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The Indigenous Imposition

Settling Expectation, Unsettling Revision,
and the Politics of Playing with Familiarity

DARREN EDWARD LONE FIGHT

The artist Steven Paul Judd's (Kiowa/Choctaw) short claymation film *Neil Discovers the Moon* opens on a black screen, and as we hear the line "Houston, Tranquility Base here. The Eagle has landed," the film cuts to an astronaut figurine slowly raising the American flag and plunging it into the moon's rocky soil. The famous line "a giant leap for mankind" plays in the background as the astronaut firmly digs the flag into the moonscape. The careful listener will notice the astronaut "breathing" during this scene, but the sound of the astronaut's respiration is actually the familiar, ominous, and mechanical sound of Darth Vader's breathing apparatus from the movie *Star Wars*. As this iconic breathing continues in the background, the astronaut releases his grip on the flag when suddenly a hand lightly taps him on the leg. The camera swings out and pans to reveal a young, dark-skinned, Native American girl sitting on the ground next to where the flag has been planted. She looks up at the astronaut and then asks in her Indigenous language, subtitled in English, "Does this mean we have to move again?" The screen swallows to black, with only a circular spotlight preserved on the mask of the astronaut. As he looks directly at the camera, the video once again reverts to audio from the space mission, intoning, "Uhh . . . Houston, we have a problem."

This film does a lot with its thirty seconds of on-screen action through its invocation of the science fiction (SF) cultural touchstone of *Star Wars*, the technologies of space exploration, and an emplacement of what I term an "Indigenous imposition" of the Native girl in a futuristic context. The aural blending of NASA transmissions and Vader's breathing is not particularly surprising here, as there has always been a connection between the SF genre and technologies of space exploration. A concise but exemplary piece of Indigenous Futurist art, Judd's film

is deceptively complex in its deployment of a revisional aesthetic, here accomplished through the juxtaposition of Indigenous and pop-culture symbolism, historical allusion, and a chiastic temporality that slips back and forth across settler-colonial and Indigenous frames of historical reference.

The initial sense of futurity is here accomplished through the use of an otherworldly lunar setting, the implied travel between solar bodies, and the figure of the astronaut—presumably Neil Armstrong, per the title of the film. The space race and lunar landing still manage to evoke a futurist framework within the American cultural imaginary; however, given that the audio transmission used in the closing seconds of Judd's film is from a different lunar mission, one that never actually landed on the moon (Apollo 13), it is reasonable to assume that the scene and space-race references here are intended rather to call to mind a vague type of nationalism and futurity rather than a precise mimetic construction of any single mission. "Armstrong," visage concealed behind the faceless reflective glass of his helmet, is generalized through this anonymity and therefore similarly nonspecific: because Armstrong is one of the best-known astronauts other than Buzz Aldrin, the title of the film, while specifying Armstrong's name, seems to operate more as a metonymy for NASA and "American greatness" during the fullest flourish of the race for space rather than any individual astronaut. Seen in this context, the lunar scene and the NASA figure serve as generalized, somewhat nonspecific representations of space exploration. In that sense, the film toys with the representational force that outer space plays in the U.S. cultural imaginary—a place of the radically foreign and heretofore unknown, and therefore ripe for discovery. And, of course, despite the futurist orientation of space exploration, these referenced NASA events (Apollo 11 and 13) transpired about fifty years ago. Here Judd has chosen signifiers of a "future" that nonetheless have their material reality in the past. As an intertextual complement to this future-historical frame, Judd has inserted the additional aural texture of Vader's breathing, pregnant with its own pop-cultural symbolism, which acts as an auditory cue connecting another future-historical space context, *Star Wars*, which is, after all, "*A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away.*"

The opening frames of the claymation film also indicate that the film is "classified footage" that has "never been seen by the public." Here there is both an invocation of the alienness of what is to come—this classified

footage verbiage frames the context of the video with fringe theories about NASA's encounter with aliens during the mission—and a characterization of the coming narrative as an uncomfortable truth that has been classified and repressed by the federal government. This is drawn to a finer point as the Indigenous girl is revealed sitting innocently on the lunar surface. The girl in this context generates what Bertolt Brecht called an “alienation effect,” where we “recognize [the] subject, but at the same time . . . it seem[s] unfamiliar” (189). The girl is rendered on the lunar surface as both alien and Indigenous, “foreign” but “in a domestic sense,” as she sits leisurely on the celestial soil sans spacesuit. In this scene, the sudden and unexpected appearance is *unsettling* both formally within the world of the film and temporally for reasons having to do with the cathected and contradictory tensions inherent in settler-colonial history. While I will cover this aesthetic of unsettlement more robustly later in this article, we can nevertheless see here the difficulties Native presence creates in this rehearsal of the “discovery doctrine.” Despite the alien context, this is a hauntingly familiar yet diametric narrative for both the settler-colonial state and Indigenous people. The young girl stands in for the partially overwritten palimpsest of the U.S. historical imaginary, the attempted repression and erasure of the dark side of U.S. imperial expansion, and the devastating toll wreaked on the Indigenous people in that pursuit. To emphasize this repressive impulse within the state imaginary and the historical narratives of progress that typically obviate such inconvenient details, the entire film itself is therefore framed as a repressed document.

This fictionalized representation clearly echoes nonfictional histories of settler-Indigenous relations in U.S. history, and, in that sense, it becomes clear that the Native girl's presence operates multiply at the level of the symbol. Even in the choice of construction material, this dichotomy is emphasized by Judd: as an Indigenous earthen embodiment of the historical nexus between sovereign tribal nations and the founding and history of the U.S. government, the Indigenous girl is rendered in clay and nestled in the sandy lunar soil; this in contrast to the faceless astronaut and American flag, both composed in hard plastic. This Indigenous imposition in an unexpected context highlights and places pressure on the settler-colonial imaginary: a clay reminder of the ongoing failure to fully overwrite and replace Indigenous presence, foregrounding the repressed and unsettling originary violence inher-

ent in the founding of the U.S. settler state. This point is driven home when the young girl, speaking in her Native language, asks if this means “we” will have to move “again.” This short interrogative sentence continues to work back across the grain of the broader futuristic temporal orientation, simultaneously situating a present and material “we”—an extant and undigested people and culture in the lunar setting—and the pointed qualifier “again,” which throws the viewer backward toward the repressed history of violence and usurpation between the state and tribal nations/people. Neatly tying together the history of imperial conquest and the space race through a temporal and perspectival reorientation, we find a familiar historical narrative: an agent of U.S. state power, motivated by the mission of discovery, powered by an ideology of progress, propelled by military technology, wielding the American flag to justify a declaration of ownership, encounters an Indigenous population that complicates the mission. This final encounter with the Indigenous alternative future’s past causes a disruption in the imperial sequence, compelling the astronaut to radio “home” to Houston that they “have a problem.” An Indian problem.

The power of Judd’s film is precisely in how it starkly and deftly illustrates the rhetorical and cultural potential that Indigenous Futurist projects find in the nexus of identity, technology, spatiality, temporality, and power. Certainly there is a strong association with the SF genre, which threads through most contemporary futurist projects, and Indigenous Futurism is no different, but Judd’s film illustrates how not only SF but the broader cultural assemblage out of which it articulates and emanates are critical tools for Native artists in the construction of compelling and exemplary Indigenous Futurist counternarratives. As such, Judd’s work here serves as an example for this article’s object of analysis, so I begin with this film and my brief analytic interpretation of its composition and effect because in it we can locate some of the structure, orientation, and content of the analysis that follows.

To that end, I will begin with a brief examination of the historically contingent character and features of the genre of science fiction, specifically, the racialized tenor of much of its textual production, before turning to a brief history of Afrofuturism as a means of grounding and articulating the connection between broader futurist projects and my own exploration of the definition(s) and conceptual framework

of Indigenous Futurism, arguing it is most effective as a particular approach or orientation rather than as an exclusively formal category. Critically, this is a classificatory intervention, as all such work of this type necessarily is, but I move as much as possible away from rigidly bound definitions, instead attempting to move my interpretive work toward an Indigenous Futurist *methodology* that articulates within the distributed and shifting networks that bridge varying commonalities in theme, approach, and definition. By connecting the revisional effect of Indigenous Futurist art to Bertolt Brecht and to Viktor Shklovsky's concept of "alienation," I will salvage and repurpose this term by freeing it from its primacy as a formal characteristic of SF, as has been previously argued, instead mobilizing and constellating it in orbit around decolonial aesthetic practice.

Because such forms of alienating aesthetic rely on a naturalized backdrop of expectation to provide revisional force, I employ Phil Deloria's exploration of the ways dominant cultural *expectations* of Native people function as a disciplinary cultural form, and I show how and why Indigenous Futurism offers a critical advantage in speaking back to this conditioning discourse. Against this cultural expectation, revision as an aesthetic approach creates a startling manifestation of the *unexpected* in the form of an Indigenous imposition: the purposeful and startling obtrusion of Indigenous representation into textual fields where such appearance is typically restricted. To do this, I break down the revisional aesthetic into two broad "unsettling" forms: from Coll Thrush's work *Native Seattle*, a utilization of the Whulshootseed word *yi*q as a form of imbractive revision operating largely at the level of the narrative, and the second, inspired by the previous, the Híraaca word *maaʔibcaa* (to bead) as a way of tracking a revisional adornment that operates at the level of the symbol.

Explaining how the processes of imbrication and adornment function in related but distinct ways, I isolate the SF pop-culture franchise *Star Wars* and briefly examine three examples of Indigenous visual art that engage with the iconography of the movie franchise to show how these pieces deploy *maaʔibcaa* and *yi*q approaches in their revision of the franchise. In the end, the purpose of this essay is not to offer a sustained textual interpretation but to examine the ways a more adaptive definition of Indigenous Futurism offers avenues for response to the

forces of colonization and non- or misrepresentations of Indigenous people by offering examples of Indigenous aesthetic revision and imposition. More specifically, I seek to examine *how* a revisional aesthetic approach plays with, adorns, and Indigenizes previously white-washed fields and *why* this particular method of constructing an Indigenous imposition is valuable within Indigenous artistic production.

* * *

Many of the artists and thinkers involved in the burgeoning field of Indigenous Futurism are heavily invested in the genre of science fiction; therefore, as a starting point for a broader consideration of Indigenous Futurism, it becomes important to examine the nature and features of SF as a means of examining where Indigenous Futurism intersects with, uses, or critically revises popular tropes and ideas. There is, of course, historical academic debate about where the beginning of the SF genre ought to be traced—or, indeed, if such a search for origin is productive or accurate. In the 1970s, Brian Aldiss in his work *Billion Year Spree* is definitive in saying that SF “was born . . . when the wife of the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley wrote *Frankenstein: or, The Modern Prometheus*” (3), thereby tracing the origin of the genre to this ur-text. More recently, Sherryl Vint and Mark Bould discuss the features of “proto SF” in terms of eutopian/dystopian works in the *Routledge Concise History of Science Fiction* (2011), arguing that work such as Edward Bellamy’s *Looking Backward, 2000–1887*, published in 1888, and other early stories of technology, travel, and exploration share certain features of the genre. To be sure, such shifts in the articulation of the genre’s form and genealogy indicate not the progression toward a more accurate description of the genre but in fact the fundamentally mutable character of such genre classifications. These formalist-rooting tendencies occlude this mutable characteristic in the attempt to stabilize and render legible a field of knowledge. As such, there is arguably more insight to be gained in thinking through the ways such characterizations reflect the ideological and cultural assumptions and influences at work in these arborescent articulations rather than simply emphasizing one particular genealogy.

An approach for this sort of analysis can be found in John Reider’s essay “On Defining SF, or Not: Genre Theory, SF, and History,” which clarifies the shifting sands of genre production through five propositions:

SF is historical and mutable;

SF has no essence, no single unifying characteristic, and no point of origin;

SF is not a set of texts, but rather a way of using texts and of drawing relationships among them;

SF's identity is a differentially articulated position in an historical and mutable field of genres;

attribution of the identity of SF to a text constitutes an active intervention in its distribution and reception. (193)

These five propositions form a foundational approach to genre that relies on the flexible, historical nature of the classificatory impulse. This impulse is emblematic of broader contemporary commitments within genre theory and provides important nuance to SF; that is, it highlights the constructed and constructive nature of textual classification. While Reider sifts through terminology to describe this concept—ranging from Brian Attebery's mathematical "fuzzy sets" to Paul Kincaid's utilization of Ludwig Wittgenstein's idea of "family resemblance"—he settles on the rhizomatic-assemblage model, which he lifts from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's work in *A Thousand Plateaus*. This approach holds that "the movement of texts and motifs into and through SF does not confer a pedigree on them . . . but instead merely connects one itinerary to another . . . [and these itineraries] must be constructed by writers, publishers, and readers out of the conjunctures they occupy and the materials at hand" (Reider 196). In this light, SF and genre more broadly are seen as a heterogeneous collection of interdependent parts that inform these mutable historical formations. Critically, an assemblage is fundamentally unstable and portable, which is to say, the constitutive elements and structure as a whole are under continuous revision: excised, moved, added to, reinterpreted, and/or substituted in multiple ways across the diachronic and synchronic registers. New connections can be drawn and old ones severed as the assemblage amoebically shifts. The assemblage or genre classification might be best thought of, then, as a loose draping over a constantly shifting multiplicity of fragmentary constituents that articulate and rearticulate across space and time.

An assemblage description of SF and Indigenous Futurism intervenes in the process Deleuze and Guattari describe as genealogical or "arbo-

rescent,” here applied to genre formation, by opening up the parameters and seeking the context of lines of encapture, disruption, and articulation. Within a rhizomatic model, the character and intervening force of the categorization process itself are given clarity and context. This movement away from the genealogical approach comes from a recognition on the part of Deleuze and Guattari that such arborescent formations do not reflect thought itself, which is rhizomatic in nature. They note that they’ve become “tired of trees,” which have “made us suffer too much” by entrenching and centering artificial stability in the form of origin and telos within the structure (15). This arborescent approach “inspire[s] a sad image of thought that is forever imitating the multiple on the basis of a centered or segmented higher unity” (16), which is to say, it attempts to force the distributed multiplicity of thought into a centralized and rooted structure that is both artificial and unreflective of the actual workings of such conceptualizations. This arborescent model is also prone to create problematic occlusions and erasures by virtue of the vertical structural pressure of its modeling. Through a process of “structural pruning,” vying articulations and other nonconforming alternative discourse are trimmed from the constituencies of the articulation in order to bind and stabilize the arborescent formation. Therefore, by reworking the description of genre formation through an assemblage approach and applying it to SF, Reider’s analysis clears space for parallel and intervening articulations. This approach also has compelling applications to the wider field of Indigenous Futurism as a similarly process-oriented structure by dilating the methods of examining the multiple and sometimes discontinuous aesthetic and methodological commitments that wax and wane under the respective banners.

Nevertheless, while genre theory and academic discourse around genre formation have pushed back against prior formalist approaches to SF, there is still a persistent impulse in popular culture to paraphrase Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart’s statement regarding the definition of pornography: “I know it when I see it.” This sentiment speaks with the voice of cultural expectation, the generated matrix of the common tropes and assumptions one takes for granted within a given context. What this typically means in practice for SF is an emphasis on space travel, technology, and planetary exploration/expansion/colonization. This rubric is simply one of many persistent characterizations upon the rhizomatic assemblage under the guise of a

totalizing discourse of genre definition. Pushing against such totalizing discourses around definitional categories is, therefore, a critical task of Indigenous Futurism. These nodal linkages provide illumination as to where Indigenous Futurism might place effective pressure on the arborescent instincts of dominant discourse.

To be sure, such thematic and narrative expectations within the genre of SF are also often overtly racially and/or ethnically bounded as a result of the relationship of the genre to the imperially inflected matrix of scientific, explorative, and conquest-oriented discursive practices. To wit, part of the value of Steven Paul Judd's claymation film is the engagement with certain racial assumptions about technology, exploration, and the future, that is, what race is normalized within the narratives of space exploration. By drawing a clear connection between the governing nationalist ideology of NASA and other space projects and the colonial-imperial ideologies of exploration and conquest, Judd clearly frames, both aurally and visually, the unsettling imposition of an Indigenous girl on the moon as a "problem" for NASA.

Mark Bould, in his essay "The Ships Landed Long Ago: Afrofuturism and Black SF," has briefly noted the racial assumptions of these space exploration programs. Motivated by a national technological brinkmanship and the future these programs projected, he notes that "the space race showed us which race space was for" (Bould 177). Aside from being a delightful turn of phrase, this also gestures toward the unstated but clear construction within the U.S. imaginary of technology, space, and, by extension, the future as *de facto* white and male. As the genre most closely connected to the technospeculative future envisioned by contemporary Western culture, SF is guilty of consistently constructing race as a future nonconcern, at best acknowledging that racial/ethnic difference might still be meaningful in the future in the form of an offhand MacGuffin that simply notes that society has moved past such issues, that "racism . . . [is] an insanity that burned itself out," as Bould puts it (180), or, more typically and more obtuse, constructing a raceless (read: white) future without any acknowledgment that race and cultural difference ever existed at all.

This minimization of ethnic and racial difference in the imaginative future is, of course, a bit of a sleight of hand: while we may think of recent SF/futurist projects as "ethnic futurisms," the first "ethnic futurism" ought to be considered white futurism, as this is, by and large, a

fairly accurate description of SF and broader futurist projects up until at least the 1960s—and is arguably still the predominant model to the present day. Science fiction has historically constructed speculative futures that underwrite and are symptomatic of settler-colonial ideology by instantiating a camouflaged white-racialized future hidden by the transparent nature of whiteness. This future-making process forms a rhetorically broad ethnic erasure, and, in a related register, the genre is typically rife with themes of exploration and conquest that resonate with Western imperial ideologies of technological progress. This is troubling, because one of the common features of SF is its engagement with futurity, and such speculative projects serve as important cultural operators that reflect how we envision ourselves not only in the future but also in the present. It has never been simply a fantastical future that is at stake in the SF genre but in fact a very real and concrete present. Nevertheless, many of these racial and gender assumptions seem well entrenched within the SF genre writ large. Until Samuel Delany in the 1960s and Octavia Butler shortly thereafter, examples of works by ethnic minorities were extremely rare and all but invisible, and the earliest women who made inroads into the field typically wrote under ambiguous or outright masculine pen names (e.g., C. L. Moore and James Tiptree Jr.).

This racially problematic history in the authorship of the SF genre and the clear discursive leaning toward Western ideals of technological imperialism and progress are deeply entrenched within broader settler-colonial ideologies. When the genre is rendered within these registers, with its genealogical roots stretching only through European historical culture and its contemporary and future-oriented manifestations, Indigenous Futurism, like other ethnic futurisms, should be seen as a revisional force on the genre, a rearticulation of the assemblage. If one thinks of the field of Indigenous Futurism in this light, the differentiated and mutable character comes to the fore and highlights a loose but constantly changing structure that offers a vantage point to look at the ways the operational force of Indigenous Futurism modifies, both diachronically and synchronically, not only SF but also the broader ideological formations within which the genre does its cultural work. As a means of exploring possibilities within Indigenous cultural production, this revisional force plays with the distillation of these ideological formations of expectation within the structure of not just SF but also the broader discursive field of which it is a part.

That is, even in its most genre-facing application, Indigenous Futurism does not need to relate directly to the SF genre as such, at least not exclusively; SF simply offers an already articulated structure that has deep, tentacled influences within the broader ideological systems that Indigenous Futurism revises. When and where Indigenous Futurism engages with the settler-colonial project, those structures can be mapped out and exploited aesthetically in order to imagine new ways of articulating these naturalized arborescent structures and histories. By highlighting their artificial nature and thereby potentiating them for rhizomatic articulation, Indigenous Futurism willfully destabilizes these structures by depruning, playing with, and/or revising the nature of the interface and lines of connection. Nevertheless, and with good reason, numerous scholars, including Lou Cornum in their piece for *New Inquiry* titled “The Space NDN’s Star Map,” center definitions of Indigenous Futurism as a method for “speaking back to the SF genre, which has long used indigenous subjects as the foils to stories of white space explorers hungry to conquer new worlds.” Grace Dillon, who popularized the term “Indigenous Futurism,” largely hews toward what is generally categorized as SF in her selections of excerpts in the edited collection *Walking the Clouds* and indicates a similar value in interacting with the genre. While this is not the limit of Dillon’s or Cornum’s characterization of the field, it does serve as an emblem for one particular mobilization of IF that works intimately with SF and its tropes of frontiers, imperial expansion, and Western-inflected narrative/stylistic representations, and these tropes are pregnant with reference to the racial and historical underside of their activation in the past, present, and future.

Due to the inertia of the previously sketched wedding of the SF genre and colonial and imperial discourse, the genre suffers from a significant problem of coherence in terms of race, ethnicity, and gender. Because its thematic orientation also necessarily produces discourse deeply rooted in imperial ideology, representational diversity is often a challenge within the genre. In fact, even after a small shift in the genre during the 1960s to encompass more diverse authorship and address the paucity of nonwhite and female worldviews, SF still had a significant race/gender problem. The Hugo Awards, created in 1953 and one of the most important literary awards in SF, has been absolutely dominated by white men. A woman, Anne McCaffrey, won a Hugo Award for best novella in 1968, but from 1959 to 2014 women have been nominated a mere 22 percent

of the time; the percentage of female winners is considerably lower. In terms of ethnicity/race, the magazine *Vocativ* compiled disturbing statistics about the Hugo Awards to 2015. In that span, within all professional categories, three of the one hundred nominees were nonwhite; adding up all the nominees for the critical category of best novel from 1953 to the present, there have been three hundred total nominations. Of these, five of the nominations were nonwhite. Until the Chinese writer Cixin Liu won the award in 2015, a nonwhite nominee had never won this valorized category in the Hugo's entire history. While the Hugo Award is certainly not the only metric for determining how the genre deals with race, it is nevertheless a telling marker and emblematic of a wider issue, and a cursory examination of the other major SF awards and popular SF works in film, TV, and literature over the last sixty years seems to rehearse the same trend.

As noted, one effect of this exclusionary trend in popular SF has been the relatively recent emergence of a variety of futurist projects that operate as critical responses to this tendency. The single most recurrent articulation within these varied fields is an engagement with power asymmetries through an intervention at the particular pressure point where technology, power, futurity, and identity converge. The most well recognized of these movements, Afrofuturism, was coined by Mark Dery in the early 1990s in a published interview with well-known African American SF authors titled "Black to Future: Interviews with Samuel R. Delany, Greg Tate, and Tricia Rose." The term seemed to have a durability to it and as such was taken up in the late 1990s and more robustly theorized by the sociologist Alondra Nelson, among others. Nelson notes that much of the discussion around this field was done through a listserv community called "Afrofuturism," and those relationships continued to develop along with the larger movement of Afrofuturism. This expansion of the term and work that it evokes eventually resulted in a special issue of *Social Text* for which Nelson wrote the introduction. This edition showcases contributions from artists and thinkers within the field, and in her introduction, Nelson offers a provisional definition by way of Sămi Ludwig's work, *Concrete Language*, describing Afrofuturism as "'African American voices' with 'other stories to tell about culture, technology and things to come'" (9). This broad and flexible definition evokes the irrealis mood as a critical orientation that has a particular strength through its ambiguity, one

that I encourage for Indigenous Futurism's own self-descriptions. The fluidity of the description primes it with potentiality and orients the field toward radical revision as a means of fostering nodal offshoots. Certainly this has been one critical result of such a definition as other related movements, such as Latinx Futurism and Queer Futurism, continue to manifest and leave their mark.

Nevertheless, shortly after *Social Text* published this special issue, Kodwo Eshun elaborated on the definition and theoretical and methodological implications of the movement in his article "Further Considerations of Afrofuturism," in *CR: The New Centennial Review*. Eshun frames Afrofuturism as an assemblage of "countermemories that contest the colonial archive," noting that "Afrofuturism does not seek to deny the tradition of countermemory. Rather, it aims to extend that tradition by reorienting the intercultural vectors of Black Atlantic temporality towards the proleptic as much as the retrospective" (288–89). Here again a direct invocation of the irrealis mood, the proleptic, and we also begin to see the emphasis on the theoretical considerations of temporality as a broader cultural orientation within the field. Eshun further notes that one critical feature of Afrofuturism's project is the analysis of "appeals that black artists, musicians, critics, and writers have made to the future, in moments where any future was made difficult for them to imagine" (294). More, Eshun concretely grounds futurity within a decolonizing context, noting:

In the colonial era of the early to middle twentieth century, avant-gardists from Walter Benjamin to Frantz Fanon revolted in the name of the future against a power structure that relied on control and representation of the historical archive. Today, the situation is reversed. The powerful employ futurists and draw power from the futures they endorse, thereby condemning the disempowered to live in the past. The present moment is stretching, slipping for some into yesterday, reaching for others into tomorrow. (289)

This emphasis on the centrality of futurity specifically when and where it finds itself most difficult to imagine, as well as the critical emphasis on temporality as a means of colonial domination, resonates and maps neatly onto an Indigenous context as well. Indeed, this is an important feature of the necessity and force of futurist projects when considered within discourses of Indigeneity.

In more recent work, Ytasha Womack's well-received book, *Afrofuturism: The World of Black Sci-Fi and Fantasy Culture*, continues to push on the analysis of Afrofuturism as a part of the project of liberation, and author Nalo Hopkinson also evokes a similar emphasis and an omnidirectional temporality in her characterization. For Hopkinson, the positionality and relationship between colonizer/colonizee comes to the fore. In her opening comments for an edited collection on postcolonial SF entitled *So Long Been Dreaming: Postcolonial Science Fiction & Fantasy*, Hopkinson notes that Afrofuturism "take[s] the meme of colonizing the natives and, from the experience of the colonizee, critique[s] it, pervert[s] it, fuck[s] with it, with irony, with anger, with humour, and also with love and respect for the genre of science fiction that makes it possible to think about new ways of doing things" (9). This emphasis on the love for the genre of SF points to the obvious but often neglected ambivalent relationship artists have with the genre. While criticism of the underlying ideologies and their manifestations forms a critical role for futurist projects, very often at the core is a deep appreciation for the SF genre, a geeky love for pop-culture products and the genre itself that manifests often as an attempt to fix a broken and hurtful object of affection. Additionally, Hopkinson, who is Afro-Caribbean and Taino/Arawak, serves as an explicit bridge between Afrofuturism and Indigenous Futurism and calls attention to the productive and sometimes shared themes, form, and approaches between the fields. Further, she finds herself migrating into Grace Dillon's edited collection by way of an excerpt from *Midnight Robber*.

This connection between Afrofuturism and Indigenous Futurism is not simply founded on an overlapping author, however. As I've noted above, there is an important shared sentiment between these varied definitions of Afrofuturism and Grace Dillon's own definition that recognizes a critical and central decolonial theme and an orientation toward the nexus of technology, identity, and temporality. And, much like some of the early formative work in Afrofuturism, *Walking the Clouds* has come to serve as an important text in defining the field of Indigenous Futurism. In her introduction, Dillon offers an oft-quoted and succinct definition with important ramifications: "[A]ll forms of Indigenous futurisms are narratives of biskaabiyyang, an Anishinaabemowin word connoting the process of 'returning to ourselves,' which involves discovering how personally one is affected by colonization, discarding the emotional and

psychological baggage carried from its impact, and recovering ancestral traditions in order to adapt in our post-Native Apocalypse world” (10). This definition has been used largely whole cloth in much scholarship on the topic, ranging from film studies, where William Lempert uses it to frame an enlightening analysis on the power of Indigenous Futurist film production, to Conrad Scott and Kelsey Amos, who mobilize the definition to pursue an analysis of formal engagements with time/space in dystopian Indigenous fictions (Scott) and to track how these concerns are reflected in Hawaiian Futurist writings by author Matthew Kaopio (Amos). Various strands of Dillon’s definition are also given different emphasis or come under partial criticism and revision in work by scholars such as Danika Medak-Saltzman, who doesn’t rework Dillon’s description so much as narrow the focus by examining the gendered character of Indigenous Futurist production, and Miriam C. Brown-Spiers, who calls attention to the classificatory impulses of Dillon’s text by questioning the value and effects of that categorization.

Brown-Spiers uses the example of the subgenre “Native slipstream,” which Dillon calls the “cultural experience[s] of reality” as SF (52), as a point of departure in her essay “Reimagining Resistance: Achieving Sovereignty in Indigenous Science Fiction.” Offering a reading of what Dean Rader calls the “Indian invention novel,” Brown-Spiers argues that this attempt to collect and emplace Native textual production into what might loosely be called SF runs the risk of defanging the critical and political work done in such texts by “collapsing definitions” and “trivializing Native voices and communities,” thereby authorizing a dismissal of the political orientation of such work (53).

While Dillon voices opposition to this effect in her work, which Brown-Spiers notes, Brown-Spiers places emphasis on assumptions of fictionality that might be assumed at the level of the story itself, and she implies a need to map the differential between what is intended and what is effected by such definitions. Nevertheless, despite this tantalizing interpretive intervention in the opening pages of her essay, Brown-Spiers here does not distinguish between Indigenous SF and Indigenous Futurism, utilizing only the former term to limit the scope of her intervention. This does seem to resonate largely from Dillon’s own heavy orientation toward SF as the defining engagement for Indigenous Futurism; however, a cursory examination of the broader field showcases the potential for a much more flexible conceptual framework,

as I've illustrated above. As a result of this SF-specific characterization, Brown-Spiers largely operates within the established genre architecture, deploying Rader's intervention as a way to articulate Indigenous SF as a "related but distinct category" within his conceptualization of the Indian invention novel (53). Brown-Spiers then begins working with the traditional definition of SF as defined by scholar Darko Suvin, focusing on the estranging "novum" as a formal defining feature of the SF genre before offering a sustained reading of the role of virtuality of Blake Hausman's novel *Riding the Trail of Tears* to this effect.

While her interpretive work here offers important insights into the use of virtuality as a space of flexible spatial and temporal representation, Brown-Spiers's initial critique also serves to highlight the distinction between the assemblage of Indigenous Futurism and a stabilized genre formation. Brown-Spiers largely works within Suvin's definition of SF, but the emblem for Indigenous Futurism might rather be found in her analysis of the nature of the "Little People" in Hausman's novel—small spirits within Cherokee ontology, which Brown-Spiers characterizes as representing "adaption and innovation" and the refusal of "absolute definitions and . . . strict separation" (59–60). Brown-Spiers expresses concern, in alignment with Rader, over definitional collapse; however, this problem is only manifest in rigidly separated, stratified, and static genre definitions. If instead we consider the ways Indigenous Futurism continuously revises and articulates its own project among spheres of influence and indeed relies on certain expectations that fluoresce around and within the genre, we might then orient interpretations toward an operationalized rhizomatic formation. This generates genre as a function of the field rather than vice versa, thereby keeping definition itself fluid and under revision. And while concern over the classificatory influence on popular regard for Indigenous artistic production is merited, it is largely a function of the very fields of expectation within which Indigenous Futurism so deftly navigates and does its work. Nevertheless, I do share Brown-Spiers's interest in how we might engage with Suvin's concept of estrangement, or at least the Brechtian concept upon which it is built. However, it becomes critical to offer a certain amount of salvage analysis that stays in the descriptive rather than prescriptive mode, mapping its effects as one expression of engagement within Indigenous Futurism rather than as a defining character of SF by Indigenous and non-Indigenous writers alike.

* * *

Rader's sustained book-length work, *Engaged Resistance: American Indian Art, Literature, and Film from Alcatraz to the NMAI*, offers an important framing for the ways Indigenous art functions within the broader dominant culture. While the use of futurism as an aesthetic and philosophical framework offers a particular advantage for Native people, the very articulation of Indigenous voices into an assemblage so ordered by settler-colonial ideology is in itself a critical strategy for representation, a startling and unsettling appearance of the unexpected. Indeed, as Rader notes, Indigenous aesthetic expression is fundamentally related to sovereignty, and such aesthetic engagement "means the ability of artists, writers, and filmmakers to tell their own stories in their own words, in their own language—whether that language is verbal or visual" (50). Aesthetic engagement at the level of cultural expectation works against discourses of erasure and usurpation embedded within settler-colonial ideology. This revision of expectation similarly works against stereotype partially by exposing how dominant "culture thinks about itself" (182–84), thereby potentiating the reworked/revised cultural products for a changed reception. The Indigenous imposition within a technological *mise-en-scène*, for example, creates a peculiar form of *unfamiliarity* within popular culture production. Indeed, something as simple as the appearance of a Native person within a technofuture framework creates an estranging juxtaposition of the familiar and unfamiliar within dominant readings, a fact shown and effectively utilized in Judd's short film. This characteristic of unfamiliarity obviously intersects in critical ways with Suvin's thesis that "SF [is] the *literature of cognitive estrangement*," which he elaborates as a "genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose main formal device is an imaginative framework alternative to the author's empirical environment" (4, 7–8, *emphasis original*).

This oft-cited formal definition has been worked over throughout the decades following Suvin's early project by numerous scholars, many of whom have refined but generally worked within this definition to varying degrees. In recent years, the idea has come under more careful criticism as a raft of literary scholars interested in the genre of SF have entered the conversation, including Reider and his important intervention into the formally centered definition quoted earlier. While my

interests here are to varying degrees involved with SF, my intent is not to rework and/or speak to Suvin's body of scholarship and interpreters. My central interest here lies in briefly isolating and examining Brecht's use of *Verfremdung* in its broader context as a means of understanding the relationship of this effect to the cultural expectations that govern its visibility. I do not find this alienation effect a necessary or definitional formal feature of Indigenous Futurism per se. Instead, my interests lie at the nodal intersection of aesthetic expression, methodological approach, and theoretical application; therefore, I am mapping a particular expressional structure in this discussion, not tracing a definitional form. Suvin's scholarship therefore operates primarily as a convenient conveyance to Brecht and then back to Indigenous Futurism rather than as an extended stop along the line. Nevertheless, Suvin's analysis of estrangement, even as a differential diagnostic, provides a meaningful glimpse into one formally bounded articulation of the SF genre.

Certainly, Suvin's definitional work in characterizing the genre has held merit for many scholars beyond Suvin himself, among them Fredric Jameson and Tom Moylan. Jameson, a committed Marxist critic like Suvin, specifically aligns his sense of the features of utopian writing with Suvin's declarations in *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions*, noting that he generally follows Suvin's reasoning that the notion of "cognitive estrangement" "characterizes SF in terms of an essentially epistemological function (thereby excluding the more oneiric flights of generic fantasy)—thus posit[ing] one specific subset of this generic category of [speculative fiction]" (xii). That said, Jameson notes the complexities and limitations of such a description when seeking to isolate and map what he calls a "utopian impulse" that both inheres in and transcends the limits of the indicated textual forms (80). Jameson also highlights a critical consideration in passing on the same page, characterizing Suvin's arborescent formulation as insistent that SF be committed to "continu[ing] a long tradition of critical emphasis on verisimilitude from Aristotle on. . . . The role of cognition in SF thus initially deploys the certainties and speculations of a rational and secular scientific age" (80).

Here we are presented with a brief but deep genealogy and more direct expression of the Western ideological commitments embedded within such a structure. In this formulation, what constitutes rational scientific discourse—and, by extension, what futures are possible—is produced

and defined by the same ideological structures that attempt to erase and replace Indigenous presence. Non-Western ontologies are minimized or silenced, Indigenous technologies and futures are deauthorized, and access to future imagining by Native people is hidden. Nevertheless, within a liberated definition of this estrangement/alienation effect, Indigenous artists have found utility in the production of startlement precisely by utilizing this oppressive backdrop, articulating an aesthetic that works to speak back to this structural orientation. By producing an “unsettlement” within settler-colonial cognition, the use and effect seem to share a more illuminating connection to Brecht’s *Verfremdung* and Shklovsky’s *ostranenie* over Suvin’s formally bound definition. There is also an indeterminacy in Suvin’s terminological usage that has been noted by the scholar Simon Spiegel, who shares a similar interest in a recourse to Brecht and Shklovsky to clarify Suvin’s description of SF.

In “Things Made Strange: On the Concept of ‘Estrangement’ in Science Fiction Theory,” appearing in *Science Fiction Studies* in 2008, the German-fluent Spiegel does much legwork in interpreting Suvin’s usage of the term “estrangement” by delineating first the usage of *ostranenie* and the *Verfremdungseffekt* in their own context before revising Suvin’s usage. Shklovsky saw *ostranenie* as a process by which alienation reveals (or rereveals) the intractable, eternal character of an object through a startling newness. To wit, in his work *Theory of Prose*, Shklovsky notes that art in this mode “returns sensation” and “make[s] us feel objects” through the process of “‘estranging’ [those] objects and complicating form” (6). This definition characterizes much of Shklovsky’s wide-ranging formalist literary interpretation even as he turns to the visual field to elaborate the point: “The purpose of the image is not to draw our understanding closer to that which the image stands for, but rather to allow us to perceive the object in a special way . . . to lead us to a ‘vision’ of this object rather than mere ‘recognition’” (10). Nevertheless, for Shklovsky this tracks exclusively at the formal level and is intended to revitalize the ability to experience the timeless form of art. As Jameson notes in *The Prison-House of Language*, *ostranenie* therefore fails to take into account “anything about the nature of the perceptions which have grown habitual, the perceptions to be renewed” (51); that is, it provides no avenue of analysis for the field of stultifying expectation against which *ostranenie* then operates. Jameson further notes that while this characterizes the literary tradition as one of rupture and break with

the previous and now familiar, it nevertheless attempts to formalize and universalize literary quality, orienting the creation and interpretation toward this Platonic form (53).

Brecht, on the other hand, was interested in using the *Verfremdungseffekt* (*V-Effekt*) to show the fundamental malleability of reality, “that things do not have to be the way they are, that any current state of things is not a natural given but a product of historical processes,” as Spiegel summarizes (370); here there is clear resonance in the emphasis on malleability and *denaturalization* of ideological processes for Indigenous Futurism. This extension beyond the level of form by Brecht is critical, as his didactic approach is heavily invested in the reception and perception by the audience. Instead, the *V-Effekt* calls attention to the naturalizing discourse of the social order that produces the expectations embedded within the art object and, by so doing, highlights the constructed and *constructable* nature of these structures. The critical thrust of Spiegel’s piece is to note that these terms are undifferentiated within Suvin’s scholarship and, further, that Suvin takes what is essentially a stylistic device across genre and attempts to use estrangement as a definitional category for SF (371). On that point, Spiegel notes that while alienation for Shklovsky renders (re)visible the timeless and genuine character of reality, for Brecht the value of alienation is in the revelation of the artifice and mutability of the social order. Suvin, however, refunctions this definitional device in an inverted form: whereas “Brecht’s plays estrange the normal,” Suvin’s characterization actually “naturalizes the strange” (Spiegel 373). In this sketch of the *orientation* in the relationship between the context and effect between Shklovsky/Brecht and Suvin, Spiegel clarifies an important distinction in the directionality of these poles of naturalization and estrangement, expectation and unsettlement.

The darkened background against which this unsettlement is illuminated in relief is “expectation.” This term, theorized by Phil Deloria in his work *Indians in Unexpected Places*, engages with the structure and representational valence of the figure of the Indian in American culture. Deloria reworks the dominant historical narrative, highlighting Indigenous presence in “unexpected” places: those moments that break with dominant culture’s signifying relationship between Indian as symbol and the actual lived experience and narratives of Indigenous people. “Expectation” is glossed by Deloria as “a shorthand for the dense

economies of meaning, representation, and acts that have inflected . . . American culture writ large . . . [through the] colonial and imperial relations of power and domination existing between Indian people and the United States. You might see in *expectation* the ways in which popular culture works to produce—and sometimes to compromise—racism and misogyny . . . the unexpected . . . resists categorization and, thereby, questions expectation itself” (11).

When the visual art that I will later briefly examine creates *unexpected*, it creates *unsettlement*, and this phenomenon is only operational against the backdrop of the dense cultural matrix of settled expectation. That is, the “naturalization” of the strange in this context is in the cultural work by dominant discourse to yoke the contradictory narratives of settler-colonial ideology into a legible form. Unsettlement occurs in this context by Indigenous imposition, the obtrusive presencing and resultant awareness of a counteroperational Indigenous revision and rearticulation of this structure of expectation that generates a type of anxiety—this largely emanating from the tensions and contradictions within the dominant master narrative that the Indigenous imposition draws in stark color.

Native revisional thinkers and artists therefore presence the Indigenous *unexpected* to unsettle not just the violence in the material history of tribal/settler-colonial relations and the contemporary presence of Indigenous America but also the ideological commitments that support and produce these structures of violence. In this sense, we can see a clear parallel to the orientation of Brechtian estrangement in this doubled emphasis on both exposing the ideological structures that create expectation itself and their rearticulation within and among those formulations. Nevertheless, this peculiar aesthetic form relies on both a familiarized historical and an *aesthetic* and symbolic shared context. A critical battleground wherein such symbolic distribution is at its most voluminous is the familiar world of popular culture. As the textual flow with the most circulation and influence within dominant ideological formations, the site of popular culture is a critical conduit for intervention within the exploitative representational projects that have so often done the “work” of erasure through manipulation of the figure of the Indian in popular culture since at least the end of the nineteenth century. Which is to say, more or less since the beginning of modern mass U.S. popular culture.

Popular culture is often part of the medium for unsettling Indigenous Futurist artists. Steven Paul Judd's engagement with the symbolic register of *Star Wars* in his claymation film is echoed in numerous other works by Indigenous artists utilizing the same franchise for representational purposes. Indeed, many Native artists have been hard at (re)work on *Star Wars* iconography, demonstrating the striking importance of this revisional act within the aesthetic field of SF. Additionally, *Star Wars* also has the honor of being the only pop-culture SF film translated into an Indigenous language (Diné). To be sure, there is a particular resonance in Native communities and with Native pop artists around the franchise; certainly, Indigenous artists interacting with the *Star Wars* universe also interact widely with other American pop culture icons, but the *Star Wars* universe as constructed seems to offer something unique that is worth examining. It is of some note that, like Judd's film, *Star Wars* offers a unique temporal construction. The films are actually a type of fictional historical archive despite the future orientation and regard, and this is reflected in the aesthetics of the films. As an example, the iconographic "lightsaber," literally a laser sword, is a combination of two temporally oriented emblems: one of the future and one of the past. What *Star Wars* does in its world-building operation is construct a world that is at once historical ("A long time ago"), futuristic ("in a galaxy"), and distant ("far, far away"), and this temporality and archival framing offers a unique platform for representational tactics by Native artists.

The revisional aesthetic expressed by Native artists against this back-drop also consciously relies on familiar cultural expectations within U.S. culture, playing not only with the iconography of the films but also with the discourse of Indigenous expectation. While the temporality of the *Star Wars* universe offers a way to represent Indigeneity in a way that still contains the presence within the "historical/vanishing Indian" trope, because the world of the films is simultaneously futuristic, these representations offer a chronological juxtaposition that revises the massively popular iconography, reconstructing indigeneity firmly in the pop-cultural present. Indeed, as Olena McLaughlin notes in her essay "Native Pop: Bunky Echo-Hawk and Steven Paul Judd Subvert *Star Wars*," such works "subvert iconic images of *Star Wars* as a means to address dominant American culture's understanding of Indigenous identities and histories, thus engaging in contemporary art and political conversation" (31). These types of involuntary collaborations

between the *Star Wars* universe and Native artists create a collision of seemingly incongruous representations at the aesthetic level and play with the expectation generated by this familiar symbolic repository. By revising *Star Wars* iconography and imbricating or adorning the textual field with unexpected indigeneity, these juxtapositions force the viewer to also consider the conflict between the historical narrative of erasure and Indigenous presence in futurist contexts and, through the force of the creation of the art object itself, the clear but unexpected presence of Native voices in the pop-cultural present. Much of Indigenous futurism and, arguably, alternative futurisms in general engages to varying degrees with the use of this revisional approach or aesthetic as a mechanism to create unsettlement in the beholder.

Such work, however, also creates a different type of identification within reception in Indigenous contexts: an effect of the layered revision is the creation of additional signification within and/or around the pop-culture symbol. Where the pop-culture piece in the nude may have previously spoken with the stentorian univocality of dominant white America, the revisive act creates an alternative sign system that functions to interrogate that univocality while simultaneously incorporating corrective impositions of Indigenous representation. This produces an Indigenous reflection, a symbol of presence and familiarity where it's not typically expected. The act of seeing and enjoying the Indigenous self in popular culture already requires significant contortion to align affective response with an ontology and axiology designed to obliterate that very possibility, so the presence of Indigenous-derived and -directed representational work in the pop-culture field creates a joyful startlement and identification for the Indigenous viewer. This work of (re)representation serves the critical function of not only interrogating ideological structures of dominance but also indigenizing pop-cultural textual formation, revisionally carving out and reclaiming Indigenous territory within dominant cultural spaces. This orientation highlights Indigenous Futurism as a revisive laboratory to explore alternative futures and counternarratives that bear on the present, a decolonizing assertion of aesthetic sovereignty within the cultural-symbolic field.

Nevertheless, this unsettling revisional aesthetic is fundamentally a method of symbolic restructuring. I examine here two forms of this revisional method, *yi q* and *maaʔibcaa*, as a means of framing methodological and aesthetic approaches that emphasize the idea of

revision itself as a narrative or aesthetic choice. To re-vise (*visio*) is to resee or revisit a prior expression. A revisional approach emphasizes the modification of the prior as a means to mobilize it in the present and potentiate it for use in the future. Both of my approaches here can be characterized by their interaction with and configuration of prior expressions. By linking to previous iterations while distinguishing the revised form, it becomes a differentiating vision that nevertheless creates a connective structure. To have a revisional aesthetic connects past iterations as a means of establishing a meaningful articulation in the present through the trafficking or visitation back and forth between multiple nodal points of signification; that is, there is still a clear, communicable resonance and connection with prior or parallel constructions, a revisive link to an established symbolic repository.

“Imbrication” is a term used by the historian Coll Thrush in his work *Native Seattle*, and he defines it thus:

In Whulshootseed there is a word, *yiq*, that describes the process of working designs of bear grass, maidenhair fern, or wild-cherry bark onto the stunning woven baskets [of the] Duwamish. . . . Imbrication, as anthropologists have named this process in English, is by nature forceful, with deer-bone awls pressing into watertight cedar bark or spruce root. . . . But the word has a second meaning as well; *yiq* can also describe the process of working something into a tight place or, as one elder described it, “worrying” something into place. (xx)

This “worrying” into place relies here on integration into an already existent weave, in Thrush’s application, the historical narrative. This imbrication of histories operates at the level of contextual integration: we might think of it as a revision of the background, which then manipulates the foreground. In Thrush’s work the term is applied to the historical situation of Native people and Europeans in the early and contemporary history of Seattle, which he endeavors to trace, focusing on the revisional insertion of the erased histories and contemporary presence of Native people in that context.

My second term to describe this aesthetic practice draws inspiration from Thrush’s method, deriving from a need to describe an inversion of the angle of effect of the *yiq*, that is, a focus on foreground and its effects



Fig. 1. Intertribal beadwork styles on multiple functional objects.

on background. Conceptually framed through the Híraaca word for the work of beading, *maaʔibcaa*, this term differs from *yi*q in angle and orientation: while beadwork can manifest varying intensities of imbrication with regard to the object, in all cases the mechanism necessarily relies on the creation and structuring of a latticed thread formation around, over, or on the object rather than worked into an extant weave, as in the case of *yi*q. This creates a polyvocalizing juxtapositional revision at the level of the sign, adorning the relational signification itself, as opposed to imbricating an integrational restructuring. A simple way to think about this is in the numerous beaded objects common to many Indigenous nations in the Americas (fig. 1). These objects, such as the beaded belt and buckle, keychain, and carabiner, create additional signification through the beadwork itself, and there is no “weave” per se that it is integrated into; rather, it is pure, structured addition. Nevertheless, it maintains a clear connection to the previous usage. Indeed, in beading, the function of the object is typically retained: the belt still functions as a belt, the carabiner as a clip/shackle, and so on. Never-

theless, it creates an Indigenous connective aesthetic form and symbolic valence that simultaneously modifies the object without diminishing its function.

There is overlap between these two terms certainly, and much like the ways semiotic analysis finds itself moving back and forth among the categories symbol, icon, and index based on vantage or level of analysis, so too do adornment and imbrication run both parallel and convergent, flowing into one another at the level of comprehension. Nevertheless, while *yi q* might modify or recontextualize the background or narrative of the photo (fig. 1), thereby modifying the valence of the *dobbers*, *maa?ibcaa* operates in the foreground, revising the *dobber* itself by impregnating it with additional symbolic meaning and opening up reinterpretation of the context. And because both of these forms of revision structure critical linkages to or within prior expressions, their application in the field of Indigenous Futurism should be clear. Therefore, in the case of much Indigenous Futurist work, the revisional act places extant cultural productions into an assemblage model that both links and distinguishes itself from arborescent forms. This revisional work is a vital Indigenous expression. Kristina Baudemann notes in a piece titled “Indigenous Futurisms in North American Indigenous Art,” examining similar visual artwork to the ones presented here, such “[Indigenous Futurist] art inscribes a sense of the ‘open, future, possible’ into this experimentation with visual structure” (148). Indeed, Baudemann, like the scholars Suzanne Fricke and Olena McLaughlin, shares an interest in the ways Indigenous visual artists utilize SF iconography within their work to revise the cultural constraints upon Indigenous culture and expression.

An example of this sort of revisional work is Ryan Singer’s (Navajo) painting, *To’ (Water): It Binds Our Universe Together*, from 2015 (fig. 2). This revision demonstrates the imbractive form neatly, in this case, integrating the Storm Troopers and world of *Star Wars* into the world of Singer’s Southwest. We notice the windmill in the background, and, with careful observation, we also will see that “Vader” has been spray-painted on the cement outcropping in the middle of the scene. Even farther in the background is a figure, perhaps a woman, tending to what appear to be sheep. There is here an integration of worlds through the commonality of water, that is, the sheep, the figure in the background, the Storm Troopers and their Dewback mounts, and an indigenous Tatooine spe-

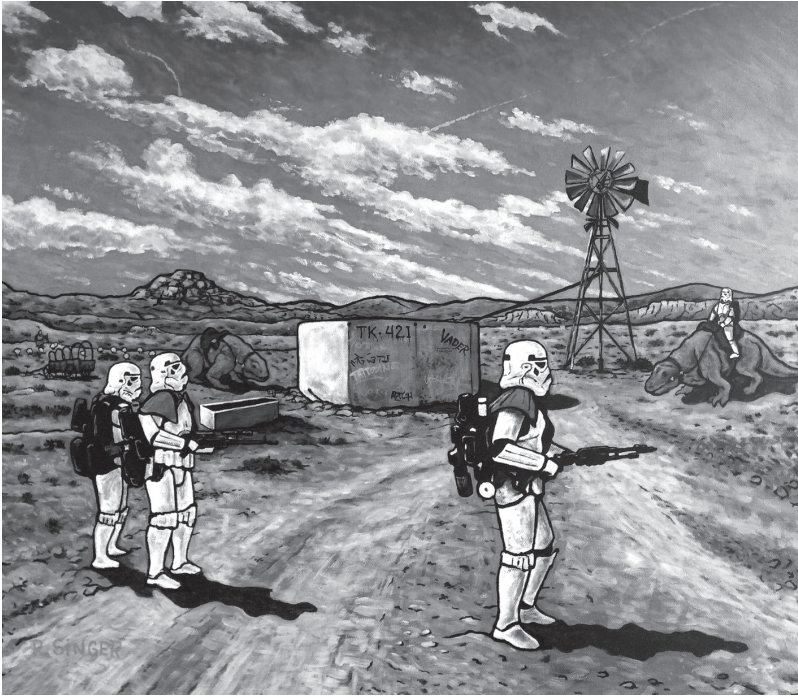


Fig. 2. Ryan Singer (Navajo), *To' (Water): It Binds Our Universe Together* (2015).

cies from the *Star Wars* universe all need water to survive and are bound together by this oasis in the desert. Dewbacks, in fact, are so-called because they are a desert species: they lick dew off their own backs in the morning to help survive in the desert. So then, one might wonder, are we on Tatooine, or are we in the American Southwest? The white-on-white Tatooine-based graffiti on the cement seems to ask this question more directly, as does the other, more stark reference, “TK 421,” the name of the Storm Trooper who was ambushed by Han Solo and Luke Skywalker, who then used TK 421’s armor to infiltrate the Death Star.

It’s important to notice in this work that, due to Singer’s specific medium of acrylic on canvas, all the figures and landscapes are quite literally painted with the same brush; they are integrated, drawn together, and this differs from some of the more photo-oriented works of someone like Steven Paul Judd or even the graphic design work of Jeffrey Veregge. In Singer’s case, the work emanates from the same creative

application, and this is a distinguishing aesthetic choice. This revision of the *Star Wars* iconography integrates itself within the world of the Southwest; it becomes an imbricated whole that blends the two worlds together. Fricke picks up on this compositional choice as well in her analysis of similar works by Singer in the article “The Force Will Be with You . . . Always: Science Fiction Imagery in Native American Art,” in which she notes that “Singer invites the viewer to spend more time with familiar figures. Singer’s paintings overlay the foreign with the familiar, combining the fictional locations over his homeland” (34). Certainly for Singer, the viewer is not intended to recognize a formal jarring difference between the SF franchise and the lived experience of the Southwest. In that sense, this works more like Suvin’s conceptualization of the formal character of estrangement: the strange is naturalized, the SF symbols are enveloped within a familiar sense of place.

This technique of estrangement also has the effect of naturalizing the foreign universe and its signifiers (Vader, TK 421, the Storm Troopers, Dewbacks, etc.) within the southwestern landscape, in effect indigenizing the future by forcefully enjoining it to Singer’s own sense of the present. The revisional act in this case emphasizes relation rather than difference by embedding the Indigenous symbolic register within the landscape itself. This is a less accessible signifier and is therefore not as immediately jarring for a casual viewer. Indeed, Fricke’s article largely hews toward characterizing his work as the expression of a cultural coexistence (34–35). Nevertheless, while the piece creates a familiarity that inheres in the southwestern-styled representation through a characterization of it as U.S.-national space, there is an oblique unsettlement at work here once we center the landscape as Indigenous land. This shift in recognition operates outside the frame of the work, instead found in the Diné title and the artist himself. These small cues are enough to engender a slow shift in realization that the signifiers are polysemous, and this begins to render the figures and other indicators within the visual field operational and supportive of this reorientation. This realization dawns and functions to revise and unsettle the setting itself, rendering it legible now in stark opposition to the initial settler-colonial identification. The setting is actually speaking a naturalizing *Indigenous* discourse, the familiarity is not directly hailing a mainstream viewer, and the land represented is not “American” but Indigenous. This fact renders the geography alien once more to the settled viewing as the familiar becomes



Fig. 3. Steven Paul Judd, *Untitled*.

unsettlingly strange. This revision and attendant instability of the spatial category come to the fore, then, and take the form of the Indigenous imposition, the appearance of the symbolic (or symbolically) Indian in an unexpected cultural articulation working at the level of the setting.

Unlike that of Ryan Singer, Steven Paul Judd's work often emphasizes layers and adornment, creating additional signification at the level of the pop-cultural symbol. There is still play at the level of the spatial setting, but it is done through juxtapositional insertion of different worlds from

separate forms. While Singer paints with the same brush, in Judd's work (fig. 3) we have filmic revision: photographs coming from two different origins that are then carefully blended to comment on one another. While Judd has some examples more geographically or spatially oriented that share more broad similarities with Singer's work, he often tends toward a more contrastive approach. In the untitled example (fig. 3), we are presented with an image of Han Solo in an iconic pose; however, he has been revised, adorned with an Indigenous-signifying shirt and necklace, blaster still in hand. This *maa'ibcaa* adds to the symbol "Han Solo," impregnating it with additional signification.

There is a parallax generated here: to the Indigenous viewer this does some of the reflective work that I mentioned earlier by emplacing an Indigenous sign system that produces a familiarity and identification within the piece. However, this adornment also produces a *disidentification* within the dominant discourse. The appearance of Indigenous markers in a futuristic context once again places pressure on the "vanished Indian," obviating the historical entrapment of Native representation. This does similar work of unsettlement to Judd's film insofar as it once again presences an Indigenous imposition within the familiar world and symbolic register of *Star Wars*. This Indigenous adornment of Han Solo—here standing in for the array of "rebels" who are the protagonists of the film franchise—functions to revise the orientation of identification within the plot structure for a dominant-culture viewer. By calling attention to and then undermining the common positionality

of the viewer to identify with those rebel forces, Judd's piece estranges Han Solo, playing with and revising the obvious familiarity with the strange and unsettling adornment.

The construction of Indigeneity in this context troubles the signifying relationship between the rebels and the settler, forcing an inversion of the common association of U.S. settler-colonial sentiment as aligned with the rebel forces, often as a pop-cultural parallel to the American Revolution. Instead, the viewer is forced into the position of the empire, the Indigenous adornment here creating a startlement that overturns this positional expectation. If the Indigenous imposition revises the symbolism of the rebel forces, by extension, it revises the symbolic representation of the empire: the evil forces of expansion, violence, and colonization are suddenly mapped onto U.S. history, a through-the-looking-glass moment that unsettles colonial history by inverting the relationship of the viewer with regard to the world of *Star Wars*. Indeed, as another Indigenous visual artist, Bunky Echo-Hawk (Pawnee/Yakama), shows in his painting *Darth Custer*, which depicts Custer wearing Vader's full outfit, this inversion of the representational force of *Star Wars* iconography has numerous other examples. In that more direct engagement with Vader's symbolic valence, the association with King George is instead mapped onto Custer and by extension the larger structure of settler colonialism. This effect, as McLaughlin notes, encourages Judd's "audiences to reconsider Native American history and position indigenous peoples as active participants in the present" (31). This exigency in some sense derives not just from the historical narrative but also from the appropriation of Indigenous culture by settler-colonial society, which poses a threat to aesthetic and cultural sovereignty (29–30). This type of involuntary collaboration finds precedent in the historical and ongoing work of cultural appropriation, here inverted and weaponized for Indigenous representational purposes.

Certainly, Darth Vader's clear symbolism within the cultural imaginary is ripe for usage in such artistic endeavors. Jeffrey Veregge's (Port Gamble S'klallum / Suquamish / Duwamish) work shares much of this revisional positioning within the cultural milieu. While Singer's medium is primarily acrylic and canvas and Judd's is photography, Veregge typically overlays Indigenous computer-graphic design and adornment on pop-culture iconography in order to embellish and add symbolic registers to the already pregnant images. There is a similar

effect and approach to Judd's piece here in terms of aesthetic operation. In Veregge's piece *Dark Father* a digital image of Darth Vader is constructed with formline technique recognizable as Northwest Coast tribal design. In it, Vader is standing straight up, centered on a white background, with his red lightsaber pointed downward between his feet. Under the figure is the title of the piece in both S'Klallam, Veregge's Indigenous language, as well as English, both of which might call attention to the fact that "Darth Vader" is itself a Dutch-inspired kluge intended to mean "Dark Father." Veregge calls this formline adornment "Salish Expressionism" and, like Singer and Judd, uses this technique to revise and indigenize pop-cultural iconography. Unlike Singer and Judd, however, Veregge does not integrate the iconography into contemporary Native geography or place; neither does he juxtapose the images with contrasting Indigenous photos or symbolism.

Instead, Veregge interprets the iconic figures through a recognizable Indigenous aesthetic style. Fricke notes that "by depicting figures in formline design, Veregge found a way to make these public images personal, reflecting his own life and the history of his region" (38). This once again agitates within the same symbolic registers previously laid out, and Veregge's maaʔibcaa functions to fluoresce an Indigenous aesthetic through this revision of Vader. The effect is striking: viewers once again are encouraged to revise their sense of the famous iconography through the lens of contemporary Indigenous artistic styling. The (re) naming of Vader into an Indigenous language also performs the function of overlaying a type of claim on critical figures within the franchise in ways similar to Judd's piece. There is a tacit potentiation of the *Star Wars* universe as translatable in some meaningful sense into Native communities and Native discourses, and this translation foregrounds the contestation around which cultures and traditions have the privilege to envision themselves within that imaginary universe.

This inclusion of Indigenous language in both Singer's and Veregge's pieces also brings into focus the entire Indigenous linguistic apparatus. Yet another instance of working back against the "Vanished Indian," the entrance and utilization of Indigenous vocabulary further throw relief on the alienation of settler discourse in these art productions. By engaging with the entire living world of Indigenous language, policies of termination, relocation, and assimilation are brought to the fore, retroactively lighting up the constellation of linguistic and religious repres-

sion within the history of the settler-colonial project. The imposition of Indigenous language in these instances takes to task the histories of linguistic repression, the words haunting the settler-colonial imaginary as a stark reminder of the failure of the state to overwrite Indigenous knowledge and culture. Veregge's work is then both an aesthetic adornment at the level of the symbol and a *yiḡ* in its imbrication of Indigenous nomenclature and, by extension, Indigenous worldviews into the world of the franchise. This translatability of dominant narratives in order to revise them is centered here, formalizing the process by translating the image into an Indigenous art form and the label into S'Klallam language. This primacy on the Indigenous language at its most basic level itself engenders a disidentification and startlement: while the symbol is familiar, the language is not, and this alienness triangulates and places emphasis on the indigeneity of the piece and its unexpected and unsettling subtext.

What's central here for these pieces is that they are reworkings of things that are already emplaced within popular culture. This reworking allows for a connective disjuncture, a rupture or break in the expectation formation that reroutes and revises those ideological networks. Here I examined Native visual art and the pop-cultural tradition of *Star Wars*; however, much contemporary music, television, film, and literature engage with similar aesthetic approaches, so this compulsion toward revisional technique is certainly not isolated to Native artists. Indigenous art of this nature offers particular aesthetic and political advantages for Native people. Nevertheless, the revision of culture is often incremental work, and in that sense it shares much in common with the process of revising writing. Writer George Saunders discussed this incrementality in an article for *The Guardian*, noting that revisional change is infinitely iterative; nevertheless, like a cruise ship turning, "the story will start to alter course via . . . thousands of incremental adjustments."

Saunders here brings emphatic attention to the nature of revision as a continuous process rather than a singular operation. This demand, implied by the revision process for a steady and repeated inclination toward reseeing the text, positions "the artist . . . like the optometrist, always asking: Is it better like this? Or like this?" That is, through a posture of constant revisitation to prior and simultaneous manifestations, Indigenous artists continue to revise the cultural field, assessing and

improving it incrementally at each point of contact. And to be sure, in the case of the visual artists examined here, revisionality is also a force for the creation of affective linkages within the pop-cultural edifice. There is deep love for popular culture in these and other similar pieces of Indigenous art. There is, then, also the clanking, productive sounds of a salvage operation at work in this revisional approach: while the aesthetic keeps a clear and often intimate connection to the pop-culture object, there is the attempt not simply to destroy the revised art but to improve it, to save it from itself.

Finally, these three pieces of art are obviously a limited selection and extremely focused examples of two forms of expectational revision that engender an Indigenous imposition within the cultural field. And one can track this usage across an extremely diverse range of artistic forms and content. Just an extended exploration of specifically *Star Wars*-inflected Indigenous visual art will yield dozens of artists and many, many dozens of pieces. As a result, maintaining a fundamental stance of metaorientation—an orientation toward constant revision of orientation—is a critical methodology in Indigenous Futurism. The ability to reorient not just one's own thought but also the rooted articulations of colonial discourse is part of the critical work of both aesthetic and intellectual sovereignty. Constant reorientation is also a means of generating new rearticulations within, among, and around these dominant cultural forms: cutting up and salvaging what can be used, redeconstructing, rearticulating, and finding our own Indigenous use for things. This requires mental flexibility in order to think obliquely within the rooted structures and master narratives, finding places to *deprune* the structure, to bring forth multiple Indigenous-nodal offshoots in unexpected places, reaching out with new articulations that intersect and interact with different cultural and historical nodes to dissolve or reroute the connecting apparatus within structures of domination. As we continue our headlong plunge toward the middle of the twenty-first century and (re)imagine the past(s), present(s), and future(s), Indigenous Futurists and other Space NDNs might be well served to keep close the method of the Warriors of Orange from Gerald Vizenor's classic film *Harold of Orange*: "The Warriors of Orange are trained in the art of socio-acupuncture. We imagine the world and cut our words from the center-folds of histories. We are wild word hunters, tricksters on the run" (55).

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Settlement, Cultural Memory, and Sacred Sites

The Function of Place-Names within the Cherokee Wonder Stories

MICHAEL S. MARTIN

According to G. Malcolm Lewis in his *Maps, Mapmaking, and Map Use by Native North Americans*, precontact Native American “maps” were instead conceptualized as “rock art and man-made such as mounds” (151). In other words, these maps were graphic ones on particular material objects. Lewis’s research suggests that these graphic representations mainly consisted of “celestial and cosmographic subjects” rather than merely re-creating objective space and place as literal representations (51). In one of the first illustrations from *Myths of the Cherokee*, a map of the eastern United States is depicted with traced borders of Cherokee tribal land overlaid onto the official national names for southeastern states and towns (Mooney 10–11). The resultant conclusion based on this 1900 Cherokee map is that something seems amiss in the two mapping practices and respective epistemologies on place and setting. This disconnect between European American mapping practices and Indigenous ones helps explain why, for example, spirit maps from the 1890s Ghost Dance movement were misinterpreted and refracted through the prism of European American aesthetics, design, and cartography (see Martin). The same type of bicultural disconnect is related by Claudia B. Haake as one where Seneca and Cherokee tribes in the nineteenth century “hint[ed] at a traditional attachment to land through traditional burial sites” as a way of asserting “rights” (31). For Haake, the tribal importance here is not on traditional modes of self-governance or rights but instead on Indigenous beliefs on land “attachment” (31–32). To be sure, Cherokee wonder stories, a form of recorded orature, are not explicitly composed as persuasive protests; instead, they exist as an Indigenously created domain of knowledge put into spiritual lore.

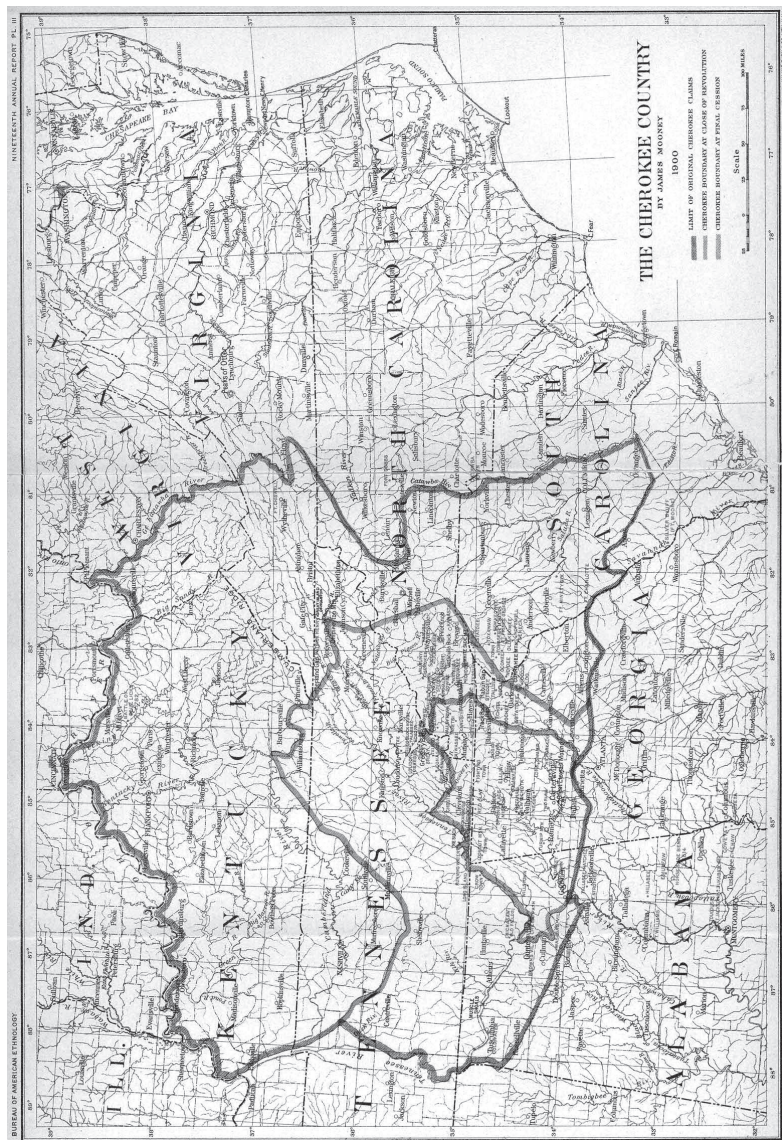


Fig. 1. James Mooney, *Map of the Cherokee Country*. In Mooney, *Myths of the Cherokee*, 8-9.

But what if such a cultural schism also exists in place-names and imaginative sites within other traditional Indigenous tribal stories? In particular, this project seeks to interrogate the way that imagined sites or settlements within the wonder stories sections of Eastern Cherokee folklore is constituted through such Native cosmographic schemes. My argument also suggests that mapped spaces based upon imaginary fantastic sites in these folklore stories are actually rather complex and Indigenously centered spatial re-creations. This project is the first to attempt a structural schematics, or study of story type, for the various versions of spiritual portals and other intradimensional worlds within this particular story cycle. The book from which this folklore is taken is James Mooney's 1900 collection *Myths of the Cherokee*, which records hundreds of stories that had been told to him by Cherokee elders and speakers on Cherokee history, mythology, and culture. Mooney's collection stands as the earliest book on Cherokee oral folklore, though several recent publications recount Cherokee oral stories passed on within family units (see Duncan; Teuton). James Mooney, an American ethnographer, lived among the remaining North Carolina Cherokee tribe within the late 1880s and collated the stories he collected into this groundbreaking volume. The Cherokee *wonder stories* comprise one distinct genre or subsection within the larger groupings of the book's mythological and origin tales. The genre classifications largely seem to be of Mooney's making; by contrast, from an Indigenous perspective, preencounter Cherokee orature does not seem to have any distinct story classification subgenres.

Within the genre divisions that Mooney created based on the stories that Cherokee elders told him, he both identified and collated the oldest stories in the tribal repertoire as being wonder stories. The stories themselves are often about fantastic beings, such as the Nunne'hi (story #78) and a spear-fingered female monster named U'tlun'ta (story #66), or lost settlements or underground pathways and worlds within the mountains, such as story #82, "Kana'sta, the Lost Settlement." According to Mooney, "For picturesque imagination and wealth of detail [the wonder stories] rank high" and could be compared to the greatest imaginative works in the European and Native American traditions, respectively (*Myths* 236). Mooney's comparison to ancient lore and tales is an appropriate one: for a lay reader encountering the wonder stories for the first time, the tropes and mythology perhaps best resemble the

underwater and wild beast stories and adventures in *The Arabian Nights* (1704). The stories' emphases on place-names recall Marcel Proust's fastidious portrayal of Combray and French places in his sprawling work *In Search of Lost Time* (1908). The Cherokee wonder stories are unlike the origin stories and animal fables in the preceding sections of *Myths of the Cherokee*. The latter do not include sustained references to particular towns, sites, and natural topography within Cherokee territory.

By contrast, the wonder stories provide some of the most sustained portrayals of mountain topography and places, including central places in Cherokee culture in North Carolina and Georgia and their uses for tribal cultural memory, within Mooney's collection of myths. In this respect, the wonder stories act as conduits for Cherokee cultural memory of place to be transmitted to future generations; articulate a dense, multifaceted portrayal of "portals," or intradimensional sites within Cherokee lands; re-create geography and place at a particular historical moment when Cherokee sovereignty and tribal boundaries were unsettled; and differ from other southeastern Native legends in terms of their location of myth within a particular setting. This essay, then, will offer comparisons of Cherokee wonder tales with those of other southeastern tribes as a way of reiterating the importance of place and tribal sites within the Cherokee oral tellings, provide a schematic for subgenre tropes and types (water-based portals, parallel worlds, and more) within this tale grouping, and argue that the wonder stories should be understood within larger Cherokee cultural issues related to tribal memory and its transmission, as well as connected with historical markers for tribal sovereignty within the nineteenth century.

My understanding of the term "cultural memory" is informed by Jeannette Rodriguez and Ted Fortier's characterization of the term in their book *Cultural Memory: Resistance, Faith, and Identity* (2007). Drawing from such diverse sources as the field of sociology and the work of French theorist Michel Foucault on history, Rodriguez and Fortier suggest that "[l]ike historical memory, cultural memory is rooted in actual events and in the surrounding and resulting alignment of images, symbols, and affectivities that turn out to be more persuasive than 'facts'" (11). They link cultural memory to "catastrophic tragedy" and also contend that these inherited beliefs are "transmitted through texts, oral history, traditions, plays, and memory" (11–12). Their larger point is

that Indigenous peoples use religious syncretism as a form of resistance, and their beliefs on “transmitted” models of cultural belonging have resonance with Cherokee oral rites and mythology at the time of Mooney’s recordings. Rodriguez and Fortier’s model for cultural memory also helps situate the rhetorical context for such a transmission: “One side of cultural memory is the *tradio*, the process” of remembering and for whom the tradition is being performed or passed down, while “[t]he other side is the *tradio*, the product,” that is, “[w]hat is being remembered” (9). The “tradio” being passed down here within the wonder stories cycle is perhaps the most important one, besides origin stories, within the Cherokee storytelling repository. The context for the wonder stories is one at a moment of Cherokee cultural upheaval, with a particular transmitted set of beliefs (“traditions, plays, and memory”) being recast for a new audience, both Indigenous and European American.

On a structural level, this essay seeks to provide classifications for the various other worlds within wonder stories while also arguing for the prevalence of real-world sites in the Appalachian Mountains sacred to the Cherokee, sites that were purposefully embedded within the tales. The second part of this essay involves a critical intervention in Native American and Cherokee studies and rethinks these stories as being both part of a larger movement in contemporary Indigenous cultural memory and connected to Native forms of knowledge and cultural sovereignty. This project is situated within the “sovereignty turn” within contemporary Native American studies and argues for a synthesis of political and cultural acts of Indigenous independence with that of traditional Cherokee oral folklore from the late nineteenth century.

Julie L. Reed, writing in *Serving the Nation: Cherokee Sovereignty and Social Welfare, 1800–1907* (2016), argues that the freedmen’s treaty of 1866, which established choice of citizenship for Cherokee individuals, was part of a larger policy of selfhood linked to “territorialization” (115). Reed’s interest is in “social polic[ies]” and “traditional social welfare practices” within nineteenth-century Cherokee communities, which she suggests are meant “to maintain the sovereignty of the nation” (115–16); but she also makes explicit reference to territory and space, often sequestered tribal land, linked to such acts of individual power. Meanwhile, Lisa Ford, in *Settler Sovereignty: Jurisdiction and Indigenous People in America and Australia, 1788–1836*, argues that Native rights and independence should be viewed in the context of “empire” (13). Ford

argues that “empire changed sovereignty because it altered the relationship of people with space” (13). Her contention links settler-colonial expansion within Indigenous spaces as being fraught with debate over Native rights.

Many other books and articles in Native American studies, including N. Amanda Moulder’s 2011 journal article on active contextual compositional practices by Cherokee women within restrictive patriarchal missionary settings, follow such a critical framework and are invested in the larger question of Indigenous sovereignty and land space. Rather than read Cherokee wonder stories purely within the genre of ahistorical tribal mythology, I contend that their repeated references to particular places are part of a larger contemporary cultural web of Native independence and selfhood, especially since the stories reassert the importance of tribal sites while the Cherokee removal still existed as a collective, transmitted memory. Cherokee wonder stories were collected by Mooney from Cherokee elders (John Ax, Swimmer, and Ta’gwadihi) and recount historical events still within tribal memory, such as the Removal of 1838, as a way of framing Cherokee voice and selfhood and, by extension, sovereignty. One way that Cherokee wonder stories foster sovereignty is through portraying both Native American (preencounter sites of cultural sovereignty) and European American (poststatehood, annexed towns and cities) conceptions of place, location, and maps.

The Cherokee wonder stories situate “place,” which is, of course, different in an oral script than on an actual map, as being imbued with numinous knowledge while not being fully within the realm of pure folklore or the fantastic. In more precise terms, the place or setting for these stories is often named and based upon real geospatial coordinates, thus leading to the question of whether a purely fantastic or fairy tale reading of these stories and their mapped locations is an accurate one. In review, the Cherokee wonder stories comprise the oldest stories in their oral folklore repertoire. My study of these stories indicates that they are often based upon multiple places or important tribal sites before the time of displacement in Cherokee history (1836–39) and, in particular, are situated mainly in western North Carolina, on Pilot Knob Mountain and, to a lesser extent, Blood Mountain in Georgia, and in a few sites in the Smokey Mountains of Tennessee.

Writing on Indigenous maps and their epistemologies and traditions, Mark Warhus suggests that “[t]he primary maps for Native Americans

were these *oral documents*” (3, emphasis mine). Native American maps were oral in form and construction: “When a map was needed to show the way or convey a message, it would be drawn on the ground, in the snow, or in the ashes of a campfire” (3). For Warhus, a three-dimensional map would be a “transitory illustration” for what was essentially an “oral document” or a “much larger interconnected mental map that existed in the oral traditions” (3). The wonder stories would have included Cherokee oral traditions of Indigenous map-making, what Warhus considers the “larger, interconnected,” collective unconscious of Native conceptions of space. These wonder stories, through their oral retelling of not only mythological narrative but also regional geography, therefore embed Indigenous Cherokee versions of setting and, in the process, transmit memory of the importance of mountainous sites as part of their storytelling repertoire.

One of the unique ways that Cherokee wonder stories schematize invisible or fantastic space represents a synthesis of ideas: the site is partially a doubling of real-world space while also being a “lost” world that was once part of this one. One such lost settlement is recounted in “The Removed Townhouses” (story #79), which features a common theme: a group of “invisible spirits” invites a Cherokee band to live with them in “their homes under the mountains and under the waters” (Mooney, *Myths* 335). Terry L. Norton, in the introduction to his collection of modern-day retellings of Mooney’s Cherokee myths, suggests that the “settlement” story section of the wonder stories “may have been combined” into one myth at some point in early tribal memory (43). Norton also notes that the “Kanuga” reference in “Tsuwe’nahi: A Legend of Pilot Knob” (story #83) may have historical precedent with an abandoned tribal town in South Carolina; the story would then relate “why some of the people of the Kanuga settlement” decided to “le[ave] their homes” to live in the interior mountains (43). The Cherokee long house, or townhouse, in this North Carolina-based tale is directly connected to an underground, unseen townhouse of the Nunne’hi, that is, immortal, invisible Cherokee, almost suggesting a geospatial grid of sorts that exists in tandem with the material realm. “The Removed Townhouses” story ends with the speaker’s townhouse being led in the air to enter in some way into the invisible one underneath the mountains, only to fall at the last moment and form what is now known as Lone Peak, a mountain in western North

Carolina. For spatial coordinates, the story provides a general bearing for where the now “invisible” townhouse is located, that is, “near the head of Cheowa” River, but it does so within the frame of Native conceptions of place as sites are recalled through river access, peak and valley location, and other usable local forms of topographic knowledge (Mooney, *Myths* 335).

Other topography and geographic locations in the wonder stories include places, invisible or not, that are superimposed onto the Cherokee homelands, such as “Ataga’hi, the Enchanted Lake” (story #69). Once again, the Cherokee speaker mentions that this unseen lake is located on the “wildest depths of the Great Smoky Mountains,” near the Ocanaluftee River, and on “the line between North Carolina and Tennessee” (Mooney, *Myths* 321). The “line” of the state border, a European American construction, corresponds with the perimeter of the invisible lake, one that “only animals know how to reach” and that Cherokee, epistemologically speaking, “know” is there, though it has never been seen by the human eye (321–22). The enchanted lake of Ataga’hi is a world that runs parallel with this one, but it is not a doubling per se; the lake exists but is only accessible through an alternate form of epistemology. In this respect, epistemology is combined with geography in the Atag’hi example.

But many of the wonder stories, such as “Tsuwe’nahi: A Legend of Pilot Knob,” feature invisible worlds built within other landscapes that open up as fleeting portals from within this world. In this story, while the protagonist is traveling with a stranger to an unknown cave, an opening into the cave appears “with a vast open country like a wide bottom land” (Mooney, *Myths* 343). In some respects, these unorthodox mapping practices present a vantage into an alternate form of cartography that the Native speakers invoke as a form of cultural individualism or sovereignty. Within Cherokee cosmography, these portals are often found at the origin of mountain springs, as in the story “The Underground Panthers” (story #73). One of the few wonder stories without a precise geographic location, “The Underground Panthers” is about a hunter who encounters either a speaking or telepathic panther who leads him to his home, again at the beginning of a mountain “head spring,” a place that the speaker describes as “a door opened in the side of a hill” that led to interior space of green fields and Native American settlements (324). These imagined settlements may correspond with actual ones that were

disappearing from Cherokee culture at the time of Mooney's recording of the tales.¹ These superimposed worlds, as I have termed this subgenre classification, are not dual/doubled spaces but instead imagined sites of Native American culture projected onto terrestrial topography.

Both "The Underground Panthers" and "Tsuwe'nahi: A Legend of Pilot Knob" could also be characterized as portal stories. The sites described are part of vast, invisible, imaginary topographies that exceed the physical limitations of this world, while the enchanted lake story suggests another, real, intradimensional world that already exists within present time and is contiguous with actual, visible landscapes. Spatial coordinates are provided in both subsets of wonder stories, invisible and portal-centered ones, and only one story is devoid of a particular place within late nineteenth-century Cherokee settlement. For the parallel or doubled world portrayals in these stories, the Cherokee speakers may have been invoking aesthetic features and designs inherent in southeastern Native American tribes. Anthropologist Charles Hudson, in his influential 1976 book *The Southeastern Indians*, draws parallels between the structural designs of "Woodland Indians," which are marked by an emphasis on "circle[s]" and "4-sided figure[s]," and those of later southeastern Indians, including the Choctaw and Cherokee (4). Hudson clarifies that one "popular Woodland structural design feature is opposed or split representations," often for "vessels" or other "artifacts" within their material culture (4). These structural designs of doubled, or opposed, sides for individual objects could extend to later Cherokee conceptions of parallel or alternating spaces within the wonder stories. If this Indigenous aesthetic principle was indeed at play in "Tsuwe'nahi: A Legend of Pilot Knob" and other stories, then part of the storytelling craft would include an alternate tribal-based epistemology being conveyed to both the immediate audience, that is, Mooney as the recorder, and the larger one, that is, Cherokee children and a Western audience not familiar with such principles.

One recurring story within the Cherokee wonder story pantheon involves a set of immortal Cherokee, or Nunne'hi, who inhabit underground townhouses adjacent to this world and, not coincidentally, centered on the Cherokee spiritual homeland of present-day North Carolina, Tennessee, and northern Georgia. The wonder stories cycle is replete with supernatural beings, ranging from a spear-fingered witch to a giant leech at the bottom of a lake to large birds of prey,

but the Nunne'hi are the most prevalent otherworldly beings within the cycle. Significantly, their geographic location is recounted by the Cherokee speaker in precise terms in a particular place of importance to Cherokee culture: "They had large townhouses in Pilot Knob and under the old Nikwasi mound in North Carolina and another under Blood Mountain," that is, at the "head of the Nottely River, in Georgia" (Mooney, *Myths* 331). The "old Nikwasi mound" references a place of spiritual and cultural importance in Cherokee history, an ancient burial mound near the geographic center of the Cherokee ancestral home in western North Carolina. Both the physical beings described, which look human for all intents and purposes, and their townhouses, that is, the material artifacts within existential space, are invisible, thus suggesting a synthesis of geography and the human body. The Nunne'hi settlements were surmised as being beneath but not serving as spatial doubles of real-world mountains, springs, and blue-water holes in the mountains, as with the location of this alternate, layered geographic setting of its Georgia community underneath a natural object or aperture. In another wonder story, the Nunne'hi, which are different in Cherokee mythology from the little people, or Yunwi Tsunsi, arrive as unexpected help during a heated battle against rival tribes and are said to be from "the Overhill settlements" in eastern Tennessee (336). What is striking, once again, is the precise nature of these place-names and geographic locations within Cherokee mythological orature, as well as the particular subset of spatial type that these locations purportedly illustrate, here being "hidden," intradimensional ones rather than lost settlements of Cherokee communities. Though these stories predate European American expansion and settlement into Cherokee land, the multiple settlements, whether invisible, underground, or within another dimension or world, take on greater resonance and importance with the loss of Cherokee ancestral land, the forced removal of the 1830s, which would have still been within the collective and individual memory of the tribe.

The intricacies of these doubled, lost, or portal worlds may, admittedly, be self-conscious or accidental script changes made by the Cherokee speakers in relating an individual wonder story, though such an explanation for precise geographic descriptions of hidden worlds seems an unsatisfactory one. At times, some of the portals are intradimensional places on the sides of mountains, as in "The

Underground Panthers,” with its reference to the animals’ lair being at an unnamed “head spring” that “opened in the side of a hill” (Mooney, *Myths* 324). Yet such an opening in “The Bear Man” (story #76) is merely one into a “hole in the side of the mountain,” one without a spiritualized doorway into another world (328). But the portal story type is the most common one within the wonder stories cycle, whether such an entranceway is at the beginning of a mountain head spring or, as is more common, on the side of a promontory, such as “the great door in the side of the rock” that opened into “an open country and town” in “Kana’sta, the Lost Settlement” (342). Usually, a protagonist’s or settlement’s opportunity to enter into the portal happens within a diminishing timeframe, as the aperture closes quickly, particularly if one hasn’t fasted before entering it. One hypothesis may be that the differences in story typology in portraying these other worlds—whether doubled ones, invisible ones, or intradimensional portals—represent a generally shared narrative construction, a changeable model that may be altered during the oral retelling of the story by the Cherokee elder or through a collaborative process between the elder and Mooney.

Two explanations seem to be at play regarding the geographic precision of the Cherokee wonder stories that were recorded by Mooney. Cherokee culture and citizenship, whether from a legal, sociopolitical, or resettlement perspective, were going through a period of tremendous upheaval. Mooney even notes that as of 1888, “the exact legal status of the East Cherokee is still a matter of dispute,” one that was on the borderland of legal status between American and Cherokee tribal council and citizenship (*Myths* 180).² In fact, several stories, including the Nunne’hi tales, explicitly reference the forced removal of 1836–39. For Native American theorists such as Joshua Nelson, the role of “imperialism” was paramount in influencing tribal customs and “social boundaries,” but it was not necessarily the sole defining factor for upheaval and self-definition in Cherokee culture, as “Native history” and “Native epistemology” would provide alternate discourse, so to speak, to this large-scale assimilation and acculturation (xii, 25). Hence, when the Cherokee speaker references the “line between North Carolina and Tennessee” in “Ataga’hi, the Enchanted Lake” (Mooney, *Myths* 321) and the era “long before the Cherokee were driven from their homes in 1838” in “The Removed Townhouses” (335), a historical description that is then followed by a geographic one, that is, the “Valley river and Hiwassee”

of western North Carolina, such a portrayal of American national borders and historical references seems to gesture toward the fraught status of Cherokee sovereignty and juridical citizenship as nineteenth-century subjects.

With this multifaceted legal status, the Cherokee surely sought to reimagine boundaries in unsettled but corresponding terms related to legal authority from the state, nation, or tribe. Similarly, Nelson's larger argument concerns the dividing line between Cherokee cultural indigeneity and that of European American colonialism (xiii–xvi). The pertinent point Nelson raises is one regarding “Indianness” and “sufficient markers of tribal and/or American Indian cultural differences” and whether such internal and external characteristics are possible to differentiate in the first place (32). Nelson includes tribal “boundary” markers within such a formulation of Cherokee autonomy and argues, as I do with the Cherokee wonder stories cycle, that literary and cultural productions reveal “principled practices dispersed” in a particular “habitus” on the part of the Cherokee (33). Cherokee wonder stories incorporate such geographic precision, a precision that isn't as prevalent in their early cultural origin stories, such as the way that game and corn were brought into the world, because these wonder tales, as the oldest ones in the cultural repertoire, must, through their oral speakers' and Mooney's framing of them, recast these central Cherokee customs and beliefs during a historically fraught time period.

Other Native American stories from southeastern tribes do not share the same pronounced emphasis on place and particular sacred geographic sites as portrayed within the Cherokee wonder stories. Not only do the other Cherokee stories, such as creation ones, not deploy extensive geography and place as purposefully as the wonder stories cycle, but also the southeastern tribal stories from the Biloxi, Hitchiti, and other local Native Americans are largely bereft of a similar emphasis. For example, the Hitchiti legend of the Water People includes a portal element that is similar to the one in the Cherokee water hole stories, but the narrative mentions no place in Georgia, the site of the small tribe of Hitchiti people, that coincides with the legend of the underwater beings and entranceway into the other world. In the tale, a boy who is hunting is led to an underwater lair, but the site itself is barely mentioned (a “bottom” with “no water”), as the emphasis is instead both on dialogue between the boy and the underwater beings and on the changing con-

sciousness of the young hunter as he hovers between both worlds, that is, the stream and dry land (Lankford 121).

By contrast, the Cherokee water portal stories, marked by a more pronounced description of the underwater opening than in this Hitchiti tale, articulate a more sustained portrayal of particular real-world places. In “The Great Leech of Tlanusi’yi” (story #77), for example, the speaker, here both Swimmer and Chief Smith, per Mooney’s notes, opens the story by invoking the geographic nexus of Cherokee country, that is, present-day Cherokee County, “in North Carolina,” and the “Valley river” at the joining with the “Hiwassee” (*Myths* 474, 329). The speaker describes the “great leech” as living below the water “on the bottom” and, as in other Cherokee portal stories, suggests there is “an underground waterway across to the Nottely river,” this one being a real-world one rather than an imagined townhouse in an alternate reality (330). Unlike in the Hitchiti legend, “The Great Leech of Tlanusi’yi” embeds a virtual geography lesson of Cherokee sacred land within the unfolding of its narrative structure, ranging from the mention of three rivers that traverse Cherokee land, the “Nottely,” “Hiwassee,” and the “Valley,” to the early identification of the western town of “Murphy” to the particular state, that is, North Carolina (329–30). A would-be listener could even find the site that inspired this legend by following the directions, that is, the “junction” of the Valley and Hiwassee Rivers, in “a deep hole” that is “above a ledge of rock,” merely by reading the story (329).

An explanation for these culturally relevant, often “lost” sites may be found within Cherokee migration and settlement practices within the Appalachian highlands. Historian Thomas E. Mails observes that Cherokee settlements along the Blue Ridge Mountains had “secondary living habitats,” or alternate settlements, that were possible “fall back” places for “times of emergency” (40). These real-world secondary settlements may serve as a model for several of the imaginary ones within the wonder stories cycle, including the alternate-world townhouses of the Nunne’hi story cycle. For example, some of the stories, such as “The Spirit Defenders of Nikwasi” (#80), have military encampment references that would support Mails’s point on fall-back tribal towns or camps. In his historical chronology of Cherokee migration practices, Mails even contends that their “broad land claims” and, by extension, mapped spaces “were to great extent based on the exploits of war

parties that had traveled great distances" (39). By contrast, some of the wonder stories, like the aforementioned water portal stories, may just serve as a local legend and not reference secondary tribal settlements within the Cherokee mountains. Other water-based wonder stories, such as "Ataga'hi, the Enchanted Lake," with its intradimensional, layered portrayal of a site that is precisely located "westward from the headwaters of Ocanaluftee river," perhaps also have an origin that is more terrestrial than celestial (Mooney, *Myths* 321).

Several of the stories, such as "The Underground Panthers" and the frame story for "Tsuwe'nahi: A Legend of Pilot Knob," feature a hunting theme that is central to the fantastic story plot. The Pilot Knob story, for instance, centers on a poor hunter, Tsuwe'nahi, who has to prove his otherworldly adventure with a massive turtle and mysterious stranger to a fellow hunter in his settlement (Mooney, *Myths* 343–44). Even the opening of "Ataga'hi, the Enchanted Lake" mentions that this dual-spaced (visible/invisible continuum) geographic feature could be found by "a stray hunter" if he hears a "whirring sound" and then attunes his "spiritual vision" to the invisible lake (321). The point here is that the wonder stories, with their emphasis on place at least partially derived from hunting expeditions, seemingly are based upon both Cherokee military exercises and seasonal hunting cycles. The enchanted lake trope within the wonder stories cycle may even be based on a hunter finding an unknown, unmapped body of water replete with fish and game while on such an expedition but then not finding this nautically centered encampment thereafter.

The cultural practices embedded within these stories are preencounter ones; the place-based emphasis, combined with hunting and military exploits, represents embedded Indigenous codes meant to perpetuate Cherokee cultural memory. In her recent work on Native American women's literature and mapping, Mishuana Goeman suggests that, in antithesis to settler-colonial practices inherent in maps and a general understanding of landscape, "Native conceptions of space" in Indigenous narratives have the capacity to "(re)map a history" and reshape both "geography and language" (2). Goeman's project is a revisionist one for actual cartographies and literary re-creations of maps; she looks at "non-normative geographies" and "Native epistemologies" as "moves towards spatial decolonization" (4). The idea that such early texts as the Cherokee wonder stories, in their first written form, contain

such Native epistemologies when referencing sacred sites must be considered. Encoded Cherokee place-names and sacred sites mentioned in the cycle indicate that Indigenous models of knowledge were part of the oral tradition being transmitted.

Other southeastern tribe legends are similar to the ones in the wonder stories cycle yet lack both the specificity of geography and the development of portal types within the stories. The Alabama legend of the Bear People, for instance, a similar theme to the animal transformation typology in the wonder stories, makes no reference to place but only starts with a vague reference to a “certain town” where the people “went about hunting” (Lankford 123). Unlike “The Bear Man,” no portal into the bear world is provided in the Alabama story. Further, unlike the Nunne’hi legend of immortals in *Myths of the Cherokee*, where their underground townhouses were under “Blood Mountain” and the Nikwasi mount in Georgia and North Carolina, respectively, very little by way of restated geography and southeastern landscape is portrayed in Catawba and Choctaw versions. The Catawba legend, for instance, tells of a “wild people” that live in a nondescript “woods,” and the Choctaw legend of Nalusa Falaya only references the setting briefly at the beginning by mentioning that these beings live “in the densest woods” (Lankford 134). The emphasis in both versions here is on the wild element of these alternate races, so setting and place lack any direct reference to actual towns, rivers, or sites in the Southeast, predominantly North Carolina and Mississippi, for these tribes (135, 134). Conversely, in the Cherokee story “The Removed Townhouses,” which is a mere five paragraphs, twelve different place references, from rivers (Valley and Hiwassee) to towns (Kingston and Loudon, Tennessee) to mountain peaks (Tsuada’ye’lun’yi, or Lone Peak), occur within every paragraph of the story (Mooney, *Myths* 335–336). The use of place-names and setting is both integral to and built within the Cherokee folklore story content.

Folklorist George E. Lankford, who collected the various Choctaw and other southeastern Native American legends from a variety of source material published in the early twentieth century, suggests that there is a disconnect in time between the actual ethnographic research that collected the oral stories of these southeastern tribes and their publication, as the “best general Southeastern ethnography,” he contends, was not published until “as late as 1976” (32). Perhaps one consequence of the lag in time between ethnography and published oral accounts of

southeastern tales is that the stories lack the tightened historical framing that makes Mooney's version of the Cherokee wonder stories much more a set of tales grounded in the Cherokee removal, which was only a few decades earlier. That cultural memory would have been fresh to Mooney, Swimmer, and Chief Smith in recounting and collaboratively re-creating the stories. Tellingly, the Cherokee stories recounted in Lankford's collection, which parallel the ones from Mooney's earlier 1900 collection, which was published closely after his ethnographic field research, lack the same precision and extensiveness regarding sacred places in Cherokee cultural memory. The implication here may be that the wonder stories cycle in *Myths of the Cherokee* purposely embedded this geography as a part of collaborative narrative crafting by Mooney, Swimmer, and Chief Smith.³ Mooney, by embedding place-names at parts of a given wonder story narrative trajectory, may have been participating in Native forms of collaborative authorship, knowingly or unknowingly.

Further, in invoking a specific geographic mapping of Cherokee wonder stories, I wish critically to intervene in the same vein of Native American studies as recent archaeological work in the field, as in the work of Stephen W. Silliman. Silliman specifically argues that, for New England Indigenous tribes, "rendering intelligible what these materials [from dishware to a Wampanoag cemetery] signified and enacted in Native American cultural contexts (and archaeological sites) affected by European colonialism" is shaped by "where" cultural practices occurred, as well as the "who" and "how" (215). The "where" in Cherokee wonder stories, the frame narrative on geography, is clearly traced on ancestral tribal lands, the birthplace and cultural epicenter of Cherokee culture in the western North Carolina mountains, particularly the recurrence of Pilot Knob. Cherokee wonder stories, by their very nature, are somewhat outside of time. Yet multiple references to the dark times of the Cherokee resettlement occur within the wonder stories cycle, including references to "the Removal, sixty years ago" in "The Great Leech of Tlanusi'yi" and "the time of the Removal" in "The Bear Man" (Mooney, *Myths* 330, 332), suggesting that the desire to preserve tribal cultural memory was a direct reaction to the event that sought to erase it. The Cherokee storytellers' re-creation of these sacred sites through the lens of mythological narratives represents what Cherokee scholar Qwo-Li Driskill terms "re-storying," that is, "a retelling and imagining

of stories that restores and continues cultural memories” (3). The tribal cultural memory of sacred place, perhaps meant to be transmitted to both a younger and a future Cherokee audience, became revived through the oral re-creation of these tribal mythologies, particularly within this subgenre. The Cherokee wonder stories existed within an oral culture for hundreds of years, though they were only transcribed into written script in the late nineteenth century by the collaboration between Mooney and various Cherokee elders. Their exact time period of transmission belies any real approximation while also reorienting the listener to an alternate, Indigenous timeline. Further, place is given precedent much more so than time in this subset of stories. As much as the wonder stories exist in a vacuum of time, as does much of Native American mythology, they are firmly cemented in events linked with Cherokee cultural memory in the nineteenth century and repeatedly invoke that time and place. As a nineteenth-century “text” in some ways, then, *Myths of the Cherokee*, particularly the wonder stories cycle, was meant geographically to re-create the center of Cherokee tribal ways through storytelling, particularly the oldest ones within the culture.

In tribal memory, at the same time that the federal and state governments attempted to divest these historical and cultural sites of their traditional meaning, they reappear in force within Cherokee folklore. In her recent historical study of new documents that bring to light the forgotten history of Cherokee removal in Georgia, Sarah H. Hill suggests that such place-names are central to a reconstituted memory for both the tribe and American history. For Hill, the “emerging details” of antebellum conflict over the Georgia removal “bring to light the missing names and locations, activities and events, attitudes and motivations that make the history of Cherokee removal from Georgia a living and relevant discourse for the present” (9). Hill’s article includes photographs of lost Cherokee spaces in Georgia, including Ellijay, a Cherokee settlement that was transformed into a military fort for removal; her project involves reconstituting such places and sites and the Cherokee story of removal, despite “the absences of physical evidence and documentation” (10). In a set of documents that recall the Cherokee removal, some from speakers who were living during that event (Swimmer was a young boy then), including the Nunne’hi reference to “the time of the removal,” the stories seem to breathe life into these nearly deserted towns and places of tribal importance (Mooney, *Myths*

332). My project, too, argues that the wonder stories were part of such a repertoire of found or “alternative” writings that reconstitute the way that place-names such as Blood Mountain, the Pisgah River, and other mountain sites function as still-central sites of sacred meaning, despite governmental edicts and discourses that say otherwise.

Much of what can be deduced regarding authorship of the Cherokee wonder stories is suppositional, as Mooney provides endnote attributions to some stories, such as “U’tlun’ta, the Spear-Finger” with John Ax, but does not clarify where the recorded Native American voices end and his editing work begins (Mooney, *Myths* 466). One persuasive angle on authorship regarding location in these stories is that Mooney was imposing his knowledge of state-based claims of sovereignty through the act of official naming, though the three Cherokee speakers seem to be well versed in European models of mapping and land-based claims. In speaking of Swimmer’s style as having a “musical voice” or quality, for example, Terry Norton suggests that Mooney’s original “recordings” of Cherokee stories “clearly contain literary embellishments” and that “questions remain about whether Mooney applied Swimmer’s other characteristics as a storyteller” (44). In other words, questions of storytelling attribution (Ax, Swimmer, and/or Tagwadihi; or collaborative authorship with Mooney) and, by extension for my argument, for whom the conditions for a place-based cultural memory are therefore created (Mooney as receiver of cultural transmission; general Cherokee audience) are somewhat blurred. Was Mooney, as a sympathetic, European American ethnographer, embedding place-names and sacred sites with wonder stories as a way of furthering Cherokee political and communal sovereignty on his own? Or is the model instead, per an understanding of rhetorical exchanges as being contextual, based on collaborative authorship of these stories and their emphasis on geographic places of tribal significance? Mooney’s role in adding specific references to Cherokee sacred sites within the wonder stories can be further speculated upon based on his systematic study of place in Cherokee lore.

Specifically, within *Myths of the Cherokee*, Mooney includes an appendix titled “Local Legends of North Carolina” and other states that provides context and background for the Nottely River in Georgia, for instance (*Myths* 416). Much as in the actual wonder stories, a geologic feature, such as “a bald spot of perhaps a hundred acres on the slope

of Tennessee bald” near the “Tuckasegee river” head, is correlated to a legend, with this one being a “giant[’s]” place of “residence” (407). He even includes some alternate Cherokee language place-names, such as Tsul’kalu and Tsunegun’yi for the Tennessee bald, with the Anglicized versions of the same sites (407). Mooney writes with geographic precision, for example, regarding the place where the legendary serpent “uktena got fastened” as a “spot on Tuckasegee River, about 2 miles above Deep creek, near Bryson City, in Swain County” (410). Even here, though, Mooney’s knowledge of Cherokee locations is based on recording the Cherokee elders, even if he may have transcribed pertinent explanatory details based upon federal and state annexation and their renaming of Cherokee ancestral land. Mooney’s careful categorizing of these places, akin to the subsequent 150-page “Notes and Parallels” and “Glossary,” shows his fastidious attention to detail regarding Cherokee place-names, lore, and story themes.

Swimmer’s transcriptions were recorded by Mooney in another book, *The Swimmer Manuscript: Cherokee Sacred Formulas and Medicinal Prescriptions* (1932), which may provide some clarity on issues of individual authorship regarding place-names in the earlier document. *The Swimmer Manuscript* has better annotations regarding authorship than *Myths of the Cherokee*, as Frans M. Olbrechts finished the introduction and added bracketed citations for Mooney’s records, as the latter died during the editing of the volume. These bracketed citations often appear as explanatory notes within the formulas and prescriptions, whether on how to cure rheumatism or assuage fellow Cherokee “when they have dreamed of snakes” (197), for instance. Because of Olbrechts’s editorial interventions, the authorial demarcations are clear; here, as elsewhere, Olbrechts added in brackets “Cf. Mooney, *Myths*, p. 311” (197). The third voice adds a layer of clarity about when Swimmer recounted his formulas, how Mooney interpreted and translated the recording, and, later, when Olbrechts interceded between Swimmer and Mooney. Most important, the use of place-names related to Cherokee culture is few and far between within these sacred formulas and prescriptions, as the mythological instead takes precedence over real-world geography. One recurring reference, often for Swimmer’s explanation of an ailment, is that a “Black Man” from the supernatural world of the “Night Lands” causes whatever issue is at stake, as with “shaking” (225). But the Night Lands originate in a numinous, not terrestrial, geography

in Cherokee beliefs and therefore contrast with the repeated allusions to North Carolina and regional place-names and sacred sites in *Myths of the Cherokee*. This second book provides a window into Mooney's possible interventions in the earlier ethnographic work, with the place-names sequenced in the appendix of *Myths of the Cherokee* taking on greater import. The place-names here suggest Mooney's purposeful intervention in Cherokee cultural memory connected with sites in the late nineteenth century.

Mooney's repeated cataloging of Cherokee sacred places and names in the appendix to *Myths of the Cherokee* suggests he had a hand in providing the same names within the actual wonder stories, though the place-names, perhaps in the pre-Anglicized original Cherokee language spoken, also gesture toward Indigenous forms of geographic knowledge. In their recent collaborative article, "Materials and Methods in Native American and Indigenous Studies: Completing the Turn," Alyssa Mt. Pleasant, Caroline Wigginton, and Kelly Wisecup propose a methodology for early period Americanists, particularly in place-based forms of knowledge, that finds currency within my own study of Cherokee wonder stories. They articulate, for example, that "the [early American] field might also more consciously acknowledge that its chronological boundaries are a direct result of settler colonialism and choose beginning points and endpoints for its research when studying Native peoples that emerge from their eras, milestones, and epistemologies" (225). The self-created "epistemologies" that are mirrored in the Cherokee wonder stories, even if full attribution of authorship is not possible, suggest such an alternate "beginning point and endpoint" because the stories, the oldest in the tribal repertoire, nonetheless reference important dates and moments from Cherokee cultural memory, particularly the forced removal of 1838. In reviewing the transpacific work of David A. Chang, Mt. Pleasant, Wigginton, and Wisecup come to a larger statement on the influence of contemporary Native and Indigenous studies: this alternate field shapes "early American studies by revealing the other geographies that preexisted, countered, and coevolved with those of European colonization and imperialism" (226). Mt. Pleasant, Wigginton, and Wisecup repeatedly introduce Indigenous geographies as one way of rethinking scholarly orientation to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Cherokee wonder stories, with named places in the Carolinas, Georgia, and Tennessee that

correspond with sacred sites often embedded throughout a given story, render such alternate geographies intelligible to a modern-day audience, re-created within both oral narrative form and collaboratively authored storytelling.

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NOTES

1. Historian Thomas E. Mails observes that Cherokee settlements along the Blue Ridge Mountains had "secondary living habitats," or alternate settlements, that were possible "fall back" places for "times of emergency" (40). These real-world secondary settlements may serve as a model for several of the imaginary ones within the wonder stories cycle.

2. See Young for a contemporaneous, regional study of the complexities of Cherokee citizenship and landscape.

3. Mooney's role in adding specific references to Cherokee sacred sites within the wonder stories can be further speculated upon based on his systematic study of place in Cherokee lore. Specifically, within *Myths of the Cherokee*, Mooney includes an appendix titled "Local Legends of North Carolina" and other states that provides context and background for the Nottely River in Georgia, for instance (416). His repeated interest in Cherokee sacred places and names within this appendix suggests he had a hand in providing the same names within the actual wonder stories.

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Black Hawk in Translation

Indigenous Critique and Liberal Guilt in the 1847
Dutch Edition of *Life of Ma-ka-tai-me-she-kia-kiak*

FRANK KELDERMAN

In 1846 Rinse Posthumus, a Protestant country pastor in the north of the Netherlands, received from a friend a copy of *Life of Ma-ka-tai-me-she-kia-kiak*, the as-told-to autobiography of the Sauk military leader Black Hawk. First published in Cincinnati in 1833, the *Life* was a best seller in the United States, but it was unfamiliar to Posthumus, who lived in a small village near the North Sea in the province of Friesland (Frisia). Over the course of the year, he studied Black Hawk's life story and began a translation of the text for Dutch readers, which he published in the city of Leeuwarden in 1847 as *Levensgeschiedenis van Ma-ka-tai-me-she-kia-kiak, of Zwarte Havik*. If Black Hawk can be regarded as the author of his autobiography, this makes Posthumus's text the first foreign translation of a book-length work of Native American literature.¹

Posthumus's edition did not cause much of a stir. Years later, the Dutch anticolonial writer Eduard Douwes Dekker mentioned the book as an "important" work (Multatuli 50), but no subsequent editions of the translation were published, nor has there been any commentary on the text by literary historians. Nevertheless, *Levensgeschiedenis van Zwarte Havik* sheds new light on the role of Indigenous writing in a transatlantic print culture in which the representation of American Indians generated popular entertainment, theories of government, and philosophies of universal history. In Britain, the circulation of American Indian literature came on the heels of a wealth of writings about Indigenous people in periodicals and newspapers, as well as "anthropological studies, works of racial science, and missionary narratives" (Flint 3). There was a continental European dimension to this story as well, and since the early nineteenth century the representation of *Indianer* held a prominent place especially in the German cultural imagination

(Bolz; Zantop; Penny; King). But as a growing number of studies has shown, the role of Indigenous people in what Jace Weaver terms “the Red Atlantic” was not merely to provide symbolic representations of Native presence: their writings, performances, diplomacy, and protests inflected the very currents of modern political and intellectual thought (Weaver; Flint; Lyons). Extending these transatlantic dialogues to a Frisian-Dutch print culture, Rinse Posthumus’s translation of the *Life* not only catered to a widespread ethnological interest in Native American culture in Europe but also brought Black Hawk’s critique of settler expansion into political debates about state power that had local and transnational implications.

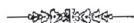
This essay is about what happened to Black Hawk’s story in translation. Annotated by a rural pastor in the province of Friesland, *Levensgeschiedenis* connects Black Hawk’s account of Indian removal in the American Midwest to a region that has been marginal to the history of cultural exchange in the Atlantic world. In what follows, I consider Rinse Posthumus’s role as translator and editor, tracing how his theological commentary builds on Enlightenment assumptions about race and linguistic difference even as it carries out a universalism that validates Indigenous cultural traditions. But I also argue that his editorial work amplifies a critical current in Black Hawk’s text about the relation between settler colonialism and the role of government, which intersected with nineteenth-century debates about political liberalism and immigration to North America. Posthumus witnessed the economic decline in the northern Netherlands in the 1840s, and his edition of the *Life* resonates with concerns about agricultural crises in Europe and the population movements of the mid-nineteenth century. By annotating Black Hawk’s account of Sauk traditions and Indigenous dispossession, Posthumus gives voice to his political commitment to liberalism during a time of economic depression and revolutionary energy in the Netherlands. Since these pressures gave rise to a peak in Dutch immigration to the American Midwest—including the very lands that were opened up for settlement after the Black Hawk War (1832)—his commentary in *Levensgeschiedenis* negotiates a politics of liberal guilt over the intertwined histories of European migration and Sauk dispossession. Tracing these connections in the interplay between text, translation, and paratext, this essay explores the transatlantic movement of an Indigenous critique of settler colonialism.

FROM BLACK HAWK'S *LIFE* TO ZWARTE HAVIK'S
LEVENSGESCHIEDENIS

With the Dutch translation of Black Hawk's *Life of Ma-ka-tai-me-she-kia-kiak*, Rinse Posthumus added a continental European dimension to the publishing history of one of the most important works of nineteenth-century Native American literature. In his autobiography, the Sauk military leader Black Hawk (1767–1838) recounts how an 1804 treaty with the Americans defrauded the Sauk Nation of significant lands in present-day Illinois and Iowa and how he challenged the validity of the treaty and the subsequent land cessions. As white homesteaders flooded into the Rock River region, in present-day Illinois and Iowa, Black Hawk's resistance to the treaty system and settler encroachment was met with a violent response from the Americans, and in 1832 the conflict came to a head in what is known as the Black Hawk War. Over the course of fifteen weeks, the war took hundreds of American Indian lives and ended with the Battle of Bad Axe, a massacre during which settler volunteers killed American Indian women and children. After the war, the United States War Department held Black Hawk and four allied leaders in captivity and took them on a tour of eastern cities that made Black Hawk a "captive celebrity" through public spectacles and newspaper coverage (Helton 500; see also Scheckel 107–11). Returning to the Sauk Nation in 1833, Black Hawk told his life story to Antoine Le Claire, a French Potawatomi government translator at the Rock Island Indian Agency. It was published in book form by the newspaper editor John Barton Patterson; the first edition appeared in Cincinnati in 1833, and it was reprinted in Boston (1834 and 1845) and London (1836) (see also Round 160–65).

Extending this publication history, the 1846 Dutch edition is an anomaly in Native American literature because it amply predates other foreign translations of books by American Indian authors. Despite the widespread European interest in Native cultures, the works of William Apess (Pequot) and George Copway (Ojibwe) did not appear in translation on the European continent in the nineteenth century, although pirated adaptations of the Cherokee author John Rollin Ridge's novel *The Life and Adventures of Joaquín Murrieta* (1854) were translated into French and Spanish in the 1880s (Parins 107). But it was not until the early twentieth century that the first significant body of foreign trans-

LEVENSGESCHIEDENIS
 VAN
MA-KA-TAI-ME-SHE-KIA-KIAK,
 OF
ZWARTE HAVIK,
 OPPERHOOFD
 VAN DEN
 STAM DER SAC-INDIANEN
 IN
Noord-Amerika,
 MET EEN BERIGT VAN DE GODSDIENSTIGE
 DENKWIJZE, ZEDEN EN GEBRUIKEN,
 VAN DIEN STAM;
 VOLGENS ZIJNE EIGENE OPGAVE AAN DEN
 TOLK DER SAC- EN FOX-INDIANEN, EN
 DOOR DEZEN IN HET ENGELSCH
 OVERGEBRAGT.
 IN HET NEDERLANDSCH VERTAALD EN MET
 EENIGE AANMERKINGEN VOORZIEN
 DOOR
R. POSTHUMUS.



BIBLIOTHECÆ
 FRISLÆ
 J. H. HALBERTSMA.

LEEUWARDEN,
 D. MEINDERSMA, Wz.
 1847.

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Fig. 1. Title page of *Levensgeschiedenis van Ma-ka-tai-me-she-kia-kiak, of Zwarte Havik* (Leeuwarden: D. Meindersma, 1847), Tresoor, Leeuwarden, the Netherlands. The full title translates as "Life history of Ma-ka-tai-me-she-kia-kiak, or Black Hawk, chief of the tribe of Sac Indians in North America, with an account of the religious beliefs, morals, and customs of this tribe; according to his own dictation to the interpreter of the Sac and Fox Indians, and translated by him into English."

lations of American Indian writers appeared, propelled by the popular Wild West shows that traveled across Europe between 1890 and 1914 (Bolz 484). Charles Alexander Eastman's (Santee Dakota) *Indian Boyhood* was published in German as *Ohijesa* in 1912, followed by German translations of Eastman's *Old Indian Days* in 1920 and Luther Standing Bear's (Sicangu and Oglala Lakota) *My People, the Sioux* ten years later (484). Before the twentieth century, the most significant works about Native Americans in foreign translation were authored by non-Native commentators, such as the travel accounts of George Catlin and Prince Maximilian zu Wied-Neuwied and Johann Georg Kohl's ethnology of the Ojibwe people on Lake Superior.

The translator of *Levensgeschiedenis*, Rinse Posthumus (1790–1859), was a Reformed pastor whose poems, books, and pamphlets take a central place in the literary history of Friesland, one of the two northernmost provinces of what was since 1815 the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Born in Ternaard, a Frisian village near the coast of the North Sea, he was the son of a grain farmer—also named Rinse Posthumus—who served as a local justice of the peace. Posthumus studied classical languages early in life while working on the family farm and later studied theology at the University of Groningen, where in 1813 he advanced to his *kandidaats diploma* (the equivalent of a bachelor's degree). Two years later, he became a pastor in the Reformed Church (Hervormde Kerk) in Waaxens, a village of less than two hundred inhabitants in the province of Friesland, where he lived for the remainder of his life (Wumkes 988). One of his contemporaries remembered Posthumus as a sometimes “unaffable” (*ongezellig*) person who lived a sober and rather isolated life in a “scattered rural municipality” where his work as a scholar depended mostly on “a curated library, the best foreign monthlies, and the newspapers” (Halbertsma 5, 31; translation mine). Posthumus published dozens of volumes of political, literary, and theological writings, including a critique of the governance of the Reformed Church (*Brief*, 1831) and a tract on poverty in the Netherlands (*Over de al te groote armoede en verarming in Nederland*, 1846). He had an abiding interest in the language and culture of the Frisians, a Germanic people along the North Sea coast of the Netherlands and Germany who speak a variety of Frisian dialects. He published Romantic poems in the West Frisian dialect (*Priewwcke fen Friesche Rijmmelarije*, 1824) and translated three of Shakespeare's plays into West Frisian: *Julius*

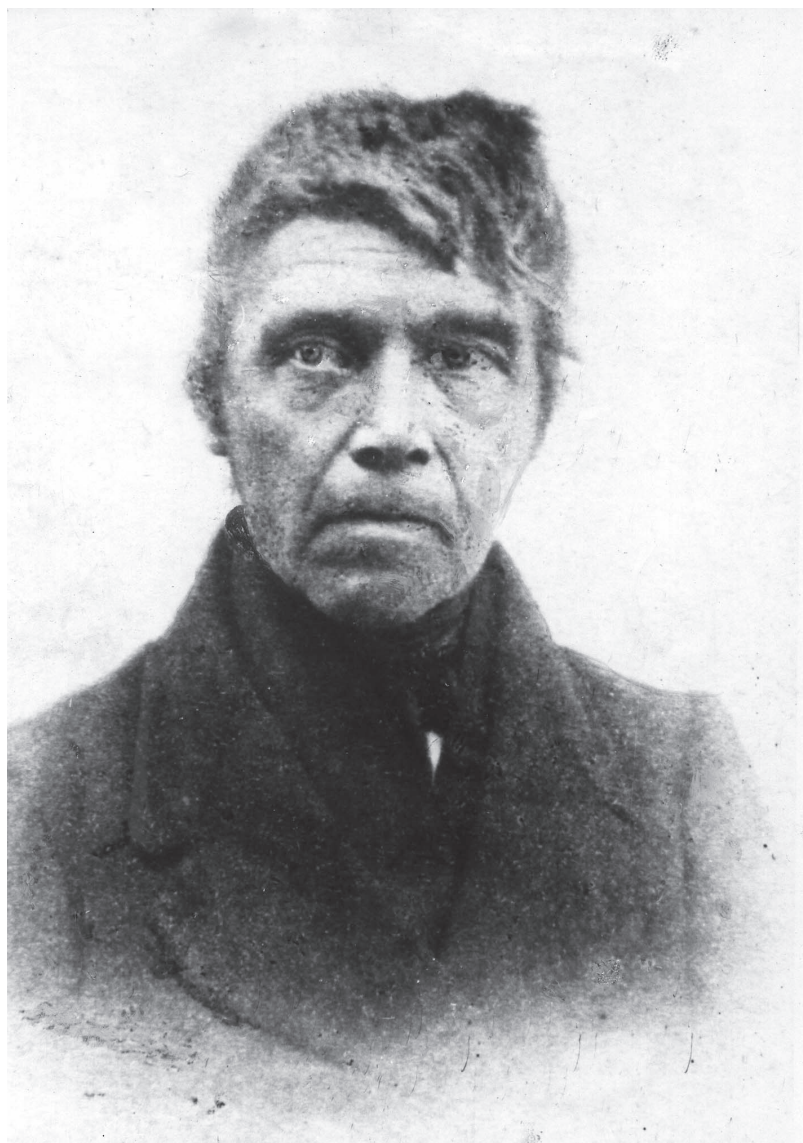


Fig. 2. Portrait of Rinse Posthumus, undated. Photograph, 12 × 17.5 cm. Fryske Ikonografy. Posthumus, Rinse F-0002. Tresoar, Leeuwarden, the Netherlands.

Caesar (1829), *The Merchant of Venice* (1829), and *As You Like It* (1842). In 1827 he was a founding member of a scholarly society that fostered a movement of Frisian cultural nationalism against the consolidation of Dutch national identity in the nineteenth century (Kuiken 184). Under its auspices, Posthumus traveled to the German region of Saterland for a study on local Frisian culture (Posthumus and Hetteema, *Onze reis naar Sagelsterland*). His commitment to folk culture was an important bedrock of a Frisian ethnolinguistic nationalism that he carried out most explicitly in an 1840 tract titled *Een woord ter opwekking van den volksgeest in het zwijgend Friesland* (A word to awaken the spirit of the people in the silent Friesland). This work is a reminder that the ethnological interest in American Indians had a counterpart on the European continent, where the rise of the nation-state brought about a heightened interest in local folk cultures.

If northern Friesland and the Sauk homelands seem like worlds apart, the story of how Black Hawk's narrative ended up in the hands of a small-town Frisian pastor bespeaks the intertwined histories of Dutch immigration and settler colonialism in North America. Although the *Life* had been republished in London in 1836, Posthumus only learned about it ten years later when he received a copy of the first edition from his friend Klaas Janszoon Beukma, a well-to-do grain farmer who had immigrated to the United States in the mid-1830s. Beukma came from the adjacent province of Groningen, where he led a movement of northern farmers to protest the new taxes imposed by King William I after the Belgian Uprising of 1830–31. When these taxes contributed to a collapse in the grain trade, he immigrated to the United States and settled in Lafayette, Indiana, before eventually moving to New Jersey (Breuker 13–14; Krabbendam 204).² These same political and economic pressures led to a surge in migrations of Dutch farmers to the American Midwest in the 1840s, and it is likely that the publication of *Levensgeschiedenis*, which is Posthumus's only translation of an American work, was motivated by an increased interest in transatlantic immigration. Although the number of Dutch settlers in the United States never reached the same level as those from other western European countries, 1846 and 1847 were in fact two peak years for immigration from the Netherlands in the nineteenth century (Krabbendam 4). And the northern provinces of Friesland and Groningen were among the three provinces that had the highest number of immigrants, many of whom settled in Michi-

gan, Illinois, and Iowa (7, 9). Notably, the rise in Dutch migration to the American Midwest was part of a wave of settlement that depended on the removal of the Sauk and Meskwaki people from their homelands. Indeed, by the time that eight hundred Dutch settlers arrived in Marion County, Iowa, in 1847 (Swierenga 197), the US government had recently completed the removal of the Sauk and Meskwaki people from that very area to a reservation in Indian Territory.

Given the surge in immigration in the mid-1840s, *Levensgeschiedenis* likely catered to a wider demand for information about the American Midwest. In this respect, the edition reads in part as an informational volume about the geography of the Illinois-Iowa region and how large tracts of the Midwest were opened up to white settlement after the Black Hawk War. To this effect, Posthumus's translation stays close to the 1833 text, and his introduction and endnotes do not sensationalize Black Hawk's account; Posthumus remarks that "I have made faithfulness my main goal, perhaps at the expense of fluidity" (*Levensgeschiedenis* xv).³ Throughout the book, Posthumus translates the name Black Hawk literally as *Zwarte Havik* and "Indians" as *indianen* (he does not capitalize the word). Posthumus's role as translator is most visible when he uses appositive translations to offer both the original English term and the Dutch translation. For instance, he glosses culturally and geographically specific terms like "prairie" (*vlak grasland*), "wampum" (*vrede-gordeI*), and "tomahawk" (*oorlogsbijl*), as well as more general terms like "fences" (*omheiningen van palen*) and "bluffs" (*hoog oeverland*). In some cases, Posthumus clarifies the meaning of place-names, as when he translates Portage des Sioux as *overvoerplaats der Sioux*. Perhaps the most significant act of translation is typographical. The original volume frequently uses italics to accentuate the dynamics of Black Hawk's oral delivery, but Posthumus renders these emphases in regular font, thereby downplaying the performative dimensions of the source text.

In the absence of international copyright law, Posthumus published the volume under his own auspices with the publishing house of D. Meindersma in Leeuwarden. He added the ten-page "Foreword from the Dutch Translator" and nineteen pages of endnotes with moral and religious commentary on Black Hawk's text, often pointing out the hypocrisy of self-professed Christians. These annotations also give historical context by turning to Anglo-American letters, drawing on David Hume's *Natural History of Religion* (1757) to argue for the similarities

between Sauk ceremonial practices and ancient religions. In addition, Posthumus consulted a Dutch translation of Jonathan Carver's *Travels through the Interior Parts of North America* (1778) to offer context about the history of the French and British Empires in North America, the treaty system, and Indigenous practices of hunting and warfare. This means that *Levensgeschiedenis* is also the first scholarly edition of Black Hawk's book, published more than a century before Donald Jackson's 1955 edition made the *Life* a key text in the canon of Native American literature.

“JUST AS IT IS WITH US”: LANGUAGE AND TEMPORALITY
IN POSTHUMUS'S TEXTUAL COMMENTARY

As one of the earliest Native American autobiographies, Black Hawk's *Life* is now a fixture in studies of early Indigenous writing, and scholars have examined the book as a representation of masculine self-performance (Sweet), as a traditionalist critique of the territorial mappings of US Indian policy (Rifkin), and as part of a longer tradition of Native American elegiac expression (Krupat, “Patterson's *Life*”). Rinse Posthumus's Dutch edition underscores that the *Life* is also a book *about* the translation of Black Hawk's oral text. Like the 1833 edition, *Levensgeschiedenis* gives insight into the collaboration that produced Black Hawk's autobiography, as it reprints the prefatory materials in the original volume: a statement on the translation by the interpreter Antoine Le Claire; the editor John Barton Patterson's “advertisement” to the reader; and Black Hawk's dedication to General Henry Atkinson, the commander of the settler army during the Black Hawk War. The latter is included in Dutch and in a transliteration of the Sauk language, which presents a phonetic rendering of Black Hawk's words.⁴ Since the original volume does not include substantial information on the Sauk language, Posthumus comments that he does “not know what to make of it” but that the dedication may help readers “determine the origins, authenticity, and the degree of reliability” of his edition (*Levensgeschiedenis* xv).

Rather than elaborating on the Sauk language, Posthumus instead places the issue of translation in a more abstract philological debate on linguistic difference. He argues that the collaboration between Black Hawk, Le Claire, and Patterson was an encounter between what he calls

a “little developed” Indigenous language and the “civilized” English tongue:

The sensible and unprejudiced reader will see for themselves, how incredibly difficult here the task must have been of those by whose collaboration this life story came into being. For BLACK HAWK it must have presented problems, in his yet so little developed language, to express himself clearly and without interruption [verstaanbaar en aaneengeschied]. For the interpreter and publisher it must have been no less difficult to record the ideas of the chief, captured in such a flawed way in his imperfect language, and to record and reproduce them in their civilized language and draw them accurately, just as they had been given to them. (*Levensgeschiedenis* xii)

In this encounter between two radically different languages, Posthumus speculates, the sophistication of the English language would have made it difficult to translate Black Hawk's ideas accurately, since even his own “imperfect” language did not allow for the full expression of his ideas. This ideologically fraught commentary attests to an Enlightenment philology in which Indigenous languages figured as a means to corroborate conjectures on the development of human civilizations. Linking language and race, the assumptions and misinterpretations of Enlightenment intellectuals about the development of Indigenous languages shaped broader ideas about Native people's literary capabilities (Harvey 19–48), and philologists understood Indigenous languages as “repositories of an ancient and sacred essence” that could buttress theories of scientific and literary progress (Rivett 8). Starting from a similar premise, Posthumus suggests that any misunderstandings between Black Hawk and his interpreter testified not to the practical difficulties of translation but to unequal linguistic development on a more abstract plane.

Posthumus's analysis of Black Hawk's text thereby attests to the influence of conjectural histories of human development. In their theories of “stadial development,” Scottish Enlightenment philosophers, including Adam Ferguson, Adam Smith, and Lord Kames, imagined the progress of civilization along different developmental stages, from a hunting stage to pastoral, agricultural, and commercial stages. Posthumus suggests that Black Hawk's text affords the opportunity to

trace such a developmental history directly through the representation of oral Indigenous speech acts on the page. To this effect he emphasizes the acts of both *hearing* and *seeing* to take in Black Hawk's narrative:

Here we hear and see a less developed member of our stock, a wild Indian from North America's woods, speak about his more civilized brothers and act with and against them. Here we see . . . in what different forms man shows himself on this earthly stage and in what distinctly higher and lower rungs he has been placed to climb up from time to time. Here we hear from the mouth of a genuine child of nature an unadorned narrative of his life and pursuits and how he chased after further development and judged the actions of his white and more civilized brothers. (*Levensgeschiedenis* vii)

However, for Posthumus the theory of stadial development is only relevant insofar as it offers a framework to recognize “generality and uniformity” among the world's various peoples. Posthumus points out semiotic systems, beyond spoken or written language, that express a universal human nature across linguistic and cultural boundaries. In a pivotal moment early in the text, Black Hawk recounts his process of grieving after the death of his father: “Owing to this misfortune I blacked my face, fasted, and prayed to the Great Spirit for five years” (Black Hawk 15). Posthumus's endnote to this passage highlights a similarity between Sauk and European customs, noting that “black, the color of the night, is here also the symbol of grief and sadness just as it is with us” (130). By this logic, linguistic difference does not mark a fundamental human difference in Posthumus's commentary: “Here human nature may express itself in a more childlike and worldly [*zinnelijk*] manner than in more educated men. It is nonetheless the same nature, however different the form of its expression” (*Levensgeschiedenis* 130).

Given Posthumus's interest in Sauk ceremonial practices, both secular and religious, his introduction and endnotes partly validate the virtues of Indigenous cultural practices. Inspired by a Romantic ethos of folk culture, Posthumus resisted “any false pretense to civilization” that posed a threat to local cultures (Wumkes 988; translation mine). To be sure, his annotations to this effect are fraught with a Eurocentric assumption of cultural superiority. Commenting on Black Hawk's description of Sauk dances, Posthumus writes that they must be “rougher simula-

tions of their actions in warfare and other occasions, rather than the natural and graceful movements according to music. . . . They are more like pantomimes . . . to entertain themselves according to their capacity rather than to truly dance" (*Levensgeschiedenis* 138). But he immediately neutralizes his own judgment. "Enough," he adds; "everyone dances and sings in their own way; and should it meet its goal, which is recreation, then the manner in which it does so will matter less" (138). In moments like this, Posthumus's moral didacticism is directed against a disparagement of folk traditions, which he vigorously defended in the service of Frisian cultural nationalism.

Overwhelmingly, however, Posthumus locates a shared humanity in practices of religious worship. He suggests that the Sauk people's practice of fasting is seen as "penitence, or punishment" to appease the Great Spirit, "just as happens among people generally" (*Levensgeschiedenis* 131). And when Black Hawk mentions the traditional belief that the Great Spirit speaks to people in their dreams, Posthumus concludes that "man is and remains man everywhere; thus, we are all of equal pursuits" (131). Furthermore, he suggests that this belief in a universal sameness rebukes ideas about racial difference based on skin color, as he argues that "[r]ed, black, and white skins are all children of one and the same heavenly Father and of the same mother, Nature" (ix). So if Posthumus characterizes Black Hawk alternately as a "wild Indian," a "member of our stock," and a "brother," this characterization registers an ambivalence that suggests how, in Hayden White's terms, Europeans paradoxically imagined Indigenous people as both "*continuous* with that humanity on which Europeans prided themselves" and as "*existing contiguously* to the Europeans" (193–94). Indeed, as Shari M. Huhndorf and Philip J. Deloria have argued, colonial representations of the Indian "Other" grew increasingly complex in the nineteenth century but had always measured more than simply positive or negative attitudes toward Native people, reflecting complex and strategic negotiations of identity along axes of interiority and exteriority, similarity and difference (Huhndorf 20; Deloria 21). In *Levensgeschiedenis*, Posthumus diffuses such ideological tensions by charting a universal commitment to religious practices to suggest that people "are the same people everywhere, one in being," even if they are "different in shape and development" (*Levensgeschiedenis* ix).

By rooting this universalism in a narrative of "development,"

however, Posthumus makes a common assumption about a temporal difference between Indigenous people and Europeans. Citing David Hume's *Natural History of Religion* (1757), Posthumus argues that the Sauk people's belief in appeasing the spirits of Rock Island is analogous to the domestic deities of ancient Persians, Jews, pagans, and Christians (*Levensgeschichte* 135). What is ostensibly an argument to validate Sauk customs echoes a colonial imaginary in which American Indians belong to an ancient or even "mythical past" (Flint 5). However, his analysis of native people's relation to temporality is not simply a denial of Native people's place in the modern world, and Posthumus identifies two modes by which Black Hawk tells historical time. He distinguishes between the first seven pages, in which Black Hawk narrates the history of the Sauk people through an account of his ancestors, and the remainder of the text, which chronicles his own military and political experiences. The opening section, Posthumus argues, represents "the hazy and indeterminate recollection of [Black Hawk's] ancestors," and as such it "floats around more in the realm of myths and sagas, which precedes the historical," relating only "the most important events" by following "the whims of an uncertain imagination" (*Levensgeschichte* 126). But if the opening passages are "hazy" and "uncertain," Posthumus does not therefore discredit them as historical knowledge. To the contrary, he suggests that this part of the book is similar to "biblical history," with a reckoning of time that "keeps to the main events" but also "serve[s] as a light and guide in pursuit of the truth in all her generality and uniformity" (126). Moreover, he suggests that this pursuit of "truth" continues when Black Hawk "offers us his own facts and experiences," since then he relates "the *historical* truth, in accordance with the unchanging order of nature" (126; emphasis mine). In other words, both parts of Black Hawk's narrative offer historical insight: one relates to a form of biblical time and is difficult to locate historically, while the other exists in the "order of nature" and can be observed in the physical world. Both, he implies, should be taken seriously as a source of knowledge.

Here Posthumus trades in on a Romantic belief that the textual encounter with Indigenous people allowed Europeans to "benefit from contact with their temporal other" (Sorensen 77), to connect with notions of virtue and truth beyond the bounds of historical time. This means that throughout *Levensgeschichte* his *métier* as a Protestant

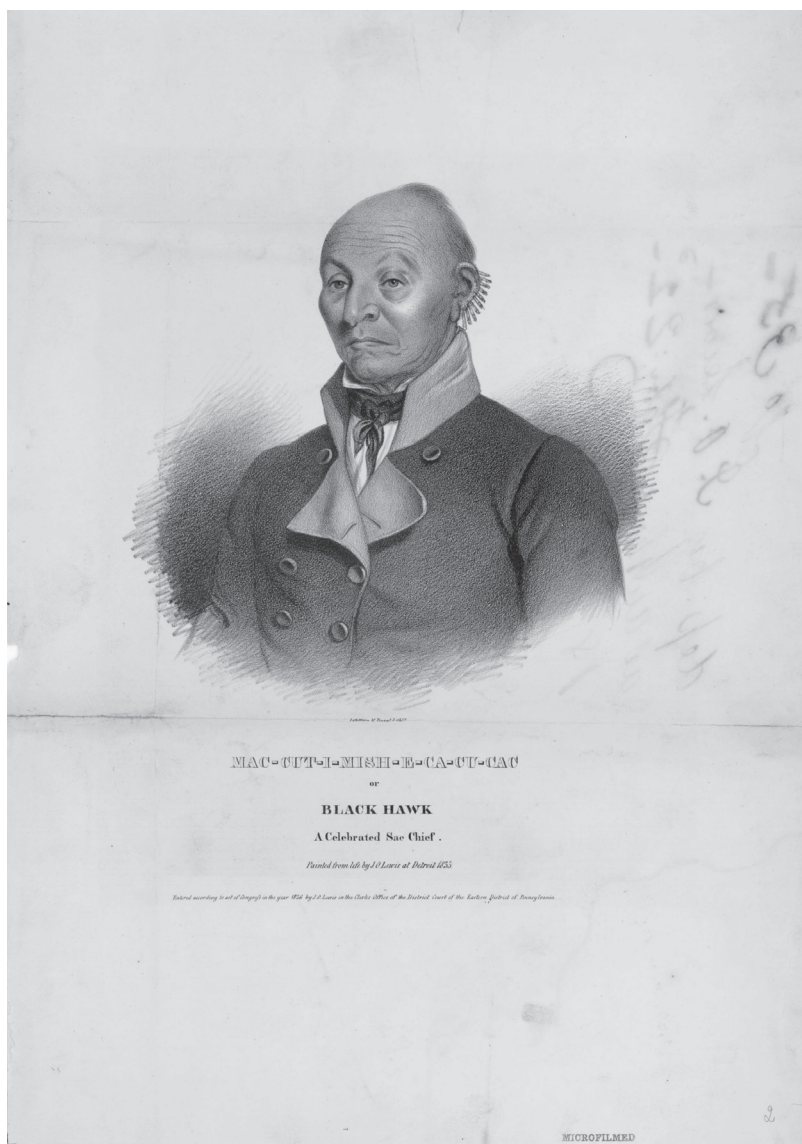


Fig. 3. James Otto Lewis, *Mac-cut-i-mish-e-ca-cu-cac* or *Black Hawk*, a *Celebrated Sac Chief*. *Painted from Life* by J. O. Lewis at Detroit, 1833, ca. 1836. Lithograph by Lehman & Duval. PGA—Lehman & Duval. Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

country preacher is clearly on display. Presenting Black Hawk's narrative as an object of scholarly exegesis, Posthumus highlights moments that serve as morality tales or opportunities for religious insight. For instance, he criticizes Christians who presume that they are the "high nobility of God's race," admonishing readers that they can only be "worthy" of this title "if we recognize our brothers in all peoples, and treat them as brothers, just as God treats us all like his children" (*Levensgeschiedenis* ix). When Black Hawk explains the duty of sharing resources with those in need, Posthumus's endnote suggests that Black Hawk's reasoning is "much more grounded and wholesome than that of many Christians and very learned theologians among them" (134). In another passage, Black Hawk explains the different Sauk ceremonies to honor the Great Spirit and how his own practices of worship differ from those of others in his nation. Here Posthumus comments that Black Hawk "teaches us, that he possessed common sense and even independence of thought. Man's dependence on the good Spirit, and his obligation to be grateful for all the good gifts received from that Spirit, how vividly are they recognized here! to the embarrassment even of many Christians, and rendered in short, fully human strokes" (138). Trading in on the rhetorical power of the *Indian* as a trope in transatlantic discourse, *Levensgeschiedenis* exhibits the lens of a small-town Protestant pastor who held up Black Hawk's actions to communicate the ideals and shortcomings of self-professed Christians.⁵

"DEPLORABLE EUROPEAN STATESMANSHIP":

STATE POWER, MIGRATION, AND LIBERAL GUILT

If Rinse Posthumus approached Black Hawk's narrative from a Protestant theological standpoint, there was also a political dimension to the moralizing bent of his commentary. Enacting a sympathetic identification with Black Hawk and the Sauk people, Posthumus castigates the manipulations of European empires leading up to the Black Hawk War. In the introduction he explicates Black Hawk's account of intertribal wars and the War of 1812 by refusing the stereotype that this warfare was a symptom of American Indian savagery. Instead, he argues that it was the result of the geopolitical designs of "civilized" European empires. Black Hawk and his followers are not the instigators of war but

dupes in an imperial power play that was marked by European lies and manipulation:

The unwitting Indians, whose unrestrained passions were kindled in all kinds of manners by the lust for profit and domination on the part of the Christians, thus fell into the traps of a deplorable European statesmanship and in ignorance plunged themselves into ruin on behalf of their false friends. They pushed these undeveloped sons of nature to commit all kinds of cruelties, only to mock them on the same account later, by depicting them as devils or even punishing them. So it also went in the war of BLACK HAWK and his band. (*Levensgeschiedenis* xv)

Establishing continuity between the imperialism of the War of 1812 and the Black Hawk War, Posthumus freely turns to racialized notions of the “unrestrained,” “unwitting,” and “undeveloped” American Indian. Moreover, his analysis of European geopolitics and militarism works by a paternalistic concept of Native people’s historical agency, denying Black Hawk and his people a role as active participants in this history. At the same time, his account of the war is also a systemic critique of imperial designs in an unequal world, highlighting a world system in which the Sauk people fell victim to European and American government control.

In this commentary, Posthumus recognizes the moral economies that gravitated around the figure of the *Indian* and uses Black Hawk’s story to critique systems that created asymmetrical power relations on a global scale. His introduction and annotations thereby negotiate a politics of liberal guilt over European imperialism in North America, registering what Julie Ellison calls the “moral embarrassment of the sensitive intellectual” through an ability to imagine the pain and emotions of others (12). This position became a key trope in the Enlightenment-era Atlantic world as intellectuals considered “the racial politics of international mercantile and colonial power relations” and began to understand the world economy as “a system that produced suffering for some and privilege for others.” These newly remarked forms of global connectedness provided new “cultural opportunities for the display of sympathy, especially sympathetic masculinity” (12). The transatlantic circulation of writings about American Indians figured prominently in

this history, and Laura M. Stevens demonstrates how the rhetoric of “the poor Indians” influenced religious debates about inequality and reform in the Atlantic world (33). Through such rhetorical and intellectual traditions, the representation of *Indians* became a convenient vehicle for expressing sympathy toward people on the receiving end of global injustice.

Posthumus’s sympathy toward the Sauk people bespeaks his political engagement and brought Black Hawk’s account of Sauk dispossession into current discourses on the role of government in protecting individual and group rights. Posthumus’s political commitment intensified with the Dutch government’s inadequate response to the failed harvest of 1845, which led to food riots that spread across the country, including the provinces of Friesland and Groningen (Kuiken 186). Although he eschewed the label of socialist or communist (Posthumus, *Over* 10), as a country pastor living in a region undergoing rapid economic decline, he was deeply concerned with class struggles in the Netherlands, and his political beliefs made him “one of the most spirited and radical figures” within the Reformed Church (Jensma 43; translation mine). He was aligned with the movement of liberalism in the Netherlands and became editor of the liberal newspaper *Provinciale Friesche Courant* in 1842 (Kuiken 175) and associated with the liberal politicians Dirk Donker Curtius and Harmanus Klaasesz, the latter of whom led the liberal movement in Posthumus’s home municipality of Westdongeradeel (Breuker 14–16). Whereas liberalism in Europe is often associated with free trade and laissez-faire economics, Dutch liberals championed a movement away from monarchical power, government oversight on the part of the parliament, an expansion of the suffrage, and the legal protection of civil rights (Kuiken 179). Liberals formed an increasingly influential coalition between the landed gentry, elite farmers, and intellectuals who criticized the policies of King William II and advocated for constitutional reforms on national, provincial, and local levels.

Although *Levensgeschiedenis* does not lay out a coherent vision of Posthumus’s liberal politics, his annotations pause on the role of both government and free citizens in Black Hawk’s account of the 1832 war, casting the Sauk people as victims of an imperial power play, as well as rampant greed. First, he criticizes the imperial governmental manipulations that divided the Sauk Nation, leading some of them to fight with Black Hawk while the majority acquiesced to removal

from the village of Saukenuk to reservations west of the Mississippi. Posthumus explains that “[t]he division within his tribe, the work of European and American statesmanship and interference, became, as it was intended, the cause of his being weakened to a state of complete defenselessness. Divide et impera: divide and conquer, which had been used so successfully so many times, worked according to plan again here, in the interest of the whites” (*Levensgeschichte* 143). But if Posthumus blames European governments for their destructive impact on Indigenous resistance movements, he goes on to argue that Sauk dispossession overall was the work of settlers acting in the *absence* of government oversight. As Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz notes, the Black Hawk War was essentially “a slaughter of Sauk farmers” (111), and Black Hawk’s narrative intensifies when white settlers begin to destroy the Sauk people’s cornfields. At this point, Posthumus notes that “[t]he abuses, to which Black Hawk’s tribe, by way of their violent expulsion from his village, fell victim, was surely more the work of greedy planters than of the North-American government, which did mislead [them] but which would have acted more justly on better information” (*Levensgeschichte* 143). These annotations accentuate how Black Hawk exposes the tensions between the individual freedoms of white settlers and the danger of those freedoms affecting vulnerable populations. The violence of the Black Hawk War, Posthumus emphasizes, happened primarily not because of the policies of the federal government but rather because of the actions of greedy settlers who operated outside of its purview.

The scholarly apparatus in *Levensgeschichte* thus brings out a strand of the narrative that reflects on the relation between settler colonialism and the working of state power. On the one hand, Posthumus underestimates the extent to which the Black Hawk War was enabled by federal policymakers who sanctioned the organization of a volunteer army against the Sauk Nation and carried out removal policies that shaped US-Indian relations on a continental scale. On the other hand, he recognizes the logic by which settler colonialism was, in Patrick Wolfe’s terms, a “decentered” process that not only was effected through direct governmental action but also depended on a “range of agencies from the metropolitan centre to the frontier encampment” (393). In other words, Posthumus underscores how Black Hawk’s narrative mediates between a critique of state power as it overreaches through direct military inter-

vention and as it fails to act to guarantee justice and protect the rights of an oppressed people. In all its shortcomings, he suggests, the “highest government” should not be seen as the only source of social injustice, and indeed it is the actions of the individual settler colonists that Posthumus condemns most vehemently: “Where Black Hawk complains multiple times of the lack of a fixed standard of justice and injustice among the whites, this came from his lack of understanding that among them the standard of egotism and self-interest is substituted” (*Levensgeschiedenis* 144). In Black Hawk’s account of Sauk dispossession, then, Posthumus emphasizes how settler expansion—beyond the reach of government oversight—is unmoored from questions of civic duty and social justice and beholden only to individual economic interests.

In short, Posthumus amplifies the *Life’s* perspective on the relation between government and free enterprise in a history of oppression. This perspective also negotiates political anxieties about the role of government at a time of economic crises and rural poverty in the Netherlands. Posthumus suggests that the book’s critique of Sauk dispossession—in which the actions of private citizens and lower-level officials played a defining role—mirrors the problems of government on the other side of the Atlantic: “In Europe also, is there not all too frequently very much evil and misery accomplished by private citizens, or subordinate members of government, or councils [*collegien*], of which the highest government remains uninformed because people keep her uninformed about it?” (*Levensgeschiedenis* 143–44). Defending the role of federal government, he concludes that “[i]t is equally foolish and bad to regard the highest government as the cause of all evil in a society and blame her, as it is to worship her” (144). His inferences from the Black Hawk War about the nature of government reflect Helena Rosenblatt’s argument that, historically speaking, political liberals were not necessarily for or against a strong role for government; instead, most were “moralists” who tied ideas about individual rights and freedom to a regard for civic duty and “questions of social justice” (4). And if Posthumus is critical of imperial government, he also believes that injustice and dispossession can result from a lack of government oversight. Black Hawk’s history thereby dramatizes a key tension that liberal intellectuals such as Posthumus negotiated: that the task of government is to allow citizens to pursue their individual freedom, but that government is also obliged to curb those freedoms when they pose a threat to the rights of others.

But for Posthumus, this debate on state power also related to the intertwined issues of settler colonialism in North America and transatlantic immigration. In the same year that Posthumus worked on the translation of the *Life*, he published a tract laying out a vision for the role of government in ameliorating “poverty and impoverishment” in the Netherlands.⁶ Placing his own region of northern Friesland in a larger European context, Posthumus locates the causes of poverty in overpopulation, taxes on daily food items, and the unavailability of “useful labor” (*Over* 13). Crucially, Posthumus envisions transatlantic migration as an important recourse, especially for Dutch farmers. His solution to overpopulation is to reclaim lands domestically for agricultural use, for laborers to move to the Dutch colonies in Indonesia, Surinam, and the Caribbean, and for the government to incentivize the immigration of farmers to North America (21–24). As to the latter, he explains: “Beyond our native country, to the west, lies North America, a country whose vast yet still uncultivated fields clamor for us to call industrious populators [*bevolkers*] to labor there under a free government for themselves, as people and citizens. There exists for each who is able and willing, abundant opportunity . . . to perfect himself through his serviceable labor, which is becoming increasingly difficult over here” (22). In the United States, he argues, farmers would stand to benefit from its liberal government, noting similarities with the Dutch Republic before the Batavian Revolution: “There, where the form of government has so much of the good things of the old republic of the Netherlands before 1795, freedom and development are inherent in the people’s nature and the wrongs that spring from them. There is youth and energy in its citizens, as opposed to European senescence and weakness. There, freedom of movement rules . . . in social life” (22). Whereas in *Levensgeschiedenis* Posthumus locates the cause of Sauk dispossession in the actions of “greedy planters” acting outside of the purview of federal government, here he champions a liberalism that safeguards the “freedom of movement” of its citizens. And if Posthumus is pessimistic about the possibility of liberal government in the Netherlands, he imagines its foothold in the US republic as a safety valve for economic crises and class struggles at home.

Of course, Posthumus’s tract on Dutch poverty should not be read directly into his commentary on Black Hawk’s text, but it underscores how he saw the issue of transatlantic immigration as bound up with a

crisis of poverty in the Netherlands and the promise of liberal government in the United States. In *Levensgeschiedenis*, however, he remains silent on this issue: the sole reference to Dutch immigration is the dedication to his friend Klaas Janszoon Beukma, “a citizen of North America, where justice and freedom have their temple and the people’s happiness is rapidly advancing and maturing” (*Levensgeschiedenis* v–vi). So although Posthumus worked on his translation during the peak years of immigration to the United States, he does not explicitly connect *Dutch* migration to the issue of settler colonialism in the American Midwest (in the same way that his critique of empire does not extend to Dutch plantation colonialism in Indonesia, Surinam, and the Caribbean). Perhaps in his appeal to a universal brotherhood, Posthumus called on potential immigrants to be more ethical in their relation to Indigenous populations than the “greedy planters” in Black Hawk’s narrative, but his appeal to cross-cultural sympathy is ultimately a limited one in a settler-colonial situation where the central dynamic is the taking of Indigenous lands. After all, the increased emigration from Friesland and Groningen to the United States depended on the extinguishing of Indigenous land title in present-day Illinois and Iowa, a region that had been opened up for white settlement through the Black Hawk War, the repeated displacement of the Sauk and Meskwaki people, and, by 1847, their removal to Indian Territory. And if the ideology of American liberal government held implications for Dutch farmers seeking to immigrate, it did all the more so for Indian nations that bore the brunt of European proimmigration discourses. In this respect, Posthumus’s analysis of Black Hawk’s text expresses an ambivalent intellectual standpoint, one that is oriented to a cosmopolitan worldview but dedicated to local economic concerns, espouses ideals of cultural relativism but is steeped in Protestant moralizing, and is critical of empire but ultimately silent on the role of Dutch colonialism in producing global inequalities.

CONCLUSION

In making my case for the political dimensions of the Dutch edition of Black Hawk’s *Life*, I do not mean to suggest that *Levensgeschiedenis* was a thinly veiled treatise on liberal government or that Rinse Posthumus subsumed its narrative only to advance his own intellectual agenda. Perhaps he simply considered the book a curiosity, a piece of Americana

that would introduce Dutch readers to the recent history and geography of the American Midwest. Moreover, his scholarly annotations do not eclipse Black Hawk's own account of his experiences. In fact, when the narrative turns to the US military campaign against the Sauk people in 1832, Posthumus scales back his annotations: "This last part of Black Hawk's story gives little reason for commentary. He recounts so clearly and impartially his experiences with and actions against the whites that every reader, upon due consideration, can contentedly judge it for themselves" (*Levensgeschiedenis* 143). By putting Black Hawk forward as an "impartial" critic of this history, Posthumus amplifies his rhetoric by retreating as the textual explicator. In Black Hawk's account of Sauk dispossession, then, Posthumus also saw a narrative that might be trusted *without* mediation, declaring himself a faithful reader of his text.

Almost a decade after Black Hawk's death, his autobiography became part of a Frisian-Dutch literary culture in which it augmented the sermons Posthumus delivered from his pulpit and the pamphlets he circulated. But it would be too simple to dismiss Posthumus's editorializing as just one more variation on the narrative of the noble savage or the "poor Indian." Nor did Posthumus adopt Black Hawk as merely a romantic emblem for his own Frisian ethnolinguistic nationalism. In his own way, the Frisian pastor took Black Hawk seriously as a critical voice in a debate informed by political liberalism about the role of the state in global systems shaped by inequality and (forced and voluntary) population movements. Still, if the book presents Black Hawk as an authority on a history of dispossession, it is also a reminder of how fraught and limiting that role was for authors of Native American literature. Posthumus both amplified and delimited the resonance of Black Hawk's critique, engaging with the history of settler colonialism in Indigenous homelands while remaining silent on the ways that Native people were affected by Dutch immigration during this very decade. Perhaps it is fair to say that Posthumus's sympathetic treatment of Black Hawk mirrors the cultural work of German enthusiasts who, as Lisa King argues, turned to representations of *Indianer* to identify as "fellow underdogs or victims in a brotherhood with Indigenous peoples" (29–30) in ways that both challenged and denied their own colonial presence in the world.

The transatlantic adaptation of Indigenous writing adds an important dimension to the literary history of Native North America, laying bare how Native and non-Native authors reckoned in overlapping ways with

the fact that Indigenous dispossession was inextricably tied to economic and political developments in Europe. Since the beginning of colonial contact, Indigenous people shared their perspectives on the workings of empire in scenes of diplomacy, in cultures of letter-writing, on the lecture circuit, and, like Black Hawk, in a transatlantic market for printed books. As a growing body of work in transnational Indigenous studies has shown, these efforts were not beholden to national or linguistic boundaries, and in this cultural exchange, Indigenous critiques of colonialism intersected with broader political debates about state power and popular resistance. Dialogic texts such as Rinse Posthumus's *Levensgeschiedenis* tell us how these critiques fashioned more than a generic discourse about the *Indian* as they became part of an intellectual reckoning with transatlantic migration in a connected world economy. Taking up these concerns in a time of crisis and revolutionary sentiment, *Levensgeschiedenis van Ma-ka-tai-me-she-kia-kiak* testifies to the unbounded horizons of American Indian writing.

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NOTES

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1. My conclusion that Rinse Posthumus's *Levensgeschiedenis* is the first foreign translation of a Native-authored book is based on my own survey of secondary scholarship, catalogs, and databases. This survey is not foolproof, and I hope that other scholars will point out earlier examples. I admit that my definition of the term "foreign translation of a Native-authored book" is somewhat limited: I here mean a full-length printed book by a Native American author that has been translated into a language other than English or the Indigenous languages of North America. This means that my definition excludes, for instance, hymn books compiled by Indigenous writers that were translated into Indigenous languages. Furthermore, since the original version of Black Hawk's text was interpreted from Sauk to English, this first edition can be regarded as a "foreign translation" in its own right. Indeed, the very question of how we think about the term "foreign translation" in early Native American literature should be the subject of further discussion.

2. It is worth noting here that between 1835 and 1838, Beukma authored a mul-

tivolume account of his immigrant experience for Dutch reading audiences, which suggests an increased interest in immigration to North America (Breuker 13).

3. All Dutch-to-English translations of Rinse Posthumus's introduction and endnotes are mine. Since Posthumus's translation keeps close to the 1833 Cincinnati edition on which it is based, I refer to this edition when quoting Black Hawk's own words.

4. An Algonquian language, the Sauk language is closely related to the Meskwaki (Fox) and Kickapoo languages; the three are sometimes together referred to as Sauk-Fox-Kickapoo.

5. My use of the word *Indian* in italics is indebted to Gerald Vizenor's use of the term in *Manifest Manners*, which I take to denote a colonial simulation of Native people in global discourse, one that is mobile and emptied of Indigenous people's active presence (11).

6. The title of Rinse Posthumus's 1846 tract is *Over de al te groote armoede en verarming in Nederland, en de middelen daartegen*, which can be translated as "On the all-too-great poverty and impoverishment in the Netherlands, and the remedies against them."

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The Secret of the Twig

Salish Adaptation, Jesuit Inculturation, and Spirit-Matter
Relation in D'Arcy McNickle's *The Surrounded*

APRIL MIDDELJANS

Early in *The Surrounded* (1936), the character of Faithful Catharine—an old Salish woman who was converted by Jesuits in her childhood—raises a question that haunts the rest of the narrative: “What had come about since that day of the planting of the cross? How was it that when one day was like another there should be, at the end of many days, a world of confusion and dread and emptiness?” (22). Life on Montana’s Flathead reservation has become a “chaotic world” full of disrespect, “distrust” and “warfare” (22, 11), blighted with poverty, hunger, “misery and hopelessness” (232). While Catharine declares that “the Fathers had not done it” (131), critics have disagreed; many read the novel as an unequivocal indictment of Christianity, its spiritual and cultural assumptions depicted as fundamentally opposed to—and ignorant of—a Salish worldview and lifeway. According to these scholars, this “anti-Catholic novel” (R. D. Parker 64) portrays Christianity as a “radically alien cosmology” that “forces the Salish out of traditional patterns of relating to family, society, nature, and the supernatural (Christensen 2–3); the Jesuit priests “doom the people [they hope] to save” (Purdy 47) as they “eradicate the Indian reality and replace it with a completely foreign conception of the world” (Owens 67). For several critics, the novel’s moral is that “Indian people know what is best for themselves and should be left alone to determine their own fates” (Lima 292). The eventual reversion of some Salish characters to paganism is read as a reassertion of lost autonomy and a resurrection of precolonial Salish identity (Purdy 77; Lima 298; Prampolini 75).

The condemnation of the Jesuits echoes a general tendency in Native American literature and scholarship to figure Christianity as an “unbidden and oblivious” vehicle of white oppression (Hoefel 52). Its missionaries and rituals are portrayed as agents of a “theological imperialism”

that, confident in its own superiority, aggressively colonizes Indian identities, cultures, and ecology (Christensen). Christian and Native religions are typified as “mutually exclusive” (Deloria 237), and some hold Christian missionaries complicit—however unwittingly or unintentionally—in the genocide of Native peoples (Tinker 4).

Plenty of historical evidence justifies such accusations against Christian evangelists, including many Jesuit missionaries. Yet McNickle’s novel and the history of Salish-Jesuit relations strangely resist the invader/invaded dichotomy that structures so much scholarship. By acknowledging the Salish initiative in summoning priests for themselves and by portraying in Father Grepilloux the Jesuit principle of inculturation (adapting to Indigenous culture), *The Surrounded* suggests that the Jesuit worldview was not in fact “radically alien” or “completely foreign” to the Salish, nor did it, as some claim, “impose” itself “with no consideration” for the Salish view (Prampolini 74). The novel’s ambivalent narrative mode makes its assessment of the priests—and of the Salish’s self-determinative agency—significantly more complex than critics have allowed. Indeed, the novel incessantly struggles to define the protean relation between cultural adaptation and cultural persistence, between one’s spiritual identity and its material incarnations. While *The Surrounded* exposes the inability of Jesuit inculturation to guarantee Salish material prosperity and cultural endurance, the novel also suggests that cultural isolationism and a reversion to precontact Salish attitudes and lifeways (were this even possible) cannot adequately ensure Salish persistence postcontact. Like McNickle’s early theories of cultural adaptation, the novel obliquely suggests by its end that the Salish identity of the future need not (and perhaps cannot) be exclusively “tribal,” that it must be open to some kind of adaptation that eschews dichotomous identity categories and cultural divisions. The novel does not yet imagine for us what that might look like, but it does not appear to consider such an adaptation incompatible with authentic and persistent Salish identity.

“HOW IT WAS I CANNOT SAY”: NARRATIVE
AMBIVALENCE IN *THE SURROUNDED*

The Surrounded’s irresolution about how to define the relation between Salish identity and cultural change is embodied in its young “mixed-

blood” protagonist, Archilde. Having spent a year playing fiddle in Portland, Archilde returns to the reservation to say a final farewell before pursuing a musical career. But after a few hours at home, “he was wishing to God that he had stayed away” from the “old stories” of its social turmoil (14, 4). His six older brothers are “quarreling, stealing, fighting” (4), his two nephews are rebellious and unhappy in the Jesuit mission school, and his parents (Catharine and Max Leon) are estranged, living in separate houses on Max’s farm. Archilde himself is alienated by the bigotry of his Spanish father, as well as by the rituals (both Native and Catholic) of his Salish mother. Eventually, Archilde’s work ethic and career ambitions beyond the reservation reconcile him to his father, who plans to fund Archilde’s musical education in Europe; at the same time, his deepening understanding of Salish history and traditions draws him closer to his mother, especially as both mother and son renounce Christianity. What cultural path Archilde might take into the future is never resolved, however, as the law ultimately interrupts his “entire scheme of life” (124): on a hunting trip with his mother, he becomes ensnared in a “stupid confusion” (127) that causes a white game warden to murder Archilde’s brother Louis, Catharine to kill the warden in retaliation, and Archilde to help bury the crimes. Sheriff Quigley suspects Archilde’s involvement in the warden’s disappearance, and despite his relative innocence, Archilde is propelled by his mixed-blood girlfriend, Elise, to hide in the mountains; when they are discovered, she kills the sheriff as he tries to arrest them, and the novel closes with Archilde in the Indian agent’s handcuffs.

As *The Surrounded* develops Archilde’s complex cultural allegiances, it also seeks a root cause for the community’s erosion by sifting through the ancient tales of Salish elders, the yellowed journal entries of Father Grepilloux (the mission’s progenitor), and the hazy memories of white settlers such as Max and the merchant Moser, who arrived in the Jesuits’ wake. But while characters on all sides agree that “something had gone wrong” (96, 150), it is not clear what. McNickle once professed that he was not one for “unknotting perplexities” (qtd. in D. Parker, *Singing* 60), and neither is the novel, whose language and narrative mode are reluctant to identify culprits or pass judgment. Cultural interactions are persistently characterized as entanglements, misinterpretations, or outright mysteries: the fact that the Salish sought out the priests (rather than vice-versa) is “bewildering” (48), and “there was no explaining”

the moral transformation of Salish youth into “bad Indians” (44–45) whose parents “grew more confused, more hopeless” each year (39). Situations are “curious” (100), “baffling” (125), and “inexplicable” (106, 128), and often “there was no accounting for what happened next” (127). As bewilderment spreads like an invasive, cross-pollinating botanical species, “the root of the beginning [is] hard to find” (258). The novel might easily take for its motto the words of Salish elder Modeste: “How it was I cannot say” (70).

In concert with the baffled diction, the narrator adopts an attitude of open-ended inquiry that resists binary conclusions. Dipping into the consciousness of nearly every character yet eschewing omniscience, the novel teems with free-indirect-discourse questions: “What did it mean?” (262); “What good had been accomplished? What evil?” (138); “Were they saved or were they destroyed?” (139). Excluding dialogue, the narrative poses over eighty questions, and thirteen of the thirty-four chapters contain questions in their conclusions, prompting readers to suspend judgment about events and characters. As the free indirect discourse muddles the distinction between character perception and narrative assertion, the equal-opportunity focalization (in which each point of view partially oppugns the previous) questions every character’s perspective on events even as it creates empathy for each. Like a set of anthropological case studies, the novel allows readers covalent access to old and young, Indian and white, Christian and pagan.

The narrative ambivalence is compounded by proliferating passive voice, which declines to blame conflicts on a single cultural agent. Robert Dale Parker notes the use of passive and past perfect especially in regard to Archilde, who sits by with a dumbfounded “inability to narrate” as first Catharine and then Elise kill government officials (59). I would add that even when the narrative uses active voice, the agents are often left indefinite, as in the tale of Big Paul, in which “someone” (54) ignites a deadly feud between Salish and white miners, and “someone” bars the door to increase the carnage (57), and “somehow” a hatchet and a revolver appear in Big Paul’s hands (58). Even the novel’s ominous epigraph—using both passive voice and referentless pronouns—recuses itself from identifying either aggressor or victim: “They called that place *Sniél-emen* (Mountains of the Surrounded) because there they had been set upon and destroyed.”¹ Although many interpretations of *The Surrounded* confidently consign its characters “to the binary roles

of invader and invaded” (Zulli 72), the novel’s circumspect language, interrogative mode, oscillating focalization, and agentless action clearly resist polarizing the protagonists and antagonists.

“THE TWIG THAT EMERGES EVER GREEN”: McNICKLE’S
THEORIES OF ADAPTATION AND PERSISTENCE

The reluctance to draw stark and moralistic lines between cultures characterizes not only McNickle’s fiction but also his scholarship, even as both interrogate colonial power. Throughout his life and career, McNickle wrestled with the question of how many and what kind of material and spiritual changes can take place before a culture forfeits its integral identity. He developed and revised his theories of cultural adaptation and persistence over three decades in *They Came Here First* (1949; revised 1975), *The Indian Tribes of the United States* (1962), and *Native American Tribalism* (1973—a revised and expanded version of *ITUS*). In all his formulations, he maintains that American Indian cultures are not “static”; like any culture, they have always been in flux, even before European contact: “In any society, at any given time, two contrary forces are at work—one force trying to hold things in status quo, the other trying as assiduously to bring about change. . . . The result is a constantly elaborating way of life” (*TCHF* 1949: 135, 66). The dynamic content of Indian culture, “if it could be explored from top to bottom in the time scale, would probably be seen as layer upon layer of customs, beliefs, economic activities” (135). Thus, “the intrusion of Europeans, with . . . the pressure for change exerted by trade goods, proselytizing, and space conquest, can be viewed as but another occurrence in a long process whose beginnings were lost in remote time” (*TCHF* 1975: 106). McNickle resists the view of Indian-European contact as a cataclysmic event that uniquely and inevitably dooms Native identity.

Even as McNickle insists that change is endemic to culture, he also insists that essential characteristics of a culture can persist over time. He suggests that, contrary to the myth of the “vanishing Indian,” among Indian cultures “a deep-lying unity and integration . . . have persisted after whole segments of prior existence have disappeared. Indians who are no longer hunters, who no longer even inhabit the hunting ground which was once theirs, still think and talk as their grandfathers thought and talked before them. Theirs is the secret of the twig that emerges ever

green from the severed stump" (*TCHF* 1949: 98–99; 1975: 71). For this twig to survive, it need not remain in "hostile isolation," since Native cultures will not necessarily "deteriorate under the impact of a stronger economic and political power" (*NAT* 13). For McNickle, cultures that adapt to their changing environment are not by definition abdicating their aboriginal identity.

How McNickle characterizes nonthreatening adaptations, however, shifts over his career; his theory of persistence becomes increasingly predicated on a distinction between material and spiritual culture. In the 1949 edition of *TCHF*, he observes (with moral neutrality) that some European change "was resisted" by Native Americans, and "some . . . was accepted gladly," and his description of Native adaptation includes changes in not just material circumstances but also "customs [and] beliefs" (1949: 135). In "A U.S. Indian Speaks" (1954), McNickle asserts that Indian "personality" persists but also that Indian assimilation into white culture is "inevitable" (10); to help Indian people weather cultural change, he asserts, the answer is not to eradicate Indian personality but to inform and shape it so that it "can compete in a white man's world": "The failure to bring about this adaptation up to now . . . has been a failure to understand the role of culture, a failure to see that culture shapes many of our ends. . . . Adjustment has to start with the people where they are, with their institutions, their outlook, the values they place on the events of life. You have to start from these and build in the desired direction" (27). In both these texts, McNickle suggests that the spirit of Native culture (its customs, beliefs, personality) can and does transform without becoming less Indian. But by 1975, McNickle suggests that the persistence of Native identity relies on discriminating between material and spiritual adaptations. Tribal societies appropriated "mostly tools, weapons, and equipment, material objects which would enlarge the scope of their own competency"; they rejected European "intangibles," such as acquisitiveness, personal ambition, individualism, environmental exploitation, and class hierarchy (*TCHF* 1975: 106). Indians "remained indubitably Indian" (*NAT* 283) "not by refusing to accept change or to adapt to a changing environment, but by selecting out of available choices those alternatives that do not impose a substitute identity" (10). McNickle's examples suggest that in this selective adaptation process, identity-preserving adaptations are strictly material,

while identity-threatening adaptations are rooted in a morally suspect European spirit.

McNickle's own rhizomatic biography (Cree Métis and Irish by inheritance, Salish by tribal adoption) may have eventually induced him to define Indianness as a spiritual quality independent of physical circumstances. In many ways McNickle was removed (or removed himself) from the communities and locations of his Native identities. He spoke only English and spent most of his boyhood and adolescence in schools away from the Flathead reservation (D. Parker, *Singing* 20). He sold his Flathead allotment to finance his higher education, did not involve himself in tribal affairs, and did not return to the reservation until the week before he died (26, 45; Ortiz 635). Yet despite this material rootlessness, McNickle became a seminal influence in academic and political definitions of Indian identity. As Alfonso Ortiz put it in McNickle's obituary, "The example of his life will always bring furrows to the brows of scholars whenever the question is posed: What is an Indian?" (633).

Critics commonly emphasize McNickle's burgeoning sense of his own Indianness to argue that *The Surrounded* affirms the "old ways" and the persistence (even triumph) of an essential Indian category over the assimilation programs of colonizers. In locating tribal identity in "intangibles" rather than in material culture, McNickle's later selective adaptation theory appears to delegitimize spiritual refashioning (religious or secular) as a viable cultural adaptation. This may have encouraged some scholars to retroactively read *The Surrounded* as more uniformly hostile toward the Jesuits than it actually is. I would add that selective adaptation presents some problems for scholars as a theory of identity. Ironically, its dualism gainsays commonplace assertions that Indians do not dichotomize mind and matter and that the material world (especially the physical landscape) is crucial to defining Indian identity.² The theory's dualism also assumes that material objects are ideologically neutral; it ignores the extent to which appropriating European technology and artifacts might necessitate importing some non-Native values.

Ultimately, given *The Surrounded*'s multivalent depiction of Salish-Jesuit relations, I argue that at least early in his career McNickle was not so certain of the neat divisibility of spiritual persistence from material adaptation, or of Indian culture from white culture, or of the spiritual superiority of one culture over another.

“READY TO BE CHRISTIANIZED”: SALISH INITIATIVE
AND AGENCY

Early in *The Surrounded*, McNickle establishes that the initial Salish-Jesuit encounter did not conform to the typical invader-invaded paradigm. Max Leon is “surprise[d]” and “bewilder[ed]” to discover that the Salish had not merely “met the white man with open friendliness” but had “stood ready to be Christianized” and “even sought out the priests” (48). In historical fact, after hearing about the Society of Jesuits from a band of Canadian Iroquois around 1820, the Salish sent four separate deputations (in 1831, 1835, 1837, and 1839) more than sixteen hundred miles through perilous wilderness and enemy territory to St. Louis to solicit a “Black Robe” for their community. The solicitation is even more remarkable given the “anti-Catholic hysteria” that dominated the nation from the 1830s until the Civil War (Burns 32). Historical Jesuit accounts express amazement at not only the zeal but also the discrimination of these “Good Catholics,” who rejected the overtures of Protestant missionaries in their quest to secure a Black Robe (Palladino 29). In both history and fiction, the Salish solicitation confounds white assumptions that Indians can play only the role of either passive victim or violent resistor in the narrative of colonization. Instead, the Salish insisted on engaging white culture on Salish terms according to their own beliefs and needs.

Strangely, criticism on *The Surrounded* ignores the tribe’s initiative in the cultural encounter; the oversight is particularly glaring in interpretations of the starving mare episode, a supposed key to the novel’s meaning. In this chapter near the novel’s end, Archilde rides out to the local Badlands, where he finds an emaciated and mud-caked mare. In resolving to catch, feed, and groom her, Archilde drives the skittish horse to much greater suffering, but “he couldn’t stop. He had to show her kindness in spite of herself” (240). Eventually, she collapses—exhausted, lame, and vulnerable to coyotes—and Archilde decides he must shoot her. Yet afterward, “in a confusion of feeling, he sat down and spent the rest of the night guarding her worthless carcass” (242). This dispiriting episode has been read as a “colonial allegory” in which the mare represents the subsisting Salish and Archilde represents the counterproductive good intentions of Catholicism and Father Grepilloux (Huhndorf 34; see also Hoefel 52; Purdy 72). The moral

of the parable is supposedly that “unsolicited helpfulness” is “useless” (Prampolini 76) and that the Salish “would have been best left alone” (Huhndorf 34; see also Hoefel 52; Lima 292; Purdy 71; Prampolini 83). To support this reading, critics align it with the ideology of *laissez-faire* self-determination in McNickle’s later anthropological work (Prampolini 75). As James Ruppert paraphrases the theory, “progress and cultural change can only come from inside a society. They cannot be imposed from without. An independent people cannot be forced to accept change even if it is well-intentioned, as the missionary approach attempts. The people must want the change” (124). But as the novel establishes, the Salish clearly did want a change, and they specifically did solicit and accept Jesuit missionaries. Why they would seemingly jeopardize their Native identity by voluntarily adopting Christianity is a question so baffling that critics seem unable to engage it.

One explanation offered by Salish oral tradition (which McNickle may have heard on the reservation) is that the Black Robes fulfilled an ancient prophecy given centuries earlier by a Spirit to the Salish boy *Xall’qs*, a culture hero known as Shining Shirt: sometime after his death, “men wearing long black dresses” would arrive to augment the spiritual teachings he had begun with his people (S-POCC 25; SKCTHP 44). Thus, when the Iroquois brought news of the Catholic priests, “the people were eager to bring this new power to the tribe” (S-POCC 9). A version of this legend was also reported by Salish centenarians to the anthropologist Harry Holbert Turney-High in 1937, a year after *The Surrounded* was published. This version adds that the fair-skinned Black Robes would bring an end to war but that “very soon after . . . other men with white skins would come and simply overrun the country” (41–42). Turney-High notes that, despite the fulfillment of the prophecy’s dire prediction (i.e., white domination), “even today [the people] are convinced that [Shining Shirt] was given his power [a metal talisman inscribed with a cross] to accomplish an inevitable divine purpose” (43). Some critics might regard the Shining Shirt legend as an internalization of a white colonial narrative that contaminates Salish spiritual identity. But the prophecy could also be seen as an assertion of Salish selfhood, implanting the advent of the Jesuits directly into Salish cosmology and granting the tribe both agency and responsibility in the encounter.³ The prophecy rejects a dualistic opposition of white and Native, colonizer and colonized. Instead, one of the Salish’s own people (Shining Shirt) is

the original religious teacher and ritualist, and the Jesuits merely elaborate the work the Salish Spirit had earlier assigned to him. According to Turney-High's account, at least some of the Salish of McNickle's day still considered Christianity integral to an ancient divine plan to help the Salish thrive on earth.

Although *The Surrounded* does not mention the Shining Shirt prophecy, McNickle clearly presents the Salish solicitation as an intrinsically motivated act of self-determination in continuity with the Salish past; furthermore, contrary to McNickle's later selective adaptation theory, this act embraces both material and spiritual change as a means of self-preservation, blurring the cultural distinction between Salish and Jesuit. The blind chief Modeste recounts the event during a long night of feasting and storytelling in honor of Archilde's return to the reservation. After describing the tribe's strength in the old days, which was shattered by their enemies acquiring firearms from the whites, he explains why the Salish sent for the Jesuits.

We thought guns would save our hunting grounds and make the old times return. But that was a mistake. This new kind of fighting just meant that more men were killed. . . . So our wise ones began to say that we must find something new. Our voices, they said, no longer reach Amotkan. . . . [W]hen we speak in the old ways we are not heard.

Now some Indians came to us from the East . . . [and] told us about the black-robe Fathers. . . . They had a power, a Somesh. . . . The black-robe Fathers called it the crucifix. If they brought it to us we would be strong again. That was . . . what our own wise ones were looking for. This was the new thing. (72–74)

Significantly, McNickle positions the account of this decision as the climax of several traditional tribal tales. The coming of the Jesuits is not presented as an alien, competing narrative; rather, it is the most recent chapter in the Salish's own ancient story of cultural adaptation: Coyote seeks Flint, the Old Man seeks the iron axe ("the thing that was going to make life easy"), the tribe seeks firearms, and the tribe seeks the priests. In each of the first three cases, the Salish adopt a material tool that promises survival by making killing and destruction easier: flint kills more buffalo, the axe more trees, the gun more men. Despite these selective technological adaptations, "something had gone wrong, the people had

lost their power” (73). To regain their material agency, the Salish determine that something beyond a material adaptation is necessary.

Here critics who subscribe to McNickle’s later, dualistic theory of persistence might argue that the Salish (both historical and fictional) regarded the crucifix as simply another tool that could be adopted without spiritual mutation. They could assert that the Salish, like subversive tricksters, turned to the priests out of skeptical expediency, preserving their Native integrity by merely performing conversion. Such a hypothesis is appealing, as it simultaneously solves the mystery of why the Salish would solicit the priests and maintains the cherished idea that Salish and Catholic worldviews are alien and incompatible.

But in Modeste’s account, the Salish seek not just a material “[t]hing that would make life easy”; rather, they seek a new prayer language that would restore the link between the natural and supernatural worlds, a new way of speaking to Amotkan. Like the Mexican-Navajo medicine man Betonie in Leslie Marmon Silko’s *Ceremony*, who asserts that “the ceremonies have always been changing” (116), the Salish are eager to adapt their rituals and lifeway to this “new thing” that might help them survive the cultural changes that had been pressuring their community long before the Jesuits arrived.⁴ If we keep in mind McNickle’s early assertions about constant cultural flux (both material and spiritual), the Salish inviting and adopting Catholicism can be seen as an elaboration of their own cultural dialectic rather than a forfeiture of a static Salish identity.

“BETTER TO GRAFT THAN TO FELL”: JESUIT INCULTURATION IN THE NORTHWEST AND IN *THE SURROUNDED*

Along with the Black Robe prophecy, another possible historical reason for the Salish embracing the Jesuits was the Jesuits’ philosophy of inculturation, which held more promise than other evangelistic methods of keeping the twig of Salish cultural identity “ever green.” Compared to Protestants and other Catholic religious groups, Jesuits were distinctively mobile, adaptive, and culturally aware. Saint Ignatius of Loyola originally commissioned these rootless pilgrims to be ready to travel to foreign parts at a moment’s notice (McKevitt 5); they were trained to see the *imago Dei* in every individual (Randall viii) and to respect Indigenous cultural traditions. As one seventeenth-century

mission directive put it, “What could be more absurd than to import France, Spain, Italy, or any other country of Europe into China?” (qtd. in Shorter 155). According to Gerald McKevitt in *Brokers of Culture* (quoting in part from the Jesuit *Constitutions*), “the leitmotif of every Jesuit activity, from the first school in sixteenth-century Spain to the Indian missions of nineteenth-century Oregon, was the same: to adapt all things to ‘the circumstances of persons, times, and places’” (4). Jesuits’ early respect for social context (unevenly practiced and sometimes suppressed by the church) became more sophisticated over time, evolving by the twentieth century into the principle of inculturation. Attempting to reconcile anthropological and theological truths (Goosen 147), inculturation rejects the Platonic dualism of spirit and matter and recognizes that “the Christian Faith cannot exist except in a cultural form” (Shorter 5, 12). As an “incarnation of . . . the Christian message in a particular cultural context,” inculturation in its most ideal expression “transcends mere acculturation”—it is not content with superficial adaptations, nor does it impose assimilation. Rather, it reformulates and reinterprets both the Gospel and the target culture in a mutually enriching transposition that continually adapts to sociocultural change (11–14).

As inculturators, the early Jesuit missionaries to the Salish believed that when evangelizing it was “better to graft than to fell”: a watercolor by Father Nicolas Point (ca. 1841–47) depicts a Catholic altar inside a Plateau Indian lodge, signifying a vision of merged rather than supplanted culture and belief (qtd. in Peterson 97). Jacqueline Peterson argues that the two groups had “a shared sense of the miraculous and the interpenetrability of the human and sacred” (23). Because both rejected spirit/matter dualism, they found “points of contact” in their ritual use of chants, prayers, and music; water, incense, colors, and sacramental objects; “sensorially rich” dramas, processions, and feast days (23–24). The Jesuits presented their sacraments to the Salish as healing “medicines of the soul” (97), and their practice of providing medals as tokens of confirmation or saints’ protection resonated with Salish belief in the power of sacred objects (103). For their part, the Jesuits also adopted some Indian ways, for example, rejecting “contrivance of the white people” such as napkins and cotton bed sheets (McKevitt 291). More crucially, while many Protestants forbid the use of Native languages as a condition of conversion, the Jesuits quickly learned Native tongues, as

Loyola had urged the first Jesuits to do (125–26). The example of Father Gregory Mengarini, who learned Salish through immersion and developed the first Salishan dictionary, led the Salish to expect fluency from subsequent missionaries (166). When Jesuits began establishing schools, they located them in Indian Country and “insisted on teaching religion and prayers in the students’ own tongue,” despite government pressure to eliminate Native languages from the classroom (158, 166).

Of course, the intercultural acuity of the nineteenth-century Jesuits should not be overstated. Among these “cultural brokers” (as McKevitt and D. Parker dub them) remained many culture breakers. As Salish historians note, many Jesuits viewed traditional Salish practices as “the devil’s work” and sought to eradicate them (S-POCC 27). Father Lawrence Palladino (one of McNickle’s sources) regarded Native culture as “barbarism” (105), and his occasional approval of Indians was offset by “strong opinions against them” (McKevitt 145). Antonio Ravalli, despite being a long-serving priest, architect, and physician to the Salish, admitted that they remained “walking mysteries” to him (146). Furthermore, as reservations and boarding schools were established and as the itinerancy of both Natives and missionaries abated, the more radical inculturation philosophy of the first Jesuits in the Northwest atrophied, and the cultural gulf widened. By 1880 the missionary schools had become “partners with the federal government in an ambitious program of native assimilation” (McKevitt 149) that aimed “to transform Indians into independent farmers” (165). Still, many Jesuits quickly recognized how the government policy of allotment, touted as an assimilation incentive, was breaking up Native communities. As the Salish Jocko reservation was opened to settlement in 1908, a Jesuit wrote, “I fear very much that our Indians will not be benefitted, materially or spiritually, by this coming change” (qtd. on 286).

McNickle would seem an unlikely Jesuit sympathizer given his sharp academic criticisms of Christianity. In a 1934 letter to a professor, he satirically refers to “the Christian barbarians [who] came to impose a ‘higher’ civilization upon the innocent” (qtd. in Hans, introduction xii). In a 1937 review of Oliver La Farge’s *The Enemy Gods*, he alludes to “the cheap rascality of Christian soul-saving” (qtd. in D. Parker, *Singing* 79). Nevertheless, McNickle also singled out the Jesuits as interculturally perceptive. Of the *Jesuit Relations*, a collection of letters (1611–72) reporting the work of Jesuit missionaries among the First Nations of

French Canada, he asserts that “it would be difficult to find any comparable body of comment on the problems which must arise when men of different cultural heritages meet and try to understand each other” (*TCHF* 1949: 127; 1975: 99). He quotes a “particularly acute observer,” Father Ragueneau, who “wrote what ought to be the classic admonishment to all missionaries, anthropologists, administrators, . . . students and workers who deal with the customs and beliefs of a people other than their own”: “One must be very careful before condemning a thousand things among their customs, which greatly offend minds brought up and nourished in another world. It is easy to call irreligious what is merely stupidity, and to take for diabolical working something that is nothing more than human” (*TCHF* 1949: 128–29; 1975: 100–101). McNickle even admonished those who failed to appreciate the Jesuits’ metacultural awareness. In a 1955 review of Peter J. Rahill’s *The Catholic Indian Missions and Grant’s Peace Policy, 1870–1884*, McNickle criticized the book’s lack of “evidences of understanding by pioneering missionaries of the problems posed by cultural conditioning (their own, as well as that of the Indian people with whom they worked)” —he noted that the *Jesuit Relations* “are filled with anecdotal self-revelation, but none of that is captured here” (1064).

Whether or not McNickle read the *Jesuit Relations* before composing his first novel, *The Surrounded* recognizes that some Jesuits struggled with the same questions of identity, adaptation, and persistence that McNickle did. Father Grepilloux exhibits a conscientious inculturation philosophy strongly at odds with critics’ depictions of the priests as theological imperialists.⁵ Though he was (to quote Ragueneau) “brought up and nourished in another world,” Grepilloux’s adaptive evangelism respects and carefully husbands the material and social culture of the Salish: “His affection for all Indians was deep and in practical matters he understood them. He saw how admirably adjusted they were to the conditions under which they lived and he learned their ways of wilderness travel and existence. . . . He despised and inveighed against those who despoiled the Indians. If the reservation system must remain, he wanted the agents removed or strictly supervised, and he wanted to see tribal laws and customs restored and respected” (137). In adopting Salish ways and promoting Salish sovereignty, Grepilloux resists importing Europe into the Native Northwest. Adhering to inculturation’s rejection of spirit/matter dualism, Grepilloux is “prone to think

practically of human problems” rather than “utter unctuous beatitudes” (38): he understands that spiritual truth without cultural embodiment is meaningless. Furthermore, by affirming the *imago Dei* in the Salish—the “Temple of God which is in every man” (40)—Grepilloux keeps their human worth firmly in view even when measuring them against his own culture’s social mores: “[T]he feeling he bore them was simple, undivided and unfailing devotion. He might bewail their ignorance, but he never cast doubt on their native ability. He might denounce their occasional lapses into paganism, as when the men made too free use of each other’s wives, but he never thought them depraved” (40–41). By incarnating Christianity into the Salish context, this “priest of gifted insight and broad sympathy” (138) earns Salish respect: “No one . . . had . . . succeeded so well in winning the affection and loyalty of the Salish people. Of all the white men they knew, they used to say in the early days, he was the only one who did not speak ‘with a forked tongue’” (40).⁶ Grepilloux’s integrity is enabled by his authentic inculturation approach—wedding word to deed, spirit to matter.

A salient example of Grepilloux’s inculturation mindset can be found in his description of the grafting of the Salish whipping ritual to the Catholic rite of confession. Early in the novel, Grepilloux points to the whipping ceremony as a cultural convergence, evidence that before the missionaries arrived, the Salish already had a concept of wrongdoing comparable to Catholicism’s—a “Divine instinct, that their spiritual health depended upon the cleansing of their souls” (51). According to Grepilloux’s journal, “the Creator has instilled in these Wilderness Children, as in us all, a sense of his Moral Law. . . . [E]ssentially they knew, that to transgress was to Sin, and that Sin must be Expiated. So it was that, from time immemorial, these people have punished Sinful Action” (50). Accordingly, the Jesuits encourage the merging of the two rites: “So it happens now, that before an important Church Festival, the Tribe gathers with the Chief and his assistants in the Church Square. Their faults are first ‘covered by the whip’ and then they come to be confessed by the Priest” (50–51). The initial, congenial amalgamation of the traditions challenges claims that Grepilloux “undermines Salish traditions” (Huhndorf 34). Indeed, it embodies the inculturation principle that “the work of the pastoral agent is not to import seed, but rather to search for and uncover the seed already there” (Schineller 25).

The relative success with which Grepilloux and the early Jesuits

integrated themselves into the Indian community can also be seen, albeit obscurely, in the narrator's description of St. Xavier, which "belonged to two ages": the "primitive" (Indian-town) and the "modern" (the white Townsite) (35). Intriguingly, the church and the Salish together inhabit the "primitive" side of the town's divide, before the "opening up of the Indian reserve brought new townsmen and new houses" (35). The circular plan of Indian-town, in which "each cabin faced the church" (36), does not "lend itself to street construction and regularity" (35), leading the newcomers to build "their neat clapboard bungalows on the opposite side of Buffalo Creek" (35). In the eyes of the new white settlers, the church is not an emblem of civilization; it is indigenized, entwined in the organic and alien "confusion" they associate with Native culture (36).

"THAT DAY OF THE PLANTING OF THE CROSS":

THE SEEDS OF INCULTURATION'S FAILURE

Despite all the potential for intercultural understanding and fruitful adaptation, the Salish in McNickle's novel do not flourish with the coming of the cross. Modeste states the case baldly: "We thought they [the Jesuits] would bring back the power we had lost—but today we have less" (72–74). Even Grepilloux, while eager to credit the Salish with "making a garden in the wilderness" (40), wonders "how it had happened that certain bad ones had come among us and spoiled the fruit" (108). The canker stems from at least three pathogens, as revealed by closely parsing McNickle's fictionalization of historical sources: the Jesuits' inflated confidence in cultural correspondences, a confusion on both sides about what material form the spiritual graft should take, and a generational shift among the priests away from adaptive inculturation toward rigid inculcation.

The historical Father Pierre-Jean De Smet arrived from St. Louis to meet the Salish chief Tjolizhitzay on July 14, 1840. De Smet's letters give two slightly different versions of the event, both dated February 4, 1841. In the first version, "addressed to M. le Chanoine Charles de la Croix (a former missionary to the Osage Indians)" and here translated from the French (Chittenden and Talbot Richardson 198), De Smet claims to give his reader a verbatim translation of Tjolizhitzay's words upon greeting him:

He addressed me the following remarks, which I report to you word for word, to give you an idea of his eloquence and his character: “Black-robe, you are welcome in my nation. Today Kyleeyou (the Great Spirit) has fulfilled our wishes. Our hearts are big, for our great desire is gratified. You are in the midst of a poor and rude people, plunged in the darkness of ignorance. I have always exhorted my children to love Kyleeyou. We know that everything belongs to him, and that our whole dependence is upon his liberal hand. From time to time good white men have given us good advice, and we have followed it; and in the eagerness of our hearts, to be taught everything that concerns our salvation, we have several times sent our people to the great Black-robe at St. Louis (the bishop) that he might send us a Father to speak with us.—Black-robe, we will follow the words of your mouth.” (Chittenden and Talbot Richardson 223–24)

In the second version, addressed to Rev. F. J. Barbelin in English, De Smet shortens the chief’s speech but adds a detail about the chief offering him his “authority” (261):

Surrounded by the principal chiefs of the two tribes, and the most renowned warriors, he thus addressed me: “This day Kaikolinzoeten (the Great Spirit) has accomplished our wishes, and our hearts are swelled with joy. Our desire to be instructed was so great, that three times had we deputed our people to the great Black-gown (the bishop) in St. Louis, to obtain a father. Now, Father, speak, and we will comply with all you will tell us. Show us the road we have to follow, to come to the place where the Great Spirit resides.” Then he resigned his authority to me; but I replied that he mistook the object of my coming among them; that I had no other object in view but their spiritual welfare; that with respect to temporal affairs, they should remain as they were, till circumstances should allow them to settle in a permanent spot. (263–64)⁷

True to his inculturator training, De Smet emphasizes cultural convergences in this event. Tjolizhitay’s conception of the Great Spirit appears compatible with Christian monotheism; his paternalism toward his Salish “children” echoes the paternalism of the Jesuit Fathers; and (in keeping with Salish historical accounts) he appears at ease with, even

eager for, the transfer of moral authority to the Black Robe teachers. At the same time, De Smet seems unaware of the linguistic discordances revealed by his two versions. To begin with, he expresses no concern that the translation from Salish to French and to English might cause some slippage in meaning. Furthermore, he is (paradoxically) both confident in the accuracy of his report and blithe about altering it: while both letters appear to quote Tjolizhitzay directly, they differ substantially (despite being written, presumably, on the same day). Each version uses a different Salish name for the “Great Spirit,” and the supposedly more precise “word for word” version generalizes the “several” envoys sent to St. Louis, while the second version provides an exact number. The first version excludes the chief’s resignation of authority, and the second version merely paraphrases this crucial speech act.

Of greater cultural consequence, perhaps, is the ideological dissonance in De Smet’s refusal of the chief’s authority. On the one hand, we could interpret the refusal as an inculturation move that aims to protect the integrity of the Indigenous material culture. Yet De Smet still manages to implicitly conflate spiritual and temporal conversions in a way that assumes a supplanting of rather than a grafting onto the Salish material way of life. When he tells the chief that “they should remain as they were, *till circumstances should allow them to settle in a permanent spot*” (emphasis added), he implies that adopting the spirit of Christianity requires a material transmutation from hunting to agriculture. Ironically, although De Smet claimed he would not interfere in earthly matters, he promised the Salish many material resources; in a further irony, he could not deliver on these pledges (Tinker 78), which ultimately kept him, as he initially insisted, from interfering in earthly affairs. He was therefore a great disappointment to the Salish; some priests in fact blamed De Smet’s empty, “lavish promises” for the eventual reversion of Salish converts (Ravalli, qtd. in Evans 110).

In *The Surrounded*, McNickle uses Father Grepilloux’s acuity to draw out the spirit/matter confusions lurking beneath the seeming concordances of this critical intercultural meeting. Like the historical De Smet, Grepilloux assumes alignment between the two cultures’ spiritual and material aims: he “thought they [the Salish] understood perfectly what this moment meant to them, and that in their hearts, they were praising the Author of their Beings” (47). Using the language of inculturation, he asserts that they understood because they already

believed: “[T]heir hearts were inclined” (49). He insists that “the Indians needed few explanations and they needed little help, once they were shown how to use tools and once they were given faith, the greatest tool of all” (40). He sees their adoption of Christianity as a natural outgrowth of their Indigenous cultural development.

Nevertheless, Grepilloux also expresses discomfort at how easily the inculturation seemed to be accomplished. He is troubled by the contrast he senses between his memories of the first Jesuit-Salish meeting (which had seemed so full of promise and hope) and the current trend of Indians rejecting the church. He tells Max that his journal “makes strange reading today. If it had been kept by a stranger . . . I might have questioned whether such things had ever happened” (45).⁸ His original account of the first meeting in fact displays much greater awareness of possible graft failure than De Smet’s:

Chief Running Wolf [the historical Tjolizhitzay] spoke to Father Lamberti [the historical De Smet]. His words were translated by the faithful Ignace. . . . In effect, the Chief said: “We have been worshiping False Gods, and we want you to teach us the True God.” Then he would have given over his Badge of Office, his Eagle Wing. When Ignace explained this offer, Father Lamberti simply bestowed his blessing on the Symbol of Power, and returned it to the Chief, explaining at the time that we would not interfere in temporal matters, and wished nothing of them but to be allowed to minister to their Spiritual Health. I thought the people looked disappointed, and I have no doubt they would willingly have delivered themselves to us. (47)

Introducing Ignace, the translator, into the scene highlights a communication gulf unremarked by De Smet. Grepilloux’s approximated, “in effect” translation of the Salish’s “strange language” (48) is also more circumspect than De Smet’s supposedly verbatim transcript. More significantly, while De Smet does not specify how Chief Tjolizhitzay attempted to resign his authority to the priest, McNickle introduces the eagle wing (the chief’s “Badge of Office”) to represent a Salish notion of a spiritual and material conflation at odds with the priests’ dualistic declaration. Unlike De Smet, Grepilloux registers the cultural dissonance, recognizing that Salish expectations about the spiritual transformation of the material have been dashed. He also later admits

that Salish material existence was eventually converted for the worse, leading to their spiritual demoralization: “[T]hese people have lost a way of life, and with it their pride, their dignity, their strength” (59).

Despite his intercultural competence, Grepilloux has some blind spots. Although Grepilloux had wanted “above all . . . to see white men kept off the reservation” (137), he fails to see that he “had shown the way over the mountains and the world had followed at his heels” (139), fulfilling the Salish prophecy recorded by Turney-High that after the Jesuits came, “other men with white skins would come and simply overrun the country” (42). More crucially, Grepilloux fails to register the shift that has come about within the next generation of Jesuits as the mission becomes more institutionalized. Father Jerome, a “new kind of priest in Sniélemen,” is no longer a flexible inculturator but a chastising spiritual and cultural dictator aligned with the rigidity of the white settlers. In contrast to the “intimacy and trust and even affection” of Grepilloux’s era, mission work among the Indians “had taken on the aspect of . . . unpleasant drudgery” (262). While Grepilloux had been “amused” by the “pagan wildness” of Salish songs and prayers spontaneously interjected into “odd moments of the Mass,” Jerome is irritated by this “old custom” (263). Rather than adapt to each *imago Dei*, he “dogmatizes” (263). His attitude toward his “wards” is summed up in his direction to Archilde: “Do as I say, for the good of your soul” (265). McNickle is careful to keep Father Jerome multidimensional, explaining that he “was not really prejudiced” (263). But clearly the Jesuits have shifted from a model of grafting to one of felling.⁹

“A STAKE IN THE FUTURE”: THE VIABILITY OF SALISH ROOTSTOCK

As Grepilloux’s faltering philosophy of inculturation gives way to Jerome’s resolute philosophy of inculcation, the Salish turn away from Christianity. “Faithful Catharine” sees that the “great happiness” promised by the fathers has not followed from their prescriptions: “[T]hey had . . . water put on their heads. . . . They told their sins and went to Mass. . . . [T]hey cleansed themselves and sang the praises of Christ the Savior—all that, and still the world grew no better. The sons stole horses and drew knives and the old people could see no hope” (131). Although the priests maintained that the rite of confession obviates the need for

the ceremonial whip (50), after the “guardians” replace the whip with “new laws,” “nobody is straight” (206–07).¹⁰ Eventually, Catharine decides to “retreat from the world which had come to Sniél-emen”: she renounces her baptism, returns to the traditional Salish whipping ceremony for atonement, and refuses the last rites on her deathbed (209–10, 259). The elder Modeste also turns “back to the old things” after he is rescued from a snowslide by his Somesh (guardian spirit) rather than by Catholic prayer (211). For the elder Salish, “The power of the two sticks, the *Somesh* which Father Grepilloux had carried over the mountains, was dissolved” (274–75). Meanwhile, Archilde’s secular experience off the reservation has led him to view Catholicism as “preposterous” (106), a white man’s trick to inspire fear and dread. The St. Xavier mission church had been, “in the beginning, everything” to him, a “theater of movement and ceremony” (99, 103). But when he returns from Portland as an adult, he sees it as “an empty room,” a “meaningless boggy” whose behind-the-curtain “shabbiness” has now been laid bare (103–05).

Since several Salish in the novel dramatically and explicitly reject Catholicism, some critics infer a “resurrection of traditional Salish identity” (Purdy 77) and a “return to Salish tribalism” (Lima 298). Enrique Lima argues that “socialization in *The Surrounded* is inextricably linked to the taking up of tribal practices and the rejection of Euro-American culture” (298), and Gaetano Prampolini insists that “Modeste’s and Catharine’s behavior is not a nostalgic escape into the past, a running away from harsh realities. . . . [T]he old-time values are not dead as long as a Salish keeps finding in them inner peace, moral sustenance, and a compensation for all that the new order has taken away” (75). Certainly, throughout the novel Archilde and the implied reader experience a maturing appreciation for Salish ancestral identity. When he first returns to the reservation, the world-wise Archilde is sickened by his backward people (62). But he comes to see that Salish stories can be “full of meaning” (69) and Salish ritual full of “majesty” (218); by the time of his mother’s death a year later, he proudly regards her rejection of the priests as a “resurrection of the spirit” (272).

Nevertheless, the narrative remains highly ambivalent about the persistence of not just old-time practices but also old-time values and ideas. Very early in the novel, four-year-old Catharine’s perspective on the first Salish-Jesuit encounter primes us to question whether the contemporary Salish can return to their pre-Jesuit past. Catharine’s

“memory did not go beyond [the fathers], it began with them” (21). Though Catharine hears her father speak to the newly arrived priests in her native Salish tongue, “[h]is words were unnamed birds to her; she heard them fly about but did not know them” (21). The omniscient narrator translates for both her and the reader. This alienation from pre-Jesuit Salish culture is echoed again when the elderly Catharine turns her back on Catholicism. Although “she had not hated those [old] ideas the way the Fathers did,” the narrative admits that “[t]he Church had come so long ago that she really knew nothing of how people lived before it came. In past years, when she heard stories about the old beliefs, about prayer-fasting and about the souls of people and animals who died, she would try to imagine what it was like to believe those things and she couldn’t quite do it. . . . She did not understand it” (173–74). Keeping Catharine’s ignorance of the Salish past in mind, it becomes more plausible to read her rejection of the last rites as a resurrection of an individual spirit rather than of an ancient Salish one.

The narrative ambivalence about the persistence of older Salish values and customs is most salient in the passages on the Salish midsummer dance, focalized through Archilde. Somewhat illogically, the novel describes the dance preparations in language suffused with Catholic metaphor. Modeste sits contemplatively, “calling to mind the sweet peace of the past,” such that “in different dress he might have been taken for a priest preparing himself for some ceremony” (214). Mike, whose dread of the Christian devil his family is trying to cure by having him participate in the old Salish medicine, is nevertheless described as Modeste’s “altar boy,” “excite[d] at the drama he was to have a part in” (214). Catharine’s “ministering” to Narcisse is also described sacramentally: “She was pleased with her duties in the way that only an old art or an old way of life, long disused, can please the hand and the heart returning to it. She took up the folded garments of beaded buckskin and placed them on her grandchild in a kind of devotional act that derived satisfaction from minute observances; in a matter so simple, the least part has its significance or it is all meaningless” (215). The plot sets up the dance as an antidote to Catholicism—a meaningful, living rite rooted in Native tradition versus a shadowy trick perpetrated by an alien culture. Yet here the poetic equivalency of the metaphors forces us to conclude that the rituals of each culture are either equally meaningful or equally empty.¹¹

The novel also uses language (unremarked by critics) that characterizes the Salish dance's effects as temporary and insufficient. At first the reverent preparations feel to Archilde like "a real thing," "almost real enough to make it seem like a spirit come from the grave" (215); he sees how the ritual might tangibly bind the community together: "[F]or a moment, almost, he was not an outsider, so close did he feel to those ministering hands" (215–16). But these impressions of meaningful social identity and communion dissipate once Archilde leaves the shelter of his mother's lodge and enters the public dancing ground, which transforms the sacred ritual into "a spectacle, a kind of low-class circus where people came to buy peanuts and look at freaks" (216). To Archilde, "there was nothing real in the scene" (216); the dancers were "actors in a play," and the ritual was a "game" (217). When Mike and Modeste enter the ring, Archilde recovers a fleeting sense of the transcendent "majesty" of the dance and his people, who "might move the world were they to set their strength to it" (218). But again the narrative insists that "it was for a moment only" (218–19; McNickle repeats the phrase "for a moment" three times in just two paragraphs), and the effect is broken by derisive white laughter (219).

Possibly the narration is indexing a mixed-blood double consciousness in Archilde that makes him unable to achieve the "inner contentment" of the elders, who are "oblivious of the laughter at [their] expense" (219). Yet the same ephemeral language is used to describe the elders' own experience. Before the dance, those who reverted to the whipping ritual find their hearts lightened only "for a while" (211). After the dance, "the old men tried to go on living on the memories which had come alive" during the dance, yet their "desolation" and "emptiness" persist (233). This makes it difficult to conclude with Prampolini that the old values and practices provide a sustaining "inner peace, moral sustenance and compensation" (75). As Archilde surveys the faces of his mother's people gathered in her yard near her end, he wonders, "Would they too return to their paganism? And would it be a good thing if they did? . . . Perhaps there was no answer" (271). Even as the novel recuperates a reverence for Salish traditions, Archilde believes his people are living in a vanished and illusory past, clinging to a spiritual identity that does not or cannot adapt in a way that will guarantee Salish persistence.

At the very least, the novel suggests that the path of the elders is insufficient to secure the future of Salish youth. Even as he comes to

a deep appreciation of Salish history, Archilde recognizes that cultural isolationism and retreat into the Salish past are not viable long-term survival strategies. This can be seen in his conflicted attitude toward Mike and Narcisse's flight into the mountains, which occurs directly after the starving mare episode. For several weeks the boys have subsisted in the woods, drumming and dancing and killing their own food. Though Archilde wonders if this is merely "a game" or "a way of life" (245), he is sympathetic to the boys, having "even less desire to see them sent back to the Fathers than they had to go there" (246). Yet he also tries to "suggest that there were other ways of living," warning that the game was gone and fish were dwindling (247). But the boys ignore his talk of the future, declaring that "if they just leave us alone that's all we want" (247). Archilde wrestles with simultaneous acceptance and disapproval of this attitude:

He was always forgetting that his way of seeing things was his own. His people could not understand it but thought he was chasing after damn fool notions. All ideas were damn fool until they were understood and believed; and it was useless to wish them on to anybody else until the other person had come to them in the same way—by understanding and believing. In his present evolution he could admit this lack of insight in his people without getting angry. . . . All [Mike and Narcisse] asked was to be let alone, and perhaps this time he would not forget it. (247)

He recognizes that, like "the mare in the Badlands," Mike and Narcisse desire to "just go ahead and do what you like, and ask only to be let alone" (248). But while Archilde has "learn[ed] to live at peace" (248) with this attitude, it is still characterized as a "lack of insight" (247) and a "limitation" (248).

This leads us deeper into the interpretive puzzle posed by the mare. I have already noted how characterizing the Badlands episode as a "colonial allegory"—a critique of Jesuit interference in Salish life—fails to acknowledge that the Salish solicited the interference. Readers might also mark the strange choice to compare Mike and Narcisse to the nearly dead mare (which was doomed with or without Archilde's intervention) rather than to the "plump and frisky" colt (which disappears by the end of the parable, its future left open). Perhaps, then, the starving mare episode does not illustrate the colonizer/colonized relation but rather

competing postcontact attitudes within the Salish themselves about how to achieve cultural persistence. Although Archilde accepts the right and determination of his people—both old and very young—to retreat psychologically and physically to a past iteration of Salish identity, the narrative voice indicates their shortsightedness about how to persist into the future. As McNickle expresses it in his anthropological work, to “remain a continuing ethnic and cultural enclave with a stake in the future,” the Salish will need to “reconstitute the fragments [of the past] into a functioning whole” (*ITUS* 9; *NAT* 15).

In some ways, the novel suggests that Archilde was on a path to do so. Although he has come to appreciate Salish practices and heritage, Archilde’s ambitions and plans for the future never include a return to older Salish traditions or habitation within the contemporary Salish community. Instead, as few critics note, he charts a course of artistic European study in which he would leave behind both traditional Salish lifeways and the assimilationist agricultural career advocated by the American state. Planning his musical education and career with both Max and Elise is a “pleasure that [moves him] deeply” (160, 255), and his pursuit is encouraged equally by his Spanish mentor and his Salish supporter. Since he was a child, his “pride and spirit” had “marked him for a special existence” (150), and in adulthood the desire to play the fiddle finally makes his path forward clear: “It was like standing on a hillside and looking into a valley where everything was revealed. He could tell himself, as he stood there, . . . that of all joys, there was none like that of capturing the future in a vision and holding it lovingly to the eye” (255). This vision bears little resemblance to “traditional Salish identity” and “Salish tribal practices,” nor does it resemble an absolute rejection of European American culture, or even of the “American dream,” as some critics claim (D. Parker, “D’Arcy” 241). At the same time, the novel does not argue that Archilde is *not* Salish, as “he too belonged to the story of Sniél-emen” (275). Rather, a potential future sprouts from a multivalent material and spiritual adaptation that declines to keep Salish and European American identities distinctly and dichotomously separate. Directly after his vision of the future, next to his mother’s deathbed, Archilde contemplates the “entangling of lives. People grew together like creeping vines. The root of beginning was hard to find in the many that had come together and spread their foliage in one mass” (258). The context of the passage focuses on the ties between Archilde

and the Salish people. But the novel as a whole, with its resistance to simple cultural dichotomies and oppositions, broadens the scope of interconnection to an inextricably entangled human community.

Despite his adaptive ambitions, Archilde “wind[s] up like every other reservation boy”—first in a mountain hideout, then in prison shackles (150). The novel’s tragic ending is difficult to interpret. Many have suggested that Archilde’s newly awakened allegiance to Salish identity is what seals his fate in a world of white law that can see only “bad Indians” (Purdy 77; D. Parker “D’Arcy” 241). But as has just been established, Archilde’s appreciation of his people and their traditions is accompanied by a critique of their spiritual limitations and shortsightedness, as well as by career plans that do not materially embody traditional Salish lifeways. If anything, the novel may be critiquing Archilde’s sudden abdication of his own agency. After Archilde confesses his mother’s crime to the agent and promises to return soon for questioning, he dazedly and indifferently allows Elise to lead him away to the mountains. He acquiesces partly because his vague ruminations on “*paganism*” coincide with Elise’s escapist designs, but when he prods himself awake from this dream of the past, he is alarmed to discover he is now a fugitive in even greater legal danger. Of course, Elise is correct that Archilde submitting to the agent and Sheriff Quigley would have likely led to incarceration anyway. But a physical, cultural, and spiritual retreat into the mountains is certainly not presented as a path into the future.

This leaves readers with the question: What exactly would successful Salish adaptation or “survivance” (to use Gerald Vizenor’s term) look like, materially and spiritually? Ultimately the novel, published at the beginning of a career that wrestled with this question for decades, provides no answer. Still, it is clear that it does not define Salish identity oppositionally, dichotomously, or statically; that it asks us to consider the possibility of Salish agency even in the midst of what might seem to be the most colonially circumscribed situations; and that it considers not just material accommodations but also spiritual re-visioning as valid adaptive strategies.

In the context of *The Surrounded*’s depiction of failed Jesuit adaptations and insufficient Salish traditions, it is worth considering that some twenty-first-century Salish still practice a hybrid of Salish and Catholic ritual that does not seem to have compromised either their Salishness or their Christianity. The reassertion of Salish strains

within Catholicism was tardily encouraged by Vatican II of the 1960s, which sought to robustly embrace a theology of inculturation. According to Clarence Woodcock, a Salish elder, “the church began to recognize and know that our people’s ceremonials, songs, and dances were good. The Vatican Council encouraged people to pray, to sing, and dance in their own native ways. One of the greatest statements I heard was that Jesus takes on the countenance of whatever culture he is in. So this began a new awakening. And the people started going back to the circle” (*Sacred*). Some have simplistically viewed the persistent cultural cohesions as internalized racism. George Tinker regards the survival of Catholic Indian congregations as evidence that “the process of Christianization has involved some internalization of the larger illusion of Indian inferiority and the idealization of white culture and religion . . . [which] surely results in a praxis of self-hatred” (3). This is doubtless true for some; as Lawrence Aripa of the Coeur d’Alene observes, “[I]t was strange . . . that all these years our people were so close to the church but yet we’ve never had any full-blood become a religious person, a priest, or a nun. They all seemed to think, I’m not worthy of it” (*Sacred*).

But it is arrogant essentialism to assume that those who have managed to find a way to graft Catholic and Salish culture are somehow inauthentic Indians or victims of Stockholm syndrome. James Treat in *Native and Christian* observes that too often “native religious adaptability” is dismissed as “tragic acculturation” (9). Perhaps for some Salish, incarnating Catholicism in Salish culture was indeed the secret of the twig. Frances Vanderburg says of her Salish ancestors, who were forcibly removed from the Bitterroot Valley in 1891, “[T]hey still hung on to the Catholic ways. They used the sweat house, they used their medicine dances, but kind of on the sideline and then they’d go to church. My amazement is that after all that happened, they still stayed Catholic. It made some people strong” (Peterson 177). Clarence Woodcock remembers how “secure” he felt in having so many of the older generation holding to both sets of traditions, attending “[c]hurch every Sunday and sweats all the time” and “pray[ing] the whole rosary . . . in our Salish language” (175). Agnes Kenmille observes that her mother’s generation were bitter about leaving the valley not just because it was the Salish homeland but also “because that was the Indians’ church. That’s where they go to mass on

Sunday. . . . That's where the cemetery is, right there for the Indians" (*Sacred*). For these Salish Christians, Catholic rituals are symbiotically entwined with Salish language and culture, each nourishing rather than impoverishing or uprooting the other.

The Surrounded is by no means a pro-Catholic novel. It robustly affirms the intrinsic worth of traditional Salish culture and sharply indexes the shortcomings of Jesuit inculturation. But readers who view the arrival of the Jesuits as garden-variety colonial aggression disregard the Salish's self-fashioning initiative in purposely inviting and adopting a "new thing." They overlook the antidualistic compatibilities between these cultures, the novel's sympathetic portrayal of the inculturation motives of the earliest priests, and its circumspect assessment of traditional Salish ritual and lifeways. The novel's assertion of Salish agency and responsibility from the very beginning helps illuminate its suggestion at the end that some kind of adaptation and reconstruction—both material and spiritual—is necessary for the Salish to build a future for themselves and that such adaptations will defy simplistic dichotomous categories of identity.

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NOTES

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1. Critics typically interpret the epigraph and title to mean that the Salish were surrounded and destroyed by white religion and law (see Lim's invocation of Foucault's panopticon [155, 161] as just one example). Yet the original meaning of Sniél'-emen posits the Salish as victors rather than victims. According to Helen Fitzgerald Sanders (one of McNickle's sources), the Salish called the place "*Sin-yal-min*, or the 'Mountains of the Surrounded,'" because there they once "surrounded and killed a herd of elk" and also "surrounded and slew a company of Blackfeet" (36). The modern-day Salish translation of Snyél'mn (*The Place Where Something Was Surrounded*) likewise implies that the Salish are the surrounders, since "people did not live at that particular spot [St. Ignatius, Montana], but used it for hunting and other purposes" (S-POCC 26). Perhaps McNickle's epigraph intends an ironic reversal. Even so, the potential for diametrically opposed interpretations of the

novel's primary place-name points to a fundamental difficulty in determining (and judging) the story's agents and actions.

2. See, for example, Owens's reference to "the essential ties between Indian identity and place" (69) and Kent's argument that the "existential futility" in the novel originates from federal policies that unmoored Native Americans from their land and cultural identity (32).

3. I draw here on Jarold Ramsey's arguments regarding "retroactive prophecy," defined as an account "in which an event or deed in pre-Contact times is dramatized as being prophetic of some consequence of the coming of the whites" (195). See also Lori Burlingame on how McNickle explicitly uses retroactive prophecy in *Runner in the Sun*.

4. Like *The Surrounded*, *Ceremony* sharply critiques many white cultural attitudes and actions. But it also likewise resists neatly bifurcated categories, regarding dichotomous white/Indian, villain/victim thinking as the poisonous fruit of a "witchery" that infects both white and Indian cultures.

5. Several critics acknowledge that Father Grepilloux avoids the stereotype of the narrow-minded evangelist (Christensen 13; Holton 75; Huhndorf 34; Larson 92; Hans, "Re-visions" 189). Even so, they disregard how radically he rejects a "coercive" colonial "white perspective" (Holton 75).

6. One could read Grepilloux's sympathy toward the Salish "children" (45, 50) in *The Surrounded* as condescension: for example, "He was at once superior to them and able to place himself on their level when occasion required it" (137). But given his acceptance by Salish boys, whom he always approached with egalitarian "friendliness" and "adult consideration free of treacle" (96), the novel resists paternalistic interpretations.

7. Whether or not this use of "surrounded" had a bearing on McNickle's choice of title, here it highlights the free agency with which the Salish, in all their political and military might, willingly engage Jesuit culture—an ironic contrast to Archilde's entrapment by novel's end.

8. These doubts challenge Hans's assertion that Grepilloux "withdraws from reality and writes the mission's history in isolation, thereby living in a past where dreams of a Christian community seemed based on fact" ("Re-visions" 188–89). He is instead clearly attuned to the dissonance between memory and present reality, seeks external perspectives to help make sense of it, and plans to "state [the] problem" in his book (45).

9. As Hans notes, "Father Jerome is the opposite of Father G. . . . [His] demand for blind adherence to the Catholic faith closes the door to all change" ("Re-visions" 188–89).

10. There is ambiguity in both history and the novel about which "guardians"—spiritual or secular—banned the whipping ritual. The "guardians" in McNickle's passive-voice passage are likely secular or Protestant, since the Jesuits are described as outside the decision-making process. Although they had no legal power to enforce a ban, many historical Jesuits favored one, not least because anti-Catholic groups

wrongly accused them of imposing the whipping ritual. Other Jesuits saw the whip as a morally useful instrument (Bigart and Woodcock 276). According to Palladino, the Salish felt that confession was superfluous to the whip, which “wiped out the guilt”; it was difficult to convince them that confession was obligatory (Palladino 101–2).

11. The historical persistence of the comparison suggests the former. Nearly 160 years after the Jesuits came to Sniél-emen, Salish elder Johnny Arlee explained Salish ritual dress using the same metaphoric equivalency: “When a person makes an outfit or it is put away, they are just material things. But when it comes time to dance, the people who dance bring the outfit alive. It is like a priest who has a prayer for each part of his vestments and kisses it to show his respect” (37–38).

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At the Intersections of Empire

Ceremony, Transnationalism, and American Indian–Filipino Exchange

ALYSSA A. HUNZIKER

Native American and Indigenous studies has increasingly questioned how it might incorporate transnational analyses while adhering to calls for literary nationalism. Scholars including Shari M. Huhndorf, Jace Weaver, Chadwick Allen, and Steven Salaita have argued that transnational approaches to Indigenous literatures helpfully expand the territories of Indigenous critique while nonetheless highlighting nation-specific literatures. Building on this approach, this article uses a transnational framework to revisit Leslie Marmon Silko's first novel, *Ceremony* (1977). The novel itself is both located and situated, as it recounts the postwar experience of Laguna Pueblo World War II veteran Tayo as he recovers from the traumas of war, the Bataan Death March, and his subsequent detention in a prisoner of war camp. However, as I argue, despite its located context, the novel is also inherently transnational, as the protagonist frequently contemplates his service as a US soldier in the Philippines.

By focusing on the Philippine context of the novel, I argue that Silko reveals overlapping histories between Indigenous peoples in North America and other colonized peoples abroad. This framework allows for comparative studies between settler colonial and colonial contexts to better link US empire as it occurs globally and to highlight historic overlaps in differently colonized spaces. By reading Silko's novel as inherently transnational, I hope not only to contribute to Silko scholarship as a whole but also to read across settler colonial, colonial, and what Allen has called *trans-Indigenous*, contexts in an effort to reassess Silko's overlapping depiction of multiple forms of empire. Similarly, I suggest that Silko uses the memories of her Native World War II veterans, Tayo, Harley, Leroy, Pinkie, and Emo, as a means of

complicating previous narratives of war, colonial difference, national boundaries, and battle lines.

Because of the historical realities of the Bataan Death March, readers can imagine that Native American soldiers would undoubtedly have had some exchange with the Filipino servicemen with whom they fought, despite the fact that we never see Filipino characters within the text itself.¹ By situating Tayo at the intersections of multiple empires—both US and Japanese—in the midst of occupied territory in the Philippines, I suggest that his experience of settler colonialism in the United States and witnessing of colonialism in the Philippines lead to a flagrant rejection of colonial rule in all of its forms. Tayo, then, becomes an international, but no less traditional, figure who mirrors Silko's later "tribal internationalists" in *Almanac of the Dead* (1991), whom scholars like Malini Johar Schueller and Channette Romero argue make up "cross-cultural spiritual coalitions . . . [that] provide a more powerful means of combating the social, political, and economic injustice faced by Native Americans (and many oppressed peoples around the world) than secular politics based on ethnicity and race alone" (Romero 623). I argue that *Ceremony's* Filipino context prefigures the overtly transnational politics of Silko's later novels, *Almanac of the Dead* and *Gardens in the Dunes* (2000).

To frame my reading of Silko's novel, I follow Salaita, Allen, and Weaver, who have argued for the importance of reading Native American and Indigenous literatures in a global context. Second, I follow settler colonial studies scholars Lorenzo Veracini and Patrick Wolfe, who argue that settler colonial systems are explicitly different from colonial and imperial systems. This distinction helps to more accurately differentiate between settler colonialism in the continent and US colonialism in the Pacific. As Veracini explains, while settler colonialism and colonialism may produce similar conditions and use similar tactics, the two systems ultimately have different aims, as settler colonialism aims to erase and remove Indigenous populations, while colonialism aims to subjugate Indigenous populations as a source of labor. Put more succinctly, Wolfe writes that "settler colonizers come to stay: invasion is a structure not an event" (388). The contexts for US occupation of Indigenous lands in North America and US colonialism in the Philippines are marked by difference even as they carry historical parallels and overlaps. Finally, I follow scholars like Jodi Byrd and Iyko Day, who have each discussed the

ways Asian American *arrivants*, in Byrd's terms, have been implicated in or affected by settler colonial practices in the United States. Byrd and Day have each discussed the ways structures of US settlement, colonialism in the Pacific, and Asian American exclusion collectively reify the settler colonial state. As Byrd notes, US policies against Native peoples have directly affected its colonialist policies abroad, as she argues that "Indianness becomes a site through which U.S. empire orients and replicates itself by transforming those to be colonized into 'Indians' through continual iterations of pioneer logs" (xiii).

Lastly, I refer to two important Bataan memoirs, Frank Lovato's *Survivor* (2008) and William E. Dyess's posthumously released *Bataan Death March: A Survivor's Account* (1944). Each soldier's account of the death march depicts the Japanese as cruel, intensely violent, and unrelentingly aggressive; yet in Silko's text, Tayo empathizes with the Japanese soldiers he encounters. In a reversal of the memoirs' narratives, the most violent characters we meet in Silko's novel are Tayo's fellow Laguna Pueblo veterans, Emo, Pinky, and Leroy. Thus, I use Lovato's and Dyess's accounts of warfare as a way to unpack Silko's more complicated representation of the Japanese, a point that becomes even more important given the wide popular appeal of both Dyess's and Wolfe's texts at their time of publication.

Similarly, I refer to Lovato's text in particular for his representation of Indigenous peoples in both the Philippines and the United States. Lovato frequently references Native Americans in the context of Japanese warfare in the Philippines despite the fact that he came into contact with no Native GIs during his time in the Pacific. Interestingly, Lovato's references to Native Americans are frequently used to metaphorically position both the Japanese and the Filipinos as "Indian" simultaneously. Thus, Lovato builds problematic connections between the Japanese, representing an imperial power, and Native Americans and Filipinos, two groups that have been subjugated by American colonial and settler colonial rule. This complicated web of comparisons proves to be a useful tool for reading Silko's novel, as her characters likewise build comparisons between the Japanese and the characters' Laguna Pueblo relatives. Ultimately, these memoirs, written by non-Native servicemen, serve as useful referents for discussing *Ceremony's* transnational significance and the complex relationship between indigeneity, colonialism, and military service in the novel.

CEREMONY'S TRANSNATIONAL POLITICS

Thus far, scholarly discussions of Silko's transnational framework have primarily focused on her two later novels, *Almanac of the Dead* and *Gardens in the Dunes*. Given their plotlines, this focus is understandable, as *Almanac* follows a broad cast of characters across North and Central America, and *Gardens* follows its child protagonist, Indigo, as she travels from California to New York, England, and Italy. Sarah Jaquette Ray has argued that although *Almanac of the Dead* is often discussed as a transnational environmental justice novel, Silko also demonstrates a suspicion of totalizing frameworks like transnationalism that can prioritize coalition building to the detriment of local environmental movements. Unlike *Almanac of the Dead*, *Ceremony* is set almost entirely on the Laguna Pueblo reservation as its main character, Tayo, recovers from his experience fighting in World War II. *Ceremony*, even more than its successor, pays close attention to environmental issues in local space while also considering how local environmental issues like uranium mining at the Jackpile Mine can affect peoples across the globe in the aftermath of the deployment of the atom bomb. Where Ray compellingly points out that *Almanac* demonstrates both the power in transnational movements and their potential for weakening existing local movements, *Ceremony*, by contrast, privileges a focus on the local while gesturing outward to the ways US settler colonialism has impacted colonization elsewhere.

Few scholars have approached *Ceremony* through a transnational framework. Connie A. Jacobs and Susan L. Duston have each discussed *Ceremony*'s potential international implications, as the final stage of Tayo's ceremony takes place in the Jackpile Uranium Mine. Attached to this setting is an implicit relationship between the Laguna Pueblo laborers who work in compromising positions in the mine and its subsequent use as an early testing site for the atom bomb. This setting suggests an uneven Laguna-Japanese relationship through the atom bomb, since the mine was used as a site for uranium extraction. Thus, Silko adds another layer to the transnational scope of the novel and places Tayo at yet another imperial intersection in the space of the reservation. In another appeal to the transpacific interests in the novel, Sharon Holm suggests that *Ceremony* tangentially highlights the experience of Native veterans of the Vietnam War, the contemporaneous audience to Silko's

novel, and reads the book as a decidedly antiwar novel. Focusing on the novel's transnational context, Holm similarly asserts that Silko positions the novel in the "ideological cross-cultural location of the U.S.-Laguna-Mexican borderlands" (249). In all three scholars' formulations, Tayo is connected to peoples in the Pacific from within the space of the reservation, either through the Jackpile Mine or through references that evoke the Vietnam War. However, as I argue, Silko's blurring of imperial lines in the novel is both local in its focus on Laguna Pueblo and transnational through Tayo's service in the Philippines.

Despite the novel's located setting, I argue that a transnational framework can help us to better understand how Silko ties together the space of the reservation with Tayo's experiences in the Philippines. While scholars do frequently reference Tayo's service in the Philippines and may even reference his status as a POW during the Bataan Death March, this aspect of the novel is generally referred to either in a general plot summary or as the genesis of his psychological trauma. Peter G. Beidler has provided the most substantial analysis of the novel's depiction of the death march. However, his analysis focuses mainly on how Silko's descriptions of the march differ from its historical realities, and he offers compelling evidence that Silko likely used Dyess's memoir in her research on the march.² By contextualizing Tayo's experience in the Philippines, Silko's allusions to several world's fairs, and the other Laguna Pueblo veterans' experiences on Wake Island and Iwo Jima, we might more clearly understand Silko's intercolonial and potentially trans-Indigenous literary vision.

Silko's transnational focus in *Ceremony* complicates previous narratives of war and colonial difference as she imbues her characters with the potential to make alliances across colonized sites. That said, Tayo, Rocky, Harley, Pinkie, Leroy, and Emo are marked with an inherent ambivalence about their military service. Native Americans' service in the Pacific could potentially have allowed them to build alliances with other oppressed groups, as in the case of a figure like Tayo, who would have likely encountered many Filipino servicemen during the Bataan Death March. However, these GIs also had the potential to align with the US military imperial project. Even Tayo's empathy for and identification with members of the Japanese Imperial Army belie an inherent ambivalence between his position fighting on behalf of the United States, the imperial power that is repeatedly identified as oppressive in

the space of the reservation, and the Philippines, which are likewise also under US colonial rule and, soon, Japanese rule.

While many of Silko's characters may express anti-imperialist sentiment against Japan or even against their treatment as Native peoples in the United States, the Laguna Pueblo GIs nonetheless serve in the military as imperial aggressors in the Pacific. In this vein, rather than questioning whether a character is involved in the military, Silko is instead interested in whether he willingly operated as an imperial aggressor and embraced the military's colonial ideologies. Emo brutally enjoys his position in the US Army, as he tries "to bring back that old feeling, that feeling they belonged to America the way they felt during the war" (43). But even this sense of belonging requires him to revel in military violence as he carries around a set of human teeth as "war souvenirs" and argues, "We should've dropped bombs on all the rest and blown them off the face of the earth" (60–61). Here, not only is Emo a military occupier through his role in the army, but he also reinforces the genocidal logics of imperialism.

Tayo, by contrast, sympathizes with the Japanese even in the aftermath of the death march. While listening to the other veterans enact "the part of the ritual where they damn those yellow Jap bastards," Tayo reminds the reader that the others "don't know that he doesn't hate the Japanese, not even the Japanese soldiers who were grim-faced watching Tayo and the corporal stumble with [Rocky's] stretcher" during the death march (43). His sympathy for the Japanese, while troubling in the context of Philippine occupation, serves as a powerful critique against imperial projects as a whole. In other words, Tayo identifies the individuals in the Japanese Imperial Army as victims of imperialism and colonialism as well—an argument staunchly rejected by many first-person memoirs of the Bataan Death March. Nonetheless, Tayo's involvement in the Philippines highlights a historical overlap between Filipinos and Native Americans, despite the characters' complicated relationship to the US military.

Significantly, all three sites of conflict for the Laguna Pueblo veterans—Iwo Jima, the Philippines, and the Marshall Islands—were vestiges of early Spanish colonial explorers, and in the case of the Philippines and the Marshall Islands, both nations became unincorporated territories of the United States in the aftermath of the Spanish-American War. Although Iwo Jima was never a site of US

colonial rule, the iconic image of US marines raising the US flag over the island just hours after their arrival in 1945 is nonetheless a direct appeal to US control and landownership. By stationing her Laguna Pueblo veterans in these three conflict zones, Silko uses the soldiers' insistence that they "belonged" when they were in the war to align Harley, Pinkie, Leroy, and Emo to the pleasure they take in their role as military occupiers of the land—one that repeats earlier US conquest at the end of the nineteenth century during the Spanish-American War.

While Tayo is critical of military violence, Emo relishes his experience in the military. Reflecting on his service abroad, Emo says, "We were the best. U.S. Army. We butchered every Jap we found. . . . We had all kinds of ways to get information out of them before they died. Cut off this, cut off that" (61). Emo's refrain is repeated later in an internal monologue:

Emo had liked what they showed him: big mortar shells that blew tanks and big trucks to pieces; jagged steel flakes that exploded from the grenades; the way the flame thrower melted a rifle into a shapeless lump. He understood them right away; he knew what they wanted. He was the best, they told him; some men didn't like to feel the quiver of the man they were killing; some men got sick when they smelled the blood. But he was the best; he was one of them. The best. United States Army. (62)

Emo's collection of Japanese body parts and noticeable pleasure in the violence of warfare, while largely a symptom of the brutalities of war in general, are textually aligned with the US Army in particular. As such, this correlation uses Emo's brutality as a stand-in for the holistic violence of the US Army in general.

For Tayo, however, as a survivor of the Bataan Death March and prison camp, the image of body parts being ruthlessly cut off would have been reminiscent of his experience as a prisoner of war, as many Filipino and American soldiers were killed on the march by bayonet or through beheading. Lovato makes frequent appeals to the violence of the Japanese Imperial Army in his memoir, and Dyess similarly writes of an American captain's beheading during the march, stating that the captain's head "hit the ground in front of him and went rolling crazily from side to side. . . . The body fell forward. . . . The heart continued to pump blood for a few seconds and at each beat there was another great

spurt of blood" (Dyess 70). Silko reverses this violence, then, by casting Emo and the US Army as the violent military aggressors in the Pacific.

In contrast to the descriptions of violence in Lovato's and Dyess's accounts of the Pacific Theater, the horrific violence in Silko's text is aligned not only with the Japanese Imperial Army but with Emo in particular. Later in the text, through Emo's influence, Emo, Pinkie, and Leroy reenact this military violence when they attack Harley. In this episode, Tayo, having recently completed a ceremony that allows him to finally see "the world as it always was: no boundaries, only transitions through all distances and times," also identifies his fellow servicemen as a new iteration of "the destroyers" who enact "witchery" that keeps people separate (246, 249). Emo, Pinkie, and Leroy are again identified with the witchery as Pinkie beats the hood of a car with a tire iron while Harley is inside: "It was the sound of witchery: smashing through the night, shrill and cold as black metal. It was the sound of [Tayo's] empty nightmares" (250). What this suggests, then, is that the military violence that enthralls Emo serves as another model of the text's "witchery" whereby the Laguna Pueblo characters are easily infected by settler colonial and colonial projects during the war.

This point is further emphasized by the text's close as each of the characters who replicate military aggression is killed or imprisoned by the end of the novel. By contrast, Tayo, despite his involvement in the war, the death march, and imprisonment in a concentration camp, can see across difference to understand the motivations of his captors. Rather than representing the Japanese Imperial Army in the brutalizing manner that Lovato and Dyess do, Tayo acknowledges the reasons for relocation, and, noticeably, no one is beheaded in Silko's retelling of the march. Even further, Tayo relates to his captors as he comments, "They looked tired too, those Japanese soldiers. Like they wanted this march to be over too" (43). While Tayo's empathy for the Japanese Imperial Army here is surprising, Silko's reversal complicates previous narratives of war and seems to imbue her transnational character with the motivations to make alliances across cultures, across colonial states, and across battle lines.

That Silko uses Emo's approach to warfare as a contrast to Tayo's is obvious; however, looking at each character's approach to other peoples allows for a more nuanced understanding of the two models established in *Ceremony*. While Emo collects the teeth of his Japanese conquests

and proudly decries the Japanese as his enemy, Tayo states that he “should have hated Emo. He should have hated the Jap soldiers who killed Rocky. The space to carry hate was deep inside, below his lungs and behind his belly; but it was empty. . . . He didn’t feel anything” (63). Though Emo declares that Tayo “loves Japs” with a sense of disdain and disgust, Betonie, the Navajo medicine man who later in the text calls for a unified Indigenous front, suggests that Tayo “saw who [the Japanese] were. Thirty thousand years ago they were not strangers. [Tayo] saw what the evil had done: [he] saw the witchery ranging as wide as this world” (63, 124). Witchery here, then, takes as its goal the separation of peoples and ranges “as wide as the world” in a kind of global phenomenon reminiscent of Western colonialism. In effect, Tayo can only reverse the witchery by knowing its whole scope and by reconciling difference to see his own relation to other peoples globally. Tayo’s ability to relate to Japanese soldiers through a perceived sense of military brotherhood is set in stark contrast to the witchery that controls Emo’s experiences in the war. We might then say that Tayo’s experiences in the Pacific and his potential collaboration with Filipino soldiers would also help him to see how US empire expands across the globe.

TRANSCERENCE AND TRANSNATIONAL EMPATHY

Rather than identifying Japanese soldiers as a faceless enemy, Tayo frequently misidentifies them as Native Americans through his hallucinatory sickness during the war, the death march, and, later, his postwar memories. It is through this hallucinatory sickness that Tayo is able to see his own relationship to other peoples through a process of transference, whereby Tayo switches wartime memories with something located in the text’s postwar present. In these moments of transference in the novel, Silko further blurs the boundaries of nations, borders, and time. Tayo makes repeated nonlinear references to the Philippines while he is in Laguna Pueblo and to Laguna Pueblo while he is in the Philippines. Within the context of the novel, then, Tayo’s trauma might be said to be his inability to make sense of his experiences in the Philippines at the intersections of both colonial and settler colonial rule.

Early in the novel, Tayo has repeated flashbacks to his time in the Philippine jungles even while he is located on the present-day, postwar Laguna Pueblo reservation. The Philippines’ “jungle steam” and “humid

air [that] turned into sweat” constantly force their way into the text’s present and, in this interruption, seem to place the two disparate locales into conversation even as they maintain their unique specificity (6, 7). Even as Tayo describes “the dry air,” “the reddish brown sand,” and the “dry empty hills” of the reservation, the description quickly shifts to “jungle rain [that] had no beginning or end.” Tayo mentions “the rain that he and Josiah had prayed for” in Laguna Pueblo and that “[w]hen Tayo prayed on the long muddy road to the prison camp [in the Philippines], it was for dry air, dry as a hundred years squeezed out of yellow sand” (10–11). These different landscapes, even with their harsh disparities, are brought together frequently in the text; however, in each episode Tayo wishes not for a different landscape but for balance between two extremes—too dry and too wet.

Tayo’s shift between the climate of the Philippines and that of Laguna Pueblo is twofold here: first, he contemplates the needs of the Laguna landscape while he is in the Philippines; and later, he inserts the Philippine landscape into his Laguna Pueblo present. Tayo attempts to acknowledge the interrelated nature of these spaces through a process of transference that can help him to overcome his repressed memories both during and after the war. At the same time, Tayo’s process of transference also becomes literal, as his insistence on bringing the Laguna Pueblo and Filipino landscapes together necessarily asks readers to contemplate each nation’s historical and colonial parallels.

The Philippines and Laguna Pueblo are both sites of colonization under both Spain and the United States. This appeal to similar history appears in Lovato’s memoir as well, as he frequently confuses Spanish missions in the Philippines with the Pueblo missions back home in New Mexico. In effect, the way the Philippines jut into the novel’s present allows for a reading of the novel as inherently transnational by relating different spaces and different colonized groups (here Filipino and Laguna Pueblo) while allowing them to retain national, geographical, and landscape-driven cultural specificity.

Convergences between the Philippines and Laguna Pueblo continue throughout the novel in relation not only to landscape but also to the figures Tayo encounters during the war. Although Betonie suggests that Tayo merely recognizes the Japanese soldiers as being connected to him, Tayo quite literally views them as Native Americans at various moments in the novel. For example, during one of the text’s early postwar drink-

ing episodes, Tayo admits that he “doesn’t hate the Japanese, not even the Japanese soldiers who were grim-faced watching Tayo and the corporal struggle with the stretcher” (43). This sentiment is immediately followed by a flashback to his cousin Rocky’s execution during the death march. In this scene, Tayo initially misidentifies a Japanese soldier as Native:

The tall one looked like a Navajo guy from Fort Defiance that Tayo had known at Indian School. They looked tired too, those Japanese soldiers. Like they wanted this march to be over too. That tall one, he even shook his head like Willie Begay did: two abrupt movements, almost too quick to see and then he pulled the corporal to his feet. . . . [T]he tall soldier pushed Tayo away, not hard, but the way a small child would be pushed away by an older brother. It was then Tayo got confused, and he called this tall Jap Willie Begay; “You remember him, Willie, he’s my brother, best football player Albuquerque Indian School ever had.”

The tall soldier looked at him curiously. . . . He pulled the blanket over Rocky as if he were already dead, and then he jabbed the rifle butt into the muddy blanket. (43–44)

Even in this moment of emotional and physical terror, Tayo surprisingly finds sympathy for the Japanese soldier who looks like Willie Begay, and in recognizing him as familiar, he is also able to recognize his shared fatigue. In this moment in the novel, Silko blurs the boundaries of difference and warfare between Native and Japanese combatants. Even as he witnesses violence against his cousin, Tayo nonetheless empathetically recognizes the Japanese soldiers’ own exhaustion in a way that greatly differs from the many memoirs that have been written about the Bataan Death March.

Just as he views the Japanese soldier as Willie Begay during the death march, Tayo also believes that a Japanese prisoner held by US soldiers is actually his Laguna Pueblo uncle, Josiah. As Tayo is told to kill a Japanese soldier, he begins to realize that “the man’s skin was not much different than his own. . . . They looked too familiar even when they were alive” (7). Ultimately, Tayo begins to substitute the Japanese soldiers for his Uncle Josiah so that when faced with killing an individual man, he imagines his Laguna Pueblo uncle is there instead:

When the sergeant told them to kill all the Japanese soldiers lined up in front of the cave with their hands on their heads, Tayo could not pull the trigger. . . . [I]n that instant he saw Josiah standing there; the face was dark from the sun, the eyes were squinting as though he were about to smile at Tayo. So Tayo stood there, stiff with nausea, while they fired at the soldiers, and he watched his uncle fall, and he *knew* it was Josiah; and even after Rocky started shaking him . . . and telling him to stop crying, it was *still* Josiah lying there. . . . Rocky made him look at the corpse and say, "Tayo, this is a *Jap*! This is a *Jap* uniform!" And then he rolled the body over with his boot and said, "Look, Tayo, look at the face," and that was when Tayo started screaming because it wasn't a Jap, it was Josiah, eyes shrinking back into the skull and all their shining black light glazed over by death. (7–8)

The space of the Philippines and the body of the Japanese soldier force Tayo to imagine the connections between a foreign imperial war and the space of the reservation back home. Just as the Japanese soldier who killed Rocky became Willie Begay, a Navajo man from back home, and the Filipino landscape frequently and suddenly is transposed onto the present of the Laguna Pueblo reservation, the Japanese soldier lined up for execution becomes, to Tayo, his closest and fondest blood relative. In these moments of transference, Tayo identifies the Japanese as somehow related to the Laguna Pueblo, and in the midst of the Bataan Death March he maintains this connection. When he returns home, however, the space of the reservation shifts his focus back to the Philippines in a way that places the two colonized spaces into conversation with one another. In effect, Tayo's ability to see connections between peoples and locations, while maintaining the specificity of these individuals and nations, furthers Silko's transnational framework and allows readers to connect settler colonial histories at home with the United States' colonial projects abroad.

HEALING THROUGH TRANS-INDIGENOUS EXCHANGE

Ultimately, the connection between Indigenous peoples in the United States, the Philippines, and Japan is expressed most clearly through the figure of Betonie, the Gallup medicine man who helps Tayo heal in the

aftermath of the war, the death march, and the prisoner of war camp. When Tayo first enters Betonie's house, he sees "bundles of newspapers, their edges curled and stiff and brown, barricading piles of telephone books with the years scattered among cities—St. Louis, Seattle, New York, Oakland—and he began to feel another dimension to the old man's room" (120). These specific locations are all the sites of several world's fairs held in the early twentieth century: the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition in Saint Louis, the 1909 Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition in Seattle, the 1901 Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, New York, and the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco (Oakland).

Each of these expositions demonstrated the colonial aims of both fair organizers and the US government as they commemorated the anniversary of the Klondike gold rush and boasted territories in both Hawai'i and the Philippines (Seattle) and celebrated the completion of the Panama Canal in the aftermath of the US takeover of the Panama Canal Zone (San Francisco / Oakland). Additionally, the fairs' import of Indigenous peoples from around the world signifies Silko's registering of this "other dimension" that Tayo identifies and recognizes in the medicine man's room. The room becomes not just a space filled with Betonie's paraphernalia and souvenirs but one that recalls and acknowledges the circulation and impact of US empire abroad through the world's fairs.

The medicine man's connection to the world's fair is reinforced when Betonie mentions that he "was at the World's Fair in St. Louis, Missouri, the year they had Geronimo there on display" (122). The main exposition on display at the 1904 world's fair was the "Philippine Reservation," which displayed peoples from the United States' recently acquired colony. The connection to Geronimo, the Chiricahua Apache leader, and the fair's commemoration of the Louisiana Purchase already allows for a kind of Indigenous exchange between Betonie and Geronimo. However, as scholars like Danika Medak-Saltzman point out, the 1904 St. Louis fair also allowed for transnational exchange between Native Americans and other Indigenous peoples from around the globe, and Geronimo directly references Indigenous peoples from the Philippines, stating that "there were some little brown people at the Fair that the United States troops captured recently on some islands far away from here" (Geronimo 204). What is telling about Geronimo's experience

is that while he was on display as a prisoner of war, he also attended the fair and its exhibitions, including the Philippine Reservation, filled with “little brown people . . . that the United States troops captured,” a phrase that almost directly imitates the imperialist rhetoric surrounding Filipinos at the turn of the century. Betonie’s attendance at the fair would have afforded him the opportunity to see Indigenous others from around the world and other peoples affected by US colonialism both within and outside the continental nation-state.

While performers like Geronimo were able to experience the fair as both spectacle and spectator, Indigenous peoples also resisted the fair’s caricatured representations. In his discussion of Indigenous representation and performance at the 1904 world’s fair, Robert Rydell argues that

One of the interesting things about the Indigenous people on display at the fair is that they were often perceived as interchangeable parts by anthropologists and by showmen. So there was one particular moment at the fair when the Hopi Indians were supposed to do one of their sacred dances. . . . They refused, and another group of Indians was brought aboard to perform that particular dance. It is evidence of the insistence . . . of the world’s fair authorities, showmen and even anthropologists to make the savage be savage, even when people did not want to perform in ways that would reinforce those particular stereotypes. (“Race”)

To a fairgoing audience, dependent on anthropologists’ racialized hierarchies, groups from disparate parts of the globe were easily interchanged and frequently misrepresented. Despite the fact that the Hopi were replaced with another group, the Hopi’s refusal to perform allowed them to resist the fair’s expectations.

These acts of resistance appear numerous times in Rydell’s report on the 1904 fair, as he suggests that many of the Indigenous peoples who were brought to the fair used the opportunity as a means of learning more about European Americans and the other Indigenous peoples on display and that common acts of resistance cropped up throughout the fair. Although Rydell states that “the people who were put on display at the fairs generally didn’t see themselves as specimens or objects,” they nonetheless “were quite savvy about trying to resist as best they could” (“Race”). Paige Raibmon also discusses Indigenous resistance through performance at the world’s fairs. For instance, Raibmon highlights

Kwakwaka'wakw resistance at the Chicago world's fair in 1893, stating that although the Kwakwaka'wakw performers were viewed as spectacles by fairgoers, the chance to perform for non-Native audiences provided "an opportunity to defy the Church and government's assimilationist program on an international stage . . . [and] offered the chance to publicly assert the endurance of Kwakwaka'wakw cultural practice" (50).

Within the context of Betonie's participation in the St. Louis world's fair, we can assume that the Navajo medicine man would have at the very least come into contact with Indigenous peoples from across the imperial globe, each of whom was implicated in and affected by different types of colonial occupation. One of the major exhibitions of the fair, for instance, was the twelve hundred Filipino Igorots and Negritos who were imported from the Philippines and who were racialized in popular media at the time "as being akin to African Americans [or] . . . akin to Native Americans" and were present at the fair to legitimate US military presence in the Philippines (Rydell, "Race"). Betonie's attendance at the 1904 fair in particular would have ensured his association with Filipino performers, particularly as the Philippine Reservation was staged near the various Indian Reservations on the fairgrounds. Even if sites of resistance at the 1904 world's fair were enacted on a small scale, like refusing to perform a ceremonial dance or charging for a photograph, one can envision the ways in which building transnational alliances serves as another means of resisting the aims of colonialism and imperialism to represent Indigenous peoples as interchangeable.

Ultimately, Betonie and Tayo serve as forerunners of *Almanac of the Dead's* tribal internationalists who nonetheless maintain a connection to their own culturally specific ceremonies and practices. Both Betonie and Tayo acknowledge the scope of colonialism for its various intersections and simultaneities across both the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans. In this way, Tayo's experiences as a soldier in the Philippines allow him to make transnational comparisons with other colonial subjects, and it is his ability to then reconnect with the specificities of Laguna Pueblo that allows him to successfully complete his ceremony and begin to heal in the aftermath of trauma. Similarly, Betonie would have encountered numerous Indigenous and colonized others through his experiences at the Buffalo, Seattle, San Francisco, and St. Louis world's fairs, including Indigenous peoples in Hawai'i and Alaska and US colonial subjects in the Philippines, Cuba, and Puerto Rico.

It is through this lens of transnational and trans-Indigenous alliance and exchange that we should read Betonie's suggestion to Tayo that traditional ceremonies and cultural practices can maintain their specificity while also being adapted to include and benefit other peoples under US colonial rule. Betonie says:

The people nowadays have an idea about the ceremonies. They think the ceremonies must be performed exactly as they have always done. . . . You see, in many ways, the ceremonies have always been changing. . . . At one time, the ceremonies as they had been performed were enough for the way the world was then. But after the white people came, elements in the world began to shift; and it became necessary to create new ceremonies. I have made changes in the rituals. The people mistrust this greatly, but only this growth keeps the ceremonies strong. (126)

Betonie's method of adapting the ceremonies while maintaining their traditional aspects is posited as a means of healing in an increasingly connected world to account for variations in the colonial present.

Ultimately, reading the transnational impulse in *Ceremony* suggests not only that the novel's protagonists prefigure Silko's later transnational figures in *Almanac of the Dead* and *Gardens in the Dunes* but also that transnational relationships and politics are important even in a text that seems to be focused mainly on the local Laguna Pueblo reservation.³ While in *Ceremony* Tayo stands at the intersections of several different forms of empire and must reconcile the inherent contradictions between his occupation in the Philippines and on the reservation, the larger cast of characters in *Almanac* also exists across lines of ambivalent contradiction. Like the tribal internationalists of *Almanac* who move through both time and space, *Ceremony*'s Tayo crosses international lines while maintaining his own connection to Laguna Pueblo people and territory. The text's erasure of the divisions between present and past, as indicated by Tayo's frequent and sudden flashbacks, in addition to Silko's use of Laguna Pueblo stories woven throughout the text, suggests that he is likewise able to navigate through time as a result of his experience in the army. In this reading, then, *Ceremony* serves as the initial site of Silko's transnational focus and can be seen as a model through which the author crafts her many, varied, and nuanced tribal internationalists in later works.

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NOTES

1. The Bataan Death March was a sixty-mile forced relocation of US and Filipino soldiers by the Japanese Imperial Army in 1942. During the march across the Bataan peninsula many prisoners were given little to no food or water, and stragglers were bayoneted or beheaded. In one survivor's account, twelve thousand American and sixty thousand Filipino soldiers surrendered to the Japanese on April 13, 1942, and within six months at Camp O'Donnell, he suggests that "the Filipinos lost over thirty-five thousand men" (Lovato 2008, iv). Peter G. Beidler writes that the death march took place "not long after the United States entered the war. When the Allied commanders decided that they could not effectively fight the war simultaneously on both the European and Pacific fronts, General MacArthur was ordered to abandon his American troops and their Filipino fellow soldiers in the Philippines. He left with the famous promise, 'I shall return.' In leaving, he was forced to abandon 100,000 American and Filipino soldiers and civilians to inevitable capture by Japanese forces. . . . Many of the American soldiers and even more of their Filipino comrades died on the weeklong trek" (25-26).

2. Beidler cites D. Leslie Evans's suggestion that Silko based her two Bataan POW characters, Rocky and Tayo, on Evans's father, Robert Leslie Evans, a Laguna Pueblo World War II veteran who survived the Bataan Death March in the Philippines and was imprisoned in a POW camp in Manchuria (24). Beidler contends that Silko's portrayal of the death march is "remarkably like those that actually happened on the Bataan peninsula" and suggests that the notable memoir by William E. Dyess is the most likely source for Silko's knowledge on the historical event (26). Beidler pays particular attention to the discrepancy between Dyess's description of the Japanese and Tayo's as evidence of Silko's more empathetic reading of Japanese soldiers in World War II.

3. Writing about *Almanac*, Channette Romero has noted the ways that "*Almanac* attempts to succeed where the American Indian Movement failed by overcoming the divisiveness and limitations of secular politics with the expansiveness of coalition politics that connects individuals 'through time' and space to each other, living and long dead. . . . [T]hese cross-national spiritual connections have the power to resist injustice in the Americas more effectively than secular political and nationalist movements" (623). While *Almanac*'s transnational scope is even more central to the novel's plot, as characters and plotlines span the distance of several different continents and centuries, we might read *Ceremony* as the forerunner to Silko's transnational aims.

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Indigenous Radical Resurgence and Multispecies Landscapes

Leslie Marmon Silko's *The Turquoise Ledge*

NATHANIEL OTJEN

Desert landscapes have played an extraordinary role in the project of settler colonialism in the United States. As Traci Brynne Voyles argues in *Wastelanding: Legacies of Uranium Mining in Navajo Country*, deserts are sites where settler colonialism has superseded its logical extremes. If this colonial violence aims to destroy and replace Indigenous peoples and environments with colonial modes of inhabitation by stealing land, settler colonialism has gone a step further in the deserts of the US Southwest by rendering these landscapes barren “wastelands.” Voyles calls the socioecological project of converting lively and productive Indigenous lands into undesirable and dead places “wastelanding.” Viewed as desolate, lifeless, and worthless places, desert wastelands extend the settler-colonial project by obscuring present Indigenous inhabitation, justifying state-sanctioned extractivist practices, and naturalizing the presence of the settler state. Voyles explains that the desert has become the sine qua non of US settler colonialism: “[T]he settler state has grounded itself in the desert Southwest, making the desert central to how we understand our history and ourselves” (18). Dian Million (Tanana Athabascan) observes that Indigenous places, in particular, are conceptualized by the settler state as barren, deserted regions: “Indigenous places are often imagined as isolated empty places, disposable, or usable places subordinate to national need. Indigenous peoples are not isolated, in a past, outside of capital, or without capitalist relations: we are central to them” (25).¹ Acknowledging their centrality to the capitalist settler-colonial project and directly opposing the colonial denigration of the Southwest, Indigenous desert dwellers have long resisted their erasure. Leslie Marmon Silko, in particular, has used literature to defy, critique, and dismantle historical and ongoing forms of settler colonialism, espe-

cially in *Storyteller*, *Ceremony*, and *Almanac of the Dead*. By exposing the structures and operations of colonization, globalization, militarization, and technology throughout her oeuvre, Silko replaces dominant claims to power with Indigenous, decolonial claims to place.

Silko, a Laguna Pueblo woman from New Mexico and Arizona, has recently used the memoir genre to resist the settler-colonial practices of wastelanding, possession, and resource extraction. Participating in the rich and expansive literary traditions of the Native memoir, Silko rejects the historical convention that sees human individuals as bounded subjects singularly shaped by their own determination and instead describes, in the words of Deanna Reder (Cree-Métis), “a communal, collective sense of self” (“Writing” 156). However, rather than restrict the possibilities of a collective self to a homogeneous community of human peers, Silko depicts herself as just one inhabitant among many *more-than-human* beings and things that cocreate and belong within the Sonoran Desert.² In *The Turquoise Ledge* (2010) she opposes the settler-colonial view of her desert home outside of Tucson, Arizona, as a vacant wasteland and instead writes herself into a multispecies landscape that teems with rattlesnakes, pack rats, skunks, mice, pigeons, dogs, macaws, and even lively turquoise. Moreover, Silko describes how these more-than-human creatures are threatened by the settler-colonial logics of possession and displacement, which continue to harm beings indigenous to this place.³ If Native memoirs stress “the sense of a relational self connected to a specific landscape” (Beard, “Teaching” 113), Silko explicates this connection to place by demonstrating how ongoing forms of possession and displacement threaten both her existence as a Native woman and the well-being of local creatures. Contributing to the history of Indigenous life writing that uses personal narratives to resist the violence of colonization, Silko’s *The Turquoise Ledge* anticipates a form of what Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg) terms “radical resurgence” in order to disrupt the physical and ideological tools of settler colonialism that attempt to claim, control, and eventually eradicate certain human and more-than-human bodies.⁴ Radical resurgence “refuses dispossession of both Indigenous bodies and land as the focal point of resurgent thinking and action” (Simpson 34). To persist as Indigenous in the settler state is to refuse colonial logics. Or, as Simpson puts it, “I simply cannot see how Indigenous peoples can continue to exist as *Indigenous* if we are willing to replicate the logics of

colonialism, because to do so is to actively engage in self-dispossession from the relationships that make us Indigenous in the first place” (35). Radical resurgence, therefore, “begins from a place of refusal of colonialism and its current settler colonial structural manifestation” (34) and subsequently builds “a politics of refusal that is generative” (177). This essay demonstrates that by supporting more-than-human well-being, Silko refuses settler-colonial possession and displacement and creates a flourishing multispecies landscape. Caught in a web of precarious but enduring entanglements, Silko and these beings craft alternative modes of togetherness to resist contemporary settler-colonial violence.

While *The Turquoise Ledge* resists colonization by promoting multispecies well-being, a danger exists in this interpretation. As Reder observes, “[A] sole focus on narratives of resistance replicates the founding ideas in much criticism about Native American literature that Indigenous texts only exist because of the existence of the colonizer” (“Indigenous” 171). Rather than reproduce this self-effacing, reactionary position, Reder reads Native life writing as seeking to “preserve Indigenous knowledge and specific tribal understandings for their descendants and subsequent generations” (170).⁵ As she succinctly explains, “[T]here is more to the politics of self-determination than resistance to oppression” (172). This essay moves away from the often reductive and universalizing interpretation of Native texts as documents of resistance by shifting attention to how radical resurgence is enacted through multispecies collaborations against specific mechanisms of settler colonialism.

To help uncover and explicate “the politics of self-determination” promoted through multispecies resistance, this article reads *The Turquoise Ledge* as engaging the practices of Indigenous environmental studies and sciences (IESS). As Kyle Whyte (Potawatomi) defines it, IESS “centers Indigenous historical heritages, living intellectual traditions, research approaches, education practices, and political advocacy to investigate how humans can live respectfully within dynamic ecosystems” (“Critical” 138). Native IESS scholars study “how moral relationships—including responsibility, spirituality, and justice—within a society yield empirical and humanistic insights about resilience” (139). As the following discussion demonstrates, Silko’s memoir participates in this emerging field. Reading *The Turquoise Ledge* through an IESS framework centers Indigenous practices and

elucidates how radical resurgence emerges from practices of care for other beings.⁶ With the field's attention to moral relationships and socioecological embeddedness, IESS examines the more than human as a site of colonial possession *and* Native resistance. Whyte and Kari Norgaard, for example, demonstrate how colonialism has harmed, and continues to harm, the abundance and availability of wild rice, sturgeon, salmon, and acorns in the Great Lakes and Pacific Coast regions. The loss of these environmental agents has, in turn, harmed Native gender identities, familial relationships, and ceremonial practices.⁷ They also make it clear, however, that Native tribes such as the Anishinaabe and Karuk continue to support these beings, and their indigeneity, in acts that demonstrate "collective continuance," or "a group's capacity to adapt to external forces, from naturally occurring environmental change . . . to more obviously human-induced changes at several scales" (Whyte, "Indigenous Experience" 166). The creatures that inhabit the pages of *The Turquoise Ledge* are a contested site where colonial possessive logics and Indigenous resistance practices meet. Insights from IESS help examine how representations of the more than human in Silko's memoir operate as an act of Native radical resurgence. While Silko's experiences as a Laguna Pueblo woman are unique and must not be used to extrapolate a universal theory of Indigenous resistance, her narrative does reveal that Native care for more than humans, as represented in the memoir genre, can defy settler-colonial logics of possession and displacement.

RATTLESNAKES AND RADICAL RESURGENCE

Rattlesnakes occupy a particularly dramatic site where settler-colonial violence and radical resurgence meet. Long appreciated, respected, and loved by many Indigenous peoples, rattlesnakes are creatures that must be admired and even revered (Portillo 80). With the arrival of European colonialism in the Americas, however, settler colonialists viewed these snakes as impediments to the project of land theft and the naturalization of settler presence. They actively eradicated rattlesnakes, casting them as dangerous menaces that must be removed from all landscapes. Like other settler-colonial policies of land management, the move to eradicate these creatures simultaneously worked to destroy Native connections to place (Silko 110). As Winona LaDuke (Ojibwe) argues in *All*

Our Relations: Native Struggles for Land and Life, the elimination of the more than human is “an immense loss to Native families and cultures” (2). Moreover, Whyte points out that in addition to harming places and Indigenous lifeways, settler colonialism has also obstructed practices of resilience: “[S]ettler campaigns *both* dramatically changed ecosystems . . . *and* obstructed indigenous peoples’ capacities to adapt to the changes” (“Our” 208). For some tribes, the loss of rattlesnakes also precipitated the loss of spiritual and experiential practices associated with these creatures. Yet by seeking to preserve these beings, Native peoples have long resisted cultural and ecological erasure. Silko frames two acts of historical and contemporary rattlesnake eradication—the use of fences and nets to demarcate boundaries and the belief in the home as a bounded, singularly human space—as forms of continued settler-colonial possession and displacement. By practicing moral relationships that seek to maintain the well-being of these snakes, such as freeing them from wires and supporting comfortable living spaces in and around the shared house, Silko partners with these creatures to resist settler-colonial harm and generate a multispecies future.⁸ As *The Turquoise Ledge* demonstrates, examining the more than human is central to the project of understanding and dismantling settler colonialism.

Throughout her memoir, Silko describes the landscapes of Tucson as deeply contested places where Indigenous and colonial presence have long collided. These lands have been occupied by Tohono O’odham peoples for millennia, and Silko emphasizes that Native presence defines this place. During one of her many walks through the local Tucson Mountains, Silko discovers a collection of grinding stones along a path and remarks: “The footpaths through the Tucson Mountains are ancient. Humans have lived in these hills and arroyos for thousands of years. . . . For the ancient people, these hills and arroyos held everything they might need for survival” (11). Later in the book she discovers awl tools, petroglyphs, arrow points, and a white quartz knife left by “the ancestors” of the mountains (259). As these examples illustrate, Native peoples *are* this place. Paula Gunn Allen, also a Laguna Pueblo author, makes the Indigenous relationship with place explicit: “We are the land. . . . [T]hat is the fundamental idea embedded in Native American life and culture in the Southwest” (1). Elaborating upon this point, Million explains, “Indigenous place is infinitely more than geographical location. It is in every sense holistic, where all entities are bound in

relations that interactively form societies, human and nonhuman” (29).⁹ Not distinguishable or separate from the other entities that create the landscapes in which one exists, Native individuals are one among many multispecies inhabitants at home in the Sonoran Desert. Silko makes this connection between Indigenous bodies and place even more explicit, recognizing the spirits of recently deceased friends in the birds that visit her, including a burrowing owl, a grackle, and a cactus wren (14–15). And while ruminating about her identity, she remarks: “When I think of the Pueblo people, I think of sandstone” (17). People and place, in other words, are coconstitutive.

Silko’s Laguna Pueblo understanding of place differs substantially from the settler-colonial view, which separates people from place, views land and its occupants as possessions, and establishes an environmental hierarchy that reinforces notions of human superiority. “In the settler mind,” Robin Wall Kimmerer (Potawatomi) observes, “land was property, real estate, capital, or natural resources. But to our people, it was everything: identity, the connection to our ancestors, the home of our nonhuman kinfolk, our pharmacy, our library, the source of all that sustained us. . . . It belonged to itself; it was a gift, not a commodity, so it could never be bought or sold” (17). Deploying a capitalist, possessive view of land, settler colonialists have damaged Silko’s multispecies home and her Native practices. Silko describes how Spaniards, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, brutally mutilated, raped, killed, and enslaved Pueblo, Laguna, Acoma, Apache, and Diné peoples in order to control lands, more-than-human creatures, and Native individuals (20–21). Later came militaries from Mexico and the United States, anthropologists from famous institutions, and boarding schools, which all sought to destroy Indigenous life and possess the newly “deserted” landscape (26–27). Lacking access to nearby public schools as a child, Silko was forced to attend a local boarding school, where she was violently discouraged from speaking the Laguna language. “We children were warned: once we crossed . . . onto the school grounds talking Indian was forbidden. If we disobeyed we’d be sent to the principal’s office for punishment. That was the first thing the teachers taught us children on the first day of kindergarten” (40–41). Dispossessed from her language in a government institution, Silko quickly learned that the settler state sought to silence her Native voice. Her childhood home in the Rio San Jose Valley was also subjected to radioactive fallout from

nearby nuclear bomb test sites, radioactive tailings from local uranium mines, and exposed yellowcake uranium from mining operations (69–71). In addition to these offenses, Silko has experienced the colonization of time itself, explaining that “[l]ong before there was any such thing as daylight savings time, the people of the desert Southwest got out of bed long before dawn . . . to work in their cornfields until daylight. . . . The Englishmen saw this and accused the people of laziness; but to work in the heat at high noon as the old gringos did was madness” (89). Even artistic expression in postsecondary institutions has been colonized: “I originally wanted to be a visual artist, not a writer. But at the University of New Mexico I discovered the fine arts college was blind to all but European art with its fetish for ‘realism’ and ‘perspective’” (129). Only recently has Silko begun to practice Laguna art forms. Colonialism, and often settler colonialism more specifically, has disrupted Indigenous places and practices in the Southwest. However, the continued presence of Native and more-than-human vitality in this region signals that the settler-colonial project of dispossession and replacement is incomplete. By coexisting alongside and supporting the continuance of rattlesnakes, in particular, Silko demonstrates that these creatures are a site where Indigenous radical resurgence and settler-colonial violence meet.

FENCES AND NETS

A tool of settler-colonial land possession in *The Turquoise Ledge*, fences displace rattlesnakes by limiting their territories and entrapping their bodies. Resisting this violence, both the snakes and Silko refute physical barriers that divide the landscape. Reviel Netz, in *Barbed Wire: An Ecology of Modernity*, demonstrates that fencing, particularly barbed wire, is a colonial technology that enabled possession of lands in the US West at unprecedented speed and geographic scale. This settler technology continues to crisscross the desert landscape where Silko lives. She had previously placed some wire fencing at strategic points around her home to protect chickens and pigeons from predators but ceased using it when she realized that it traps and kills rattlesnakes. At one point some chicken wire she had discarded “became the death snare for a fine three foot long rattler on the west slope of the hill below my house. The snake was able to get its head and neck through the oval opening but when the fatter part of it could not fit and the snake attempted to go back out, the

wire snagged its scales so it was trapped and died terribly” (84). After this horrific incident, Silko “got rid of all the chicken wire” and installed hardware cloth, which is “superior in every way to chicken wire and does far less harm to reptiles” (84). The act of removing the wire fences promotes the well-being of local snakes.

Like fences, plastic nets are a settler-colonial technology that harm rattlesnakes and threaten Native lifeways. As a tool designed to aid the spread of European American fruit tree agriculture into warm southwestern climates, nylon netting supports the large-scale purchasing of land for orchards and, subsequently, the takeover of aqueducts and waterways to irrigate industrial fields. Plastic nets and massive irrigation systems make industrial agriculture possible in a region with its own unique desert ecology. Orchards replace native species with non-native monocultures, damaging and disrupting the long-term ecological relations that evolved in this arid region. Agriculture has long been used as a mechanism of and justification for land theft from Native tribes. Tree netting harms more than humans, especially birds that seek sustenance and creatures such as rattlesnakes that get caught in its filaments. Silko discovers this when she removes some “wretched” nylon netting designed to keep birds out of fruit trees (84) and later finds a rattlesnake caught in the net’s filaments. “It was bad. As the snake struggled to free itself, it had only pulled the netting tighter, until the filaments drew blood on the tender skin between the scales. I had to act fast. I ran indoors and found a pair of tin shears. . . . I was going to have to put both hands within easy striking range of the head and upper body that was not entangled and moved freely” (85). Ensnared with the rattlesnake in this moment, Silko must either try to free the creature or let it suffer a slow death. Moved by the rattler’s pain, Silko attempts to cut it free:

I didn’t want to cut or harm the snake in any way. I slowly moved the tin shears down to the ensnared scales; I was so intently focused on freeing the snake from the netting the snake must have somehow understood. . . . Then a strange confidence came over me which I still can’t explain. . . . [W]ith the tin shears in my right hand I pushed the steel tips firmly against the snake’s body to try to reach the nylon threads cutting into his skin. I managed to get a nylon thread in the shears and snip! The snake didn’t react. I exhaled. Again I gently but firmly put the blades of the shears

under another nylon thread and cut it. When he felt his fat mid-section cut free, the big diamondback glided away gracefully and I felt blessed. (86)

During this precarious moment when both the rattlesnake's and Silko's lives are endangered, they trust one another and ultimately resist the trappings of settler-colonial technology. Mortified by the suffering she has accidentally caused the snake, Silko decides to risk her life for its well-being. As Whyte observes, "For many indigenous peoples, plants, animals and other nonhuman beings, entities and places are understood as among those capable of experiencing harm" ("Indigenous Experience" 166). Trapped in the netting, the rattler experiences the localized harm of the plastic filaments cutting its flesh and the dissipated harm of settler-colonial practices. Kimmerer acknowledges the willingness of Native individuals to aid more than humans as a necessary condition of caring for others: "[Y]ou hear people say that the best thing people can do for nature is to stay away from it and let it be. . . . But we were also given the responsibility to care for land. What people forget is that that means participating—that the natural world relies on us to do good things. You don't show your love and care by putting what you love behind a fence. You have to be involved" (363). Together, Silko and the rattlesnake practice care for one another while simultaneously resisting the technology that threatens their very existence. By destroying the net and freeing one of the animal prisoners it is designed to trap, Silko and the rattlesnake defy settler-colonial projects of possession and displacement.

THE HOUSE

If fences and nets stage a particularly visible encounter between settler and Indigenous practices, the home provides a less apparent and more intimate site of radical resurgence. The home, Stacy Alaimo observes, "has served as the defining container for the Western 'human,' a bounded space, wrought by delusions of safety, fed by consumerism, and fueled by nationalist fantasies" (17–18). Much like the technologies of fences and nets, the home demarcates interior from exterior, what is owned from what is not, what is safe from what is dangerous, and domesticated from wild. While scholars critiquing colonialism have studied the

home and homemaking as settler goals and evidence of displacement, they have left unexamined the ways in which this physical structure and the ideologies that dictate its use support and enable the settler-colonial project.¹⁰ Indeed, the settler home has been integral to imagining the westward progression of the frontier, the fulfillment of Manifest Destiny, and the expansion of the United States. It has served as a site where patriarchal domination could be developed and then practiced to control broader territories and peoples. Settler society extended the ideology of control used to dominate women and children in the home to conquer new subjects and landscapes. The goal of settler colonialism and settler home life are, after all, quite similar: the consolidation of power through violent means in order to erase the claims of others. The home has also harmed more than humans, which is a central practice of settler colonialism. “Nonhuman creatures, ecosystems, and environments have, no doubt, been harmed by the unrelenting encroachment of human domestic space,” Alaimo argues, “which is purified, as such, by the elimination of all but a few nonhuman species deemed desirable” (19). Finally, the home is a site that has enabled settler colonialists to imagine themselves as indigenous to place. With “roots” that extend several generations in the same home, settler colonialists are able to justify their continued presence on and claims to land. Threatening actions—whether historically by displaced Indigenous individuals seeking justice or in the present moment by socioenvironmental disasters—are seen as a personal affront to intergenerational settler presence and histories of placemaking supported by the state. As David Naguib Pellow observes, features of the built environment are often used as “subjects and instruments of oppression” (79). The settler home has been used to oppress Native individuals and more than humans.

Silko recognizes the home as a settler-colonial site and resists this violent characterization by dismantling illusions of the house as a bounded, exclusively human space and choosing instead to live with and support the well-being of rattlesnake companions. Her desert home lacks imagined and physical boundaries; instead, the house, the yard, the garage, the storage shed, the pigeon coop, and the garden are all permeable components of the landscape. In fact, Silko does not distinguish herself as separate from the other creatures that create and occupy this place but instead writes herself into the multispecies desert community. She remarks, for example: “In 1997 I started writing little notes about the

sky, the clouds, and all us desert creatures anxious to have the rain. . . . Clouds please take pity on us" (87). Just one of many "desert creatures" who require water for their daily survival, Silko recognizes herself as a vulnerable member of this shared place. Reflecting this understanding of the self as intimately and always connected with more-than-human creatures, Silko's home is a permeable part of the landscape that welcomes and nurtures—rather than excludes and harms—other beings. There are, for instance, holes in the wall behind the kitchen stove that allow animals to enter and exit. As Silko explains, "[A] small spotted Sonora skunk used to come out into the kitchen from under the stove in the winter," and "a big red rattlesnake" once entered the house from this permeable place (91). While skunks, dogs, pigeons, macaws, and pack rats all inhabit the home, rattlesnakes are the favored cohabitants. Despite posing an occasional risk to the dogs, who quickly learn to leave them alone, dozens of rattlers share spaces with Silko. They curl up next to ceramic water bowls and drainpipes in the yard waiting for prey (82); the snakes live by the horse corral (82–83); a female rattlesnake lives under the back step (91); another female rattler birthed six young in the living room; Silko raised one of the juveniles to adulthood and offers her living room as a home for it (92–93); a "big albino rattler" lives near a fig tree and hunts rats that live in a nearby drainpipe; a diamondback occasionally visits the pigeon cage looking for sparrows and small rodents to consume (96); one snake lives under the feed shed (97); a rare banded rock rattlesnake once spent part of an evening in the living room (98); rattlesnakes occasionally enter the cistern (99–100); a "big white rattler" lives in the backyard (102); and three rattlesnakes keep warm under the house beside the fireplace during the winter (103). Silko so appreciates their presence that she has a "snake pipe" installed under the house to "allow the snakes to get in and out" (101). She also fills bowls of water for the snakes and removes potential hazards to their health. By welcoming the rattlers, helping them find suitable homes, disrupting barriers with pipes and holes, and supporting their health, Silko ensures the well-being of these creatures and provides a way to live with them that opposes the bounded, anthropocentric, domineering, and hostile colonial home.

While from a settler-colonial perspective this multispecies community is downright dangerous and represents a failure of the property owner to maintain their space, Silko contends that living with

rattlesnakes can be perfectly safe, and she advances a theory of trust to explain her Native relationship with these beings. Her neighbors drop off “relocated” rattlers in the arroyo below her house because “they’ve heard” that she is “a friend of snakes” (Silko 290). To support the relocated snakes, Silko “keep[s] the area around the old corrals hospitable with a water trough and places for snakes to hide and to find rodents” (290–91). By supporting the well-being of these creatures, Silko challenges the colonial view that rattlesnakes do not belong in the Sonoran Desert. Shortly after moving to this area, she met a large rattlesnake four feet long and five inches in diameter that she jokingly called “Baby.” This rattler, as she puts it, “made me feel welcome here. He knew I was a friend of snakes” (82–83). Given the gift of welcoming, Silko begins to establish relationships with other snakes. One time a rattlesnake fell into the cistern, and as Silko worked to free it, the snake understood that she “meant no harm” (100) and cooperated with the rescue effort. The female rattlesnake that lives under the back step “trusts” Silko, and they have established a daily schedule with one another (91). Finally, during a tense encounter with the dogs, the “big white rattler” demonstrates its trust and respect for Silko: “The snake didn’t rattle at me, most snakes here don’t rattle at me, only at the dogs” (102). Silko, unlike the dogs, is a trusted companion.

In addition to placing one’s well-being in the control of another, Silko suggests that mutual trust is developed through the process of establishing familiarity. For example, at one point a rattler under the house “used to rattle whenever I stepped near the refrigerator door” (Silko 91). “At first she didn’t recognize my footsteps and used to rattle loudly under the kitchen floor where I stood. I jumped every time she rattled and then gradually she stopped rattling because she got used to me” (92). The gradual process of familiarity performed through daily interaction establishes trust between the snake and Silko. In a call for people to “safely live side by side with rattlesnakes in the Sonoran Desert” (113), Silko advises the reader: “Over time the rattlesnakes will get to know you and your pets. They learn human and dog behavior and seem to understand the timing of your daily routine; they try to avoid encounters with us at all cost” (114). While they ultimately attempt to avoid people, these intelligent creatures establish and practice trust. Indigenous practices of homemaking and being with emphasize “relationships that connect diverse parties (from humans

to forests) as *relatives* with reciprocal *responsibilities* to one another” (Whyte, “Indigenous Environmental” 564). The settler-colonial home, however, replaces the practices of multispecies trust, responsibility, and collaboration with a hierarchy of domination. This model of control centers the dominant male figure and leaves no room for more-than-human cohabitants that threaten colonial violence. Silko positions her practices of inhabiting as an explicit act of radical resurgence that resists settler-colonial logics. By living together, dismantling boundaries, supporting one another’s well-being, and establishing relationships of trust, Silko and the rattlesnakes resist settler-colonial formulations of the home.

HISTORIES OF COMPANIONSHIP

As Silko disassembles contemporary fences, nets, walls, ideologies, and boundaries meant to eliminate rattlesnakes, she also acknowledges that these reptiles have long been a site of Indigenous radical resurgence. Rattlesnakes are deeply embedded within Native cultural practices in the Southwest. Silko explains that the Tarahumara Indians in Chihuahua, Mexico, use rattlesnake venom “to treat cancer tumors” and that snake oil possesses medicinal qualities for many Native peoples (82). She learns that “Hopi farmers copied the tight coil of the rattlers to make their garden plots. The farmers made deep circular depressions in the garden soil that were designed to catch and hold rainwater for the seeds planted in the center just the way the rattlers caught rain in their coils” (104). These examples demonstrate that rattlesnakes have long supported the well-being and survival of Indigenous peoples. Silko also discusses her long-standing familial and spiritual connections to rattlesnakes, recalling how her relatives “used to sprinkle corn meal and pollen in the circles the snakes made” (102). Not long after her mother’s death, Silko comes across two blue rattlesnakes while on a horse ride that she recognizes as her mother’s spirit: “The twin rattlesnakes caught my attention; they were her message to me. Where she was now was in this world and nearby me, but not as she was” (98). These creatures connect Silko to her loved ones, reaffirming Laguna Pueblo presence and continuance.

With their central position in many tribal cultures, rattlesnakes have been the direct target of settler-colonial eradication campaigns. Yet

Silko imagines that, despite being targeted for extermination, ancient rattlesnakes persist:

At the time of the coming of the Europeans to the Americas, giant rattlesnakes in excess of ten feet in length with the diameter of a man's thigh lived near springs and permanent sources of water. The indigenous people believed the springs belonged to the big snakes, and they revered the snakes as divine messengers and bringers of rain. Reports by the Spanish troops and the Catholic priests recount their diligence in hacking up these giant snakes or burning them alive in the name of Christianity.

But the Americas are vast. Great expanses of mountainous areas are virtually inaccessible even by helicopter. Many rural locations are only visited a few times a year by a handful of people. Rattlesnakes are wise beings, so it seems possible that in remote box canyons in mountains too steep and rough for humans to enter, a number of twelve foot long rattlesnakes have survived after all. (110)

This passage considers how rattlesnakes are the site of both settler-colonial violence and Native radical resurgence. Silko blames Spanish troops and Catholic priests for the “hacking” and “burning . . . alive” of giant rattlesnakes, making it clear that the eradication of these creatures was a way to exterminate Indigenous belief practices that asked people to revere the snakes as “divine messengers and bringers of rain” and replace this rich Native belief system with Christianity.¹¹ As Whyte argues, “Settler colonialism . . . interferes with and erases the socioecological contexts required for indigenous populations to experience the world as a place infused with responsibilities to humans, nonhumans and ecosystems” (“Indigenous Experience” 159). By destroying the rattlesnakes and their habitats, settler colonialists also sought to eliminate the socioecological conditions required to support Native life and customs. However, in direct opposition to the settler-colonial goal of total extermination, Silko claims a form of what Pellow calls “socioecological indispensability,” arguing that giant rattlesnakes may have survived and asserting their central position within landscapes and Native practices. If the giant snakes have survived settler-colonial possession and displacement, Indigenous beliefs and practices concerning the snakes have also continued to exist. In this way, the collective continuance of rattlesnakes and Native peoples is a form of radical resurgence, a way

of refusing settler-colonial violence by enduring and asserting a shared indispensability.

RADICAL RESURGENCE THROUGH ART AND LANDSCAPE

Silko's multispecies radical resurgence culminates in the final section of the memoir, where she uses Indigenous art to resist the disruptive settler-colonial actions of a neighbor who possesses and destroys a local arroyo that provides necessary habitat and food sources for the creatures she lives alongside. Urban sprawl, Silko explains, is a particularly pernicious manifestation of contemporary settler colonialism. The outward expansion of Tucson has led to fragmentation and privatization of land, which has subsequently displaced desert beings. Repeating a critique that runs through her fiction, Silko addresses how real-estate development has produced the dangerous interworking of possession and displacement: "In the past thirty years the bulldozers and urban sprawl of Tucson have destroyed hundreds of square miles of pristine desert habitat and left the desert tortoises in danger of extinction along with the Gila monster lizards and spotted owls" (82). While her description of the desert habitat as "pristine" is troubling, given the environmental history of this region, Silko makes it clear that real-estate expansion has parceled up the Sonoran Desert and displaced a number of animals.¹² During a walk through the Tucson Mountains, Silko discovers that her neighbor—a proponent of Tucson's urban sprawl—recently quarried sand and stone from a nearby arroyo to improve his yard. Upon seeing the damage done to the arroyo, she remarks: "[T]he beautiful gray basalt and pale orange quartzite boulders had been torn loose from the sides of the arroyo and dragged out of the wash and skidded up the old road to 'landscape' the yard of the preposterous house with its prison tower and prison wall" (170). The neighbor possesses significant wealth and owns an oversized, sprawling home that overlooks the arroyo. Unlike Silko's home, which is rather compact, is part of the Sonoran Desert, and nurtures the well-being of more-than-human companions, the neighbor's house is "preposterous," reminds Silko of a "prison," and eradicates local creatures. By likening the house to a prison, Silko emphasizes how the building aims to be impermeable and how it threatens the well-being of nonwhite and nonhuman bodies.¹³ Damaging the Sonoran landscape harms multispecies relations.

In a subsequent passage, Silko characterizes the destruction of the arroyo as a direct form of settler-colonial violence endorsed by the state: “The owner of the grotesque house could have easily afforded to buy rock and sand excavated legally from a quarry. Instead he acted out what he saw as his manifest destiny: to destroy whatever he wanted to destroy willy-nilly no matter the impact on others or himself” (170). Unconcerned about the well-being of other inhabitants and unable to recognize his own embeddedness in this landscape, the neighbor participates in a paramount settler-colonial imaginary of the US West: Manifest Destiny. The colonial belief in the rightful and inevitable ownership of western lands justified, and continues to justify, the elimination and erasure of Native peoples and more-than-human beings. Holding unbridled patriarchal entitlement and privilege, the neighbor believes the arroyo is his to pillage. However, as Silko observes, damaging this ecosystem puts others at risk, including the man responsible for these acts. Silko views the destruction of this place as a state-condoned attack against both her Native identity and the well-being of other desert inhabitants: “The loss and outrage I felt choked me. I knew the local authorities didn’t bother to enforce the laws intended to protect the land from damage, and that angered me even more” (169). The state sanctions this settler-colonial violence that leaves Silko “choked” and unable to breathe or speak. As Lindsey Dillon and Julie Sze make clear, the state restricts the ability of people of color to breathe. Dillon and Sze point out that socioenvironmental justice movements, including Black Lives Matter, have used phrases such as Eric Garner’s last words, “I can’t breathe,” to resist police and state brutality (247). By stifling Silko’s breath in this moment, the state can be read as further limiting her ability to resist. Silko, however, writes about her experience, using the memoir genre to speak and breathe again.

In addition to stifling Silko’s Indigenous identity, the state-sanctioned violence also harms her more-than-human companions. Before this man’s harmful actions, the arroyo supported a vibrant multispecies community of desert tortoises, Gila monster lizards, and spotted owls; however, the destruction of this place forces a group of famished great horned owls to pursue several macaws that live with Silko. She blames her neighbor and the state for this attack: “I love the great horned owls; I don’t blame the owls for the attack on my macaws, I blame the men in the bulldozers who crush the desert. I blame the imbeciles in

Pima County government who fail at everything except collecting taxes and bribes” (Silko 207). Aileen Moreton-Robinson considers this state-approved violence a possessive logic that works to “circulate sets of meanings about ownership of the nation, as part of commonsense knowledge, decision making, and socially produced conventions” (xii). By physically damaging the desert with heavy equipment and participating in bureaucratic practices, the settler state supports and justifies the possessive violence caused by Silko’s neighbor.

After several failed attempts to secure justice through state authorities, Silko pursues a form of radical resurgence that operates outside of state power. She uses Laguna Pueblo art to ensure her continued presence and the future well-being of more-than-human creatures in the Sonoran Desert. Silko paints white Star Beings, or spirits sent from the stars, on the remaining stones in the bulldozed arroyo. “The Star Beings directed me to paint their glyph,” she explains, “the white cross figure of the star, on all sides of the boulders, and especially on the scars left by the metal claw of the machine or cracks or damaged [*sic*] inflicted by the machine” (308). Feeling responsible to the boulders and the arroyo, Silko establishes moral relationships with environmental figures. Shortly after this radical act of resistance, Silko returns to the arroyo to discover that her neighbor ceased his destructive actions; the Star Beings stymied settler violence. As Silko leaves the arroyo, she encounters a local woman, who asks if she has seen the “gang graffiti” left on the boulders in the gully. This hiker suspects that gangs from Tucson visited the region to tag stones with their group’s sign. In this moment of cultural misidentification, Silko’s Laguna Pueblo art is falsely interpreted as gang sign. The woman’s misreading of these marks demonstrates how gang behavior is criminalized while settler-colonial actions are not. As Silko remarks, “In Tucson ‘gang’ and ‘gang graffiti’ are code words white people use to indicate young brown or black men who they consider to be ‘aliens’ even if they are born in Arizona” (317). The settler state attempts to manage black and brown bodies while normalizing and condoning environmental violence.

In addition to rendering visible the normalization of settler-colonial harm, the misidentification of these marks demonstrates the extent to which Indigenous individuals have been erased from this landscape. Rather than consider local actors, the woman makes a significant leap to assume that “an urban gang had driven miles out of town to the

big arroyo to paint ‘gang graffiti’ on the rocks” (Silko 318). Moreover, she is unable to recognize the Star Beings as a Laguna Pueblo spiritual art form and instead assumes that these marks must be graffiti. Silko, however, refuses to be misinterpreted, affirming that her marks are a form of radical resurgence: “How interesting that the small white crosses were interpreted as ‘gang graffiti.’ . . . Apparently the emblem of the Star Beings penetrated the psyches of the newcomers who got the message: indigenous forces are present to oppose you” (317). The Star Beings, boulders, and herself, she makes clear, are “indigenous forces” that together “oppose” state-condoned colonial violence. Silko’s art operates external to state control and represents an assertion of Native self-determination. Abandoning the regulatory apparatus of the state, which supports settler-colonial projects of possession and displacement, Silko refuses to participate within the state judiciary system.¹⁴ As Elizabeth Hoover explains, Indigenous individuals must work within the trappings of the settler state if they seek environmental justice. “Indigenous people are free to construct and produce environmental knowledge according to whatever cultural criteria they wish,” Hoover writes, “but if they want to see that knowledge actually used in negotiations, they must express it in a way that conforms to those criteria specifically sanctioned by state power” (132–33). Silko abandons this framework altogether, practicing radical resurgence to halt the neighbor’s destructive actions. By painting Native symbols on the damaged boulders of the arroyo, Silko resists settler-colonial violence. This resurgent act allows Silko to assert her Laguna Pueblo presence and protect the landscape that nurtures more-than-human companions.

SELF, GENRE, AND RADICAL RESURGENCE

Supporting the well-being of Silko’s fellow desert cohabitants preserves her Laguna Pueblo identity, ensures the ongoing contributions of more-than-human creatures to this landscape, and resists contemporary settler colonialism premised on the logics of possession and displacement. *The Turquoise Ledge* accomplishes this work by exploring the plurality of selfhood through personal narrative. Beard argues that in life narratives by Native women of the Americas, “the self is defined not in individual terms but in collective terms, as part of a collective struggle, as part of a communal identity” (*Acts* 115). Moreover, as Reder contends,

the self in Native memoirs is “ever-changing” and constantly in flux (“Stories” 278). Silko presents her Laguna Pueblo self as always mutable and mutual, but she practices this identity by positioning herself within a landscape of active more than humans that constantly shape and influence one another. By writing herself into the Sonoran Desert, in accordance with IESS understandings of relationality, Silko positions herself as just one creature among many who together resist settler colonialism in this place. Her identity as a Laguna Pueblo woman hinges upon the presence of rattlesnakes, owls, lizards, skunks, and a host of other creatures. Silko centers a collection of more-than-human characters, ultimately using the Native memoir form to reject the colonial belief in bounded subjectivity and the division between “human” and “other” in favor of an Indigenous perspective that acknowledges moral relationships and intimate interconnections. Read together, the entangled resistance of Silko and more than humans to disruptive and possessive settler-colonial logics is a form of radical resurgence that refuses the many manifestations of settler colonialism. Critiquing the multiple, pervasive forms of settler violence in the desert Southwest, Silko proposes decolonial modes of togetherness necessary for future well-being. With its emphasis on togetherness, relationality, and collective continuance, *The Turquoise Ledge* models a form of multispecies storytelling that affirms the presence of Indigenous peoples and more-than-human beings.

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NOTES

1. Influenced by Voyles's discussion of wastelanding in the US Southwest, Million contends that the region known as the Arctic represents the most recent manifestation of this settler-colonial move to vacate meanings, people, and more than humans from landscapes. Imagined as empty and devoid of cultural value, the difficult terrains of the arctic tundra and desert landscape justify resource extraction by global superpowers and multinational corporations.

2. I use David Abram's phenomenological term "more than human" to describe the creatures of the Sonoran Desert because it better captures Silko's inclusive relationship with organisms than the Cartesian and colonial term "nonhuman," which positions certain people—the European subject, in particular—as superior to all animal and plant others that can never be human.

3. While pigeons and macaws are not indigenous to the Sonoran Desert, they have occupied this place for centuries through a history of trade.

4. See Beard (*Acts*; "Teaching"); Sands; and Faagai for more on Native life writing as narrative resistance. Lee Schweninger argues that life writing has been central to Native literature because it enables authors to foreground injustice through personal experience and to emphasize differences between Indigenous and European American responses to land (11).

5. Reder further develops these claims in "Writing."

6. IESS resists non-Indigenous readings of the text that risk misrepresenting Silko's experiences, the Sonoran Desert, the threats of ongoing colonialism, and the beings that occupy this place. Like Annette Angela Portillo, who, in her recently published *Sovereign Stories and Blood Memories: Native American Women's Autobiography*, explains the necessity of centering indigeneity in Silko's memoir, this article reads *The Turquoise Ledge* through Native frameworks. As Portillo notes: "A nonindigenous-centered reading of *Turquoise Ledge* might characterize Silko as a 'nature writer' or even call her an 'environmental conservationist' using ecocriticism or even ecofeminism as a methodology to examine her text. But I resist those reductionist methods because at its core *Turquoise Ledge* is about survivance of indigenous peoples and indigenous homelands as well as animals and all sentient beings" (74). For more on the threats posed by non-Native methodologies, theories, and praxis, see Tuck and Yang; Todd.

7. See Whyte, "Our"; Norgaard; and Willette, Norgaard, and Reed.

8. Taking a different approach from Catherine Rainwater, who questions the "real" presence of the rattlesnakes, this article understands these creatures to be participants in the Sonoran Desert landscape. In one of the few scholarly publications that consider *The Turquoise Ledge*, Rainwater contends that "by telling us that she lives among rattlers and receives messages from Star Beings, Silko shakes her attentive audience loose from blinding certainty" (13). Rather than reinforce a binary between certainty and uncertainty, this article avoids claims to "the real" and reads the rattlesnakes as Silko's cohabitants.

9. LaDuke provides a similar discussion of Indigenous place, writing about Anishinaabeg connections to land and water: "We are nations of people with distinct

land areas, and our leadership and direction emerge from the land up. Our commitment and tenacity spring from our deep connection to the land. This relationship to land and water is continuously reaffirmed through prayer, deed, and our way of being—*minobimaatisiwin*, the ‘good life’” (4).

10. See, for example, Dunbar-Ortiz; Wolfe.

11. While rattlesnakes were hated, feared, and exterminated by settlers, the snake also became what Drake Stutesman calls “an emblem of colonial tenacity” during the Revolutionary War, when flags began displaying an image of a ready-to-attack rattlesnake with the words “Don’t Tread on Me” underneath (176). Most recently, this image has been co-opted by the so-called Tea Party, which celebrates US colonialism and promotes continued settler-colonial violence.

12. At one point in her memoir, Silko describes the Sonoran Desert as “slightly askew and a bit trashy” (170). Her use of the term “pristine” to describe the Sonoran landscape obscures the environmental violence that has occurred in this place and suggests that the settler-colonial concept of “untouched wilderness” still holds cultural currency.

13. In *What Is Critical Environmental Justice?* (2017) Pellow explains that prisons, contrary to the goals of the state, are quite permeable. Inmates regularly escape, and toxins saturate most prison complexes. In addition, prisons displace more than humans through their construction and the practices required to maintain them.

14. The Native pursuit of justice external to the state judicial system also highlights the inadequacy of colonial courts to fairly handle disputes and demonstrates the wide array of Indigenous practices available for addressing and resolving criminal acts.

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Book Review

Tommy Pico. *Nature Poem*. Tin House P, 2017. ISBN: 978-1-9410-4063-8. 76 pp.

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“Let’s be clear,” Teebs tells his audience in *Nature Poem*. “I hate nature—hate its *guts*” (67). This emphatic insistence eight pages before the conclusion of Tommy Pico’s seventy-four-page long-form poem is presented in case we missed Teebs’s many other declarations up to this point about his troubled relationship with Nature, capital N. “I wd slap a tree across the face,” Teebs declares on page 2, while on page 50 he announces he “wd give a wedgie to a sacred mountain and gladly piss on the grass of / the park of poetic form / while no one’s lookin’.” And don’t even get him started about writing a nature poem; there’s absolutely no way Teebs could *ever* write one.

These disavowals by Teebs (who is Pico’s performance persona, “an exaggerated version of the author” (Moskowitz), and the speaker in *Nature Poem*) are as funny as they are fraught in Pico’s angry, brilliant, tender, troubling, and often hilarious poem. *Nature Poem* is a carefully crafted, seductive portrait of Teebs’s ambivalence around natural bodies, including his own queer, urban, contemporary Kumeyaay body, whose cells contain the living distillation of a larger body of historical knowledge about his own and other Indigenous peoples. In a stylistic diversity of short poetic snapshots and reflections—written in frequent hashtags, italics, text slang, and expletives—Teebs outlines a larger story about his responsibility to that historical knowledge as both a relentless weight he’d like to offload and an inspiration of which he is in perpetual awe.

Nature Poem opens with Teebs contemplating the stars, which glitter throughout this poem to consistently remind us that this might, in fact, be a poem about nature. Pico writes of “sea stars on the Pacific coast,” of “think[ing] about orange cliffs, bare of orange stars,” of “[a]nemonies n shit. Sand crabs n shit. Fleas. . . . / Ugh I swore to myself I would never

write a nature poem" (1). The theme of the destruction of the natural world by human activity laces the text alongside the repeated idea that Teebs "can't write a nature poem" in order to confront a range of stereotypes Pico believes he will resist by not writing one. "I can't write a nature poem / bc it's fodder for the noble savage / narrative" (2), Teebs explains, a trope he illustrates several pages later through relating how "This white guy asks do I feel more connected to nature / bc I'm NDN / asks did I live *like in a regular house* / growing up on the rez / . . . says it's hot do I have any rain ceremonies" (15). Expressing his frustration with this clueless white man, although Teebs nevertheless hooks up with him, Teebs laments, "[H]e doesn't understand / why I can't write a fucking nature / poem." A tone of Teebs's alienation is the baseline in this text.

Yet despite Teebs's resistance to it, Nature keeps putting the moves on Teebs. "Nature keeps wanting to hang out," he tells us, even though "[e]very date feels like the final date bc we always / find small ways of being / extremely rude to each other, like / mosquito bites or deforestation." Teebs believes he might be "in an abusive relationship w / nature / then again I think I'm in an abusive relationship w / myself, I whisper after / pinching my squishy belly" (22). Pico's defiant voice and snarky resistance to performing the monolithic, earth-connected Indian underscore *Nature Poem's* effectiveness as an ecocritical text. "Nature kisses me outside the movie theater," Teebs informs readers, but he "can't tell if it was a romantic comedy or a scary movie bc of politics" (65). Pico's use of personification in *Nature Poem* gives agency not only to Nature but also to History, and even an agency has agency here: "Crappy water / Shoots through purgatory creek / On its way to the Colorado River / *My bad*, says the EPA after accidentally dumping 3 million gallons of / waste in the stream. / *Fuck you too*, says Nature" (54).

We see early on that the "Nature" Pico is exploring is primarily human. The poem is Teebs's struggle to work out something that ultimately can't be worked out, like how to reconcile the simultaneity of disproportionately high rates of Native youth suicide, plundered Kumeyaay funeral urns, and historical trauma with Teebs's own immediate and mundane pleasures, including "hoovering" gold gummy bears in the movie theater while trying not to appear like a candy-scarfing kid to his date (21), tweeting with his friend AngelNafis about the transcendence of Aretha Franklin (34), and managing his own

sexual desires. “Last night I had a dream that I was a ghost who gave blowjobs and that,” Teebs believes, “is pretty much the experience of dating in the city” (20).

Tommy Pico isn’t able to resolve his ambivalence toward Nature or toward his place on earth as an urban, Kumeyaay, twenty-first-century queer person. He writes, for example, with a blend of tenderness and bewilderment about his parents’ close relationship with their homelands and plant relatives. “My father takes me into the hills we cut sage,” he recalls. “He tells me to *thank / the plant for its sacrifice, son*. Every time I free a switch of it a burst of / prayer for every leaf.” As for his mother, “When she ascends the mountains to pick acorn, my mother / motherfucking waves at oak trees.” Despite his profane wordplay, there is clearly affection and respect in Pico’s description of these details. At the same time, Teebs is quick to distance himself from such behavior before the end of the page: “*I am nothing like that*, I say to my audience. / I say, *I went to Sarah Lawrence College / I make quinoa n shit*.” The page closes with Teebs stating flatly that, after being called “*a good Indian*” by “some dick / walking to class” when Teebs was seen picking up a candy wrapper, he “no longer pick[s] up trash” (24). It is this minefield of attraction and repulsion toward his relationship with the natural world as a Native man and toward the humans within that world, too many of whom work to box him into a static racist trope, that Pico constantly negotiates in *Nature Poem*.

Pico forces readers to acknowledge this negotiation through recognizing the physicality of Indigenous and queer bodies, bodies belonging to two populations that, often simultaneously, have and continue to experience white supremacist, settler-colonialist violence. When Teebs is onstage performing, he’s “a mess / of tremor and sweat,” his physical nervousness leading him to consider historical trauma and his individual impulse to disappear. Because “[w]hen yr descended from a clever self adept at evading an occupying / force,” Teebs states, “when contact meant another swath of sick cousins, another / cosmology snuffed, another stolen sister / and the water and the blood and the blood and the blood and the / blood and the blood / u flush under the hot lights” (55). Such is the nature of Teebs’s engagement with the multiple spaces and histories he inhabits.

Written primarily in free verse, *Nature Poem* is an often-breathless series of emphatic rants and peevish outbursts punctuated by silences

and soft asides. If *Nature Poem* were an EKG, the graph of its seismic squiggles would indicate an extremely agitated heart, one either vigorously healthy or about to explode. The effect of these poetic peaks and valleys is intentional in mapping the form and the intellectual landscape of *Nature Poem*. Writing on *IRL*, Pico's long-form poem preceding *Nature Poem*, Peter Moskowitz describes Pico's belief that "[p]oetry is . . . a way to make people understand just how hard" it is to reconcile Pico's multiple and often conflicting identities as a queer urban artist and a rez kid who grew up poor. Through his poetry, "[h]e wants his readers to feel the disjointedness of his life." As in *IRL*, *Nature Poem* realizes these intentions through both craft and content.

There are so many powerful moments in *Nature Poem* that describing the few I've focused on here merely scratches the surface. Song, band, and music references are woven throughout, creating a soundtrack to the poem that is worthy of recording. The complexity and depth of *Nature Poem* accrue upon subsequent readings. Near the end of the poem, Teebs finally faces those questions he was resisting and asks, "What if I really do feel connected to the land?" (72). We saw this coming, of course. Funny, heartbreaking, chronically questioning, Pico writes a single line on the poem's penultimate page: "Admit it. This is the poem you wanted all along" (73). It turns out he's right, and we didn't even know it.

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