and within me at the same time, looking from the corners of the eyes to see the "essence."

SALVAGGIO: So at this crucial time, the silence and repose of Chimayó allowed that poetic conversation?

GOULD: Silence seems to be an essential quality of repose. But it's not truly without sound. Instead, we sound the depths of memory and understanding to get at what feels like an insight or revelation. There may be a long drift involved before the sounding brings anything to fruition.

Poetry is about play and playfulness. A child at play is absorbed in whatever fantasy and imagination is going on to make that play meaningful and enjoyable. A poem might occur once it has found the right shape for what is being expressed. The poet makes this out of language and images that seem to come from the unconscious world, where a different kind of vision takes place. Play is intense. It has an erotic and instinctual quality full of longing, of yearning. To write poetry is to find some balance between play and repose, discipline and freedom, and instinct and imagination that makes sense.

You can't make repose (or meditation) happen. You have to respect your own processes, for the quelling of mind-chatter, as well as for the long silence. Sometimes that can feel unbearable, and a person can berate herself for not writing. Other poets' writing helps me see the world instead of getting lost in despair, but the creative process is a mystery. The long silences surrounding the writing of poems are productive, a time of incubation.

SALVAGGIO: Does the seed itself somehow pull us into this "time of incubation" in poetry?

GOULD: The labor of gardening is tied to a more natural sense of time than the eight-to-five work that many people do. Teaching feels unnatural to me, since universities require joining committees, attending meet-

ings, going to talks, seminars, and conferences, doing endless evaluations, and meeting deadlines. It's important that we nurture our souls or spirits. Working in the yard, taking a hike, walking in a park, listening without thought, even cooking and cleaning—these activities can be restorative. Today everything moves really fast. When I am working in the yard, I don't worry about the time.

SALVAGGIO: Yes, I sense this suspension of time in the opening poem that unfolds in your "abdomen," in a "dream," threading back into "sacred land." In "Dream" you write: "I was nineteen, bereft and lonely / When I woke, I was sixty-nine."

GOULD: I'm not a very "linear" person. I suspect this has as much to do with working in the arts as being Native American. A good deal of our time is taken up by "scheduled labor," and I've often thought that this has only benefited the rich, the corporate/capitalists who created the time clock in the first place. Retreats and other ways of "getting away" no doubt help, because doing art takes concentration, focus, and a kind of mindfulness—the ability to be in solitude without distractions.

As I read back through *Seed* I see that some of the poems, like "Visitations," are concerned with death. I wrote that poem a couple of years ago, not as part of the spate of "garden" poems that "arrived" in September. The mild weather in Chimayó allowed me to sit outside on the flagstone patio near an old cottonwood tree. I could hear a burro braying, birds flocking, a rooster crowing. At night I sat under a comforter and wrote poems. A word would come to me, and I would follow it. I mentioned repose, but there is also a kind of intensity that drives a person to create. This does not mean to be in a place of stasis, though stillness may be involved, but it's not rigid. It's relaxed and open, allowing one to be adrift. There are so many ways the ego berates one for being adrift; the daydreaming state is not always easy to fall into. I am not usually aware of the drift of my thoughts, because whatever mind-work is going on is happening in some deeper, silent layer of the psyche.

SALVAGGIO: You mentioned "Visitations," a poem steeped in remembrances and the "drift of memories." How does memory inform your poems?

GOULD: Movement is one aspect of drifting; accumulation is another of its aspects. Memory is an accumulation of re-membered experiences and events that shape and form us. I drift into memory, image, and its coconspirator language as a way of seeking (and playfully seizing) the poem. I don't know where *Seed* came from. Some of it, like "Mrs. Ryder's Hands," was written maybe four or more years ago—out of memory and a need to describe what humiliation feels like. But "Black Hair," which takes place in the same time frame as "Mrs. Ryder's Hands," is a recent poem, something that incubated for a long time.

SALVAGGIO: You once mentioned to me a notion that art is produced from a place of pain, yet you also write about the astonishment and joy of poetic ways of seeing.

GOULD: The photographer Robert Adams believes that artists produce out of a place of pain, whether physical or emotional. I try to articulate this by asking myself what damages and hurt I endured and survived as a child that I continued to carry with me into adulthood and that made me act against my own conscience or what I professed to believe. As a young person I found it hard to understand how I could be a girl or a woman. I didn't feel that I was like what a girl or woman should be—as expressed by society and by my mother. I behaved in "androgynous" ways, sometimes being a tomboy and sometimes just being my own gentle, soft-spoken self. I wanted to wear jeans and T-shirts if given the opportunity. Being a "girl" was so restrictive—always in a dress on school days, always having to behave in certain ways, always supposed (even as a preteen) to want a boyfriend.

SALVAGGIO: Was growing up Native American ever a source of such remorse or pain?

GOULD: The feelings aroused by your question are complicated. I understood from stories my mother would tell about her own experiences that we would or could encounter hostility and racism. When we were little and would visit our English-born grandparents in Arcadia, California, our grandmother would say in front of our mother, "What a shame the children are so dark!" My own encounters with racism around my American Indian identity are subtle and strangely

mixed because of my mixed-blood status and how that informs how people see me. When I was a child, a little girl once turned on me and called me “a dirty Jap.” Another girl once asked me if my family only ate rice and eggs, because wasn’t I Chinese? As an adult I’ve been ignored but also followed around in stores, as if the shopkeeper had decided I was a thief. I have been pulled over by police a few times for essentially nothing. Some of my poems, like “Indian Mascot, 1959” (in *Doubters and Dreamers*), explore the complexity of being Indian in these United States. I’m not sure I’ve said everything I want to say about that, but I register my protest to that time in a less overtly “political” way in the prosody and form of that poem.

SALVAGGIO: There does seem inevitably this tension between intense expression and poetic form. Can you talk about navigating this process?

GOULD: The poems that feel most real to me are the ones where the words feel like they’ve chosen me. The “choosing” I do is intuitive; it isn’t simply an intellectual process. Clearly, the poem will have a final line, just as it will have a title and a first line—and content. Learning where and what those things are has to do with learning and practicing the craft. I think it’s mysterious, that “choosing.” As a writer, I’m always selecting words. I go back over what I wrote—in a letter, an essay, a poem—to find places where a better word would do or where a phrase or sentence seems particularly cumbersome or unclear. I tend to edit myself, and then I ask Mimi to edit my writing too. But this technical work is different from the selection of specific words that create a poem. Through reading poetry—and not just contemporary work but some of the older forms—you learn what lyric is and does. In free verse you can let go of the formal rules, but even a free-verse poem takes some kind of shape. Language and “music” help create the shape. Right now I’m working with a long, skinny shape. I could reshape the poems I’ve written, enjamb the lines differently. For now, it’s fun to find pleasure in the work. Making a poem requires one to accept a certain responsibility for truth—as well as for beauty. Maybe that comes from my more Native sensibility. I believe in beauty, in its power to move us, change us. But this raises all kinds of questions about how we define beauty, or power, or being “moved” or changed, even surprised.

SALVAGGIO: In “Beloved” you write beautifully about love and longing but also “hurt” and “fury.” Since many of your poems reference your “beloved,” talk about the love that infuses your poems—as when you write in “Rain,” “We love female rain, my beloved and I.”

GOULD: When do we begin to experience the beloved, to be awed by the mystery of loving and being loved? In lesbian friendships, there is sometimes an element of the erotic, the pull of attraction, a fascination with and excitement about the other. This is probably a subtle and typically silent, negotiated dance. The erotic is not always present, but I have silently and reverently loved many of my close women friends, whether lesbian or straight.

My poetry is a place where I can explore and express desire for another woman. I don’t know how it is for young lesbians today, but I never really learned to look at another woman. There was no “lesbian gaze” for me except in moments of intense intimacy. Are women allowed to look at other women with reverence and respect, with warm desire, with erotic happiness? There are so many taboos around this. Much of the “gaze” that women are allowed has been perverted into and claimed as envy, rivalry, or self-hatred. So it’s important to announce the beloved as a flesh-and-blood woman who may transform psychically and poetically into mother, sister, friend, goddess, Earth, or lover. It is important to develop the beautiful gaze that allows for intimacy and intensity, openly, without fear, without taboo.

Love is transformative and can include the natural world of forests, plants, rivers, clouds, mountains, animals, colors, and much more. Transformation is an aspect of power. It is our choice how we use or misuse power and the pleasures and perils of the erotic. I enjoy falling in love, and I enjoy seeing and remembering the beloved in all the women I’ve loved. But I have learned to be responsible in my choices and behaviors out of respect and care for the beloved’s feelings, her ways of living, believing, and being in the world.

SALVAGGIO: Your small, intense images in *Seed* do strike me as utterly transformative, infused with an almost radiant love. Earth becomes a “whirling planet, blue / and precious like a child’s marble.” You say you “much prefer” the “Little People / and Small Deer / of the Cherokee,” and you envision an illuminated world of “small truths”—among them

“ocean-washed agates” and “even a discarded cat’s claw, / shining on the hardwood floor.” What of this world of “small truths” and radiant images?

GOULD: I love seeing the cat’s discarded claw on the hardwood floor. It’s like the curve of a waxing or waning moon. She just leaves it there, and it shines, almost translucent, a discrete radiance. Years ago, a friend I was in love with taught me how to see and to taste. I’m not an unobservant person, but I was surprised by and enchanted at how many details of the natural world my friend would notice and point out to me. I began to look more closely at “things,” to take pleasure, then, in the color, texture, and complexity of what is around us, to pause, stop, contemplate, and observe. Walking anywhere became a different experience. What appeals to and attracts me are the small and ordinary things of life: the shape of a cup, the feel of a good pen to write with, the warm metal of a pocket watch or penknife, the smell of leather and clean tobacco and sweetgrass, the elegance of a feather, a flower, a well-written poem. Where does truth come in? Can we learn to see those inner places?

It’s good to be moved by the force of gratitude. Gratitude requires us to humble ourselves. Perhaps it enables grace and rains down “fierce tears.” If I am telling the truth—and, as Joy Harjo once pointed out, that’s the poet’s responsibility—then I feel most confident looking for truth in the small, humble, and obscure, strangely and ardently shining.

No Words for Good-Bye

MALEA POWELL

This is one of the hardest things I've ever had to write. Nothing I can think to say feels good enough for Janice, not poetic enough, not expansive enough, not real enough. It feels like all my words are living in that dark place where they lived before I met her, before I knew what was possible for me because of her. So . . .

Flashes.

1993. I'm reading pieces from Smith and Watson's *De/Colonizing the Subject* for a class I'm taking during my second year in grad school. Not in the actual book but in a reader made for us by our instructor, which includes the table of contents. In the TOC, I see an essay by Janice Gould, "The Problem of Being 'Indian': One Mixed-Blood's Dilemma." I go to the library and recall their copy of the book, read the whole essay, and feel seen. Totally, completely seen. For the first time, someone seems to be talking about me, about my positionality, about my struggles in academia. The details are different, but the anger, the struggle, the balance I've been trying to achieve and the desire to pull up the layers of "civilization" at my institution to reveal the blood and bones of colonization that are there just beneath the surface—those things are the same. There in her writing, in her voice, her quiet, calm voice, there is both fury and truth. "It is obvious that there is not a university in this country that is not built on what was once native land. We should reflect on this over and over, and understand this fact as one fundamental point about the relationship of Indians to academia" (81–82). And it's a truth that opened a path in front of me that I had only sensed but never seen before.

1995. I open the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) convention program (mailed to us prior to the convention, as they did in those days) and see that Janice Gould has been awarded a Scholars for the Dream Award. I am beyond excited. As a previous award recipient, I will get to meet her at the award breakfast at the conference! I tell everyone I know this news—the queer Native writer whose essay I love will be at the CCCC! I show up at the breakfast and wait for her to arrive. Then I have a total fan-girl moment where I don’t leave her side during the entire breakfast. I say “I love your work” and “Thank you for that essay” at least fifty times each. She is gracious, slightly embarrassed, but very very kind. I invite her to our tiny Caucus meeting (at that time it’s the Caucus for American Indian Scholars and Scholarship). She comes! She’s friendly and generous, as Janice always was when meeting other Native writers. She and I exchange contact information. We correspond. I tell her that I’ll be visiting New Mexico during the summer for a National Writing Project workshop at the Mabel Dodge Luhan house in Taos and ask her for advice about getting from Albuquerque (where I’ll fly in) to Taos. She invites me to visit her, to stay a couple of extra days with her and her partner, Mimi, prior to the workshop. I am elated and excited. I feel seen, understood, encouraged.

During that visit we talk, walk along the Bosque, and begin to know each other better. Janice always assumed I was a poet first. She encouraged me to write, to think of myself not as a failed poet who could be a scholar but as poet and scholar and artist. More than that, she was a model for how those things could coexist. Remember, this was the 1990s—the theory wars and canon wars in academia. Boundaries were how they kept people *out*, so crossing them was only possible if you lived in a certain kind of body (not mine) with a certain kind of history (not mine either). Janice taught me those boundaries were imagined and that I could learn to not believe in them. I like to think that’s a lesson I learned well and one that I’ve carried on to others.

I don’t think it’s too much to say that Janice’s friendship changed my life. That summer in New Mexico was just after my mother had been diagnosed with lung cancer and given a year to live. I still didn’t know what that would mean, but Janice did. Her book *Earthquake Weather* became a roadmap for me. I carried it and Harjo’s *In Mad Love and War* with me for the next two years. Poetry became my navigation and

my guide as my mother made her journey toward the other side and after she walked on. Poetry became meditation and mediation—writing it and reading it and, yes, even just carrying it like the sacred space I now know it to be. And it's not like Janice lectured me about these things or provided tough-love advice or anything, she just listened to me, accepted me, shared her own stories, and became my relation. She was loving, humble but confident, and so generous. When I heard that Janice had walked on, my first thoughts were these first moments of our friendship. She was so patient with me, so gentle with the chaos of my feelings, so tolerant of my awkward attempts to follow that path I had just begun to glimpse.

Somehow it is true, this energy in which we exist,
 like the force of music that streams
 into and out of our hearts, the muscle itself
 clenching, releasing, converting one thing
 into another: anger into hatred, hatred into blood,
 blood into love. And none of this is easy.
 ("This Energy in Which We Exist" 16)

Today I want to write her a hundred poems, pour forth words of mourning so perfect that it hurts to read them, tell truths so sharp that they cut the muscle from my bones, describe beauty so brilliant that I am blinded by its existence. Instead, I sit inside this little casita north of Taos, stare at the Sangre de Cristos—the very mountains that Janice and I talked about all those years ago as we walked the Bosque near her house in Albuquerque—and think about the perfection of the hummingbirds fighting outside the window. I know that someone will write those poems, but it won't be me. Not today. And I know that none of what I've written here comes close to what I want to say about Janice, about what her loss means to this world or to me. How do I say good-bye to her?

How do I say good-bye to the person whose words were the first I read that made me think there would be space for me? whose poetry lived in/with me while my mother was dying? whose friendship comforted me after she passed? How do I say good-bye to the friend whose life showed me how to protect the creative center of myself amid the chaos of colonialism and patriarchy? who taught me how to flirt with girls without embarrassing myself? who showed me how to hold wom-

en's friendships close and dear? How do I say good-bye to a relative who bore witness to those moments when I was just imagining all I could become? How is it possible that Janice is gone from this world?

And I felt the words that came
from the other side of memory and knowledge.
They had less to do with justice
than tenderness,
less to do with love
than courage.
("Outside Language" 14)

The only thing I have is this, the words I put up in smoke every day.
Dear Janice—lovely smart talented beautiful mischievous gifted friend
and relative. Thank you. I love you. Be safe there. Be at peace there. I'll
see you when I get to the other side.

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A Tribute to Janice Gould

DEAN RADER

It is hard for me to imagine a world without Janice Gould in it.

Janice and I did not see each other that often, and we could go months without communicating, but I always felt close to her. Her death affected me more than I feel like I can express, adequately, here. In fact, I'm still coming to terms with the realization that she is no longer on this earth. She was kind, compassionate, patient, and crazy smart.

Composing a text about someone in close proximity to their death is beyond difficult. As I write this, Janice has only been gone a few days, and I am reminded so clearly of trying to compose my father's obituary on the very day he died—a task both impossible and necessary. I was on a plane, a United Airlines flight, back to Oklahoma to make arrangements for his body while trying to convey something about his essence to those who knew him and those who did not. Ironically (or not) I was also on a United Airlines flight when I learned of Janice's death, this time, though, headed the opposite direction—to Colorado, where she both was and was not. When I landed in Denver, I was aware that I was closer to my friend than I had been in a long while, and yes, also much farther away.

Time—Transit—Transformation. The great triumvirate of our lives.

I don't know where Janice is now, but I already miss her. I do not think of myself as a collaborative person, but it would appear that I have spent most of my academic career collaborating, and Janice was my first collaborator. Our work on *Speak to Me Words* was formative in the field but also for me personally and professionally. Working with Janice on that book changed my life in small and not-so-small ways. I still remember the first time we spoke on the phone about the project. I had proposed the book idea to the University of Arizona Press, and while they liked the idea, they recommended a coeditor. Our editor at

the press, Patti Harmann, and I discussed several different folks, but we both kept coming back to Janice, though Janice and I had never met. Some emails were exchanged between Patti and Janice, then the three of us, then Janice suggested she and I talk by phone. I was nervous when I dialed her number and more nervous at the beginning of our conversations. There were many pauses on her end. Was she being cautious? Did I sound stupid? Was the former because of the latter? In my memory, we had a lovely and fruitful exchange. That conversation evolved into a wonderful working relationship that went beyond *Speak to Me Words*. I have so many fond memories of the arc of our personal and professional lives: Janice sending me chapters of her dissertation. Me seeking advice for the special issue of *Sentence*. Janice sharing photographs. Me sending Janice poems. Janice sending me poems. Janice dissecting panels we were on. Janice emailing me to tell me that just yesterday she and Mimi had gotten married! Janice, Qwo-Li, and me reading at Powell's, Janice telling me about her MLS degree, her move to Tucson, her move to Colorado Springs. Janice as a poet laureate! Janice and I discussing what to include in *Native Voices*. Janice getting sick. Janice dying.

Janice dying.

Janice dying.

That sentence caused me to stop and reread what I've written.

I fear I have said too much about myself and not enough about Janice. But people are important to you because of how they make you feel, and Janice always made me feel good. She understood my writerly restlessness. She and I seemed perpetually to be wearing different professional hats—often at the same time. She was a brilliant poet, an amazing photographer, a gifted scholar, a badass musician, and an excellent essayist. And if that was not enough, she decided, right in the middle of everything, to go back to school and get a graduate degree in library science. Who does that? Oh, I almost forgot—she also earned a second-degree black belt in Aikido. When Janice and I met I was, less impressively, writing scholarly essays while also trying to publish poems while also writing about pop culture while also translating Latin American poetry while also trying to write about Paul Klee. Was I a poet? A critic? A scholar? If a scholar, was it of poetry? Painting? Fiction? Film? Janice understood my confusions, my ambitions, my disillusion. She is one of the few people with whom I've exchanged

both critical and creative work. We recognized in each other that desire to multitask. One genre was never enough.

That said, my favorite of her many genres is her poetry. I've long believed that Janice was and is underrated as a poet. Her poems were provocative spaces that, in retrospect, were ahead of their times. Her work engages lesbian erotics, land reclamation, Indian mascots, environmentalism, Indigenous genocide, and sexual violence. Her early poems were edgy but quiet. Maybe quiet but edgy. Smart. Sneaky smart. Her poems were autobiographical without being confessional—she never tried to mythologize the self or capitalize on trauma. Rather, she was able to connect with readers by way of candor, by way of truth. Reading her poems, you felt you knew her. Remember this passage from “Autobiography”?

After awhile, I manifested
a tendency to howl,
cry inconsolably,
and choose the wrong women.

The appendix may be consulted
for a list of lovers, pets
travels, etc.

How can you not love the poet who writes those lines?

Though her early poems like “Coyotismo” and “Day of the Dead” are the pieces most readers are likely to know, I think her best work is *Doubters and Dreamers*. That book is just brilliant. Her deployment of the sonnet is gorgeous, and her fluency with the villanelle is top shelf. Like very top shelf, where the best stuff is. I mean, how good are these opening lines from “XXI Villanelle”?

Because I hear the voices of the dead
at night (who call out in the circling storm),
I cannot cut the knot or loose the thread.

Earth opens; I see a faint trail ahead
but stay among the ones who laugh or mourn.
Because I hear the voices of the dead,

I smudge the air with sage, incense, and red
cedar and pray to see it all transform.

Beauty + darkness = unforgettable. Add truth and wisdom to that (as this one does), and you have a poem everyone should be reading. And by everyone I mean, like, everyone.

The poem I've been thinking about the most since I learned she passed is one we published in *Native Voices*. It is also the opening poem for her final book, *Seed*, which appeared earlier this year and which, fortunately, she got to see in print. It is one of those poems whose title is also its first line:

A POEM

is about to flower
full force from my abdomen,
my spleen, my wrists,

my ankles. I could feel the pip of it
in last night's dream
that kept threading its way
back to sacred land

It makes me happy—perhaps because it is some sort of victory over death—to think of a poem flowering from the totality of Janice's body. I think I'm just going to leave it at that.

Janice was, like her poems, gracious, generous, and giving. Working with her was a kind of base code for me in terms of collaborating with other artists and writers. She taught me more than she knew. My life—like this world—has been made richer because of her.

“A Language That Can Bear Our Truth”

Honoring Janice Gould

LISA TATONETTI

I have a vivid memory of making coffee as the sound of Janice playing guitar in my living room drifted into the kitchen when she was visiting Manhattan, Kansas, for a reading a number of years ago. It was already sunny, the windows were open, and the haunting sound of her playing entwined with the morning birdsong. The deep, embodied pleasure of that moment has long stayed with me. Her reading that night was interspersed with songs and stories. In the end, she brought the house down with her signature blend of quiet humor, gorgeous poetry, and music. The beauty of that lyricism, of her words, and, most importantly, of her as a person is what I hold in my memory as I join my voice with the others here to mourn her loss and celebrate her life.

Janice's family story is entwined with Manhattan, so her visit there was both a reading and a trip through a town that had been the home of the three white sisters, the Lanes, who would eventually adopt Janice's Koyoonk'auwi mother, Vivian. The details of that informal adoption are hazy, but the outcome is that after Vivian's mother (Janice's grandmother) died, Vivian was taken from her father, Harry Beatty, and moved from Concow land to San Francisco when she was somewhere between seven and ten years old. While Vivian would return to Beldon and the Feather River, she would come to adulthood, marry, and have her children, including Janice, in San Diego and the Bay Area. As Janice shared with me recently when remembering her mother, "The story of her mother's death, her father's abandonment of her, the break with her siblings, her apparent adoption by the Lanes, and much more were tales my mother imparted to us over the years. The land still had meaning because of my mom's memories."

This connection is seen throughout Janice's poetry and essays, and it is the power of that work, of her words, that brought me to immerse myself in her writing and, later, to have the privilege of calling her my friend. I first encountered Janice's writing in a graduate class on queer literature in the late 1990s. We read a selection of Janice's poetry alongside Bay of Quinte Mohawk writer/theorist Beth Brant's "A Long Story." This initial encounter would shape the course of the rest of my life, just as their own friendship would affect Janice's life—Brant introduced Janice to Gloria Anzaldúa, for example, as she was writing *Borderlands*, and, most recently, Janice edited a new collection of Brant's work, *A Generous Spirit / Selected Works by Beth Brant* (2019). The impact of their writing changed the shape of Indigenous studies and expanded the possibilities so many young Indigenous readers and writers saw in the world.

Janice, as most of you know, was part of the first generation of queer Indigenous writers to claim the intersections of queerness and Indigeneity in writing and activism. She recently shared a bit about her experience of coming to political consciousness. This blossoming was spurred by early college classes she attended in Berkeley: "My older sister and I attended Merritt Junior College, which was an old technical/vocational school on what used to be Grove Street and later became Martin Luther King Boulevard." There, she explained, "I took women's studies classes and began to acquire a language for what I felt, thought, and experienced." She alludes to this as well in "Integrity," a poem in which she remembers her teenage self:

I don't know
 why I want to be a poet.
 Perhaps because I need
 a language for
 the knowledge
 I have been accumulating
 lately, words that shine
 with the slow, steady glimmer
 of my heart
 (*Seed*, 22–23)

Janice wrote since childhood, and the "language" that she acquired as a young adult, which allowed her to claim and name her truth, would become a gift, a giveaway for generations to come. In the fifty years of

writing that followed those classes, Janice demanded voice and acknowledgment for queer/Two-Spirit Indigenous people and also shared her personal experiences as a non-cis Koyoonk'auwi lesbian who came of age in a world that was often both unsafe and cruel to such folks.

A sadness for me is that a writer of such incredible import had doubts about her legacy and reading base. She commented, "I imagine I have some small following among an older generation of readers, but I suppose that many younger writers, readers, and scholars have no idea who I am or what I write about." Janice looms so large in my mind when I think about the rise of queer Indigenous literature and its present-day impact that it's hard for me to hear those words and to imagine that young readers and writers might be unaware of her work, of her significance.

With that in mind, I want to honor Janice's memory here by turning briefly to her writing, because, as she told me, "It's hard to be a poet. The apprenticeship takes time. We learn from others, we experiment, but then we have to make our own way and find a language that can bear our truth."

These days, as I, together with so many others, mourn Janice's passing, I've been returning to the essays and poems I've cited and read aloud, thumbing through books and revisiting words that have traced paths through my heart and become an embodied part of how I see the world. While I could spend endless time talking about her work, especially her creative texts—*Beneath My Heart* (1990), *Earthquake Weather* (1996), *Alphabet* (1996), *Doubters and Dreamers* (2011), and *The Force of Gratitude* (2017)—I mediate here on Janice's most recent collection, *Seed* (2019), because it was so important to her to see this new book come to fruition.

In the fall of 2018 Janice contacted me about the upcoming publication of *Seed*, which she was excited to bring into the world. At the same time, she told me about her pancreatic cancer, as these two things were entwined—this physical challenge she was facing together with her long-time partner, Mimi Wheatfield, and this new collection of writing she was shepherding into the world. This email came at a time when I was dealing with the news that my mom had maybe six months to live. Both Janice's health crisis, which at the time seemed potentially surmountable, and my mom's illness and death backgrounded my multiple readings of *Seed* in early 2019. The sometimes-crushing intersections of

illness, fear, and hope allowed me to feel, so deeply, how Janice's poetry creates a grammar for loss, for possibility, and for love.

Among the many poignant and beautiful pieces in *Seed*, I returned to two intersecting poems over and over in those early readings of the book. In the first of these, "Weed," the maligned plant speaks, describing its hidden growth, its love for the rose that shelters it, and the way, despite its "unattractive" leaves, bees still find sustenance in its blossoms. The poem concludes with these words:

Creator made me for some
unstated purpose, perhaps
to annoy and displease you,
to disrupt your fundamental beliefs
about order and meaning.
or to offer you another way
to see beauty.
(*Seed*, 7)

In so many ways, this stanza epitomizes how Janice's writing honors change, allows for disruption. Though quiet herself and often, to use her own words, "seen as shy," Janice refused to be silent in the face of injustice. So many of her poems across the years share stories of what it meant to be a tomboy in a world that asked her to sew skirts, what it meant to be a lesbian in a time that demanded her straightness, what it meant to be a California Indian in a community that hung effigies of Indians for "fun." Like the weed she alludes to in *Seed*, Janice too would go where she was not wanted to push boundaries, shift perceptions, and disrupt fundamental beliefs.

In her last months of illness, Janice and I exchanged emails for a final interview (though it didn't start out as anything we thought would be "final"). Looking back through these interactions reminds me of what a big heart she had. Though her own health was waning, Janice regularly asked about my mother, and when my mom died in early April, even though Janice herself was at that point very weak, she sent me an email that speaks of who she was—a contemplative and deeply caring person. Noting how hard it is to watch someone "pass over to the other side," Janice named the double edge of death, the way "the loss may come like a blessing because one's loved one is finally released from suffering." She continued, "I think it takes a while to fully understand how heavy that

load can be, the weight of responsibility of helping to usher someone to the edge of her life with attention and compassion. It's not an easy job." I was incredibly touched by the depth of her compassion and by her ability to carefully, honestly, and thoughtfully describe the twinned beauty and pain of our confrontations with mortality—this insight and attentiveness, so characteristic of Janice, also marks the deeply contemplative and gorgeous poems in *Seed*. (As an aside, Janice would undoubtedly attribute some of this contemplative ability and attentiveness to her practice of aikido, which she referenced often. She said that for her, aikido "offers a kind of path, a way of living and being. It informs how I am in the world.")

I'll end here with Janice's words from her poem "Midnight." In it, the speaker is up late, wrestling with "the hard consonants of worry and despair" and the knowledge that "one day we will leave / this whirling planet" (*Seed*, 16). In the face of this reality, the poem calls the reader to shake off their fears and inhabit their body, to exist fully in this place at this moment. Janice calls us to smell the loam and the flowers of the new strawberry plants, to see the mountain, hear the water, and feel the echoes of heat held by the stones.

I wept as I read and reread these words from "Midnight" as my mom was dying, and here I am again as I read it after Janice's passing. But Janice left us a message: in the face of her death, of all death, she urges us to live more fully, to be more present. She calls us, saying, "Wake up, dear soul" (*Seed*, 16). And in that spirit—acknowledging her brilliance and her caring, being thankful for all she gave her fellow writers, readers, and scholars, and holding up all she shared with her friends and loved ones—perhaps the best way to honor Janice is to take up her offer:

Were we not invited to love this place
with tenderness and respect?
Were we not formed with the very dirt
we will have to one day bid farewell—
fragrant soil made of stardust
and rain? Let's walk in the garden
and feel the night wind on our faces.
Give me your warm hand to kiss.
(*Seed*, 16–17)

Memories of Janice

DANIEL HEATH JUSTICE

My first and most indelible memory of Janice was her laughter.

I was in my last year as an undergrad at the University of Northern Colorado—just as I was about to head to the University of Nebraska–Lincoln to do grad work in Native American literature—and I had volunteered to drive her somewhere during her campus visit. Janice was touring in support of her poetry collection *Earthquake Weather*, and my friend and fellow UNC alum Qwo-Li Driskill had suggested I participate in the visit. So I made my monster burnished-copper 1977 Chrysler Newport, with a massive dent in the driver's side panel, available for chauffeuring—and when I pulled in to pick her up Janice let loose a laugh of utter delight. I was incredibly nervous to be driving her around, as there was something almost supernatural to me about published writers, but she had a way of making others feel very much at ease. We ended up laughing a lot on that visit, and not just about my car. I'd only just started embracing my heritage and was still very much struggling with my sexuality. She was asking questions in her work that both fascinated and frightened me, but meeting her and experiencing her personal generosity gave me a hopeful sense of the good possibilities to come, both personally and professionally. *Earthquake Weather* would continue to be a touchstone text in the years that followed.

One of my first published essays appeared in *Speak to Me Words: Essays on Contemporary American Indian Poetry*, which Janice coedited with Dean Rader, and once again she demonstrated enormous intellectual generosity in her feedback on the piece. Later, and to our lasting gratitude, Janice contributed extraordinary work to a couple of coedited projects I worked on with other colleagues. The last time I saw her was in 2011, when Mark Rifkin invited Janice, Craig Womack, and me to the University of North Carolina at Greensboro for a symposium on the

intersections of sexuality and Indigeneity. It was a wonderful visit, and I was constantly reminded of our first meeting, because we laughed so much over those now-precious days. It never occurred to me that this would be our final visit together.

Janice would go on to teach in Colorado Springs, which was just an hour and a half from my hometown. We tried a couple of times to meet up on one of my many visits home over the past few years, but it just never quite worked out, especially as my parents' health deteriorated and my trips home were dedicated to hospital, doctor, and chemo appointments. But I'm sorry I didn't try harder to make it happen—I would have loved to sit down and laugh with her again, and thank her for helping a confused and frightened, queer, mixed-heritage Cherokee kid see something beautiful and strong in those embraided threads.

Keep a fire, Janice. You will be sorely missed.

Outsourcing Reconciliation

The Government of Canada's #IndigenousReads Campaign
and the Appropriation of Indigenous Intellectual Labor

PAULINE WAKEHAM

On June 21, 2016, National Indigenous Peoples Day, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau released a statement repeating one of the credos he has reiterated frequently since taking office: “No relationship is more important to our government and to Canada than the one with Indigenous peoples” (“Statement” 2016).¹ After affirming “the importance of reconciliation,” Trudeau promised once again “to fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples” (UNDRIP) and to “listen to Indigenous voices on environmental matters” (“Statement” 2016). At the end of his statement, the prime minister extended a new invitation, encouraging Canadians “to join the #IndigenousReads campaign to help raise awareness and understanding through shared culture and stories and encourage steps toward reconciliation with Indigenous peoples” (Trudeau, “Statement” 2016). Three years later, the promises expressed in Trudeau’s statement are more threadbare than ever, as his administration has equivocated on entrenching UNDRIP in Canadian law and implemented only a handful of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s 94 Calls to Action, despite his campaign promise to deliver on the full suite. Moreover, despite vocal Indigenous opposition, the Trudeau Liberals have aggressively supported many hotly contested oil and energy extraction projects, including the controversial Trans Mountain pipeline expansion. As Métis scholar Chelsea Vowel asserts, “It is clear that reconciliation as understood by the federal government is much more about ‘the economy’ than building real relationships with Indigenous Peoples” (“Indigenous”).

In the midst of Trudeau's failure to implement substantive change regarding Indigenous rights to land and self-determination, the Liberal government has continued its rhetoric of reconciliation through initiatives such as the #IndigenousReads campaign. Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) Carolyn Bennett first announced the idea on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's (CBC) radio program *The Current* on December 29, 2015.² In response to her desire to "find a better answer for all of the people now coming to me saying . . . how can I help? How can I be part of reconciliation?" ("Carolyn Bennett" 00:16:50–17:00), Bennett posed the solution of making the month of June national Indigenous Book Club Month, encouraging citizens to read the work of "an Indigenous author or . . . ally" (00:18:37–41).³ By June 2016 Bennett's project had a name, a website, and a hashtag, as #IndigenousReads was launched as part of the festivities for National Indigenous Peoples Day. On the government webpage created for the campaign, a video of Bennett positions the minister as the host of a national book club inviting Canadians into a virtual public sphere where they can use social media to join in the "journey" of "reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples by sharing Indigenous literature" ("#IndigenousReads").

As a settler scholar and teacher of Indigenous literatures, I believe that reading the work of Indigenous writers can offer an important starting point for raising awareness and challenging non-Indigenous peoples' worldviews. At the same time, my own experiences as a reader and teacher have taught me that the terms of engagement through which non-Indigenous people approach Indigenous literatures can have a significant impact upon the possibility of transformative learning. As Métis scholar Aubrey Jean Hanson observes in response to Bennett's proposal for an Indigenous book club, "a great deal of [further] learning is required" by non-Indigenous Canadians "to develop responsive relationships" with Indigenous literatures (69–70).⁴ Indeed, in the case of CIRNAC's #IndigenousReads campaign, I argue that the generative possibilities of engaging with Indigenous literatures have been constrained by the particular ways that this state initiative has entangled Indigenous literatures with two of the Trudeau administration's keywords: reconciliation and relationship. While much has now been said about the problematics of reconciliation—its tendency to prioritize settler catharsis by relegating colonialism to the past and foreclosing resistance to the ongo-

ing expropriation of Indigenous land—far less has been said about how the concept of “relationship” has similarly been co-opted and appended to settler state discourses of reconciliation in ways that are profoundly incommensurable with Indigenous philosophies and practices of relationality.⁵ Vowel’s rebuttal of Trudeau’s hollow invocation of relationship, therefore, is a provocation to take up in further detail.

In this essay, I want to consider the imbrication of the concepts of reconciliation and relationship by examining how CIRNAC’s #IndigenousReads campaign seeks to co-opt Indigenous literatures for a state-mediated project of reconciliation that frames reading as the preferred mode of enacting relationships with Indigenous peoples. On a broad level, it is important to consider what other possible modes of engagement with Indigenous communities—such as supporting Indigenous land claims, campaigning for equal funding for on-reserve education, and demonstrating against pipeline development, to name only a few possibilities—get rerouted by CIRNAC’s direction of non-Indigenous citizens toward book club participation.⁶ At the more specific level of how CIRNAC frames reading as relationship and reconciliation, it is vital to examine how the program enlists Indigenous authors and texts in the service of a framework to which they may not have consented (“#IndigenousReads”). In so doing, the program risks displacing Indigenous storytelling protocols that are founded upon embodied and communal contexts of oral teachings—practices that ask listeners and readers of textualized Indigenous stories to understand themselves as responsible to the communities who have shared them. In turn, CIRNAC’s initiative recenters a virtual community of non-Indigenous readers led by Minister Bennett that uses Indigenous literatures as resources for citizen engagement in a settler state project of reconciliation. Viewed in this light, CIRNAC’s #IndigenousReads risks co-opting Indigenous literatures for the production of what I will call imaginary relations of reconciliation—a phantasmatic transformation of the act of reading into a form of civic engagement that “assuage[s] settler guilt” (Coulthard 127) while obscuring the real conditions of non-Indigenous Canadians’ existence as beneficiaries of settler colonialism.⁷

The Althusserian echoes in my formulation of imaginary relations of reconciliation are deliberate. In recalling Louis Althusser’s pivotal intervention into Marxist theory—namely, that the base does not determine the superstructure in a unidirectional flow of power—I want

to demonstrate how #IndigenousReads prompts reconsideration of the relation between the material (base) and the symbolic (superstructure) in the Canadian settler state's reconciliation agenda. Much scholarship has critiqued settler state rapprochement initiatives as what transitional justice scholar Andrew Rigby calls "cheap reconciliation" (qtd. in Corntassel and Holder 467), an approach to addressing colonial injustices whereby the state mobilizes symbolic gestures of rapprochement as a substitute for more substantive reparations such as financial compensation and the return of land.⁸ However, the example of #IndigenousReads reveals that the government's symbolic gestures of reconciliation are often something more than "cheap" tokens—they are often Indigenous creative and cultural resources that the state attempts to co-opt and repackage as a beneficent gift to the nation. In this context, I argue that the state's symbolic reconciliatory gestures do not function merely as alibis for the ongoing expropriation of land and resources; rather, in many cases, these tokens of state recompense hinge upon the appropriation and exploitation of Indigenous intellectual, creative, and testimonial resources and labor. In critiquing how the settler state offers reconciliatory tokens as part of a "politics of distraction" that enables continued large-scale theft of Indigenous lands and resources (Corntassel and Holder 472), it is therefore vital to not lose sight of the fact that the very substance of those "distractions" often involves state co-optation of Indigenous art and testimony, which are indeed very real resources and labor grounded in Indigenous material economies. In this sense, reconciliation may be "cheap" for the state but not for Indigenous peoples. Thus, I contend that CIRNAC's #IndigenousReads campaign and the "imaginary relations of reconciliation" it promotes have a hidden economy, one that outsources the labor of reconciliation to Indigenous communities while simultaneously effacing such outsourcing via an appropriative sleight of hand that reframes Indigenous work and resources as settler state reconciliatory initiatives.

In developing this argument, I want to credit the work of Chelsea Vowel and her blog, *âpihtawikosisân*, Chippewas of Nawash author Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm, Tuscarora writer Alicia Elliott, Ojibwe arts commentator Jesse Wente, and many other Indigenous public intellectuals who have brilliantly highlighted the exploitation of Indigenous intellectual and material labor in many contexts over recent years and without whose observations this essay could not have come

into being.⁹ After first examining the production of imaginary relations of reconciliation at work in CIRNAC's #IndigenousReads campaign, I then want to recenter the Indigenous creative and intellectual labor that CIRNAC's program risks displacing and highlight how Indigenous arts, despite state attempts at co-optation, are radically challenging the settler state's vision of reconciliation and advocating for decolonization and Indigenous resurgence instead. In fact, much of the literature that Bennett has sought to draw into the #IndigenousReads orbit resists the very terms of the government's campaign and, even in textualized form, gestures toward long-held Indigenous storytelling protocols founded upon embodied and communal contexts of oral teaching—protocols that emphasize vastly more robust forms of relationship and responsibility than what is modeled by Bennett's virtual book club. I will consider how such protocols have been translated into new communal contexts by Cree poet Rosanna Deerchild, who has generatively intervened in the #IndigenousReads discourse via her CBC radio program, *Unreserved*, to recenter Indigenous-guided discussions of Indigenous literatures. As well, I will consider how Defenders of the Land and Idle No More collaborated in June 2017 to create "Canada Reads: The Unsettling Canada Edition" as a decolonial response to the Canada 150 celebrations and a powerful statement about how reading may be connected to other forms of communal action. Finally, my analysis would oscillate around a glaring blind spot if I did not consider what the #IndigenousReads campaign might illuminate about the potential for reproducing "imaginary relations of reconciliation" in Euro-Canadian academics' pedagogical and research approaches to Indigenous literatures. In this regard, I offer some preliminary thoughts about how settler scholars like myself might foster more accountable relationships to Indigenous literatures and Indigenous intellectuals.

OUTSOURCING RECONCILIATION, APPROPRIATING INDIGENOUS LABOR

On the official website for the new Ministry of Crown-Indigenous Relations, a section devoted to "Reconciliation" invites readers to "[l]earn how the Government of Canada is working to advance reconciliation and renew the relationship with Indigenous peoples, based on recognition of rights, respect, cooperation and partnership" ("Reconciliation").

Beneath this greeting are several headings, including but not limited to “Truth and Reconciliation Commission,” “Indian Residential Schools,” “United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,” and “#IndigenousReads.” While the website’s depiction of the government’s role and aspirations regarding each project warrants further analysis, my interest here is on what counts as state labor on behalf of reconciliation. For instance, the heading “Truth and Reconciliation Commission” leads to a webpage that provides information about the commission, which operated between 2008 and 2015. The “Government of Canada,” readers are told, “provided about \$72 million to support the TRC’s work.” Although the webpage notes that the creation of the TRC was a component of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (IRSSA)—“the largest class-action settlement in Canadian history”—there is no recognition that the government of Canada signed that agreement as a defendant (“Truth and Reconciliation Commission”). The \$72 million provided by the federal government, therefore, was not a magnanimous gift; it was a legal condition for ending costly civil litigation with the potential for far greater financial penalty against the government for engendering the devastating multigenerational harms of the Indian residential school system. What the webpage frames as government sponsorship, therefore, is in actuality a defendant’s payment of damages. As commission chair Justice Murray Sinclair repeatedly asserted at TRC events, the commission was not funded by the government of Canada; rather, it was funded by former residential school students who chose to allocate a portion of their compensation toward the creation of a forum that would create a historical record of residential schools grounded in Indigenous knowledges.¹⁰

Once the question of “sponsorship” is clarified, it is important to specify how the labor of reconciliation is attributed in CIRNAC’s framing of the TRC. The webpage introduces readers to the commission in the following terms: “The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) provided those directly or indirectly affected by the legacy of the Indian Residential Schools system with an opportunity to share their stories and experiences” (“Truth and Reconciliation Commission”). Representing the TRC as a form of service provision to populations “affected by the legacy” of the schools, the webpage implicitly frames the “opportunity” for survivors to “share their stories” as a healing initiative offered

by the state. This phrasing reinforces the settler state's depiction of Indigenous peoples as what Tanana Athabascan scholar Dian Million calls "therapeutic subjects"—vulnerable populations whose calls for justice are heard as psychotherapeutic needs rather than legitimate political and legal claims articulated by strong Indigenous nations (170). While former residential school students and their families have endured immense hardship and trauma, their testimonial contributions to the TRC constitute something much more than a therapeutic encounter: their testimony is a form of intellectual and emotional labor on behalf of their families and communities, as well as an invaluable contribution to an Indigenous archive of knowledge about residential schools now held at the University of Manitoba.¹¹ CIRNAC's effacement of this Indigenous testimonial and educational work is part of a historical continuum of settler colonial capitalism in which Indigenous labor in the fur trade, in colonial wars between the British and the French, and in the European industrial "development" of Canada has been systematically exploited and then disavowed. Perhaps most perversely, CIRNAC's rhetorical disappearance of Indigenous labor at the TRC echoes the erasure of Indigenous children's grueling labor at residential schools, where, instead of receiving the state's purported service provision of education, students often spent more than half of their days working on the upkeep of the institutions (*Honouring* 62, 80).

Although the scale and nature of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and the #IndigenousReads campaign are of very different orders, these two projects are connected by the way CIRNAC's Reconciliation webpage frames both initiatives via a structure of appropriation in which Indigenous labor is effaced and reframed as evidence of "how the Government of Canada is working to advance reconciliation" ("Reconciliation"). The webpage for the book club explains: "Through #IndigenousReads, the Government of Canada hopes to encourage reconciliation by increasing Canadians' understanding of Indigenous issues, cultures, and history" ("About #IndigenousReads"). But what of the teaching labor of Indigenous authors and texts that are at the heart of the #IndigenousReads program? How does the campaign represent their work? Throughout the #IndigenousReads website, Indigenous literatures are tacitly treated as yet further resources that can be extracted from Indigenous authors



Fig. 1. CIRNAC's #IndigenousReads logo ("#IndigenousReads").

and communities in the service of the Canadian nation-state. Such extraction, however, is finessed by the fantasy of imaginary relations of reconciliation projected by the campaign.

The logo for #IndigenousReads conjures a particular image of Indigenous texts that mystifies the labor and displaces the creative agency of Indigenous authors. Featuring the profile of a book cracked open in half, lying on its spine, the pages are represented by wisps of yellow and red, above which float three symbols—a yellow infinity sign, a black Inukshuk, and a feather—denoting Métis, Inuit, and First Nations cultures, respectively. From the open book and its ethereal pages, these colors and symbols appear to effortlessly emanate: Indigeneity, it seems, is an open book that magically reveals itself to readers, offering up its gifts for the taking. If this mystical process of revelation is not clear enough in the main #IndigenousReads logo, any doubt is removed in the special iconography produced for the winter “holiday season,” titled #GiftingReconciliation. Here, the pages of the open book of Indigeneity radiate a warm glow of light, which diffuses into magical bubbles that float upward toward the original logo of the #IndigenousReads campaign—the project that sanctions and enables the revelation of Indigeneity to non-Indigenous Canadians.

These images of the magical revelation of Indigeneity conjure a process similar to Karl Marx's theory of commodity fetishism, the “mystical” process through which capitalist exchange transubstantiates relations of labor into “the fantastic form of a relation between things” (n.p.).¹² Though Marx's formulation was focused upon the relations between the proletariat and the owners of the means of production, the simultaneous enlisting and concealing of Indigenous intellectual labor in the #GiftingReconciliation campaign enable a similar “fantastic”



Fig. 2. CIRNAC's logo for the seasonal winter "holiday" version of the #IndigenousReads campaign ("#giftingreconciliation").

transformation of Indigenous work into a decontextualized commodity that can be rebranded and recirculated by the state. Minister Bennett's tweets throughout the "holiday" shopping season functioned similarly to Indigo CEO and "Chief Booklover" Heather Reisman's "Heather's Picks," which adorn texts sold by the megacorporation with the CEO's seal of approval as "really and truly a book that . . . [she has] read and loved" ("Heather's Picks"). The #GiftingReconciliation campaign thus entices non-Indigenous Canadians to buy into CIRNAC's book club and purchase key stakeholder positions in a state-directed conversation about reconciliation. Settler readers are thus able to imagine themselves as the ones who add value to the raw resource of Indigenous texts via their own reading labor—a labor of supposed reconciliation enacted by settlers. The intellectual labor and creative agency of Indigenous authors and texts is thus eclipsed behind a fantastical image of the book's magical self-revelation, obscuring the complex ways that Indigenous literatures may resist and even refuse disclosures of Indigeneity, not to mention state formulations of reconciliation.¹³ In this context, when Indigenous literatures are alienated from Indigenous communities, it becomes easier for these texts to be enlisted in the service of imaginary relations of reconciliation—fantasies of engagement with a process of

national reconciliation that remains defined by the state, that forecloses upon Indigenous dissent, and that obscures the real conditions of settler colonial expropriation of Indigenous resources. CIRNAC accordingly assumes control of the “relations of definition” of what reconciliation means, thereby reproducing settler colonial “relations of domination” (Beck 29).¹⁴

During a year in which, according to CIRNAC, “sharing Indigenous literature” was supposed to “encourage” “reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples” (“#IndigenousReads”), many national conversations about Indigenous literatures revealed the Canadian public’s ongoing failure to listen to and respect Indigenous cultures, knowledges, and intellectual property. On December 23, 2016, Aboriginal Peoples Television Network journalist Jorge Barrera published an article titled “Author Joseph Boyden’s Shape-Shifting Indigenous Identity” that raised serious questions about Boyden’s Indigenous ancestry claims.¹⁵ Rather than rehearse the debates about Boyden’s identity here, I reference these events as a striking example of settlers’ unwillingness to hear and follow the guidance of Indigenous communities. In the wake of Barrera’s article, many Euro-Canadian commentators sought to defend Boyden by asserting their authority to define Indigenous identity. These commentators often fundamentally misunderstood and disregarded Indigenous public intellectuals’ cogent articulations of Indigenous belonging, as well as their assertions of their nations’ sovereign rights to self-determine membership. As Tuscarora writer Alicia Elliott brilliantly argued in a CBC article on January 26, 2017, many non-Indigenous Canadians defended Boyden’s claims to Indigeneity because he has framed national conversations about reconciliation in ways that are favorable to settler interests. According to Elliott,

When asked about reconciliation by *The Edmonton Journal* this past November, Boyden did not talk about giving land back, honouring treaties, upholding the United Nations’ Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, eradicating discriminatory gaps in on-reserve versus off-reserve funding or letting sovereign Indigenous nations decide their own fates. Instead he cited “recognizing the treaty territory” and defined reconciliation as “all of us saying, ‘We’ve made mistakes in the past and we’ve hurt some

people very badly in the past and it's time now to move forward together rather than divided.”

Such are precisely the kinds of imaginary relations of reconciliation upon which the settler state relies. During this controversy, Minister Bennett selected two of Boyden's novels for her list of “picks” on the #GiftingReconciliation webpage—choices that remain on it as of September 2018—thereby overwriting the voices of Indigenous activists, community leaders, and intellectuals who were critiquing Boyden's position as a spokesperson for Indigenous peoples. Such actions demonstrate how CIRNAC's campaign has manufactured a conversation about reconciliation that seeks to appropriate Indigenous literatures in the service of government goals while bypassing the significant challenges articulated by Indigenous communities.

In May 2017 controversy erupted again when *Write* magazine, the quarterly publication of the Writers' Union of Canada, released its spring issue. This special issue, devoted to Indigenous authors, was prefaced with a “Writer's Prompt” titled “Winning the Appropriation Prize” written by magazine editor Hal Niedzviecki. In it, he asserted: “I don't believe in cultural appropriation. In my opinion, anyone, anywhere, should be encouraged to imagine other peoples, other cultures, other identities. I'd go so far as to say that there should even be an award for doing so—the Appropriation Prize for best book by an author who writes about people who aren't even remotely like her or him” (qtd. in “I Invoked”).¹⁶ In response to Indigenous writers' robust critiques of Niedzviecki's piece, powerful settler leaders of the Canadian media establishment—including editors in chief of the *National Post* and *Maclean's Magazine* and the managing editor of *CBC News'* flagship program, *The National*—joked on Twitter about making Niedzviecki's appropriation prize a reality, offering money toward its establishment via the hashtag #AppropriationPrize (Kassam). Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm, Chippewas of Nawash author and founder of Kegedonce Press, wrote a powerful opinion piece in the *Globe and Mail* underscoring the failure of settler Canadian society to listen and learn from Indigenous interventions. Pointing to her cousin Lenore Keeshig's 1990 article, “Stop Stealing Native Stories,” also published in the *Globe and Mail*, Akiwenzie-Damm asserted,

[I]f the past 30 years have taught us anything, it is that there is a powerful, loud bunch of privileged white settlers who do not want to learn about us or from us. They spew out their impressions of our experience and double down when confronted with research and data and our first-hand accounts. They want to “debate” appropriation, on their terms and make these demands as if it has not been done before. As if the past 30 years of our work is meaningless because they are unaware and do not have to bother doing the research. For us, to continue to debate at this point is nothing but a type of busy work that pulls Indigenous writers and publishers away from what we ought to be doing—namely, writing, telling and publishing our own stories.

Akiwenzie-Damm’s commentary not only historicized settler amnesia but also pointed toward the immense and repeated demands upon Indigenous intellectual labor—the perpetual “busy work” of educating a settler public that seems unwilling to do its necessary share of the labor by engaging in something more challenging than imaginary relations of reconciliation.

Akiwenzie-Damm’s insights, moreover, point toward the underlying commonalities between these two literary controversies in the midst of what Hanson aptly calls CIRNAC’s reductive “reading for reconciliation” campaign (75). Far from anomalous events, they demonstrate a recurring structure of exploitation within settler colonial knowledge economies that hinges upon the simultaneous erasure and appropriation of Indigenous intellectual and creative resources and labor. As Ojibwe media commentator Jesse Wenté pointed out in a CBC interview,

[A]ppropriation is institutionalized in Canada—not just cultural appropriation but appropriation of land, of our lives. . . . This is the very foundation of what Canada is based on, including laws that were written specifically to enforce cultural appropriation, that banned our ceremonies, banned our stories, enabled the stealing of our cultural artifacts to be positioned in museums, that silenced our voice. (“Appropriation”)

In other words, settler colonialism considers Indigenous cultures unclaimed resources free for the taking. In having to defend these resources from extraction, Indigenous intellectuals are forced to engage

in repeated, exhausting “busy work” (to borrow Akiwenzie-Damm’s phrase) in educating a forgetful public, which detracts from the time and energy Indigenous intellectuals can invest in their own community projects. In the era of purported reconciliation, I would add, this exhausting “busy work” of defending Indigenous resources against appropriation and educating the public about the historical institutionalization of such processes in Canada becomes magically transmogrified through imaginary relations of reconciliation into *settler* rather than Indigenous labor. By magnanimously consuming Indigenous art and stories through campaigns like #IndigenousReads, it becomes settlers who purportedly perform the work of reconciliation by seizing the resources of Indigenous literatures for tertiary development into narratives of non-Indigenous self-enlightenment.

REENACTING COMMUNITY THROUGH INDIGENOUS LITERATURES

By mapping the terrain of constraints that CIRNAC’s project engenders for national engagement with Indigenous literatures, my goal has been to establish the contexts in which Indigenous activists, intellectuals, and texts have brilliantly intervened in recent years. Despite their diverse methods, what these interventions share in common is that they resist attempts to co-opt Indigenous literatures for the reproduction of imaginary relations of reconciliation by recentering those literatures within Indigenous community contexts. In his 1997 book, *That the People Might Live: Native American Literatures and Native American Community*, Jace Weaver argued that Euro-Western approaches to texts that foreground individualistic, solipsistic encounters of imagination and artistic license were fundamentally incompatible with Indigenous practices of storytelling as communal acts. In this context, Weaver averred,

the single thing that most defines Indian literatures relates to this sense of community and commitment to it. It is what I term “communitism.” Communitism, or its adjectival form “communitist,” is a neologism of my own devising. . . . It is formed from a combination of the words “community” and “activism” or “activist.” Literature is communitist to the extent that it has a proactive com-

mitment to Native community. . . . In communities that have too often been fractured . . . by the effects of more than 500 years of colonialism, to promote communitist values means to participate in the healing of the grief and sense of exile felt by Native communities and the pained individuals in them. (43)

For Weaver, Indigenous literatures are integral to the survivance of Indigenous communities precisely because they continue, in new ways, the telling of Indigenous stories that transmit the beliefs, experiences, and hopes of Indigenous peoples. As Anishinaabe writer and critic Kimberly Blaeser asserts, textualized Indigenous literatures carry on the protocols practiced in Indigenous oral storytelling in which responsibility to and respect of stories—and the communities from which they emerge—are of key importance. Reading Indigenous literatures therefore requires what Blaeser calls “response-ability” (54)—ethical modes of engagement that approach these stories as “not consumable” (Vizenor qtd. in Blaeser 55) and as requiring care. According to Blaeser, the particular modes of “response” that are appropriate to a given reading experience are contingent upon the reader’s subject position and context and can range from “simply acknowledging” the teachings in a text “to engagement in a conversation . . . or physically reacting through political resistance” (55). Such modes of “response-ability” thus require self-reflexivity and attentiveness to Indigenous communities that challenge imaginary relations of reconciliation.

Since Weaver first published his book in 1997, the possible shapes that Indigenous community might take have expanded via the rise of digital media. While land-based communities and practices are still of paramount importance to Indigenous resurgence projects, they do not preclude other communal contexts being formed across airwaves and cyberspace. The decolonial occupation of “*terra virtualis*” has become a way of supplementing—rather than replacing—the embodied, territorialized reclaiming of Indigenous land from the colonial mythology and material conquest of *terra nullius* (Findlay 298–99). While Len Findlay rightly warned in 2003 of the potential for *terra virtualis* to operate as the “shifting ‘ground’ of cybercolonialism . . . which aggravates inequality and injustice even as it promises to end them” (298–99), the last fifteen years have demonstrated that, despite the continuance of colonial power in digital domains, Indigenous activists are utilizing digital media

as tools of both decolonial resistance and community-oriented resurgence, combining communal forums across real and virtual terrain. While Idle No More demonstrated the use of social media for active mobilization, the Twitter communities that Indigenous activists and intellectuals have formed are continuing to function as a powerful force for speaking back against the settler media establishment and for organizing on the ground. Twitter is a forum through which many Indigenous writers, activists, and community members comment publicly in real time (rather than through the time lag of more formal publishing venues) and influence the course of unfolding events. For instance, the Indigenous Twitter community played a vital role in prompting the resignations of Niedzwiecki as editor of *Write* magazine and Jonathan Kay as editor of *The Walrus* in the wake of their participation in the appropriation prize debacle. Moreover, Indigenous Twitter's cogent critiques of ongoing appropriation of Indigenous land, art, and culture also led to the creation of a crowd-sourced antidote to the appropriation prize—an IndieGogo campaign initiated by Toronto lawyer Robin Parker that raised funds for Indigenous writers. Within four months, the fund raised \$116,565 from more than fifteen hundred donors. Parker, along with author Silvia Moreno-Garcia and Cherokee writer and scholar Daniel Heath Justice, partnered with the recently formed Indigenous Literary Studies Association (ILSA) to create the Indigenous Voices Awards (IVAs)—what has become a long-term source of funding “to support Indigenous literary production in its diversity and complexity” and to “honour the sovereignty of Indigenous voices and reject cultural appropriation” (“Background”). These interventions demonstrate the ways that Indigenous literatures may be resituated within virtual and physical communities that foster lived relationships built on respect, “response-ability,” and material support and transformation. Such is a kind of communitism for the twenty-first century.

In October 2018, Indigenous writers, intellectuals, and activists intervened again in the ongoing management of Indigenous literatures by non-Indigenous organizations and institutions. Similar to the model set by Minister Bennett in her curated list of government-approved books, the Edmonton Public School Board appointed itself arbiter of appropriate Indigenous texts by creating a list of recommended reading, as well as a list of “books to weed out” of the schools (Derworiz). David Alexander Robertson, a member of the Norway House Cree Nation and

a winner of the Governor General's Literary Award, learned about this list on Twitter and, after consulting the website, quickly discovered that his works, along with books by Lee Maracle, Drew Hayden Taylor, and many other Indigenous authors, had been placed on the “weed out” list by the school board. Robertson's 7 *Generations* graphic novel series, written for grades nine to twelve, was deemed “[n]ot recommended for use in Edmonton Public Schools” because it “contains sensitive subject matter and visual inferencing of abuse in residential schools” that “require pre- and post-conversations with students” (qtd. in Derworiz). In bewilderment regarding this rationale, Robertson remarked: “What is a school there for if they're not going to have pre- and post-conversations about literature that begin in the classroom? That's the whole point” (qtd. in Derworiz). In contrast to this apparent abdication of pedagogical labor by the school board, Robertson highlighted the arduous work of truth telling undertaken by Indigenous authors that is crucial to any reckoning with colonialism in Canada. As Robertson asserted, “There's a lot of Indigenous writers who are sharing their truths to own those stories about the difficult parts of our history that sometimes we don't want to talk about, and these are the books we should be bringing into the classroom” (qtd. in Derworiz). Robertson further underscored his pedagogical labor by remarking, “I've done a lot of work over the last decade and spoken to tens of thousands in classrooms across Canada using my books” (qtd. in Derworiz). In utilizing Twitter to draw attention to the school board's exclusion of many Indigenous authors, Robertson was able to galvanize a critical mass of Indigenous artists and commentators online and bring the matter to the attention of national news media, thus prompting the Edmonton Public School Board to take the site down for review. Indigenous artists challenged settler institutions' power to police the boundaries of what they deem to be acceptable Indigenous stories and appropriate amounts of truth telling in a culture of reconciliation.

Other key interventions for resituating Indigenous literatures within community contexts were developed by Indigenous radio hosts. One week after Minister Bennett announced her proposal for an Indigenous Book Club Month on CBC's *The Current*, Cree-Saulteaux journalist Connie Walker used her guest host role on the same radio show to foreground Indigenous perspectives on the proposal—a crucial valence that Bennett failed to consider. Walker invited three acclaimed

Indigenous authors—Tracey Lindberg (Cree), Lee Maracle (Stó:lō and Métis), and Drew Hayden Taylor (Anishinaabe)—to discuss the idea. Lindberg and Taylor both voiced support for the idea of a month dedicated to Indigenous writing, while Maracle remained more cautious, worrying about the tendency of such a club to reproduce prevailing trends in the literary marketplace, such as favoring male novelists (“First Nations” 00:04:22–05:00). However, when Walker posed a question about “the role that literature can possibly play in helping to bring about a reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people,” all three authors applied critical pressure to the suggestion (00:08:28–40). Maracle powerfully clarified the problems involved in entangling Indigenous literatures with the discourse of reconciliation:

[T]he emotional relationship between ourselves and Canadians is really one of racism and undoing racism, and I think literature certainly can do that . . . but it doesn't have anything to do with reconciliation. Reconciliation has to do with when you hurt someone, you have to make restitution, and only Canada as a government body can make restitution, and the restitution is immense. . . . We have a large problem in Canada, and that is that we're still colonized, and restitution has to be made for that, and the beginnings of reconciliation is of course having Indigenous people negotiate with Canada a fair and equitable sharing of the country. (00:10:26–11:50)

At the heart of Maracle's intervention, therefore, was a prescient diagnosis of CIRNAC's sleight of hand in seeking to co-opt Indigenous literatures' labor as a substitute for the state's own responsibilities toward substantive restitution. At the same time, Maracle refused the idea that such co-optation could successfully stifle the power of Indigenous literature, underscoring its capacity to educate and challenge non-Indigenous Canadians' entrenched perspectives. Maracle's own diverse body of writing has done such work in remarkable ways. In her recent series of reflections titled *My Conversations with Canadians* (2017), Maracle explicitly invites non-Indigenous peoples into a dialogue that demands rigorous “response-ability.” Describing the problematics in which she is intervening, Maracle asserts: “Canada views itself as the nicest colonizer in the world. It does not ask the colonized if they agree with this, Canadians just keep repeating it to each other like bobbleheads that can't

stop bobbling. It doesn't occur to them that this statement requires our agreement to be true" (127–28). The striking image of the bobbleheads perfectly exemplifies the problem of imaginary relations of reconciliation in contemporary Canada, while Maracle's book offers an antidote: challenging conversations that insist on listening to Indigenous truths.

Like Walker and her guests, Cree poet Rosanna Deerchild has also seized the potential of radio and digital media to resituate Indigenous literatures within community contexts. Deerchild's CBC radio program, *Unreserved*, has transformed the ways in which #IndigenousReads discussions take place, often resituating Minister Bennett's recommended texts—and, most crucially, foregrounding books overlooked by the minister—within community contexts guided by the voices of Indigenous authors and public intellectuals. For example, Deerchild chose Métis author Katherena Vermette's *The Break*, a gripping debut novel about Métis and Anishinaabe women in Winnipeg's north end, as the first text for her radio book club version of #IndigenousReads on October 9, 2016. Deerchild centered a text about violence against Indigenous women, as well as Indigenous women's strength and courage, that was not included on Bennett's list of reading suggestions until the summer of 2017, despite the numerous awards the book has won. The omission of *The Break* from Bennett's recommendations was particularly noticeable in the midst of the National Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls, especially given that the novel highlights the institutionalized racism in the police force and health care system, which should be at the forefront of national conversations about MMIWG2S.¹⁷ In introducing new books to her readers through her radio show, Deerchild often corrects CIRNAC's tendency to displace Indigenous writers' agency by centering authors' voices through readings and on-air discussions. In addition, *Unreserved's* version of #IndigenousReads features panel conversations about the books that bring Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators, writers, and community members together, thereby foregrounding Indigenous voices while also promoting cross-cultural dialogue grounded within Indigenous community contexts.

Yet another crucial intervention that resituated Indigenous literatures within the context of community goals and activism was Canada Reads: The Unsettling Canada Edition, developed by a coalition of members from Idle No More and Defenders of the Land. Strategically reappropri-

ating the name of the CBC's annual Canada Reads competition to select the nation's must-read book of the year, the *Unsettling Canada Edition* was developed as a decolonial anti-150th project designed to "mark the anniversary not by celebrating Canada but by trying to unsettle it" ("Activists"). By decolonizing the concept of Canada Reads, this grass-roots reading campaign directly challenged the ways that CIRNAC's #IndigenousReads program reproduces the Indian Act's segregationist logic, a logic in which all things "Indigenous" are relegated to the purview of a paternalistic federal department, thereby perpetuating a structural asymmetry between "Canadian" and "Indigenous" matters. The *Unsettling Canada Edition* thus insisted that all Canadians need to read key texts such as Secwepemc leader Arthur Manuel and Grand Chief Ronald Derrickson's *Unsettling Canada: A National Wake-up Call*, along with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.¹⁸ As Defenders of the Land spokesperson Russ Diabo remarked regarding the reading list: "These are [texts] that the prime minister has said he's going to endorse and implement, but when you read them, you can see that he's not doing any of that" (qtd. in Robertson). In this context, reading Indigenous texts was reclaimed as a way of holding the settler state to account rather than perpetuating imaginary relations of reconciliation. Moreover, unlike the virtual, armchair version of "reading for reconciliation" (Hanson 75) offered by CIRNAC's initiative, the Canada Reads: The *Unsettling Canada Edition* project was framed as "part of a broader Indigenous Day of Action . . . planned around Canada's 150th anniversary" on July 1, 2017 ("Activists"). In this way, the campaign exposed the settler bourgeois book club as a leisurely fantasy predicated on imaginary relations of reconciliation and, in turn, resituated the act of reading as part of a broader community-oriented practice of social and political engagement.

INDIGENOUS INTELLECTUAL LABOR AND ACADEMIC CAPITAL: RETHINKING RELATIONS

Thus far, my discussion of CIRNAC's #IndigenousReads campaign has operated at a critical distance, focusing upon the settler state's attempts to enlist Indigenous literatures in the production of imaginary relations of reconciliation. I have also sought to foreground the extraordinary

labor of Indigenous activists, authors, and public intellectuals in transforming the terms of public discussion about Indigenous literatures in recent years. There are limits to this analysis, however, if I am not willing to abandon the safety of negative critique and reflect upon what a consideration of #IndigenousReads illuminates about my own relation to Indigenous literatures as a settler scholar with job security in a neo-liberal settler colonial knowledge economy.

CIRNAC's co-optation of Indigenous literatures and Indigenous intellectual labor for the reproduction of imaginary relations of reconciliation must be understood as a foil that refracts the long history of academic literary studies back against itself. In other words, the extractive approach to Indigenous literatures modeled in the #IndigenousReads campaign has strong correlates to a more long-standing Euro-Western scholarly tradition of treating texts as ready resources for critical analysis and experimentation without considering accountability to Indigenous communities. These are precisely the entrenched scholarly approaches that Weaver's *That the People Might Live*—and the movement of Native Literary Nationalism that it helped to formulate—sought to respond to and disrupt.¹⁹ As Weaver observed in that book, “[T]he majority of critical study of American Indian literatures is produced by Amer-European scholars, ‘adding value’ to the literary ‘raw material’ of Native texts” (22). Similarly, Métis scholar Emma LaRocque has noted that many non-Indigenous academics have adopted an ostensibly “inclusive or ‘cross-cultural’ approach” in which “cross-cultural means their ‘academic right’ to use Native material in the advancement of (their) research and theory. . . . Here cross-cultural is a one-way street” (64). In light of these problems, many Indigenous scholars have pushed back against the traditionally solipsistic, text-based approaches of Euro-Western literary studies and argued for the necessity of more ethical engagements with Indigenous literatures—engagements in which this art is studied in relation to the communities from which it emerges and that support those communities’ “inherent right[s]” to “protect . . . their identities (languages, literatures, among other things) and what is left of their lands and resources” (64).

In reflecting upon the ways that Indigenous literatures have been positioned in public debates over the past few years, I am reminded of the continued urgency of many of the core principles of Native Literary Nationalism and other approaches to community-centered Indigenous

literary scholarship that emerged more than two decades ago. However, the important corrective that Weaver signaled—namely, of engaging with Indigenous literatures under the guidance of Indigenous principles of community and relationship—has engendered new possibilities and challenges with the development of the digital era. Here, it is important to heed Findlay's warning about the “cyber-predatory” dynamics of *terra virtualis*, which can “aggravate . . . inequality and injustice” (298–99). In watching the literary controversies of the past two years unfold over social media, I have been acutely aware of the fact that the majority of field-shaking interventions have been made by Indigenous intellectuals who are situated outside of the university system. The question that arises is how to acknowledge in academic writing the field-altering interventions of Indigenous activists and public intellectuals without repeating CIRNAC's co-optation of their intellectual labor. One principle that can be derived from these debates is what Vowel calls “radical citational policies” (“Indigenization” 00:33:58–34:00), which center Indigenous voices and resist entrenched academic hierarchies by recognizing that Indigenous brilliance is articulated from manifold locations, both inside and beyond academia. Such a citation policy seeks to bring into visibility—and to mark as valuable work—all the labor of Indigenous communities that is often disappeared by the appropriative knowledge economy of settler colonial academia, an institutional system that has made a whole industry out of hijacking Indigenous peoples' knowledge while erasing this debt by portraying them as primitive subjects lacking their own theorists, genealogists, historians, scientists, and knowledge keepers. In the new era of social media, scholars need to honor the fact that substantive and field-transforming work is done by Indigenous public intellectuals on forums like Twitter and in blogs and opinion pieces in a range of venues that need to be considered, cited, and valued. I have attempted to heed Vowel's call throughout this article by foregrounding the interventions of Maracle, Elliott, Deerchild, Akiwenzie-Damm, and others and urging readers to consult these sources that have commented on the unfolding debates first and most powerfully.

While a politics of citation that honors interventions that occur outside of academia may constitute a positive development, it can, however, transmogrify into another unaccountable practice when cyberspace enables remote access to a myriad of conversations that

can be mined like yet another “raw resource” for tertiary academic development. Even respectful citational acknowledgment and the foregrounding of Indigenous voices, however, do not address the radically uneven economic conditions in which tenure-stream academics can publish to enhance already secure employment while Indigenous cultural workers who choose to locate themselves outside the colonial academy are subject to schemes of so-called flexible labor under neoliberalism. When academic capital has little to no exchange value outside of the university, citation may be a weak or even irrelevant form of acknowledgment. Making donations to support blogs or alternative media sources—some of which invite support through PayPal and Patreon links—and financially prioritizing Indigenous speakers series both on-campus and off may be some ways of offering what is still only minimal compensation to unpaid or underpaid public intellectuals. Publishing in open access journals—like the one that I have chosen as a venue for this article—is a way that academics can make their writing more public rather than selecting venues cloistered by access fees. Moreover, in an effort to ethically navigate the still emerging protocols of the digital domain, given the clear statements that have been offered by Indigenous public intellectuals in recent years about which conversations are open for non-Indigenous involvement and which are not, I have deliberately chosen throughout this essay not to cite Twitter or Facebook posts and only reference the words of Indigenous intellectuals who have consciously framed their interventions as public ones by writing articles in newspapers or magazines, participating in published interviews, or giving public lectures posted online.²⁰ That said, in order to recognize Twitter, Facebook posts, and blogs as doing transformative work, citation in the future may be vital, and clearer protocols of respect and reciprocity between academics and digital commentators may need to be developed.

Beyond personal decisions I can make for my own scholarly practice, I would also like to float a potential collective project for scholars of Indigenous studies, such as developing a working group that brings academics and Indigenous artists and intellectuals working outside the university together to discuss appropriate and sustained rather than one-off modes of reciprocity in a neoliberal settler colonial knowledge economy. Obviously, nonacademic participants would require payment for their time and labor. What are ethical practices of citation for the

digital domain of social media? What forms of reciprocity are required in an era of open access digital knowledge exchange? How can conversations and connections via social media be transformed into long-term relationships of respect and responsibility? What are the best versions of communitism that can be imagined and practiced in the twenty-first century? Asking these questions in conversation together, with the guidance of Indigenous scholars and Indigenous communities, is another step in moving beyond imaginary relations of reconciliation and engaging with the far more challenging and world-altering gift of lived relationships.

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NOTES

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1. In 2016 the annual event was still called National Aboriginal Day. One year later, Trudeau issued a statement, asserting, "This year, I am also pleased to announce that from here forward the Government's intention is to rename this day National Indigenous Peoples Day" ("Statement" 2017).

2. At the time, Bennett's title was minister of Indigenous and northern affairs. However, in August 2017, Trudeau "dissolve[d] the Department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs and . . . replace[d] it with two distinct, though complementary, departments, each with its own minister" (Trudeau, "Minister of Indigenous Services"). Bennett became the minister of Crown-Indigenous relations, while the former health minister, Jane Philpott, was appointed the minister of Indigenous services. The bifurcation of these two portfolios was presented by Trudeau as part of his commitment to reconciliation. The minister of Indigenous services was tasked with "continu[ing] to oversee the provision of existing services to Indigenous Peoples, and particularly First Nations under the *Indian Act*, including the provision of community infrastructure, emergency management, water, education, moneys and trusts, and registration" (Trudeau, "Minister of Indigenous Services"). In turn, the

minister of Crown-Indigenous relations was tasked with “renew[ing] the nation-to-nation, Inuit-Crown, and government-to-government relationship between Canada and Indigenous Peoples” (Trudeau, “Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations”). It could be argued that this separation of departments risks reproducing the bifurcation between the government’s rhetoric of reconciliation and relationship and the actual material infrastructure and resources necessary to substantiate reconciliation with material change and significant financial reparations. The #IndigenousReads campaign was developed by Bennett as part of the Department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs (INAC), and it appears that it will remain part of Bennett’s portfolio, since the project is now listed on the new website for the Department of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs.

3. If the goal of the government’s project is to cultivate non-Indigenous Canadians’ awareness of Indigenous cultures, it seems strange that works written by non-Indigenous people the government deems “allies” are included. Given the vast range of Indigenous literatures that have been published and the vital importance of listening to Indigenous voices, this project could and should have focused exclusively on Indigenous authors.

4. For a compelling discussion of Bennett’s proposal, as well as “the difference between reading for reconciliation and reading for resurgence,” see Aubrey Hanson’s article listed in the works cited (75). After I presented an earlier version of this essay at the June 2017 Indigenous Literary Studies Association conference, Aubrey shared her own essay with me, and we both read and exchanged feedback on each other’s articles as they went through the peer review processes at the respective journals to which they had been submitted. I am grateful for the opportunity to have benefited from a rich dialogue with Aubrey and her work throughout this process.

5. For critiques of the temporal closure inscribed in settler state discourses of reconciliation, see Wakeham (219–24); Martin (49–58); and Coulthard (108–9, 120).

6. It is important to note that Bennett’s announcement of her idea for the Indigenous Book Club Month came at the end of a twenty-one-minute interview that focused primarily on topics such as the national inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls and boil-water advisories on reserves. When guest host Connie Walker asked Bennett how she would judge herself on her own job as minister of Indigenous and northern affairs in five years’ time, Bennett replied by stating: “I will judge my job on all of these things on the shopping list, and all these blueprints of things that must see, must do, [*sic*] will be how the 96 percent of Canadians from a non-Indigenous background feel about their role in reconciliation. And as we move to 2017 and celebrating Canada’s 150th anniversary of Confederation, that [*sic*] how can we make sure that every single Canadian feels that reconciliation is part of their experience as a Canadian?” (“Carolyn Bennett” 00:14:02–37). In the process, the problem of MMIWG and unsafe drinking water became part of a “shopping list” that was superseded by a focus on the 96 percent of non-Indigenous citizens who need to feel that “reconciliation is part of their experience as a Canadian.” Further explaining her goal to involve non-Indigenous Canadians, Bennett added: “And we know we’re probably thirty years behind New Zealand, where, from the Haka ceremony at the football games, and with the armed

forces, to the Maori studies being kindergarten to grade 8, and the Maori history and culture part of the identity of all New Zealanders" (00:14:37–55). The final sentence here in particular suggests a kind of appropriation of Indigenous "history and culture" as "part of the identity" of all citizens in the settler state.

7. In formulating the concept of "imaginary relations of reconciliation," I am deliberately echoing Louis Althusser's argument that "Ideology is a 'Representation' of the Imaginary Relationship of Individuals to their Real Conditions of Existence" (294).

8. Sociologist Andrew Woolford calls such "cheap reconciliation" an approach to reparations that foregrounds the goal of "economic certainty" for the settler state and for corporations (11). Economic certainty for non-Indigenous peoples thus becomes the primary motive behind "reconciliation" initiatives rather than justice for Indigenous nations. In a similar vein, Yellowknives Dene political theorist Glen Coulthard argues that reconciliation attempts to bypass land restitution and treaty responsibilities (127). Thank you to Aubrey Hanson for drawing my attention to the fact that Paulette Regan also refers to the idea of "cheap reconciliation" (14) and, according to Hanson, calls for settler Canadians to "engage in more substantial ways with Indigenous peoples and perspectives if they wish to position themselves as allies" (73).

9. To the best of my knowledge, these authors have not spoken about Indigenous intellectual labor specifically in relation to the government's #IndigenousReads program, but they have addressed this theme through various debates about Indigenous literatures, as well as Indigenous intellectual contributions to academic knowledge production more broadly. Some of their work will be directly cited in the ensuing pages of this essay.

10. My reference to Sinclair's statement comes from my fieldnotes from attending multiple TRC national and regional events. I noted that Sinclair made this important point at the Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, national event from June 21 to 24, 2012.

11. Survivors' testimony at the TRC has been recorded and archived at the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) at the University of Manitoba. The NCTR's mandate is to preserve and protect this invaluable archive of Indigenous knowledge about residential schools.

12. Marx's writings about commodity fetishism hinged upon a racist and homogenizing caricature of what Marx called "primitive" cultures and their belief that inanimate objects could emanate divine powers (163). In order to locate a critical vocabulary with which he could critique the "metaphysical subtleties" of commodities in Euro-Western capitalism, Marx asserted that "we must have recourse to the mist-enveloped regions of the religious world" (163). Marx's caricature of so-called primitive cultures thus ironically returns in this essay as another example of the long tradition within Euro-Western knowledge production of stereotyping and appropriating "other" cultures' practices and knowledge as raw resources for theoretical development.

13. My reference to refusal is indebted to Kahnawà:ke Mohawk scholar Audra Simpson's concept of "ethnographic refusal" in chapter 4 of her book *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States*. Simpson formulates the

idea of ethnographic refusal as a way of resisting colonial imperatives of disclosure of Indigenous ideas, beliefs, and practices in ethnographic writing. Simpson also extends the concept of refusal to discuss the ways in which Indigenous communities turn away from the demands of settler states. Speaking of her own community, Simpson refers to “the ways in which Kahnawa’kehró:non had *refused* the authority of the state at almost every turn and in so doing reinstantiated a different political authority. This practice of refusal includes the ways in which the formation of Kahnawa’ke’s initial membership code (now replaced by a lineage code and board of elders to implement the code and determine cases) was refused; the ways in which their interactions with border guards at the international boundary line were predicated upon a refusal; how refusal worked in everyday encounters to enunciate repeatedly to themselves and to outsiders: “This is who we are; this is who you are; these are my rights” (106).

14. Here, I am redeploying Ulrich Beck’s formulation of “relations of definition as relations of domination” (29). Beck uses this phrase to describe the power dynamics shaping the definition of what is deemed a significant “risk” in a “world risk society”—a society in which risks like climate change have gone global, transcending nation-state borders (29). Drawing an analogy with Marx’s “relations of production,” Beck argues that the “actual staging of risks presupposes their social recognition: ‘relations of definition’ . . . must be conceived as relations of domination in the staging of risk” (24). In a similar way, I contend that the settler state has seized control of the relations of definition of what constitutes “reconciliation” and has attempted to co-opt Indigenous literatures via the #IndigenousReads project for this purpose. By defining “reconciliation” as “economic certainty” (Woolford 11), the state perpetuates relations of settler colonial domination.

15. Conversations among Indigenous peoples about Joseph Boyden’s relation to community had previously taken place for quite some time without settler interference. Then, in December 2017, while guest-hosting the @indigenousXca Twitter account, independent journalist Robert Jago (Nooksack and Kwantlen First Nation) “used that . . . opportunity to raise the question of author Joseph Boyden’s Indigenous identity—his ‘Indigeneity’” (Jago). A few days later, Barrera published his article, which then drew international attention to the matter. In the article, Barrera wrote that “Boyden has never publicly revealed exactly from which earth his Indigenous heritage grows. . . . Over the years, Boyden has variously claimed his family’s roots extended to the Metis, Mi’kmaq, Ojibway and Nipmuc peoples.”

16. The full text of Niedzwiecki’s article is featured via a screen capture in an article posted on the website for the CBC’s radio show *The Current*. I am quoting from that source, for which full details are available in the works cited.

17. The acronym MMIWG2S is a grassroots intervention into the hashtag MMIW that adds girls and two-spirit people to the naming of those who have been targeted in specific ways due to colonial heteropatriarchy. *The Break* broaches the topic of violence against Indigenous women and girls in nuanced and complex ways and draws attention to the structures of racism and colonialism that enable such systemic violence. For instance, the tragic death of character Stella McGregor’s mother, Lor-

rairie, is revealed toward the end of the novel. Focalized through Stella's perspective yet also inflected by the detached tone of police and hospital reports through which Stella reconstructed the events "in parts and bits," Stella reflects: "Some white guy was chatting her up, and they went to his truck. Police later found blood in the cab, and they thought he beat her half to death in there without even leaving the parking lot. No one saw that or saw how she wandered, half conscious, to the hospital. Some nurse just saw her, drunk and bloody. The nurse rolled her eyes and told Stella's mom to wait. That was what the file said. She was there long enough to make a file. They thought she was just drunk, had made her own head injury, and could wait" (271–72).

18. The Canada Reads: The Unsettling Canada Edition project's website is part of the larger Unsettling 150 website, produced by Idle No More and Defenders of the Land. The homepage for The Unsettling Canada Edition initiative is unsettling150.ca/canada-must-read/. Over the past year, the title Canada Reads: The Unsettling Canada Edition has changed to Canada Must Read: The Unsettling Canada Edition, suggesting more emphasis upon the importance of reading for public awareness. The webpage provides access to PDF copies of the three key texts it is advocating that people read.

19. When Creek-Cherokee scholar Craig Womack published *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism* in 1999, he issued a passionate call for attention to "tribally specific literatures and critical approaches" that are cultivated by "working from within the nation, rather than looking toward the outside" (225, 12). In so doing, Womack built upon Robert Warrior's advocacy of the use of Indigenous scholarship to study Indigenous texts in *Tribal Secrets: Recovering American Indian Intellectual Traditions* (1994) and Jace Weaver's foregrounding of the relation between Indigenous literatures and Indigenous communities in *That the People Might Live: Native American Literatures and Native American Community* (1997). Womack, Warrior, and Weaver subsequently united their voices in the publication of *American Indian Literary Nationalism* (2006), thereby consolidating a literary-critical movement of the same name. The term "Indigenous" and, hence, the phrase "Indigenous literary nationalism" are often used by critics in Canada in order to reference internationally recognized Indigenous rights in documents such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (see Fagan et al.).

20. For instance, it is very clear that discussions about what constitutes Indigenous identity are matters for Indigenous communities and not for settler interference. At the same time, this does not mean that non-Indigenous communities should not heed the recommendations offered by Indigenous communities once their own conversations have occurred. Such was the case when, upon the advice of local Indigenous leaders, the city of Edmonton canceled Boyden's scheduled presentation at its Winter Cities Shake-Up event in January 2017 (Ahearn).

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Four More Indigenous Projects for the Native American Humanities

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As someone who studies and teaches the Native American humanities from within a Native American studies department, I often think about the productive possibilities that might emerge for the Native American humanities from a sustained, direct engagement with Indigenous research (IR) and Indigenous research methodologies (IRMs).¹ In my own scholarship and teaching, one of the most useful tools is Linda Tuhiwai Smith's short essay "Twenty-Five Indigenous Projects," from the groundbreaking IR text *Decolonizing Methodologies* (1999). Whenever I can, I recommend the essay to other teachers and assign it to my students because Smith's Indigenous projects are so readily applicable as analytical frameworks for producing decolonizing readings of texts. As Smith presents them, the twenty-five Indigenous projects are descriptions of actually existing research programs or action-based community projects that perform decolonization by supporting Indigenous knowledges, values, and interests and by utilizing Indigenous collaboration or control in knowledge production, application, and distribution. All twenty-five projects have short, self-defining titles—"claiming," "celebrating survival," "reframing"—that evoke the decolonizing actions they describe and perform.

While Smith acknowledges that Indigenous projects can describe work being done "at the level of ideas," most of the projects deal with legal issues or concern problems that call for solutions from the behavioral, health, or social sciences—not the humanities. Even so, the decolonizing processes the projects activate are not exclusive to any particular problem or need or to any particular academic discipline or theory. Claiming, for example, can be about asserting "rights and

dues” in tribunals and courts of law, as Smith says, but it can also be about asserting voice and agency, epistemological privilege and visual sovereignty, and historiographical authority and representational control. Claiming takes place in legal briefs, in other words, but also in lyric poetry, graphic novels, and Indigenous documentary film. Think, for example, of all that Abenaki filmmaker Alanis Obomsawin claims in her classic film, *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance*—land, history, voice, Kanien’kéhaka political rights and autonomy, moral authority, and the documentary form itself—and how such claims not only broaden but also strengthen the film’s overall decolonizing impact. There is no limit, then, to where, when, and how claiming can be asserted for decolonizing purposes, and this interdisciplinary flexibility “at the level of ideas” holds true for all of Smith’s Indigenous projects.

This year, 2019, marks the twentieth anniversary of *Decolonizing Methodologies*. I first read it in the summer of 2000 as a tribal college liberal arts instructor, and as a non-Native scholar teaching in a tribal community, I found Smith’s thoughts on positionality, ethics, and protocol helpful for imagining better ways to do my work and to help my students do theirs. Over the years, however, it has been the book’s twenty-five Indigenous projects that have made the most enduring contribution to my scholarship and teaching. These projects gave specific names to actually existing decolonizing methods and procedures that made me aware of decolonization as an expansive, open-ended, performative process most usefully understood as a collection of practices (“Indigenous projects,” after all) rather than a single one. I became more aware of what decolonization actually looked like in action through the concrete examples of the projects themselves, but I also became more aware of what was possible—that other decolonizing projects were present yet incompletely formed and that new or refurbished forms were always in the process of becoming. Overall, *Decolonizing Methodologies* made me a more attentive reader for decolonization in all its forms, it provided a critical vocabulary for identifying the forms decolonization takes, and it instilled in me a critical consciousness keyed to the nuances of Native textual survivance. Decolonization in action is neither simple to perform nor easy to discern, but Smith’s Indigenous projects, when used as conceptual frameworks to identify decolonizing processes in texts, provide specificity and precision that make such processes intelligible and enable a competence for understanding how such processes work and to what ends.

As a gesture of gratitude, appreciation, and respect for twenty years of *Decolonizing Methodologies*, the present essay offers four more Indigenous projects with the Native American humanities in mind. In an earlier commemorative essay, “*Decolonizing Methodologies 15 Years Later*,” Unangax scholar Eve Tuck calls the twenty-five Indigenous projects “perhaps [Smith’s] most visionary act of generosity in *Decolonizing Methodologies*,” claiming Smith offers the “25 Indigenous projects as a cartographic act” that speaks to “intersecting lines of simultaneous oppressions” across all Indigenous locations (368–69). The five years since Tuck’s essay have only confirmed the truth of these impressions. In *Decolonizing Methodologies*, Smith foresaw “the level of ideas” as another site of “simultaneous oppression” but did not follow the movement of its line (367). This essay aims to contribute by tracking intersecting decolonizing work in the Native American humanities through a few key sample texts, some of which are likely familiar and others that might not be, but all of which, in the spirit of Smith’s work, speak to the broader decolonizing project of “enabling communities and peoples to come together, transcending their own colonized contexts and experiences, in order to learn, share, plan, organize and struggle collectively for self-determination on the global and local stages” (7). There is no question that Smith’s contributions to IR and to emancipatory scholarship remain as important today as they were twenty years ago, and this is even more true in the Native American humanities, where her work still has so much to offer.²

FOUR MORE INDIGENOUS PROJECTS

1. *Continuing*

At the level of ideas, one way settler colonialism works to dispossess Native American peoples from their lands, resources, and claims to culture is to sever conceptually the people from who and where they are, were, and will be. These ideological sleights of hand drive ontological wedges between the past and present, today and tomorrow, tradition and modernity, rez and city, and grandparent and grandchild. Settler colonialism troubles claims to identity and to homelands because changes (and exchanges) over time and through movements from one place to another, so goes the logic, render the people no longer self-identical. Native people themselves are thus the true ethnic frauds. They

are no longer who they claim to be. What results is the message that who (and how) Native peoples used to be has been replaced by existential gaps and cultural ruptures too big to bridge. For Chickasaw scholar Jodi A. Byrd, “U.S. empire discursively and juridically figures American Indian lives as ungrievable in a past tense lament that forecloses futurity” (xxxv). One place these dehumanizing, disrupting figurations lead back to is nineteenth-century social science concepts, like vanishing race theory and the ethnographic present, alongside which developed static, lifeless theories of culture and race still very much in effect today as existential conceptual double binds that posit that Native authenticity exists but only in past forms. One goes either back to an uncorrupted past or ahead into loss and endlessly attenuating hybridities. The limit case of settler-colonial ruptural logics is thus the impossibility of the present and the future of the Native real.

Continuing is an Indigenous project that operates in full knowledge of these logics and performs decolonization by working to expose and combat them. Continuing gives the lie to ideological gaps and ruptures by pointing out the bad cultural theory at the heart of settler-colonial essentialisms and by showing proof of survivance, recovering erased legacies and genealogies, and shining a bright light on the ties that bind today’s practices, beliefs, values, and traditions to those of previous generations. Continuing also shows how change and mobility are not the enemies of culture but rather necessary preconditions, since cultures that can’t change don’t survive. Continuing activates theories of acculturation and Indigenization that understand that Native cultures and identities can be carried forward through new and borrowed forms. At the same time, continuing unites dispersed communities by acknowledging mobility, diaspora, and exile as trajectories of endurance rather than loss and by recognizing the legitimacy of the knowledge, experience, and art produced along and through these lines. Whether linking back, looking ahead, or reaching across, continuing is a project that supports the perpetuation of Native life and culture by battling conceptual discontinuities aiming to cut the peoples off from their various pasts, presents, and futures across time and space.

In both scholarship and creative work, examples of continuing are everywhere throughout the Native American humanities. In a photo essay tribute to her great-grandmother who made and sold beadwork “whimsies” to Niagara Falls tourists in the 1940s, Tuscarora artist and

scholar Jolene Rickard writes how her ancestors kept the people and the culture alive through times of great hardship despite the unwillingness of the US government to recognize the people's skill at adapting to change:

Initially we survived as growers. The year after my great-grandma Flossie was born in 1891, the U.S. Census Office filed a report on Ska ru re. Its tone indicated obvious surprise at the productivity of our orchards, gardens, and grain fields. The shock at our ability to survive might well have been based on the knowledge of what we had been through. Such refusal to recognize indigenous peoples' ingenuity for survival is just another tactic in the colonizing process. By not recognizing our continuity as a separate and self-governing people, the U.S. government felt no need to observe their own laws and treaties. (107)

In "Native Media's Communities," media scholar Steven Leuthold defines and describes Indigenous documentary film through a key constitutive feature he calls "intergenerational continuity," a "communal element" that "is achieved through symbolic participation in powwows, naming ceremonies, feasts and so on that form the glue which holds communities together" (198). For Leuthold, "Native media people document these symbolic, participatory practices—including rituals, dances, music, rodeos, and other occasions or activities—that express commitment to the community" through scenes of intergenerational exchanges of knowledge and experience (199). In *X-Marks: Native Signatures of Assent*, Ojibwe scholar Scott Richard Lyons writes about how switching to conceptual frameworks that see identity as *doing* rather than *being* and that see culture as *process* rather than *product* provides an intellectually sound solution to the conceptual trap of reductive colonial theories poised to turn culture into rupture and loss (59–60, 93–95).

The Native American novel is another rich source of continuing. Leslie Marmon Silko's monumental work *Ceremony* (1977) is a key text. As the reader will recall, the mixedblood protagonist, Tayo—socially and racially alienated from friends and family and spiritually alienated from himself and the land—fulfills the hero role by bringing back his story of the Destroyers to share with the elders in the kiva. Overcoming these alienations, Tayo is thus prepared to perform the ideological work of continuing, which he does by embodying the link between

the old and the new story-knowledges and old and new subjectivities. The sign of continuing, Tayo puts front and center a new postcolonial world-historical consciousness, with tribal cultural renewal at its core, that exemplifies the book's main slogan, "no boundaries, only transitions through all distances and time" (246). The book's iconic final scene reinforces its decolonizing ideological investment in continuing: Old Grandma, sitting next to the stove, says, "It seems like I already heard these stories before. . . . [O]nly thing is, the names sound different" (260).

Louise Erdrich's *Tracks* (1988) is a historical novel about allotment, assimilation, and resistance among the Plains Ojibwe and Métis in the first few decades of the twentieth century. The book is about power, how to acquire it, how to maintain it, and how to use (and misuse) it, and power is a thematic vehicle that drives the continuing project forward. Nanapush, de facto tribal elder and eventual tribal chairman, finds power in Ojibwe tradition and spirituality, in humor, and in sexuality, but he also finds it in strategic anticolonial appropriations of newspapers, maps, and colonial bureaucratic languages, which he uses to bring his adopted daughter, Lulu, back home from boarding school. Nanapush's story in *Tracks*, told in second-person narration to Lulu, thus enacts continuing through the retrievals (cultural, familial, tribal) and intergenerationality Lulu's return both symbolizes and performs.

Tommy Orange's (Cheyenne/Arapaho) novel *There There* (2018) performs continuing in the urban Native context of Oakland, California. The novel's thematic core centers on the fact that there is a "there there" in urban Indian spaces despite the dislocations of Native populations over time. The story follows several Native families in various stages of disruption, to be sure, but the point of emphasis is how disruption is not identical to rupture but rather a way of life in its own right through which Native ways and values persist and grow. As Orange points out in the prologue, "[T]he city made us new, and we made it ours" (11–12). "Urban Indians were the generation born in the city," writes Orange. "We've been moving for a long time, but the land moves with you like memory. An Urban Indian belongs to the city, and cities belong to the earth. Everything here is formed in relation to every other living and nonliving thing from the earth. All our relations" (15). Orange's transitive logic informs the continuing project of his book, including his process-oriented theory of culture, and serves to place it in a long line of

Native American novels that decolonize by celebrating Native social and cultural durabilities.

Over the years, a vital source of continuing has been the scholarly and creative work of Acoma writer Simon Ortiz. In the well-known essay "Towards a National Indian Literature: Cultural Authenticity in Nationalism," Ortiz creates a powerful formulation for understanding not just how Native American literatures perform continuing but how these literatures, by their very nature under colonialism, are acts of continuing:

This is the crucial item that has to be understood, that it is entirely possible for a people to retain and maintain their lives through the use of any language. There is not a question of authenticity here; rather it is the way that Indian people have creatively responded to forced colonization. And this response has been one of resistance; there is no clearer word for it than resistance.

It has been this resistance—political, armed, spiritual—which has been carried out by the oral tradition. The continued use of the oral tradition today is evidence that this resistance is on-going. Its use, in fact, is what has given rise to the surge of literature created by contemporary Indian authors. And it is this literature, based upon continuing resistance, which has given a particularly nationalistic character to the Native American voice. (122)

Ortiz's poem "A Story of How a Wall Stands" gives another illustration. The poem opens on a scene at Acu of a father showing his son how to prepare the special mud that is applied to a community funerary wall, "a graveyard built on a steep incline" (518). Over the course of the three short stanzas, there is a progressive blending of showing and telling, from the father to the son, how this preparation should be done, a blending that the poem also extends to speech and writing and to word and object, such that the words and actions of father and son gradually become indistinguishable. In the second stanza, is it the mud that is being mixed "patiently," or is it the story of the mixing? In fact, in the final stanza, the quoted speech of the father slips, seamlessly and completely, into the language of the son/speaker, a transition made visually evident through the absence of quotation marks. This blending is a sign of intergenerational continuity—the words and knowledge of the father becoming those of the son—and a sign of Ortiz's affirmation of the dynamic, enduring, regenerative reality of Pueblo life and culture.

Through further blendings—from wall to story of wall to poem and from ancestral wisdom to poetry—“A Story of How a Wall Stands” also models how poetry can enable the continuity of tribal knowledges, cultures, and values—all strong evidence to counter the ruptural cultural logics of settler colonialism.

2. *Reknowing*

On the broadest level, reknowing respects, defends, and advances Native knowledge in all its forms. It recognizes that the status of Native knowledges continues to be involved in an anticolonial struggle over legitimacy. While settler colonialism has long pointed to Western rationalisms as a means to discount Native ways of knowing, reknowing works to counter such attacks, resist the epistemological (and political) violence that so often accompanies them, and expose to sunlight the ongoing colonization of knowledges in hopes of bringing it to an end. But reknowing also recognizes Native knowledges as valid forms of knowledge that have sustained Native lifeways since time immemorial. In writing about Crow science, Apsáalooke scholar Emerson Bull Chief relates how Crow “knowledge is something that one experiences and then creates a relationship with it to a point that you know through your whole being” (10–11). Reknowing supports and fosters such relationships, whether by exposing and contesting settler-colonial assaults on Native belief ways or by showcasing the power and potency of Native knowledges to solve problems, pose and answer questions, interpret information in socially useful and productive ways, understand the world, and heal.

Many times throughout my teaching career, Native students have asked permission to write papers in the first person or to include personal examples from the lives of their friends and relatives. Sometimes, something about the assignment or the assigned texts reminds students of something important and relevant a grandparent said or did, which they would like to use. At some point in their education, these students were taught to believe that the personal is not the pedagogical and is off-limits in academic writing. At the same time, these students know that their experiences and the words, actions, and experiences of friends and family have the power of theory—in fact, *are* theory—in their power to analyze and explain. Students know that experience and emotion are

productive cognitive modes, but they know, too, that such forms can count for precious little in university settings. Describing “felt theory,” Dian Million (Tanana Athabaskan) writes, “I find causal agency between certain acts and others that academia will not legitimate. . . . The stories, unlike data, contain the affective legacy of our experiences. They are a felt knowledge that accumulates and becomes a force that empowers stories that are otherwise separate to become a focus, a potential movement. . . . I reiterate a position about the worth of our lives, our Indigenous lives as the stuff of theory” (31–32).

The assertion of felt theory against the cognitive dissonances of colonialism is one way reknowing performs decolonization. Once again, Tayo’s story in Silko’s *Ceremony* provides a good example. Tayo struggles against repressive colonial knowledges (Rocky’s high school textbooks, the failed diagnoses of white doctors, Auntie’s and Emo’s racist social theories) that clash with Uncle Josiah’s wisdom and knowledge. The confusion contributes to Tayo’s agonizing sickness. His eventual healing and triumph over the witchery are due to the efforts of Betonie and Ts’eh, whose cures in large part merely convince Tayo that the experiential and traditional knowledges he knows and feels to be true are, in fact, true. The novel’s important closing affirmation of Native knowing, which coincides with Tayo’s invitation to the kiva, is one of the most iconic examples of reknowing in Native American literature.

Contemporary Native poetry is replete with examples celebrating affective knowledge. Kimberly Blaesus’s (White Earth Ojibwe) well-known “Living History” is a case in point. “Living History” narrates a chance summer encounter at a gas station (“Pinehurst”) between a young woman who is the poem’s speaker and a “Big Indian man” who sees something familiar in her, so much so that he stares at her “hard,” walks up to her, and pinches her arm: “‘Jeez,’ he says, ‘You look just like your mom— / You must be Marlene’s girl’” (435). The young woman, momentarily confused by the man’s words and actions, thinks:

Pinches my arm, but I guess it’s yours
he touches.
Hell, wasn’t even looking at me.
Wonder if I am what they call living history? (435)

The poem uses humor, poking fun at the fickle vanity of youth, but it also takes a serious look at affective knowledge, with the pinch to the

arm as an affective epiphany that teaches knowledge of self by virtue of knowledge of one's place in community. The speaker's emotional realization that she is "living history" refers to a newfound historical consciousness but also an awareness of having a "living" relationship to it. "Living history" is the social organism that is the ever-unfolding communal past, present, and future. The speaker herself, including her body, as the pinch makes clear, is a site that is both of and within it. "Living history" thus signals the dynamic, knowledge-producing relation inhering between the physical (the pinch to the arm), the emotional, the social, and the historical, which is set in motion by the chance encounter between the speaker and the "Big Indian man." The speaker's epiphany is a "felt knowledge," in mind and in body, while the poem, by reknowing Native knowledge, shows itself to be "the stuff of theory."

Perhaps more than any other Native American poet's, the work of Henry Real Bird (Apsáalooke) is the poetry of affect. Thoughts, feelings, sensations, and intuitions form the content of poems that are philosophical explorations of knowing based on Crow belief ways. Mainly set in the mountains and drainages of Crow Country in southeastern Montana, these poems speak an intimate insider cultural idiom of horses, wolf pups, thunderheads, dappled skies, and sun dance revelations. "Without a Body" tells the story of ghosts entering camp after a little boy gathers "ghost tobacco." The people tell the boy never to gather it again. It ends with a slogan for reknowing: "People who know nothing / Think that everyone should think as they do" (81). In "Rivers of Horse," he writes:

At the edge of my eye something went by,
It returned into my feeling,
You're so far away from me
As I stare into the twinkle and glitter
Of blowing snow flakes in the wind. (86)

In "Beyond Reflection," the short essay on Crow history and culture that opens *Horse Tracks* (2010), in which these two poems appear, Real Bird writes, "Where the soul lives in the mind of some who know not only the body, I go riding through, whipping over and under in the beautiful colors of the morning sun." A few lines later: "Where it is high—butes and mountain tops—my people would come to ask for good things from He Who First Did Everything. Thoughts, feelings and life, they would

ask for in the wind that is good where it is high" (1). These poems and statements celebrate Crow knowing and perform it unselfconsciously through an affective poetics of impressions, sensations, and sentiments drawn from meaningful interactions with landscape, dreams, ceremony, and personal and ancestral memory.

Beyond contemporary poetry, reknowing is widespread, occurring across historical periods and in all kinds of texts. One finds it throughout the long tradition of Native American autobiography when Native subjects confront and contest epistemological assaults as they write themselves into history. Near the beginning of *A Son of the Forest* (1829), the first published Native American autobiography, William Apess (Pequot) shares the story from his youth of fearing for his life at seeing very dark-skinned women (he believed they were "a body of the natives") while out berry picking with his adoptive white family. Looking back on the episode, the adult Apess remarks,

[T]he great fear I entertained of my brethren [the Natives] was occasioned by the many stories I had heard of their cruelty toward the whites. . . . But the whites did not tell me that they were in a great majority of instances the aggressors—that they had imbrued their hands in the lifeblood of my brethren, driven them from their once peaceful and happy homes—that they introduced among them the fatal and exterminating diseases of civilized life.

(11)

The story and the commentary perform two main functions of reknowing. First, there is Apess highlighting the cognitive dissonance born of his childhood identity confusion as a result of being brainwashed by anti-Indian discourses. Next, there is Apess reflecting on those painful, bewildering times from a position of epistemological privilege born of experiential knowledge informed by physical and emotional suffering under colonialism.

Some form of this basic formula—epistemological alienation, recovery through reknowing, epistemological affirmation—is common in Native American texts. The quasi-autobiographical Indigenous documentary film *Reel Injun* (2010) tells the history of Native Americans in cinema from the silent era through Hollywood westerns to contemporary Native films, but it does so in part as a personal story (a personal road film, really), following filmmaker Neil Diamond's (Cree)

“rez car” journey through his own recovery from cognitive dissonance growing up always wanting to be the cowboy when playing cowboys and Indians. A central point of the film is that while colonial representations cause psychic damage, Native film, including *Reel Injun* itself, can help ameliorate this damage. A good example is the classroom scene at the elementary school in Lodge Grass on the Crow Reservation where the teacher and her young students screen the violent Washita massacre scenes from *Little Big Man* (1970). As we watch the camera slowly pan the children’s reactions in the controlled classroom environment, Diamond suggests what the film as a whole demonstrates: Native control over the processing of negative affective knowledge can lead to positive social outcomes through the resolution of grief, trauma, and cognitive dissonance. As Million points out in observance of yet another function of reknowing, “In my gut I know that when our articulation has been centered on ‘a something that has happened,’ it has been necessary to establish our sanity, because what is really happening is too big, and we know that too” (31).

3. Sociologizing

Sociologizing tells the social story of Native American life. Its objective is to decolonize the major stories of Native life by adding a social focus all too often ignored or erased. In the United States, the sociology of everyday Native American life is a story that is mostly unknown to the wider public because, outside of the popular tragic narrative of Native loss that everyone receives, the social story of Native life is dangerous in the way it threatens to expose the past and ongoing neglect, chicanery, and injustice Native peoples suffer under settler colonialism. The social story is also dangerous because it shines a light on the damage done to Native social forms and processes under settler colonialism and focuses on the causes behind these problems. While tragic narratives of Native crisis are, indeed, common, they tend to evoke pity (rather than understanding, responsibility, or action) and often come across as soft indictments of the victims themselves. Etiological analysis and exposure fall outside these narratives, which helps explain the importance of the decolonizing project of sociologizing.

Sociologizing performs decolonization in the way it pulls the specificity of Native American social realities out and into the open to bear

witness, raise awareness, and change consciousness. Culture and history dominate thought about Native peoples, and as default cognitive frameworks, these function in reductive and essentializing ways, such that when Native life is popularly imagined, versions of the ethnographic present are still common, if not usual. In other words, not only is the number of available frameworks of intelligibility (history and culture) limited, but the nature and scope of these frameworks are limited as well. As Vine Deloria Jr. famously writes in the introduction to *Custer Died for Your Sins*, “To be an Indian in modern American society is in a very real sense to be unreal and ahistorical” (2). Chris Andersen (Métis) argues for shifting critical priorities from *difference* to *density*—what he calls “a more serious and infinitely less schematic *livedness* which defies easy (academic) description”—in order to prevent the presumptive truths of Native life from being “reductively fixed in time and space through apparently objective, logical markers used to bear the discursive weight of our authenticity and legitimacy” (92). More recently, in *X-Marks*, Ojibwe scholar Scott Richard Lyons writes, “Most of our problems today, including the crisis of identity, have economic, social, or political dimensions that might be lost when we frame them as primarily cultural issues” (58). The ongoing need for statements like these to be continually reasserted is a problem to which sociologizing responds.

By drawing attention to the real, historical, and dense sociological dimensions of Native texts, sociologizing aims to end the epistemological violence and ontological thinness colonial conceptual diminishments commit. Native American aesthetic and cultural texts, as important forms of social and historical knowledge, can be approached to unlock the social realities they hold. As a decolonizing reading practice, sociologizing is cued to the ways texts embody the sociological dimensions of Native life, and this would include the Native patterns of response to the production and reproduction of settler-colonial relations as these impact everyday Native social life. D’Arcy McNickle’s historical novel, *The Surrounded* (1936), is often read for its depiction of boarding school life and treatment of cross-cultural identity issues, but the book is also a detailed sociological study of allotment-era reservation life on the Flathead Indian Reservation in western Montana. *The Surrounded* highlights how a confluence of “surrounding” forces and interests—economic, cultural, institutional, psychological—tears the social fabric of life. It showcases McNickle’s exacting imagination

for sociological detail in tragic, intricately plotted scenes that reveal the contradictions, ironies, and disorder of living under colonial rule during the reservation's transition to capitalist social relations. Cluttered as it is with random farm implements and all kinds of dwellings (tipis, shacks, cabins), it is tempting to read Modeste's reservation land allotment as a sign of cultural syncretism, but the multiple families occupying the plot are also a sign of the land shortage that plagued the reservation just one generation into allotment. Archilde's brother, Louis, functions as another sign of these problems. Louis is a horse thief, hides out in the mountains (importantly, unallotted/nonhomestead land), and is seen by all as a criminal, but he suffers from the lack of available allotments and, as a result, from the consequent labor surplus that all landless young reservation males of his generation faced. To be sure, *The Surrounded* documents Salish historical and cultural transitions, but it does so by showing the socioeconomic bases of such change.

The Indigenous documentary film *The Place of the Falling Waters* (Roy Bigcrane and Thompson Smith, 1990) also concerns Flathead history, which it explores in the context of the construction of Kerr Dam (now the Seliš Ksanka Ql'ispé Dam). The film is full of interviews with tribal elders on topics in tribal history and culture, but the film's primary attention, as the narration makes clear, falls squarely on how the people and the culture adapted to survive the forced "transition to an industrial market economy" through strategic accommodations that reshaped the people and the traditional culture in lasting, irreversible, but manageable ways. We hear how during the early days of colonial settlement in western Montana the tribal people used the more stationary agricultural mode of production that was forced upon them, but they did so only to "supplement but not replace" the more mobile traditional hunter-gatherer basis of life, which persisted. We hear how during the Depression, some tribal people became migrant laborers to provide for their families, while others turned to wage labor, working on the dam. We also hear how the people fought and won against the federal government and corporate interests to acquire the rights to own and manage the dam and its hydroelectric resources. The film's dense sociological description of tribal history and culture during the reservation era decolonizes by complicating any simple or reductive account of tribal life through illustrations of tribal survivance in the face of external pressures that show tribal culture, like all cultures, as sociological, as being shaped by and through social and economic processes.

Joy Harjo's (Mvskoke) well-known poem "The Woman Hanging from the Thirteenth Floor Window" stands out as an urban sociology. It is a poem about Native cultural longing—a kind of relocation allegory—that paints an emotional portrait of a Native woman's experience of urban dislocation. The speaker lives alone with her three young children in a Chicago tenement building "on the Indian side of town." We learn that the woman "ate wild rice on scraped down / plates in warm wood rooms" in the "farther / north" when she was young, but these details can be seen accentuating the woman's social alienation rather than only telling a cultural story of loss (480). Her story is one of faceless integration ("She is all the women of the apartment / building who stand watching her, watching themselves"), racialization ("She thinks of the color of her skin"), and negative class consciousness (she sees the "tall glass houses at the edge of" Lake Michigan where "the rich / live") (480–81). Typical of so much Harjo poetry, the poem portrays this Native life as very much a human life—full of sadness, desperation, momentary joy, and hope—but such a life, as the poem suggests through references to the concrete materiality of everyday life in the city, is also very much a social story anchored in a dense *livedness* that gives depth and meaning to the woman's cultural longing and to the affective dimension of her life.

Telling the social story of Native American life also means understanding the social real from tribally specific perspectives. Tribal languages and worldviews not only give depth and meaning to Native social experience but also are key sources for scholarly theory and method designed to analyze that experience in Native texts. Ojibwe scholar and poet Margaret Noodin reads Anishinaabe literature by letting Anishinaabemowin (the Anishinaabe language) be her "eyes" (xvi). Even Anishinaabe texts written in English bear cultural and conceptual traces of Anishinaabemowin, and failing to account for those traces means foreclosing worlds of hermeneutic possibility and missing opportunities to spotlight Anishinaabe-specific social realities only recoverable through knowledge of the language. An example is Noodin's cultural-linguistic analysis of Louise Erdrich's use of the word "windigo" in the novel *Love Medicine* (1984), where the term is applied to Moses Pillager, a mysterious character who functions as the sign of deep traditionalism (66). In the novel, first Nanapush and then Margaret Rushes Bear warn Lulu to stay away from Moses: "He's too old for you! Too close a relation! It's dangerous to mix things up!" Rushes

Bear had been listening at the door and now she threw it wide and stood in the entry, blazing out all her objections. ‘Besides, he’s *windigo*! His grandfather ate his own wife’” (75). According to Noodin, “He’s *windigo*!” might sound to an English-speaking ear like he’s crazy, but in a correct cultural context, it is a verb that means he is related to one who succumbed to selfishness and greed to the point of harming others (66). Having the proper linguistic context opens to view the dense social architecture of this scene, which involves the intergenerational transfer of tribal social values. All the reasons Lulu’s elder guardians pass along to avoid Moses have to do with social norms and values and the implied loss of prestige for violating them. This includes *windigo*, for, as Noodin shows, this warning has less to do with associating with someone who is “crazy” than it does associating with someone who has a disqualifying family history of extreme selfishness and greed.

Another example is Penelope Kelsey’s (Seneca) “tribal theory,” which she explains as the “unique tribal knowledges, epistemology, and philosophy” that underpin the worldviews Native writers “repeatedly and mindfully invoke and deploy. . . . These worldviews and their theoretical bases become vehicles for Indigenous resurgence, resistance, survival: they are tribal theory” (*Tribal* 1). As a form of textual analysis “predicated upon deep knowledge of a tribal tradition,” tribal theory sociologizes by reading a text’s culturally specific semiotic system for evidence of lived social experience (8). Kelsey’s reading of Shelley Niro (Mohawk) and Anna Gronau’s film *It Starts with a Whisper* (1993) provides a good case in point. By attending to the film’s incorporation of the history of Tutelo tribal decline and the “visual grammar” of condolence as a healing response to historical trauma, Kelsey gives specificity to both the sources and the impacts of the alienation the film’s protagonist, Shanna Sabbath, suffers and to the social relations (“Gantowisa identity, role, and resilience”) through which such suffering is alleviated. This specificity thus sheds light on the film as a dense presentation of a Haudenosaunee sociology of loss and renewal (“Condolence” 120, 122). As Kelsey and Noodin show, presumptively cultural features of texts can be deeply sociological. To the extent the Native social real remains popularly unthought, sociologizing decolonizes by insisting on density, in all kinds of ways, as a conceptual priority when giving accounts of Native life and as an interpretive priority when reading Native texts.

4. *Valuing*

The project of valuing supports and advances Native American aesthetics and politics on the level of aesthetic value. Cultures and societies develop and maintain systems of preferences that establish the relative worth of aesthetic forms, practices, practitioners, and products and that provide the bases for categorizing, evaluating, and otherwise making aesthetic distinctions, but it is sometimes forgotten that these systems differ across cultures and over time. Aesthetic value is often taken for granted, viewed as a human universal, infrequently questioned or studied, and only dimly perceived as a social reality that operates according to social rules. If aesthetic value is contingent, as Barbara Herrnstein-Smith has argued, then the dominant cultural field operates according to settler-colonial rules, tastes, and ideals. All of this makes aesthetic value important to monitor because its operations (re)produce settler-colonial relations. The Indigenous project of valuing recognizes that aesthetic value is a site for the reproduction of colonial ideology and that dismantling the system's underlying framework can be an impactful decolonizing tactic.

Valuing takes two basic forms, which sometimes occur in combination. One form critiques settler-colonial, ruling-class systems of aesthetic value and the sites of institutional power that protect them. American Indian art history has long understood the contingent nature of settler-colonial aesthetic value by tracking the changing mainstream assessments of Native art over time. According to art historians Melanie Anne Herzog and Sarah Anne Stolte, European American perceptions of Native American material culture gradually shifted “from an ‘artifact’ to a ‘souvenir’ to a ‘work of art’ paradigm” (86). Despite the progression, “the Native arts that continue to garner the most art historical attention [today] are too often those that either predate the past one hundred years or those that appear strongly rooted in ‘traditional’ art practices, rather than arts that engage contemporary practices, materials, and issues” (87). Native American literary reception study observes similar reductions, exclusions, and evasions at work in mainstream reading behaviors. Ojibwe scholar and novelist David Treuer uses the term “culturalism” to describe how a pervasive, overdetermined cultural essentialism dominates readers’ imaginations when reading Native texts, bringing them to read solely for culture at the expense of other

considerations—and doing so by drawing on a narrow, stereotyped version of Native culture at that. What this situation describes is the social phenomenon of basing literary value on perceived cultural status, which ultimately devalues Native texts by rendering their status more assigned than achieved.

A good illustration of this critique, Kim Shuck's (Cherokee) "The Great Urban Indian Poem" is a one-page poem consisting of three stanzas, each of which, in a different way, explains why the great urban Indian poem exists but can't be found:

THE GREAT URBAN INDIAN POEM

Has already been written
Most people missed it . . .

.....

The great urban Indian poem is ongoing but
Most people miss it because there will never be a release
Party or even a book and Deb Iyall, though she may
Want to will not play the event and
The tribes involved are conflicted because one of the
Poets has no CDIB card and the other is from an
Unrecognized band . . .

.....

The great urban Indian poem will be found
When you least expect it and

.....

There will be no signs directing people to
The poem and it will not be reviewed or
Published in a sanctioned literary organ (22)

Through sardonic humor, Shuck brings attention to the cultural restrictions and preconditions behind the social meaning of "great," suggesting that "great" and "urban" in the context of Native poetry are mutually exclusive, as well as the ways identity politics can work to remove value, thus pointing out the galling disconnect between dominant aesthetic sensibilities and urban Indian life and art. Great urban Indian poetry is produced—and Shuck provides clues where to find it—but it is not available through customary outlets, the poem suggests, because value not only makes distinctions but also discriminates under settler colonialism.

The second form of valuing is the assertion of Native aesthetic value. Tribal aesthetic traditions stretch back millennia and continue to this day through unique and distinct systems determining aesthetic statuses, functions, and values. These systems get little play in the mainstream academic humanities, but their power and persistence are undeniable. By drawing attention to their ongoing use and validity, valuing reduces the violence that value commits by loosening the grip of hegemonic colonial aesthetics while opening spaces for Native aesthetic understandings. In *The Way of the Warrior: Stories of the Crow People*, Crow scholar Phenocia Bauerle opens with short introductory essays on how to appreciate Crow narrative. In “Crow Values in the Stories,” Bauerle periodizes Crow narrative into “ancient,” “legendary,” and “historical” phases; describes significant narrative elements, such as the “portrayal of prestige and worthiness to be gained from the accomplishment of deeds”; and details the specific ways “those things that are held as most important to the tribe are reflected in the narratives” (9). What comes clear is a Crow system of aesthetic value that involves aesthetic understandings based on particular social functions and spiritual dimensions, that is vastly different from dominant settler-colonial systems. These introductory essays testify to the reality of axiological aesthetic differences, and in so doing, they call into question, and thereby work to decolonize, exclusivist and universalist notions of value.

Another example of assertive valuing is the power of Native story and storytelling, which is found as a value all throughout Native aesthetic traditions. Richard Van Camp’s (Tlicho Dene) novel *The Lesser Blessed* is a useful example in this context because it illustrates the worth Native aesthetic value systems place on both the enculturating and the medicinal/therapeutic functions of Native story. *The Lesser Blessed* is a First Nations Bildungsroman that revolves around the healing of Larry Sole (Dogrib), who suffers abuse from a father who himself was abused in the residential schools. Larry Sole is a high schooler in the multicultural, working-class town of Fort Simmer (Northwest Territories) who lives with his mother, Verna, and her boyfriend, Jed (Slavey), whose stories and storytelling become the vital support system Larry needs to overcome the intergenerational trauma and anti-Indianism that overdetermine the more minor coming-of-age challenges he faces. When the pace of Larry’s recovery begins to accelerate midway through the book, it is a direct result of Larry coming into his own as a powerful

storyteller, paving the way for the crucial self-affirmation that poetically closes the book:

I would in time
find one to call my own
mine to disappear in
to be. (134)

In *Taking Back Our Spirits: Indigenous Literature, Public Policy, and Healing* (2009), Métis literary scholar Jo-Ann Episkenew writes, “[H]ealing from the trauma of colonialism is a prime function of contemporary Indigenous literature”; she also asserts, “[E]veryday stories, *âcimowina*, the stories that are the foundation of contemporary Indigenous literature, although not spiritual, are nevertheless spirit” (17, 15). The “transformative powers,” as Episkenew says, of Native story are real and extend to the printed page. *The Lesser Blessed* is thus more than a story about healing; it is a text that heals. The transformative capacity of story exercised as “spirit” is a concrete example of Native aesthetic value. Episkenew’s First Nations narrative theory defines one way Native texts are valued, a fact Van Camp and *The Lesser Blessed* poignantly express.

SUMMARY

At the end of “Twenty-Five Indigenous Projects,” Smith writes, “I hope the message [this essay] gives to communities is that they have issues that matter, and processes and methodologies that can work for them” (163). The principal aim of this article has been to honor this message by advancing the argument among Native American humanities communities that the Indigenous project concept not only operates but also is comfortably at home “at the level of ideas.” Smith’s work reminds us that decolonization remains the central task for IR and for Native studies more broadly—and this is no different for the Native American humanities. To that end, Smith’s work provides a blueprint for the development of “processes and methodologies” that can bring “issues that matter” to the surface of Native texts and that can perform decolonization as a function of reading those texts. The four projects offered here have followed this blueprint. I hope they illustrate that so much more is possible by thinking about IR and IRMs in humanities ways.

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NOTES

1. Although IR is most often considered part of the social and behavioral sciences, there are IR texts that do engage the Native humanities. In *Indigenous Storywork: Educating the Heart, Mind, Body, and Spirit* (2008), Jo-Ann Archibald presents a guide for using seven “storywork principles” (“respect, responsibility, reciprocity, relevance, holism, interrelatedness, and synergy”) as a basis “for making meaning from stories and for using them in educational contexts” (ix). What this guide develops is a framework for conducting respectful research with and on Native stories, storytelling, and oral traditions. Peter Cole’s *Coyote and Raven Go Canoeing: Coming Home to the Village* (2006) is a unique, self-described “conversation a canoe journey shaped out of words / with members of First Nations communities,” including Coyote and Raven, in hybridized free verse / narrative form (xiii). It is an idiosyncratic, experimental performance of decolonization theory and method, anticolonial critique, and First Nations history, especially educational history, that unworks, outsmarts, and remakes academic English and scholarly discursive conventions to make a case for increasing First Nations control over academic knowledge production about First Nations peoples. Although the focus falls on education, there is much here for humanities scholars to enjoy, especially the playful, tricky indigenization of theory and method, which is on display throughout. Margaret Kovach’s *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts* (2009) advances many of the key insights from Smith’s *Decolonizing Methodologies*, such as the critique of imperialist knowledges and the imperative of maintaining a decolonizing lens in all research activities, but it goes further by discussing and developing actual research methods for practitioners, including “Nēhiyaw Methodology” and “story as method” as just two specific examples. Because the methods Kovach describes are for qualitative research exclusively, this book is likely especially useful for humanities scholars.

2. If you are not familiar with Smith’s “Twenty-Five Indigenous Projects,” please consider reading the essay before you proceed. Doing so will not necessarily increase the significance of the four projects presented here, but it will provide context for understanding them along with a vital set of analytical frameworks that are useful in all kinds of interpretive decolonizing humanities work.

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The Good Mind and Trans-Systemic Thinking in the Two-Row Poems of Mohawk Poet Peter Blue Cloud

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This article explores the far-reaching philosophical, environmental, and legal profundity of Peter Blue Cloud's (1933–2011) two-column poems with reference to Haudenosaunee (Six Nations) teachings about the Good Mind. In order to illustrate the far-reaching implications of Blue Cloud's two-column enactments of the Good Mind, I discuss one of the most famous uses of Haudenosaunee two-column thinking in the Two Row Wampum before I turn, toward the end of this article, to Chickasaw legal theorist James (Sa'ke') Youngblood Henderson's concept of "trans-systemic" analysis as a way to map out the importance of Two Row thinking for recalibrating relations between Indigenous and settler-colonial legal regimes. But first, one of Blue Cloud's two-column poems:

FIRST LIGHT

First light, a dark outline
of a mountain peak and
pines their morning scent
carried on first breezes,

stars a naked brilliance
pulsing to coyote cries
And keening chorus,

a cricket's tentative chirping,
long pauses,
the fall of an oak leaf
a bird's sudden question,

evening
too
will
call,

to
sleep
again,

the
mind
is
dreaming,

that deepest blue of sky
And now the stars turn
brighter,

 a sliver of moon
 followed by a star

And then the pink of morning
sky as vast and open
as a child's dreaming,

a carpet of leaves, hazy
grey to mist of yellow
the oak growing a cliff face
reaching out for balance,

a dog bark crawling over a hill,
a snapping conversation of twigs
 and branches in fire,
I wrap myself in morning
 as echoes

 of a silly dream

linger my mind
And I smile to it,

my urine splashes the ground
sending up an acrid steam,
a long, ribbed cloud I reach for,

 I want to

Soar on hawk wings and whistle
An all-consuming pride,

I smell the pine and cedar
and the damp morning soil,
 a flicker calls,

my feet are hooves

I run,

 taking great, soaring
 leaps

above the trees, over hills
to meet
 the sun.

mind
is
a

nation
of
people
in
search,

mind
is
Creation
space,

mind
is
space
is
void

is
crowded
lodge,

mind
is
memory
of
a
way,

a
people
seeking

a
law,
great
law
of
lasting
peace. (*Clans* 96–97)

Peter Blue Cloud loved to get up very early, around 3:00 a.m., and write until 6:00 or 7:00 a.m. each day (Blue Cloud, “Talking” 32).¹ Likewise, each of the four two-column poems included in his *Clans of Many Nations: Selected Poems 1969–94* (1995) presents a speaker in the pre-dawn hours, attending to the waking earth of the new day. In each of these poems, the left-hand column presents Creation as alive and nurturing, and the speaker himself acknowledges his immersion in and wonder at each detail as the dawn emerges. By contrast with the rich, sensory images of the left-hand columns, the right-hand columns in these poems descend in one-word lines that trace, in very spare language, an essential thought or growing realization that runs like a thread beside the lush imagery of the left-hand column.

How are we to read poems laid out like this? Are we to read one column at a time? Should we read some of one column, and then some of the other? Should we read across from left column to right? None of these poems is organized in such a way that the grammar reads smoothly across from one column to the next.² You can’t read Peter Blue Cloud’s two-column poems without being confronted with your own habits of thought, your own assumptions about how to make meaning, which are challenged and made conscious by your simultaneous encounter with more than one way of doing things. The only comment by Blue Cloud about this two-column format that I have been able to find appears in the anthology *New Voices from the Longhouse* (1989), where he explains

*The visual structure is: seeing it as a long,
single page broadside of the mind. So then,
the words become stories within
stories/some, thoughts as they occurred on
my walks, or thought upon next morning.
The story at right is a staff of mt. lilac,
unpeeled, simple, yet meant to guide. To be
read as a whole after the main body.*

(Bruchac 24; format, including italics, exactly as in original)

From this statement, we learn that we are meant to read the right column after we have read the left and that the two add up to a “single page broadside of the mind.” Mind itself—its habits and how it is organized—is central to the purposes of these poems. Balancing the early morning setting of the left column by a turn to nightfall, the right col-

umn of “First Light,” written out horizontally, reads like this: “evening too will call, to sleep again, the mind is dreaming, mind is a nation of people in search, mind is Creation space, mind is space is void is crowded lodge, mind is memory of a way, a people seeking a law, great law of lasting peace.” We could say that, whereas the mind of the left column is waking to and acknowledging the elements of the living world of the new day, the mind of the right column in this poem is retiring to sleep, releasing itself to the expansive world of dream-knowledge and the supraconscious or more-than-individual, more-than-human mind. These words about human-plus-more-than-human mind and the Great Law of Peace evoke Haudenosaunee teachings about the Good Mind.

TWO COLUMNS—TWO ROWS

The two-column poems leaped off the pages when I first read *Clans of Many Nations* because I have been deeply engaged in thinking about the Two Row Wampum for the past twelve years. I am a European Canadian professor, and I have lived and taught in Six Nations territory for over twenty years. I had carried out no research related to Haudenosaunee culture prior to February 2006, when an incident occurred that brought this first treaty between Indigenous North Americans and incoming Europeans into prominence. Young women from the Six Nations of the Grand River Reserve, which is half an hour’s drive from where I work at McMaster University, occupied a housing development known as Douglas Creek Estates between the reserve and the neighboring town of Caledonia. They insisted that building stop until the 150-year-old disputes over the land were addressed by the Canadian and Ontario governments. There are too many layers to the story for me to do them justice here, but among the points of contestation was a question of sovereignty. The original Two Row Wampum agreement with the Dutch from the early 1600s had been taken up by the English when they took over New York colony in 1664, and its principles of reciprocal, autonomous relations had been inherited by Canada, so the reclaimers asked the long-unanswered question: Did Canada have jurisdiction to impose its property laws upon a people who had never agreed to be subjects of either Britain or its successor, Canada? Repeatedly throughout the violent exchanges that erupted at the disputed site, the Two Row Wampum featured prominently on flags, banners, and media images as Canadians

were urged to remember that the Haudenosaunee were allies, not subjects, of the Crown and therefore of Canada.

A year later, the Ontario Provincial Police were still guarding a no-man's-land between the Haudenosaunee reclaimers on the site and angry Canadian nationalists threatening to take the land back by vigilante force when I was asked by Haudenosaunee colleagues at McMaster to serve as academic cochair of the university's President's Committee on Indigenous Issues. Playing a parallel role to mine, Tuscarora educator Rebecca Jamieson was appointed the Indigenous community cochair. She was then coming into office as president of Six Nations Polytechnic, which is based on the Grand River territory. Our committee's purpose was to promote understanding between Indigenous and university communities by maintaining and enhancing on- and off-campus educational initiatives such as the Indigenous Studies Program at McMaster and Six Nations Polytechnic on the reserve. One of our first tasks as new cochairs was to establish a long-contemplated Indigenous Knowledge Centre at Six Nations Polytechnic, supported by McMaster, which could serve as an archives and research hub to ensure that Haudenosaunee traditions of living and being would be passed on in the future. At one of our first advisory committee meetings, the elders who advised us on the vision for the center suggested we call it *Deyohahá:ge*, meaning "two roads or paths" in the Cayuga language, with the idea that the center would bring the best of Haudenosaunee and Western approaches together to ensure the flourishing of Haudenosaunee lifeways for future generations. The prominence of the Two Row Wampum in Six Nations discourse about the land reclamation and in the elders' naming of *Deyohahá:ge*, then, has meant that over the past twelve years I have been reading the history of, consulting with Six Nations colleagues about, and listening to traditional speakers on the importance of the Two Row Wampum.

Deyohahá:ge went on to hire as its first senior research coordinator Richard "Rick" W. Hill Sr., the renowned Tuscarora artist, curator, and cultural historian, who had worked for over forty years in Haudenosaunee cultural restoration, especially in recovering wampum from museums and private collections around the world. (Two of the photographs of wampum included in this article are his and used with his permission.) Given the elders' advice, we members of the advisory committee thought that a practical way to learn how the Two Row Wampum might

provide guidance to the research methods and partnerships developed at Deyohahá:ge: would be to launch a series of monthly seminars at the center wherein Six Nations-based and university-based researchers could meet regularly to develop both the necessary knowledge and the relationships (the knowledge-in-relationships) to pursue healthy two-paths research. From those seminar discussions many initiatives have emerged, among them the Cultural Fluency series of documents and videos, posted at Deyohahá:ge:'s website (see www.snpolytechnic.com/knowledge-centre/resources), and the copublication by Rick Hill and myself entitled "The Two Row Wampum-Covenant Chain Tradition as a Guide for Indigenous-University Research Partnerships," published in the journal *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies* (2018).³ Another initiative is this essay. So this is the context that made Peter Blue Cloud's two-column poems leap off the page when I read them: they looked like concrete manifestations of the Two Row thinking on which our work at Deyohahá:ge: has focused. Blue Cloud's two-column poems about early risers greeting the new dawn clearly employ a visual dualism to convey the experience of the Haudenosaunee practice of the Good Mind. It was the visual code of the two columns that drew my attention.⁴ This article reads these poems in relation to that code because it is a good way to indicate the profound implications of these quiet poems, but it is important to remember that the Two Row Wampum is only one application of the larger Haudenosaunee philosophy of the Good Mind, which extends throughout many ceremonies and teachings of the Iroquoian League of Peace.

THANKSGIVING AND THE GOOD MIND

"The sunlight is coming in your window. And you're laying on that bed," Mohawk elder Sakokweniónkwás Tom Porter's grandmother used to tell him. "That light of that sun, that's the Creator surrounding us. . . . What do you do when that happens every day? You can't just do nothing. . . . You better put out your hand *or something*. Acknowledge" (*And Grandma Said* 373, emphasis in the original). Blue Cloud's speaker enacts this everyday courtesy at the break of dawn in each of his two-column poems: he acknowledges. His words constitute his own version of the Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwén, Words That Come before All Else, also known as the Thanksgiving Address, as they take note of and

catalog everything that makes up the emerging day. In “First Light,” for example, his acknowledgments proceed from coyotes and crickets to stars and moon in the sky, leaves on the ground, branches in the fire, damp morning soil, all the way up above the trees and hills to the rising sun. Whether at the beginning of council meetings and diplomatic gatherings with outsiders or in their own homes at the start or end of each day, Haudenosaunee people are instructed to put themselves in a Good Mind by offering greetings and thanks to each other and to all the beings of Creation that make it possible for life to continue. Porter says he used to think of the address as a prayer until he realized that in Christian understanding, prayer means making requests, and the Thanksgiving Address isn’t asking for anything, because the earth has already given us everything we need (374). “The Good Mind starts at the beginning of the world,” he explains in a different publication. “There were instructions to us when we were first put here, to carry a Good Mind. In Creation time, that’s when our Good Mind began to become aware of everything: animals, plants, waters, sky, sun, moon—everything that it talks about in our Thanksgiving Address” (“The Good Mind” 8). This practice of organizing one’s mind is the link between Blue Cloud’s poetic acknowledgment of the many beings that make up Creation in the left column and his evocation of mind dreaming, remembering, and “seeking a . . . great law of lasting peace” in the right. Usually, the Thanksgiving Address follows a particular order, greeting all those who have gathered, then proceeding from low to high, from the earth and water, the plants and animals that inhabit them, up to the sky, thunders, moon, and sun as it lifts the mind to the goodness of the Creator. But, as Porter explains, each person will generate their own way of offering the Words That Come before All Else: “[I]t would be much different words from each of us as we describe the beauty . . . ; it’s always the same, but it’s never word-for-word” (*And Grandma Said* 9). Accordingly, Blue Cloud’s poems constitute his adaptations of the Thanksgiving Address’s orderly catalog of Creation’s gifts. The orderliness is important. Mohawk lawyer for the Six Nations Confederacy Kayanesenh Paul Williams explains:

Viewed through the lens of the Konhweratonhsera [Thanksgiving Address], the world is an orderly place: every part of the world has been given instructions and responsibilities, and each continues to fulfill those instructions as well as it can. . . . Giving thanks as peo-

ple gathered together is the beginning of being of one mind. As they come together, our minds are “bundled together” into one: entitewahwe’non:ni ne onkwa’nikonikon:ra. Kanonhweratonhsera reminds us that order is the natural and intentional condition of creation, and that being of one good mind is the ideal condition of the people. (xi)

The early morning figures in Blue Cloud’s poems are following these original instructions by putting themselves in the Good Mind, greeting and acknowledging the beings of Creation at the start of each day. The poems proceed in a respectful, organized fashion, so that reciting or reading them, we experience the orderly Good Mind that emerges when we bundle our minds together as one with all beings around us in seeking that law of peace. The two-column format gives us a clear visualization of order and of balance. The first, wide column begins with dawn, balanced by the second, narrow column’s turn to evening; the first column lists the sensuous and concrete details of beings active in the external world, and it is balanced by the second column’s abstract world of an interbeing mind—described as a nation of people searching, as Creation space, as void, as memory suggesting previous generations. This act of ordering one’s thoughts in a good way, of acknowledging our interdependence with the beings surrounding us in nature, constitutes what Onondaga clan mother Frieda Jean Jacques calls the “discipline of the Good Mind.” “Since our actions stem from our thoughts, the discipline of the Good Mind has a direct effect on what we are doing with our lives,” she writes. “During the ‘opening address’ the Creator is given thanks for all of Creation. . . . With the discipline of the Good Mind we clear our minds and hearts to be open to the Creator’s will” (n.p.). “I smell the pine and cedar,” writes Blue Cloud, evoking two important medicines of Iroquoian cosmology. Cedar evokes the Haudenosaunee tea that famously healed the scurvy suffered by Jacques Cartier’s sailors during his disastrous winter at Stadacona (Quebec City) in 1535.⁵ The pine evokes the Tree of Peace, which the people uprooted so they could cast their weapons into the underground river beneath it before it was symbolically replanted at the center of the council fire when Peacemaker was finalizing the Great Law of Peace. The speaker’s catalog of the earth’s beings in the left column adds up to an image of him taking “great, soaring leaps” as he rises “above the trees, over hills / to meet /

the sun.” Thus, his mind joins the more-than-human, energized reasonableness that is what the right column calls both “void” and “crowded lodge,” a dynamic “Creation space” where memory of Creation’s original instructions can help all beings continue to seek the “great law of lasting peace.”

THE TWO ROW WAMPUM AND THE GOOD MIND

The Two Row Wampum is, likewise, a way of ordering Good Minds, this time for the purposes of creating good balance in international, intercultural relationships. Let me summarize briefly from Rick Hill’s publication of the oral history of the Two Row agreement as it was recited in public multiple times by Grand River Cayuga chief and faith keeper Jacob Thomas before his death in 1998 (see Hill, “Linking”; Hill, “Oral”). As Chief Thomas described it, Mohawk leaders from the easternmost nation of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy met Dutch merchants when the latter first appeared on what became known as the Hudson River in 1609, the same year that the French explorer Samuel de Champlain introduced firearms into their world and killed several of their relatives in the St. Lawrence River region. Wanting to avoid similar violence with the newcomers from the Netherlands who were arriving in their territory, the Mohawks arranged a meeting near present-day Albany sometime around 1613 at which they negotiated a treaty of friendship on behalf of the confederacy. At this meeting, the Mohawk leaders burned tobacco and explained that the Creator did not mean for people to live in fear and conflict, so they wished to link arms with the Dutch to form a human covenant chain and treat one another as family. The Dutch agreed and welcomed the Haudenosaunee as “sons” into their family, but the Mohawk leaders rejected the hierarchical parent-child metaphor and insisted they use the language of siblings and call each other “brothers.” These are all important concepts in the history of the Two Row agreement because they come from the *Kayanerenkó:wa*, often translated into English as the Great Law of Peace and understood to be the constitutional code of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy.

Long before Columbus, a figure known as Peacemaker made allies of the formerly hostile Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senecas. His teachings centered around three words or concepts: *ne’skennen* (often translated as “peace”), *karihwí:yo* (righteousness),

and *ka'satsténshsera* (power). I have seen and heard various English translations of these terms. Kayanesenh Paul Williams's translations published in 2018 have the virtue of being very recent and taking many before him into account. He writes that when *ne'skén:nen* is applied to a people or society it means "peace, tranquility, or rest" as opposed to war or strife, but when it is applied to a living individual it means "health, soundness, and a normal functioning condition" (218). Furthermore, this concept of peace "extends to the world around us: environmental health means both that humans thrive in an environment that is free of things that cause disease, and that humans must avoid doing things that cause harm to the natural world" (219). Williams explains that *karihwí:yo* (righteousness) literally means "the good word," but, he explains, "'word' and 'way' are blurred." It "denotes justice, right" and "good doctrine in institutional forms" (219). The third concept, *ka'satsténshsera*, refers to the "power of peace," the "power to get things done" (221)—a power that has two expressions: one in "force, authority based in force, as expressed in the war power of the people," and a second in "the *orenda* or magic potency of the institutions of the people" (222). Williams summarizes:

The three concepts can . . . be understood as a sequence. A person hears and is persuaded by the word, the Good Message. He becomes good-minded, and this infuses him with the power of righteousness. In turn this enables him to see, create, and maintain the peace. The three concepts are, in a way, a mirror of the three concepts contained in the silver links of the [Two Row Wampum–]Covenant Chain treaty relationship . . . : respect, trust, and friendship. Respect must be achieved first. Based on respect, one may build trust, and friendship may grow from that. (224–25)

Peacemaker's philosophy drew together five nations and eventually six, when the Tuscaroras joined in 1722, so that they are known today as the Six Nations Confederacy. His message of peace, good thinking, and unified, empowered minds laid out clear protocols for how to choose leaders (nominated by the clan mothers), how to make decisions (by consensus, with designated representatives from each nation passing decisions back and forth across the council fire), and especially how to live with a Good Mind in relation to the natural environment. Peace depends upon good health not only in human minds and hearts but also in the larger Creation. Incoming Europeans were so amazed at

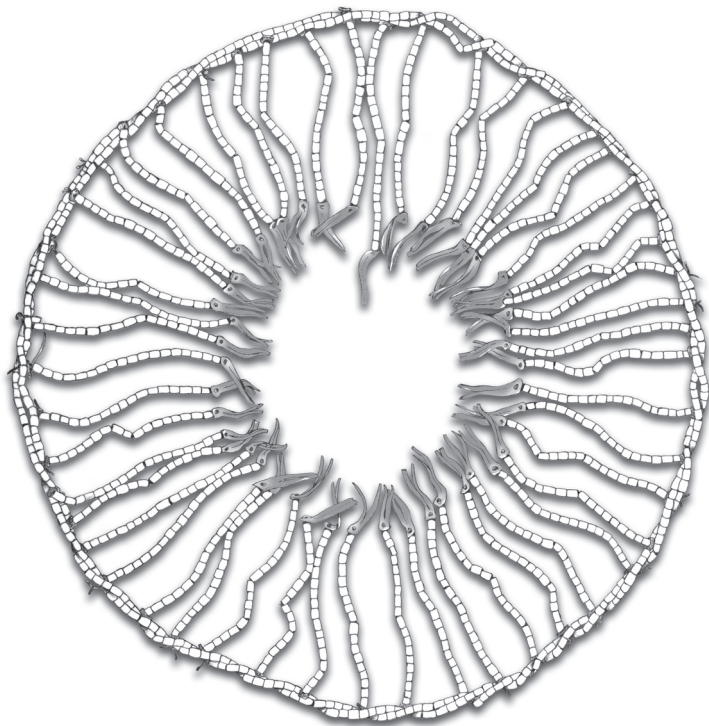


Fig. 1. Circle Wampum, *Rotinonshón:ni Teiotiokwaonháston*, Mohawk language, meaning “It circles the people.” Image and photo by Raymond R. Skye, Tuscarora artist, Six Nations of the Grand River Territory.

the sophistication of the Haudenosaunee Great Law that people such as Benjamin Franklin attended councils to observe and study their jurisprudence and methods of organization. Indeed, historians have argued that the Haudenosaunee system had significant influence on the development of the American Constitution.⁶ The member nations of the confederacy called each other “brothers” to emphasize their equality, and their fifty appointed chiefs linked arms in a great circle of solidarity that would protect the people within their unified embrace (see figure 1).

These legal and constitutional precedents from the Kayanerenkó:wa constitute the Haudenosaunee normative thinking on which the Two Row agreement the Mohawk negotiators were forming with the Dutch was based.⁷ The Dutch responded by saying they would put this agreement in writing, and the Haudenosaunee assented, adding,

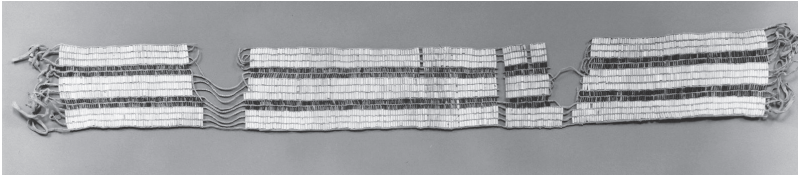


Fig. 2. Two Row Wampum, Tekani teyothata'tye kaswenta, Mohawk language, meaning "Two Row Wampum belt." Photo courtesy of Rick Hill.

however, that paper might not last, and they must find more enduring symbols to record their treaty agreement, something that would endure as long as the grass stayed green, the sun rose in the morning, and the water continued to flow. They noted that the Dutch had arrived in a sailing ship, whereas they used canoes to travel the river, so they would record the agreement by means of wampum to symbolize a model for future relations based on their two distinct ways of travel: the Dutch would keep their beliefs, laws, and culture in their ship, and the Haudenosaunee would keep theirs in their canoe. Conscious of these differences in their ways of knowing and living, the two parties could better understand how to share the river of life in equality and friendship.

There is much to say about every detail of the Two Row Wampum belt (figure 2): the two purple rows, themselves made of two columns of beads, signal internal pluralism even as they remain parallel and never intersect. The three white rows, which are each three beads wide, symbolize the *ne'skennen* (peace), *karihwi:iyo* (good word or way), and *ka'satsténshsera* (unified, empowered minds)—Chief Thomas translated these as peace, respect, and friendship—that will allow the two vessels to share the ever-flowing River of Life. The rows run off the two ends of the belt, visually encoding the never-ending intention not just of natural things like rivers but also of the relationship being formed. Indeed, the strings at the end of the wampum could be tied together around the wampum bearer's waist, forming an eternal circle. As a ceremonial-mnemonic form of legal record keeping, wampum requires the two parties to meet regularly to dust off the beads and repolish the covenant chain to keep it from rusting. The Haudenosaunee appointed particular elders, such as Chief Thomas, to serve as wampum keepers who would memorize the sacred words associated with each wampum in

their nation's "library" and recite these regularly so communities would repolish their memories and maintain their Good Minds (Hill, "Oral"; Hill, "Linking"; Foster).

From this brief overview of the Two Row tradition, we can see that it was conceptualized from the beginning in a trans-systemic, cross-cultural context, and its explicitly two-sided, dialogical form was meant to help the treaty partners work out a balanced relationship throughout its ongoing life. The idea of making agreements to live in peace and friendship between two sides is not just an idea of how to relate to outsiders like Dutch or British people, for the teachings of the Great Law were derived from dualist interactions evident in nature and mirrored in daily Haudenosaunee life. Williams notes that the idea of balance in the Great Law involved formal, ceremonial recognition of duality: "In the natural world, examples of this duality abound: night and day; male and female; young and old; forest and meadow. The two sides of the longhouse, divided by the imaginary line down the middle of the building, reflect this, and so do many aspects of the law" (4). Until the early nineteenth century, Six Nations people lived in matrilineally organized longhouses, with rows of bunks where a clan mother's daughters' families slept along each side. Between each sister's or auntie's family there was a cooking fire shared by the two sisters and their families. So the experience of passing things cooperatively back and forth across the fire was what Penelope Myrtle Kelsey calls "Iro-normative" (63).⁸ This basic living arrangement became standard for many kinds of proceedings in Haudenosaunee lifeways, from the function of moieties in the two sides within each clan to the arrangements of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy Council, whereby the "elder brother" nations (Mohawks and Senecas) sat on one side of the fire, while the "younger brother" nations (Cayugas, Oneidas, Tuscaroras) sat on the other, and the Onondagas moderated the meeting from the middle. Any proposal would be discussed among the older brothers, then passed across the fire to the younger brothers, who would debate the matter among themselves before they passed it back across the fire with their response. Basic to this arrangement was the idea that good decisions, good thinking, was dialogical: one way of thinking was not enough. Ideas and proposals needed to be considered from at least one more point of view and then returned to the first before good decisions could be made. The Great Law of Peace is only made through thinking dialogically, thinking along more than one track.

As the discussion between the Mohawk spokespeople and the Dutch merchants and the subsequent transfer of this treaty agreement to the British demonstrate, the parties to these agreements were very aware of translating between cultural codes and knowledge systems, a process that requires both differentiation and equivalence. The two vessels remain distinct, yet they share the river not to create cultural apartheid but to insist upon the Haudenosaunee understanding—demonstrated in the confederation of six distinct nations into a political structure that did not homogenize them into a single nation—that healthy relationships recognize rather than suppress differences and that the impulse to overwhelm and absorb the other into a hierarchical relationship can chafe and destroy peaceful relations. The agreement to live in peace and friendship, sharing the river of life while respecting one another's differences, is keyed not to human time but to ecological time and the cycles of nature—as long as the grass turns green, the rivers flow, and the sun rises each day. All of these concepts and principles are informed by the teachings of Peacemaker's Kayanerenkó:wa, which emphasizes the importance of establishing the kind of well-reasoned order that sets the groundwork for peace. As historians of early America, Daniel Richter and Jon Parmenter, have clearly documented, British colonial and, later, American government council minutes refer repeatedly to the Two Row Wampum–Covenant Chain allyship between themselves and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy well into the nineteenth century and beyond. Indeed, references to this agreement recur in Canadian and American official correspondence with the Haudenosaunee Confederacy to this day.⁹

From what I have read and been told, Haudenosaunee wampum itself has its origins in the need for the orderliness and clarity of the Good Mind. The much-retold story is that one of the first people to take up Peacemaker's message, Aionwahta (known in English as Hiawatha but distorted out of recognition in Longfellow's poem of that name), stumbled into the woods in a morass of grief and despair after his wife and daughters were killed.¹⁰ It is said that his heart fell to the ground. Finding himself at the side of a dried lake, he gathered some purple and some white shells (note the need for two contrasting colors), which he impulsively began to string on lengths of reed grass. He soon noticed that the concentration of doing one thing at a time, stringing one bead, then another one, then another, trying not to break the delicate shells, calmed his mind and heart. "I wish someone could take this string of

beads,” he is reported to have said, “and count my troubles with me.” Later, when they met up in Mohawk territory, Peacemaker apparently heard Aionwahta’s wish and did just that: matched Aionwahta’s strings of wampum with ones Peacemaker had made himself and retold the story of Aionwahta’s trauma and pain. In the process, Peacemaker confirmed the clarity and peace of his friend’s troubled mind. Ever since, wampum has been important to the restoration of the calm and peaceful mind.

But order, peace, and good-mindedness are not permanent states. Time brings new hurts and losses, and the history of the Two Row Wampum agreement is one of the growing imbalance between the two vessels as the European sailing ship grew in its power over four centuries to impose its laws and meanings and culture upon the Haudenosaunee canoe. New York-based Mohawk artist Alan Michelson’s video installation *Two Row II* (2005) presents an ironic rendering of the Two Row’s symbols of order and balance in tension with the current realities of disorder and confusion that have resulted from the history of imbalance. (Please see a clip from the video at alanmichelson.com/work/.) Following the commitments they had made with the British in the Two Row agreements, many warriors from the Six Nations supported the British during the Revolutionary War, and because of this their people—whether they had supported the British or not—were burned out of their traditional territories in the Finger Lakes region of upstate New York. In recognition of the Six Nations’ allyship and their losses, the British granted the refugees six miles on each side of the Grand River in 1784 from its source to its mouth in what had been the Confederacy’s traditional beaver-hunting grounds (now southwestern Ontario) where they could rebuild their lives. However, through repeated interventions by British and Canadian governments, the land has been whittled away until today the Six Nations have only 5 percent of that original grant of land and only on one side of the river.¹¹ In his video, Michelson shot film through a purple filter of the two banks from a boat on the Grand River and presented it in two moving horizontal bands to convey the visual image of the wampum’s two rows. He double-layered the soundtrack by recording a Canadian river cruise captain telling tourists about the area over the voice of a woman elder telling traditional stories about this region. The two purple riverbanks appear to move simultaneously in opposed directions, making it seem that the two

rows are traveling in opposite directions, and the simultaneous layering of voices in the soundtrack conveys the confusion that we can witness on a river whose protocols are no longer governed by the peace, good-mindedness, and mutual empowerment that were supposed to bind the two sides together.

If we listened very carefully, we could probably sort out what each of the two voices on the garbled soundtrack is saying from each other, but it would take real concentration and attentiveness to do this work, and delicacy too, since the two hundred years of relations along the Grand River since 1784 mean families on both sides are mixed in many ways, just as both Blue Cloud's and Michelson's heritage is by intermarriage but also by having to operate in the Western sailing ship of media, education, and economy, so that discerning the ways of the original canoe from the ship requires tact and remarkable sensitivity. Michelson's use of the Western technology of video and Blue Cloud's borrowing from the English tradition of lyric nature poetry in the left-hand column of his poems both remind us that contemporary engagements with the Two Row tradition operate, as did the original agreement, within a dialogic domain, not some realm of singular cultural purity. That said, the Two Row tradition also reminds us that there is value in keeping one's inheritances distinct; in tracing the wampum beads one by one, as Aionwahta did; in keeping track of the original instructions and founding worldviews that continue to animate different ways of being in the world, even if—especially when—they become entangled and hard to decipher. It is only by this means that the particular alternatives posed by Haudenosaunee values and the philosophy of the Good Mind can challenge and check the dominant status quo. As with Michelson's video, I understand Blue Cloud's two-column poems to be quiet efforts to help readers *experience* two-row thinking, then, as a practice for clarifying and ordering the morass that results from traumatic, multilayered, unjust history. This means that while these poems look like meditations on living quietly in Creation, they have important implications for law, politics, and epistemology.

TWO ROW, GOOD MIND, AND "A GENTLE EARTHQUAKE" I

We can see this orderly, two-row epistemology of the Good Mind at work in "A Gentle Earthquake," another of Blue Cloud's two-column

poems. This poem is even more precisely ordered than “First Light,” for it uses the same carefully structured two-column format, but it now adds a strictly numbered stanza structure that descends from replete, nine-line stanzas at the beginning of the seven-page poem to spare, single-line stanzas at the end. Every four stanzas it drops one line. Thus, whether your eye proceeds from left to right or from top to bottom, the words move from complexity to bare essence. Bead by bead, row by row, stanza by stanza, the poem settles the welter of thought and emotion until it reaches clarity—all our minds gathered as one. The left column opens with environmental and human disturbance:

An all night summer wind, hot
and dry without a hint of seas.
A restless tossing, turning series
of short-lived dreams set mind
to rhythms of remembered oceans.
A rolling shiver of earth skin
shakes the vessel of this sleeping house,
and caught between dream and awakening,
I wait for the next slight tremor. (134)

When he wrote the poem the poet was living in California, and he had been wakened by an early-morning earthquake. This waking disturbance is acknowledged and set immediately in context as we read in the left column:

Mama Coyote and her two pups
respond to the earthquake in song.
.....
Crickets one by one begin again
their chorus of song.

And across from these lines we read on the right: “Once a feast was given and everyone ate. Once a song was sung in praise of all.” At earthquake’s beckoning, the more-than-human world is singing the Words That Come before All Else. This contrapuntal exchange between disturbance and the Good Mind recurs down the receding stanzas of the poem. They open with the dialogue between earthquake as threat and the creative refashioning of Creation (in the nine-line and eight-line stanzas), then a dialectic between private property law as compared to the Great Law of Peace (seven-line and six-line stanzas), followed by the

tension between images of the fractured earth and the ceremonial songs and dances that heal it, and concluding with images of the regenerating, renewing power of a forgiving earth (three-line to one-line stanzas).

In the first section on earthquakes, the dialogue is explicit:

An earthquake is not a devastation,	The
a malicious act of nature against man.	sky
An earthquake is because it must be.	is
The early morning newsperson reports	a
minor damage here and there. He does	feast
not declare a state of emergency. He	of
does not suggest a praise to earth	stars
her wondrous breath of life (35)	

These lines present two consciousnesses: one that sees earthquakes and the power of nature as evidence of Creation's capricious malice, while the other, exercising the Good Mind, sees the (fortunately) gentle earthquake as a reminder of nature's power and thus cause for praise and acknowledgment. Tellingly, these two approaches to Creation's vitality are not divided neatly between the two columns (as if there were a settler-colonial column and a Mohawk one); rather, the two ways of seeing are presented in the left column, while a larger realization that literally transcends the two (repositioning the concerns of the earth in a larger cosmos by considering the sky full of stars) is presented in the right. The dialogue between these different ways of apprehending the earthquake—and Creation—leads into a meditation on ethics and justice set in the context of two kinds of law: law based on private property and the Great Law. Five stanzas later, we read in the left column:

I suck in breath and pull a drink
 from the river far below, trying
 to ignore the one-man dredge

 whining its greed as it sucks-up
 sand and pebbles searching for gold.
 I embarrass myself with a sob
 which wracks my body just once,

How did it come to be that we
 gave over the power of Creation's
 balance to government agencies and

corporations bent on destruction?
 It is much like sending yourself as
 a child, to government boarding school.

The old parchments of law are brittle,
 and because they had to be written
 down and re-read for enlightenment,
 there, under glass, they cannot
 even become the compost they
 were surely meant to be.

The Great Law of Peace of
 the Six Nations is a beginning:
 it is a lifeway memorized and
 recited to the people. Memory is
 knowing, mind is Creation space:
 mind is, we are, Creation dreaming. (*Clans* 136–37)

This passage contrasts the legally legitimized delusion that Creation's resources can be exploited with impunity, which is calcified in the brittle legal traditions that enable what is ultimately a self-exploitation (sending ourselves to residential school) with the *Kayanerenkó:wa*, which is a jurisprudence maintained in people's memory and derived from Good Minds deeply immersed in valuing (praising, dreaming, remembering, thinking within) Creation. Indeed, in phrasing that we also saw in the poem "First Light," the Good Mind recognizes that "mind is, we are, Creation dreaming." The contrast between these two ways of thinking and the two legal traditions associated with them plays out in subsequent stanzas that record, first, that "A Cree is / spearing fish which will slowly / poison his own loved family" and, second, "On the other side of earth / a shaman on a high plateau is praising the dawn. . . . She is a warm breath which soothes my sleeping children" (138–39). These tensions remain in play to the end of the poem's left column, whose final set of one-line stanzas read: "A sea of waving grasses / hooves of extinct creatures / ourselves in exile, and always / a forgiving earth" (140). So the entire poem lives in the balance between the earthquake and Creation's self-regenerating power, between the laws of destruction and ceremonies of restoration, between the forces of extinction and exile and the forgiveness of the earth.

TWO ROW TRANS-SYSTEMIC THINKING

Chickasaw legal philosopher Sa'ke'j Henderson, longtime professor at the Native Law Centre of Canada in Saskatoon and a major formulator of the UN Declaration on Indigenous Peoples, uses the concept of "trans-systemic analysis" or "trans-systemic synthesis" to describe something similar to the balanced dualisms that are normative to the Good Mind and the Two Row Wampum. His ideas help us see how far-reaching the kind of Good-Minded thinking evoked in Blue Cloud's two-column poems can be. Henderson has written about the necessary shift in the Grundnorm of Canadian law that is required if Canadian judges, lawyers, and parliamentarians are to implement Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution, in which Aboriginal rights are guaranteed. Section 35 declares:

35. (1) The existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed. . . .

(3) For greater certainty, in subsection (1) "treaty rights" includes rights that now exist by way of land claims agreements or may be so acquired.

Henderson explains that this guarantee was generated by the patriation of the Canadian Constitution in 1982, when ultimate questions of sovereignty could no longer be referred to the Privy Council in London and had to be reconciled with the preexisting Indigenous sovereignties that had been recognized in foundational treaties with the British Crown. As the Supreme Court found in *Van der Peet* (1996), Aboriginal rights had to be included in the Constitution "because of one simple fact: when Europeans arrived in North America, Aboriginal peoples were already here, living in communities on the land, and participating in distinctive cultures, as they had done for centuries. It is this fact . . . which mandates their special legal, and now constitutional, status" (para. 30, qtd. in Henderson 58). "Properly understood," writes Henderson, "Aboriginal sovereignty is the source of all law in Canada. It flips over the colonial concept that all power derives from the imperial Crown or imperial Parliament, and it creates a distinct way of looking at the patriated constitution of Canada and the divisions of powers" (59). He observes that in the years since 1982, there have been over forty court cases determining and elaborating what is meant by Section 35's "aboriginal rights," "treaty

rights,” or “land claims agreements” and what these things mean for the development of what he calls “a truly Canadian legal system based on symbiotic constitutionalism and legal and epistemic plurality. That is, it has had to develop innovative principles of adjudication that seek a convergence of Aboriginal and Eurocentric legal traditions” (51–52). The reference in Section 35 to “land claims agreements,” for example, conjures up the tangled history of expropriated lands and the reluctance of the Canadian political and legal systems to address the foundational injustice on which the settler-colonial state was established.

More than this, however, is a profound difference between common law and Indigenous understandings of the relations between humans and land. “Many Indigenous peoples,” writes Henderson with Marie Battiste (Mi’kmaq) in *Protecting Indigenous Knowledge and Heritage*,

describe the ecosystem itself in terms of historical marriages or alliances between humans and non-humans, and among different non-human species. Hence, the present structure of the local ecosystem is the cumulative result of a large number of historical contracts, which create reciprocal obligations of kinship and solidarity among all the species and forces which co-exist in that place. The ecosystem is seen as a product of historical choices with an inherent legal structure. It is a moral and legal space characterized by a negotiated order, rather than by mere chance. (44–45)

In this way of understanding legal orders and law, nature is not separated from human culture; what Western thought considers the “laws of nature” are not separate from the world of human consciousness, jurisprudence, or agency. As Peter Blue Cloud puts it in “A Gentle Earthquake,” “it takes humanity, pencil and paper, / to sit as I commenting on events,” but this is only the human version of what coyotes or crickets do: “Crickets, too, rejoice and / grow their song among invisible grasses which are seas which / reflect the song in star pictures” (135). Or, to put it differently, the *greater* law of peace finds its rationale and precedents within the original instructions given to all beings by the Creator, by the relationships and agreements that all beings in Creation have to make with one another in order to live peaceful and prosperous lives. To ignore “holistic notions of citizenship” that Anishinaabe professor of law John Borrows says “must include the land, and all the beings upon

it" (141) is to exclude yourself, your mind, from the law of the land.¹² It's "like sending yourself / as a child, to government boarding school" (Blue Cloud, *Clans* 137).

As the example of land claims demonstrates, then, the task for a major overhaul of the assumptions of the settler state to address "Aboriginal rights" and their legal orders is daunting, which is why Henderson argues that a widespread trans-systemic capacity needs to be developed by everyone—lawyers, legal philosophers, artists, scholars, and opinion leaders of many kinds—so that the epistemologies of Indigenous peoples can influence not just the courts' but also a broad public's understandings of what constitutes evidence, what narrative traditions inform the basis for ethics and law, and how Indigenous ecological thinking and spirituality can reshape Canada's capacity to follow its own Constitution. To return to "A Gentle Earthquake's" phrasing about settler-colonial laws that enable the exploitation of Creation, the "old parchments of law are brittle" as long as they are read and "re-read for enlightenment, there, under glass." I take Blue Cloud to be punning on the idea of reading to be enlightened, which is then undermined by the idea of reading whatever one reads within the airless glass box of a monocultural version of European Enlightenment epistemology. Read in such a limited way, "they cannot / even become the compost they / were surely meant to be." The reference to compost here alludes to a law greater than human law, according to which, as the Haudenosaunee noted when they were forming the Two Row agreement with the Dutch, even the paper treaties and constitutions are written on will eventually decompose into earth. Sharing Blue Cloud's rejection of a myopic, monocultural understanding of law, Henderson writes that, by contrast, "[t]rans-systemic analysis is designed to promote a more profound and coherent understanding of fundamental epistemologies that mould the jurisprudential consciousness and legal principles of Canadian law rather than simply teaching the logic of a single system of law" (66–67). Henderson is aware that dialogical, trans-systemic thinking remains unfamiliar to the homogeneous formulations of the settler-colonial nation-state.¹³ He therefore recommends that we need artistic and scholarly work in multiple domains to create a new Grundnorm, a different set of public assumptions about the norms of thinking, debate, and reasoning in order for all of us to think in trans-systemic ways. Indeed, we could say that colonialism operates primarily by imposing an intellectual monoculture as the Grundnorm of

law, citizenship, and civilization. Decolonization, therefore, necessarily involves a contest over epistemologies, cosmologies, and ontologies. It involves shifting how and what we think.

THE TRANS-SYSTEMIC GOOD MIND AND
“A GENTLE EARTHQUAKE” II

Building our capacity for trans-systemic thinking is rarely dramatic or headline-grabbing work. Indeed, Blue Cloud’s poems are quiet, intimate ways through which he draws the reader into the *experience* (rather than the mere concept) of trans-systemic awareness to the balance of dualisms that is normative to Haudenosaunee ways of thinking. I will conclude with a return to “A Gentle Earthquake’s” right-hand column—that unpeeled, simple staff of mountain lilac that serves as a guide through the tense polarities recorded in the left-hand column. Stripped down by one line every four stanzas like the left column, the first four stanzas, laid out horizontally with slash marks indicating stanza breaks, remind us of the original instructions:

Once a feast was given and everyone ate. / Once a song was sung
in praise of all. / Once a drum was pulse to the all-ness. / Once a
people lived in balance with Creation. (134–35)

The next section highlights Creation’s various beings’ participation in songs and ceremonies of acknowledgment:

The sky is a feast of stars which / are drum beats in a song return-
ing. / A rattle is an earthquake shaking. / A bullroarer is wind
force calling. / A flute is all life singing. / Lightning is masked
dancer inviting / us to join the round dance tonight. / Fire is a call
to feast. Water / is surrounding us all. / The sentence of a snake /
trail in sand, a fish float- / ing in its own space, a / bird sings us
“ah-waken.” (135–38)

Here we encounter Creation as what Anishinaabe-Haudenosaunee scholar Vanessa Watts has called “Place-Thought”: the land as thinking and participating, an interspecies agential mind that includes humans along with other beings in its “crowded lodge.” The next section places this ceremonial consciousness within the original instructions, which are fulfilled by each element of the cycle of planting and growth:

Seeds of corn falling, / green beans ripening, fat / squash and mel-
ons tempting, / rain falling rain. / Sun warming sun. / Night sleep-
ing night. / Green sprouts from earth, / tender green. (138–39)

Seeds follow their instructions by growing into corn, just as sun fulfills its duties by generating warmth. Creation here is a collective intelligence that cycles from the past into the future beyond any single being's lifespan. The Great Law of Peace emerges as all beings participate in this larger mind, first expressed when the earth was brought from the bottom of the water by muskrat and placed on turtle's back in the Haudenosaunee story of Creation:

Hands cupped to / drink clear water, / water emerging / from
ground / water liv- / ing in / sky, water / con- / tain- / ing / Earth.
(139–40)

Beginning with the destructive, re-creative power of the earthquake, the poem concludes with the creation of the earth from "groundwater." The poem's alignment of human mind with Creation mind reinvigorates the Law of Peace, which is not a set of laws, as in the Canadian Constitution, but is the *Kayanerenkó:wa*, a law of the land. "I don't call it the *Great Law of Peace*," Peter Blue Cloud told Joseph Bruchac in an interview:

The way I learned to talk Mohawk, my understanding is that "good" and "calm" are the words. Not "great." The Good Peace or the Calm Peace. And good and calm equal reason. You can't reason unless you are calm. You meditate with yourself and with others. Maybe you do verbal meditation. But in order to use reason, you have to be really calm, especially if it's a problem involving a lot of people and not just yourself. ("Talking" 38)

Meditating calmly and deliberately, bead by single bead, seeing oneself in balance and reciprocity with others in an agential, sentient Creation that itself is thinking, dreaming, searching for an ever-unfolding great law—these are practices of the Good Mind from which a dynamic and balanced jurisprudence grows.

Peter Blue Cloud's two-column poems, then, are exercises of thinking in balance, acts of two-path discernment that are aimed at keeping the welter of ideas and competing worries in their orderly rows. As such, they are experiments in trans-systemic thinking, which, ultimately, is

about the orders of Creation itself as law—the law of the land, not just human law. At the beginning of each day and of each important gathering, Haudenosaunee people recite the Thanksgiving Address. Reciting this message of thanks to all the beings of Creation, one by one, calms the welter of emotions and creates the calmness and rebalancing needed to enhance the Good Mind. Blue Cloud's two-column poems are all set at the break of day, when Peacemaker taught the people that it was their duty and responsibility to offer gratitude to the beings that sustain all life. In traditions like these, we catch a trans-systemic gesture toward what law might look like, if we understood law as the duties and responsibilities each being on earth must fulfill in order to sustain Creation's mind, Creation's dream, the Law of Peace. Blue Cloud's two-column, two-row poems are exercises in creating or re-creating this kind of trans-systemic Good Mind.

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NOTES

I wish to offer a big thank you to the two anonymous reviewers of *SAIL*, whose thoughtful comments on the earlier draft of this essay helped me clarify its focus.

1. Despite Blue Cloud's publication of ten books of poems and short stories, his leading role in the occupation of Alcatraz as editor of the record of that galvanizing moment, *Alcatraz Is Not an Island* (1972), his prominent work in the world of Indigenous writing through serving as poetry editor (starting in 1975) and then as general editor (in 1980) of the influential *Akwesasne Notes*, and his winning an American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation in 1981, Blue Cloud has not received a great deal of critical attention. There are biographical essays on his work in *Dictionary of Literary Biography* (2008), *Native North American Literature* (1994), and elsewhere, in addition to an extensive interview about his poetry with Joseph Bruchac in 1987. His work is taken up in various surveys of North American Indigenous writing, but I am not aware of any articles or books that take up his work on its own.

2. See, for comparison, Onondaga writer Eric Gansworth's two-column poem "Cross-PolliNation" (2008), which is constructed to make sense either way: down each column separately or left to right across the two columns. If Gansworth, as a Haudenosaunee poet writing a generation after Blue Cloud, was not conscious-

ly building on Blue Cloud's formal two-column experiment, he was undoubtedly working from the same tradition. Seneca scholar Penelope Myrtle Kelsey's *Reading the Wampum* (2014) drew my attention to another example of this tradition: some of Akwesasne Mohawk poet James Thomas Stevens's concrete poems in *A Bridge in the Dead Water* (2007) are arranged in two columns (see Kelsey 23).

3. I include an en dash with the phrase "Two Row Wampum–Covenant Chain" tradition rather than keeping the Two Row Wampum and Covenant Chain of Friendship separate, because these two wampums trace their origin back to the same agreement with the Dutch that was later transferred to the English when New Netherlands became New York in 1664. There is debate in Iroquoian scholarship over the exact dates on which each of the Two Row Wampum and Covenant Chain of Friendship treaties was established (see Muller; Richter; Parmenter), but it is clear that both wampum traditions refer to the same line or genealogy of treaty relationships. This is an important point of discussion that I cannot elaborate upon here, but it has been fully addressed in Williams and Nelson (87, 92–95, 103–09). Since the present essay focuses on the two-column format of Blue Cloud's poems, I will simply refer to the Two Row Wampum here but remain always conscious that it is a shorthand for the entire genealogy of agreements.

4. Seneca scholar Penelope Kelsey writes: "[W]ampum composes a significant portion of what we understand as Iroquois visual code, a set of mutually understood symbols and images that communicate culturally-embedded ideas to the viewer; these symbols arise from traditional forms such as pottery, beadwork, wampum, and sculpture and are contemporarily applied in media as varied as painting, film, metalsmithing, and digital displays" (xii).

5. The incident, first recorded in Cartier's *Voyages* (1534), is so renowned that it is cited repeatedly. See, for example, its appearance in *The Canadian Encyclopedia's* entry on scurvy at www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/scurvy.

6. Many publications have engaged in trying to assess the extent of this influence. For a small sample of these, see Barreiro; Johansen. My colleagues in the Two Row Research Partnership at Six Nations Polytechnic have discussed the possible distortions that arise from calling Peacemaker's message a "constitution." This term was applied to Peacemaker's formulations by Seneca anthropologist Arthur Parker in his influential "The Constitution of the Five Nations" (1916). As Lisa Brooks points out in her survey of Indigenous constitutional literature throughout the Americas, Parker's work appeared, alongside many other Indigenous nations' publication of their constitutions (see, e.g., the drafting of the Cherokee Constitution in 1827 and the efforts of the Tribal Organization Committee, administered by Felix Cohen in the United States in the mid-1930s, to help tribes across the United States create and formally register their foundational documents), in a period when the colonizing pressures of the settler states motivated tribal councils to formalize their ordinances and organizing principles as "constitutions" to aid their arguments for sovereignty. One can see both the success and the limits of this kind of recognition in the 1976 US Senate resolution "to recognize the contribution of the Iroquois Confederacy of Nations to the development of the United States Constitution and to reaffirm the

continuing government-to-government relationship between Indian tribes and the United States established in the Constitution. . . . The Confederation of the original Thirteen Colonies into one republic was explicitly modeled upon the Iroquois Confederacy as were many of the democratic principles which were incorporated into the Constitution itself” (qtd. in Williams, 9n26). For more on the history of Indigenous constitutionalism and its development in Indigenous literary studies as a form of criticism, see the special issue, “Constitutional Criticism,” *Studies in American Indian Literature*, vol. 23, no. 4, 2011.

7. My phrasing is influenced here by Penelope Kelsey’s use of the term “Iro-normative” in her discussion of the related Canandaigua Treaty Belt. Kelsey speaks of how “Iro-normative political and economic understandings of the land” constitute a “map for navigating this new ecogeospatial relationship between settler and Indigene, a cartography in which a Hodinöhsö:ni’ worldview is still normative” (63).

8. On “Iro-normative,” see note 7. For more on everyday dualism in Haudenosaunee culture and its reflection in political arrangements, see Susan Hill (Mohawk) (80–81).

9. See Hill, “Oral Memory,” and especially his *War Clubs and Wampum Belts*, where the British, American, and Canadian recognition of the Two Row Wampum–Covenant Chain and other wampum agreements is a central theme of the book.

10. Versions of this story can be found in Porter, *And Grandma Said* (293–97); Hill, “The Restorative”; Parker’s “The Hiawatha Tradition” as told by Baptist Thomas; and many other sources.

11. There are many accounts of how British and Canadian governments have connived with squatters, settlers, Indian agents, and companies to wrest away Six Nations’ land. One of the fullest accounts appears in Susan Hill’s *The Clay We Are Made Of: Haudenosaunee Land Tenure on the Grand River* (2017).

12. Borrows writes, “Canadian citizenship under Aboriginal influence may expand to recognize the land as a party to Confederation in its own right. Many Aboriginal groups have well-developed notions about how to recognize the land as having citizenship. In the Anishinabek language, the land is animate and perceived as having rights and obligations in its relations with humankind. Aboriginal people may be able to persuade other Canadians to consider the adverse impact of their activities on the land itself, as an entity in its own right” (146).

13. Whereas Henderson uses the phrase “trans-systemic synthesis” repeatedly in his essay, I am reluctant to leap to “synthesis” before the antithetical elements of the canoe of Indigenous epistemologies and forms of jurisprudence as compared to those of the Western sailing ship have been more fully understood. Influenced by Two Row ways of thinking, I am wary of the assimilatory potential in premature moves toward synthesis. I therefore use the phrase “trans-systemic thinking.”

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“When My Hands Are Empty / I Will Be Full”

Visualizing Two-Spirit Bodies in Chrystos’s *Not Vanishing*

CRYSTAL VERONIE

As a prominent advocate for First Nations women, Chrystos, a Menominee poet and artist from San Francisco, demanded seats at the feminist table for Indigenous women over a decade before Rebecca Walker declared the advent of the “third wave” of feminism (41).¹ Despite increased recognition of intersectionality, contemporary “fourth wave” feminism, marked as it is by the use of digital technologies, continues to fail to locate First Nations’ issues clearly within itself.² Such failures recall Chrystos’s lament in “I Don’t Understand Those Who Have Turned Away from Me” (1981) that white feminists feel “[n]o responsibility to others” (70).³ Contemporary digital platforms such as Idle No More exemplify First Nations’ response to abandonment by mainstream white feminisms, and through such social media, First Nations women place the struggle for Indigenous sovereignty front and center.⁴ The lack of visibility of LGBTQ2+ people in these organizations, though, threatens to render two-spirit people virtually invisible, and it is this threat that creates a sense of urgency for scholars to revisit Chrystos’s work as a foremother of twenty-first-century queer Indigenous feminism and to ensure the continued availability of her work.⁵

Chrystos’s poetry challenges definitions of Indigeneity in the English language that threaten to rhetorically erase the existence of two-spirit people.⁶ This rhetorical erasure, or the way that language removes the reality of existence, threatens all Indigenous peoples, but especially two-spirit people, with physical and cultural erasure.⁷ Even the title of her first collection, *Not Vanishing* (1988), declares Chrystos’s rejection of this form of genocide and establishes a theme of self-determinism that forms a backbone of continuity that runs through her subsequent collections. Chrystos’s poems resist the trope of vanishing on two levels:

they thwart mainstream iterations of the “vanishing Indian” and challenge conceptualizations of Native sexual identity and sexuality as heteronormative and “missionary.”⁸ In *Not Vanishing*, Chrystos reclaims the erotic from the stereotype of Native heterosexuality and redefines it as a drive or power to transgress barriers to two-spirit self-determinism.⁹ Moreover, her poems paired with her drawings of feathers create a syncretism between second wave feminist and Indigenous symbiology that functions as a critique of white feminism.¹⁰

As an urban Indigenous diasporic writer who self-identifies as lesbian and “two-spirited,” Chrystos offers a multifaceted perspective on issues facing First Nations women and Indigenous women worldwide. She defines “two-spirit” as a self-determined Indigenous term for “queer” (“Chrystos”).¹¹ This is not to say that Chrystos’s identification applies broadly to all people in Native communities who identify themselves as outside the narrow bounds of heteronormativity. In their introduction to *Sovereign Erotics: A Collection of Two-Spirit Literature*, Qwo-Li Driskill (Cherokee), Daniel Heath Justice (Cherokee Nation), Deborah A. Miranda (Ohlone-Costanoan Esselen Nation / Chumash), and Lisa Tatonetti recognize that differences exist in the use of the term because “[n]ot all queer Native people identify as two-spirit or see their sexualities and genders as connected to two-spirit histories in their communities” (5). In accord with Driskill, Justice, Miranda, and Tatonetti’s definition of “two-spirit,” I use the term to refer broadly to Native gay, lesbian, queer, bisexual, transgender, and two-spirit communities: this is not to minimize the complexity of identities within these groups or to impose any perspective of a unified pantribal or panhistorical perspective. In contrast, my intent is to closely attend to Chrystos’s poetic vision in *Not Vanishing* and how her lyric and erotic poetry speaks the language of two-spirit intimacy, thereby resisting the alienation of Indigenous peoples who do not identify with heteronormative sexuality.¹²

The need to understand Chrystos’s drive to make two-spirit people visible through her poetry is made even more immediate by the scarcity of scholarship that addresses rhetorical erasure in her work.¹³ Beth Brant (Mohawk) anticipated the problem of rhetorical erasure of Indigenous lesbians within feminist circles when she lamented in 1993, “We are rarely reviewed in so-called feminist newspapers or journals. So-called progressive papers do not know our names” (946).¹⁴ Little else was written about Chrystos’s poetry in academic journals until five

years later, when Victoria Brehm surmised that Chrystos's poetry was avoided by academics because her focus rests on topics that are "too painful, too disturbing, and once accepted and acknowledged would demand political and personal action that would be inconvenient, at best" (81).¹⁵ Despite Brehm's concerns, in 1998 Robin Riley Fast attended to Chrystos as a serious writer and situated her work as an urban Indigenous poet in connection with the feminist movement, in particular with feminist writers Adrienne Rich and Denise Levertov.¹⁶ In 2002 Deborah A. Miranda revisited Chrystos's poetry to call attention to the dismal publication record for American Indian women's love poetry.¹⁷ Similarly motivated to recognize Indigenous women's writing, in 2004 Qwo-Li Driskill turned to Chrystos's collection *In Her I Am* (1993) to illustrate his point that scholars frequently overlook two-spirit love poetry because they do not recognize the power inherent in erotic language (58).¹⁸ Indeed, in 2005 Marie Lovrod did not address the erotic in her analysis of child abuse in "For Eli" or the poem's relationship to erotic poetry within the collection.¹⁹ After a lull in scholarship on Chrystos, Mark Rifkin's 2012 examination of Chrystos brought much-needed visibility to two-spirit and urban Indigenous diasporas within the academic community.²⁰ Likewise, the work of Lisa Tatonetti, who in 2014 probed Chrystos's poetry as a literary "space" that allows for "opposition" and "coalition" with other two-spirit writers, people of color, and Indigenous peoples (xvii), makes even more sense when viewed from the perspective that Chrystos has long used language to build bridges between factions of peoples marginalized by a feminist movement mostly concerned with issues important to white women.²¹

What this study offers to the body of existing scholarship is a pathway that unites the disparate work of these scholars and offers close readings of *Not Vanishing* that help to understand Chrystos's oeuvre. Rhetorical erasure forms a persistent theme throughout Chrystos's poetry and art that repeatedly insists on making two-spirit people visible in literature. The necessity for interdisciplinary cooperation is highlighted by Cheryl Suzack, who has recently argued for the inclusion of Chrystos's literature as "cultural texts" that could serve to inform decision-making in the judicial sphere (5), a possibility that points beyond the academic arena and into the realm of judicial decision-making that directly impacts issues of Indigenous sovereignty.²² Such real-world effects, as Suzack's example of influencing legal actions, are what lie closest to Chrystos's

poetic vision.²³ This study's focus on Chrystos's poetry and art as an expression of survival provides a method by which to understand how her poetry refuses to accept rhetorical invisibility not only for two-spirit people but for all Indigenous people.

In addition to Chrystos's testimonial and lyric/erotic poems, I analyze the interrelationship between Chrystos's poetry and drawings of feathers in her first collection. Here, "testimonial" describes the type of poetry that does the work Elizabeth Archuleta identifies as "naming the enemy," a critical step toward decolonizing the oppressor's language by using it to "identify the poisons that threaten to destroy us" (92).²⁴ Moreover, in the words of Brant, Chrystos's poetry "is not bitter or mournful. It is testimony" (946). Gerald Vizenor's (Chippewa) concept of "survival," which he defines as a storytelling practice that "creates a sense of narrative resistance to absence, literary tragedy, nihilism, and victimry" (*Native 1*), can also be helpful in understanding Chrystos's poetry.²⁵ Included among poems of pain and loss and poems of erotic celebration stand the feathers, which hold a vital key to understanding Chrystos's work. After attending to ways that she uses formal elements in her writing, I will turn to how she uses embodiment, the lived experiences of a person within their body, to shift Indigenous and two-spirit bodies into public view.²⁶ Then, I will address the line drawings of feathers. Finally, I will examine the relationship between the feathers and the poetry in the collection. Throughout this essay, I will return to the issue that brings Indigenous women and two-spirit people together: survival.

In *Not Vanishing*, Chrystos articulates terror as common to First Nations womanhood and threatening to the survival of two-spirit communities.²⁷ Her prologue, written in a verse style that combines elements of poetry and prose, identifies the dangers inherent in living as a twentieth-century First Nations woman and features a litany of threats to Native peoples' survival:

Hunger, infant mortality, forced sterilization, treaty violations, the plague of alcohol & drugs, ridiculous jail terms, denial of civil rights, radiation poisoning, land theft, endless contrived legal battles which drain our wills, corrupt "tribal" governments, harassment & death at the hands of the BIA & FBI (Chrystos, *Not* lines 18–22)

From the opening page of her collection, Chrystos stakes out survival as

the critical issue Indigenous women face; in this, she echoes Paula Gunn Allen's (Laguna Pueblo) similar claim in *The Sacred Hoop* that "[t]he central issue that confronts American Indian women throughout the hemisphere is survival, *literal survival*, both on a cultural and biological level" (189). By calling attention first to issues facing all First Nations peoples, Chrystos positions her two-spirit poetry in relation to the broader issues facing Indigenous America. By focusing first on the issues facing all First Nations peoples, Chrystos also positions her poetry in solidarity with First Nations women such as Allen and Brant who use their writing as an expression of activism.²⁸ Furthermore, Chrystos's publication of *Not Vanishing* in the same year as her contributions to Will Roscoe's *Living the Spirit*, the first anthology of gay American Indian literature, situates her work, along with Paula Gunn Allen's, in conversation with a community of two-spirit writers.

The prologue to *Not Vanishing* resists imperialist trends that tend to reify Indigeneity as myth. In Western culture, myths function as aesthetic perspectives that determine what is worth viewing; said another way, the myths or symbols of Western culture function to control what is visible and what remains rhetorically unseen. By calling attention to the "actual, material conditions" for First Nations peoples (Chrystos, *Not* line 17), Chrystos invokes the rhetorical visibility of living people as opposed to a mythic past. The prologue to *Not Vanishing* frames the collection as Chrystos's manifesto: in it, she refuses the role of spokesperson for "Native women" or "Spiritual Leader," roles thrust upon her by "white women" (lines 10–11). Instead, the collection declares her selfhood as a two-spirit writer, even before the coining of that term in 1990. At the end of the prologue, Chrystos rejects the myth substantiated by rhetorical erasure, declaring, "[W]e are not / Vanishing Americans" (lines 25–26). "Americans," her last word, is an allusion to place that insists she and other First Nations peoples possess connections to the land that precede the formation of the United States. To punctuate this point, she places a turtle beneath her poem; as a coded image, the stylized turtle potentially refers to creation stories that depict North America as the back of a great turtle, a potent symbol of the land that unites all First Nations people.

For Chrystos, Indigenous survival becomes a negotiation between the past and future that includes respecting and acknowledging the specters that haunt the space left by rhetorical erasure. In the first poem,

“Crazy Grandpa Whispers,” she situates the poem from the perspective of a Lakota speaker. By writing about a communication with a deceased relative, Chrystos points to the continued relevance of Indigenous history, which is not a distant past; on the contrary, it is an immediate presence:

tells me: take a pick ax to new car row hack & clear the land
 plant Hopi corn down to the sea
 tells me: break open that zoo buffalo corral
 chase them snorting through the streets
 tells me: put up tipis in every vacant lot
 shelter the poor without rent
 tells me: steal those dogs the pound suffocates
 cook them for Lakota stew
 feed the hungry without words (Chrystos, *Not* lines 1–9)

Alluding to dramatic literary form, the repeated phrase “tells me:” functions as a cue that the line is the voice that the speaker hears, which she attributes to her grandfather (Chrystos, *Not* line 10). The colons following “tells me” are significant in that they serve as the only punctuation in the poem. Considered another way, the absence of punctuation other than the colons serves to create a solemnity in their appearance that symbolizes the honoring of an elder. Additionally, the absence of capital letters other than “Lakota” in this section of the poem implies that the word “Lakota” embodies more than a tribal designation; it embodies the speaker’s identity. In addition to breaths, the spaces function as silence, providing an opportunity for reverence and cultural respect that values Indigenous traditions instead of marginalizing them. Finally, the repetition of four lines with the words “tells me” followed by a direction creates a ceremony of words where the number four alludes to the symbol of the four directions, a symbol that is especially potent for Chrystos, as evidenced by her painting of it on the cover of *Not Vanishing*.

In “Crazy Grandpa Whispers,” Chrystos shifts the poetic composition away from the expected conclusion that “Lakota” people are vanishing and insists instead on their embodied existence. The exchange between the speaker and the past that haunts the boundaries of her urban Indigenous awareness also provides knowledge and a sense of Indigenous identity. Emphasizing the materiality of the speaker’s body as the location of collective history, Chrystos anticipates Rifkin’s claim

that “[h]aunting points to the other histories that are present but unrealized or, at least, are given widespread, perhaps less institutionalized, credence as the fact of peoplehood in the present” (54). The dissonance of “Crazy Grandpa” can be heard within the urban spaces that refuse to acknowledge the Indigenous diaspora. The poem argues that Indigenous identity must be acknowledged, as invisibility threatens freedom and life. The speaker’s response to her ancestor, “Grandpa if I obey you they’ll lock me up again” (Chrystos, *Not* line 17), might also suggest that rhetorical erasure of Indigeneity means that the dominant culture identifies Indigenous selfhood as contiguous with deviance. From such a perspective, being true to one’s Indigenous identity in America comes at the price of incarceration, if not in a mental institution or in a penitentiary, then on a reservation or by the constraints of language. Despite this harsh reality, the ancestor’s message still presents the listener with words of value. The four orders from Grandpa, to “plant Hopi corn,” free the “buffalo,” “put up tipis,” and “cook” the dogs “for Lakota stew” (lines 2–4, 6), address physical and cultural survival (food, shelter, and cultural knowledge). Thus, “Crazy Grandpa Whispers” insists that ancestral Indigenous knowledge is necessary for identity and for survival. But Chrystos’s poem does something more in that it includes elements of ritual, what Paula Gunn Allen recognizes as actions that “manipulate or direct nonmaterial energies toward some larger goal” (80). By weaving together symbolic letters and words into a ritual of sorts, Chrystos suggests that writing a textual body has the potential to right the imbalance of energies and reverse the material effects of rhetorical erasure.

In addition to marking the four directions, the location of the ancestor in the speaker’s “backbone” alludes to a fifth direction represented corporeally in the vertical axis of the speaker’s body. The speaker recognizes that she is anchored to this backbone through a shared history:

Crazy grandpa supposed to be dead They locked him up
He withered Not dead I feel him shrivel against my backbone
when I see anyone behind bars. (Chrystos, *Not* lines 10–12)

The speaker acknowledges the spirit, “Grandpa I hear you through walls of my skin” (Chrystos, *Not* line 16), but insists that his advice, to “take back these cities” (line 13), is problematic: “[I]f I obey you they’ll lock me up again / like they did you” (lines 17–18). “Crazy Grandpa Whispers” acknowledges a difference in temporality between the ances-

tor who demands a rebirth of Indigenous tradition and the speaker who insists that survival must first be achieved. The speaker rebuts, “Grandpa I’m still learning how to walk in this world / without getting caught” (lines 23–24), a response that communicates the fear that she, too, will become a specter who haunts the boundaries of awareness. Relating the sense of her grandfather “shrivel[ing] against [her] backbone,” the speaker acknowledges the social pressures to be defeated, colonized, assimilated, or vanished; however, by identifying the “enemy,” the poem reverses that threat, and in this way the poem seems to anticipate what Vizenor calls an act of “survivance,” in that Chrystos creates a narrative that resists “absence” (*Native* 1).²⁹ The speaker embodies a contemporary Lakota person who is made complete by their connection to the past. The speaker is literally filled up by the presence of the ancestor, a fact that conveys the interconnection between embodiment and survival and, at the same time, rejects nihilism. The act of writing the past into the poem turns the threat of rhetorical erasure on its head, so that the sense of her ancestor’s presence is made manifest in the white space that pushes apart the words, insisting on its continuance, which the written word makes reality.

Chrystos inserts white spaces into the poetic line as an expression of the physical experience of her breath.³⁰ In the first eight lines of “Crazy Grandpa Whispers,” she combines these spaces in the line with repetition and minimal punctuation. The spaces in the lines function as embodiment in that Chrystos’s breath is manifest as white spaces in her lines. As she writes the speaker’s body, she honors Indigenous womanhood by focusing on the central issue for First Nations women: survival. The identification of the speaker’s “grandpa” (Chrystos, *Not* line 10) in the “space against my backbone” (line 11) further enhances the corporeality of Indigenous history. By inserting white spaces in the lines, Chrystos acknowledges the presence of that which had otherwise been vanished and silenced. The creation of this space for “grandpa” also serves as a manifestation of her cultural inheritance: she cannot escape her connection to the legacy of cultural genocide that rests against her “backbone.” The act of making space for breath is an erotic action in that it involves penetrating the text in a creative act that acknowledges both the text’s and the poet’s material bodies. Chrystos pushes open the line: the white space enters the line as breath enters the body. Her manipulation of language at the level of the line insists on the material-

ity of the poem, whose form, like a body, can be penetrated and opened to receive new experiences.³¹ Chrystos's experimental approach to white space literally brings Indigenous bodies into view and demonstrates the benefits of linguistic flexibility for which she advocates.

The white spaces in Chrystos's poems recognize the material reality of Indigenous bodies made invisible by rhetorical erasure and serve as reminders that those silenced by the dominant culture remain and occupy space despite their invisibility. In "Savage Eloquence," she insists that her poems focus on survival as the issue most important to Indigenous women: "They mean to kill us / all Vanishing is no joke they mean it" (Chrystos, *Not* lines 5–6). The interruption of the line by white space interjects the speaker's physical presence and pushes apart the words in a visual insistence on inclusivity of Indigenous identity at the level of the poetic line. Such an action suggests that Fast is correct in her proposal that Chrystos's poetry works by "bringing the marginalized into the center" (157). Her poetry insists that the threat to First Nations is real and not a turn of phrase. For Chrystos, Indigenous survival is rhetorical visibility. The speaker in "Savage Eloquence" addresses the attack on Indigenous and two-spirit people as rhetorical erasure, asserting, "We don't fit this machine they've made instead of life" (Chrystos, *Not* line 7), an apparent allusion to written language. She contrasts the abstract quality of written language to the direct experience of material existence: "We breathe / spirit softness of dirt between our toes" (lines 7–8). Chrystos insists that Indigenous peoples' connection to "life" is direct and unmediated by figurative language: "No metaphors / Mountains ARE our mothers" (lines 8–9). Furthermore, the speaker condemns American legal documentation as complicit with genocide: her lines, "their white papers decisions empty eyes laws rules stone fences / time cut apart with dots" (lines 30–31), recall laws such as the Indian Removal Act of 1830, where the written word and its symbiology threaten Indigenous cultural and physical survival.³² Chrystos alludes to the way that the "dots" on "white papers" (lines 30–31), though meaningless to oral cultures and seemingly benign in their materiality, are dangerous in that they have the power to "cut apart" "time" (lines 30–31) and establish arbitrary boundaries with terrifying consequences.³³ Chrystos implicates the written language of the dominant culture in America with the very real and material results of physical and cultural genocide of Native peoples.

“Savage Eloquence” documents the historical genocide of Indigenous peoples and pushes back against the exclusion of their voices. As “testimonial” poetry, “Savage Eloquence” provides witness “testimony” to the historically recognized events of “Wounded Knee” and the “Trails of Tears.” The speaker lists the abuses of the dominant culture’s written language, “their white papers decisions empty eyes laws rules stone fences / time cut apart with dots” (Chrystos, *Not* lines 30–31), and, rejecting the distancing effect of commas, she insists on the causal proximity between legal documents with enclosures destructive to Indigenous peoples’ ways of subsistence living and the arbitrators’ “empty eyes,” a metonym for white people made blind to the violence that their written words perpetuate. Further, Chrystos uses enjambment with the running over of “time cut apart with dots” to the next line, and this connection with the words “stone fences” in the previous line calls attention to the absence of punctuation (lines 30–31). The speaker refuses to be complicit with the containment of time within the boundaries of punctuation. This action calls attention to the way that punctuation in written language rhetorically erases Indigenous teleological difference. “Time” becomes synonymous with Indigenous experience as different from the dominant culture’s experience of time, that is, independent of the cycles of seasons and mechanically sorted into increments. For the speaker, Indigenous experience exists beyond illusion and beyond the “dots.” By ending the poem with “you are such an old / old story” (lines 48–49), the poem evokes the telling and retelling of stories, such as those about the loss of land, mission schools, and broken treaties, within Native communities and reframes them as stories of survival. In this way, Chrystos’s poem resists a tragic view of Native peoples by insisting that the stories of survival become a source of Indigenous identity and pride.

Chrystos celebrates her heritage in both her collective history and her forward-looking vision. In “Ceremony for Completing a Poetry Reading,” she likens her poems to “seeds” that provide “a new way” (Chrystos, *Not* line 27). Her “seeds” challenge the aspects of standardization that exclude the voices of two-spirit people by way of punctuation and structure imposed by the dominant culture. Twentieth-century poets have experimented with white space since the Bauhaus movement; however, Chrystos’s purpose differs from the minimalists’ use of white space to privilege a single idea. Instead of revolutionizing the genre in an attempt at originality, Chrystos pushes back on the exclusivity of

institutionalized language as a self-defensive measure against rhetorical erasure. For this Menominee poet, standardized English is a colonizer's language (Chrystos, "Speaking" 33–34). Chrystos's poetry rejects the master language imposed on Native peoples through the missionary schools as a matter of federal policy.³⁴ By inserting white spaces into her poetic lines and avoiding punctuation, Chrystos uses the textual body to bring visibility to the interconnections between the materiality of bodies and language.

By emphasizing the embodiment of her speakers, Chrystos accentuates the interrelationship between the two-spirit corporeality and Indigenous identity. "I Walk in the History of My People" exemplifies this inseparability of the speaker's body and her Native identity; she insists that her body contains her ancestors: "There are women locked in my joints" and "In my marrow are hungry faces" (Chrystos, *Not* lines 1, 7).³⁵ Additionally, she depicts a simultaneous reality of the living and the dead such that the body performs the function of contiguous time. To say this another way, language and the past are intimately connected and share the same space. This concept of contiguous time, or the linguistic relationship between the living and the dead, recalls Jacques Derrida's declaration in *Cinders* that "[t]he sentence is adorned with all of its dead" (37), a statement that proposes that written language harbors and conceals meanings that are lost between oral thought and written word. In the imaginative space of the poem, the speaker uncovers the way that words have a relationship with each other, where "joints" mean simultaneously the places where bones meet (Chrystos, *Not* line 1), and the way that women are incarcerated or "locked" in prison (line 2). Yet another meaning haunts the border of the words, that of traces of past traumas that persist into the future. In the repetition of injuries to her knee, the speaker alludes overtly to "Wounded Knee": the 1890 massacre of over three hundred Sioux by the US Cavalry and the 1973 occupation of the site by American Indian Movement activists haunt these 1988 poems. Her allusion to this massacre invokes the dead and implies the perpetuity of unwitnessed traumas.³⁶ In the final message, "see / How I Am Still Walking" (lines 27–28), the speaker implies that "Still Walking" or simply surviving is an act of resistance to the forces of genocide. The white space in the center of the poem emphasizes the silence of the spirits, whose "swollen hands" resemble the edema that occurs in hands bound by handcuffs or rope (line 10). The location of these dis-

embodied “hands” within “my marrow” declares that the speaker identifies with her tribal identity *to the bone* (line 10), a metaphor that Chrystos refashions into a material, embodied construction. Such a turn of phrase evidences how Chrystos uses figurative language to enhance the visibility of material concerns facing First Nations peoples. She combats the rhetorical erasure of Indigenous meaning by acknowledging and making visible these relationships of intimacy and calling attention to contiguous meanings bound up in written language.

In addition to embodiment in her poems, Chrystos’s feather drawings demand visuality for two-spirit bodies. In each of the three drawings, a feather rests within the opening of circumferential ovals that resemble the labia majora, minora, and vaginal opening. In “Gift: Seagull” (fig. 1), the feather stands vertically within the vaginal opening with circumferential lines that suggest the landscape of the external female genitalia. The feather, by its position within the oval of the circumferential lines, indicates interrelationship between the materiality of the female genitalia and the feather, where neither is elevated in importance over the other. By its vertical orientation, the feather communicates power, respect, and even erotic arousal. Viewed as a palimpsest of Indigenous and feminist symbiology, the feather represents both Indigenous pride and the erotic potential of written language.

Moving from “Gift: Seagull” to “Gift: Blue Heron” (fig. 2), the oval in the center of the circumferential lines widens and rounds to the point that the lines symbolic of the labia become a thin border and the vaginal opening becomes circular. This dilation and thinning of the circumferential lines mirror the preparation of the cervix and vaginal opening during the transition phase of childbirth. The widening of the opening in “Gift: Blue Heron” even creates a circular shape that recalls the icon of the hoop.³⁷

Finally, in “Gift: Eagle” (fig. 3), the feather is inverted, with the apex of the feather down and apparently moistened in vaginal fluids. The feather’s inversion can be likened to a birth, with its emergence from the oval space as representative of a delivery from the female body. While this view would be convenient for mashing Chrystos’s rhetorics with Hélène Cixous’s order to “write the body,” it seems this assumed perspective may be flawed.



Fig. 1. "Gift: Seagull" appears on page 33 of *Not Vanishing* and is here reprinted with the permission of the artist, Chrystos.



Fig. 2. "Gift: Blue Heron" appears on page 55 of *Not Vanishing* and is here reprinted with the permission of the artist, Chrystos.



Fig. 3. "Gift: Eagle" appears on page 80 of *Not Vanishing* and is here reprinted with the permission of the artist, Chrystos.

On closer inspection, the feather positioned in all three feather drawings lies within the vaginal opening, but from the perspective of one looking out from within the body. While the circular fullness of “Gift: Eagle” imitates the vaginal opening at the time of birth, the perspective is of one who is emerging out of the body. Instead of being from the perspective of an observer awaiting the feather’s emergence, Chrystos’s drawings are from the perspective of one who is traveling the same path as the feather: their awaited emergence must occur simultaneously.

Chrystos invokes Indigenous symbols that liken representations of the womb to conceptions of time, yet rather than a birth of the feather, the drawing depicts the satiation of erotic desire, a *petit mort* of sorts.³⁸ Instead of a Lacanian *jouissance*, an emergence of Indigenous subjectivity, Chrystos’s feather drawings emphasize relationship: the perspective in “Gift: Eagle” insists that Indigenous self-determination and two-spirit selfhood must come together. Chrystos reclaims the erotic for two-spirit women as a source of reinvigoration, a power that wills two-spirit self-hood into existence. Instead of a birth of Indigenous authorship, Chrystos’s feather drawings insist on the continuation of two-spirit existence through an orgasm of creative invention.³⁹ By inverting the feather in the final drawing, she brings this potent Indigenous symbol to account for homoerotic senses.

By engaging with dominant narratives only to turn them around or on their heads, Chrystos creates a narrative of survivance in the sense that the drawings of feathers resist the trope of “vanishing” and victimry. Her pairing of drawings of feathers with poetry can be interpreted as a syncretism of Indigenous and feminist symbols. As a prominent symbol of First Nations Indigenous identity, the feather also is a potent symbol for writing; indeed, the quill has long been used as a phallic metaphor in the Western literary tradition.⁴⁰ As an erotic tease, a malleable symbol, the feather engages simultaneously with Indigenous, feminist, and erotic symbiology.⁴¹ The feather drawings turn on its head the dominant culture’s assumption that First Nations peoples acquired the skills of reading and writing as signs of their assimilation. As palimpsests of Indigenous and feminist meanings, the feather drawings embody what Vizenor calls “survivance” (*Manifest* 5), in that they insist that First Nations peoples are viable and continuing to create new meaning.⁴² Paired with Chrystos’s poetry that alternates between testimonial and erotic, the feather drawings function as an

example of the literary tradition that inspires Vizenor's term: her poems as examples of survivance means that her literature follows a tradition of storytelling that resists the dominant culture's rhetoric that claims Indigenous peoples are vanishing.

The feather drawings operate in the liminal space, a place that Driskill associates with the "Sovereign Erotic," the power inherent in ambiguity, which he locates in traditional Cherokee stories (56). Driskill defines the "Sovereign Erotic" as "a return to and/or continuance of the complex realities of gender and sexuality that are ever-present in both human and more-than-human world, but erased and hidden by colonial cultures" (56). Driskill's concept of an erotic power is helpful in understanding Chrystos's play on symbols and language in relation to two-spirit sexuality. The erotic in Chrystos's poetry acts as a catalyst for two-spirit survival, which is meant to reinvigorate the queer community at-large and provide scripts for interactions between two-spirit people and the greater queer community. As such, the erotic provides the power or drive to transgress boundaries to two-spirit self-determination. For Chrystos, though, the erotic reinvigorates two-spirit writing as a Lacanian *jouissance*, in that she harnesses the erotic to transform her two-spirit identity from nonexistent by means of rhetorical erasure to the subject of her poetry as a textual body that validates two-spirit reality. Chrystos makes the literary form a space for two-spirit life, a move that potentially has consequences beyond the rhetorical. Similar to Audre Lorde's assertion that "poetry is not a luxury" ("Poetry" 37), Chrystos insists that for her, poetry is not just necessary, it is literally survival. Culturally denied as urban, mixed white, Menominee, and lesbian, Chrystos rejects the narrow range of Indigenous writing that perpetuates the myth: for her, in "Savage Eloquence," "[v]anishing is no metaphor" (*Not* line 19). Her poetry depicts the pressures created by the politics of cultural purity, which she views as complicit in the rhetorical erasure of Indigenous peoples who fail to fit a specific definition of "Indian."⁴³ Chrystos's poetry alternately teases and cajoles, but, most powerfully, it thwarts rhetorical erasure. By generating textual embodiment, Chrystos's poetry and art in *Not Vanishing* become metonymical for First Nations and two-spirit people's survival.

The feather art in *Not Vanishing* interconnects with poetic depictions of the erotic that figure Indigenous selfhood as the consummate product of erotic feeling. In "I Could Carve," the symbol of the feather first

connects with the land: “Pink gray dappled beach granite / Green ones with white feather smoke lines” (Chrystos, *Not* lines 2–3). The “pink” and “dappled” color of the granite alludes to the variations of pigment in the vagina. The softness of the “feather smoke” contrasts with the hardness of the stone, both integral to the “granite” and individually identifiable, while the “feather” represents two-spirit people’s interconnection within their communities. The speaker in the poem expresses erotic desire: “I could weave / your name through every muscle of my body black with longing to be / in / you” (lines 3–6). This theme of desiring connection, to be “in,” reflects the desire for inclusivity that Paula Gunn Allen identifies as a theme of alienation in the writings of Indigenous writers who feel marginalized by their Indigenous communities (129–30). In “I Could Carve,” the speaker insists that her sexual difference provides something of value to the community; she insists at the end of “I Could Carve,” “Our fingers traced with granite where we’ve carved our bodies Our / in” (Chrystos, *Not* lines 26–27). The speaker expresses her realization that her inclusivity always has been “carved” into the granite: the erotic heals her perception and helps her to see herself and her two-spirit body as one with her community (lines 26–27).

Personal and community healing feature prominently in Chrystos’s *Not Vanishing*; indeed, her most intimate depictions of love and pleasure combine with themes of healing and interdependency. Her erotic poems depict two-spirit sexuality as an interdependent aspect of the multiple facets of the speaker’s self; instead of a vision of diasporic estrangement and cultural alienation, Chrystos’s *Not Vanishing* ends with an allusion to the potlatch, a North American Pacific First Nations ceremony that serves as a metaphor for wholeness that comes from giving everything away. The poem celebrates connection to a community as an overabundant wealth; the speaker offers gifts, such as “a shell from our mother sea” that provides a continuation of stories (Chrystos, *Not* lines 6–7), which represent different facets of cultural belonging. Though the speaker is positioned prominently as the giver of this wealth, she indicates communal reciprocity, in that “I’ve wrapped your faces / around me a warm robe” (lines 7–8). In this declaration of community, the white space suggests her presence, if only by her breath, within the circle. Rather than a hierarchical position, the speaker considers herself as materially included in her community, both giving and receiving, if

not in kind, then in equal measure. The last lines of the poem, “*When my hands are empty / I will be full*” (lines 35–36), depict the satisfaction she feels by emptying her hands, which calls further attention to her body and suggests that two-spirit personhood becomes visible when the focus shifts away from property ownership and toward interrelationship between members in community.

Two-spirit people in relation to their Native identities remains the primary focus of *Not Vanishing*. Whether broken and despairing or arching in pleasure, the bodies that make up Chrystos’s poetics demand their existence and visibility. As a repository for Indigenous bodies, Chrystos’s poetry must be viewed within the contingent history of Indigenous self-determination: her erotically charged poems and drawings that depict creative representations of two-spirit intimacy are more than erotica, they are a declaration of her selfhood as a two-spirit writer and artist. As such, Chrystos’s poems continue the tradition of queer Native artistic expression that Paula Gunn Allen and Qwo-Li Driskill argue existed before European contact.⁴⁴ Two-spirit writing, though rendered invisible by the stereotypical views of Native peoples as heteronormative, has existed in the body of Indigenous writing since its inception. In her resistance to a heteronormative definition of Indigeneity, Chrystos’s poetry converses with what Tatonetti acknowledges as a less-recognized undercurrent of conflict among First Nations peoples, where certain members of the communities seek to suppress two-spirit visibility, while those who identify as “two-spirited,” like Chrystos, insist on their integral connection to and inclusion in the Indigenous community (xiv). It is this conflict that Driskill addresses as well when he invokes the term “erotic sovereignty” to explain how First Nations two-spirit people relate their sexualities to their Indigeneity and thus to their communities (51). Chrystos’s depiction of two-spirit sexuality forecasts Driskill’s argument that two-spirit people desire to heal their personal traumas and is intertwined with the need to heal their Native communities. An understanding of Chrystos’s views of the interdependency between two-spirit people and their communities is helped by Rifkin’s clarification that the erotic functions “as touchstones for a broader conception and narration of selfhood” (27). As lyric poetry that overwhelmingly depicts erotic interactions between women, Chrystos’s work functions as expressions that both depict and shape

her identity as a two-spirit woman. In pairing erotic poetry with the drawings of feathers, Chrystos communicates a vision of two-spirit selfhood, one in which writing is a path to self-determinism.

Chrystos is a foremother of twenty-first-century Indigenous queer feminism and a major voice in the third wave feminist movement who sought to call attention to Third World women's voices, and her poetry deserves more critical attention than it has previously received. More also needs to be done to situate her work in relation to other two-spirit writers. Such a move on the part of First Nations feminists and scholars to recognize Chrystos and preserve her poetry could not be better timed than in anticipation of her reissuing of *Not Vanishing* and *Dream On*.⁴⁵ Literary analysis of Chrystos's poetry as an act that brings increased visibility to her work can also be viewed as an act of solidarity with two-spirit writers and a positive step forward to healing traumas that remain between two-spirit people and their communities. Further, championing a return of Chrystos to print would be a gesture to the power of the erotic: to bring two-spirit writers' love poetry into visibility.

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NOTES

1. The line quoted in the title is from Chrystos (Menominee), "Ceremony for Completing a Poetry Reading" (*Not Vanishing* 100, hereafter referred to as *Not*). Chrystos likens her poems to gifts given away in a potlatch ceremony, a Pacific Northwest First Nations tradition. *Not Vanishing* is the first of Chrystos's five collections of poetry, including *Dream On* (1991), *In Her I Am* (1993), *Fugitive Colors* (1995), and *Fire Power* (1995). In addition to winning a Barbara Deming Memorial Grant (1989), a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship (1990), and a Lannan Literary Award for Poetry (1991), Chrystos won the Audre Lorde International Poetry Competition (1994) for *Fugitive Colors* and the Sappho Award of Distinction

from the Astraea Lesbian Justice Foundation (1995). Despite Chrystos's reputation as a writer, artist, lecturer, and land rights and human justice activist, the bankruptcy of Press Gang Publishers in Vancouver, British Columbia, has so far prevented the republication of *Not Vanishing* and three other collections of her poetry (Miranda 146). As evidenced by her participation in the cohort who published the anthology *This Bridge Called My Back* (Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, 1981), Chrystos is a prominent figure in a movement that centers on issues important to women of color. A decade later, Walker would declare this movement the "Third Wave" of feminism, with "Third" referring both to the wave chronology and to the focus on "Third World" issues that threaten women of color. I argue that by pairing her line drawings of feathers with poetry, Chrystos defines herself as a writer of *l'écriture féminine*, or women's writing, and in doing so she reorients second-wave feminism in relationship with a long-standing tradition of Indigenous women who write as an expression of resistance to colonialism and survival.

2. Although Kimberlé Crenshaw first used the term "intersectionality" in relation to feminism in "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics" (1989), theories of intersectionality extend back at least to W. E. B. Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), if not before. In "Representative Women: Slavery, Citizenship, and Feminist Theory in Du Bois's 'Damnation of Women'" (2005), Katharine Lawrence Balfour complicates readings of Du Bois's "feminism" by pointing to his failures to attribute quotes to Anna Julia Cooper or to recognize "Ida B. Wells-Barnett upon whose anti-lynching campaigns Du Bois built his own" (130). Thus, the origins and definitions of intersectionality are contested and still being debated within scholarly circles. Pythia Peay, who first declared "Feminism's Fourth Wave" (2005), received widespread criticism for identifying the movement with a rise in "feminist spirituality," a New Age spiritual movement dominated by white, economically privileged women. In "First Wave Wisdom for the Third Wave World" (2008), Elizabeth J. Allen proposes that wave imagery "de-historicizes the narrative of women's efforts to bring greater equality to their lives," thus estranging diverse expressions of feminism from one another and working counter to the reality of a continuum of feminism. Despite Kathleen A. Laughlin et al.'s analysis of the problems inherent in the waves metaphor in "Is It Time to Jump Ship?," Jennifer Baumgardner in *Fem* legitimates wave terminology and proposes that the fourth wave began in 2008 with the widespread use of digital technology to organize feminist activities (250–51). In "Feminist Frequencies," Nancy A. Hewitt recommends that the wave metaphors be modified from the previous maritime model to one of radio frequencies, a metaphor that recognizes, in her words, "differential access . . . static, jamming, and other disruptions" (668). While I recognize that wave metaphors can simplify discussions of feminist history, I agree with Hewitt and other scholars critical of the depiction of phases of feminism as waves, because the oversimplification of feminisms precipitates a revisionist history that foregrounds white feminists at the expense of women of color.

3. In "I Don't Understand Those Who Have Turned Away from Me," Chrystos indicts white feminists as "bathing beauties" who "want the status of reality & respect

without labor” (70). In this poem, Chrystos calls for white feminists to “[r]espect us simply because we exist” (70). The election of Sharice Davids (Ho-Chunk) and Deb Haaland (Laguna Pueblo) to the House of Representatives indicates the saliency of Indigenous perspectives and the need to review the historical relationship between Indigenous feminisms and white feminism to better contextualize Davids’s and Haaland’s leadership within a history of women’s activism.

4. M. Annette Jaimes Guerrero (Juaneño/Yaqui; formerly M. Annette Jaimes) and Theresa Halsey (Lakota) relate Janet McCloud’s (Tulalip) criticism of white feminism to demonstrate that First Nations solidarity, an “explicitly nationalist content of women’s activism,” drives Indigenous feminism (314). McCloud lumps women’s liberation in with other “‘progressive’ non-Indian ideas” and insists it “would divide us among ourselves in such a way as to leave us colonized in the name of gender equality” (qtd in Jaimes and Halsey, “American” 314). Further, Jaimes and Halsey argue that Indigenous women, including two-spirit people such as Paula Gunn Allen and Chrystos, seek liberation from white supremacy and the effects of colonization, which white women and their feminism are seen to be a part (332–33). I argue that the criticism of feminism that reverberates in Chrystos’s poetry continues through contemporary digital platforms such as *Idle No More* (www.idlenomore.ca/), which are rarely recognized by white feminists as separate expressions of Indigenous-centered feminism. Problematically, though, two-spirit people remain nearly invisible on *Idle No More*. For example, the only mention of LGBTQ2+ people on the website is on a page about marches held in honor of missing or murdered “women, girls and two spirit people” (www.idlenomore.ca/february_14th_annual_women_s_memorial_march). While the presence of “two-spirits” gestures toward inclusion, their mention only in memorials relegates them to victimry.

5. “Two-spirit” refers to a nonbinary gender/sexuality category that includes a diverse range of gender and sexuality expressions. For a rich exploration of the term and its historicity, I suggest Qwo-Li Driskill et al.’s introduction to *Sovereign Erotics*. Since “two-spirit” is specific to certain North American Indigenous communities, many Indigenous LGBTQ choose to use their own tribal terminology for nonbinary gender/sexuality. In this article, I use the term “two-spirit” to refer to Native people who identify themselves in this way. The wave metaphor used to describe mainstream white feminism does not apply to Indigenous feminism. Paula Gunn Allen proposes in her introduction to *The Sacred Hoop* that Indigenous gynocracy extends back to pre-European contact, which makes patriarchy a colonization issue for many Native communities (3). Additionally, as Gerald Vizenor in *Manifest Manners* points out, many First Nations women after the American Civil War became writer-activists: thus, Indigenous feminism can be thought to have a long history, and contemporary wave terminology is out of sync with Native feminist movements.

6. In “Toward a Mestiza Rhetoric,” Gloria Anzaldúa explains how the structure of a language can erase rhetorics that do not fit easily within its paradigms (63). This is important to my argument that Chrystos situates her poetry as a *l’écriture féminine* and insists that it be viewed in relationship with other traditions of women’s writing in English.

7. In *The Sacred Hoop*, Paula Gunn Allen argues that Indigenous peoples, “caught between two cultures,” are “the most likely to be suicidal, inarticulate, almost paralyzed in their inability to direct their energies toward resolving what seems to them an insoluble conflict” (135). I propose that Chrystos’s poetry reimagines the liminality of victimhood and champions two-spirit people by insisting on bringing the materiality of their bodies to the attention of feminist, queer, and Indigenous movements.

8. Chrystos’s poetry challenges stereotypes and myths, including those perpetuated within First Nations societies. As Leslie Marmon Silko (Laguna Pueblo) explains in her interview with Per Seyersted, Indigenous writers feel pressured to write by white publishers according to the “romanticized notion” of Native American literature (9). That is, Indigenous writers are at the mercy of white consumers’ demands for romanticized versions of Indigenous sexuality, along with mythic images of the “noble savage” and the “vanishing Indian.” In qualifying the stereotype of Native sexuality as “missionary,” I recall both heteronormative sexuality and the mission boarding schools and the forced assimilation of First Nations children into Western culture, including what Adrienne Rich calls “compulsory heterosexuality.” Jorge Noriega (Mestizo) argues that the US government funded mission-run boarding schools to indoctrinate First Nations children to Christianity as a way of depriving them of the “influences of their own societies” (380). Against this genocidal history, Chrystos’s use of the erotic works as Miranda advises to “make a more ‘real,’ less stereotypical, artificially constructed American Indian woman visible” and counter the damaging effects of the mission schools (146).

9. By stereotypes of Native heterosexuality, I refer to the romanticized notions of “Indianness” that Paula Gunn Allen argues attempt to define Indigenous peoples by “blood quantum” or “community membership,” which pressures individuals to conform their identity to “qualifying standards” that are too restrictive and perpetuate alienation (130). Allen further clarifies that this “overt or covert alienation from the basic source of one’s consciousness, informs the greater body of Native American writing, though its expression is often disguised by historically justified anger and culturally supported romanticizing of the old ways” (130). I argue that Chrystos, as a two-spirit writer, pushes back on stereotypes of Native heterosexuality as a refusal to comply with demand for a romanticized “Indianness” by casting women speakers in relationships with other women.

10. In “The Laugh of the Medusa,” Hélène Cixous declares that women must create their own writing, *l’écriture féminine*, by breaking the text and writing their bodies into existence. The process of writing, then, becomes a birth, a production, of the female body. Cixous, along with Luce Irigaray and Monique Wittig, led the second wave of feminism. See Ann Rosalind Jones’s “Writing the Body” for a succinct summary of Cixous’s, Irigaray’s, and Wittig’s feminist literary theories. Also see Elaine Marks’s “Women and Literature in France” for an expansive examination of their work. Cixous’s charge has become iconic of the second wave of (white) feminism; however, Chrystos complicates this symbiology by positioning a feather instead of a quill/pen in relation to concentric lines indicative of female embodiment. It is my argument that the feather drawings in concert with her poetry insist on the visibility of a separate feminism for Indigenous and two-spirit women.

11. In this 2002 interview with Barbara Cameron (Standing Rock Sioux), Chrystos identified herself as “two-spirited,” qualifying it as an Indigenous term analogous to “queer.” Sue-Ellen Jacobs, Wesley Thomas (Diné), and Sabine Lang historicize the term as originating during the 1990 Native American / First Nations gay and lesbian conference in Winnipeg as a “clear intention to distance themselves from non-Native gays and lesbians” (2–3).

12. For Audre Lorde in “Uses of the Erotic,” the “erotic” offers “a well of replenishing and provocative force to the woman who does not fear its revelation, nor succumb to the belief that sensation is enough” (54). I propose that Chrystos uses the erotic in her poetry as a way to increase two-spirit people’s visibility.

13. In “Strategies of Erasure,” Lisa Kahaleole Hall (Kanakanaka Maoli) recognizes that “feminist scholars of color have struggled to show how gender and sexuality in the United States have shaped and been shaped by race, indigeneity, and empire” (273). Hall examines several “strategies of erasure” that work together to threaten Hawaiian Indigeneity, including the “popular conception of race as paradigmatically black and white” (275). I mention Hall’s essay because she finds the term “erasure” helpful in understanding the diverse threats to Indigenous survival. In this essay, I similarly examine erasure, but I specify this erasure as rhetorical because I am interested in how language persuades people to believe in the disappearance of Indigeneity or, as in the case of Chrystos, how it can be cleverly used to counteract the colonialist impulses and bring Indigenous and two-spirit people back into view.

14. Beth Brant in “Giveaway” calls attention to the sparse publication record of “Native lesbian writers,” including “Janice Gould (1990), Vickie Sears (1990), Chrystos (1988, 1991), Connie Fife (1992), Susan Beaver, Catron Grieves (1987), Sharon Day (1983),” and “Nicole Tanguay, Victoria Lena Manyarrows, Barbara Cameron, Mary Moran, and Elaine Hall,” who she claims either struggled to get published or failed to do so because of rhetorical erasure within the feminist presses and homophobia and racism toward two-spirit writers in general (946). I mention Brant’s essay in hopes of sparking a renewed interest in the literature and activism of these writers and to illustrate the point that two-spirit writers attempted to educate white feminist readers of their exclusion, as evidenced by the publication of Brant’s piece in *Signs*.

15. In “Urban Survivor Stories,” Victoria Brehm identifies a thread of antiacademic rhetoric—that Chrystos “suggests that most urban Indians—the largest group of Indians in the U.S. and Canada—are not only ‘Not Vanishing,’ they are also not colorful, not quaint, and probably not acceptable at most faculty dinner parties except as the hired help” (78). Brehm argues that Chrystos’s poetry critiques “liberal politics,” which “can be as demeaning and destructive as anything that has been visited on Indians in the last four hundred years” (78).

16. In Robin Riley Fast’s “Who Speaks, Who Listens?,” she begins the work of situating Chrystos as a poet of merit within the larger community of feminist poets. This early analysis of Chrystos’s poetry hints at her connection to the feminist movement. Though Fast does not explicate how she thinks Chrystos compares with Rich, I imagine Chrystos’s depictions of two-spirit relationships as a response to Adrienne Rich’s “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence,” where Rich argues that “the

erasure of lesbians (except as exotic and perverse) in art, literature, film” has resulted in women being convinced that “marriage, and sexual orientation toward men, are inevitable, even if unsatisfying or oppressive components of their lives” (640).

17. Miranda makes a compelling argument that American Indian women’s poetry is being repressed by a dominant culture that resists any representation of First Nations people that does not fit neatly into the stereotype. She proposes that Native women writing erotic poetry “is almost as frightening to America as if the skeletal witnesses in anthropology departments and national museums had suddenly risen from their numbered boxes and begun to testify” (Miranda 146). I agree with Miranda’s claims and second her call for scholars to recognize the erotic in Indigenous women’s love poetry as a powerful force pushing back against repressive forces that threaten Indigenous women with erasure.

18. In “Stolen from Our Bodies,” Driskill describes a “Sovereign Erotic” as “a return to and/or continuance of the complex realities of gender and sexuality that are ever-present in both the human and more-than-human world, but erased and hidden by colonial cultures” (56–57). From this perspective, Chrystos’s poetry exemplifies the way that the erotic becomes a tool for healing: in Driskill’s words, “The Sovereign Erotics created by Two-Spirits are part of the healing of the wounded bodies of ourselves, our lands, and our planet” (61). In this study, I agree with Driskill’s estimation of Chrystos’s poetry, and I strive to identify how her first collection, *Not Vanishing*, anticipates his vision.

19. In “Shifting Contexts, Shaping Experiences,” Marie Lovrod isolates “For Eli” as an example of a literary child abuse survivor narrative, but in doing so, she overlooks the significance of erotic power in the collection and the benefits inherent in recognizing the poem’s relationship to other poems in the collection.

20. See chapter 4 in Mark Rifkin’s *The Erotics of Sovereignty* for a more in-depth examination of Chrystos as a representative of the urban Indigenous diaspora. I would agree with Rifkin that Chrystos’s work must be analyzed within an understanding of the challenges that face a member of the Menominee diasporic community who also faces the marginalization of mixed-race identity.

21. In her introduction to *The Queerness of Native American Literature*, Lisa Tattonetti explores Chrystos’s poetry as a “space” that she uses to resist the heteronormative definition of Indigeneity.

22. Cheryl Suzack in “Transitional Justice” argues that “transitional justice mechanisms that rely on statement-gathering practices” should “be augmented in their documentary role by incorporating cultural texts by Indigenous authors” (4). She uses Chrystos’s poetry as a primary example of the way that Indigenous poetry testifies to the experiences of cultural trauma while simultaneously resisting the dominant myth of “vanishing” Indigenous communities.

23. Brehm makes the case that Chrystos is more concerned with real-life material needs, citing from “Interview” in *Fugitive Colors* (1995) the bag lady’s retort to an offer for poetry, “I’ll take a baloney sandwich instead” (76). Brehm surmises that “[f]ood, in the universe Chrystos forces her readers to experience, matters more than poetry” (76).

24. Elizabeth Archuleta in “I Give You Back” argues that Indigenous feminism, contrary to the popular opinion in academic circles, faces no famine of theoretical discourse; rather, Indigenous women’s theoretical discourse tends not to be recognized by many academics because it is informed by “lived experiences” rather than “Western tools” and “[Western] worldviews” (88).

25. Though Chrystos’s practice of resisting the stereotype of the “vanishing Indian” precedes Gerald Vizenor’s theory of survivance, his explanation is helpful in understanding how these narrative practices relate to a long tradition of oral and written storytelling as a form of resistance to colonial oppression. Vizenor initially used the term in *Manifest Manners*, but I find the definition in his introduction to *Native Liberty* more clearly articulated.

26. Chrystos writes two-spirit bodies into her poetry. For the purposes of this argument, I accept Abby Wilkerson’s definition of “embodiment” in *Keywords* as “the state of living in/through/as a body,” which “includes pleasures, pain, suffering, sensorial and sensual engagements with the world, vulnerabilities, capabilities, and constraints as they arise within specific times and places” (67). Chrystos’s embodied poetic expressions account for the lived experiences of the body.

27. *Not* can be seen as a work in solidarity with First Nations women.

28. In her dedication of *Not*, Chrystos includes LGBTQ and two-spirit writers Beth Brant, Paula Gunn Allen, Joy Harjo (Creek), Vickie Sears (Cherokee), and many others.

29. In *Native Liberty*, Vizenor argues for a “distinctive native aesthetics” consisting of “stories of inspired, visionary transmotion, and trick conversions” (6). I view Chrystos’s use of ancestral presence in “Crazy Grandpa Whispers” as an anticipation of Vizenor’s theory of cultural survivance.

30. Chrystos, in her 2002 interview, “Chrystos on Queer Native America,” explained, “[F]or the most part my lines are my breaths. They’re by breaths and by thought and by what goes together” (33).

31. In “Approaches to Penetration,” Agnes Bolsø explores “penetration” as “one of the language’s most loaded expressions” (560) in the context of the feminist theoretical approaches of Judith Butler and Jorun Solheim, specifically, Butler’s concept of the “lesbian phallus” and Solheim’s “open body.” Most productive in Bolsø’s argument is her recognition of the slippage between the material and the symbolic and the possibility for new significations to impact practice or vice versa.

32. In “Key Indian Laws and Cases,” Ward Churchill and Glenn T. Morris provide an annotated list of statutes and cases important in Indigenous history. The Indian Removal Act of 1830 is one such case that illustrates the way that language has been used to threaten Indigenous survival (13).

33. In her introduction to *Decolonizing Methodologies*, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (Ngati Awa and Ngati Porou, Maori) explains that from many Indigenous peoples’ perspectives, “research” remains suspect because of its role in colonizing Indigenous peoples. Smith elaborates: “It appalls us that the West can desire, extract and claim ownership of our ways of knowing, our imagery, the things we create and produce, and then simultaneously reject the people who created and developed those ideas

and seek to deny them further opportunities to be creators of their own culture and own nations" (1). I mention Smith because I view Chrystos's work as arising from international Indigenous movements for recognition of Indigenous peoples and their rights to self-determination. As such, Chrystos's work can be understood as an integral part of larger efforts to validate Indigenous knowledges, recognize Native people's rights and abilities to tell their own stories, raise consciousness about issues of concern to their communities, and theorize new ways of thinking.

34. For more on the way that standardized English was imposed on Native peoples through missionary schools funded by the US government, see Stefano Bosco's "Is There a Native American English?" and Sean P. Harvey's *Native Tongues*, which explore federal policies that forbid the speaking of Native languages in missionary schools and the justifications for the suppression of Native languages in America.

35. In the double meaning, for example, of "joints," Chrystos calls attention to embodiment and the problem of incarceration, especially for First Nations people. Chrystos has advocated for political prisoners, including Leonard Peltier, Norma Jean Croy, and Marilyn Buck.

36. Further, Chrystos's doubling of the meaning of "Wounded knee" creates a morphing of old and new traumas, which substantiates Indigenous claims that genocide continues into contemporary time.

37. In 1931 Black Elk (Sioux) related to John G. Neihardt his vision of the "nation's hoop," which seems to represent visually the continuity of his people's culture. He ends his narrative by saying that the hoop is "broken and scattered" (169). In *Lakota Woman*, Mary Crow Dog (also known as Mary Brave Bird) negates this prophecy. Her story of survival ends with faith that Native peoples will find a way to continue, that "[l]ife goes on" (263). What Chrystos seems to be doing by alluding to the hoop is similarly arguing that two-spirit people will find ways to survive.

38. See Patrisia Gonzales's (Kickapoo/Comanche/Macehual) *Red Medicine* for a more thorough explanation of the uses of Indigenous symbols that link symbols of the womb with conceptions of time (93). The inversion of the feather becomes symbolic of the satiation of desire, which is differentiated from a *petit mort*, or the "little death" of physical arousal after orgasm, because the feather (and arguably the observer) are propelled forward by the force of orgasm. Chrystos's drawings could be seen to complicate Roland Barthes's claim in *The Pleasure of the Text* that reading literature is a sexually charged experience. In contrast to pleasure for pleasure's sake, Chrystos's drawings insist that erotic power be directed to assist the emergence of two-spirit selfhood.

39. Jacques Lacan's concept of *jouissance*, whereby the Other, as Bruce Fink explains in *The Lacanian Subject*, "takes the subject beyond his or her nothingness, his or her mere existence as a marker at the level of alienation, and supplies a sense of being," can be helpful in considering Chrystos's complication of feminist symbiology (60). From this perspective, it seems that Chrystos channels the erotic power to reclaim her subjectivity, shifting from the "nothingness" that is the place of rhetorical abandonment into "existence" through her poetry. Brehm similarly is concerned with how "Chrystos explores the extremities of Lacanian relationship" (80). I argue

that an even richer reading of Chrystos's feather drawings can be obtained by turning to Indigenous feminist theory and, more specifically, by recognizing Chrystos's rhetorical strategy as an example of Indigenous feminist theorizing in action, one that possesses those characteristics that Elizabeth Archuleta identifies as integral to Indigenous feminist practices: "responsibility, the promotion of healing, and a call for survival" (89).

40. In *The Madwoman in the Attic*, Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar trace in the Western literary tradition the equation of literary mastery with male sexuality (3–4).

41. Hélène Cixous in "The Laugh of the Medusa" figures the quill as a phallic symbol. Beyond urging women to write their bodies, to subvert the oppressor's tool in service to women's liberation, Cixous claims the quill as an extension of the tongue. I argue that Chrystos creates a syncretism of feminist and Indigenous symbols, alternately subverting the quill and the tongue further with the Indigenous tradition of presenting feathers in celebration of important moments or achievements in a person's life.

42. Vizenor proposes that Indigenous writers' stories embody survivance: "The postindian warriors hover at last over the ruins of tribal representations and surmount the scriptures of manifest manners with new stories; these warriors counter the surveillance and literature of dominance with their own simulations of survivance" (*Manifest* 5). Here, Vizenor estimates that by their "simulations of dominance," First Nations writers continue traditions, battle against the dominant culture, and create new meanings that revitalize their tribal knowledges. I argue that Chrystos's drawings insist on alliances between two-spirit people and their communities.

43. James Davis in "Who Is Black?" argues that "the concept of passing applies only to blacks": in contrast to African Americans, Indigenous Americans and other minorities find that "miscegenation promotes assimilation" (45). In other words, the one-drop rule works in opposite ways for Indigenous peoples than for African Americans. Instead of insuring the maintenance of a minority class, colonial-imposed assimilation functions to make Native peoples invisible and strip them of their rights to their land and sovereignty. In "Federal Indian Identification Policy" M. Annette Jaimes compares the method of identifying American Indians adopted in the General Allotment Act of 1887 as a strategic method to exclude Native peoples from their property rights (62). Rather than a paternal protector, the US government uses blood quantum to exclude Indigenous peoples from their property by refusing to acknowledge their tribal identities, similar to the way it uses the one-drop rule to exclude African Americans from land rights by refusing to acknowledge hyperdescent.

44. In "Stolen from Our Bodies," Driskill locates two-spirit people's existence pre-European contact in traditional Cherokee stories that feature "the embodiment of opposites" (56).

45. Chrystos lists on her Facebook "About" page that she is planning to reissue *Not Vanishing and Dream On* (www.facebook.com/pg/Chrystos-189866507698351/about/?ref=page_internal).

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Colonial Violence in Sixties Scoop Narratives

From *In Search of April Raintree* to *A Matter of Conscience*

PETRA FACHINGER

“Adopted” in the parlance of the day, meant “no longer Indian.” Thousands of us were denied the fundamental right to know who we were created to be.
Richard Wagamese, “Surviving the Scoop”

Indigenous literatures matter because *Indigenous peoples matter*. And that, to me, is a mighty good cause for celebration.

Daniel Heath Justice, *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter*

Inspired by personal experience, Métis author Beatrice Mosionier’s novel *In Search of April Raintree* (1983) was one of the first texts written in Canada to deal with the Indigenous foster child experience. According to the late Métis scholar Jo-Ann Episkenew, *In Search of April Raintree* publicly acknowledges and validates the experiences of “the many Indigenous children in the care of the settler government’s child-welfare system.” She adds that “even though she [Mosionier] could have written an autobiographical account of her own experiences as a foster child, Culleton Mosionier made a deliberate choice to write the story of a fictional family, the Raintrees, who, like her own family, were torn apart by Canadian government policies” (Episkenew 112).¹ The novel introduces major human rights issues that subsequent narratives echo: the violent removal of Indigenous children from their parents by the Canadian government to assimilate them by placing them in white middle-class homes, the resulting identity conflicts from which many foster care and transracial adoption survivors suffer, sexual assault on Indigenous women, suicide, and intergenerational trauma as a result of the residential school experience.² All of these issues arise out of

systemic and institutional colonial violence, as *April Raintree* and the Sixties Scoop narratives that I will discuss in this essay show.

Both the Sixties Scoop, which began in 1951, when amendments to the Indian Act gave the provinces jurisdiction over Indigenous child welfare where none existed federally, and continued through the 1980s, and the so-called Millennium Scoop are part of the history of the child-welfare system in Canada, which continues to tragically fail Indigenous peoples. These terms reflect the violence of the removal of Indigenous children without their parents' consent and often without their knowledge.³ The history of the large-scale governmental foster and adoption strategies of the Sixties Scoop, which saw the largest number of children taken in the 1960s and continued until the mid-1980s, has not yet received the same critical attention as the discussion of residential schools, which have entered the Canadian public consciousness more widely in response to the 2015 *Final Report* of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC). Unfortunately, despite the changes that have been made as a result of the condemning reports on the government's welfare initiatives and systemic underfunding, the number of children in permanent care outside of their own families and communities has continued to rise in the new millennium—hence the term “Millennium Scoop.”⁴ Cora Morgan, Manitoba's First Nations family advocate, for example, points to a case “where a three-day-old boy was taken from his mother simply because the mother had been a ward of Family Services until she was 18” (Vowel 185). Moreover, a number of provinces have been housing teenaged Indigenous foster children in motels and hotels when no other accommodation seems to have been available. This practice has come under scrutiny after the brutal murder in 2014 of fifteen-year-old Tina Fontaine (Anishinaabe), who was one of the many victims of such placement (185).

According to Patrick Johnston, several factors have contributed to the recent resurgence of interest in the Sixties Scoop: the fact that the TRC has characterized it as a legacy of the residential school system; the formal apology by former premier Greg Selinger in the Manitoba legislature in 2015; the tireless efforts of Cindy Blackstock (Gitksan), executive director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society; increased activism by those affected; and a series of class-action lawsuits launched in five different provinces. On 28 May 2018 Premier Rachel Notley formally apologized on behalf of the province of Alberta to

Sixties Scoop survivors and their families as an attempt to respond to the ninety-four Calls to Action made by the TRC.⁵ And on 7 January 2019, Premier Scott Moe apologized for Saskatchewan's role in the Sixties Scoop.⁶ There has also been renewed interest in the Scoop experience in literature, as reflected in the publication of several novels and memoirs by Indigenous authors. Among the most recent publications are Lisa Bird-Wilson's (Métis) collection *Just Pretending* (2013), Carol Daniels's (Cree/Chipewyan) novel *Bearskin Diary* (2015), Colleen Cardinal's (Nehiyaw) memoir *Ohpikiihaakan–Ohpimhah Raised Somewhere Else: A 60s Scoop Adoptee's Story of Coming Home* (2018), and Inez Cook (Nuxalk) and Jason Eaglespeaker's (Blackfoot/Duwamish) graphic book for children titled *Sixties Scoop* (2018).

In this essay, I will analyze three novels written between 1983 and 2018 by Indigenous authors from different nations and backgrounds with the intent to illuminate the complexity of the Scoop experience and each protagonist's different circumstances. Although all of these narratives show that the Sixties Scoop cannot be isolated from other acts of violence against Indigenous peoples, they describe some positive relationships between white foster and adoptive parents and those in their care, thus illustrating the complexity of the issues surrounding the forced removal of children from their families, communities, and reserves. I argue that the novels take the focus away from the Indigenous child's struggle to fit into white society and away from abusive foster homes—albeit without diminishing the harmful effects of personal racist attitudes—to demonstrate that systemic and structural racism and continuing colonization are to blame rather than individuals. As Manitoba judge Edwin C. Kimelman maintains in his 1985 report *No Quiet Place: Review Committee on Indian and Métis Adoptions and Placements*, based on the 1982 inquiry into the child-welfare system and how it affected Indigenous communities: "It would be reassuring if blame could be laid to any single part of the system. The appalling reality is that everyone involved believed they were doing their best and stood firm in their belief that the system was working well" (qtd. in Vowel 183). My discussion will pay particular attention to the representation of three interrelated issues: residential schools and intergenerational trauma; violence against Indigenous women and girls; and foster children's eventual attempt to reconnect with their birth families and Indigenous community and culture. The protagonists' efforts to restore

connections shed light on the most harmful effect of the removal of Indigenous children from their communities: (cultural) genocide.

I will focus on Mosionier's *In Search of April Raintree*, the late Robert Arthur Alexie's (Gwich'in) *The Pale Indian* (2005), and James Bartleman's (Chippewa) *A Matter of Conscience* (2018).⁷ I have chosen these particular texts to cover a certain range of literary styles and strategies, a diversity of author backgrounds, and the significant timespan of almost four decades between the publication of Mosionier's and Bartleman's novels. The texts suggest that the overrepresentation of Indigenous children in foster care remains one of the most pressing issues to be addressed by the Canadian government in collaboration with Indigenous leaders and communities.

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS AND INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA

As the late Richard Wagamese (Anishinaabe), a survivor of the foster care experience himself, observes in his essay "Surviving the Scoop," "[T]his sad chapter [the Sixties Scoop] in our country's history followed closely on the heels of the closure of the residential schools. To those affected, the Scoop felt like a continuation of the same genocidal policy. For me, it meant the door was effectively slammed shut on my identity" (191). *In Search of April Raintree*, set between 1950 and the early 1970s, tells the story of two Métis sisters, April and Cheryl, who grow up in a number of different foster homes after being taken from their parents by the Children's Aid Society. The novel connects the Scoop thematically to residential schools in several ways. The description of the orphanage in which the sisters are initially placed and which is run by Catholic nuns who physically and emotionally mistreat the children resembles representations of the residential school experience in numerous Indigenous memoirs and fictional texts. While April initially seems to be fortunate to be placed in a congenial family environment, she experiences racism and psychological and physical abuse by the members of her second foster family. That abuse echoes the residential school abuse experienced by her mother, Alice. Alice's residential school upbringing and the removal of her own daughters cause her emotional pain, which she attempts to drown in alcohol and which prompts her to commit suicide when she realizes that her daughters will never be returned to her. The fact that April's sister, Cheryl, jumps to her death from the same bridge,

the Louise Bridge across the Red River in downtown Winnipeg, dramatizes the link between the tragic consequences of her mother's residential school experience, its intergenerational legacy, and the foster care ordeal.

Similarly, Alexie links the alcoholism of the protagonist's parents to the physical and sexual abuse that they suffered at residential school in *The Pale Indian*, set in the 1970s and 1980s in Canada's Northwest Territories. Notably, John's mother, who dies at the hands of her husband, attended the same institution. Chief James of the Aberdeen community facilitates the adoption of John and his younger sister, Eva, by a non-Indigenous couple once he becomes aware that the children's parents are no longer providing them with the necessities of life. John and Eva, who were adopted into the same family, were spared April's negative foster home experience in that, as John puts it, they were sent "to a good family." As John explains: "They treated us like their own" (Alexie 69). Work in the oil patch takes the twenty-four-year-old John back to the community of Aberdeen, where he spent the first twelve years of his life. Shortly after he marries his soul mate, a young woman from the community, Tina falls ill with leukemia and is in need of a bone marrow transplant. As her grandparents and others in the community have just found out, Tina's mother was raped by John's father, whose identity she never revealed. Tina's mother committed suicide shortly after giving birth to her daughter. The novel's terrible irony is that Tina's half sister, Eva, ultimately saves her life as a matching bone marrow donor. But the novel does not conclude on a hopeful note, as Tina spends the rest of her life in an institution after suffering a mental breakdown in response to the revelation that she has been married to her half brother. The novel does not make it apparent if John dies in a traffic accident after leaving Tina in the hospital or if he spends the rest of his life in self-exile.

Alexie portrays the entire community as having thus come under the horrific shadow of the residential school experience and its tragic legacies. Although he does not identify the Indigenous people of Aberdeen as Gwich'in—he refers to them as "Blue Indians"—he draws on his own experience as a member of the Tetlit Gwich'in of Fort McPherson in the Northwest Territories. The name "Blue Indians" seems to have been inspired by the late activist, poet, actor, and singer-songwriter John Trudell's (Santee Dakota) 1999 album *Blue Indians*. Trudell's wife, Tina Manning, and their three children died

in a suspicious house fire in 1979 right after Trudell burned a US flag on the steps of the FBI building in Washington, DC, in protest of the government's treatment of Native Americans. It is no coincidence that Alexie names his romantic couple after John Trudell and his wife, Tina, and that John aspires to become a recording musician. With this reference to the violence suffered by Native Americans at the hands of American law enforcement agencies during the political confrontations in the 1960s and 1970s, Alexie reminds the reader of the greater picture of the long history of colonization of Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island. It is worth noting here that before the missionaries arrived in the Northwest Territories and imposed patrilineal structures on Indigenous communities, the Gwich'in had three matrilineal clans that regulated marriage, which means that from a traditional perspective, a marriage between John and Tina would likely not have been taboo.⁸ However, the 1876 Indian Act disrupted traditional kinship systems and matrilineal descent patterns with its gendered provisions and promotion of male-dominated forms of political organization. *The Pale Indian* illustrates the tragic consequences of this violent colonial intervention in its portrayal of a community that has lost knowledge of traditional governance models and practices. As much as the novel condemns systemic and institutional violence against Indigenous peoples, it also shows Chief James at fault for not having attempted to find a home for Eva and John with relatives or community members.

The fact that both Alexie, a residential school survivor, and Bartleman wrote their residential school novels *Porcupines and China Dolls* (2003) and *As Long as the Rivers Flow* (2011) prior to turning to the Scoop experience suggests that the authors intended to draw attention to the link between the colonial violence of the residential school and the foster care experience. The two authors' political engagement also informs their texts. Alexie served two terms as vice president of the Gwich'in Tribal Council and helped obtain a land-claim agreement for this community; Bartleman, a Canadian diplomat and fierce advocate for literacy and education in Indigenous communities, was Ontario's first Indigenous lieutenant governor. *A Matter of Conscience* begins with the violent removal of six-month-old twins Brenda and Josh from their home on the fictional Yellow Dog Indian Reserve in northwestern Ontario while their sixteen-year-old parents, who allegedly left their children at home unattended while out drinking, silently witness their abduction. The text explains their apathy as follows: "[T]hey had spent

most of their lives in a residential school where they had been taught to obey the edicts of white teachers and officials without question under penalty of receiving a sharp slap across the face” (Bartleman 18). The next chapter focuses on the community elders mourning the loss of several children taken from the community that day. As it is in *The Pale Indian*, the older generation is portrayed as helpless in the face of violent colonial intervention. The parents’ and grandparents’ shortcomings are portrayed through the eyes of Raven, the couple’s youngest daughter: “[G]etting drunk and doing drugs, no matter how much you suffered at residential school or being a victim of the Sixties Scoop, is no excuse for poor parenting” (86). But the novel also examines how racism is internalized and how it circulates. Although Raven blames her parents for their dysfunctional behavior, Bartleman makes it evident that their way of life is not a matter of choice. Rather than absolving the government and Canadians from their responsibility for the effects of colonization by blaming inadequate parenting, the novel points at the vicious cycle of abuse. This didactic text, which includes the novel proper, as well as over a hundred pages of recommended background readings, including documents on the Sixties Scoop, excerpts from the 2004 Amnesty International report *A Human Rights Response to Discrimination and Violence against Indigenous Women in Canada*, and the TRC’s *Final Report*, links substance abuse and lateral violence directly to residential school trauma.

The novel follows the life of Brenda from her adoption by a white couple in a small town in Ontario to her being left for dead by her abusive white husband. After their ill-fated reunion later in life, Brenda’s birth mother tells her in a letter that she was relieved to see Children’s Aid take her and her brother because they “were born from rape” (Bartleman 98). Her letter talks about the physical and sexual abuse that the girls suffered not only at the hands of priests, nuns, and other staff but also at the hands of Indigenous boys. Shortly after writing this letter, she decides to report her husband, who has been physically abusing her all these years. The novel makes the point that although Brenda did not grow up in her birth family, she is a survivor of intergenerational trauma precisely because of forced separation from her culture. The novel suggests that this trauma, coupled with her adoptive parents’ blatant racism, conditions her to put up with an abusive husband the way her birth mother did.

GENDERED RACISM AND VIOLENCE
AGAINST INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS

As social critic and criminologist Lisa Monchalin (Algonquin/Métis/Huron) observes, “Indigenous women are victims of racism and sexism and experience excessive levels of violence when compared to other women in Canada” (175). According to Monchalin, Indigenous women are almost three times more likely than non-Indigenous women to become victims of violent crimes in Canada. They are also more likely to be victims of spousal violence (175). She explains that “all of this violence and crime affecting Indigenous women is not traditional. Many pre-contact Indigenous societies had an equitable division of labour between men and women, as well as women leaders” (176). However, when European religions and laws were forced on Indigenous peoples, women’s roles began to be eroded, not least because of the fact that European men historically treated women as subordinate. These colonial practices and notions changed Indigenous norms (178). In all three novels, racial and gender-based violence marked by colonial relations runs rampant, and Indigenous women are ultimately blamed for the violence they encounter. *In Search of April Raintree* puts the abusiveness of the child-welfare system in relief by showing how April and Cheryl are beaten and humiliated by the nuns and some foster parents. Their mother is declared unfit as a parent when her youngest daughter dies, although the baby likely died because of premature dismissal from the hospital. As Sharon Smulders observes, “[B]y giving April’s social worker the last name of Robert Semple who, as Governor-in-Chief of the Hudson’s Bay Company in 1816, tried unsuccessfully to neutralize Metis power in the Red River region, she instead suggests the girls are apprehended because of colonialist prejudices” rather than parental neglect (“Double” 41). Both April and Cheryl are bullied by their classmates and are physically and sexually assaulted as young women. Cheryl’s friend Nancy “had been raped by her drunken father” (Mosionier 106), and, as April tells the reader, both Nancy and her mother work temporarily in the sex trade because they are destitute. When April is trapped in a car with three men who brutally assault her and as she begins to fear for her life, she thinks that “she hadn’t been in Winnipeg long enough to know whether there had been a rash of rapes and strangulations going on. Maybe that’s what was going to happen to

me. And if they had knives, it would be a whole lot worse. They could torture me to death, cut me to pieces, or beat me up and leave me to die in the cold somewhere, all bloody and broken” (141). The text refers here to the fate of Helen Betty Osborne (Cree), who was kidnapped, raped, and brutally murdered by four white men in The Pas, Manitoba, in 1971, a decade prior to the publication of Mosionier’s novel. April’s oblivion to the reality of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls is symptomatic of her persistent refusal to self-identify as Indigenous. Some critics, including settler scholar Margery Fee and Métis critic Aubrey Jean Hanson, have interpreted the fact that the rapists mistake April for Cheryl as prompting April’s momentary acknowledgment of her identity as an Indigenous woman. Weeks after the brutal rape, when April is asked by the police to identify the third rapist in a lineup, she admits: “I began wondering for the hundredth time why they had kept on calling me squaw. Was it obvious? That really puzzled me. Except for my long black hair, I really didn’t think I could be mistaken as a Native person. Mistaken? There’s that shame again. Okay, identified” (164). But as soon as she learns that Cheryl was working in the sex trade and was the actual target of the assault, she ceases to see herself as an Indigenous woman and no longer feels any sympathy or solidarity. Instead, she blames Cheryl for the harrowing experience. According to Smulders, “April, having internalized the racism to which she is subject, initially shares her assailants’ assumptions about the sexual availability of Aboriginal women since she questions not the decision to victimize a ‘squaw’ but rather the decision to identify her as one” (“Double” 44). With her judgmental attitude toward Cheryl’s Cree friend Nancy, April is also guilty of perpetuating “the tendency to render disappeared women as anonymous figures whose lives and livelihoods are made to signal an apparent willing vulnerability to violence” (Hargreaves 83). Yet as the reader learns at the end of the novel, Nancy has a complex family life. In revealing Nancy’s story at the end of the novel, Mosionier positions her and her mother not as isolated and culpable figures but as belonging to a broader familial and community network.

In *The Pale Indian*, with ongoing colonization having damaged the community, the family itself becomes the place of utmost violence. Exiled to a cabin outside of Aberdeen, John’s father kills his wife in a drunken stupor during an argument. John’s uncle Edward, his mother’s brother, happens to witness the homicide and kills his brother-in-law

in self-defense after learning that he raped Tina's mother. The traumatized Edward stops talking after this fatal encounter and is institutionalized in a mental hospital. When John asks his aunt Eunice, who was also sexually abused by her brother William, why Edward was sent away rather than taken in by the community, she tells him that they did not know how to support him (Alexie 111). History repeats itself when Tina is taken to the same institution rather than cared for by family and community after suffering a nervous breakdown in response to learning who her father was. That this smart, beautiful, and independent young woman is afflicted by a blood disorder disease is, within the logic of the narrative, no coincidence. The disorder serves as a metaphor for the community's "contamination" by the repercussions of state colonialism, which leaves its members helpless in the face of mental illness resulting from trauma. As Anishinaabe educator Jessica Riel-Johns succinctly puts it,

The connection between colonization and intergenerational trauma apparent in many forms of traumatic experiences that occurred at residential schools has been related to the violence, abuse, alcoholism, that plague many Indigenous communities. Intergenerational trauma also manifests in the prevalence of high suicide rates and other mental health issues, related to the loss of cultural identity. These issues are related to the racialized and sexualized violence experienced by Indigenous women at the hands of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous men. Moreover, it has contributed to Indigenous women's vulnerability to violence. (40)

While *A Matter of Conscience* focuses on Brenda's life, a second narrative strand follows the life of Greg Chambers, who is the son of white parents. Greg's father, who is an alcoholic and works as a police officer, physically abuses his son whenever he fails to perform according to his expectations. When Greg grows into a "180-pound player" on the local midget hockey team, he fights back and knocks his father to his knees with the result that he turns his aggression toward his wife: "[W]henever his son did something that upset him, he took out his anger on his wife, punching her in the stomach, breast, and ribs and yanking her hair" (Bartleman 41). Bartleman implies that the violence to which Greg was exposed at home plays a role in his involvement in the murder of a young Indigenous woman at the

Calvin Mine close to the town of Murdoch in northeastern Manitoba, where he spends the summer of 1990 as a kitchen helper. The author is interested here in probing the psychological mechanisms of lateral violence.

Waking up in his Métis coworker's car after a night of heavy drinking, Greg hears the moaning of a girl who is being brutally raped and beaten by the older man. The Woodland Cree teenager, who apparently was on her way home for the summer from residential school, is still alive when the two men throw her into the Desolation River to get rid of the evidence. When Greg asks his coworker if the Mounties will be looking for the missing girl, the man's response demonstrates his disregard for Indigenous women's lives: "[U]p here there's no bus service to the south, so the people on the reserves go out on the side of the road and stick out their thumbs. The girls, especially the good-looking ones, have no trouble getting rides. But they gotta pay a price. There's no free lunch. They gotta put out or get out" (56). This shockingly inhumane assessment of the colonially marked violence against Indigenous women suggests that frequently these crimes occur with the silent collusion or complicity of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). The 2013 Human Rights Watch report *Those Who Take Us Away*, which examines the relationship between Indigenous women and the RCMP in northern British Columbia, shows "how Indigenous women and girls are under-protected by the police and how they have also been the objects of outright police abuse" (Knott 155). The description of the often fatal consequences of hitchhiking mirrors the reality of the "Highway of Tears," the 720-kilometer section of Highway 16 between Prince George and Prince Rupert in northern British Columbia. Dozens of Indigenous women, who are most vulnerable because of poverty or social isolation, have gone missing or been found murdered on this stretch over the last few decades.⁹

Rather than turning himself in, Greg pretends to be Georgian Bay Métis and attempts to do "penance" for his crime "by helping Indigenous people" (Bartleman 62). Five years after the murder, he marries Brenda, who believes that getting married to an Indigenous man will give her more authenticity. Greg is attracted to her because he senses her eagerness to please: "[H]e wanted a woman like his mother who rarely questioned the judgement of his father, and who wouldn't complain if he occasionally slapped her around. . . . But most of all, he wanted

someone he could look at every day and be reminded of the Indian girl he had helped murder—sort of like a hair shirt on a medieval monk doing penance for past sins” (72). Brenda does indeed end up being a battered wife until one night she fights back when Greg confesses his participation in the murder during an argument in a hotel room in Cuba. After being knocked unconscious by Greg, she owes her life to a quick-witted local doctor, who tells Greg that his wife is dead. She is taken to a hospital and survives, while Greg is arrested for attempted murder. In this way, *A Matter of Conscience* highlights the vicious cycle of domestic and gender-based violence.

IDENTITY CONFLICTS AND ATTEMPTS TO RECONNECT WITH CULTURE AND COMMUNITY

All three novels insist not that identity conflicts are issues of personality or unwillingness to adapt but that the challenges for out-adopted children emerge from racism and persistent colonialism. All three texts structure their narratives around pairs of siblings (or half siblings, in Alexie’s case) to prove this point. April and Cheryl relate to being Métis in different ways, not least because April, as she repeatedly points out, perceives herself as being able to pass for white, whereas Cheryl, in April’s words, “looks Indian.” *The Pale Indian* juxtaposes Tina’s experience of growing up with her grandparents in her own community with that of John as he was raised as a “pale Indian.”¹⁰ *A Matter of Conscience* contrasts Brenda’s experience with that of her twin brother, Josh, who, unlike her, finds his way back to the community.

April and Cheryl were five and three years old when the family moved from Norway House to Winnipeg because their father contracted tuberculosis. Many severe illnesses could not be treated in small-town northern Manitoba because of lack of funding for remote Indigenous communities. The fact that the sisters were already uprooted from their father’s community and culture before they became foster children deprived them of a footing in Indigenous culture and made it difficult for them to resist the numerous attempts at forced assimilation. In the house of her first foster parents, who treat April kindly, she is being transformed into a francophone Catholic, whereas Cheryl’s first foster mother, who is Métis, encourages Cheryl to be proud of her heritage. As Cheryl tells April, “[T]hey got a lot of books on Indian tribes and how

they used to live a long time ago" (Mosionier 40). Several critics have pointed out that Cheryl subsequently develops a romantic view of the Métis, as evident in her letters, school essays, and academic speeches on Métis history and heroism. She is shocked when she finally finds that her biological father ended up as an impoverished alcoholic.¹¹ She loses her pride in being Métis, quits university, falls in with the wrong people, and begins to drink heavily. Cheryl's experience is corroborated by the literature and research in the area of Indigenous transracial adoption. As Cree/Assiniboine/Saulteaux scholar Raven Sinclair observes,

[C]onventional adoption literature emphasizes the importance of instilling a cultural heritage in the child through books, movies and culturally relevant events such as pow wows. . . . Unfortunately, these are idealized versions of Aboriginal culture and not realistic as means for instilling identity. What the child sees when they venture out into the world as an adult is not necessarily going to match with idealized versions of Aboriginal culture. . . . What the adoptee may not know is that they are not seeing Aboriginal culture; they are seeing the vestiges of colonization and a neo-colonial society's construction of Aboriginal culture. However, who is available to explain that context to them? (73)

In contrast to Cheryl, April continues to attempt to assimilate into white society, craves status symbols, and associates with powerful white men. She feels that being Métis rather than full blood is a particular liability and finds it challenging to live in this perceived in-betweenness. Literary scholar, author, and filmmaker Janice Acoose (Salteaux/Métis) has criticized Mosionier for her portrayal of Métisness as being half white and half Indigenous and fears that the text "may leave readers with misinformed notions about the Métis" (235).¹² But Acoose also concedes that *In Search of April Raintree* "becomes an important novel for critical discourse surrounding issues of identity formation and cultural transmission" (235).

Despite her desire to pass as white, April seems to understand that she has been "educated" to forget about her Indigenous roots. She wants white privilege, but when Cheryl introduces her to White Thunderbird Woman at the Native Friendship Centre, she reflects that "if I'd had such a grandmother when I was growing up, maybe I wouldn't have been so mixed up" (Mosionier 178). Some critics, including Helen Hoy,

read the fact that April looks forward to raising Henry Liberty Raintree, Cheryl's young son, as a sign that Cheryl's death has prompted April to acknowledge her Indigeneity (Hoy 281). Such reading seems to be warranted in view of April's concluding words that "it was tragic that it had taken Cheryl's death to bring me to accept my identity" (Mosionier 234). However, April's growing closeness to yet another powerful white man, who wants to marry her, makes Henry Liberty's opportunity to stay connected with Indigenous culture and community unlikely, particularly considering Winnipeg's unconcealed racism. Moreover, as Fee explains, "April takes the baby from Nancy and her mother, who have clearly helped raise him successfully so far, in what could be seen as a reenactment of the social workers taking April and Cheryl from their parents" (225). Supporting Fee's point, Mosionier does not indicate if April intends to stay in contact with Nancy and her mother to nurture kinship bonds.

Like *In Search of April Raintree*, *The Pale Indian* is concerned with the tensions between "blood" and kinship and relationality, which with today's advanced research in genetics and DNA have become more acute than ever before. John, Tina, and Edward are all full blood Blue Indians, but all three of them can be seen as the "pale Indian" of the book's title. John's observation in reference to his white parents—"they treated us like their own" (Alexie 69)—might suggest that the Olsons are good parents who give the same attention to Eva and John as to their two biological daughters. But it might also suggest that John and Eva were raised to be white. Alexie implies that even happy relations between white adoptive parents and Indigenous adoptees fall short because the children are growing up without vital links to their own culture and community. With regard to racist assimilation theories in North America, Kim TallBear (Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate) observes:

[C]onsidered a property that would hold Indians back on the road to civilization, Indian blood could be diluted over generations through interbreeding with Euro-American populations. Indians were seen as capable of cultural evolution (unlike Africans) and therefore of cultural absorption into the white populace. "Kill the Indian, save the man" was a mantra of nineteenth-century U.S. assimilation policies. Indian blood could also be overcome via mandatory boarding-school education, bans on religious

practices, and the destruction of communal living and property arrangements. (45–46)

Tina, who takes on the role of John's "Native informant," falls ill when she follows John to Calgary. Prior to the heartbreaking medical diagnosis, her grandmother attributes Tina's loss of weight and paleness to the white diet in the city and regularly supplies her with "drymeat" and other traditional food. It takes "blood" to heal Tina from leukemia by way of her half sister's bone marrow donation, which also reinforces their intimate kinship relationship.

Moreover, the relationship between Edward and his African Canadian nurse, Jim, at the mental institution demonstrates how kinship and relationality are more important than colonial notions of "Indian blood." According to TallBear, "[L]ike many other Americans, we are transitioning in Indian Country away from blood talk to speaking in terms of what 'is coded in our DNA' or our 'genetic memory.' But we do it in a very particular social and historical context, one that entangles genetic information in a web of known family relations, reservation histories, and tribal and federal-government regulations" (4). Whereas Edward is described as pale while institutionalized in the mental hospital, "he was getting darker. He was becoming an Indian again" (Alexie 256) after his return to the community. Importantly, his memories of the circumstances that caused his breakdown reveal to Jim the complexity of kinship relations in the Aberdeen community. Jim himself deserves most of the credit for Edward's recovery because his care and listening skills actively foster relationships across race and culture. Having traveled with Edward to the community, he greatly enjoys his stay there and makes important connections:

[H]e enjoyed their easygoing manners, their joking and their teasing. All this in spite of the problems they, as a people and as a community, were facing. The idyllic life that Edward had talked about was all but gone. Drugs, alcohol and the problems it brought were the norm. No one lived off the land any more. There were no dog teams, community hunts and fish camps, except along the river close by the town, and then it was only the elders who went there. (Alexie 267)

Because of his genuine interest in the community, it is he who discovers the biological connections between John and Tina. But, in a reciprocal way, he also learns to respect the community's kinship relations. At the end of his visit, Edward becomes part of Tina's family when her grandfather sends him off with the following words: "[M]y daughter left because the Creator decided it was her time. I'm not going to lose a granddaughter. The Creator will look after her. And I've never had a son. . . . You have a lot to learn when you come home. We are here" (Alexie 286). In response to Jim's question, "[W]hat did he say?" Edward responds, "[H]e called me his son" (287). When Jim comments that he wished that Edward was Abraham's son for real, Edward assures him that he is indeed Abraham's son. Through this exchange, Jim becomes aware of the importance of kinship ties and relationality in the community.

Bartleman similarly emphasizes the importance of community and cultural connection in *A Matter of Conscience*, although he does not shy away from portraying the problems that the reserve is facing. Raven, who grew up with her birth parents, is clearly more self-confident and socially engaged than her "scooped" siblings. After a failed suicide attempt in a joint suicide pact among several youth in the community, Raven explains how the young people have turned their lives around: "[W]e decided to take matters into our own hands, agreed not to take crap from anyone who stood in our way, became activists, campaigned for a new school, for more and better suicide prevention counseling, breakfasts for hungry schoolchildren, a drug rehabilitation study, and a program to take troubled youth out on the land to find themselves with elders" (Bartleman 87). She adds that when the time came, several of the group members left the community to bring about change from the outside as well. Some of the young people, including Raven, enrolled in university programs. Josh, who after being taken away by Children's Aid went from foster home to foster home, eventually ended up on the street. As Lisa Monchalin observes, "[R]ecent longitudinal research from the United States has proven that those [Indigenous children] who grow up in the foster care system are highly likely to become involved in crime later in life given their lack of a strong and stable nurturing family environment" (169). Josh explains to Brenda that his real family was "a Native gang" whose members he met in jail and who "all looked out for each other" (Bartleman 89). More importantly, some older Indigenous inmates taught him "the importance of Native pride" (89) and convinced

him to take part in healing circles and sweat lodges. Again, Bartleman shows here that reconnecting to tradition and ceremony tends to turn lives around. He is promoting traditional Indigenous justice as a response to colonial criminalization.

In contrast to her twin brother, Brenda, who by social worker standards should have had the most “promising” start with a white middle-class adoptive family, does not fare as well as her siblings despite her education and her job as a program officer at Indian Affairs. She makes unfortunate life choices and continues to struggle with her identity: “[N]o matter how many Indigenous friends she made, no matter how many powwows and demonstrations she attended, she still harbored doubts about her identity as an Indigenous person” (Bartleman 69). As she grows up with parents who seem to be unaware of their own blatant racism, her childhood is anything but happy. Playing second fiddle to a sister the same age adopted from China, Brenda tells her adoptive mother that she would like to find her birth parents. Her mother responds by telling her that they are her “real family now” and ends the conversation by saying: “[Y]ou might not like what you discover” (33). In high school she is the object of identity confusion when everyone assumes that she is Chinese like her sister. Her Chippewa classmates laugh when she tells them that she is “Indian” and wonder why a “Chinese wants to pass as Indian” (32). When her adoptive parents send her sister off to study medicine and tell Brenda that there is no money left for her, she leaves for good and breaks off contact with them. Her isolation is complete when her birth mother tells her that she does not want to see her ever again. The novel concludes with a letter from the sister of the young woman who was murdered by Greg and his coworker in which she accuses Brenda of having lived with a “monster” (130). She blames Brenda for not having reported him earlier, as she believes that even before Greg admitted his crime to her, Brenda should have been able to read the signs: domestic violence, womanizing, and his odd cultural cross-dressing (130). She ends her letter by observing that while her own family has finally gained closure, Brenda will have to live with her conscience (hence the title of the book), implying that Brenda’s failure to take responsibility excludes her morally from any claim to community connection and kinship.

CONCLUSION

Contemporary Indigenous literature, including the texts that I have discussed here as Sixties Scoop narratives, plays an important role in analyzing colonialism, providing antiviolence critique, and promoting social change. According to Cherokee scholar Daniel Heath Justice, “[I]n the face of a powerful colonial society that rewrote Indigenous loss as a story of innate Indigenous deficiency rather than intentional settler violence, betrayal, and subterfuge, Indigenous peoples have storied our experience to empower the struggle of the present and to make the truth of struggle clear to future generations” (118). For Indigenous readers who are survivors themselves, *In Search of April Raintree* “has become a vehicle of healing that validates their experiences and provides an opportunity for critical reflections and catharsis,” as Episkew points out in her discussion of Mosionier’s text (113). According to Episkew, *In Search of April Raintree* helps Indigenous readers to understand the pain of those who have gone through this experience, and it helps non-Indigenous readers to learn about issues too. I would argue that this is true of all other Sixties Scoop narratives as well. In addition to referring to its protagonists’ flawed moral choices, the very title of Bartleman’s book points to Canada’s continuing failure to address flagrant anti-Indigeneity despite the recommendations made by the TRC. Generally speaking, stories written about the Scoop can facilitate healing of Indigenous individuals and communities and educate non-Indigenous readers in accordance with the TRC’s Calls to Action 1 to 5 and 62 to 65. The TRC’s *Final Report* acknowledges the vital role that the arts in general and literature in particular can play in education for reconciliation, “providing alternative voices, vehicles, and venues for expressing historical truths and present hopes. Creative expression supports everyday practices of resistance, healing, and commemoration at individual, community, regional, and national levels” (279). To these ends, Sixties Scoop narratives draw attention to the connections among residential school history, violence against Indigenous women and girls, and continuing out-adoption of Indigenous children.

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NOTES

1. According to Sharon Smulders, "*In Search of April Raintree* draws on Mosionier's childhood experience as a ward of the Children's Aid Society of Winnipeg" ("What's" 75).
2. Note that Mosionier published *In Search of April Raintree* under her former name, Beatrice Culleton.
3. The term "Sixties Scoop" was coined by Patrick Johnston, a researcher for the Canadian Council on Social Development, in his 1983 report to the Canadian Council on Social Development, *Aboriginal Children and the Child Welfare System* (Sinclair 66). He recalls that he got the term from a British Columbian social worker who told him that it was common practice in 1960s BC to "scoop" from their homes almost all newborn babies (66). Cree scholar Lauri Gilchrist has described the recent "scoop" of Indigenous children as the "millennium scoop" (67).
4. As Métis critic Chelsea Vowel observes, "[B]y 2002, over 22,500 Indigenous children were in foster care across Canada—more than the total taken during the Sixties Scoop" (182).
5. A transcript of Notley's apology is published on the Government of Alberta website, www.alberta.ca/sixties-scoop-apology.aspx. For the Calls to Action, see trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf.
6. A transcript of Premier Moe's apology is available on the Government of Saskatchewan website, www.saskatchewan.ca/government/news-and-media/2019/january/07/sixty-scoop-apology.
7. In addition to the more recent texts mentioned earlier in this essay, other texts dealing with transracial Indigenous adoption written in Canada that I am unable to consider here because of limitations of space include Gerry William's (Splots'in) *The Black Ship* (1994), Richard Wagamese's (Anishinaabe) *A Quality of Light* (1997) and *Keeper'n Me* (2006), Tomson Highway's (Cree) *Kiss of the Fur Queen* (1998), Drew Hayden Taylor's (Anishinaabe) dramatic trilogy *Someday* (1993), *Only Drunks and Children Know the Truth* (2005), and *400 Kilometres* (2005), and Kevin Loring's (N'lakap'mux) *Where the Blood Mixes* (2009).
8. For information about the Gwich'in clan system, see Shirleen Smith.
9. The recent cancellation of Greyhound bus services in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and most of British Columbia will likely put more Indigenous women in danger.
10. The novel's title can be interpreted in various ways as referring to several characters in the novel, including John, Tina, and John's maternal uncle Edward.
11. See Heather Hillsburg's and Margery Fee's articles, among others.
12. For a comprehensive discussion of Métis identity, see Chelsea Vowel's chapter "You're Métis? Which of Your Parents Is an Indian?" in *Indigenous Writes*.

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The Commission, the Community, and the Cree Woman in the Attic

Georgina Lightning's *Older Than America* in
Canada's Culture of Redress

K. L. KILLEBREW

Two years after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) published its final report on the nation's Indian residential school system, 2017 saw a resurgence in political conflict over the legacy of residential schools in Canada. From the passing of the Indian Act in 1876 through the 1990s, thousands of Indigenous children across Canada were forcibly removed from their homes and placed in residential schools to receive federally mandated education.¹ Underfunded, poorly staffed, and built upon a foundation of Christian and European American ideologies that viewed Indigenous people and Indigenous culture as inferior to their European counterparts, residential schools have become an infamous part of Canadian history responsible for starvation, disease, humiliation, and physical and emotional abuse toward hundreds of thousands of Native children. In a January 31 meeting of the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples and again on March 7 while addressing overrepresentation of Indigenous women in Canadian prisons, Senator Lynn Beyak offered controversial remarks about the positive effects and good intentions of boarding schools. Her remarks stirred a national conflict between Indigenous communities and their progressive allies and what Beyak claims is a majority of Canadians who quietly share her sentiments, a conflict representative of a larger and increasingly heated culture war among progressive proponents of reconciliation between Canada and Indigenous peoples and Canadian nationalists.² Not long afterward, noted reconciliation critic Frances Widdowson presented her paper "The Political Economy of 'Truth and Reconciliation': Neotribal Rentierism and the Creation of the Victim/Perpetrator Dichotomy" at the annual meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association. Continuing her previous work, Widdowson

essentially attempted to revive what Roland Chrisjohn, Sherri Young, and Michael Maraun refer to as the “standard account” of residential schools to characterize reconciliation as an extraction of resources from the Canadian government by Aboriginal lawyers, activists, and tribal leaders. The Supreme Court of Canada ruled that survivor testimony collected by the Independent Assessment Process (IAP), a branch of the landmark 2006 Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement (IRSSA), be destroyed after fifteen years. An ultimately unsurprising ruling reflecting the established privacy of IAP testimony, it has nonetheless spurred debate about the purpose and ownership of survivor statements.³ At the same time, emboldened by right-wing victories in the United States and Europe, nationalist-leaning organizations found renewed vigor for combating progress on Indigenous issues and for reinvesting in overtly racist and nationalistic colonial rhetoric. Since that time, another year of reconciliation has passed under the shadow of controversy and resistance.

In 2013 Ronald Niezen voiced his concern that “there is arguably more disputed, mutually contradictory meaning-making in the TRCC than in any truth commission elsewhere” (5), and his suggestion is worth remembering—that regardless of the monetary compensation provided by the IRSSA and federally mandated reforms, the TRC “will fail if too many remain un-persuaded of the reality of these harms and if few possess the will to bring the history of the school experience to life with their own tangible participation in its remembrance” (6). The body of testimony gathered by the TRC stands as more or less incontrovertible evidence that residential schools were problematic, but for the most part, right-wing resistance has avoided contesting the TRC’s data by contesting instead the narrative through which testimony has been interpreted. Beyak and her supporters, for instance, seem to fault the TRC for its emphasis on the harm that the schools caused or insist upon the good intentions of colonial authorities running the schools. Other voices merely resurrect the colonial narratives of the unfitness of Indigenous peoples, which justified the residential schools in the first place. Implicit in these stances is, again, a model of residential school experience similar to the standard account long before the TRC came into being, a historical narrative of the school system that evades questions of systemic colonial oppression and psychologizes Indigenous survivors, to the extent that abuse is admitted, as victims in need of the

intervention of colonial social services and Western medicine. It is amid this pushback from the Right (and several missteps from the Left, such as a disastrous year for inquiries into murdered and missing Indigenous women) that calls for immediate, substantive progress for Indigenous peoples on Indigenous terms have become particularly acute. As a contested space for progressive and conservative meaning making, the TRC demonstrates the power of interpretive authority and the intractable necessity for Indigenous people to propagate and control their own narratives if actionable reconciliatory work is to happen. Right-wing opposition to reconciliation is made possible, in large part, through the gross decontextualization of colonial history, but this pernicious fragmentation of historical knowledge is itself enabled by an academic and mainstream apparatus that has not yet acclimated itself to holistic Indigenous epistemologies. Though programs such as the TRC adopt varying levels of Indigenous language to describe the principles and processes of reconciliation, there can be no clean integration of Indigenous practices, beliefs, and systems of knowing into European American academic and clinical discourse. Until Native knowledge forms the core of reconciliatory work and until Native people are centered in Canada's idealized national polity, the addition of Native thought to existing colonial dialogues about redress cannot help but seem ad hoc at best and, as opponents of reconciliation would have it, as so much extraneous nonsense at worst.

This article reads Cree director Georgina Lightning's first feature film, *Older Than America* (2008), as both an act of Indigenous truth telling in the face of colonial resistance to reconciliation and an exercise of autointerpretive authority, asserting the right of Indigenous people to read colonial history through Native lenses and to rewrite settler discourses about residential schools by Indigenizing or displacing the evidential tools that support them.⁴ The story of Cree schoolteacher Rain Many Lightnings (Georgina Lightning), a secondary survivor of a fictional residential school on the Fond du Lac Reservation in Minnesota, *Older Than America* utilizes cinematic sequences representative of visions, memories, and interventions from the spirit world to confront the Indigenous reservation community and its non-Indigenous settler authorities with a Native history of the local residential school and a Native framework through which the community can make sense of colonial wrongdoing, begin to heal the wounds of personal and

historical trauma, and revitalize precontact institutions that will allow the community to move forward while maintaining its Native identity in the face of continued colonial pressure.⁵ As such, it employs what Julia Emberley refers to as an “Indigenous epistemological framework” to Indigenize and therefore lay claim to Western evidential narrative genres (“Epistemic” 143) while redefining evidence according to more holistic and experiential ways of knowing. This article further explores Lightning’s cinematic representations of residential school memories in the context of survivor statements, in which it emerged. These statements—difficult, heartfelt, and yet beautifully subversive—comprise an Indigenous evidential genre that constitutes the most true-to-life history of residential schools and their effects we will ever have.⁶ By reading Lightning’s film alongside testimonial accounts rooted in similar lived experiences and storytelling techniques, I consider both film and testimony as Indigenous narrative forms utilizing non-Western tools for relating trauma and seeking healing.

Toward the trajectory of reconciliation, I will also look to the ways in which Lightning champions Indigenous tools for spiritual renewal. Rather than accepting European American models of mental illness, the film dismantles conceptions of individual and communal deviance as fundamental and problematic components of European American representations of Indigenous communities. Lightning’s Indigenization of the language of mental illness parallels the reinterpretation and reconstitution of Western discourses of trauma, victimization, and reconciliation by residential school survivors, culminating in a dramatically redefined and decolonized concept of Indigenous healing that seeks to empower “victims” and escape the hegemonic language of contemporary European American liberal rhetoric while offering Indigenous answers to the medicalization of social wrongs in psychotherapeutic models of trauma and redress. Ultimately, this article considers the transformative impact of Indigenous storytelling praxis on the European American trauma narrative through reconciliation-driven institutions like the TRC and its expression in Indigenous films. The Indigenization of this Western therapeutic mode constitutes a significant departure from the mainstream terminology of trauma, redefining traditional victim-aggressor power dynamics and reevaluating the hegemonic status of psychotherapeutic models of reconciliation endemic to European American discourses of social justice.

Lastly, this article is concerned with overturning contemporary models of reconciliation in North American settler states—discourses that, historically, have attempted to articulate healing without reciprocity between settler governments and self-determined Indigenous peoples.⁷ With Dian Million, I believe that nation building is fundamental to healing and that reconciliation can only be fully realized when neoliberal conceptions of human rights centered on the white, heteronormative, male subject give way to a gendered, desexualized, and deracialized polity. Though through the workings of Western adversarial law these rights can be extended to new populations, “[r]ights are multiplied across inclusions as afterthoughts that vex but never displace this [white, heteronormative, male] subject” (Million, *Therapeutic* 179). The politics of recognition—that struggle for admission under the exclusionary umbrella of so-called human rights historically afforded their white, straight, and cis-male authors—must cede to a polity that would “bring us beyond representation” (132). As such, this article proceeds from the assumption that reconciliation must begin with the self-determination and self-actualization of those whom settler states would see diagnosed as victims in need of colonial intervention and that the incorporation of psytechnics into Indigenous healing must therefore take the form of an Indigenized liberation psychology. Furthermore, as an American and an outsider to both the Canadian residential school system and the TRC, I intend to privilege, whenever possible, the knowledge and methods of Indigenous scholars in Canada and, perhaps more significantly, the voices of primary and secondary survivors whose spoken and written words constitute the most rigorous history and criticism of the system available.

In *The Wounded Storyteller: Body, Illness, and Ethics*, Arthur W. Frank suggests that in a modern age dominated by Western medicine articulated through clinical discourses of disease and treatment, persons with injured bodies feel an intense need to share their experiences outside the scientific language of physicians. Though speaking specifically of bodies that have suffered *physical* harm in the form of disease or injury, Frank’s call to individuals who have suffered to rearticulate their experiences through their own voices and on their own terms is just as applicable to the singular and collective victims of emotional and cultural wrongdoing, and it is illustrative of broader movements in Western psychology that call for the same thing. Indeed, narration has emerged in the last

few decades as a popular instrument for healing trauma, though Frank notes that there is more to narrating trauma than personal healing. "As wounded, people may be cared for," he observes, "but as storytellers, they care for others" (Frank xii). And projects such as the TRC are implicitly committed to a similar principle. Truth telling is fundamental not only to historical revision and personal reconciliation but also to the healing of Indigenous communities. Million rightly observes that "the belief is that when victims of state violence speak their truth in the presence of oppressors, a new story will emerge, a reconciled national history" (*Therapeutic* 3).

But narrating trauma, as it is commonly understood in settler societies, does not have the same meaning as it does in Indigenous communities, and a clear, workable apparatus for the extension of healing from individuals to communities through individual speech acts has not been readily apparent in the liberal culture of redress.⁸ Million reminds us that projects such as the TRC necessarily make bridging this gap more difficult as they shift focus from nation building to "one where self-determination becomes intertwined with state-determined biopolitical programs for emotional and psychological self-care informed by trauma" (*Therapeutic* 6). European American institutions lack the discursive tools necessary to address community healing without recourse to Western theories and concepts formulated to talk about non-Indigenous people.⁹ This is, perhaps, inevitable, because European American methods of narrating are rooted in a conception of the individual subject that is alien to many non-Western cultures. As Emberley aptly observes, models for victim testimony in Western trauma studies are effective "precisely because the testimonies make use of the underlying representational authority of an individual self whose testimony may be used to grant the protection and security of individual rights" ("Epistemic" 143).

The effectiveness of narration as a means of healing trauma, according to the Western mode, lies with its ability to restore coherence to traumatic events. As Chris Van Der Merwe and Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela note, "[T]he traumatised person has 'lost the plot'" of a portion of his or her own life, and narration fosters the "regaining of meaning after trauma, the rewriting of one's life narrative" (6). The autonomous, *individualized* self of European American tradition is well suited to jurisprudential and therapeutic models of redress and reconciliation between

individual victims and aggressors, and it is well positioned to articulate trauma through the discourse of Western trauma studies. However, the Indigenous testimonial subject is “accountable to and implicated in a set of kinship and community relations beyond the individual self” and tends to articulate victimization of and desire healing for a communal context extending past the boundaries of the European American individual and the immediate traumatic event (Emberley, “Epistemic” 143). In *Truth & Indignation: Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Indian Residential Schools*, Niezen offers several common trends in survivor testimony in the TRC, such as a tendency for speakers to use TRC platforms to discuss matters beyond its intended scope, that reflect a broad array of Indigenous discourses about trauma and justice that cannot be contained by traditional victim-aggressor relations and are often founded on Indigenous histories and ways of knowing that seek to answer the entire continuum of colonial power relations as a necessary precursor to finding individual healing.

Emberley adds, however, that because Indigenous speaking subjects participate in both Indigenous and colonial discourses, they are able to “resist and reconfigure the polymorphous techniques of colonial power” (“Epistemic” 143). The TRC, perhaps most well known for its emphasis on oral testimony, whether public or private, has afforded survivors the occasion to Indigenize the evidential tools of Western testimonial forms or to “use forms that originate internationally to locally locate themselves as the interlocutors of their own experience” (Million, *Therapeutic* 7). For instance, many survivors recount their experiences using analogical description rather than through the standard rhetoric of contemporary liberalism, which gives order to trauma through the application of a specialized nomenclature to code actions and actors according to standardized narratives of colonial abuse. These storytellers instead assert that Indigeneity possesses the requisite tools to narrate trauma by substituting readily available European American descriptors for Native ones. This method manifests in part through a sometimes startling lack of direct appeals to the language of the TRC’s mandate and publications on statement gathering and through a tendency to reject European American self-naming to label the people and places in their stories according to their experiences as victims. The testimonies of Campbell Papequash and Ida Ralph Quisess, published as part of the TRC’s final report in *The Survivors Speak*, are exemplary. Papequash

avoids referring to Catholic nuns as such, calling them “these ladies” who “wore these robes that I’ve never seen women wear before, they only showed their forehead and their eyes and the bottom of their face and their hands” (*Survivors* 33), and he further expresses unease at the image of a seemingly dead man hanging on a cross who is clearly Jesus, refraining from identifying the symbol of Christianity. Quisess similarly refers to nuns as “these women in black dresses,” only naming them nuns with reference to knowledge gained much later: “I later learned they were sisters, they called them nuns, the Oblate nuns, later, many years after I learned what their title was” (36). This stylistically enforced lack of familiarity is often contrasted with depictions of preresidential school family life, in which survivors often paint vivid portraits of Indigenous communities characterized by their beautiful orderliness and innate comprehensibility. Albert Elias recalls his earliest memories with poetic awe: “The land was all around me, the snow, the sky, the sun, and I have my parents . . . and I was amazed at what I saw, just the environment, the peace, the strength, the love, the smile on my dad’s face” (4). In instances like these, survivors reject the interpretive lens offered in hindsight by contemporary reconciliatory rhetoric and seek to make sense of events using tools available to their younger selves to establish their own ways of talking about trauma.¹⁰

Furthermore, acknowledging that the autobiographical forms available in European American literary and psychological traditions are not the only means capable of communicating the residential school experience, Indigenous speakers often employ Native narrative forms, offering a Native conception of self-accommodating community and family affiliations beyond those offered by Western individualism. Adopting Indigenous modes of narration further allows speakers to appeal to European American clinical rhetoric without granting it hegemonic authority. For while the medicalization of trauma can have benefits, taking on the role of patient—as much as taking on the role of victim—necessarily entails the abdication of at least some narrative authority. Those Western medicine classify as sick have little choice but to surrender themselves to Western doctors, what Frank rightly notes is not merely a physical but also a *narrative* surrender (6). Specifically, it entails surrender to “residential school syndrome,” the subjugating nexus of colonial symptoms that dominates Chrisjohn, Young, and Maraun’s standard account (20). With participation in European therapeutic modes comes the expecta-

tion that the survivor accepts the dominance of Western medical narratives as the primary mode for talking about trauma. Hence, in becoming a patient, the survivor waives much of their right to articulate their own story on their own terms. And for the sick, discussions of justice must come *after* discussions of treatment; as long as Indigenous people are thought of as diseased, curing them will, in the mind of the settler government, always precede any talk of justice for their victimization.

Finding means of healing that do not imply submission to colonial discourse has therefore become central to many Native theories of reconciliation. Million, for instance, reconsiders trauma from an Indigenous perspective, emphasizing that “[a]s Aboriginal peoples have entered the discursive field of trauma they have re-articulated some of its terms” (“Trauma” 161), even as some tribal psychologists begin to Indigenize the technologies of psychology with Indigenous knowledge (*Therapeutic* 156). This rearticulation centers both on the subject of trauma and on the outcomes of healings. In terms of the former, she claims that “in their own narratives, their victimization (i.e., colonization) would end with their self-governance, a self-governance that they reflexively understand as being reliant upon a return from personal and communal colonial fragmentation” (“Trauma” 161). Toward the latter she says, “[T]he subjects of Indigenous sovereignty are reconstituted nations, individuals, families, and communities” (161). Million’s solution is an Indigenism that serves “as an international discourse and as a language that opposes the colonial fragmentation of persons, families, and communities” and “seeks lateral moves outside the colonial Aboriginal subject to articulate a healing that reconstitutes Indigenous identity without depending on the ephemeral case for state recognition to practice one’s culture” (161).

Older Than America calls for just such a healing Indigenism. The film’s protagonist, Rain Many Lightnings, uncovers the history of abuse her mother, Irene (Rose Berens), and other children were subjected to at the local Catholic residential school on the Fond du Lac reservation and how church leaders covered the tracks of this abuse by committing Irene to a nearby Catholic mental hospital and by discreetly burying the bodies of the children who died at the school in the woods nearby. Building from this mother-daughter relationship, Lightning explores the restoration of repressed traumatic memories as a means of healing the reservation community, strengthening Indigenous identities,

and exposing the crimes of local colonial authorities. Central to this healing is the reaffirmation of her Cree identity and of the legitimacy and goodness of her people's traditional ways. Raised primarily by her Catholic aunt Barbara (Tantoo Cardinal), called "Auntie Apple" because she is "red on the outside, white on the inside," Rain has grown up distant from her more traditional mother and from her community's practices. Convinced by the lies of Barbara's spiritual advisor, the local vicar, Father Bartoli (Stephen Yoakam), she further believes that the proudly Indigenous Irene is schizophrenic and that the spiritual pull of her own Indigenous heritage will eventually drag her into a similar madness if she does not resist it. Rain is effectively immobilized by a web of falsehoods woven by religious, medical, municipal, and familial authorities bent on preserving colonial power on the reservation, and it is only the intervention of the spirits of Indigenous victims of the local Penmore residential school and the power of their living memories that allow her to reclaim her life and her family and to begin to heal the community's colonial wounds.

Healing in *Older Than America* requires Rain to weaponize Native truths, and the film's primary method of truth telling lies with filmic techniques that give visual representation to individual and communal memories that resist the subjectivity and chronologic of traditional European American autobiographical forms. These memories are embodied through representations of residential school life in a series of short, often black-and-white, and sometimes silent scenes set at the long-closed Penmore school. A Catholic boarding school at which Indigenous children were regularly abused, Penmore was forced to shut down after sustaining damage from a freak earthquake while Irene, Barbara, and their brother, Walter (Dan Harrison), were students there. The school has been boarded up and is guarded closely by Father Bartoli and the local officer of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), so the crimes committed there are forcibly kept under wraps. In addition to wrongfully committing Irene and subjecting her to treatments that leave her in a near-vegetative state after she brought forth claims against Penmore, the local authorities take an active role in covering up the school's history. Mayor Paul Gunderson (Chris Mulkey) murders Walter around the same time Bartoli convinces Barbara to have Irene committed. Despite the concerted efforts of religious and municipal authorities to repress them, the community's experiences

demand recognition and emerge through the aforementioned vision scenes. Although the great majority of these narrative interventions are experienced by Rain alone, they skirt the conventional subjectivity of European American portrayals of psychic phenomena, taking on an objective reality that has agency within the reservation community. Rain witnesses and is once transposed into events that occurred during her mother's youth, while non-Native geologist Luke Peterson (Bradley Cooper) visits the residential school's past metaphorically through photographs and articles and literally by the brief apparition of a Native friend of his who had committed suicide years ago. Father Bartoli is confronted by the spirits of a group of children killed at the boarding school who force him to watch a montage of abuses toward Indigenous children, and these literal spirits, such as Walter's, prove themselves to have efficacy in the physical world. Much like the residential school memories shared by Indigenous people across Canada, these visions of the past refuse to remain in, or even to be about, the past alone, and they similarly collapse the barriers of subjectivity, attempting to separate the victim as an individual subject from a broader communal or historical context.

Older Than America's filmic representations of memory form an apt parallel to the testimonial style of the survivor narrative because that narrative is more performative than literary in nature. An unfortunate but necessary conceit of the TRC's methods of gathering and distributing information is its overwhelming preference for recordkeeping. The TRC "sets the record straight" on residential schools by inviting Native people to tell their stories and then recording and, when consent is given, publishing them and giving them the historicizing heft of the recorded word and the endorsement of the federal government. The TRC, to a certain extent, writes Native history by making Native histories look like European American ones, pieces of its final report such as *The Survivors Speak* weaving individual testimonies together to create coherent historical narratives of the residential school system. Each survivor's story is the narrative of an authoritative witness, embodying the teller's lived experience and reflecting his or her thematic priorities. Collected, truncated, and reorganized into book form, stories published in TRC publications are made to speak to an official narrative instead. Lightning's film declines to participate, forsaking the written word and non-Native support to create its own Indigenous method of historical

storytelling. Its vision of residential school abuse further captures the style of the survivor narrative in several respects. For many Native children, residential school life represents a sundering of narrative logic. In survivor stories, this sudden disruption of a life narrative often results in confusion and bewilderment, precipitating doubts about the coherence of life before admission into school; many survivors express feelings that their families did not love them or betrayed them, while others assume that they themselves have done wrong. Often, these hurtful narratives were enforced by school personnel. One survivor was told on her first night at a residential school that “if your mother and dad really cared about you, they wouldn’t have left you here” (*Survivors* 40). Feelings of anger, guilt, and dissociation were further fueled by a racist curriculum that painted Native culture as savage, uncivilized, and sometimes even demonic. Distortion of meaning in a life narrative is often attended by a collapse of narrative chronological coherence as well.

By the end of *Older Than America*, Rain establishes a coherent narrative both of the Penmore school and of her own life, but what she finds is not a traditional European *chronology* of events. The film’s images of residential school life present a challenge to traditional Western narrative chronologic. Though many of these scenes take the form of Rain’s visions, subjective experiences of the past that do not necessarily constitute a literal reordering of objective time and are stylistically similar to traditional Hollywood flashback sequences, there are instances in which actual temporal displacement or cyclical repetitions of events occur. Near the film’s climax Rain finds herself transported to the school as the 1956 earthquake begins, watching as the staff evacuate the building without ensuring the safety of the students, several of whom have been locked in the basement as punishment and then left to die in the disaster. Desperate to prevent the tragedy of the past, Rain and her mother of fifty years past struggle to free the children and ultimately fail. When Rain, like her mother before her, is wrongfully committed to the Penmore hospital, she witnesses Irene being wrestled down by doctors and administered drugs and electroshock therapy while the same thing is done to her in the present. Even Rain’s purely subjective experiences of the past mirror the fractured continuity that necessarily dominates many stories of residential school life; the trauma of the experience was often continuous yet episodic, and traumatic memories are often recurring and therefore difficult to contain within a narrative chronology. Million observes that “[t]rauma

supposes a violence that overwhelms, wounding individual (and collective) psyche, sometimes suspending access to memory” (*Therapeutic* 2). Many survivor storytellers are confronted with the formal difficulties of relating experiences that they had as children, stories that the passage of time and the nature of childhood memory have fractured. The lengthy gap between childhood memory and the present may be complicated by the disruptive nature of the traumatic memory. As Gobodo-Madikizela and Van Der Merwe note, “[T]ension between intrusive memory and avoidance of trauma renders traumatic memory difficult to assimilate,” complicating the traumatic event’s inclusion in a coherent narrative (25).

The intrusion of visions of the Penmore residential school into Rain’s life further parallels the dramatic disruption of traumatic memory. Fleeting images of abuse—a girl thrown down a flight of stairs by a nun, a boy tearfully fleeing the scene of a rape at the hands of a priest, a group of children huddled together in the darkness of their cellar prison—enter abruptly into her consciousness. She is almost killed when she swerves her car to avoid running over a group of spectral students she sees on the road at night, and her self-narration steadily begins to fragment as she fears that she is developing schizophrenia. Though in time her visions come to foster rather than prevent healing, the healing process begins only when Rain is able to find narrative coherence in her experiences. However, doing so requires her to acknowledge that the previous European American narratives on which she was raised are false. Furthermore, because her visions and her interactions with Native spirits are incompatible with European American narratives, she must turn to Native narratives in which her experiences can find coherence. This revisiting of narrative frameworks is significant because the act of storytelling for many survivors is simultaneously an act of analysis. Relating survival stories requires the sufferer to take the role of interpreter, an act that takes power away from abusers, whose interpretation is part of the dominant discourse that led to the abuse in the first place and continues to deny it, justify it, or offer extenuating circumstances in its defense. This act of interpretation, and of reinterpretation, leads Rain and her community toward the renewal of their traditions. Rain’s ability to establish a new narrative of the Penmore school leads to a number of significant changes to the reservation. Father Bartoli is arrested, and the hidden burial site of many Native children is reclaimed; Irene’s stories are proven true, leading to her release from the sanitarium; and the

crimes of Mayor Paul Gunderson are revealed to the community, leaving the Native people of the Fond du Lac Reservation poised to elect an Indigenous candidate, Steve Klamath (Glenn Gould), who promises to defend the community's rights and land against further encroachment.

The fracturing of narrative time in testimony and in Lightning's film serves a rhetorical purpose as well. Niezen finds that many survivors interviewed by the TRC attempt to "press beyond the Commission's mandate by giving expression to other grievances, often more current, sometimes even expressed with more urgency and passion than their traumatic memories of the abuse they received in school" (6). In a public statement on testimony gathering, the TRC's leadership encourages participants "to share any aspect of [their] li[ves]" having to do with their school experiences, specifying that survivors may be interested in speaking about life "before, during, and after attending residential school" and may speak about "direct experiences as a student, as the relative of a student, as someone who worked in the schools or of any other experience related to residential schools" (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, "Statement"). In line with compensatory programs like the IAP that provide financial redress to survivors both for time spent in the schools and for its negative impacts afterward (such as lost wages, addictions, medical problems, social and psychological impairments, etc.), this call to give voice to anything associated with the schools emerges from a Western concept of trauma that begins with a traumatic event and delineates its aftereffects. For many storytellers, however, their time spent in the residential schools is only part of a larger historical trauma. What aspects of life are related to residential schools is a question many survivors interpret very broadly, using testimony as an opportunity to make far-reaching statements about Indigeneity in Canada or air any grievances they have about local, state, or federal authorities. This narrative urgency to lay the wrongs of the past and present side by side or even to equivocate between them is certainly not new to considerations of ongoing personal and generational trauma faced by Indigenous people. It is also reminiscent of the cyclical chronologic of many Indigenous conceptions of real and narrative time. As radio host Richard Two-Rivers says during the resolution of *Older Than America*, circular patterns in Indigenous art, stories, rituals, and structures "represent to us the tendency that life has to come full circle," for "the important thing about coming full circle is that it allows us to

see not only the past but also the future.” This cyclical conception of time mediates a cyclical healing articulated by a progressive return to tradition. The circle’s ability to heal arises, in part, from what Chrisjohn, Young, and Maraun identify in *The Circle Game* as the holistic nature of the circle across Indigenous cultures in North America, one that signals a perennial return at the same time that it signifies change and progress. They contrast this concept of circularity with that of the West—of vacuous repetition, beginning and ending in nothing (133).

The cyclical nature of Indigenous healing finds perhaps its clearest representation in *Older Than America* in the recurring symbol of the medicine wheel. The Anishinaabeg medicine wheel, with its four cardinal directions, colored white, yellow, red, and black, symbolizes several cyclical processes in the world, the environment, and the lives of all people. The yellow East represents spring, infancy, and morning; the red South summer, youth, and daylight; the black West autumn, adulthood, and evening; and the white North winter, venerable age, and night. The medicine wheel as a recognizable symbol of the Anishinaabe peoples appears prominently as the backdrop for the flag of the Fond du Lac Reservation, which flies over the reservation in establishing shots in *Older Than America*—though it flies lower than that of the United States, the symbol of colonial power hanging over the community. The wheel first appears in the opening scene, in which the spirit of Walter Many Lightnings takes part in the Sun Dance ceremony, a sign to those who understand its meaning that Indigenous cycles continue and that Walter and the other spirits are coming to bring healing to the Fond du Lac Reservation.¹¹ Early in the film, Rain is unaware of the wheel’s meaning and is instead disturbed by her dream, seeing Walter’s acts of self-harm during the Sun Dance as sinister rather than sacrificial. The appearance of Walter’s spirit outside her home and his sudden disappearance do nothing to comfort her, as she thinks him to be stalking rather than protecting her. Misreading Walter’s beneficence based on the local authorities’ insistence that such Indigenous visions are signs of an inherited madness from her mother’s family, she assumes that they can only be dangerous hallucinations of the sort that haunt her schizophrenic mother. Cut off from her mother’s cultural knowledge, the wheel appears only as a symbol of her fear of her heritage. She is further confused by the wheel’s superficial similarity to a circumscribed Christian cross. When one of her students offers her a picture of

a medicine wheel that he had drawn in class, she recognizes it as the symbol from her dream and asks him what it is. When the boy simply calls the drawing “a cross,” she takes him at his word, missing its significance as an important symbol of the Fond du Lac community. This conflation of Native and European American culture becomes more literal shortly afterward, when Auntie Apple and Father Bartoli attempt to convince Rain and her fiancé, John Goodfeather (Adam Beach), to have a Catholic wedding, their primary argument against a Native ceremony being that Rain’s mother was raised as a Catholic. Putting aside the likelihood that the rebellious Irene, who refused to sing Christian songs as a girl and was committed for trying to expose the nuns and priests at the school for their rampant abuses, is anything other than a nominal Catholic at best, the two presume that Irene’s experience with Catholicism supersedes generations of Indigenous heritage. In the same way that the dominance of the Christian religion leads Rain and her student to call the medicine wheel a cross, the two Catholics’ rhetoric denies the possibility of simultaneous Indigenous and Christian identities and strips Rain of Indigeneity to save the attribution of Christianity. This rhetoric is taken to its logical conclusion when Rain is herself committed. While in Penmore she ceases to be Rain Many Lightnings and becomes Rain O’Rourke, her family’s rarely used European name superseding the name she has used exclusively up to this point. The Catholic authority figures at the Penmore school, however, are not fooled by the resemblance between the medicine wheel and the cross of their religion, and, seeing it as a symbol of Indigeneity, they try to eliminate it. In one of Rain’s visions of the lightless, stony basement in which children are cast as punishment, she witnesses a group of students huddled in a circle around a medicine wheel they have made from rocks found in their dungeon-like prison. When a nun appears at the top of the stairs to shove another child into their midst, she spies the wheel and stamps at it furiously while decrying the students as “savages.”

The loss of the medicine wheel represents much more than a loss of cultural identity. The alienness of the wheel in Rain’s settler-centered worldview represents a loss of Indigenous ways of knowing the world and her own position in its natural order. For it is only within the cyclical schemata of natural relationships that a holistic Indigenous knowledge becomes comprehensible. As Kathleen Absolon reminds

us in *Kaandossiwin: How We Come to Know*, “Indigenous worldviews teach people to see themselves humbly within a larger web or circle of life,” which “contains our relationships to one another and to all of Creation” (31). These knowledge systems “consider all directions of life: east, south, west, north, and beneath, above and ground levels.” Absolon is Anishinaabe, and the medicine wheel forms the center of her *learning circle*, which organizes Indigenous methodologies and ways of knowing. The disintegration of relationships of family and kinship and the loss of self-knowledge precipitate from Rain’s abandonment of this naturally occurring web of interrelationships.

Eventually, however, the medicine wheel makes its return and replaces the cross as a symbol of life and healing, allowing Rain “to wake from the colonial trance and rejoin the web of life.” Its cyclical processes of renewal and the traditional practices connected to it are brought to the fore by John’s father, Pete Goodfeather (Dennis Banks), who helps Rain to heal in his capacity as medicine man, taking her into the sweat lodge with the assistance of Mattie Moonshadow (Gloria Eshkibok) and chanting and praying for her healing as Walter appears to affirm her membership in the community and her purpose in carrying on the truth-telling work that her mother began thirty years earlier. Before the ceremony, Rain confronts Barbara with Irene’s medical records, taken from Bartoli’s office, which reveal that her schizophrenia was a fabrication meant to keep a young woman one doctor called “strong-willed and resilient” from spreading the truth. Seeing proof that there was never anything wrong with Irene’s mind and that Bartoli had known this all along while leading her to believe that committing her sister to the Penmore hospital was the only way to help her, Barbara furiously tears the crucifix from around her neck and throws it away, realizing that the healing that the local church had promised for her and her family was a lie meant to silence them. The two events affirm the dismantling of the imposed colonial regime and the restoration of the community’s traditional spiritual practices.

The act of healing finds its most literal application in Irene, who is liberated from Penmore following the revelation that she should never have been there in the first place. Damaged by her supposed treatments to the extent that she can do little more than sit and stare and seems only vaguely aware of her surroundings and the identity of her daughter, Irene recovers significantly once discharged. As Rain drives her

home, she looks out the window as the reservation goes by and, seemingly for the first time in years, speaks, saying, "I know this place." As she reidentifies with the physical localities of her community, she similarly remembers herself and her family. Rain leads her to meet with her friends around a circle of drums and invites a shamed Auntie Apple to speak to her sister. Irene recognizes her sister, smiles, and embraces her before joining her community as they sing to the music of the drums.

The promise of Irene's gradual recovery adds a new dimension to Rain's earlier fears that she might be "going the way of [her] mom," a worry doubly representative of the threat of inherited schizophrenia from Irene and of the literal collapse of the boundaries separating her mother and herself as distinct mental entities. As a supposed schizophrenic, Irene initially serves as Rain's madwoman in the attic, confined in silence in the upstairs of an old hospital and representative of a looming gothic madness that claws perpetually at the rational Western mind. As Laura Beadling notes, *Older Than America* is ultimately invested in an Indigenous gothic form that resists ahistorical models of vanishing Indigeneity and the usurpation of Aboriginal history by settlers by forcing its Native characters to seek the past for healing rather than be haunted by it (143–45). At the beginning of the film, Irene and Barbara stand as two competing mother figures for Rain—the former Cree and dysfunctional and the latter assimilated and successful. If Irene is essentially a madwoman, as her doctors claim, then Rain, as her daughter, is at risk for the same illness. Because of this genetic threat, Rain is discouraged from imitating her mother's beliefs and practices as well, a cautious tactic that at first seems to be reinforced by Barbara's stability. The only one of her siblings who is alive and in her right mind, Barbara's eagerness to follow the advice of the priests and doctors of her Catholic faith seems to ensure her safety from a family history of mental illness and dysfunction. In line with popular mainstream images of contemporary Indigenous people as alcoholics or addicted to drugs, impoverished, and depressed, Barbara and Bartoli encourage Rain to connect Indigeneity with degeneracy. A young Barbara even claims in a vision that she would rather be assimilated than be "a dying savage."

The invasion of Rain's mind by the memories of others and the gradual merging of Rain's experiences and those of her mother constitute a psychical transformation with implications not only for the film's sense of narrative chronologic as she is displaced in time but also for Rain's

subjectivity and that of the film. Representations of communal memory undermine the individualistic subjectivity of Western film narratives, forcing *Older Than America* to shift genres from horror to healing as Rain gradually abandons the clinical European American mindset that sees the intrusion of communal experience into her mental life as a sign of schizophrenia into an Indigenous one that sees her visions as a gift allowing her to fully realize her individual and community identity. For Rain, the nature of these visions follows a coherent trajectory, drawing her ever deeper into the shared experience of her community. Unlike Irene, Barbara, and Walter, all of whom attended the Penmore school together, Rain is a secondary survivor born into the community after the school closed, and as such she is forcibly cut off from knowledge of the abuses that took place there due to the violently enforced wall of silence surrounding its nightmarish past. With Irene committed, Walter dead, and Barbara thoroughly under Father Bartoli's thumb, Rain must be awakened to the situation through memories that gradually place her directly in her family's past and allow her to find salvation for her community. As such, her visions progress steadily toward a unification of past and present and gradually spread from her subjective individual experience into the shared experience of the objective external world.

Initially, images of the residential school appear in dreams or what at first appear to be hallucinations and take a montage-like form, inviting connections between past injustices and present circumstances. As her students leave for the day, Rain briefly sees a scar on a little girl's face that quickly vanishes, accompanied by the image of a girl from the residential school with the same scar two generations prior, a mark of the school's intergenerational wounds. However, these visions soon begin to depict events that both are narrative in nature and contain historical rather than merely symbolic truths. After a dinner with Auntie Apple and Father Bartoli at which the two Catholics attempt to persuade her to have a Catholic wedding, Rain dreams about her mother's childhood, seeing a group of schoolchildren led by a nun singing "Silent Night." A young Irene does not sing along, and when the sister demands to know why, she responds in her own language, for which the nun drags her inside and washes out her "disrespectful mouth" with a bar of soap. Just before a car crash that lands her in the county hospital—and eventually in the same psychiatric hospital as her mother—Rain begins to see children from the school in the waking world, a sign that they are not

merely the product of her mind but living spirits seeking to help her. As she is wrongfully taken to Penmore for treatment, she begins to witness episodes of her mother's life as if she were there, watching helplessly as Irene is held down on a table, sedated, and shocked by doctors under Father Bartoli's orders. As she herself undergoes the same treatment in the present, receiving wildly outmoded electroshock therapy for what Bartoli and Barbara alternately call "lies" and "delusions," she sees a nun locking children in the school basement. Rain then sees her mother, aunt, and uncle in a classroom where a priest is leading the students in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. Walter tells his sisters not to say the words and chastises Apple for participating. The priest comes after Walter and Irene, who flee. Further visions reveal to her the location of Father Bartoli's copies of Irene's medical records—illegally obtained and proving that he conspired to falsify her condition to be rid of her for good—as well as the secluded spot in the forest at which the school's victims were buried to avoid public scrutiny. Her physical and temporal translocation into the school during the earthquake serves as the apex of these experiences as she, for the first time, is able not only to witness the past but also to participate in it. This sudden shift is paralleled by similar developments from the spirit world. Throughout her struggles, Rain is watched by Walter's spirit, and as she reaches back into the past, he begins to interact more directly with the present, freeing her from the hospital, giving her instructions for healing, and protecting her from Bartoli.

Throughout the film, the lines between memory, visions, and reality are constantly blurred, as are the notions of subjectivity that European American narratives rely on to give coherence to events and to differentiate between the interior psychology of individual characters, the fictionalized reality of the narrative world, and the tools of narration themselves. Rain's first vision, for example, is the opening of the film itself, in which Walter participates in the Sun Dance. Though its slight tint, drops in frame rate, and lack of spatiotemporal context are dreamlike in nature, it is not until Rain wakes up at its conclusion that it becomes clear that the scene was her subjective experience. Nor is it clear, especially when Walter's spirit begins to appear in the physical world, that the scene was *merely* a subjective experience; given the film's tendency to present images of the past and future out of order, it very well may have been a past event or one yet to happen. It is further

possible that the ceremony may have been performed on a spiritual rather than a physical plane, and as the film demonstrates the potency of spirits in the physical world, the spectral Sun Dance may very well have been the literal, as well as the symbolic, beginning of the community's healing process.

Most of Rain's visions, however, are distinctly linked to the past and to the physical world. These visions, gifted to her by the Creator and directed toward telling the story of her family and her community, are themselves a form of testimony that gradually weaves together to form a coherent narrative linked to her Native identity. Like distant memories, the scenes of the past that Rain observes are short, fragmented, and heavily significant. Yet at the same time, these images, inasmuch as they serve as testimony, revel in the contested boundaries of memories—subjective narratives of an individual experience of the past—and events—the past itself. Throughout Rain's early visions, the cinematic eye of the camera corresponds to Rain's field of vision as a spectator of past events, emphasizing her experience of past events even when she wasn't present for them. As the boundary between visions of the past and the past itself seems to collapse with Rain's physical chronological displacement, so does the model of subjectivity suggested by Rain's earlier visions. No longer does the camera associate with Rain's experience; instead, it adopts its usual narrative objectivity. As Irene acts on the one side of the school's basement door, upon the other side of which Irene is trapped, the viewer witnesses events that Rain assuredly cannot see.

Ultimately, what Rain sees and what her family and community see or have seen cannot be cleanly separated into individual experiences, and neither can the past and present be divided between her mother's generation and her own. As Rain gradually transforms from a mere *individual* woman to a truth-speaking voice of healing for her community, her experiences expand further and further beyond the personal into the communal. Gradually, her expanding breadth of experience grants her a new identity that negotiates the individual and the community. While Rain's visions of the school's history complete the story of Penmore that geologist Luke Peterson is unable to fully uncover through seismological research and the records kept by the non-Native Penmore Historical Society, they ultimately constitute something greater than a European American *history*. Like the narratives of many residential school survivors given to the TRC, their purpose is not simply to cor-

rect the historical record but also to legitimize ways of knowing the past and its relation to the present outside of the European American written record. What Rain discovers is a rich web both of stories and of living and deceased memories accessible through spiritual experiences of her Native identity and through participation in the rituals and practices of her people. The Sun Dance, the sweat lodge, the medicine wheel, and the land itself, at first obstacles to living a coherent and ordinary life, become vessels through which she can spiritually affirm her place in her community, the value of her Cree heritage, and the story of her family—all things that she can experience more closely and know more fully and assuredly than she could through mere historical records. Rain's immersive return to the foundation of her Cree identity finds an apt parallel in Margaret Kovach's *Indigenous Methodologies*, published the year after *Older Than America's* release in 2008. Grounding her own research as a Cree woman in a Nehiyaw epistemology, Kovach emphasizes the importance of *miskasowin*, a process involving going "to the centre of yourself to find your own belonging," in situating herself as a researcher (49). Acknowledging that Indigenous epistemologies do not fragment and compartmentalize knowledge but are "interactional and interrelational, broad-based, whole, inclusive, animate, cyclical, fluid, and spiritual" (56), she emphasizes that respectful use of Indigenous methods requires the researcher to understand and articulate first her place in the world she hopes to study and to describe.

The introduction to Kovach's *Indigenous Methodologies* begins with a personal anecdote about a young Native student's reaction to a presentation of Kovach's on the subject of Indigenous methodologies. Said student, of Native ancestry but feeling removed from her traditional roots, Kovach says, "was drawn to using an Indigenous methodology but did not think that she could go this route because she did not have the necessary cultural connections" (10). Kovach then details her response: "I said that our culture, family, kin, kith, clan, and community wait for us. We have the right to know who we are, and that this right involves responsibilities—but there are people to help us out, that we are not alone. I offered her the best guidance I could should she choose Indigenous methodologies—start where you are, it will take you where you need to go" (10). For Rain Many Lightnings, awakening to an Indigenous worldview—expanding her awareness to encompass the entirety of her community's past and present—is sudden and

supernatural, a spiritual transformation brought on by the intervention of the spirit world. This is not the sort of metamorphosis that the average person can expect. Yet, ultimately, what Rain experiences is not so far removed from what Kovach describes. She receives guidance, some sought and some not, from kin and community she once ignored, and by looking deeply into her family and herself she arrives at last at a proper beginning, an understanding of who she is, where she comes from, and where she must go from there.

The epistemological framework offered by *Lightning's* film and by Indigenized testimonial narratives offers a path for healing to extend from individuals to communities. The search for an Indigenous healing as an alternative to the medicalization of individual and communal trauma is one of *Older Than America's* urgent concerns, and the cyclical return to tradition that Rain ultimately embraces points toward both a personal solution to her own crisis of identity and a precontact healing tradition that answers stereotypes of cultural degeneracy in Native communities. This latter point is significant because any reconciliation founded on the assumption that Indigenous peoples are sick and in need of benevolent settler intervention is not reconciliation at all but merely a reconstitution of the same "Indian Problem" through which settlers justified colonial programs like the residential schools to begin with. No right-minded person would think it wise to appoint the abuser to give therapy to the victim, but sadly this is not an unfair metaphor for what has historically been the case in relations between settler and Indigenous states. It is precisely the case in *Older Than America*, in which Rain and her mother are forced into mental institutions under the influence of the local priests and nuns who were their primary abusers. The blatantly corrupt and self-serving practices of Bartoli and others can hardly be taken as a flat refutation of all Western medicine, of course, and several members of the medical profession—including a Native nurse who attempts to look after Rain following her car accident and a non-Native friend of hers who works as a receptionist at the Penmore hospital and puts her career at risk to help Rain escape from commitment—genuinely have Rain's best interests at heart. Still, the film's ambivalence toward the motivations of the medical establishment and its misconceptions about Native practices emphasize Western medical psychology's inability to act as the sole method for the treatment of Native suffering from the trauma of colonization and are not unlike those espoused

by Native critics of Canadian reconciliation programs. Irene was never schizophrenic, just as Native families that raised their children according to their own customs and traditions were not incompetent; but Irene's resistance to the residential school system, her refusal to give up her language and culture, and her efforts to reveal the crimes committed at the Penmore school are sufficiently "deviant" that she is labeled insane and imprisoned. When her wrongfully administered treatment only harms Irene and leaves her as broken and incapable of caring for herself as she was initially falsely accused of being, settler authorities like Bartoli take advantage of her now real unfitness to keep her stuck in the system permanently. Rain, too, is referred to the psychiatric hospital because there is no room in a healthy European American constitution for prophetic dreams and visions or interactions with the spirit world, such phenomena being relegated to superstitious or diseased minds in the eyes of her clinical captors, who see instead only the specter of what Daniel Heath Justice simply names "Indigenous deficiency" (2).

Rain's supernatural experiences, however, reveal to her the healthiness of her Cree identity and deepen the ties between Irene and herself. Toward the film's conclusion, Rain laments that the assumption of sickness and deviance within her family and community had left her unwilling or unable to live a full and independent life. Articulating her healing involves reference to what Million refers to as "an affective discipline of shame intrinsically woven into the moralized discourses and embodied practices attached to Indian sexuality that informed their own and generations of their extended families' physical and psychic abuse in residential schools" (*Therapeutic* 6). Like the racist caricature of the wild savage painted by proponents of residential schooling and the modern conception of the sick Indian, Rain grew up believing that a loving marriage, a healthy family life, a strong career, and social mobility were simply beyond her reach, not because they were inaccessible to her due to social or economic issues facing her community but because her mother's deviant heritage—conveniently absent in Irene's good Catholic sister—might at any time emerge in her own life and send her spiraling into madness and depravity. For this reason, Rain's final act in the film is to bring Irene home, removing her from the attic-like room in Penmore hospital and from the metaphorical attic in which she had compartmentalized her in her own mind.

In its tendency toward embracing Indigenous methods of spiritual

and physical healing and interest in the possibility of repairing the narrative damage of colonial trauma, *Older Than America* parallels similar calls for a healing Indigenism outside the scope of federally mandated and directed models of redress such as Million's and Emberley's. Particularly, Rain's difficult transformation brings to mind Justice's words in *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter*:

Love, then becomes the binding cord that links us to the world, and from it come all the other meaningful connections between the ancestors and descendants of generations to come: respect, reciprocity, accountability, commitment, generosity. Connection through relationship. It's not easy; it's messy, and painful, and uncomfortable. It calls us to be better than we are, to be braver than we expected, in a living world that bears the memory of who we were and the vision of who we are meant to be. It asks us to open ourselves to vulnerability—emotional as well as physical—and to risk the blurring of our boundaries of self in the connection with others. But it requires action. Our humanity isn't what *we are*, but rather what *we enact*—we choose to become human each and every day. (69–70)

Though I draw attention here to a collection of Indigenous voices that has grown increasingly strong over the last decade or so, it is perhaps worth stating the obvious—that Indigenous tools for healing are, importantly, not new. As Lightning's insistence in an interview with *Cowboys and Indians* that Native peoples turn to “those things that are older than America” and the local medicine man in her film's reassurances that the return to tradition is a cyclical process of healing suggest, there is nothing radically innovative about Indigenism other than the circumstances in which the notion has arisen (Wise). Though I should be loath to diminish in any way the seriousness of the political, social, and cultural damage wreaked against the original peoples of North America by settler colonialism, to say nothing of the catastrophic human loss, it would be equally unjust to Indigenous people to pretend that life before contact was one of uninterrupted stasis. Change is the order of the universe, and precontact Natives were no more frozen in time than their European counterparts across the sea. Part of Indigenism's rhetorical draw is that it is not merely a reinvestment in a past and faded Indigeneity but a reaffirmation that Indigenous peoples

have faced and overcome political and cultural upheaval in the past and that colonization, despite its vastness, is not necessarily categorically different to challenges that Native communities have faced before. As a form of *survivance*, as conceptualized by Vizenor, it emphasizes that Indigeneity is enduring and continuous—possessing the requisite tools for a healthy, fulfilling, and self-determined contemporary Indigenous identity—but not static.

In an article in the *Financial Post*, Widdowson claims that Indigenous knowledge “consists of either unsystematic observations or spiritual beliefs,” neither of which “enhance[s] ‘sound facts, evidence, and analysis.’” Privileging this knowledge, she says, amounts to “pretending to admire something that has only a token benefit” (“Junk”). This, sadly, seems to be the opinion of many Canadians, and it can only be combatted through the rigorous assertion by Indigenous people of their right to be heard, the legitimacy of their ways of knowing, and their rightful place at the helm of their own futures. For survivor-storytellers of Canada’s residential schools, Indigenous tools are the central tools of reconciliation. Storytelling is the first step toward healing; truth telling explodes colonial histories, and narration empowers survivors and gives them control over their own life narratives. The storyteller ascribes meaning to events and coherence to memory, and her Indigenous worldview, suppressed in school by colonial ideologies, becomes the lens through which new histories are asserted. Storytelling can be mentally therapeutic and politically potent, but proper healing in Native communities and between Native and non-Native peoples requires that stories be attentively and correctly received. Van der Merwe and Gobodo-Madikizela emphasize that the empathetic listener is almost as important to healing as the narration itself (27). Magda Stroińska, Vikki Cecchetto, and Kate Szymanski offer similar remarks, suggesting that “[t]o witness a trauma narrative is to give the victim the presence and supportive context in which they can express the unspeakable. The act of witnessing these testimonies creates a connection between an individual and the community, between past, present, and future” (13).

But it is also important that trauma narratives be properly received by the right audiences. Colin Davis warns against the impulse to “participate in or co-own the other’s trauma,” which gives the listener “the potentially self-serving illusion of empathetic understanding” (20). Indigenous and Indigenized voices must likewise be received

by listeners equipped to understand their meaning, and *Older Than America*, ultimately, is about a woman who learns how to listen to her mother's story. Though Irene is by all appearances a broken and disturbed invalid confined to an attic-like room in an old hospital, her resilience and courage are irrepressible, and her story forces its way into Rain's life and leads her, through considerable pain, toward understanding. And as contemporary voices continue to resist the powerful recommendations of survivor-storytellers, particularly with regard to the TRC's ninety-four calls to action, it becomes increasingly clear that if reconciliation is to take place, then we need better listeners. The stories put forth by survivors of Canada's residential schools confront us with powerful truths, and it is imperative that Canadians listen and respond to them with the same courage and spirit through which they are given. Lightning's call for actionable healing in the real world similarly demands both storytellers and listeners, placing equal responsibility for reconciliation on Native voices to take leading roles in reconciliation and on non-Native audiences to listen and to act upon them in good faith.

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NOTES

1. Though the concept of residential schools in Canada predates the Indian Act, 1879 saw the publication of the Davin Report, which led to the establishment of the government-funded and church-operated system widely discussed today. An 1894 amendment later gave Indian agents the right to compel the children of supposedly unfit parents to attend government schools, and in 1920 a further amendment mandated that all Indigenous children be placed either in a residential or a day school. The TRC's *Knock on the Door* offers a useful timeline of major developments in the Canadian system.

2. See, for instance, Tasker. Worth mentioning is Beyak's employment of a statement from Tomson Highway in 2015 highlighting his own positive experience in a residential school and citing it as a contributing factor to his success. Highway's account has been variously employed in defense of the work of residential schools, only most famously by Beyak. The remarks have proliferated, no doubt in part due to Beyak's use of them, through right-wing groups, most recently appearing in flyers posted at the University of New Brunswick alleging that Indigenous people are beneficiaries rather than victims of colonization.

3. Some Indigenous critics lament that the destruction of the records will constitute an erasure of history, allowing Canadians to forget some of the most harrowing experiences of survivors and burying the largest body of narratives the government has collected. Other Natives like Phil Fontaine, who was instrumental in bringing the IRSSA into being in the first place, wish to see the records destroyed to keep their confidentiality and protect them from researchers, noting that the Court's decision offers a grace period during which survivors can opt to have their testimony preserved. Opponents of the decision, however, object that without a massive investment of time and resources, it will be impossible to track down thousands of survivors to acquire permission. Some further opine that the aging population of survivors is rapidly dwindling and that many who gave testimony to the IAP with the understanding that it would be preserved forever are now deceased, their testimony's fate predetermined by their passing. The federal government has argued that the testimony given to the IAP is the property of the government itself and that the authority to determine its preservation rests with the government, a position that has been echoed by some researchers but may ignite further debates over ownership of Indigenous testimony given to federal institutions through the IRSSA. Unsurprisingly, several churches and many religious groups involved in running the residential schools have advocated for the destruction of all the testimony and have supported the Supreme Court in its decision.

4. It will perhaps seem odd that this study of Canadian/Indigenous discourses centers around a film that, while the work of a Cree filmmaker living in Canada, is neither set in Canada nor focused on a Canadian residential school. Though the film is set in the United States, the Penmore residential school reflects an educational project that is identifiably Canadian. Though the Canadian school system that emerged after confederation greatly resembled that already in place in the United States, it was defined by a level of cooperation between the federal government and major Christian churches—predominantly Catholic, Anglican, and Methodist—well beyond that of its neighbor to the South. In part to save costs using missionary labor, the majority of Canadian residential and day schools were operated by churches (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 34), around 60 percent by the Catholic oblates specifically (Niezen 1). The omnipresence of the churches, particularly the Catholic Church, in Canada's residential schools is reflected in survivor testimony from within and without the TRC in which priests and nuns are the primary abusers. *Older Than America* might be set in the United States, but in presenting fragments of colonial violence perpetrated by authority figures of the Catholic Church it evokes a shared traumatic memory that is distinctly Canadian.

5. *Older Than America* was filmed on location and is set on the Fond du Lac Reservation in Minnesota, though its location in Penmore County and the existence of a Catholic-run hospital and residential school on the reservation are fictional. The late Jim Northrop, celebrated Anishinaabe author and performer and real-life resident of the reservation, appears briefly in the film.

6. To maximize the accessibility of my sources and to protect the privacy of statement givers, this article makes use only of survivor testimony that has already been made public.

7. Though the RCAP report, the IRSSA, and the TRC constitute a program of reparations and outreach to Indigenous peoples by a Western democracy that is unprecedented in its scope and public profile, many Native and non-Native critics are quick to observe the potentially self-serving actions of the liberal state to circumscribe the “renewal” of federal-Indigenous relations within a far-reaching rhetoric of Canadian multiculturalism. Ronald Niezen observes a perhaps surprising absence of federal participation and representation at TRC events, especially in comparison to the many Christian churches that routinely sent ranking and nonranking representatives to make formal statements and offer private expressions of remorse, an absence that has not gone unnoticed by critics. Niezen suggests that the liberal government is reluctant to draw attention to its own culpability, preferring to have the pre-1982 government and the churches take the bulk of the blame. Along these lines Jennifer Henderson and Pauline Wakeham suggest that “the state has arguably framed its approach towards reconciliation as a more committed and coherent project than it actually is in order to shore up national mythologies of Canada’s dedication to pluralism and to reinforce Canada’s international reputation as a peacekeeping, peace-making nation” (7). Using Derrida’s concept of the “globalization of forgiveness,” they claim that liberal Canada “is prompted by a pragmatic attention to a global context of shifting expectations of historical reckoning, if not the overcoming of history itself, as a criterion of admission to the international civil society of free-trade zones and corporate investment” (7). Matt James adds that Canada’s movement toward reconciliation with Aboriginal peoples can be read as part of a shifting rhetoric of multiculturalism toward “a discourse of ‘cohesion’ and ‘heritage’ attenuated . . . as a quasi-official language for promoting difference recognition in civic debates” that “stress[es] ‘Canadian heritage’ in the singular to convey a newly aggressive stance towards the politics of difference” (34). Thus, moves toward healing Native communities can be employed to consolidate Indigenous identities into a broader, multi-cultural *Canadian* identity. To many critics, these motives are evident in the federal government’s attempts to justify or even glorify the contemporary liberal state and its institutions even as it apologizes for past wrongdoing. Though generally well-received as the first major statement of apology from the federal government itself, Stephen Harper’s 2008 apology on behalf of the Canadian government rests on what Eva Mackay refers to as “a demarcation between the pre-apology past and the present in which the crime or transgression is absent . . . by effectively marking racialized colonial and national wrongdoings *as past*, and sidestepping complex questions about how similar colonial structures may continue” (49).

8. Dale Turner offers a sentiment similar to Million’s on this subject: “The TRC’s idea of reconciliation focuses on resolving historical injustices in order to heal ‘unhealthy’ Aboriginal communities, whereas the idea of renewal, especially as it has been understood since the 1996 *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (RCAP), is explicitly a political project: reconciliation attempts to heal Aborigi-

nal peoples and communities; renewal attempts to implement the nation-to-nation political relationship" (100).

9. In their chapter in the edited collection *Understanding Trauma*, Cecile Rousseau and Toby Measham offer a similar observation that scientific and psychotherapeutic models of trauma remain "impoverished in [their] inability to incorporate non-medical and non-Western sources of knowledge" (Rousseau and Measham 279).

10. It is worth noting, additionally, that contemporary narratives of victimization such as those sought by the TRC are a largely European American creation and have been traditionally understood in the context of growing social justice-related discourses within liberal democracies rooted in contemporary theories of trauma and victimization. As such, several aspects of the genre—the individualization of traumatic experiences, its foundation in a power dynamic of victims and aggressors, and the medicalization of victimhood—are distinctly non-Native and have taken as their archetypal models instances of trauma in which victims are usually European American and white, such as the Holocaust, posttraumatic stress disorder among Vietnam War veterans, and Western victims of physical and sexual violence. Intervention projects aimed at narrating trauma in non-Western communities are complicated by cultural differences in experiencing and responding to trauma and in choosing narration or silence as a coping mechanism. Barbara Chettle uses the example of Lao refugees living in Ontario, many of whom expressed bewilderment at counselors' suggestions that narrative trauma might alleviate suffering, citing commitments to forget traumatic events, unwillingness to burden even close family with individual suffering, or social obligations to be respectful as foreign nationals living abroad. Moreover, as Stevan Weine rightfully notes, the encouragement of narrative production in victims of trauma has traditionally been promoted as a sort of intervention in which alleviating suffering is forcibly tied to diffusing aggressive or otherwise negative sensations that might be a barrier to larger social goals: "[T] here is a tendency to overemphasize that trauma-disturbed cognitive mechanisms in individuals pose obstacles to peace and reconciliation, to extrapolate these individual phenomena to the larger group level, and to believe that these must be transformed through clinical or psychosocial interventions" (121).

11. In an interview with *Cowboys and Indians*, Lightning admitted to an agonizing inner conflict over the incorporation of the Sun Dance ceremony in *Older Than America* due to its sacred nature but claimed she ultimately decided that "I just had to go with it. At the end of the day, it's about who we are: our ceremonies, our dances, our songs. All of those things that existed before boarding schools. All of those things that are older than America" (Wise). Its inclusion is also symbolic, as the same body of amendments to Canada's Indian Act that saw the Sun Dance ceremony and many other rituals and objects of religious significance banned gave the government powers to force Indigenous parents to enroll their children in residential schools and limited the authority of tribal councils (Fontaine 29).

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Among Ghost Dances

Sarah Winnemucca and the Production of Tribal Identity

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In the late 1860s and late 1880s, Ghost Dance movements emerged out of and extended across the Great Basin, into California and the Columbia Plateau, down to the Colorado River, and onto the Great Plains, emanating from visions of Native regeneration dreamed by Northern Paiute men (Wodziwob of the Walker River Reservation and Wovoka of the Yerington band).¹ The most famous and well-documented of these prophet movements in the late nineteenth century—the Ghost Dances of 1870 and 1890, as they have come to be known—can be understood, though, less as solely the result of ideologies or principles that derive from a single prophet figure than as part and parcel of a broader set of sociospiritual dynamics that were prevalent throughout the region during the entire period and that were of a piece with a range of other prophet-led movements that preceded and were concurrent with those that came to be labeled as a “Ghost Dance.” As Gregory Smoak suggests, “The Ghost Dances were an appeal to spiritual power to overturn a world that was not of their making” (199), and he continues, “The Ghost Dances were not two discrete movements but rather two periods of intense excitement in a continuing pattern of religious practice that stretched throughout the nineteenth century and survives to this day” (204). Yet in Sarah Winnemucca’s *Life among the Piutes* (1883), she does not discuss these movements at all. Not only is this omission quite notable given that the text addresses Northern Paiute politics and history reaching from the 1840s to the 1880s, which includes the widespread response to Wodziwob’s visions starting in 1869, but two of the central people in the text were known to be shamans and to have participated in prophet movements: Winnemucca’s father and Oytes, both of whom appear as important leaders in the narrative.

In the narrative and in her public presentations, Winnemucca consistently presents herself as speaking for the Paiutes, as representing them and their interests to white publics and government officials.² Many scholars have noted that Winnemucca draws on forms of presentation that would be familiar to white readers in order to advocate for the Paiute people.³ What precisely, though, is the entity in whose name or in whose stead Winnemucca is said to speak?⁴ The sense of such a cohesive political entity might instead be understood as an *effect* of the kinds of strategies the narrative deploys, such as portraying the Paiutes as having a principal chief and occupying a clearly delineated land base for which one could advocate increased Paiute title and control. These rhetorical strategies draw on the terms of existing federal Indian policy, including as it had unevenly been applied in the Great Basin. In this way, Winnemucca's claims to representativity can be interpreted less as a relation of surrogation for or delegation from an already existing entity—call it the Paiute people, tribe, or nation—than as a relay within the circuits of policy and practice generated by settler governance.⁵ In contrast to Winnemucca's claims to speak for a unified Paiute polity or public, Ghost Dance movements highlight the ways forms of Indigenous peoplehood in the Great Basin in the late nineteenth century did not fit the terms of Indian policy, organized as it was around notions of clearly delineated tribes with discretely demarcated land bases, and tracing Winnemucca's evasion of the Ghost Dance underlines the intellectual labor at play in seeking to engage with non-Native popular and political discourses. Attending to *Life's* efforts to avoid and to speak around the sociopolitical implications of the Ghost Dance emphasizes the constructedness of the account of cohesive Paiute identity that the text offers.⁶

This way of approaching Winnemucca's narrative highlights the difficulties at play in reading the relation between Native texts' portrayals of peoplehood and extratextual sociopolitical formations. In *The Common Pot*, Lisa Brooks asks, "What happens to our view of American history when Native narratives are not just *included* but *privileged*? . . . What happens when we put Native space at the center of America rather than merely striving for inclusion of minority viewpoints or viewing Native Americans as a *part* of or on the *periphery* of America?" (xxxv), and she suggests that such a reorientation "serves as a model for reading indigenous texts within the network of rivers and

relations” in ways that can mark the “persistence of indigenous political systems, relationships, and epistemologies” (xli, xlii). However, to what extent can texts written for non-Native publics in the nineteenth century provide a window onto Indigenous sociopolitical formations? These Native narratives provide accounts of Indigenous identities, histories, and geographies that often aim to articulate visions of indigeneity that will be intelligible to settlers. If we seek to foreground Indigenous networks of relation as they played out in “Native space,” then we may have to read Native writings against the grain, to mark how their modes of portraying Indigenous peoplehood and of seeking to advocate for Indigenous peoples engage with the terms of settler-colonial discourses in ways that can reframe, mistranslate, distort, and efface extratextual dynamics of Indigenous peoplehood, territoriality, and governance.

Such tensions appear particularly pointed in instances where Native authors and texts, like *Life*, assert their *representativity*—not simply depicting a particular people but claiming to speak in their name. By focusing on the dynamics of representativity, I seek to address, in Gayatri Spivak’s terms, how two senses of *representation* get collapsed into each other—the difference “between a proxy and a portrait.” The conflation of those two becomes particularly problematic when “running them together” enables one to suggest that “beyond both is where oppressed subjects speak, act, and know *for themselves*,” which “leads to an essentialist . . . politics” (Spivak 258, 259). If Winnemucca can only come into non-Native public view as an authorized speaker in her claim to serve as a representative of the Paiute people, treated as a singular entity, how does such a staging of herself as political proxy enact a version of Paiute tribal identity—a portrait—that normalizes the terms of settler policy as the commonsensical basis through which to understand Native peoplehood? If we approach her invocation of “the Piute nation” in *Life* as merely referential—as an existing political entity that the text cites, thereby offering a window onto “Native space”—we end up obscuring the intellectual labor Winnemucca performs and the politics of the discursive and institutional context in which she does so. She offers a particular staging of Paiute collectivity in order to be able to interface with non-Native frameworks (conceptual and political). That depiction of a coherent “Piute nation,” though, requires serious editing and reformulating of Native geopolitical mappings and identifications as they played out in the Great Basin in this period, as evidenced in and by

the Ghost Dance and other prophet movements. Reading for the largely effaced traces of Ghost Dancing in *Life*, then, enables us to see how and why the text constructs Paiute nationhood through its enactment of representativity.⁷

Tracking the ways Native authors use assertions of representativity to negotiate with non-Native publics and their expectations also foregrounds tensions in current approaches to the question of state recognition. A number of scholars have focused on how seeking acknowledgment from the state can normalize and legitimize existing colonial ideologies. As Glen Coulthard argues in *Red Skin, White Masks*, “[I]nstead of ushering in an era of peaceful coexistence grounded on the ideal of *reciprocity* or *mutual* recognition, the politics of recognition in its contemporary liberal form promises to reproduce the very configurations of colonialist . . . power that Indigenous peoples’ demands for recognition have historically sought to transcend” (3). He further suggests that the recognition can appear “as something that is ultimately ‘granted’ or ‘accorded’ a subaltern group or entity” in ways that suggests “its failure to significantly modify, let alone transcend, the breadth of power at play in colonial relationships” (30–31). The pursuit of such recognition from the state further can reaffirm “the problematic background assumption that the settler state constitutes a legitimate framework within which Indigenous peoples might be more justly included,” thereby “leav[ing] intact . . . the legitimacy of the settler state’s claim to sovereignty over Indigenous peoples and their territories,” as well as “the normative status of the state-form as an appropriate mode of governance” (36).⁸ In this vein, one might understand Winnemucca’s presentation of Paiute identity as a bid for recognition that reifies the terms of Indian policy, at the expense of the kinds of less rigidly delineated and more porous conceptions of peoplehood at play in prophet movements and associated social forms and mappings. However, in her analysis of the contemporary processes of Osage constitutionalism, Jean Dennison emphasizes the dynamics of “entanglement” that shape Indigenous political decision-making, “call[ing] attention to the inherent power dynamics within the ongoing colonial context without erasing the agency that national reform entails” (6–7). She observes, “The nation-state model with its power dynamics and internal workings is anything but ideal, but it is currently the primary tool for exerting sovereignty,” further noting that “the nation is

clearly a necessary entanglement. The key is making something out of this structure that does not mirror the oppression of the colonizer” (8). If Coulthard emphasizes the dangers of reinforcing settler frameworks, Dennison stresses the contingent value for Indigenous people(s) of taking up the discourses and institutional forms available to them within the “ongoing colonial context” in order to fashion possibilities for collective identity and governance that exceed settler interests and imperatives. Even as the critique of recognition provides a powerful analysis of state aims and the threat of co-optation, it can underexamine the difficulties and exigencies of inhabiting the entanglements of settler-colonial governance, particularly in the context of active programs of mass removal and military aggression. *Life* illustrates the dynamics of late-nineteenth-century modes of entanglement and the effort to navigate them in ways that, in Dennison’s terms, enact a “politic of contestation” and seek to increase Paiute “capacities” for autonomous governance (5, 7). That process, as well as its costs and erasures, though, only comes into view when one does not treat the text as offering what amounts to a transcription of “Native space.”

Understanding the vision of a unified Paiute nation that Winnemucca’s narrative offers as a strategic fiction draws attention to the difficult mediations Winnemucca performs in negotiating the relationship between settler frameworks and lived formations of indigeneity that do not fit such paradigms. In this way, Winnemucca’s narrative provides a powerful example of how Native writing in the nineteenth century often does not so much reflect or convey preexisting modes of (geo)political identity as rhetorically constitute a version of peoplehood that allows the writer to position herself as an advocate within non-Native discursive and institutional networks. *Life* mobilizes elements already at play in Indian policy to constitute the Paiutes as a specific kind of group, call it a tribe, that functions in particular ways—with a singular leadership on a clearly delineated land base that is cleanly differentiated from that of other tribes. Winnemucca offers this portrait of Paiute identity and place-making in order to enable her to advocate for changes in existing federal policy. However, in the process of doing so, she also must displace prominent regional principles, practices, and geographies that run counter to the administrative and ideological frameworks at play in Indian policy, since such regional formations undermine both her claim to stand for the Paiute people and the presence of a clearly delineated *Paiute people*

for whom she could speak. The issue is not so much that non-Native readers would have particular perspectives on Ghost Dancing that would thwart Winnemucca's aims as that engaging with the social, spatial, and political dynamics of Ghost Dancing in the Great Basin among Paiute and neighboring people(s) would lead to an account of Indigenous identity/identities that would not fit the model of unified nationhood that organizes Winnemucca's narrative and that sustains her appeal to non-Native publics.

Thus, we can only understand the full dimensions of the text's political and intellectual work when we address the ways its portrait of Paiute identity does not simply tactically negotiate non-Native discourses but largely invents a cohesive Paiute identity/nationhood as part of its maneuvering.⁹ Drawing attention to the text's nonengagement with Ghost Dancing underlines the rhetorical processes by which the narrative gives shape to the notion of a Paiute tribe and by which Winnemucca positions herself as the representative for it. By employing definitions of tribal identity at play in Indian law and administration, *Life* seeks to endow Paiute peoplehood with a form recognizable to non-Natives that facilitates advocacy within settler networks. Conversely, working within and through the terms of settler governance in these ways—in order to present herself as a viable spokesperson—also implicitly disowns other extant Indigenous sociopolitical formations, like those associated with Ghost Dancing. Each section below will address particular aspects of how the text shapes its depiction of Paiute collectivity to fit non-Native frameworks in ways that both consolidate Winnemucca's representativity and displace (even while being marked by) alternative regional patterns in terms of understandings of leadership, relations with neighboring peoples, and modes of collective place-making.

IN SEARCH OF CHIEF WINNEMUCCA

Life presents Winnemucca as descended from a chiefly family. During her public addresses in San Francisco and in the Northeast, both just prior to and in the wake of composing the narrative, Winnemucca indicates that she is touring and speaking to white audiences as an expression of her father's aims and status as leader of the Paiute tribe.¹⁰ Moreover, in the "Editor's Preface" to *Life*, Mary Mann refers to the

“impulse” for Winnemucca to tell her story as “the dying charge given her by her father, the truly parental chief of his beloved tribe” (2). This way of portraying Paiute governance depends on understanding Chief Winnemucca, Sarah’s father, as the undisputed leader of a political structure that encompasses Paiutes stretching from what is now southern Nevada up to southeastern Oregon and east into Idaho.¹¹ Winnemucca’s portrayal of her father and her family in these terms helps create the sense of a clear Paiute chain of command that would facilitate diplomatic negotiations, such as those conducted through the federal government’s treaty system, while also enabling the narrative to delegitimize other Paiutes who asserted political authority (such as in aligning with the Bannocks in the 1878 war that bears their name). The narrative, though, hints at the existence of other understandings of power at play in the region. Attending to the narrative’s portrayal of Paiute governance, largely through its account of Chief Winnemucca, highlights the ways the text reformats existing modes of association and leadership in the Great Basin in order to construct the sense of a coherent “Piute nation” in whose name she can speak. In doing so, Winnemucca consolidates her own representativity in terms legible within non-Native policy formations that allow her to position herself as a negotiator with authorities while effacing extant regional understandings of power in the Great Basin (including those that enabled Chief Winnemucca’s rise to prominence prior to sustained white presence).

From the beginning, *Life* situates Winnemucca within a line of leadership succession that licenses her speech as a spokesperson for the Paiute people. In the first paragraph of the narrative, she indicates, “My grandfather was chief of the entire Piute nation” (5), and when her grandfather (Truckee, a name given to him by whites) returns from having fought in the Mexican-American War in California on the side of the United States, he “told my father to take charge of his people and hold the tribe” while Truckee returned to California with about thirty families to work for his “white brothers”: “[M]y father took his place as Chief of the Piutes, and had it as long as he lived” (10).¹² These moments unequivocally present the Paiutes as an integrated political body under a single leader, and they cast that authority as generationally transmitted, such that Winnemucca occupies a privileged position in communicating Paiute interests and aims to non-Natives. She appears to readers as, in her own terms, “the chieftain’s weary daughter” (12). As such, she provides

a vehicle for conveying collective sentiments, particularly in the wake of her father's death a year before the narrative was published (Zanjani 233–34). The text further casts Winnemucca as something of a mother to the people, presenting her activity in speaking for the Paiute people as an act of love and a fully reciprocated form of maternal concern and care.¹³ In presenting herself as part of the ruling family, Winnemucca invokes a geopolitical entity over which their authority is extended—“the Piute nation.” The contacts among geographically dispersed Paiutes across the large area of Paiute occupation, though, appear primarily to occur through Chief Winnemucca and members of his family (including Winnemucca). Although the narrative highlights the role of deliberation in council as a vital part of Paiute governance (Winnemucca 52), as part of detailing the existence of democratic processes even amid the chief's rule, Winnemucca does not discuss any coming together of widely separated Paiutes as a body or a meeting by representatives from groups whose principal dwellings lie far from each other. What appears here to tie them together as a “people” is their mutual filiation to Chief Winnemucca, and when the narrative refers to them as “my people” (see 5, 73, 122, 189, 203, 242), that gesture indicates a sense of belonging and relation that seems to be predicated on having a shared “chief.”

More than indicating her father's prominence among the Paiutes, Winnemucca's text repeatedly illustrates how US officials, civilian and military, treat her father as the preeminent leader of the Paiutes as a polity, although often when insisting on the importance of bringing him back to state-managed spaces when he has refused to stay within their boundaries (85, 103, 154).¹⁴ These moments illustrate the ways that Chief Winnemucca serves as an important political figure in the eyes of various US officials, as someone whose whereabouts need to be ascertained and who needs to be brought into spaces more directly regulated by the government (reservations and forts) in order to assert and maintain settler control in the region. As Sally Zanjani notes, “[L]ong before Sarah could be accused of aggrandizing her family's position at the expense of the headmen of other bands, white men had started to recognize Winnemucca as a leader and show their preference for dealing with a hierarchical authority—a chief—instead of the assorted headmen of many fluid bands” (43). Officials seek to draw on Winnemucca's father in order to generate a sense of coherent Paiute identity over which US authority can be exercised through him, positioning him as a metonym

whose compliance can signify and enact the bringing to order of Paiute populations.¹⁵ In many ways, “Winnemucca” comes to function as a public and administrative trope through which to coalesce a range of different visions and versions of authority among Paiute groups, thereby (re)constructing and (re)circulating the image of a unified Paiute collectivity over which such power could be exerted.¹⁶ Reciprocally, Winnemucca cites the Indian Service’s and the army’s use of her father to these ends in ways that reaffirm his role as “head chief of the Piute nation” and, thus, her own legitimacy as the advocate for the Paiute people—as their representative in interactions with non-Native publics.

Scholars, though, have suggested that in the decades prior to sustained contact with non-Natives there was nothing like a Northern Paiute nation, in the sense of having a leadership structure that extended over all Northern Paiute groups or having a clearly delineated territory understood as belonging to such an overarching political body.¹⁷ There were over twenty Northern Paiute bands (Gualtieri 22; Knack and Stewart 16; Zanjani 8). While distinguished by the particular lands and waters they claimed as their own, the bands did not so much operate as cohesive, discrete geopolitical units as occupy overlapping spheres of use, in which each band recognized the other bands’ rights to control particular areas even as they regularly sought and were given permission to use them as part of subsistence strategies within shifting Great Basin ecologies.¹⁸ Michael Allen Gualtieri suggests that “these family or ‘household’ groups were affiliated via a complex web of intersecting consanguineal and affinal relationships, cooperative foraging relationships, and relationships linking particular population clusters—at particular times—to transcendental power (*puha*) itself” (23). People throughout the Great Basin developed extensive relations of kinship and trade with each other that allowed individuals and families to draw on resources in a range of spaces that were not associated with the band to which they may have belonged. There is debate, then, over whether something like the idea of “chief” makes sense for talking about Northern Paiute groups and modes of authority prior to the mid-nineteenth century. The potential absence of a “head chief” raises questions about the text’s claim to speak for a cohesive Paiute *nation*, suggesting that Winnemucca’s narrative participates in the process of generating such an entity rather than simply reflecting its existence and speaking in its name.

However, even as it seeks to project a sense of encompassing Paiute political cohesion through the depiction of her family's leadership, *Life* registers other kinds of authority at play in the Great Basin that suggest a kind of mapping very different from that of a head chief who can represent a unified nation.¹⁹ Chief Winnemucca, Winnemucca, and her brother Natchez all demonstrate the ability to see the future or contemporaneous events elsewhere through dreams (see Winnemucca 14, 83, 184–85). This link reinforces their suitability for leadership by suggesting that their authority arises from other-than-human sanction. Throughout the Great Basin, dreaming served as the basis for shamanic power, indicating a spirit entity's endowment of greater than ordinary access to puha—the omnipresent forms of energy available in all living things (on puha, see Gualtieri; Hittman, “1870”; Miller; Smoak). To be possessed of such increased abilities enabled one to mobilize ambient forms of power to particular ends, especially forms of healing, thereby leading to the figure of the medicine man.²⁰ As Smoak argues, popular belief “in the efficacy of shamanism” throughout the region “provided the internal logic of the prophetic religions of the nineteenth century, including both Ghost Dances” (57). The emergence of prophet-led movements in the late nineteenth century that involved thousands of people and that spread across the Great Basin and Columbia Plateau testifies to the continuing importance among the Paiutes and neighboring peoples of puha and those who could wield it. Moreover, US officials understood these networks as a threat to settler governance (see *Annual Report* [1871] 974, and [1872] 746; Howard, “Report” 211; Howard, *My Life* 376). The relative absence in the narrative of discussion of regular shamanic and spiritually-motivated activity, including the fact that the text jumps from 1868 to 1875 skipping over the period of greatest attention to Wodziwob's visions, can be understood as an effort to bypass the kinds of authority generated through these practices in favor of a portrait of Paiute collectivity as organized in ways more amenable to European American political forms.²¹

While referencing the Winnemucca family's dreamings in ways that work to shore up a sense of their undisputed leadership, the text also indirectly gestures to the importance of puha in securing chiefly status for Chief Winnemucca. Somewhat buried in the chapter titled “Domestic and Social Moralities,” amid the array of Paiute practices and beliefs discussed, Winnemucca notes, “My people capture antelopes by

charming them, but only some of the people are charmers. My father was one of them, and once I went with him on an antelope hunt” (55). The narrative then devotes three pages to discussing the hunt, but the text does not explain the significance of antelope charmers among Paiute people(s) in the prereservation era. Since antelope were a major source of subsistence and charming them was understood as a principal way of gathering enough of them to sustain a band or set of bands for the year, having access to an antelope charmer was of great importance as part of annual food strategies. Bands, as well as sustained relations among them, could take shape around these figures and the forms of power that they employed (see Gualtieri 76–85). This way of mobilizing puha and the kinds of leadership and collectivity that emerged around and through antelope charming are not equivalent to those that gathered around Wodziwob and others who led broader prophet movements, but Zanjani observes that Chief Winnemucca “also prophesied on occasion and related myths to his people that explained their troubles. Some said he could heal bullet wounds. More than fifty years after his death, old men still spoke of his extraordinary shamanistic powers” (9). Moreover, the rituals surrounding the antelope hunt involved a Round Dance, which throughout the Great Basin served as a means of collectively gathering and enacting puha in various annual traditions (including mourning dances among some Paiute groups), and such dances provided the framework, or template, for what would become the central ritual enactment—circle dancing—from which the “Ghost Dance” received its name (see Hittman, “1870”; Gualtieri 137, 141, 215–16; Smoak 114–15).²²

How, then, do we understand what seems like a disjunction between the narrative’s account of Paiute political identity as integrated across the region and what appear to be long-standing and ongoing decentralized Paiute conceptions of power? *Life* can be read as drawing on the administrative and popular narrative of Chief Winnemucca’s ubiquitous authority across Paiute space in order to position the text as engaging in a mode of diplomatic engagement. In this way, we might characterize *Life* as enacting a treaty imaginary, conveying the sense that Winnemucca’s writing itself surrogates for the absent scene of formal negotiation. US treaty-making with Native peoples officially ended in 1871 (on this development, see Bruyneel; Genetin-Pilawa; Prucha). While the Northern Paiutes did not have any formal treaties with the federal government,

Winnemucca references a “treaty giving the Pyramid Lake Reservation to my people” (73), and in her previous speeches and engagements, she speaks of the Pyramid Lake and Malheur Reservations as resulting from treaties (Carpenter and Sorisio 51, 64, 162).²³ Although both reservations were created by presidential executive order, such claims create the sense of an ongoing process of political relation and negotiation that obtains between the Paiutes as a nation and the US government. Amid what Nancy Bentley has described as “the ruins of an absent diplomatic public” in the late nineteenth century (175), Winnemucca seeks to generate the sense of a treaty relationship, with her family serving as diplomatic mediators. The narrative draws on the impression of a history of entering into agreements with US officials for which the terms are unclear or are not honored. At one point, Winnemucca quotes Jim, a “sub-chief” from Pyramid Lake, as saying, “I am going to quit signing any paper, for I don’t know what I have been signing all these twenty-two years” (95), and toward the end of the narrative, Winnemucca asserts, “My people have been signing papers for the last twenty-three years. They don’t know what they sign” (242).²⁴ These moments in the narrative implicitly employ the figure of the treaty as ideally an expression of informed consent to shared terms and a promise of an ongoing relation of peace and friendship between political actors, while also highlighting the failures of the US government to act honorably or in the spirit of the agreements into which it has entered.

Invoking a legacy of treaty-making and treaty violation also allows Winnemucca to position the narrative as an effort to engage in a good-faith process of negotiation.²⁵ In Nevada in the wake of the Bannock War, she gets a telegram from “a man named Hayworth [J. M. Haworth], saying, ‘Sarah, the President wants you and your father and brother Natchez and any other chiefs, four in number, to go to Washington with me’” (217). In her discussion of their time there, Winnemucca indicates that when meeting with various officials she and those with her advocated for the return of Paiutes who had been removed to the Yakima Reservation (218, 219, 221).²⁶ This part of the narrative underlines her and her family’s role as officially recognized representatives authorized to speak for the Paiutes. In response to a later report that they were “a *self-constituted* delegation,” Winnemucca insists, “we did not come of ourselves; we were sent for” (220–21), refusing the idea that they merely had positioned themselves as spokespersons for Paiute collective

interests. Together, these aspects of *Life* seek to give a diplomatic cast and force to the proposals offered in the text for addressing the settler-orchestrated expulsions and deprivations experienced by Paiute people(s) (such as the return of noncombatants who had been removed to the Yakima Reservation, the restoration and expansion of reservation lands, and the reformation of the Indian agency system). In order to engage in negotiation with the US government, including for the return of Paiutes from Yakima, there needs to be a negotiator who is understood as legitimate. Legitimacy in that relation, though, is not solely a function of Native political philosophies and processes but of what will be understood by settlers as a viable and valid entity with whom to negotiate. In this way, *Life* coalesces a sense of Winnemucca as a representative figure, via her “chiefly” lineage, in ways that position her to perform this semiofficial role while also working to generate a sense of “the Piute nation” as a proper partner for such federal diplomacy. Mishuana Goeman argues that “the literary . . . tenders an avenue for the ‘imaginative’ creation of new possibilities, which must happen through imaginative modes precisely because the ‘real’ of settler colonial society is built on the violent erasures of alternative modes of mapping and geographic understandings” (2), but *Life* testifies to the ways that Indigenous struggles to create new possibilities for Native people(s) through acts of writing also involved the mobilization of non-Native “modes of understanding”—such as the existence of centralized “chiefly” leadership over a clearly delimited group—as part of seeking to maneuver within existing policy entanglements. Here, non-Native recognition of Winnemucca’s capacity to operate as a leader serves as a prerequisite in the text’s attempt to leverage Indian policy through public appeal—an appeal modeled on the forms of the treaty system.

The effort to present the text and Winnemucca herself as representative relies on generating a sense of coherent Paiute identity and leadership through the invocation of her “chiefly” lineage. That process of situating her family, particularly her father, in a position of supposedly uncontested authority over the Paiutes as a unified collectivity, though, does not originate in Winnemucca’s narrative. Instead, it was part and parcel of non-Native governmental, media, and popular discourses in the Great Basin and beyond from at least the early 1860s onward. *Life* mobilizes this story of the political status of Winnemucca’s family in ways that enable Winnemucca and the text itself to appear as representa-

tive, as embodying the collective will of the Paiute people.²⁷ In doing so, she recirculates the centralizing vision of tribal identity used by federal policy to try to simplify Native sociopolitical formations and to expedite the process of securing consent to Indigenous land loss. (Having a singular leader of a large group decreases the number of signatories while increasing the jurisdictional scope and significance of their assent.) That strategy, though, occludes other formations of leadership and identification at play in the region throughout the time period that the text covers. The powerful influence of forms of shamanic power and prophecies appears fleetingly in Winnemucca's narrative. Attending to such Ghost Dance traces in the text, though, helps bring to the fore the constructedness, administrative and textual, of accounts of unified Paiute nationality, as well as the presence of other forms of peoplehood (such as those organized around flexible and shifting networks of *puha*)—ones that need to be effaced if "Paiute" is to emerge as a coherent object of public policy and advocacy within the terms of extant Indian administration.

SEPARATING THE GOOD FROM THE BAD

If the Paiutes live on distinct reservations separated by dozens to hundreds of miles, what enables us to understand them as a singular entity in whose name Winnemucca can speak? Distinguishing between the Paiutes and other neighboring peoples gives greater definition to the sense of a clear "Piute nation." More specifically, drawing lines of demarcation that separate Paiutes from other Native groups presents Paiute identity as self-contained and, thus, as juridically differentiable within the terms of Indian law and policy. By seeking clearly to delineate the Paiutes from neighboring groups, particularly those the narrative labels as "bad Indians" (such as the Columbia River Indians and the Bannocks), Winnemucca not only generates a kind of political subjectivity for which she can serve as the representative but also aims to exonerate those who belong to this category from the critique and censure directed against those other groups, particularly due to their supposed wandering and aggressive tendencies. However, this manner of consolidating a sense of Paiute identity and innocence severs long-standing relationships among groups in the region, creating an atomizing portrait of tribal belonging that effaces complex and shifting cartographies of kinship, alliance, and affiliation. In doing so,

Winnemucca's narrative displaces what we might term Ghost Dance geographies, the webs of connection among persons and groups that gain strength through prophet-led movements—Indigenous matrices of engagement that in many ways precede the late nineteenth century but that such movements help further catalyze and extend. While registering traces of these patterns of relation, *Life* also suggests the ways that claims to tribal representativity necessarily efface such networks in order to circulate the kind of tribal identity privileged within settler governance. In this way, the text's strategic engagement with Indian policy does not so much place the Paiutes within Native space, in Brooks's terms, as work (at least rhetorically) to disaggregate such space. The text does so in order to consolidate a sense of determinate Paiuteness cleanly separable from adjacent peoples, and that distinctness both licenses Winnemucca's speech and seeks to exonerate Paiutes within settler determinations of wrongdoing, in order to avoid and remedy the dispossessive consequences of such determinations.

Much of the political work of the narrative lies in its efforts to persuade white readers of Paiutes' capacity for civilization while differentiating the Paiutes from neighboring peoples.²⁸ A good deal of the narrative addresses the resistance of Oytes, a leader on the Malheur Reservation, to the dictates of Indian agents and federal policy. In discussing Oytes's refusal to follow the orders of Malheur's first agent, Samuel Parrish, Winnemucca presents his continuing relationship with the Columbia River Indians as proof of his profligacy. After proclaiming, "I am not going to work" (107), Oytes announces that he and his men will go live with the Columbia River Indians (113). Although Winnemucca notes that "they came to trade with my people every summer," Egan, another Paiute leader at Malheur, declares them to be "bad Indians," and Parrish says that they "were always making trouble, and it was best that they should never come to the reservation at all" (110). Accounts at the time routinely characterized Oytes as a "Dreamer," meaning that he specifically was linked to the followers of the prophet Smohalla and to the dissemination of the Ghost Dance more broadly (see Howard, *Famous* 265; Howard, *My Life* 391–92; Smoak 143; Stowell 151; Zanjani 132).²⁹ Smohalla was a mid-nineteenth-century leader of Wanapum descent who had been a medicine man and became a prophet, eventually gathering a group of followers who at the height of his influence numbered in the thousands. Many of them

lived with him in an off-reservation area just south of the Columbia River, leading to them being known as “the Columbia River Indians.”³⁰ Preventing the conflation of Paiutes with the Bannocks is even more pressing. Given the recent hostilities between US military forces and Native groups that had come to be known as “Bannocks,” as well as the subsequent removal of the residents of Malheur to the Yakima Reservation, one of the text’s chief aims is to enable the return of those Paiutes by establishing their innocence. While the narrative reflects the fact that there were Paiutes from the Malheur Reservation who joined with the Bannocks, Winnemucca tends to localize that dynamic in ways that seek to preserve a distinction between the groups. She insists, “It was Oytes who first carried some of my people over to the Bannocks” (189). Moreover, while other evidence suggests the prominence of Egan and his band in the conflict, *Life* repeatedly highlights Oytes’s centrality to the war (158, 160, 163, 170, 189).³¹ Linking participation in the war to the forms of aberrance and animosity previously attributed to Oytes allows the narrative to present Paiute presence among the combatants as anomalous. Toward the end of the narrative, Winnemucca asserts, “I have given up those who were bad” (218). Separating the good Indians from the bad ones maintains the integrity of the Paiutes as both a distinct collective and one worthy of public pleading in their interests, as well as enabling Winnemucca to present herself as speaking in the name of a singular group that can be differentiated clearly and cleanly from other groups (especially those engaged in punishable behavior).³² Distinguishing the Paiutes from these two groups and simultaneously repudiating them allows Winnemucca both to clarify/construct the boundaries of Paiute identity and to underline Paiutes’ goodness in their relative acceptance of the terms of US policy.

The narrative treats the Columbia River Indians and the Bannocks as discrete groups, and to the extent that they appear as tribes or tribe-like entities, Winnemucca can defend the Paiutes from association with them by underlining the specificity of Paiute tribal identity, particularly in their belonging to a singular “nation” led by her father. The Columbia River Indians and the Bannocks, though, were not so much long-standing ethnic or political units as complex and shifting networks in which belonging had more to do with shared principles (including prophetic affiliations) than genealogical connections or generationally enduring ties to particular territories. While “the Columbia River

Indians” often indicated the followers of the prophet Smohalla who had gathered in the area of Priest Rapids just south of the Columbia River in the mid-nineteenth century, the name also served as something of a catchall for the various bands in that vicinity who refused to live on reservations. The annual report from the Oregon superintendency for 1870 notes “the existence among the Indians of Oregon of a peculiar religion, called ‘Smokeller,’ or Dreamers, the chief doctrine of which is, that the ‘red man is again to rule the country,’” indicating that this doctrine “sometimes leads to rebellion against lawful authority” (*Annual Report* [1870] 514, and see [1872] 746). This description suggests a direct relation between the visions of Smohalla (as well as those who follow him) and *rebellion* against US Indian policy. However, other reports suggest a broader field of reference. One annual report from Oregon speaks of “tribes not under the supervision of agents” that “consist of scattered bands along the Columbia River” and that “are scattered over so vast a country that it would be impossible to gather them together for a treaty” (*Annual Report* [1867] 63, 71–72). Another report suggests, “There are several bands of Indians living on the Columbia River, all of whom have been parties to treaties, but have refused to comply with treaty stipulations, and who, under the ruling of Commissioner Parker, last June, have thereby forfeited all right and interest in and to lands and annuities per treaty” (*Annual Report* [1871] 721). These examples point to the ways that the phrase “Columbia River Indians” less indexed a determinate group than provided a means of collating a range of people(s) whose principal unifying characteristic, in the phrase’s various iterations, lay in their implicit repudiation of settler-sanctioned procedures, identifications, and mappings.

The Bannocks encompassed an even wider array of groups over a much broader territorial range. The term “Bannock” most directly refers to a Northern Paiute dialect, and it was used to encompass Paiute-speaking and Shoshone-speaking mounted bands from the Great Basin that increasingly took part in buffalo hunts to the east during the first half of the nineteenth century (see Smoak). The Bannocks came to be associated with the Fort Hall Reservation in what is now southeastern Idaho. Created by executive order in 1867, the reservation served as the principal state-recognized space for the Bannocks in the wake of the Fort Bridger Treaty of 1868, even as those bands known as Bannocks continued to spend most of their time off-reservation (Smoak 95–112).

However, the term “Bannock” was used more broadly by US officials to include a range of mounted bands across the northern Great Basin and western Columbia Plateau. They are described as “rang[ing] the extreme southeastern part of Oregon, the northern part of Nevada, and southwestern Idaho” (*Annual Report* [1864] 229, and see [1866] 114, [1872] 447). These groups, though, also were folded into the category of “Snakes,” for which “Bannocks” was often used as a substitute.³³ Those peoples loosely called Snakes are, in the words of one official, “a numerous race, divided into various sub-tribes or bands, and extending over a very large extent of country; but their general characteristics are the same. Their language differs in its dialects, but its groundwork is the same. They are a nomadic people, ranging from Nevada and Utah to Oregon, Idaho, Washington, and Montana, often under different names” (*Annual Report* [1867] 72–73, and see [1863] 167, [1864] 228, [1872] 746, [1875] 578, [1877] 568–69). What marks the Bannocks/Snakes as such seems to have been that they are “beyond the reach of the Indian bureau” (*Annual Report* [1867] 72–73), that they do not choose to remain on reservation, and that they occupy spaces to which US officials do not deem them properly to belong. Here we see again a process of collecting a range of persons and bands into a category that then functions as if it were referential, as if it simply indicated a particular group or determinate set of groups rather than a negative relation to US policy—in terms of their supposed scatteredness, nomadism, recalcitrance, and opposition to white governance.

US officials speak of “the Columbia River Indians” and the “Bannocks” as if they are clearly defined tribal entities, but instead, we might understand them as principally marked in non-Native accounts by their rejection of settler frameworks. This perspective resonates with Audra Simpson’s foregrounding of refusal as an alternative to recognition, and she suggests that such refusal “comes with the requirement of having one’s *political* sovereignty acknowledged and upheld, and raises the question of legitimacy for those who are usually in the position of recognizing: What is their authority to do so? Where does it come from?” (11). As with Coulthard’s critique of recognition, discussed earlier, Simpson highlights the ways that the expectation that Native political forms should fit neatly in nondisruptive ways within settler jurisdictional structures normalizes such structures and displaces the colonial violence enacted through their ongoing imposition. If

the people(s) that come to appear in non-Native narratives as the Columbia River Indians and the Bannocks might be characterized as engaged in a project of refusal, the pursuit of non-Native recognition by Winnemucca's narrative sets her at odds with them. She seeks to produce a portrait of "the Piute nation" in and through her claims to representative status that can differentiate that entity and its people from those other groups, which are deemed threatening, blameworthy, and in need of discipline/chastisement by non-Native officials. Yet Simpson also suggests that acts of Indigenous refusal occur in the context of "operating in the teeth of Empire, in the face of state aggression," further referring to Native peoples as existing under settler rule "in states of strangulation," and she asks, "How does one assert sovereignty and independence when some of the power to define that sovereignty is bestowed by a foreign power?" (158). This question brings us back to the entanglements of empire, and in this vein, Winnemucca's differentiation of "Paiutes" from "Columbia River Indians" and "Bannocks"—her positioning of herself as the spokesperson for the good against the bad—can be seen as employing settler-defined notions of Native identity and sovereignty in trying to redress the kinds of colonial strangulation at play in the Great Basin. Within regional networks, "Paiute," "Columbia River Indian," and "Bannock" do not function as discrete categories, and the kinds of refusal that get attached to the latter two in settler narratives also can characterize actions by those labelled as Paiutes. Thus, as part of advocating for "the Piute nation" with non-Native publics, Winnemucca generates a version of such nationality that can be disaggregated from extant regional modes of relation, place-making, and belonging.

In order to produce such a portrait of Paiute identity, for which Winnemucca can then serve as the proxy, *Life* needs to segregate the Paiutes from the Ghost Dance geographies in which they were enmeshed. US officials, civilian and military, tended to use the term "Dreamer" to refer to adherents of Wodziwob's visions and those connected to Smohalla, suggesting that the two prophet movements energized and were imbricated in each other, and that synergy also included Paiute communities. General Oliver Otis Howard, who commanded US forces during the Bannock War, indicates in his report following the end of the conflict, "Their spirit prophets, for example, Oytes, of the Malheurs, prophesied that the time had come when the Indians were to destroy the whites and recover their country" ("Report" 211), and Agent William

V. Rinehart of the Malheur Reservation notes in a letter sent in March 1874 with respect to Paiutes there, “They all held to that particular religious creed called ‘Dreamers’ and practiced all the peculiar rites of that strange belief—such as drumming and dancing, bowing and making strange signs” (qtd. in Canfield 273). Ghost Dancing in its various forms, then, can be understood as informing and mediating relations among Native people(s) across the Great Basin. Moreover, Chief Winnemucca served as an important figure connecting the groups labelled as “Paiutes,” “Columbia River Indians,” and “Bannocks” due to his reputation as a possessor of great *puha*, itself central in the emergence and circulation of prophetic movements. One of the earliest reports from the Nevada superintendency mentions a meeting “with Winnemucca and his people, and also some Bannacks who were visiting them at the time,” adding, “The Bannacks have returned to their own country, accompanied by old Winnemucca, who intends spending the summer with them and returning to his tribe in autumn” (*Annual Report* [1862] 367). Chief Winnemucca’s regionally well-known status as an antelope charmer and other shamanic abilities also enabled him to build a relationship with Pasheco, a prophet figure who emerged among the Bannocks in the late 1850s to whom Chief Winnemucca served as an emissary for the US government in 1864 (see *Annual Report* [1864] 289; Canfield 34; Gualtieri 186, 294–96, 298; Smoak 75–78). While such connections preceded the Ghost Dance of 1870, the movement arising from Wodziwob’s visions seems to have consolidated, intensified, and extended these existing networks of relation. An 1873 article in the *Idaho Statesman* suggested that Chief Winnemucca “had reportedly turned to the Ghost Dance religion, sending runners to the various tribes to tell of his prophecy that one day Indian warriors would rise from their graves and collect on the plain in a powerful army that would wipe out the white man” (Zanjani 112; see also Smoak 124). Bannocks certainly were followers and transmitters of the Ghost Dance movement, spreading it eastward from where it began on the Walker River Reservation in southwestern Nevada and performing related dances during the war (Smoak 118–30, 149).³⁴

As against this sense of prophet-animated fluidity among populations and territories in the region, *Life* posits a clear distinction between the innocent and the guilty, particularly in order to argue for the return of Malheur residents from their exile to the Yakima Reservation. They had been forcibly relocated to Yakima—about four hun-

dred miles from Malheur—as punishment for the Bannock War, even those who had been noncombatants unassociated with Bannock forces (see *Annual Report* [1879] 235–36; Canfield 150–57; Howard, “Report”; Stowell 232–44; Zanjani 186–90).³⁵ The petition with which the narrative closes requests “the Honorable Congress of the United States to restore to them said Malheur Reservation,” adding, “And especially do we petition for the return of that portion of the tribe arbitrarily removed from the Malheur Reservation, after the Bannock war, to the Yakima Reservation on Columbia River, in which removal families were ruthlessly separated” (Winnemucca 247). Presenting the Paiutes who had resided at the Malheur Reservation as having been intimately enmeshed in wide-ranging relations that encompassed the Bannocks and the Columbia River Indians, therefore, would make difficult an argument for their right to return to their former federally recognized lands. Earlier in the narrative Winnemucca insists, “[M]y people have not done anything, and why should they be sent away from their own country? If there are any to be sent away, let it be Oytes and his few men” (203). Later, when meeting in Washington, DC with Secretary of the Interior Carl Schurz, she notes, “I have come to plead for my poor people who are dying off with broken hearts, because they are separated from their children and husbands and wives and sons,” and in response to the charge that “they are bad people” who “have killed and scalped many innocent people,” she retorts, “Not so; my people who are over there at Yakima did not do so any more than you have scalped people. There are only a few who went with the Bannocks who did wrong,” further declaring, “I have not come to plead for the bad ones” (218).³⁶ Winnemucca’s positioning of herself as the proper person to “plead” in the name of her “people” entails distinguishing them from other peoples. The Paiutes’ status as “good” and as a “nation,” then, is coconstitutive in the narrative, rhetorically emerging from Winnemucca’s presentation of herself as righteously speaking in their name.

Recycling the trope of “bad” Indians from earlier in the narrative, these moments of pleading suggest the political ecology in which such a figuration gains meaning and force. To the extent that the Paiutes blend into other peoples, that they are indistinguishable as a unit from those groups that have resisted US policy and administrative mappings, they become legitimately subject to disciplinary action. If they both are a distinct group and are not inherently *bad*, unlike the Bannocks and

Columbia River Indians, then the actions of Oytes and those who went with him can be understood as exceptional—an aberrant “few” whose choices do not reflect true *Paiute* principles and tendencies. The narrative’s assertion of Winnemucca’s ability to speak for a coherent Paiute people, then, takes part in an effort to clarify the sense of Paiute identity so as to differentiate it from the geographies of puha-activated and prophet-mediated relation among persons and peoples at play throughout the region. In this way, *Life* implicitly takes up the discourse of Ghost Dancing as threat promulgated by civilian and military authorities but redeploys it in ways that exceptionalize such elements in Paiute sociality. In doing so, the text works to coalesce a sense of the Paiutes as properly civilized partners for legal recognition and diplomatic negotiation, as conducted by and through Winnemucca.

CLAIMING THE RESERVATION

In speaking as the representative for “the Piute nation,” Winnemucca argues for the need to maintain, restore, and increase Paiute reservations, conveying the sense of a distinct polity whose territoriality must be acknowledged by the federal government. However, in figuring Paiute emplacement in ways that would be more conducive to non-Native conceptions of tribal identity, the narrative provides a vision of indigeneity distanced from the mobilities of land use, affiliation, and belonging that tended to characterize Native space and sociality in the Great Basin. In this way, Winnemucca seeks to distance her account of Paiute territoriality from the more diffuse and shifting geographies of Ghost Dancing and other prophet movements, which largely rejected US policy mappings that sought to locate peoples on particular reservations as their exclusive space of occupancy. Conversely, attending to the ways such movements speak to forms of relation—to place(s) and other people(s)—that exceed reservation mappings helps draw attention to the intellectual and representational labor involved in the text’s portrayal of Paiute landedness. In positioning herself as a spokesperson, Winnemucca contributes to the impression of a clearly delineated Paiute people for whose distinct and rightful land base she can advocate, suggesting the ways the pursuit of state recognition in *Life* works in the service of carving out legally acknowledged Indigenous territory in the face of aggressive projects of expropriation and dispossession. Although

in many ways taking up the orienting parameters of settler policy, the narrative mediates them in its appeal for public intervention, illustrating the character of forms of colonial entanglement in the late nineteenth century, as well as the intellectual and rhetorical labors involved in negotiating them. In this way, Winnemucca's efforts to secure state recognition for a Paiute polity with rights to determinate lands—and to do so via her claims to represent such a polity—suggest how Native writers seek to occupy colonial modes of naming and mapping in order to orient them otherwise. The text's portrayal of life on Paiute reservations, then, effaces prevalent forms of collective identity and land tenure in the region while also generating a vision of Paiute sovereignty aimed at contesting the kinds of administrative discretion exercised by Indian agents and the regulations enacted to control Native labor and residency.

Winnemucca addresses the question of control over state-sanctioned reservations in terms of the longer history of settler dispossession, staging Native inhabitation in and authority over such spaces as a function of Indigenous peoples' inherent rights to their own territories. During the text's discussion of the Paiutes' exile to Yakima, she provides an encompassing critique of the force of displacement that has attended white presence:

Oh, for shame! You who are educated by a Christian government in the art of war; the practice of whose professions makes you natural enemies of the savages, so called by you. Yes, you, who call yourselves the great civilization; you who have knelt upon Plymouth Rock, covenanting with God to make this land the home of the free and the brave. Ah, then you rise from your bended knees and seizing the welcoming hands of those who are the owners of this land, which you are not, your carbines rise upon the bleak shore, and your so-called civilization sweeps inland from the ocean wave; but, oh, my God! leaving its pathway marked by crimson lines of blood and strewn by the bones of two races, the inheritor and the invader[.] (207)

Official US action against the Paiutes appears not as a function of hostile activities on their part (which Winnemucca consistently denies) but as due to a drive toward conquest borne from at least Anglo arrival at Plymouth and carried forth across the continent. The supposed march

of civilization here becomes a trail of blood marked by the production of white freedom through genocidal violence (see Reddy). Winnemucca presents Paiute attachments to their reservations and efforts to regulate Paiute sociality on them in light of this history of aggression and annexation. More specifically, she casts the connection to the territory as one of sustained residency and exclusive control, presenting the Paiutes—and, by extension, other peoples—as “owners” of their lands. Most often Egan, one of the chiefs at Malheur, serves as the vehicle through which the narrative offers its most forceful articulations of Paiute connections to reservation lands. Agent Rinehart claims with respect to the Malheur Reservation, “Nothing here is yours. It is all the government’s,” to which Egan responds, “We want to know how the government came by this land” (Winnemucca 133). He further remarks, “His white children have come and have taken all our mountains, and all our valleys, and all our rivers; and now, because he has given us this little place without our asking him for it, he sends you here to tell us to go away” (134). Egan’s question foregrounds the legitimacy crisis faced by settler rule in its assertion of the *de facto* domesticity of Indigenous territories, highlighting the absence of consent to such US superintendence. The reservation functions as a bulwark against white incursions—a “little place” that can be theirs in the face of non-Native occupation of much of the rest of their homeland. Egan underlines enduring collective Paiute relations with particular lands and waters through the use of “our,” suggesting a political entity with whose histories and articulations the United States should engage.

In this way, the narrative challenges the portrayal of Paiute reservations as a gift from the US government, which would put residence there at the pleasure of the Indian agent who putatively serves as the embodiment of the government’s munificence, authority, and regulation. As a kind of bureaucratic form through which to address Native peoplehood and territoriality, the reservation does not inherently represent Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination. From the 1850s onward, lands reserved for Native inhabitation—by treaty, executive order, or other means—increasingly were portrayed in official discourses and within non-Native publics as a charitable grant. With the end of treaty-making in 1871, such ways of depicting US acknowledgment of Native lands gained greater scope and momentum.³⁷ *Life*, though, takes up the reservation as a bureaucratic form, seeking to (re)orient the public

sense of what a reservation is away from understandings of it as a site of unrestrained governmental discretion. Winnemucca emphasizes the unreasonableness of various agents' claims to exert virtually unlimited power over what happens at Pyramid Lake and Malheur. In addition to noting Rinehart's assertion that "[n]othing here is yours" (133), the text chronicles the discrepancy between his understanding of his authority and that of the previous agent, Parrish. After Rinehart insists, "This land which you are living on is government land," Egan responds, "[W]e don't want the Big Father in Washington fool with us. He sends one man to say one thing and another to say something else. The man who just left us told us the land was ours, and what we do on it was ours" (124). This moment underlines the abrupt, incoherent changes in policy formulations that can arise from changes in agents when they are treated as if they, as bearers of federal will, single-handedly can determine the character of Native residence on reservation. By emphasizing that their reservations are manifestations of the geopolitical identity of *the Paiute nation*, Winnemucca aims to modify the vision of Native land as a kind of beneficent and conditional present from the government.

In this vein, within the narrative Native people's (and peoples') decisions to leave reservations stand as a protest over poor treatment by US officials and the violation of the promises made upon the drawing of reservation boundaries in the first place. At many points, Winnemucca notes that people on Paiute reservations are starving due to the government's failure to feed them. In response to the Pyramid Lake agent's provision of "one ton of flour" to a group of Shoshones in order to impress a visiting colonel, Winnemucca exclaims, "You come up here to show off before this man. Go and bring some flour to my people on Humboldt River, who are starving, the people over whom you are agent" (87). With respect to the Malheur Reservation, residents report to her just prior to the Bannock War that Rinehart "has not given us anything to eat; he is not issuing rations to us as father Parrish used to do" (137), and later, Egan asks, "What does that praying agent mean by not giving us our rations? What does he say about giving rations, anyhow; or, what does he say about giving us some of the wheat which we raised last year?" (141). These forms of exploitation and deprivation motivate flight from the reservations in search of less oversight and better conditions, including procuring basic sustenance.³⁸ The text's portrayal of movement off-reservation as a function of US failure to provide adequate goods and to

engage with resident Natives in nonexploitative ways also implicitly distinguishes the actions of those who refuse such conditions from others whose seemingly ingrained tendencies toward wandering and aggression make them “bad Indians” (such as the Bannocks and Columbia River Indians). Furthermore, Winnemucca’s presentation of herself as a representative spokesperson for “the Piute nation” facilitates her ability to position her account of Paiute resistance to reservation residence as definitive, as offering the real reasons why Paiutes do not conform to administrative expectations of Indian docility. Reciprocally, her ability to offer an explanation that reaffirms the overall reasonableness of the reservation system (although not the actions of Indian agents) helps underwrite her status as a viable mediator with the US government—as opposed to those “bad Indians” who lie beyond the sphere of civilized conduct and diplomacy.

Agents’ reports from the period, though, suggest a range of reasons why Native people(s) might refuse sustained residence on reservation that are less amenable to the kinds of land rights Winnemucca seeks to claim or to her positioning of herself as a representative authority on Paiute wants and needs. While steeped in dismissive and racializing assumptions about Indian degeneracy, these accounts by agents provide traces of regional Indigenous refusals of the imperatives toward centralization, categorization, and containment that animated Indian policy. In his reports from Malheur, Rinehart characterizes groups of Indians living off-reservation as “wild, roving, half-starved bands” that dwell “far back in the mountains” (*Annual Report* [1875] 851) and as “renegades and stragglers” who cannot “be induced to change their roaming habits” (*Annual Report* [1878] 613). However, he also suggests that they desire to be “away from the influence of the whites” in “summer resorts in the mountains,” which they use for “hunting and fishing” (*Annual Report* [1875] 852). In addition, in the wake of the Bannock War, he observes, “Winnemucca’s people deserted Pyramid Lake Reservation for this, and soon abandoned it for a worthless life of independent vagabondage around frontier military posts and border towns” (*Annual Report* [1879] 237). Not only did agents fail to provide enough provisions to sustain large reservation populations, but Paiutes maintained ongoing relationships with other locations from which they derived subsistence and that they understood to be home sites of various kinds. These are the geographies, modes of inhabitation, and forms of

shifting association that were manifested through and helped drive Ghost Dance movements throughout the region. Yet since these were not locations of permanent settlements, the US government understood such enduring relationships and the kinship connections through which others gained access to these areas as merely “roving” and “roaming” over an otherwise undifferentiated landscape.³⁹

The matrices of seasonal inhabitation and movement and the shifting social networks through which variously constituted Paiute groups understood legitimate claims to place, then, appear in officials’ account as the lack of a sustained or sustainable relation to reservation geographies. When viewed from this perspective, reservations appear less as expressions of Indigenous landedness than as the imposition of non-Native mappings onto existing social cartographies in ways that, at least in the context of the Great Basin, tend to create an impression of tribal geopolitical cohesion that does not fit extant patterns of belonging and residency. Although these dispersed and shifting patterns of leadership, movement (seasonal and otherwise), and coalescence as bands do not arise as a result of prophet movements, such movements worked through and at times helped catalyze these dynamics. As Goeman suggests, “Unlike the maps that designate Indian land as existing only in certain places, wherever we went there were Natives and Natives spaces, and if there weren’t, we carved them out” (5), challenging the idea that Native place could or can be confined to those lands legally acknowledged by the United States as Indian Country. The shifting formations of place-making and political relation at play in prophet movements, which appear in official US accounts as aimless and barbaric nomadism, are part of such processes of creating Native space. Goeman further argues that “colonial spatial construction is not unidirectional, and Native people have mediated these spatial constructions with the best tools at their disposal—storytelling, writing, and sense of place” (36). However, if the storytelling at play in Native-authored texts mediated the colonial mappings of the reservation system, it did not always do so in ways that refused such administrative geographies, instead strategically inhabiting them in ways that also could efface other kinds of Native spatialities. In this vein, Winnemucca’s choice in her narrative to avoid sustained engagement with the Ghost Dance and similar prophetic phenomena can be interpreted as related to the text’s investment

in downplaying the prominence of those modes of Indigenous networking, which run counter to Indian policy aims and the reservation topographies emphasized in *Life*.

Winnemucca's focus on asserting Paiutes' authority over their reservations, though, works to preserve a clearly defined land base for (the) Paiute people. As the culmination of her speaking tour of the Northeast, Winnemucca appeared before Congress in April 1884, and her primary aim in her testimony was to secure a reservation at Fort McDermit (which was created in July 1889), partially to replace the Malheur Reservation (since it had been returned to the public lands by presidential executive order in 1882) and partially to secure lands nearer where her father had resided for years prior to his death in 1882 (see Canfield 214, 256; Carpenter and Sorisio 13, 207; Stowell 253–54). Through this effort, she sought to address the ongoing displacement of Paiute people, including the seizure of their lands by non-Natives on existing reservations like Pyramid Lake. In *Life among the Piutes* and her public appearances, Winnemucca cites the reservation as the principal vehicle through which to assert and secure US recognition for Native territories and political identities. She does so, however, in ways that argue for the end of oversight by Indian agents.⁴⁰ In *Life* she insists that “there is no law with agents. The few good ones cannot do good enough to make it worth while to keep up that system” (178), later adding, “I beseech of you, hear our pitiful cry to you, sweep away the agency system; give us homes to live in, for God’s sake and for humanity’s sake” (243). Winnemucca illustrates the extremity of officials’ misconduct in her much-circulated and reprinted letter to the commissioner of Indian Affairs, in which she asks, “What is the object of the Government in regard to Indians? Is it enough that we are at peace? Remove all the Indians from the military posts and place them on reservations such as the Truckee and Walker River reservations (as they were conducted,) and it will require a greater military force stationed around to keep them within the limits than it now does to keep them in subjection” (*Annual Report* [1870] 570–71). In making this argument, she presents Paiute reservations as expressive of the geopolitical cohesion of the Paiute people. As against the image of legally recognized Native lands as a gift by a civilized benefactor, an idea that licenses US assertions of the right to regulate all conduct on such lands, Winnemucca insists that

the Pyramid Lake and Malheur Reservations have been carved out of the precontact territories of “the Piute nation.” As such, Paiutes should exercise full sovereign authority over them.⁴¹

By implicitly positioning herself as the representative for this political entity, which includes but also exceeds the reservations per se, Winnemucca generates a sense of coherent Paiute collective identity that provides the basis for Paiute territoriality. In this way, she draws on the reservation as a form within Indian policy in order to contest the notion that the U.S. government possesses an underlying jurisdiction that allows it to create and eliminate enclosed Indian spaces at will and to move populations among those sites as it sees fit. Winnemucca’s implicit portrayal of Paiute geographies as expressive of an integrated national land base also works as a way of refuting proliferating depictions of Native peoples as merely roaming across the landscape in ways divorced from meaningful place-making. However, *Life*’s presentation of reservations as a significant horizon of Paiute political aspiration runs counter to other evidence from the period that suggests the ongoing refusal by numerous Paiute persons and groups to remain on reservation. While Winnemucca often represents evidence of such trajectories as due to agents’ misconduct, Paiutes’ choices to reside off-reservation may be understood as expressive of shifting modes of association, place-making, leadership, and memory that do not conform to the bounded vision of geopolitical identity at play in federal policy’s conception of the Indian tribe. Instead, the social patterns sustained off-reservation by groups of Paiutes—groups whose composition keeps changing and whose relation to particular spaces does not take the form of a centralized exertion of jurisdiction—is consistent with the expressions of Indigenous peoplehood within nineteenth-century prophet movements. Conversely, such movements in the Great Basin can be understood as oriented by long-standing regional formations of Native peoplehood that operate in ways irreducible to the reservation-based mappings of indigeneity employed in Indian policy, on which Winnemucca draws in advocating for Paiutes within non-Native public discourses.

Winnemucca’s narrative does not engage with Ghost Dancing, and arguably, it cannot do so within the ways it frames Paiute identity, territory, and governance. Ghost Dancing draws on conceptions of power (puha), shifting forms of collective identification, and patterns of place-making that do not align with a conception of the Paiute people as a

unified entity with a singular leadership that can easily be differentiated from surrounding peoples. Instead, Ghost Dancing takes part in and circulates through extant modes of Indigenous networking in the Great Basin, sociopolitical matrices that also supported earlier and other contemporaneous prophet movements not reducible to Wodziwob's vision and its specific dissemination in "the Ghost Dance of 1870." These geographies are expressive of forms of indigeneity that do not fit easily into mappings organized around Indian tribes, envisioned as discretely insulated from each other in terms of their spheres of governance and bounded territories. While registering the ways that actions by Native people and peoples in a variety of ways did not fit this account of *tribal* separateness, US officials in the late nineteenth century sought to organize Native political geographies in these ways, casting deviations from this cartography as expressive of savage tendencies toward nomadism and/or projects of antisettler warfare. In many ways, *Life among the Piutes* reiterates these official ways of framing Native collective identity and territoriality. Winnemucca's account of "the Piute nation" presents it as having a centralized leadership (based in her family) that extends over Paiute communities reaching from southern Nevada up into eastern Oregon and western Idaho, as being clearly distinguishable from other peoples who are viewed as problems by US officials (particularly the Columbia River Indians and the Bannocks), and as possessing an integrated land base from which federally acknowledged reservations can be carved and over which the Paiute people can exert clear political authority.

The discrepancy between Winnemucca's account of Paiute peopledom and the kinds of social formations associated with the Ghost Dance, though, should not be read as indicative of a need to choose between them in order to determine which version is the more accurate/authentic one. In positioning herself as the representative for *the* Paiute people, Winnemucca helps discursively constitute the entity for which she putatively speaks. The kinds of public advocacy in which she is engaged may necessitate the depiction of Paiutes in this way in order to gain access to the limited and diminishing forms of (geo)political recognition for Native peoples offered by the federal government in the late nineteenth century. *Life* takes up the forms of Indigenous peopledom circulating within federal policy, seeking to activate the potentials of such framings and to deploy them (including by using them to

solicit support from non-Native publics) toward policy ends at odds with existing administrative procedures and determinations. Thus, if we treat Winnemucca's account as providing a window onto, in Brooks's terms, Indigenous "political systems, relationships, and epistemologies," we can miss the political work performed by the narrative in navigating, mediating, and mobilizing the formulations at play in Indian policy. Put another way, foregrounding the complexities of Native sociopolitical formations in our analyses may entail reading for colonial entanglement, less treating texts as expressive of Native collectivities than as themselves engaged in negotiating non-Native frames in which Indigenous peoplehood takes on particular circumscribed forms. Tracking the contours and aims of *Life's* claims to representativity and tracing the text's nonengagement with the Ghost Dance, then, are flip sides of the same project, namely, of understanding the complicated dynamics involved in staging versions of peoplehood intelligible to settler publics under conditions of colonial occupation.

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NOTES

1. On the Ghost Dances of 1870 and 1890, see DuBois; Hittman, "1870"; Mooney; Smoak; Warren.
2. The charge of misrepresenting Paiute groups, though, has been made against Winnemucca by other Paiutes. See Carpenter, *Seeing* 116–25; Scott.
3. For examples, see Carpenter, *Seeing*; Kohler; McClure; Powell; Sorisio, "I Nailed."
4. Even when critical accounts note the existence of a range of Paiute bands that did not have a singular shared governing structure, they still tend to characterize the narrative as engaged in a struggle to better the situation of a unified political collectivity, sometimes referred to as "the Paiute tribe" or "the Paiute nation." For examples, see Carpenter, "Sarah"; Lape; McClure; Sneider; Tisinger; Walker.
5. My reading here, then, differs from ones that either engage nineteenth-century Native texts as speaking for an existing Indian nation or read them as expressive of how the authors' experience of individual subjectivity is shaped by the terms of Indian law and policy. For an example of the former, see Konkle, and of the latter, see Carlson.

6. For brevity's sake, I will often use the term "Paiute," and in doing so, I am reflecting both Winnemucca's usage and that of critics who write about Winnemucca's life and *Life*. However, these references are only to the Northern Paiutes. The Southern Paiutes are a distinct (set of) group(s) whose language is quite different.

7. Notably, critics almost entirely have avoided discussion of the relation between Winnemucca's narrative and the Ghost Dances.

8. For other critiques of recognition, see Barker; Denetdale; Goeman; Million; Povinelli, *Cunning*; A. Simpson; L. Simpson.

9. While focusing on how the narrative mediates extant discourses in Indian policy, this interpretation also builds on the rich body of scholarship on *Life* that foregrounds Winnemucca's role as a mediator of various kinds, including in her role as translator. For examples, see Carpenter, "Sarah"; Kohler; Lape; Powell; Sneider; Sorisio, "Sarah"; Tisinger; Walker 139–63.

10. On May 25, 1883, the *Salem Gazette* reported her as having said during one of her lectures that "I come because my father wished me to tell the true story of my people to the world" (Carpenter and Sorisio 161–62).

11. As early as 1864, newspapers in Nevada and California were presenting Winnemucca's father as the leader of a cohesive Paiute nation, describing him as the "High Old Chief of all the Pi-utes" and as "emperor," characterizing his family (including Winnemucca) as "royal." See Carpenter and Sorisio 33, 44, 36.

Some authors seek to avoid confusion by referring to Sarah Winnemucca as "Sarah" so as not to have readers conflate her with her father. Instead, I will continue to refer to Sarah Winnemucca as "Winnemucca" and will refer to Winnemucca's father as "Chief Winnemucca," even as I explore the tensions at play in this designation.

12. The text at times suggests that Chief Winnemucca is Truckee's son and at other times that he is Truckee's son-in-law. See Winnemucca 14, 16, 30, 33, 37, 40, 41, 67, 120, 193. Scholars indicate that Truckee is Winnemucca's mother's father. See Carpenter and Sorisio 4; Hittman, *Great* 388; Zanjani 21.

13. In the chapter concerned with describing traditional Paiute practices and social formations, Winnemucca insists that "the chiefs do not rule like tyrants; they discuss everything with their people, as a father would in his family" (52), later noting, "Their love for their chief holds them together, and helps them to do right. A tribe is a large family" (194). On the text's mobilization of sentimental figurations, see Carpenter, "Sarah"; Carpenter and Sorisio 1–30; Hanrahan; Lape; Powell.

14. On Agent Rinehart's running efforts to get Chief Winnemucca to reside on the Malheur reservation in the 1870s and early 1880s, see *Annual Report* [1878] 612, and [1879] 237; Canfield 115, 117; Stowell 188, 199; Zanjani 141.

15. This dynamic of using Chief Winnemucca to figure Paiute collectivity appears repeatedly in agents' and military officers' accounts of events from the 1860s onward. See *Annual Report* [1861] 718, [1862] 359, 367, [1864] 289, [1870] 567, and [1873] 624. Such accounts also appear in eastern newspapers such as the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* in the late 1870s and early 1880s. See Carpenter and Sorisio 70, 114, 115.

16. General O. O. Howard served in the Great Basin in the 1880s and led US forces in the Bannock War. He would have had occasion to have significant knowledge of Paiute political structure, and he conflates Chief Winnemucca and Truckee. See Howard, *Famous* 207–08, 217. In 1867 citizens in the vicinity of the Pyramid Lake Reservation complained that Chief Winnemucca should be replaced as head chief by a new “Winnemucca” (Canfield 48). Moreover, non-Native accounts in the 1860s and 1870s routinely conflated Chief Winnemucca with his nephew Numaga, who was known as “Young Winnemucca.” See *Annual Report* [1866] 119; Canfield 3, 13, 18, 24, 27–28, 33, 263; Gualtieri 80; Howard, *Indian* 226; Knack and Stewart 53.

17. In addition to those sources quoted, this portrait of Northern Paiute lifeways draws on Canfield; Smoak; Stowell; Zanjani.

18. As Martha C. Knack and Omar C. Stewart argue, “Great Basin ethnic groups were culturally very similar to each other, and none had political organizations of any kind which would have united all members of one group and demarcated them from others”; those groups that came to be known as “Northern Paiutes” “called themselves simply ‘Numa,’ the people” (14). The territory used by these groups extended over approximately 78,000 square miles, and while they “considered themselves a distinct ethnic group in contrast to Washos or Shoshones,” “there was no single tribal organization which involved all the people of this huge area, nor was there any time during the year when the entire population came together for any purpose” (15).

19. The narrative’s vision of cohesive Paiute collectivity under a single leader/family also involves a somewhat conceptually wobbly distinction between the “chief” and his supposed “sub-chiefs.” See Winnemucca 54, 107, 144, 146.

20. Smoak suggests, “Power is essentially the opposite of sickness, and so the shaman’s principal function was the healing rite” (53).

21. On Winnemucca’s personal response, or lack thereof, to the Ghost Dances of 1870 and 1890, see Carpenter and Sorisio 18; Zanjani 90, 284–86, 295.

22. Canfield observes, “The ‘pernicious’ fandangos for which Agent Rinehart had such contempt were held several times yearly. The numerous Paiute chiefs would agree upon a time and place, and often as many as three or four hundred people would assemble” (159). For mentions of Paiute “dancing” in the text, see Winnemucca 13, 40, 112.

23. Pyramid Lake was set aside for Paiutes in 1859 by executive order in what would become western Nevada. On the history of the Pyramid Lake Reservation, see Knack and Stewart. The Malheur Reservation was created by executive order in 1872 (although described by Winnemucca as having been established in 1867). See *Annual Report* [1872] 453; Winnemucca 105; Zanjani 128.

24. On the text’s broader negotiation of European American assumptions about writing and practices of documentation, see Carpenter, *Seeing* 87–125; Kohler; Lape; Powell; Tisinger.

25. This impression is strongly aided by the inclusion at the end of the text proper (just prior to the appendix of letters of support for Winnemucca) a petition directed to “the Honorable Congress of the United States” (Winnemucca 247). Moreover, Elizabeth Peabody sent a copy of a newspaper review of *Life* to all the Republicans in Congress, implicitly presenting the narrative as an expression of Paiute political

will (Zanjani 250). On the relationship between Winnemucca and Elizabeth Peabody and Peabody's sister Mary Mann (who edited *Life among the Piutes*), see Hanrahan; Sorisio, "I Nailed."

26. I use "Yakima" since this is the spelling in the text, but the name the people and the reservation currently use is "Yakama."

27. As Carolyn Sorisio observes in "Sarah Winnemucca, Translation, and US Colonialism and Imperialism," "Winnemucca seems to have promoted her (and her family's) representative status to create an autonomous, if not sovereign, place for Northern Paiutes within the U.S." (45).

28. As Malea Powell suggests, Winnemucca uses "the tropes and figures of 'savagery' and 'civilization' . . . to authenticate and authorize herself," "representing herself as a *civilized Indian woman*" in order to appeal to a non-Native readership (80).

29. In Winnemucca's narrative, at points Oytes appears as able to draw on puha, alternately as a shaman (to heal) and as a witch (to injure). See Winnemucca 110–11, 129.

30. On Smohalla, see Miller, *Prophetic* 118–21; Mooney 708–31; Ruby and Brown, *Dreamer* 19–102; Trafzer and Beach; Walker and Schuster 501, 505. On the use of the term "dreamer" in the period to refer to adherents of other prophet figures beyond Smohalla, including Wodziwob, see Canfield 273; Howard, *My Life* 376, 418–19.

31. On Egan's leadership role, see *Annual Report* [1878] 616, and [1879] 235; Hittman, *Great Basin* 62–65; Howard, *Famous* 259–77; Howard, *My Life* 298–410; Smoak 143–49; Zanjani 165, 186–87.

32. On the text's emphasis on the Paiutes' goodness, see McClure; Powell; Snieder; Walker.

33. As Susan Jane Stowell notes, "[T]he term Snake" is "a term . . . white trappers and explorers used to refer to Indians they encountered in areas anywhere from the western Plateau to southeastern Oregon and portions of western Nevada" (90).

34. In *My Life and Experiences*, General Howard recollects with respect to the fact that some Paiutes joined with Bannocks during the Bannock War, "It was while these Pi-Utes were in a state of unrest and extreme discontent that the Bannock messengers had come among them. The outbreak seemed so extensive that the old *tooats* suddenly had a new inspiration to the effect that the time was at hand for the great long-promised resurrection of Indians. This news was carried from tribe to tribe" (379).

35. One in five of those Paiutes relocated to Yakima died as a result of the removal (Carpenter and Sorisio 6–7).

36. By 1884, when the remaining Paiutes at Yakima received official permission to leave, the Paiutes from Malheur largely had left and returned to the relative area from which they had been removed, with officials largely turning a blind eye to this movement. See Canfield 214; Stowell 255; Zanjani 224.

37. On shifting understandings of the status of the Indian reservation from the mid-nineteenth century onward, see Bruyneel; Denetdale; Genetin-Pilawa; Hoxie; Ostler; Piatote; Rand; Rockwell; Trennert; Warren.

38. These charges in the text resonate with explanations offered by Indian agents in Nevada, Oregon, and Idaho for the presence of Native people(s) off-reservation

over the course of the period covered by Winnemucca's narrative. For examples, see *Annual Report* [1869] 644, [1870] 558, [1871] 960, [1872] 668–69, [1874] 588, [1877] 572, and [1878] 446–47.

39. As Elizabeth Povinelli suggests with respect to state understandings of nonsedentary modes of Indigenous place-making, "It is only now emerging how deeply the liberal capitalist state has itself been defined in opposition to Western constructions of 'hunter-gatherers'—the arch[e]typical primitive—and therefore how difficult it is legally and economically for that state to make a fair assessment of . . . claims to traditional lands" (*Labor's* 8). On prereservation Paiute patterns of sociospatiality in southeastern Oregon, see Smoak; Stowell. For Nevada, see Gualtieri; Knack and Stewart.

40. On the discretionary violence of the agency system, see Piatote.

41. Winnemucca's argument for allotment is in the service of such autonomy from non-Native control. The petition that closes *Life*, which Winnemucca had been circulating in her public appearances, indicates the desirability of the Paiutes receiving "lands in severalty without losing tribal relations . . . where their citizenship implied in this distribution of land, will defend them from the encroachments of white settlers" (247).

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The Evolution of a Poem

An Interview with Tiffany Midge

SCOTT ANDREWS

The following interview is taken from a series of e-mails I exchanged with award-winning poet Tiffany Midge (Standing Rock Sioux) in early 2018. I was intrigued by different versions of her poem “The Woman Who Married a Bear,” and I wanted to learn more about her process of revising it. I thought other readers and poets would be interested as well, especially since she has two books coming out in 2019: a collection of cultural criticism and humor titled *Bury My Heart at Chuck E. Cheese’s* (University of Nebraska Press) and a chapbook of poetry titled *Horns* (Scabland Books). I first encountered “The Woman Who Married a Bear” in her 2005 book from Gazoobi Tales; a revised version appeared in her 2016 award-winning poetry collection from the University of New Mexico Press. I have included both versions here, with permission from and gratitude to the publishers.

From *Guiding the Stars to Their Campfires, Driving the Salmon to Their Beds* (Gazoobi Tales, 2005)

THE WOMAN WHO MARRIED A BEAR

Alliances between animals and humans are common in many tribes’ myths. They appear to be most popular in the North Pacific Coast tribes, where a whale takes a human wife, and among the Plains Indians whose legends often feature a buffalo or bear.

—Richard Erdoes and Alfonso Ortiz, *American Indian Myths and Legends*

She had a lover whose eyes were black hooks,
luring her heart into the marsh of his body—
then dragging her out like a stained prize,
a captive of his scars, his mother's blood.

She wintered on berries and thin plums,
drank a broth of maples and spruce,
strung nets to snare the mice and snakes,
while her lover groaned and slept.

She had a lover whose fingers spun sticky webs,
who wove her nerves around his throat like pearls—
a necklace of fat spiders and grubs,
moth wings fluttering against his skin.

Mornings she melted anise and cream
in an iron skillet over low flames.
She gutted pale fish and split the flesh
dangling from the bones like husks of fruit.
Her lover rubbed against the current of her hips,
howled in gratitude and ate.

She had a lover whose voice pulled at the fragile
cords coiled along her spine like a harp.
Whose dreaming hands arranged the black
veil of her hair until it shimmered with music,
each strand a tiny river of sound
combed between his claws.

She scraped the rings of green melons,
crushed pine needles and thick leaves,
simmered the reeds and stems in summer grass—
then braided a rug of feathers and straw
for her lover to rest upon while he smoked.

She had a lover who spooned her body at night,
who drank from the full cups of her breasts,
who hungered for her shoulders, her mouth, her belly—
who fed on the pounding in her chest.

From *The Woman Who Married a Bear* (Mary Burritt Christiansen
Poetry Series, University of New Mexico Press, 2016)

THE WOMAN WHO MARRIED A BEAR

Alliances between animals and humans are common in many tribes' myths. They appear to be most popular in the North Pacific Coast tribes, where a whale takes a human wife, and among the Plains Indians whose legends often feature a buffalo or bear.

—Richard Erdoes and Alfonso Ortiz, *American Indian Myths and Legends*

She had a lover whose eyes were black hooks
 that pierced her heart into the darkling of his body—
 then winched it out, a spent, stained prize,
 a captive of his scars, his mother's blood.

She wintered on berries and thin plums,
 relied on the mercy of trees, their crafts—
 knitted traps to snare wood rats and grouse,
 while her husband groaned and slept.

She had a lover whose fingers spun viscid webs,
 who wove his nerves around her throat—
 a necklace of swarm and teem, sorrow's breath,
 moth wings fluttering against her skin.

Evenings, his voice edged the cords coiled
 along her spine like a harp. His dreaming hands
 arranged the dark veil of her hair, quickened into song,
 each plait a river of sound combed between his claws.

She had a lover who spooned her body at night,
 who drank from the full cups of her breasts,
 who hungered for her shoulders, her mouth, her belly—
 who fed on the pounding in her chest.

SCOTT ANDREWS (SA): Before we discuss the inspiration for your poem, I would like to ask about its title. My initial interest in the poem was its title, because each semester in my American Indian literature class I teach a unit on what I call “bear marriage stories.” There are many versions of them from very different parts of this continent, and I love exploring some of them with students. What attracted you to this title and to the narrative that your poem echoes?

TIFFANY MIDGE (TM): The impetus for that poem—first published about one hundred years ago, 1995, in *Poetry Northwest*—was me toying with anaphora and wanting to write a love poem. Harjo’s “She Had Some Horses” is one of my very favorite poems, and I wanted to experiment with using refrain. In hindsight “She had a lover” sounds like a daytime soap opera or a line from a subtitled French film, and I really don’t mind that. It’s entirely plausible in the world of imagination, and I like that it’s a little cheesy, because I’m unapologetically cheesy. I was not inspired by the novel *Bear* by Marian Engel, but I wish that I had been. The poem did not begin with any premise involving bears, but a kind of meditation about consuming desire for another and being “in service” to another, no matter the cost to one’s own well-being, which was something I felt very melodramatically intimate with. It was only in a later draft that I recognized the idea that the speaker was likely involved in interspecies congress with a bear—what other explanation could there be?

The relationship between a bear and a human also served as a metaphor for my mixed-race identity—an idea that is now decidedly out of fashion, but it was very much discussed a hundred years ago, when I first wrote the poem. I was interested in hybridity, and also in mythic elements and how they related to the world in nature. I wrote a few other poems using this same idea—writing contemporary narratives in poems that take their inspiration from various Native stories, such as star lovers, owls as guardians to the afterlife, a Coyote and vagina dentata story, and others.

SA: One of my attractions to the bear marriage stories is the ambivalent relationship they so often describe. Many times the women are taken against their will or are hypnotized into thinking the bear is a human, and yet they often demonstrate a desire to remain in the relationship—a sense of loyalty to their bear mate—when their human relatives come to rescue them. When I try to connect the stories to my students’ lives, I ask them to recall or imagine relationships that may have started badly but became good later, or a relationship that someone stays in even after they have decided it isn’t healthy for them. I also ask them to think about relationships that require people to choose between their family and their mate, since this is an element of some of the bear stories.

But some students like to see the interspecies attraction in the stories as analogous to interracial relationships, as your response suggests.

I think a similar erotic ambivalence is at the heart of “The Woman Who Married a Bear.”

What was your familiarity with the bear stories before writing the poem? Was there a particular version that you liked?

TM: Oh, I like those “takes”! And your takeaway of “erotic ambivalence.” Those are all really insightful and valid.

To answer your question about having any prior understanding or acquaintance with bear/human marriage stories, I didn’t beyond the *American Indian Myths and Legends* anthology. I believe it resonated so much with me because of my parents’ marriage. He was very bear-like, and my mom was very domestic and servile. And the idea of having to choose between one’s husband and one’s people also resonates with me with regard to my upbringing. My mother was often put in the position to choose between her Indian relatives and my father and our life in Washington. Her father, our grandfather, lived with us for several years, and this created some tension in their marriage. Some relatives came to visit, and they took our grandfather back home with them to Fort Peck—this was devastating to my mother because it was very unexpected, and they left in the middle of the night.

SA: Could you talk a bit about your process, how the composition for a poem typically begins for you? You have run many poetry-writing workshops, so I imagine you have been asked many times, “Where do you get your ideas for poems?” How does a poem start for you?

TM: For the most part, a poem typically begins with some kind of personal experience I want to convey, or a strong associative idea, sentiment, political stance, historical event, or maybe just an image. It depends on the day. Some poems will begin with a specific prompt. For instance, “Code Name Geronimo,” the ghazel, began with a prompt initiated by—I think it was Deborah Miranda—with regard to the apprehension of bin Laden and the offense of dubbing the operation “Geronimo.” Other times, a poem is a matter of dumb luck—some days ideas come together seemingly by accident, that line, or that thread appears—which is I suppose inspiration, or the duende.

SA: I was curious about which versions of the bear marriage stories you were familiar with, because your poem reminds me of a story I use in class, “The Woman Who Married the Bear” as told by Tom Peters. You can find it in *Haa Shuká, Our Ancestors: Tlingit Oral Narratives* by Nora Marks Dauenhauer and Richard Dauenhauer. [I send her a copy of the poem.] The bear in that story hypnotizes the young woman into thinking he is a handsome young man, and it takes a while for her to realize that she is living with a bear. We can think of that hypnosis as being a kind of seduction, and in this case it is a kind of deception. Your first stanza describes the bear’s eyes as “black hooks” that simultaneously lure the woman and drag her. And then she is described as a “captive.”

This idea may not be alien to our daily lives. Aren’t online dating profiles an acceptable form of lying? We show ourselves as how we wish we were or what we should be in order to be desired by others. In the early stages of a relationship, aren’t we presenting our ideal selves? Or am I projecting?

TM: Thanks for sending me that story. I’ve not seen it before! Human nature / psychology seems to be the same across cultures and time periods. The luring and captivity essence reminds me of captivity narratives in a way. And analogous with your description of the hazards of online dating, this “tricking” is apparent in another of my poems, “(Dis)Beliefs Suspended,” where Coyote pretends to be a beautiful woman so that he can marry the chief’s son, and he goes so far as to fashion an elk liver into a pretend vagina. That story slays me! I haven’t seen any poems yet about Coyote trying to hook up on Tinder or other dating apps. I might have to write some. Thanks for the suggestion.

SA: I know that my poems generally get shorter with each revision. The language and imagery get more compressed and, ideally, more effective. One difference between the two versions of “The Woman Who Married a Bear” is that the later version is shorter. Were the first drafts of the poem—before it was published—longer? If so, can you talk about what you left out and why?

TM: I cut two stanzas from the original. In the true original, David Wagoner, then the editor of *Poetry Northwest*, suggested my deleting many modifiers/adjectives. At that point in time, I wasn’t aware how the

overuse of adjectives marks one as a novice. When I was revising for the collection to go into print for the University of New Mexico Press I wanted to cut the portions that seemed unessential in the interest of allowing the remaining stanzas to have more impact.

SA: In both poems the stanzas seem to come in pairs. The first starts with “She had a lover” and describes her interaction with the bear. The second starts with reference to her, and it describes her activities either for herself or for the bear. And then the final stanza does not have a mate, if you will. If the stanza structures were compared to a rhyme scheme for the poem, it would be *abababa*. Was this always the poem’s structure? Was there a particular effect you were after with these alternating stanzas?

TM: Initially, no. I didn’t decide to create any sort of structure or rhyme scheme. I intended only to use a refrain, “she had a lover,” which, of course, ends up being a structure. Or at least a scaffolding. I can intend to write a sonnet or some other formal structure, and it might even seem to hold together decently, it might even have an elegant line or two, but free verse is another sort of process. “The Woman Who Married a Bear” uses refrain, or anaphora, and it might even have some kind of accidental rhyme or rhythmic structure, but that’s about the extent of it.

SA: Can you recall why you chose to indent the alternating lines in the revised poem? Did that coincide with making each stanza contain four lines?

TM: I indented the lines for cosmetic reasons and because the left margin often bears—no pun intended—most of the weight in poems while receiving little of the glory. It is the strong shoulder of a poem, it does the heavy lifting, and its entry, its initial words, are usually boring but necessary structural trusses like “The” and “A” and conjunctions. As in *TWWMAB*, “who” is repeated at the left margin four times and three times in a row in the closing stanza, giving the impression that an owl is talking—who, who, who. So maybe the narrator is not a human being but an owl being? An owl woman being? If you reread the poem from that possibility, it’s plausible! And doesn’t that make it more . . . well, interesting?

My foremost intention was in creating an environment, tone, and mood, an exploration of myth and story, poetically transforming or reimagining those stories. Also, my primary concern beyond structure was in the language. I'd been most interested in using language that was very lyrically driven, and also I was interested in crafting arresting images.

I remember now, all these years later, that I composed the poem from a writing exercise that I created for a set of writing workshops I facilitated at a youth home for at-risk teens. I even still have that handout. I had selected several words from Louise Erdrich's poetry collection *Jacklight*, and I had asked the students to make poems from that word pool. I discussed how using one-syllable nouns made for stronger and more interesting poems. In my handout I wrote:

The poems that most appeal to my senses have three things in common: 1.) They contain mostly nouns. 2.) They're mostly one-syllable words. 3.) They are common or useful objects (concrete words). The following is a list of some of my favorite words:

plums ditch raccoon fork eat waste howl skin fat wood reed dim
dirt nerves socket scrub scrap rind cups spine pulp raw lean snare
stain scar claw husk meal potmilk string spoon meat dough trap

I added "hook" to my poem independently of this list.

The word-pool exercise is how some of my poems begin. I collect synonyms and associative words and images that relate to some idea I have in mind to reflect and expound on.

SA: I find this double meaning in your poem too—the bear husband is simultaneously seductive and controlling. The sensual imagery is attractive and sinister at the same time (but the more time I spend with the revised version, the more sinister it feels to me). And in Erdrich's novel *Love Medicine*, in the chapter describing the duel between Marie and Sister Leopolda, there is a line that describes love as a "black hook" (like the bear's eyes). At times, it seems, to love someone is to surrender your control to them. And that is consistent with some of the bear marriage stories I mentioned earlier.

TM: You have excellent recall. I don't remember the reference from *Love Medicine*, although clearly I must have poached it. I can't say what compelled me to change blue to black [from the 1995 version to the 2005 version]—other than that it adds to the element of darkness or, as you say, sinister sense. But the blue would have been just as effective, even more so, with notions of “blue-eyed devils” and soldiers vis-à-vis colonialism, actual eye color of person(s) I had in mind, etc. . . .

It interests me that one's immediate interpretation of the poem (obviously, the images and narrative lead one to think this way as well) is that the bear is holding the woman captive and not the other way around. While the sequences do speak to that (“a captive of his scars”), the woman could be interpreted as the bear's dark force casting him under her spells too. Abuse narratives always paint a male figure as the abuser by default. This is odd, because evil witches dominate European folk culture and perhaps various other stories from other cultures as well, but the evil queen or witch has always featured prominently. A friend of mine, when remarking about a past relationship with a woman he'd cared a great deal for, said that their relationship could more accurately be described as Stockholm syndrome. I always thought that was funny.

SA: What about “mother's blood” in the first stanza? That stays the same from the first printed version to the second. The line suggests that by being a captive of the bear she also is a captive of his mother's blood. Is that an Indigenous mother-in-law joke?

TM: One would assume! Right? I don't think there are enough Native mother-in-law jokes. I seem to recall my mother telling me that in the old ways, as a matter of polite conduct, a son-in-law would never look at or address his mother-in-law as a way to avoid conflict. It's possible this is within my own family lore, because whenever my mother's mother came to visit, my father literally headed for the hills and camped out for however long they were visiting. My grandmother asked me why my father always went camping whenever they visited, and I told her it was because he didn't like her. I got in trouble for saying that. I hardly thought it was a secret.

“Mother's blood” (violence, unrest) serves as the antithesis to “mother's milk” (kindness, yielding). Not that I want to put blame on women or mothers, but if a child is reared by a withholding or abusive mother,

a person might not learn to trust or be vulnerable. “His mother’s blood” denotes he is a product of his mother’s violence either in thought, neglect, or abuse. The poem tells of her captive’s scars but does not speak of her own scars. She wouldn’t be in this situation otherwise.

SA: I am especially interested in the two versions of this poem because I sense a big shift occurred at some point. *Guiding the Stars to Their Campfires, Driving the Salmon to Their Beds*—such a great title!—was published in 2005; *The Woman Who Married a Bear* was published in 2016. That is a long time to live with a poem, to turn it over in your mind (and since the poem was published in 1995, you had even more time than I had imagined). Did you perform it many times at public readings? When did it begin to change?

In the third stanza of the first version, you write that the bear “wove *her* nerves around *his* throat like pearls” (my emphasis). That suggests she may be a kind of trophy (negative), but it also has connotations of beauty (positive). But in the second version, you write that the bear “wove *his* nerves around *her* throat,” and, as they say, that changes everything! Now it sounds like he is choking her, controlling her. The necklace has gone from being a prize he wears to perhaps a territorial marker that she wears.

Also, in the first version the beautiful trophy is a “necklace of fat spiders and grubs.” At least from a bear’s perspective, those probably are good things to eat. More positive connotations. In the second version that necklace consists of “swarm and teem,” which suggests struggle and turmoil rather than specific bear-land goodies. And to make the negative connotations clear, the necklace is made of “sorrow’s breath.”

So what happened?

TM: There wasn’t any dramatic shift that led to the revisions in this poem—other than that I started my MFA in poetry around the same time I put the chapbook out in 2005, and since I very much still liked the poem, I wanted to revise it from its chapbook version to the full collection several years later. I agree, that is a very long time period to sit with a poem! The most immediate reason I can think of to explain the revisions would be because I was in poetry-writing workshops and immersing myself in areas of craft, etc. . . . and I was (hopefully) becoming a better poet. Or a more self-conscious one.

I also agree about the lines “wove his/her nerves around his/her throat.” I imagine I felt it was interchangeable. And I agree that those are two very different representations. Also, I simply *had* to get rid of that pearl necklace image. I hadn’t realized its connotation when I wrote the earlier draft, and it’s just ew and TMI. I imagine that’s why I switched out who was doing the weaving around whose throat, to circumvent that suggestion.

“Swarm and teem” are verbs rather than nouns “spiders and grubs.” And I felt that things *doing* was more active—providing energy and movement—rather than just inert things. Plus, I think “swarm and teem” is more eloquent. “Grubs” is a terrible thing to do to a poem.

Why “sorrow’s breath”? It does shift the emphasis somewhat. The image lines up with the first stanza’s “captive of his scars.” One is using a lasso of their own nerves to trap or hook another, and maybe his nerves of sorrow’s breath indicate his internal state of being. And I suppose the speaker is revealing a sense of burden and expressing particular anti-thetical aspects about love.

SA: In the revised version you added a reference to “merciful trees” tending to the woman while her husband slept. For me, this works to make her even more sympathetic, receiving the aid from others that should come from her mate.

TM: “Merciful trees” attempts to connote how nurturing and life-giving trees are to the abundance of lives that make their homes within them or by them.

All of these concerns within the poems are interesting to deconstruct and analyze, but in the process of writing I was most concerned with lyricism of language, with, as I said earlier, creating a mood or tone and keeping the imagery fresh and interesting (at least to myself). I believe any narrative or story details that come out of that is a kind of coincidental happy accident, which is why art and writing poetry can often-times be so surprising and mysterious. The subconscious steps in and takes over while you’re busy making other plans, while the poet is basically throwing spaghetti on the ceiling to see what sticks.

SA: Perhaps the MFA experience encouraged more uniformity in the structure of the stanzas? In the original, stanzas have varying numbers

of lines: four, four, four, six, six, five, five. (Unless what I see as the fifth stanza is really two stanzas, four lines and two. In the chapbook, it spans a page break.) The revised version is shorter, as we have noted, and each stanza has four lines.

Perhaps such quotidian observations get annoying to the poet. But they are the kinds of things teachers and students note in class as they explore every avenue of inquiry. But to me these are also the things a fellow poet would observe and explore. I have faced similar decisions in the poems I write: Do I like this structure? Do I like this rhythm? Do I want verbs or nouns?

TM: I don't think the former drafts were concerned with uniformity, obviously, due to the varying lines per stanza. And most definitely, I would have been influenced by readings within my grad writing program—at least in the sense of “corralling” and creating more control through uniformity and adhering to tighter structures, which doesn't guarantee to strengthen a poem but does lend the impression that the poet is *trying*, at least. Are poets still writing in structured stanzas? Somehow, I get the sense that it's outdated (kidding). Although alternative forms, experimental forms, are complicated for editors and typesetters and don't retain their integrity when viewed on iPhones and Tablets. So there is that to consider. I happen to prefer more traditionally structured poems, with the rare exception now and then. Inupiaq-Inuit poet dg nanouk okpik had a poem in her book *Corpse Whale* that I admired—it was a description of ice flow, and the words were dispersed all over the page. I love stuff like that, be it concrete poem or content-meets-form. But in a lot of cases, when I see words scattershot all over the page, my attention wanes, because it becomes more of an effort to read. But in this case, dg's poem was uncompromising, surprising, and delightful. I do love concrete poems and have taught them in poetry classes. There are subtle ones in *The Woman Who Married a Bear*, such as “The Draw,” where the speaker is having their blood drawn and the phlebotomist is making a mess of their arm—of course the poem had to be long and thin like a syringe, right?

SA: Two stanzas that were removed in the revision involve the woman providing food and comfort for the bear husband. One describes a “braided rug” for him to “rest upon while he smoked,” and the other

describes her cooking for him and him rubbing against her hips, howling “in gratitude.” These describe her providing for him, perhaps even serving him (possible negative connotations there). These images are not present in the revision, and we have only the wife taking care of her own needs. Were these changes a conscious effort to remove positive connotations from the poem, to make its domesticity less positive?

TM: I would have deleted them in the interest of economy and to deemphasize the already visible notions of feminine servitude. No sense in restating those allusions. I hope that the revisions improved the poem. There’s been a shift in understanding and perception in regard to gender identity and roles, etc., since that first draft, and I imagine I may have been capitulating to that, although there are still subordinate suggestions in the later version. But for the most part, romantic relationships are about servitude to the other, reciprocally, regardless of gender, so while discussing these specifics within the poem and how they relate and respond to sexual and gender politics, it doesn’t have to be the *only* takeaway. But it’s a good stepping-off point and an obvious stepping-off point because so much of the rest of the book carries these themes of love and desire.

SA: One stanza that you kept from the original was altered in its first line and became more compressed. I am talking about the bear arranging “the dark veil of her hair.” The language of this stanza remains sensual, and I think it describes a pleasant experience—a lover combing your hair is always nice. I wonder if you could talk about the pleasure this poem brings to you now. You liked this poem enough to revise it, to spend more time and energy with it. You made decisions about what to lose and what to keep. Can you tell me about the things you liked, whether they are things you kept or changed?

Finally, am I out of line with thinking the last stanza is hot? I acknowledge the negative connotations possible in it—she is being consumed by the bear in perhaps a literal way. But there also are positive connotations in these images: drinking from “the full cups of her breasts” and hungering for “her shoulders, her mouth, her belly.”

TM: I do like and enjoy this poem. Is that an appropriate thing to say about one’s own poetry? I enjoy reading it to an audience, I like to think

that it's a sensory parade, and it is enjoyable for listeners to hear and experience. I think that with the refrain, "she had a lover," the poem is working at the level of song, taking into account the poem's rhythmic and lyrical elements. Although I would never literally sing the poem or any poem (I have the tendency to want to crawl into a small, dark space and curl up into a ball whenever poets literally sing in public), but I'm not above using "poet's voice" occasionally. Just kidding. That's frightening too.

The last stanza pleases me. Yes, it connotes she's being figuratively consumed. Perhaps it is comparable to the ukiyo-e style woodblock print *The Dream of the Fisherman's Wife*, another interspecies love subject I wrote a poem about (not in *The Woman Who Married a Bear*, unfortunately). While there's a pleasant-sounding "finish" with the rhyme "breasts" and "chest," I should have ended with a couplet rhyme because *get it?* They're a couple?!

Looking over the last stanza, I may have gone overboard with the "consuming" vocab. Each line uses an eating verb: "spooned," "drank," "hungered," and finally "fed." So yeah, the metaphor isn't hard to miss! Like, okay, we get it, she's being consumed! All right already! But I think that despite its heavy-handedness, the stanza works, structure-wise and rhythmic-wise, and it lands solidly and "serves" the poem's thematic agenda, its intentions, and provides a nice "finish" in terms of the overall ambiance.

SA: I like knowing that you enjoy your own poetry and that you enjoy reading it aloud. Not enjoying it would be like a stand-up comic who didn't think she was funny or who did not enjoy laughing. I like knowing that you enjoy it, because I enjoy it too.

TIFFANY MIDGE (Standing Rock Sioux) received the *Kenyon Review's* Earthworks Prize for Indigenous Poetry and a Western Heritage Award for *The Woman Who Married a Bear*. *Outlaws, Renegades and Saints: Diary of a Mixed-up Halfbreed* won the Diane Decorah Memorial Poetry Prize by the Native Writers' Circle of the Americas.

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Film Review

John Little and Kenn Little, dirs. *More Than a Word*. 2017. Dist. by Media Education Foundation. 70 mins.

Martha L. Viehmann, *Greater Anderson Promotes Peace*

More Than a Word, a documentary by brothers John and Kenn Little (Standing Rock Sioux), focuses on Native American-themed sports mascots and fan antics, especially those of the Washington, DC, football team. The film presents the history of the team and the controversy over its name within a broad context of pop culture, US history, and when and how Native American imagery and perspectives gain attention. Featuring interviews with activists Suzan Shown Harjo (Cheyenne and Hodulgee Muscogee), Amanda Blackhorse (Diné), and Tara Houska (Couchiching), with scholars Philip Deloria (Dakota), Jared Ball, and Joe Horse Capture (A'anin), and with diverse fans, the documentary affirms the importance of the mascot issue. *More Than a Word* claims that dehumanizing images on the playing field impact Indigenous people everywhere else and limit the ability of non-Natives to understand and value diverse Native perspectives.

With short chapters, thought-provoking juxtapositions, and imagery ripe for analysis, *More Than a Word* lends itself to use in the classroom. The topic remains relevant because nearly a thousand professional teams and K–12 schools still use Native-themed mascots, according to the National Congress of American Indians. Communities across the nation are reconsidering their school brands, and recent name changes in Ohio, Utah, and Maine keep the topic in the news and make it likely that campus or community-based screenings will attract viewers from beyond the university.

The structure of the film conveys the way media and sports stereotypes impact Native American visibility even as the Littles center Native American voices. The opening sequence features non-Native perspectives, signaling the challenge for Indigenous people to break into conversations about issues central to them. Soon after introducing the

activists and scholars in interviews, the film cuts to stills and clips of costumed fans, half-time show “Indian” clowns, and other images that illustrate why sports mascots are a central topic even though, as Deloria puts it, “We’d rather talk about treaty rights than the rituals of Washington football fans.” *More Than a Word* shows that the history of playing Indian and white supremacy shape how Native people are seen and heard, and it uses the arguments of Native people to try to change the dominant site of stereotyping.

The documentary also shows the fierce resistance to change. In one sequence, Amanda Blackhorse describes the vicious attacks lobbed at her as the named plaintiff in a lawsuit against Pro-Football Inc. As she speaks, messages sent to her appear in white boxes on black screens. The stark design highlights the hateful words. We hear the emotion in Blackhorse’s voice as we read words like “Consider suicide?” The film is persuasive to those who are not already firmly entrenched because it both informs and moves viewers; it does so through a recursive structure that contrasts stubborn efforts to cling to white supremacist “traditions” with uplifting moments when Indigenous people gain control of the narrative, such as scenes from the inaugural Indigenous Comic Con.

The skillful use of structure is also evident in the carefully crafted conclusion. In the summer of 2017 the Littles were finalizing the film when the Supreme Court released its decision in the *Slants* case. This decision overturned the Lanham Act, meaning copyright protection can now be extended to offensive material. Thus, the latest appeal in *Blackhorse v. ProFootball, Inc.* was dropped. The film pushes back against despair with a change in the background music and the declaration that “the fight against the Washington team name and other Native American mascots will continue.” Final appearances from Houska, Horse Capture, and Blackhorse affirm their confidence. Blackhorse says, “The more they’ve tried to silence . . . [us], the stronger we’ve become. I know we’re going to win.”

The scholars and activists in *More Than a Word* declare that education about Native American nations—their diversity, their history, and their modern presence—is key to convincing the public that sports team mascots must go. Continuing evidence of mascot change in the news and stories in the documentary of avid fans who no longer support the name give reasons for hope. By centering Native American voices in response to representations that appear to make living Indigenous peo-

ple irrelevant, John and Kenn Little provide powerful evidence not only of the living presence but also of the creativity and skill that counter white supremacist imagery by showing that Indigenous people have important and beautiful things to say for themselves.

MARTHA L. VIEHMANN, PhD, has studied Native American literature and film for over thirty years. Her publications include essays on Mourning Dove and Pauline Johnson. Viehmann lives in Cincinnati, Ohio, where she works with Greater Anderson Promotes Peace on mascot change and community education to promote diversity and inclusion.

Book Reviews

Daniel Heath Justice. *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter*. Wilfrid Laurier UP, 2018. ISBN: 978-1-7711-2176-7. 260 pp.

Kate Rose, *China University of Mining and Technology*

Daniel Heath Justice begins this book by talking about stories, those told by Indigenous peoples and those told about them. Whereas the first are crucial to the continuance of identity, the second can be “toxic.” Similarly, applying theories from outside Indigenous worldviews to the study of Indigenous literatures not only can miss the main points but also can reduce and/or co-opt Indigenous cultures and world views. Thus, the need for Indigenous theory.

Justice himself uses stories frequently to make his points, writing in language that is accessible (and beautifully precise) yet rigorous and meaningful from an academic perspective and for a general readership of anyone interested in Indigenous lives today. In this politically engaged, substantiated, and rhetorically sound book, Justice argues in favor of telling different kinds of stories within academia. The implications stretch far beyond the field of Indigenous literatures to potentially shake the foundations of the academic canon. They parallel a small but growing movement to take Indigenous knowledge seriously within all fields of study, including, for example, climate change research, which incorporates traditional environmental knowledge (TEK), with papers coauthored by Indigenous scientists who have no training in a Western system but who provide valuable insights that Western science cannot. I have long felt this is also true for literature, and it is time we stopped pretending that the perspective anchored in white, male culture is objective and universal. This means a radical revision of the tools we use, which is easier said than done.

Reading Justice’s enactment of different kinds of theory makes this goal suddenly seem more feasible. Feminist, civil rights, and Native American movements during the 1960s paved the way in academia for subjects of study that were previously rare and allowed us to ask

questions we could not previously ask, at least in academia. However, it now seems that we are forced to answer these questions using a specific kind of discourse determined by a reductive framework anchored in Eurowestern history or we are not taken seriously. We can choose our subject but must interpret it with the literary equivalent of mainstream Western science. Justice's book is key in changing this problematic situation through challenging what is a valid source and angle for approaching literary study. Which questions really matter, and which sources can we use to answer them?

Justice not only discusses Indigenous authors but also cites a wide range of scholars from a variety of Indigenous traditions rather than applying Eurowestern criticism to non-Eurocentric texts, which is still the norm in academia. He challenges the assumption that serious analysis must address the canon, respond to the canon—criticize it if you want, but never leave it behind. He enacts a new kind of theory not by discussing it more than necessary but by applying it to the study of texts and, in a cyclical fashion, using the texts to inform the theory. He not only argues for why we need Indigenous theory and elaborates on what it would look like but also shows us how to apply it. Most of this book is devoted to analysis of literary texts.

Why Indigenous Literatures Matter is accessible enough to be used as a textbook for undergraduates not only in fields related to Indigenous studies but more broadly in literature courses or anything regarding race, North America, or queer studies, as Justice frequently references the experiences of Two-Spirit people, which he describes as an Indigenous term to name and honor nonbinary people as being closer to the divine. Although written clearly and accessibly, the arguments themselves are not simplistic, nor are the issues discussed; therefore, it is a book of great importance to scholars specializing in Indigenous theory and related fields.

Why Indigenous Literatures Matter is structured around four central chapters regarding human existence, thus firmly and refreshingly placing literature in relation to real life: "How Do We Learn to Be Human?," "How Do We Behave as Good Relatives?," "How Do We Become Good Ancestors?," and "How Do We Learn to Live Together?" His responses are full of examples from the natural world and a variety of cultural traditions. Justice cites both established and lesser-known Native American authors, all showing the continuance of traditions

and the resistance to oppression. The excerpts are well-chosen and interesting. Justice also responds to the marginalization of women and nonbinary people by Eurowestern culture, suggesting and enacting through his choice of texts an Indigenous alternative that embraces diversity in gender and sexuality. Indeed, the freedom to love is a political force against Eurowestern hatred and denial of Native desire and agency: “To challenge that hate, we take on love—embody it, in bodies of all kinds, of all sizes, of all shades and shapes” (108). With humility, compassion, and deep respect for the writers he cites, Justice creates a work of intellectual integrity and literary passion. He certainly meets the book’s goal of showing why Indigenous literatures matter, or should matter, to all of us.

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Theodore C. Van Alst Jr. *Sacred Smokes*. U of New Mexico P, 2018.
ISBN: 978-0-8263-5990-2. 176 pp.

David L. Moore, *University of Montana*

A fourteen-year-old Hunkpapa Sioux gangsta on the streets of Chicago, called “the professor” and “Midget” by his peers, claims his voice, shifting between f-bombs and lyrical, fantastical horror stories that mesmerize the other boys. His claim does not feel surprising or out of place because his voice, at the heart of Theodore C. Van Alst Jr.’s *Sacred Smokes*, seems to have always been there—in his breath and in the Windy City. It never left, and that’s the point. The f-bombs and the stories, woven casually, sometimes three layers deep in voice and point of view, pulse with narrative vitality, reappropriating urban America into a compelling Indigenous presence.

This remarkably original collection of semiautobiographical short fiction, twelve interwoven tales, leaps through tragedy to poignancy to hilarity and deep irony. The jungle of streets becomes Indigenous. The language itself evolves and cycles through the text, a kind of portrait of the artist as a young Indian, shifting not from baby talk to philosophy

but from teenage street rap, punctuated with early childhood flashbacks, to flashforwards of literary discourse, then circling back to street talk touched with fine observations. We meet in alleys with scared young gangstas with guns or within grim apartment walls sweating with a beloved and brutal drunken father's presence, a relocated link to Lakota ways. Textual parallels with James Joyce and contextually with the Irish Renaissance are telling. Here is a grittier rhetorical evolution that both masters and remasters the master's discourse: we lament for a colonized people; we feel the tensions of family as politics and politics as family; we feel exile, diaspora, resistance; and we feel this voice that would speak for the conscience of his race.

Both Susan Power and Stephen Graham Jones, endorsing this remarkable collection, describe *Sacred Smokes* as "necessary." "A necessary read," Power writes, and Jones responds to it as "real and raw and necessary." His further insistence that "[w]e've been needing this book for a lot of years now" speaks both to the literary accomplishment of "its hyperreal voice of an Indian gang member trying to survive the streets of Chicago," as Power describes it, and to the historic placement of this text in the contemporary flowering of Indigenous literatures. That Jones refers here to "a lot of years" marks, I reckon, precisely the five decades since publication of N. Scott Momaday's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *House Made of Dawn*, in 1968. Although there have been many other factors contributing to decades of artistic momentum, that literary award served as the starting gun for a remarkable Indian relay of Native American writers in full gallop, a race that continues nonstop. As many readers know, there have been waves of writers from Indian Country in the last two generations, both reservation-based and urban, who offer fiction and poetry, drama, essay, and film. Some now are canonized. They convey modern and historical Native narratives on the land, on reservations, and in the cities, but none has dug more deeply into young urban Native life on the streets than *Sacred Smokes*.

The book stands among recent titles of city life by emerging Indigenous writers, especially the new urban Native novel *There, There*, by Cheyenne and Arapaho writer Tommy Orange, along with numerous texts by Stephen Graham Jones (Blackfeet). The intense young narrative voice in Van Alst's fiction embodies the more formally discursive voices in Orange's novel, where the prologue proclaims: "Being Indian has never been about returning to the land. The land is everywhere

or nowhere” (11). Such a radical announcement may be seen across generations either as ultimate assimilation, giving up on “returning to the land,” or as ultimate reappropriation, remapping kinship on the “land” as “everywhere,” including downtown. This urban affirmation grants no quarter to settler colonials who refuse to acknowledge they live on stolen land.

The voice in *Sacred Smokes* is unique, holding technically to its youthful point of view without an omniscient narrator’s distance, even as it indirectly—and sometimes directly—articulates incisive social critique. The result of this vocal spectrum across dialogue, narrative drama, description, and minimal exposition is precisely a central consciousness, a casual voice that is this fiction’s textual foreground and its contextual achievement, breaking fictional ground. It forcefully extends Indigenous presence back into the streets, the city, the realm of the Chicago Board of Trade overlaid on Indian land. There is of course an array of textual elements that achieve this forceful presence via realistic dialogue, alert description, comic rhythm, and even brief alternate fonts to convey a kind of graffiti tone. It is fashionable in book reviews to praise an author’s prose as “luminous” or “lyrical” or “riveting,” but the language in Van Alst’s text goes beyond such descriptors. It generates heat and light. It is electric, forceful, magnetic—though often coolly understated. Like city neon or the third rail of the elevated train, which plays a grim role in plot and character here, the prose spits sparks that weld the reader to the page.

Van Alst, who is indeed a professor, now teaching at Portland State University after the University of Connecticut, Yale, and the University of Montana, brings a different version of this originality to his more formal academic publications as well, shifting the discourse in a welcome, more informal direction.

The plural in the title, *Sacred Smokes*, works punningly to signify layers of meaning at the heart of the book’s significance. On the basis of smoke as messenger of prayer to the Creator in many Indigenous cultures, “smokes” represent different kinds of tobacco, different tongues, and indeed different identities, even as the word utters its literal vernacular meaning of “cigarettes.” This elusive interplay of meaning is key to the fictional voice’s buoyancy. The literal meaning of “cigarettes,” in turn, connotes countless stories of Native people reappropriating com-

modified products of Big Tobacco for their own sacred and personal purposes. The word “smokes” thus carries stories of transformation, of shifting addiction into personal and cultural strength, of life rising through death, of strength rising from ashes of suffering.

We discover that Van Alst’s text fills its steady flow of juvenile f-bombs with a strangely compelling logic of personal momentum into insight and articulation, where the character of the young narrator is both a representative of and an exception to a life of the streets. He knows as a survivor that he’s smarter than the rest. His characterization thus affirms a sense of consciousness through desperation and suffering. This complexity in his voice explodes quietly off the page from an early moment in chapter 2, “Jagg’d,” when the narrator first slides from expletive-laced dialogue and narration into storytelling within the story, unspooling a sneaky horror tale for his street buddies. “Jesus-fuckinchrist, Teddy. What goes on inside that head of yours? someone says,” and amid the banter of his friends, the narrator writes, “I clench, unclench” (25). Nothing of the oppressive circumstances is overstated, but even the streams of obscenity become full of suggestion, punctuated by the narrator’s keen eye.

Subtly, amid rough language and dialogue, the text refers to an unquestioned Indigenous urban identity in the “warlord’s” gang. Via street slang, in addition to scattered standard usage of “init” carried over from Rez English, there are references to “Injun” (86); to a member’s Ojibwe mother, who is “tradish” (106); to the character Goof’s “Indian-long hair” (108); and, in a later hitchhiking moment in Mississippi, even to “[s]uspicious eyes check out my long hair and pretty brown self” (117). This steadily Indigenous point of view unites these stories not into a novel but into a detailed map of a fictional world founded on Indian ground. Passages explode from laugh-out-loud comedy to sometimes brutal loss. One representative quotation will have to suffice to convey the “authentic” quality of storytelling, full of vocal presence in tone, diction, rhythm, imagery. At the end of the final short story, “Thunderbird,” after an anticlimactic gang fight, the final image emerges of a falcon hitting a flock of pigeons. It works well as a metaphor for much of the book, for both the social violence and the narrator’s quieter sense of longing, almost to the edge of wonder, as the language is characteristically vivid:

[Y]up, this flock of pigeons takes off in front of me like they do, and they're fiddlyfuck flying around, and then there's this . . . shadow, but not really a shadow, more like a greyed-out knife-edge of pressure I can feel above my head, and then *bam* there's like a shock wave and this *ploomph* sound and a crack of hollow bones that comes from the center of the birdspray, and then just some feathers float down and all the other pigeons flap away in rolly-eyed terror, and I watch this falcon streak home supper to her young about fifty-five stories up, and I just keep looking, looking. (154)

These delicate perceptions in the midst of chaotic violence claim and retain a voice through sensational imagery.

What I love about this book is not so much its radical approach to long-term questions of Indigenous identity (does a definition need “the land”?), though it does address such questions between the lines. Instead, we have the literary force of this narrative voice itself that gives body to its own radical “Indian” presence—in the city. It does a remarkable job of poignantly dramatizing those questions.

I'm guessing that what Powers and Jones find “necessary” in this new text is precisely its long-awaited affirmation of Indigenous urban identity. Or better: Indigeneity precedes the “urban,” just as it precedes the “wilderness.” Van Alst's text, by indirection, affirms how Indigeneity is a category apart from settler colonial confusions and European American constructs of “civilization and wilderness.” Just as Standing Bear affirmed that “[t]here was no wilderness till the white man came,” so did many Indigenous cultures in the Western Hemisphere live in great cities long before 1492, from Cahokia to Tenochtitlan and beyond.

In this *postindian* moment of Native American literature (Van Alst in *Sacred Smokes* does explicitly cite Gerald Vizenor, Ojibwe author of such key terms as “postindian,” “terminal creeds,” “socioacupuncture,” and “survivance”) the emergence of that urban voice proves itself crucial and necessary. Up to 70 percent of Native American tribal members and uncounted other nontribal members live today in the cities and urban sprawl of America, not on reservations. From Chicago's “City Indians” of the Progressive Era in the first half of the twentieth century through relocation to various cities in the 1950s, 1960s, and beyond, identity and community for Native Americans have been defined largely by urban

landscapes, with the resonant sovereignty of tribal nationhood echoing like a steady drum song through their reservation ties.

What is most remarkable is Van Alst's ultimate turn on the colonial narrative. In the long tradition of Indigenous literary resistance, *Sacred Smokes* not only fights back across the frontier but also reclaims Indian land, rural and urban. Rather than the familiar litanies of annihilation, or assimilation, or reorganization, or termination, or even self-determination, and rather than return to some imperial, nostalgic view of purity, authenticity, or even Indigeneity, the young voice in *Sacred Smokes* simply lays claim to the streets of Chicago, to the city of Chicago, to the land of Chicago, to the land everywhere and nowhere. As Van Alst puts it in the acknowledgments at the very end: "Chicago. . . . Hey, you're my rez. I love you and all of us, your folks, so fiercely, so completely, I think about you every day." Beyond a story of settler colonialism paving the shore of Lake Michigan with concrete, Van Alst affirms that Indigenous presence never left the beloved ground, and never will.

DAVID L. MOORE, professor of English at the University of Montana, has distinguished himself as a literary critic with a specialization in Native American literature through his writings on authors Leslie Marmon Silko, Ray Young Bear, Gerald Vizenor, and Simon Ortiz. Author of the *That Dream Shall Have a Name: Native Americans Rewriting America*, Moore provides a way for us to discuss the difficult moral and ethical choices we make in cross-cultural contact, influence, and communication. Dr. Moore recently gave a lecture on Native American literature and the principles of sovereignty, community, identity, authenticity, and irony from his book, and he has participated in panels on contemporary Native American literary studies.

Carlos G. Vélez-Ibáñez. *Hegemonies of Language and Their Discontents: The Southwest North American Region Since 1540*. U of Arizona P, 2018. ISBN: 978-0-8165-3920-8. 337 pp.

David Martínez, *Arizona State University, Tempe*

Probably not since Octavio Paz offered his learned reflections on the Mexican soul in *The Labyrinth of Solitude* (1950) has a single volume captured the epic sweep of what is today the transborder region of the American Southwest and northern Mexico. From the homeland of Indigenous peoples speaking an array of Uto-Aztecan languages to

the Pimería Alta and New Spain under the Spanish Crown, then to the Gadsden Purchase and New Mexico Territory under the Americans, what Vélez-Ibáñez designates the Southwest North American Region (SWNAR) has been the site of significant cultural, political, and linguistic changes, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. More specifically, *Hegemonies of Language and Their Discontents* is about the sociolinguistic permutations that the populations inhabiting the SWNAR have undergone as the region was subjected to different types of political, religious, and economic control, or what the author refers to as “metascripts.” Consequently, there is long but dramatic historical change in which power relations are articulated and reassigned between culturally distinct groups, such as Jesuit missionaries like Padre Eusebio Francisco Kino learning Indigenous languages, O’odham and Yuman among them, for the purpose of spreading the Christian Gospel and establishing a mission system to the intransigent efforts of, say, the state of Arizona asserting an assimilationist and monolingual approach to coercing Spanish-speaking schoolchildren and migrants into the American white-centric mainstream.

Ultimately, Vélez-Ibáñez’s book is about the virtues of bilingual education and the benefits this creates for the student populations served by such programming and the societies across SWNAR where bilingualism is a part of everyday life. As such, Vélez-Ibáñez effectively rebuts the legal and political premises on which English-only laws, which arise in Arizona periodically, presume that a more linguistically homogeneous society means a more law-abiding society. Such propositions are simultaneously based on a condescending attitude toward Spanish speakers as socially corrupt, on the one hand, and the concept that English-based society is by definition more civilized, on the other. “These [attitudes],” though, as Vélez-Ibáñez poignantly observes, “are reminiscent of the nineteenth and twentieth century narratives of the Know-Nothings, the Ku Klux Klan of the Midwest, and the Posse Comitatus of recent vintage” (180). The latter example, of course, continues to roil the US-Mexico border, be it Arizona sheriff Joe Arpaio’s reign of terror or the current president’s deployment of military troops in violation of the Posse Comitatus Act (1878).

Divided into seven chapters and three appendices, *Hegemonies of Language and Their Discontents* guides its reader across a variety of cultural, historical, and political phenomena that have shaped the SWNAR

into what it is today. In the case of the book's historic scope, 1540 marks the embarkation of the Coronado Expedition, which led to the Spanish colonization of SWNAR. At the same time, it was an era in which the Indigenous nations that Spanish explorers encountered maintained power and influence across their respective territories, including linguistic control, which the Spaniards had to accommodate lest their colonial ambitions come to naught. Chapters 1 through 3 thereby cover the Indigenous linguistic ecology of the SWNAR into which Spanish explorers and settlers imposed themselves, consequently sending the region into a cultural-linguistic upheaval out of which the "seeing man" syndrome emerged, a concept that Vélez-Ibáñez borrows from Mary Pratt's 1992 treatise on travel writing and colonialism to signify the "missionary agents, civil authorities, and the military and their attending discontents" (7) whose colonial gaze was fixated on possessing everything within its view. However, as dramatized by Popé and the 1680 Pueblo Revolt, for every people conquered there erupted an anticonquest movement that influenced all aspects of the SWNAR, in which languages and customs resisted oppression, assimilation, and erasure by developing in cultural spaces beyond the purview of colonial institutions, such as the rituals and ceremonies of the Matachines, celebrated in chapter 3. Further examples are enumerated in chapter 7, ostensibly about bilingual programming and the "funds of knowledge" maintained within bilingual populations, such as the "household funds of knowledge" listed on an ethnographic chart (237).

For the people variously labeled as Mexican, Mestizo/a, and Chicano/a, the battle for cultural endurance ever since the international border was dropped on them after the American-Mexican War (chapter 4) has been waged against blatant racism, eugenics programming, and historical trauma perpetrated most notoriously by a public-school system designed to eliminate Hispanic language and culture from the minds of its students for the purpose of "Americanizing" them. Chapters 5 through 7 chart the liberation of the above-named people from the hegemony of English monolingual control. Integral to Vélez-Ibáñez's analysis, the worst instance of the "seeing man" problem is the way in which English monolingual educational policy is premised on the racism of eugenics: "The eugenics argument raises its serpentine head in the present almost one hundred years later so that the massive immigration expulsions, raids, arrests, fracturing of families, and the

immense psychological and emotional costs in the present are directly associated with the long-standing nativist tradition . . . and given substance by referring to the costs of educating Mexican-origin children especially” (147). In response, chapter 7 is a comprehensive refutation of prevailing English-only policy initiatives, complete with a thorough analysis of “the latest research and practices from the literature in Europe and the United States,” in addition to the “ethnographical information recounted through published fieldwork [and] the human dynamics that produce the most positive results beyond our penchant for measurable evidence” (216).

In the final analysis, bilingualism is not only good policy consistent with the cultural and linguistic history of the SWNAR but also a healthy antidote to the deleterious effects of the forced assimilation perpetrated on generations of defenseless schoolchildren and their communities, many of whom were here long before the SWNAR came under American control. On this point, I do have one criticism on an otherwise phenomenal contribution to the history of linguistic sovereignty, which is that the Indigenous peoples introduced in chapters 1 and 2, namely the O’odham, Yaqui, and Tarahumara, are largely forgotten in the latter half of the book. Perhaps a companion study is in order. In the meantime, I do wholeheartedly recommend this book to anyone interested in the linguistics of colonialism, resistance, and revitalization. Insofar as the Mexican American population is exemplary of contemporary language and education policy in America, I assert that anyone with a concern for non-English-language maintenance in the SWNAR and beyond should read this work.

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Tommy Orange. *There, There*. Alfred Knopf, 2018. ISBN: 978-0-5255-2037-5. 294 pp.

Brandon Hobson. *Where the Dead Sit Talking*. Soho Press, 2018. ISBN: 978-1-6169-5887-9. 273 pp.

Jeremy M. Carnes, *University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee*

The legacies of settler colonialism continually mark the bodies of Indigenous peoples. As Tommy Orange writes, “[I]t’s the way history lands on a face” (16). In the recent novels by Tommy Orange and Brandon Hobson, characters are marked by these settler-colonial legacies. *There, There* opens with Tony Loneman noting, “The drome first came to me in the mirror when I was six” (15). When he was told that he had fetal alcohol syndrome, six-year-old Loneman connected his face with that final syllable, “drome.” Similarly, Hobson’s Sequoyah was burned by hot grease at eleven, an accident at the hands of a mother dealing with alcoholism. As common as it is to blame mothers in these situations, Hobson, through Sequoyah’s mother, gives voice to the problem at hand. After seeing his mother get sick when drunk, Sequoyah remarks, “Those people you’re with are poisoning your drink.” His mother responds, “It’s normal. . . . [I]t’s how it is for everyone” (3). As much as she is explaining the effects of alcohol to a son too young to understand, she is marking her alcoholism as itself inescapable. However, both Hobson and Orange couch issues of alcoholism and substance abuse within the larger narrative of settler-colonial violence.

Tommy Orange’s *There, There* is multigenerational and multiperspectival in a vein similar to the novels of Louise Erdrich. Yet, as much as Orange tells the stories of the characters in his novel, he tells the story of the city of Oakland, one of many American cities where Native individuals were relocated at the hands of termination era policies of the 1950s. In fact, the title even comes from a famous Gertrude Stein quote about the city, “There is no there there,” which Orange deconstructs through one of his characters, likening it to the Native dispossession of land and identity. Each of the lives around Oakland lead, throughout the novel, to the Big Oakland Powwow, though their paths there are varying and circuitous. From Edwin Black, who applies for an internship with the powwow at the urging of his mother in an effort to get him out of the house he has walled himself away in, to Dene Oxendene, who is follow-

ing in his uncle's footsteps to film the stories of Native individuals in the Oakland area, each character is given a rich and complex history that relies equally on their identity as Indigenous peoples and on their urban locales.

The twelve characters of *There, There* offer a robust and complex picture of life in Oakland, and Orange does not shy away from all of the problems that brings. The quotidian details of these lives include the hopefulness of love, the complexities of familial relationships, and the deep sorrow of loss. Each character is marked by their own story and their family's history, some of which center around Oakland and others that connect the city with various reservations across the country. We see the effects of the close-quarter living on Alcatraz Island during the occupation of the American Indian Movement on both Opal Viola Victoria Bear Shield and her sister Jacquie Red Feather. We glimpse how poverty can affect a family's outlook on life, on personal worth. All the while, Orange makes clear that what connects these people is nothing more than the fact that they are living. In their own situations, the decisions they make might not be the best ones, but they are living. They might not treat those around them with the respect they deserve, but they are living. They might be giving and giving and giving so much that it is slowly killing them, but they are living. Orange's most pointed strength in this novel is his ability to engage our sympathy while also contemplating what actions can signify, both positively and negatively, for the rest of the community, whether the family community or the larger communities across Oakland itself.

While Orange's novel provides a complex commentary on Indigeneity and urbanity through the characters and situations he weaves, he compliments this point by including an essay-style prologue and interlude that breaks up the fiction of his story with the reality these fictionalized lives are based in. The inclusion of this very different genre next to the fictionalized story gives the novel a specific kind of weight, particularly through the ways in which urban Natives have been disconnected from tribal homelands, whether of their own volition or not. Orange uses this space to put a point on issues like blood quantum, mass media representations of Natives, the importance of powwows, and the ways in which urbanity has been largely misunderstood in relation to Native lives. As he writes in the prelude, "Urban Indians were the generation born in the city. We've been moving for a long time, but the land moves with

you like memory. An Urban Indian belongs to the city, and cities belong to the earth. Everything here is formed in relation to every other living and nonliving thing from the earth" (11). Thus, throughout *There, There* Orange works to rewrite dominant conceptions of urban Natives, complicating both their assumed assimilation (on the part of the US government) and their connection to tribal nations, beliefs, and practices.

In a markedly different vein from Orange's novel, Brandon Hobson's *Where the Dead Sit Talking* focuses on Sequoyah, a young Cherokee boy who is placed in the foster care system after his mother is put in jail. The novel is retrospective; it is told by an older Sequoyah as he thinks about his time with the Troutt family in 1989. Harold and Agnes Troutt, who live in rural Little Crow, Oklahoma, have two other foster children living with them: the eccentric thirteen-year-old George and the more reclusive seventeen-year-old Rosemary. Rosemary and Sequoyah end up connecting over their shared Native background. Rosemary is Kiowa. She introduces Sequoyah to books like N. Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* and *The Way to Rainy Mountain*. However, what I find refreshing about this novel is that it does not try to be something it is not. Rather than an awakening novel where a young Cherokee and a young Kiowa become closer to their identities as Native individuals, this book focuses on the problems that teenagers face in an especially tumultuous time in their lives, and Rosemary's and Sequoyah's tumult is only magnified by their placement in the foster care system and their own familial traumas.

While *Where the Dead Sit Talking* can seem perhaps a bit melodramatic at certain moments, this is what I think gives the novel noted depth. The characters, Sequoyah and Rosemary particularly, are not simple or one-dimensional but carry the baggage of their pasts and their struggles of their own self-definitions with them in each interaction. Occasionally this means that a seemingly happy encounter between the two becomes a moment of tension or of teenage anger and angst, but these turns are never left without a grounding in the experiences built around the backstories of these characters. Furthermore, like Orange, Hobson complicates what it means to be Native simply by telling a story that mirrors the experience of so many Native youth in foster care. Like the experiences of urban Natives, the experience of foster care is not divorced from the stories of real people, even if the tale told by Hobson is itself fictional.

However, while it is easy to praise both novels for their ability to get past the grandiloquent representations that often plague contemporary literature, it is important to note that the realities depicted in each novel are neither easy to consider nor easy to consume. Discussions and representations of substance abuse, (gun) violence, suicide, and physical or emotional abuse are engrained within the fabric of these stories. While both authors, it seems, would argue that these issues are inherent to contemporary life, especially contemporary lives under the rule of a settler-colonial government, the difficulties readers may have approaching this content must be noted. In fact, it is precisely because these issues are rooted in living fact, are a part of individual and communal testimony, that engaging with the content can become a retreading of these traumas. Knowing that this content forms much of the backbone for both stories is the right of every reader.

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