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FROM THE EDITORS

tawâw! Welcome to volume 32, issues 1–2, of *Studies in American Indian Literatures*. The idea of space and who is deemed worthy of support is something we've been thinking about. So-called polite Canadians wrung their hands over the "inconvenience" of Indigenous peoples and accomplices occupying entrances to ports, intersections, and railways. It didn't take long to see how settlers really feel about Indigenous peoples asserting sovereignty. And we're in the middle of a pandemic, which will also significantly impact reserves and remote communities without access to clean drinking water and grocery stores. In 2009, the Canadian government sent body bags to remote Manitoba communities when they demanded more help with the H1N1 flu outbreak. And so many reserves in Canada don't have clean drinking water, which alongside the calls for continuing governmental hostility to land sovereignty, shows how little "reconciliation" means in Canada.

It's not surprising that many of our contributors echo the necessity for Indigenous self-representation and sovereignty. Sophie McCall's "Re-Framing, De-Framing, and Shattering the Frames: Indigenous Writers and Artists on Representing Residential School Narratives" uses late Cree editor Greg Younging's (who wrote *Best Practices in Indigenous Publishing*) assertion that appropriating Indigenous stories is akin to the extraction of resources from Indigenous lands and children from Indigenous families and communities. McCall argues for a reframing of residential school literature, particularly for settler scholars, in order to center how Indigenous writers are shattering the frames of residential school representation. In "U nojil a ch'i'ibal: Briceida Cuevas Cob's Poetic Empowerment of Yucatec Maya Women," Hannah Palmer examines Yucatec Maya identity in light of transnational impulses in Indigenous women's writing. Similarly, in "'Language To Reach With': Layli Long Soldier's *WHEREAS* Connects Words to Reality," Rachel Griffis explores how Long Soldier uses language to trouble official apologies, stressing

the strength of Indigenous languages to uphold powerful anti-colonial realities.

“What Looks Like a Grave: Native and Anarchist Place-Making in New England” by Theresa Warburton analyzes the long so-called New England to examine how both anarchist and settler stories of the land supplant Indigenous place-making, particularly during the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the Mayflower. Rachel Brown shows how Anglo-Cheyenne writer George Bent’s six-part autobiography *Forty Years with the Cheyennes*, published from October 1905 to March 1906 in the Colorado Springs periodical *The Frontier: A Journal of Early Days and Their Thrilling Events*, writes against the discourse of western expansion. “Now for the Indian Story’: Reconceiving George Bent as a Warrior-Writer” shows how Bent uses Cheyenne ways of knowing, particularly warrior culture, as an active agent of history. Jen Shook’s “Unghosting Bones: Resistant Play(s) versus the Legacy of Carlisle Indian Industrial School” examines how *The Moon in Two Windows* (2006) by N. Scott Momaday (Kiowa) and *My Father’s Bones* (2013) by Suzan Shown Harjo (Cheyenne/Hodulgee Muscogee) and Mary Kathryn Nagle (Cherokee) make visible what should not be hidden: residential schools and the looting of sacred remains and objects. “The Necessity of Lived Resistance: Reading Leslie Marmon Silko’s *Gardens in the Dunes* in An Era of Rapid Climate Change” by Rebecca Tillett illuminates how Silko’s novel envisions Indigenous ways of knowing as an alternative to climate change, an alternative that some non-Indigenous peoples are now starting to understand. Janet Dean’s “Getting on with Things: Ojibwe Ontology and the Material in Louise Erdrich’s *The Painted Drum*” also illustrates the importance of Indigenous ways of knowing and imagines an Indigenous-centered ecological praxis, echoing this issue’s call for a (re)turn to Indigenous ways of knowing.

June Scudeler and Siobhan Senior

Re-Framing, De-Framing, and Shattering the Frames

Indigenous Writers and Artists on Representing
Residential School Narratives

SOPHIE MCCALL

During a panel session titled “Best Practices in Indigenous Publishing” in 2017, the late Cree author Gregory Younging¹ talked about the tension between what he calls the “Extraction and reclamation of Indigenous cultural expressions.”² He argues that much of the history and practice of publishing Indigenous literatures in Canada has been about extraction. In referring to extraction he is invoking not only the appropriation of Indigenous stories, but also the mining of resources from the land and the taking of children from their families and communities (Taylor, *Gathering* 24).³ Younging goes on to describe how Indigenous writers are now turning toward “reclamation,” taking back what’s been taken, and asserting belonging on Indigenous people’s own terms. In this era of Indigenous resurgence,⁴ characterized in part by Survivor⁵-led acts of breaking generations of silences around Residential Schools and rejecting federally-imposed models of recognition, there is a tremendous momentum for reclaiming stories, knowledges, lifeways, languages, and cultural forms of expression.

An extraordinary example of the tension between extraction and reclamation that Younging names is *The Witness Blanket* (2012–2014) by Kwakwaka’wakw Master Carver and installation artist Carey Newman (Hayalthkin’geme). Newman—whose father Victor, great-great grandfather Charlie James, and great aunt Ellen Neel are all renowned wood carvers—is also an intergenerational Survivor of residential schools. Over the course of twelve months, Newman hired three people—Rosy Hartman, Jamie Elizabeth Lewis, and Marek Tyler⁶—to travel 204,762 kilometers to sites of former residential schools, the vast majority of which are falling down, have burned down, have been demolished, or in some cases have been transformed to serve another

purpose.⁷ At these sites, as well as at churches, government buildings, and cultural structures,⁸ the team gathered 887 objects that Newman calls “pieces of history.” Newman embedded into large cedar frame each of these pieces of history—including an old door, stained glass, a child’s shoe, a hockey skate, a doorknob, a brick, his sisters’ braids of hair, a photograph of a child, a letter from parents asking that their children come home—Newman embedded into large cedar frame. On the accompanying website, each belonging is attributed to its donor, and many are accompanied by short personal statements or testimonies. One of the most important pieces is a door reclaimed from St. Michael’s Residential School in Alert Bay, BC. This building was demolished in February 2015 after a ceremony hosted by the ‘Namgis First Nation and attended by former students (Hyslop). The door itself frames many individual belongings. It remains open to let visitors walk through to the other side. In his documentary film (codirected by Cody Graham), *Picking Up the Pieces: The Making of the Witness Blanket* (2018), Newman tells the story of his father’s first visit back to the residential school that he had attended as a young boy. As if walking through a door, Victor establishes a new relationship with the place. Carey states, “For most of his life my father locked his childhood away in darkness. But visiting what remains of St. Mary’s Residential School [in Mission, BC] he walked amongst memories, reclaiming the space” (Graham and Newman, dirs.).

This paper examines how Indigenous writers and artists have approached the representation of residential school history and the ethical challenges this work poses to settler scholars addressing this subject. *The Witness Blanket* is a visual manifestation of a larger movement or impulse in artistic and cultural work by Survivors and intergenerational Survivors: the intensity of a desire to re-frame, de-frame, or shatter the frames of residential school narratives. The strategies of re- and de-framing fulfill many purposes, including to challenge the forces of erasure, appropriation, and extraction; to assert the forces of reclamation; to proclaim sovereignty over stories; and to imagine testimony outside of the framework of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC). Writers and artists shift the frame to make stories more legible—or in some cases to deliberately foreground silence and what is not (yet) told. This struggle to re-frame, de-frame, and shatter the frames of how to tell these stories has high

stakes when it comes to asserting control over the complex legacies of residential schools. Questions emerging from the works of art that I will be discussing include who owns these stories? How should the testimonies from the TRC and other fora be cared for and preserved, and who should make decisions about access to this testimony? What are the differences in giving testimony within the structures of the TRC and outside of that frame? Given the forces of cultural repression, language prohibition, and censorship, and the strict control over residential school archives by the Canadian State, how do these works push against this silencing and assert voice and presence?

The works I address in this paper emerge from a variety of Indigenous contexts—including Kwakwaka'wakw, Cree, Secwepemc, Tahltan, and Siksika Nations—reflecting the widespread, systemic impact of residential schools as well as the diverse ways in which Indigenous artists have voiced testimony. In discussing testimony and its expression in the work of Indigenous writers and artists, I draw on the work of Algonquin scholar Michelle Coupal, who has devised the concept of the “testimonial imaginary” to describe how Indigenous writers “give[] evidence to the experiences of individuals or communities” while offering “an alternative form of testimonial to residential school abuses, and a creative act of instruction about its legacies, as a supplement to the work of the TRC” (Coupal 477). The works I discuss explore “alternative form[s] of testimonial” by refusing predetermined frames in the telling of Survivors’ and their extended family’s stories. Cree poet Louise Bernice Halfe, or Skywalker, dedicates her latest work to her children and grandchildren and gives her testimony through the frame of ceremony. Bev Sellars places her autobiography and biography of three generations of Secwepemc women at a residential school—her grandmother, her mother, and herself—into the bentwood box at the TRC National Event in Vancouver in 2013, while exhorting the commission to do more to change the material realities for Survivors. Tahltan performance artist Peter Morin, working with various collaborators, describes how he aimed to transform the space of the TRC National Event in Montreal (April 2013) into the Stikine River in Tahltan territories (Morin 70). Siksika artist Adrian Stimson retrieves from the town dump cast-off beds and windows from the Old Sun Residential School, located on Siksika territory, and creates an installation that recovers his own and his parents’ stories of residential schools. These artists have found new and

startling ways to draw their audience's attention to the ethics of speaking for, about, and with others. They have taken control over the structural devices of documentation, confronting the lie of idealism embedded within Christian, liberal-democratic discourses of reconciliation, and insisting upon the material histories of residential schools.

Attending to the material histories of residential schools counteracts the tendency in mainstream discourses of reconciliation to focus too narrowly on the personal dynamics of confession and healing, while eliding the material conditions that shape the acts of testifying and witnessing. Coupal argues for "reinvigorating an engagement with testimony in a way that avoids the pitfalls of public confession" (480). Likewise, Roland Chrisjohn (Onyota'a:ka) and Sherri Young argue that the current discursive climate that values "reconciliation" acts as a smokescreen that diverts attention away from Indigenous people's calls for material forms of restitution, including land and resources (37). Through my research in diverse contexts of giving testimony, and more broadly of storytelling exchanges, I have learned that the telling of story is a way of enacting or asserting sovereignty. For example, to assert their Land Title over their traditional territories, Gitxsan and Wet'suwet'en Elders performed their oral histories in their own languages, thereby transforming the courthouse into their feast house during the Supreme Court hearings, *Delgamuukw v. The Queen* (1991, 1997).⁹ It continues to matter who tells stories, to whom, and under what circumstances. As Tlingit Elder and storyteller Angela Sidney said to non-Indigenous anthropologist and coauthor Julie Cruikshank, "my stories are my wealth."¹⁰ Sidney's statement, made originally in the 1970s, continues to resonate as a powerful reminder of the material contexts of storytelling protocols, questions of authorship, and relations of address.

For settler scholars such as myself, engaging with the history of residential schools involves reflecting on my own positionality, the limits of my knowledge, and my responsibilities to find ways to practice what I have learned (and un-learned). Secwepemc scholar Dorothy Christian observes that "in many Indigenous cultures, there is a concept of giving back" and whether we take something from the land, stories, or a community, "we can't just keep taking and taking and taking and not give something back." She continues that once settler and Indigenous people learn to "relat[e] to each other as dignified, autonomous human beings," we can envision and put into practice "a shared active engage-

ment in the decolonizing process” (76). This emphasis on reciprocity is an urgent reminder for each of us to reflect upon our implication in what Stó:lō scholar Dylan Robinson calls the “intergenerational responsibility” of the legacy of residential schools. Robinson expects from settler individuals, as well as settler society as a whole, a much greater degree of ownership and accountability as beneficiaries and as perpetrators of settler colonial governance than has been shown to date (“Intergenerational” 47). Part of this responsibility is accomplished through a concerted effort on the part of settlers to “give back”: to return what has been taken from land, stories, and communities, to build reciprocal relationships through a shared engagement in a decolonizing process, and to challenge the material conditions of inequality, as generated by the residential school system, which has become part of the foundation of Canadian settler colonial society.

FRAMING AND RE-FRAMING

Questions of how, why, and in what form residential school testimonies should be edited and preserved, and to what degree they should be made publicly available, have been central points of contention in the work of the TRC.¹¹ The TRC recorded over 6,750 testimonies from former students and their families, and, following its conclusion in July 2015, submitted a final report with ninety-four Calls to Action. More than five million documents relating to the legacy of residential schools in Canada now are archived at the National Research Centre for Truth and Reconciliation in Winnipeg, and still more reside at the Indian Residential School Research and Dialogue Centre at the University of British Columbia. These and other archives are vital records of truth-telling, conveying the scale and devastation of settler colonial genocide of which residential schools played an integral part.

Yet it is important to note the degree to which the TRC operated within institutional, legal, and material constraints. These constraints are clearly itemized in the TRC’s mandate, *Schedule “N”: Mandate for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*. First, the mandate prohibited witnesses from naming or otherwise identifying individuals accused of wrongdoing except during *in camera* sessions. Second, the TRC did not have powers of subpoena to call witnesses regarding alleged crimes. Third, there is no legal redress from TRC findings, and, as Métis scholar

Tricia Logan, Associate Director of the Residential School Research and Dialogue Centre points out, there are significant “historical, archival, and legal challenges to creating access to the records of the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement” (Logan 94).¹² The alleged purpose of the restrictions on the TRC’s powers as outlined in the Mandate is to preserve Survivors’ rights should they wish to pursue further legal action. However, these measures join other forms of restrictions and silencing, and, according to Logan, “threaten the memory of settler colonial genocide in Canada” (Logan 92).

A compelling example of the consequences of these restrictions is evident in a recent Supreme Court decision, which has determined that keeping testimony collected as part of the Independent Assessment Process (IAP) breaches privacy laws. The IAP was an out-of-court process that compensated Survivors who endured sexual abuse and serious physical or psychological abuse. Unless otherwise instructed by Survivors, all 36,000 IAP records will be destroyed within fifteen years (Logan 94). The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and other groups oppose Canada’s position on the destruction of the IAP records. On their website, the AFN writes,

At the heart of this legal issue is: who owns the personal accounts of a former student’s experiences while attending an Indian Residential School? Canada argued that all IAP documents and the personal testimonies of former students are government records and, therefore, belong to Canada and can be stored and eventually released to the Canadian public pursuant to federal privacy laws. All other Parties to the IRSSA opposed Canada’s view and encouraged the Court to resist Canada’s attempt to confiscate and seize IAP Claimants’ stories and records. In this regard, the AFN argued that the personal accounts of abuse detailed in the IAP records belong solely to former IAP students. As such, IAP claimants must provide their free, prior, and informed consent for the archiving of their personal records. (Assembly of First Nations)

AFN’s assertion of Survivors’ ownership of their stories is fundamental to my argument concerning the importance of Survivors asserting sovereignty over their testimonies and reclaiming a material history of residential schools. Even more urgently, Canada’s presumption to claim a citizen’s personal testimony as a government record reflects

an uncompromising assertion of settler colonial rule and a disregard for Indigenous people's self-determination over their own stories and experiences.

The silencing evident in this controversial decision is continuous with what Jonathan Dewar (Huron-Wendat) calls "the profound silences" of residential school history. One reason for the formidable role of silence in the complex legacies of residential school history is that from the time the first residential schools opened in the nineteenth century, the information available and the narrative around the institutions have been tightly controlled. In writing *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879 to 1986*, John S. Milloy describes the difficulty of working within the restrictions imposed by the Privacy Act and departmental regulations (vii–viii). Milloy states that many documents required high security clearance for their access—a clearance he was able to obtain because of his work with the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1991–1996). Other documents have been destroyed, remain missing, or are still unexamined due to shortfalls in TRC funding. In Volume One of the *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, the commissioners detail the frustrating process of having to take the government to court multiple times over the course of several years, with litigation continuing to this day, to obtain documents from the federal government's archives, Library and Archives Canada (Truth, *Vol. One* 27–29). As Logan argues, the forced removal of children from their homes relies on the suppression and absence of records (Logan 97). One of the most disturbing sets of absent records is that of children's deaths in the schools. In Volume Four of the TRC's final report, *Canada's Residential Schools: Missing Children and Unmarked Burials*, the commissioners admit that the records concerning the death of well over three thousand children in residential schools is incomplete, with many graves and even cemeteries remaining unmarked to this day (Truth, *Vol. Four* 1–12).

Partly as a result of this suppression of information, ideas of "truth," "reconciliation," and "forgiveness" remain deeply controversial. Indigenous artists and writers engaging with residential schools often thematize silence and the strategic withholding of information. Cree poet Louise Bernice Halfe, a Survivor along with her parents, confronts the reader with both the compulsion to speak and the constraints on voice in her four books of poetry (1994, 1998 [rev. ed. 2002], 2007, 2016). In

Blue Marrow (2002), through the speaker's own "blue marrow" or pen with blue ink—which doubles as a reference to the Blue Quills Residential School in St. Paul, Alberta—she enlists the reader as witness to "listen to the bones" (19). The main speaker of the poem is "*âcimowinis*," the present-day Keeper of the Stories, who is committed to fulfilling her responsibility as witness to the stories of the named and the unnamed. She declares, "When the Voices roar, / I write" (53). However, sometimes the voices withdraw, remaining loudly silent. The ethics of speaking for another, particularly for the dead, come sharply into focus when the act of witnessing is compared to "squeez[ing]" words "through her blistered tongues" (18). Furthermore, "They tore out our tongues," suggesting both the speaker's loss of the Cree language and the near-impossibility of voicing or witnessing unspeakable trauma (19).

Blue Marrow, which confronts the intergenerational effects of residential schools in the larger colonial context of land takeover, calls upon the dead to speak through their bones not yet laid to rest. The opening passage of the book is an act of memorialization: a listing of names. Here voice is a powerful tool in righting historical wrongs—naming, declaring, and owning the past, not only the past associated with residential schools, but more broadly in terms of the history of contact in Cree territory. Yet as *Blue Marrow* makes clear, many Survivors do not and will not tell their stories. Using a call-and-response, voices-in-dialogue structure, *âcimowinis* channels voices from the grandmothers who describe how Cree people have become "beggars in the land / that once filled their bellies" (32). These grandmothers are simultaneously in the present moment and trapped within historically-charged dates of the past—such as 1492, the arrival of Columbus; or 1876, the passing of the Indian Act and the signing of Treaty 6. *âcimowinis* becomes the lightning rod through which the voices descend in a cacophonous storm—alternately as haunting spirits, demanding voice, truth, and justice—and as the haunted, whom *âcimowinis* will not let rest in silence.

Halfe creates a layering of voices through her multiple translations of the Cree language. In the glossary, the word "grandmother" in Cree is not translated as one word. Indeed, there are eleven Cree words for "grandmother"—from the speaker's own genealogical Grandmothers and Great-Grandmothers, to the Eternal Grandmothers, to Grandmother Keeper of the Sacred Legends, to Mother Earth, among others. The many Cree words for "Grandmother" represent just one

cluster of words emphasizing familial relationships: indeed, about forty percent of the words in the index describe in some way kinship ties. Especially for the Cree reader, the numerous translations of terms of kinship help expand the web of family relations well beyond the nuclear unit—stretching backward and forward in time, and into the realm of the Eternal Grandmothers. By translating words in several ways, Halfe is suggesting that the act of translation across languages, and by extension across cultural frames, is always incomplete. There is always a gap between languages and worldviews. At the same time, Halfe's strong emphasis on Cree kinship ties reknits family and language—exactly what have been severed through residential schools. Settler scholar Sam McKegney argues that Halfe uses Cree language as a way of asserting “Cree ethics of kinship” (209). The emphasis on kinship through the compound translations of the word Grandmother creates the conditions for longer conversations extending beyond the page and shaped by Cree community contexts—contexts whose accessibility depends upon readers' knowledge of the Cree language.

David Gaertner argues that “Louise Halfe has a way of breathing life into silence,” even as she highlights the tremendous risk involved in breaking that silence (“Introduction” xi). In Halfe's poetry, this risk is partly offset through careful acts of framing and re-framing. Her latest collection of poetry, *Burning in this Midnight Dream* (2016), was written during the time that the TRC was holding its hearings. The poem “April 30 2014,” which comes late in the collection, is the culminating point in the work—the poem to which Halfe is writing from the very first page. This is the day that Halfe gave her testimony at the TRC (68). Virtually every page tells and refuses to tell. While the book as a whole is shaped by the reverberating effects of silence, Halfe constructs frames of protection within which she offers her testimony. Dedications to her children and grandchildren open the book, while the first poem is titled “Dedication for the Seventh Generation.” Her advice to her listeners is to “offer our tobacco, hang our prayer cloth / take these small lessons / and reclaim them as our own” (63). Reclaiming these small lessons involves creating connected scaffoldings made up of the Cree language, kinship relationships, and ceremony, far beyond the formal spaces of the TRC hearings. Halfe's recentering of family relations and her assertion of sovereignty over her testimony outside the TRC resonates with Coupal's discussion of the “testimonial imaginary” in the work of Indigenous

writers who “testify to the complexities, ambivalences, and contradictions of [Survivors’] experiences” in strategies that “speak the truth in ways that the fact-based, adversarial court system would not permit” (477). Coupal continues that Indigenous writers explore the possibility of disclosing their experiences in ways that “avoid[] the pitfalls of public confession” (480). In the case of Halfe, her testimony is protected by her deliberate construction of frames of ceremony and kinship ties, enabling her to push back against the silences that have shaped her experiences.

Halfe’s nuanced treatment of both voicing and deliberately withholding testimony brings into the foreground some important questions relevant to the TRC context: for whom were the speakers disclosing, and for what purposes? Métis artist David Garneau argues that the TRC as a framework was “constrained by non-Indigenous narratives of healing and closure; by Western religious ideology (the Catholic rite of reconciliation and Christian concepts of forgiveness); by an emphasis on individuals over communities; by the public display of victims but not perpetrators; and by the degrading and corrupting influence of cash-for-testimony” (23–24). Moreover, the procedures that the commission was obliged to follow further underscored these constraints. At commissioners’ sharing panels—the largest and most public type of forum for people to share their stories at National Events—speakers were limited to fifteen minutes. Videos of the testimonies were projected onto large screens and often live-streamed on the internet, while statement gatherers transcribed the testimonies in text form. As settler scholars Naomi Angel and Pauline Wakeham argue, the transmission of these stories through the particular framing devices of both camera and text is not a neutral act. Video, more than text, is adept at creating the illusion of capturing “the full picture,” conveying the tone, body language, and gestures of the speaker. Yet what is captured is what can be seen through the viewfinder, which is already a cropping. Testimony, no matter how powerful or articulate, is conveyed within the constraints of its frames. One of the most constraining frames of the TRC was the prohibition from naming abusers except *in camera*.

Bev Sellars, former Xat’sull Chief and author of the autobiography *They Called Me Number One* (2013), wanted to confront her abusers by naming them. Even though Bishop O’Connor, who worked at St. Joseph’s Mission at Williams Lake, BC, was convicted of some of his crimes as far back as 1996, it took several years for Sellars to find a press,

Talon Books, that would agree to publish her story as she wanted it.¹³ A few months after publishing the book, Sellars presented her autobiography at the TRC National Event in Vancouver in 2013. She stated, “I am proud to have my book become part of the permanent record, but I wonder what the result of this entire exercise will be . . . Simply dredging up the horror that thousands of people experienced only to have them experience it again is not enough. The apology and compensation are not enough” (Talonbooks; see also Sellars, “Truth”). She could not name her abusers in the public forum, so instead she placed her book within the bentwood box in front of the commissioners. The gesture is a powerful one of joining her voice to the collective voices of the Survivors. At the same time the gesture reflects her imposed silence. The bentwood box itself is a symbol of both the frame of the TRC and how Survivors have taken back the frame for their own purposes. The box, made by Luke Marston, a member of the Stz’uminus First Nation, includes a representation of his own grandmother, with tears running down her face and with broken fingers—a reference to her own experience of violence at residential school (Kalbfleisch 286–87, 289). The box travelled with the commission to all the National and Regional Events. It became a receptacle for many objects, texts, photographs, and documents, some welcomed and some contested, as Survivors and their families strove to keep the TRC responsive to their own needs and agendas, while representatives of differently aligned organizations also tried to shape the TRC narrative strategically according to their interests.¹⁴

Survivors and their descendants have transformed the framework of the TRC to suit their own purposes and to initiate “actions of repair” on their own terms, as Stó:lō scholar Dylan Robinson and coauthor Keavy Martin have argued (18). Robinson and Martin recount an anecdote that captures the knot of contradictions that inform the national project of reconciliation. At the 2013 Québec National Event, a Kanien’kehá:ka audience member stood up to state, “‘if you come and break the windows to my house, you’re going to have to fix those windows before I’ll entertain your apology’” (qtd. 1). The idea of an agent responsible for breaking windows apologizing, without repairing the damage or changing that agent’s ongoing actions, exemplifies the paradoxes of discourses of reconciliation. Despite the compromised spaces of the TRC, Robinson and Martin insist that “the TRC remained throughout its life a venue of possibility” (7). Robinson and Martin name the forces that

are bent on “demolish[ing] the houses of Indigenous nationhood” even as the process of repairing windows continues. More importantly, the point is to change the frames in which those windows are replaced: to “think[] through and beyond official practices of reconciliation” and move to actions of repair “that constitute more than window dressing” (18–19). Here Robinson and Martin clearly highlight the material implications of re-framing.

What Garneau proposes to contrast with the “display mechanisms” and official spaces of the TRC are the “irreconcilable spaces of Aboriginality” (27), “sovereign display territories,” and “collaborations beyond the project currently known as Reconciliation” (23). Taking inspiration from the work of Jean-Michel Basquiat, whose paintings function as a “barrier” . . . “designed to be a closed door,” and “like a secret chamber that can only be opened and entered by those who can decipher hidden codes” (bell hooks, qtd. 24–25), Garneau suggests the benefits of making art to, for, and with Indigenous people—especially in spaces in which Indigenous artists and cultural producers make things apart from the shaping gaze of the colonizer. He writes that in contrast to the exhibitory imperative of reconciliation and the TRC, “[p]rimary sites of Indigenous resistance” are “the everyday active refusals of complete engagement with agents of assimilation,” including “speaking with one’s own [voice] in one’s own way, refusing translation and full explanations” (23). What emerges from this refusal to translate and explain within the predetermined spaces such as the TRC is not silence; it is a shift in the conversation.

Robinson emphasizes that “it is exceedingly important to note the ways in which survivors remade the TRC process as their own” (44). This was powerfully illustrated to me in March 2014 at a Musqueam 101 session, a monthly lecture series and community gathering that takes place on the unceded ancestral territories of the Musqueam Nation (Vancouver, BC). There were eight Survivors in the room. None had participated in the National Event in Vancouver six months earlier. I had been invited to give a talk, but it quickly became a discussion, as community members raised their hands and interjected to give their take on the TRC. Most of the discussion focused on the shortcomings of the TRC. As one participant put it to me, “Canada asks for our truth, but where is Canada’s truth?” This profound question largely remains unanswered today. Another said that he didn’t participate in the TRC because

giving testimony was too similar to the weekly demand for confession at residential school. The conversation then turned to addressing the heart of the concerns of the community—questions of land, water, cultural continuance, Musqueam epistemologies, and the *hən'qəmin'əm* language. One participant recalled the dramatic events that led to the landmark Supreme Court of Canada decision, *R. v. Guerin* (1984). The catalyst for this case was the discovery of “missing” (more likely deliberately hidden) paperwork relating to Musqueam rights and land title in the Indian Agent’s office.¹⁵ This intervention is just one example of how Survivors and their descendants have asserted themselves as “active remembering agents” and have taken hold of the reconciliation agenda (Angel and Wakeham 120). It is also an example of how Survivors have put at the center issues of Indigenous resurgence relating to the reclamation of stories, land, language, and lifeways.

Political goals of self-determination and resurgence cannot be separated from the intimate politics of the body. Robinson focuses on “different forms of reclaiming ‘sensory agency,’” modeling how to listen attentively to the ways in which bodies speak through tears, silences, gestures, and false starts at TRC hearings and in other spaces (Robinson 45–46). Embodied knowledge and practice are further explored in performances by Peter Morin (Tahltan): “As a performance artist and researcher, I experience and document the spoken language of the residential school survivors through my body” (Morin 67). Morin is critical of the TRC national events, particularly the supervision of space, voices, and crowds into manageable areas. At the National Event in Montreal in 2013, Morin deliberately draws on “a Tahltan epistemological tradition” and reconfigures the institutionalized space of the TRC in a comparable manner to which “Tahltan land is shaped and transformed by the movement of the Stikine River” (70). Morin thus centers Tahltan land and epistemologies in his artistic practice, as well as in his engagement with residential schools and the politics of reconciliation.

While always centering land in this discussion of residential schools, Morin crafts a radical collaborative method in which he works closely with Indigenous and allied artists to speak out as embodied and positioned subjects and to connect histories of dispossession and resistance across differences. With Japanese Canadian performance artist Ayumi Goto, Morin has made multiple performances that show the intercon-

nections between Japanese Canadian histories of uprooting with how Indigenous peoples have been displaced and marginalized within their own homelands. In “Hair,” Morin’s deep sense of sorrow compelled him to “want[] to be the scissors,” “the scissors that cut the hair off the children who were stolen from their families, from their lands” (Goto and Morin 174). In response Goto, invoking a tradition from her family, cuts her own hair. Then Goto knotted twenty-eight stones “onto Peter’s body—legs, arms, upper and lower torso,” a heavy weight to carry, but also a manifestation of the responsibilities of taking care of the land (176). These stones reference not only the weight of residential school history, but also the very material in which many of the buildings were constructed and the land upon which the institutions stood.

DE-FRAMING AND SHATTERING THE FRAMES

The question of *how* to transform the frame of residential school narratives echoes debates over what to do with the actual buildings themselves. Former residential schools have been transformed into First Nations’ administration offices, educational centers, social service providers, parks, and even one luxury resort. For example, the Shingwauk Residential School in Sault Ste. Marie in Ontario became the Shingwauk Residential School Centre, a research and teaching facility that is led by Survivors; St. Mary’s Residential School, which Victor Newman attended, is now the site of the Fraser River Heritage Park in Mission, BC (Graham and Newman, dirs.); and the Kamloops Indian Residential School in Cranbrook, BC, now is St. Eugene’s golf course and resort, owned and operated by the Ktunaxa Nation (Parry). Very few of the 138 residential schools recognized by the Settlement Agreement remain standing today. Many have been burnt to the ground or bulldozed, sometimes with former students witnessing or participating in the buildings’ destruction. For example, after the closure of St. Joseph’s Mission, where Bev Sellars attended, former students returned and reduced the school to a virtual pile of rubble (Sellars, *They* 121). In 2009, the Tseshah First Nation invited former students to participate in the demolition of Peake Hall in Port Alberni, BC (Corntassel et. al. 377–78). St. Michael’s Indian Residential School in Alert Bay, BC, was demolished in 2015 (Parry). In many ways, the demolition or repurposing of former residential schools is a physical

manifestation of what Indigenous writers and artists do in transforming the frames in which their narratives take place.

Siksika (or Blackfoot) artist Adrian Stimson's installation *Sick and Tired* (2004), combining windows and an old infirmary bedframe from the Old Sun Residential School located on the reserve in Siksika territories, captures this impetus to de-frame and shatter the frames created by the TRC. An intergenerational Survivor and a day student, Stimson nevertheless attended two residential schools and experienced many of the same injustices and abuses as the residential students. However, because he attended as a day student, his application to the Common Experience Payment fund was rejected—a process which he says has invalidated his experiences and prevented him from taking his place in “the residential school experience commons” (Stimson, “Used” par. 4). He describes how he came to have the beds and window frames in an interview:

I was a bit of a junk collector when I was a kid, and I'd go trekking and dragging these beds and windows home to my parents' place and put them in the garage. My mom and dad would say, 'What are you doing bringing all this junk home?' And I'd say, 'I don't know, maybe I might use it someday.' . . . All of these things became parts of installations that I did in my later life. (Stimson, Interview 192)

In *Sick and Tired*, the windows are filled with feathers and backlit, while a bison robe is folded into a human shape and placed on the springs of the bed. Stimson comments, “I can imagine many children peering out of these windows, longing to be home with their families. Their reality, however, was confinement similar to being smothered by a pillow” (Stimson, “Used” par. 19). While the infirmary bed invokes individual students' experiences of illness, tiredness, and death, the bison robe reminds viewers of the larger context of settler colonial genocide. The bison also reclaims a vital symbol of cultural continuance on Siksika territory. Meanwhile, the windows are simultaneously a view to an exit and the barriers that impede escape.

Stimson's work of retrieving the bed and window frames from the residential school resonates powerfully with Carey Newman's retrieval of “pieces of history” in the making of *The Witness Blanket*. Exposing the pretense of idealism embedded within Christian (specifically Catholic) notions of reconciliation, these artists refuse to forget

the material histories of residential schools. Beds, windows, doors, brick, mortar: these are the foundations of residential schools, and as such are the foundations of settler colonial society. Stimson radically reconfigures the material elements of the residential schools that existed at the sites in order to, as Stimson says, “exorcise” settler colonial history (“Used” par. 21, 27, 29). The attention to windows, doorways, and frames of buildings emphasizes confinement and isolation. However, these are simultaneously exits—ways to imagine the liberation that Survivors and their descendants continually work towards. These artists build new structures in which the stories can breathe and find space.

For Newman, there is a need to take action and to collectively build a frame, which he calls a blanket, to hold the stories of Survivors. While “blanket” may be counterintuitive as a descriptor for the massive cedar and metal structure stretching twelve meters long, a blanket suggests a comforting support in which these stories can find connection, healing, and a sense of being woven back together. Newman says he tried to treat the donations he received from Survivors as elements of a textile: “Left alone, these pieces may be forgotten, lost, buried, or worse—be uncomfortable reminders that leave painful impressions on the minds and hearts of those who recognize what they represent. . . . Together they are strong and formidable, collectively able to recount for future generations the true story of loss, strength, reconciliation, and pride” (Newman, “Artist Statement”). He also situates this act of retrieving the pieces within the cultural framework of Kwakwaka’wakw Big House Laws: “In my culture here on the coast, we believe that our big houses are the ancestors, that they have a spirit of their own. . . . My idea was that each of the items would have stood in witness to part of the history of residential schools” (qtd. in Sandals). In other words, the schools themselves, as well as the materials from which the buildings were made, witnessed what the children could not or would not speak to. Newman and his team also spoke with Survivors and asked them to participate in a collective process of making *The Witness Blanket* by donating their belongings and telling their stories.

Newman’s codirected film, *Picking Up the Pieces: The Making of the Witness Blanket*, contains many of these testimonies, including one of the very few stories that Victor Newman shared with his children as they were growing up about his time at St. Mary’s Residential School. The film documents Victor’s first visit back to the site with his chil-

dren and grandchildren. Carey notes that when his father arrived at the site, he was silent and grumpy. But his mood began to lighten when he described himself as a “renegade,” and recounted how one of his friends would slip into the priests’ cellar from a small opening and roll barrels of wine down the hill where Victor and other boys were waiting in the orchard. Carey wanted to weave into *The Witness Blanket* a “piece of history” from that orchard. He thus cut a small branch from an apple tree at the site to incorporate into the artwork:

Growing up Dad didn’t talk much about his time at residential school. But that story about drinking the holy wine always meant something special to me. It was a story about resilience, about not letting the worst things in life define you. What he didn’t say is that all the boys were lined up and were told that if the guilty didn’t come forward everyone would suffer. My Dad stepped forward. And to this day when I hear that story it fills me with a certain kind of pride. The kind of pride reserved for a child looking up to a parent. The moment that I came up with the idea of the witness blanket I knew that one day I would be in that orchard cutting a branch in honour of my father. (qtd. in Graham and Newman, dirs.)

In the film, Carey describes how transformative this visit to the site of St. Mary’s became for his father. Carey states, “Our family watched as weight lifted from his shoulders. It was as though the sunshine that day was chasing away the shadows of his past” (qtd. in Graham and Newman, dirs.). Another Survivor interviewed in the film, Harold Gatensby, visited the site of the Carcross (Chooulta) Residential School, Yukon. While picking up an old disintegrating shoe and then a glass brick, he comments, “There’s a time when you make use of everything that’s available to you, and that’s what I have done with that residential school.” *The Witness Blanket* takes inspiration from Survivors who “make use of everything that’s available” to them to transform this legacy of violence, sorrow, and dehumanization into a sense of empowerment and strength.

Another powerful example of “mak[ing] use of everything that’s available” is the contribution of Carey’s sisters, Marion and Ellen, to the project. In memory of those children whose hair was cut off immediately upon entering the residential school, the sisters grew their hair for

one year before donating their hair in ceremony. For four sunrises in a row, they bathed in river waters from melting glaciers and prayed. On the fifth sunrise, they applied ochre to their hair, dressed in button blankets, and surrendered their hair under the guidance and support of an Elder, Shirley Alphonse, and their mother, Edith Newman. This process of giving an intimate part of themselves underlines the personal stakes of the project and the necessity of confronting and overcoming the legacy of residential schools through embodied acts. Through this powerful gesture of giving back, Marion and Ellen acknowledge their sense of “intergenerational responsibility” (Robinson) while contributing to “a shared active engagement in the decolonizing process” (Christian 76). At the same time, the sisters assert their sovereignty over the process of relinquishing their hair, reversing the appropriations and extractions of residential schools.

Marion and Ellen’s act of reclamation is consistent with the overall process and vision of *The Witness Blanket*, in which the sovereignty of the belongings and of the stories attached to these belongings, is honored. Carey Newman’s emphasis on the material contexts of collaboration reflects many Indigenous Nations’ protocols around storytelling: when storytellers are working with writers or translators, they often start with who they are, where, when and from whom they first heard a story, and why they have the right to retell that story. This is part of what Tlingit Elder Angela Sidney is talking about when she says, “My stories are my wealth.” Newman recently signed an agreement with The Canadian Museum for Human Rights to be joint stewards of *The Witness Blanket*, while the ownership of the items remains with the donors that he worked with. In devising a way to share this responsibility with the CMHR, Newman said he and the Crown-owned museum came to an unprecedented agreement in which legal rights would rest with the artwork itself, rather than treating it like a transfer of property. Newman states, “I never felt ownership of the 12-metre-long installation, but rather a responsibility to honour the survivors’ stories it carries. . . . By putting the rights with the work, and putting responsibilities with ourselves, we’ve become collaborators trying to figure out our way forward” (qtd. in “Artwork”). Heather Bidzinski, the CMHR’s head of collections, said the museum will care for *The Witness Blanket*, in an ongoing working relationship with Newman, to ensure

the artwork's rights are being respected in keeping with Indigenous cultural practices ("Artwork").

The writers and artists that I discuss in this paper assert the sovereignty of the stories they have been entrusted with, and do so by taking control over the framing devices: Halfe by embedding her stories within ceremony, kinship ties, and the Cree language; Sellars by placing her book directly inside the bentwood box—a book whose truths could not be uttered except *in camera* during TRC proceedings; Stimson by reclaiming bedframes and window frames from the dump and inserting his own story into the "common experience" of residential schools; and Newman by insisting that the rights to *The Witness Blanket* are embedded within the artwork itself. Even though the forces of extraction continue to exert their power, it is the forces of reclamation that these works are all about. In reclaiming the frames within which they tell the stories, these writers and artists are necessarily making an intervention in discourses of reconciliation by insisting upon the material histories of residential schools. The emphasis on walls, windows, and doors from the residential schools enacts a re-framing, de-framing, or a shattering of the narrative frames in representing residential school history. Of special importance is the door at the center of Newman's *The Witness Blanket*. Here is an invitation to the viewers to walk into the exhibition and to contemplate their own role in assuming their sense of "intergenerational responsibility" and in engaging in a transformative process of self-reflection, learning, and un-learning.

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NOTES

1. This paper is dedicated to Greg Younging (1961–2019), a much-missed colleague and friend. His book *Elements of Indigenous Style*, as well as his work for many years as director of Theytus Books, an Indigenous-owned and operated press based in Penticton, British Columbia, changed the landscape of Indigenous publishing and editing. He was also the Assistant Director of Research for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), devoting himself for years to the documentation of the history and effects of the residential school system in Canada.

2. Many thanks to Inupiaq scholar Rachel Taylor for telling me about the panel discussion, “Best Practices in Indigenous Publishing,” Indigenous Editors Circle / Editing Indigenous Manuscripts, Etobicoke, ON: Humber College, August 2017. Although I was not present, a summary by Taylor is available. See Taylor, “Digitization” and “Gathering.”

3. In her summary of this panel discussion, Taylor writes that not only were “Indigenous people and communities . . . mined for the stories that settlers wanted; . . . those stories were themselves often about the trauma of extraction” (Taylor, “Gathering” 227).

4. Indigenous resurgence is a diverse set of Indigenous-led theories, ethics, and practices that emphasize the revitalization of Indigenous lifeways, languages, social justice models, and systems of governance. Some of its best-known practitioners are L. Simpson, G. Coulthard, J. Cornthassel, and A. Simpson; however, many other writers and scholars use resurgence as a way of describing their political and ethical commitments.

5. Former attendees at residential schools often are referred to as Survivors, and the term is frequently capitalized. This is the convention that I have followed in this paper out of respect to Survivors and my sense of responsibility in attending carefully to the ethics of representing this history. Cree poet and filmmaker Jules Koostachin does not use term “survivor” to describe her mother; instead she calls her mother a “warrior of the Canadian Residential school system” (Koostachin, Biography). Koostachin here is defying the language of victimhood that sometimes accompanies representations of former students of residential schools. Others (e.g. Chrisjohn et. al.) argue that these institutions should not be dignified with the word “schools,” nor should the children be called “students,” drawing attention to the punishment, incarceration, hunger, and lack of education that inmates endured. In recognition of how the language of “schools” and “students” has limited applicability to residential school history, the first sentence of the 2015 Summary of the Final Report from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Canada reads: “Canada’s residential school system for Aboriginal children was an educational system in name only for much of its existence” (v).

6. Rosy Hartman, from Saddle Lake Cree Nation, was the collections coordinator. Jamie Elizabeth Lewis (Anishinaabe) managed the collection for the first half of the project, while Marek Tyler (Cree) managed the collection for the second half (Newman and Hudson 12–13).

7. The majority of the 138 Residential School buildings recognized by the Settlement Agreement have been demolished. Virtually all those that remain standing have been renovated (Carr 237).

8. Newman explains that the original plan was to gather objects or belongings from residential schools exclusively; however, in order to link residential schools to a wider context of settler colonial incursion on Indigenous lands and communities, he also gathered items from churches and government buildings. At the same time, Newman also wanted to demonstrate the resilience and strength of Indigenous

communities; thus, he opted to include objects from traditional structures such as teepees, friendship centers, and sweat lodges. See Lederman; Graham and Newman (dir.).

9. In 1991, the Supreme Court of British Columbia denied the Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en plaintiffs of their claim to the ownership and jurisdiction of their territories on the Northwest coast of British Columbia. However, in 1997, the Supreme Court of Canada stated that there were "palpable errors" in the judgment and ruled that the lower court had not given adequate weight to the oral histories. This landmark decision determined that future trials must include oral traditions as evidence. See *Delgamuukw*; McCall, Ch. 5, *First*.

10. Cruikshank, Sidney, Smith, and Ned (36). See McCall, Ch. 5, *First*, for further discussion.

11. Indian Residential Schools were in operation in Canada from the 1880s to the 1970s, with the last school closing in 1997. Over the course of decades, but especially since the mid-1990s, thousands of cases were filed against the state for abuse at the schools. The influx of cases pushed the government to agree to a negotiated settlement, the largest class-action lawsuit in Canadian history. In 2007, the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement came into effect, providing some limited compensation to former attendees of residential schools in Canada, and mandating the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2008–2015). See Coupal; Garneau; Robinson and Martin (eds.); Logan; Milloy; and Niezen for more.

12. Several critics have criticized the mandate for precluding perpetrators' legal implication, among other issues. See Logan; Niezen; Chrisjohn et. al.; Angel and Wakeham; Gaertner, "Aboriginal."

13. Sellars is hardly the first Indigenous writer whose work was deemed too risky legally speaking to publish. For example, see Reder and Shield on the story of how a key passage from Métis writer Maria Campbell's *Halfbreed* was suppressed in the original publication due to fears of legal repercussions.

14. Kalbleisch writes, "one of the more memorable and confounding moments occurred at the Halifax event, when then Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development John Duncan presented a printed copy of Prime Minister Stephen Harper's 2008 apology to survivors" (Kalbleisch 293–94).

15. In 1975, Delbert Guerin, former Chief of the Musqueam First Nation, discovered the land deeds and other written agreements that showed that Musqueam lands were being leased to the Shaughnessy Golf and Country Club at a fraction of their market value. It took Guerin many years to finally find a lawyer willing to take on the case on behalf of the Musqueam First Nation. Almost a decade later, after several appeals and counter-appeals in the lower courts, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in favor of the Musqueam in *R. v. Guerin* (1984). This decision established the Canadian government's fiduciary duty or obligation to act in the best interests of First Nations, particularly with respect to reserve lands. See Salomons and Hanson; *Guerin v. The Queen*.

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U nojil a ch'i'ibal

Briceida Cuevas Cob's Poetic Empowerment of Yucatec Maya Women

HANNAH PALMER

INTRODUCTION

In her recent book *Revealing Rebellion in Abiayala*, Hannah Burdette proposes a unifying framework to understand the interactions between Indigenous literatures and social movements across the Western Hemisphere.¹ Her analysis suggests that writing serves a dual function for Native political struggles: on one hand, Indigenous texts make visible (visibilizar) ways of knowing and being erased by colonial violence. On the other, these works envision (visualizar) Indigenous modernities outside of and alternative to the logic of coloniality/modernity (6). The interplay between recording and creating Indigenous realities transforms literature into a potent space for “critical revitalization,” the remaking of tradition to meet contemporary demands (9). The emergence of “new and unexpected ways of being indigenous” in the writings of Native peoples prefigures transformations within their communities as well as outside of them (4).

This transformative power makes literature a dynamic tool to interrupt engrained practices of discrimination. As Bolivian Aymara activist Julieta Paredes asserts, Indigenous communities are not now, nor were they ever, free from systems of social violence, especially against women. Rather, she affirms that Indigenous women today suffer the effects of a compounded patriarchy, an entronque patriarcal (patriarchal link), formed when pre-existing forms of gender discrimination combined with those imported by colonial powers (71–73). To truly decolonize, therefore, Native communities must look critically at their own histories and root out patriarchal practices arising from them. In praxis, this process requires a radical re-envisioning of many revered traditions. As K'iche' Maya political leader Alma López describes in her interview

with Ángela Ixkic Duarte Bastian, “Me propongo reconstruir los discursos tradicionales, cuestionarlos, transformar los espacios tradicionales en espacios reales de poder para hombres y mujeres” [“I propose to reconstruct traditional discourses, question them, transform traditional spaces into real spaces of power for men and women”] (178).²

The following article explores how Indigenous women utilize the transformative space of literature to engage in just such a project of reimagining local tradition and identity. It reads the 1998 collection *Je' bix k'in/Como el sol (Like the Sun)* by Yucatec Maya poet Briceida Cuevas Cob as a defense of the Yucatec Maya Peoples framed around a feminist revision of their traditions. As the collection's poems trace the transmission of a spiritual heritage through women's domestic labor, Cuevas Cob rethinks a central concept of Yucatec Maya identity: *ch'i'ibal*, or lineage. Her work, embedding feminist praxis within the struggle for Indigenous rights, thus belongs to a global corpus of Indigenous feminist theory as well as to the canon of Yucatec Maya activist literature.

Because Cuevas Cob writes in a context distinct from that found in the United States and Canada, I begin my argument with a historical overview of Indigenous writing in Yucatán, Mexico. Linking the contemporary literary moment with a long trajectory of Yucatec Maya writing as resistance, I suggest that today's authors assert Native authority despite their utilization of state-sponsored programs and resources. Next, I examine how these writers summon the social category of *ch'i'ibal*—lineage—to unify Yucatán's Indigenous Peoples and defend their privileged position in the region's history. Considering the term's historical connection with male domination of political and spiritual power, I then argue the urgency of reimagining *ch'i'ibal* to fully integrate women into the Yucatec Maya community. To illustrate such a revision, I analyze how a selection of poems from Cuevas Cob's *Je' bix k'in* reimagines *ch'i'ibal* to depict women engaging fully in its production. Validating women's claims to authority, the work reveals the importance of female communion to transmit sacred knowledge. I conclude by speculating on the potential for literary alliances between Cuevas Cob's poetry and that of Indigenous women across Abiayala.

Before beginning my analysis, I offer one brief note on language. Like many Indigenous works published in Spanish-speaking regions, Cuevas Cob's poems appear almost exclusively in bilingual formats. This duality creates a conundrum for scholars, who must decide how to engage

with multiple texts that are similar but not equal: Briceida Cuevas Cob herself has described her poems as having “dos corazones, uno en maya y otro en español” [“two hearts, one in Maya and the other in Spanish”] (Dey 114). These twin versions of a text speak on different terms to different audiences. As Paul Worley argues in “*Máseual excluido/indio permitido*: Neoliberal Translation in Waldemar Noh Tzec,” the conversion of Indigenous expressions into a colonial language represents an act of “neoliberal translation” through which “moments of irreconcilable otherness are translated into the terms and structures of the neoliberal multicultural nation-state, thereby reaffirming that nation-state’s norms and values” (291). Because the majority of readers, even members of Native communities, lack the linguistic tools to read Indigenous-language texts, they may miss out on these crucial moments of radical difference.

Though I am a white, US-American scholar, I have been fortunate to study the Yucatec Maya language since 2012.³ During this time, I have become especially attuned to how the language itself—its vocabulary, grammatical constructions, and even sounds—shapes the expression of Indigenous identity in Yucatec Maya writing. If language is, as Zapotec writer Irma Pineda proposes, that which “define nuestro pensamiento y nuestro sentir” (“defines our thought and our feelings”), then paying attention to Indigenous languages offers particular insight into how their speakers define themselves. For this reason, I base all of my readings in the Yucatec Maya versions of the text, for which I present my own translations. While I cannot claim any authority to speak as a member of the Yucatec Maya community, I attempt to enact the “radical linguistic interculturality” Worley proscribes to approach Indigenous identity on its own terms (“*Másehual*” 295).

DEFINING THE CH’Í’IBAL:

WRITING AND IDENTITY IN YUCATÁN

Mexico’s Yucatán Peninsula, encompassing the states of Yucatán, Campeche, and Quintana Roo, is home today to approximately 750,000 speakers of the Yucatec Maya language (INEGI 42). Even though relatively few of these individuals identify with externally-imposed labels of Indigeneity, such as “Maya” or “Indigenous,” Yucatec Maya-speaking communities have maintained a body of shared knowledge and practices through continued resistance to colonial rule. The written word

has played an important role in this history of resistance because of the inherent relationship between writing, or *ts'ib*, and power in Maya thought. Paul Worley and Rita Palacios have theorized *ts'ib* as a Maya concept that includes writing but transcends the alphabetic script to include other visual and performative arts, daily practices, and even natural phenomena (3). In all of its modes, *ts'ib* implies an aspect of performance that lends it its particular power: it does not merely describe identity, it does identity (Worley and Palacios 20). Accordingly, “*Ts'ib* is a process that produces physical space [. . .] wherein subject formation takes place and knowledge is acquired through the process of creating and experiencing that space through social interaction” (28).

As one form of *ts'ib*, literature packs incredible potential to consolidate and mobilize the Yucatec Maya Peoples. The history of writing in Yucatán bears out this assertion. For centuries, the recorded word has been closely linked to the sources of spiritual and political power shaping Maya society. Before the Spanish invasion, glyphic inscriptions recorded histories, spiritual lineages, and prophecies to legitimize ruling families.⁴ During the Colonial Period, the books of the Chilam Balam documented sacred and historical knowledge, validating Indigenous practices and foretelling the return of Indigenous rule.⁵ In the nineteenth century, letters written to and by the *cruz parlante*, or talking cross, authorized Caste War rebels to rise up against oppressive landowners and reclaim their ancestral lands.⁶ The most recent wave of Yucatec Maya literature emerges from this genealogy of writing as power. Despite speaking to a radically different sociopolitical moment, it likewise utilizes language to consolidate local peoples behind a single coherent identity, one that stands in opposition to the dominant *ts'ul*, or non-indigenous, society.⁷

Scholars locate the inception of the current literary boom in the 1970s, when government-trained cultural promoters began to organize around projects of linguistic revitalization.⁸ In the early 1980s, literary workshops spearheaded by Mexican writer Carlos Montemayor and Yucatec Maya anthropologist José Tec Poot further propelled the movement by training and supporting a generation of notable literary voices, including Gerardo Can Pat, Feliciano Sánchez Chan, Miguel Ángel May May, Santiago Domínguez Aké, and María Luisa Góngara Pacheco, among others (del Valle, “Maya World” 38). Since that time, the movement has continued to grow in conjunction with a nationwide ideological shift

away from *mestizaje*, or racial mixing (read assimilation), and towards pluriculturalism. This shift has opened new resources for Indigenous writers as the Mexican government has enacted a series of reforms to foment Indigenous expression, from the passage of laws like the 2003 *Ley de Derechos Lingüísticos* (Linguistic Rights Law) to the establishment of new government offices like the Instituto Nacional de Lenguas Indígenas (INALI) (National Institute for Indigenous Languages) to the creation of funding programs like the Programa de Apoyo a las Culturas Municipales y Comunitarias (PACMyC) (Program to Support Municipal and Community Cultures). Meanwhile, states, especially the state of Yucatán, have followed with the establishment of their own local agencies, such as the Instituto para el Desarrollo de la Cultura Maya del Estado de Yucatán (INDEMAYA) (Yucatán State Institute for the Development of Maya Culture).

The dependence of many contemporary Indigenous writers on government programs and funding has led some scholars to question these authors' efficacy in promoting their communities' interests.⁹ Indeed, today's governmental programs reflect a model of "indigenismo participatorio" (participatory indigenism) that in many ways pursues the same objectives as previous projects to co-opt Indigenous Peoples into the nation-state (Sánchez 97–98). Even so, Analisa Taylor reminds us that we cannot overlook how the increased support has also provided new tools for resistance (116). The cultural promotion programs, literary workshops, and publishing grants have collectively created a platform to promote a politicized Indigenous identity across the peninsula.

The project of articulating such a collective identity is complicated by Yucatec Maya speakers' historic lack of identification with comprehensive terms of identity including "Maya" and "Indigenous."¹⁰ Just as Yucatec Maya is one branch of the greater Maya language group, the Yucatec Maya People are both related to and distinct from communities in other regions of Mexico and Central America, most notably Chiapas and Guatemala. The universal application of the term Maya to these groups is an external imposition of the Western Academy and tourist industries, one now adopted by official state rhetoric.¹¹ Despite a surge of claims to Maya identity in response to the Caste Wars of the nineteenth century, many residents of Yucatán today display an ambivalent relationship to the term (Restall, "Ethnogenesis" 80). Consequently, although claiming Mayaness may be the most efficient means to com-

municate with external audiences, it is not necessarily effective for mobilizing the local community. Silvia Cristina Leirana Alcocer, who works closely with Yucatec Maya writers and activists from her home in Mérida, describes a split between poor, rural populations on one end and the educated, professional elite on the other: for members of the former, Indigenous identity represents a source of denigration and marginalization, whereas for members of the latter, including writers like Briceida Cuevas Cob, it represents a source of social and cultural power (64–66). In order to overcome these internal divisions, activists must translate identity discourse into terms with which all segments of the community can identify.

Many writers, therefore, turn to the Yucatec Maya concept of *ch'i'ibal* to trace a common ancestry stretching back to the Pre-Columbian Era.¹² The meaning of this term, which most literally denotes one's patrilineage, slips in contemporary usage to encompass a broader notion of ethnicity. For example, Vicente Canché Múo's introduction to his 2002 collection of short stories *U tzikbalooob mayab/Relatos del mayab (Stories of the Mayab)* concludes, "Ma' unaj k-tu'ubsike'ex ku yaalkab t-wiinkilil u k'i'ikel le noj ch'i'ibal ku jaak'besik u yool k-éet maayaliloob bey xan uláak' máako'obo': U CH'I'IBAL MAAYA'OB" ["We should not forget that the blood that runs within our bodies is the blood of the great lineage that awed our fellow Maya, as well as other men: THE LINEAGE OF THE MAYAS"] (8). In a prime example of "neoliberal translation," the Spanish version equates *ch'i'ibal* with "raza," or "race." Connecting the externally-imposed notion of ethnicity with the internally powerful *ch'i'ibal*, or lineage, enables Yucatec Maya writers to speak across audiences.

Appearing only in the Yucatec Maya versions of texts, *ch'i'ibal* recalls a concept that historian Mark Restall suggests has been one of the most fundamental sources of identification throughout the region's history (*Maya World* 15–19). Hence, locating identity in *ch'i'ibal* speaks directly to the Yucatec Maya-speaking audience and sidesteps the problems that come with imposing an external category on its members. It avoids the aforementioned ambiguity of the term *Maya*. In turning to the idea of familial bonds, writers emphasize that they speak especially to and for those who most closely share their experiences. This emphasis on relationships, furthermore, defies the Western narrative of individuality to propose a communal model of subject-formation: claiming a *Maya*

ch'i'ibal, individuals recognize themselves through their connections to other members of a larger social network.

In this way, belonging to a ch'i'ibal enables one to channel both spiritual and political power inherited from previous generations. The Colonial-Era books of the Chilam Balam connect the concept of ch'i'ibal with the transfer of the esoteric wisdom that legitimizes local rulers. The *Book of the Chilam Balam of Chumayel*, for example, contains an examination to determine whether initiates “are of the lineage [ch'i'ibal] of rulers, whether they are of the lineage of chiefs” (Hoil and Roys 43). Only those with the correct genealogy will be able to “prove” themselves by responding correctly to the king’s riddles (Hoil and Roys 43). If a candidate is not able to decipher the ruler’s metaphorical speech—and perform his knowledge by bringing the item requested—he will be deemed an imposter. This section of the Chilam Balam reveals important ties between power, performance, language, and ch'i'ibal. As a result of these links, claims of membership in a ch'i'ibal are often also assertions of one’s right to express ideas and exercise social and spiritual authority.

EL ENTRONQUE PATRIARCAL: FEMALE DISEMPOWERMENT IN YUCATEC MAYA HISTORY AND LITERATURE

Given the intrinsic ties between ch'i'ibal and power, it is also important to interrogate the term’s patriarchal connotations. In the most archaic sense, ch'i'ibal refers only to the male kinship line. In the Pre-Columbian Era, this patriline was complemented by the dzacab, or matriline, in accordance with the precept of gender complementarity (Coe 104). Even so, Michael Coe surmises that the primary function of the dzacab was to uphold marriage regulations, while the ch'i'ibal determined the inheritance of both property and spiritual and secular offices (104). The predominance of the matriline waned and disappeared following European invasion as the process of colonization pushed women further and further away from the seats of power (Sigal 129). Simultaneously, Yucatec Maya women lost both spiritual authority and the ability to record their versions of history and truth. In the Spanish campaign against “idolatry,” missionaries eradicated household shrines and pushed ritual practices into wilderness sites forbidden to women by Maya understandings of gendered space (Clendinnen 436).¹³ Meanwhile, if some women may have been scribes during the Pre-Columbia Era, nearly universal female

illiteracy characterized the Colonial period (Restall, "Literacy" 13). As Denis Tedlock summarizes the era's literary production, "all accounts were written by men who received their information from men" (164).

As women lost access to the authority associated with both spiritual practice and *ts'iib*, local and foreign forms of patriarchy consolidated. The principle of gender complementarity now serves to reify male dominance as it excludes female participation in arenas of power. Meanwhile, the desacralization of female spaces entails a concurrent devaluation of women's labor. Studying a parallel situation in the Peruvian Andes, Marisol de la Cadena observes how women's culturally-assigned labor is not considered "work" since it is not capable of producing wealth and status (10–11). This denigration of female labor delegitimizes women's contributions to family maintenance. In the same way, *ch'i'ibal*, historically founded on the transmission of knowledge from grandfather to father and father to son, relegates women to unrecognized ancillary roles. Women participate in the lineage only insofar as they reproduce the male bodies that will come to inherit its wisdom and prestige. Their "work" does not really count toward preserving its essence. Therefore, while *ch'i'ibal* is useful to define Yucatec Maya identity in local terms, it is not necessarily a secure foundation for the construction of an equitable society. Without a critical approach to the concept, activists risk reinforcing internal hierarchies that exclude women from full participation in the community.

The sphere of contemporary literature, which continues to be dominated by male voices and viewpoints, attests to the continued prevalence of these hierarchies in Yucatán. Prejudices against female education among members of Yucatec Maya communities, especially ubiquitous during previous generations, have meant that more men than women are equipped to enter the lettered elite (Gutiérrez, *Nationalist* 29). Moreover, male authors frequently reproduce patriarchal understandings of local identity and culture in their works. As Emil Keme, writing as Emilio del Valle Escalante, notes, Jorge Cocom Pech's widely-recognized text *Muk'ult'an in nool/Secretos del abuelo* (*My Grandfather's Secrets*), "dignifies nature, Maya identity, and Yucatek as a literary language, [but] it also affirms a Maya patriarchal order that eclipses the contribution of Maya women" ("Ambivalence" 58). Cocom Pech's text is representative of a broader trend against which the works of women like Breceida Cuevas Cob contend.

Keme's critique of *Muk'ult'an in nool* is particularly relevant to the current article because this collection of stories illustrates the central assumptions challenged in *Je' bix k'in*. Tracing a young man's spiritual apprenticeship, *Muk'ult'an in nool* also connects Maya spiritual inheritance with membership in a lineage. Beginning with a grandfather's vow to teach the protagonist the "payalchi'ob yéetel chinpoolilo'ob ku méental úuchil tumen u ch'ibalilo'ob u kajtalil maya" ["the prayers and ceremonies long practiced by the lineages of the Maya community"] (31), the cycle of stories records the boy's initiation into a sacred Maya clan through participation in ritual. The child's journey climaxes in a sexually charged vision of penetration, one that links ch'i'ibal and spiritual power by suggesting a parallel between the transmission of wisdom and procreation. Significantly, the only active participants in either of these processes are male. The virgin penetrated in the boy's dream remains silent as she is passed from the "jala'achil" (leader)—"patriarca" (patriarch) in the Spanish version—to a victorious warrior. The girl's virginity, her "sujuyil," for which the onlooking crowd clamors, represents a channel through which the virile young man can reproduce himself without taint. If we read the passage as an allegory for the reproduction of the ch'i'ibal or, more specifically, of the transmission of a birthright to knowledge and power as seen in the Chilam Balam, its implications for Yucatec Maya women become clear. Denying the female figure any agency as she is passed from one man to another, the passage locks women out from full participation in sacred processes. At both the genetic and spiritual levels, men determine the direction in which the lineage will continue to grow. The woman, meanwhile, acts merely as the conduit through which men pass power from one generation to the next.

This scene from *Muk'ult'an in nool* demonstrates how deeply patriarchy has become engrained within Yucatec Maya thoughts about ancestry and inheritance. It frames Indigenous identity around women's continued marginalization and partial exclusion. Restoring women's centrality to the Yucatec Maya community requires reimagining those key traditions and precepts upon which a sense of communal identity is built. This is the project undertaken by Yucatec Maya writers including Briceida Cuevas Cob, Maria Luisa Góngara Pacheco, Flor Marlene Herrera, Ana Patricia Martínez Huchim, and Sol Ceh Moo, to name only a few. Deeply ingrained in local activism to promote Yucatec Maya ways

of knowing and being, these women engage in a form of what Paredes calls “feminismo comunitario” (“communal feminism”) to rethink “mujeres y hombres en relación a la comunidad” [“men and women in relation to the community”] (78–79). Their writing, whose unique style and focus have been examined by scholars including Natividad Gutiérrez Chong, Gloria Chacón, Arturo Arias, Paul Worley, and Celia Rosado and Oscar Ortega, reimagines the gendered relationships central to their community’s shared identity.

In the remainder of this article, I will focus on only one example: the revision of *ch’i’ibal* in Briceida Cuevas Cob’s 1998 collection of poetry *Je’ bix k’in/Como el sol (Like the Sun)*. As I analyze the collection’s poems, I ask the following questions: in what ways do Cuevas Cob’s ideas coincide with and/or diverge from the vision of *ch’i’ibal* presented by other writers? How does she utilize this concept to position herself and fellow women in relationship to a Yucatec Maya past and present? In so doing, how does she claim authority for her distinctly female voice? Finally, what new possibilities does her writing open up for alliances among women across spatial boundaries? As the following analysis reveals, Cuevas Cob participates in a project parallel to that of Indigenous women across Abiyala as she rescues the spiritual authority exercised by women as they nurture future generations.

RETRACING CH’I’IBAL:

THE GYNOCENTRIC POETRY OF *JE’ BIX K’IN*

Briceida Cuevas Cob, who is a native of Tepakán, Calkiní, Campeche, has long played a vital role in the Yucatec Maya literary and cultural movements. Though she began writing in Spanish in the late 1980s, she switched to composing in both Yucatec Maya and Spanish after participating in the Taller de Creación Literaria de Lengua Maya (Maya Language Literary Creation Workshop) sponsored by Carlos Montemayor (“Escribir”). *Je’ bix k’in*, which is her second full-length work following the 1995 publication of *U yok’ol auat pek’ tí u kuxtal pek’/El quejido del perro en su existencia (The Dog’s Howl at Its Dog’s Life)*, first appeared in a 1998 bilingual Yucatec Maya-Spanish edition published as a part of the third series of *Letras Mayas Contemporáneas (Contemporary Maya Letters)*. Many of its poems were revised and republished in the 2008 anthology *Ti’ u billil in nook’/Del dobladillo de*

mi ropa (*From the Folds of My Clothes*). Several can also be found in English translation in anthologies including *Words of the True Peoples*, edited by Carlos Montemayor and Donald Frischmann, and *In the Language of Kings*, edited by Miguel León-Portilla and Earl Shorris. More recently, translations have also been featured in magazines, journals, and online platforms including *International Poetry Review*, *World Literature Today*, *Words Without Borders*, and *Latin American Literature Today*.

Not only is Cuevas Cob one of the first Yucatec Maya writers to receive an international readership, but her work has also attracted significant critical attention. Her poems have been featured in a growing number of articles and book chapters that note her precise rendering of the cadence of daily interactions and her challenge to Western forms of knowledge and education.¹⁴ Several scholars, including Natividad Guitiérrez Chong, Gloria Chacón, Paul Worley, and Maya Wubbolt, have already noted the feminist overtones of *Je' bix k'in*. Their work sets the stage for my extended analysis of how Cuevas Cob's poems challenge the local entronque patriarchal by proposing more inclusive practices to reproduce Yucatec Maya identity. Writing about the transformative power of Cuevas Cob's work, Gloria Chacón contends, "La idea de que por tradición la mujer solo puede aportar como reproductora biológica es transformada por la educación, pero, tal vez aún más importante por el poder espiritual de las mujeres" ["The traditional idea that a woman can only contribute through biological reproduction is transformed through her education, but, perhaps even more importantly, by women's spiritual power"] (103). Cuevas Cob's poems enact this transformation by shifting focus away from sexual reproduction and towards the practices of family maintenance performed by women. By doing so, Cuevas Cob emphasizes the spiritual significance of everyday practice and reveals the extent to which women actively build the ch'i'ibal as much through their daily labor as through physical reproduction.

I adapt ch'i'ibal as the framework for my analysis because as previously discussed, it represents a key framework through which the Yucatec Maya Peoples view themselves. Furthermore, the concept encompasses both the physical and spiritual facets of identity explored in Cuevas Cob's poems. While the term appears only twice in *Je' bix k'in*, both times in the poem "Yan a bin xook" ("You Must Go Study"), the collection's overall structure and language evokes the ideas of family

and power united in the expression of *ch'i'ibal*. As the progression of poems draws attention to the processes of procreation and generational exchange, their language asserts control over the esoteric speech associated with the "lineage of rulers." Cuevas Cob thus inserts her collection into a literary genealogy of *ts'iib* concerned with the ritual transmission of knowledge from one generation to the next. In contrast to an androcentric work like *Muk'ult'an in nool*, however, *Je' bix k'in* manifests the cultural potential of interactions between women in the female-dominated space of the home.

Men, in fact, are conspicuously absent from this text. Not even the male turkey of the poem "Chan ichkaji tso" ("Little Vagrant Turkey") is present: readers meet his owner on her way to round up the erstwhile fowl. At times, this vacancy is painful; it seems unnatural, neglectful, and even cruel in the laments of the scorned lover of "U jo'ol in booch" ("The Tip of My Scarf") or "Ualki tu'na" ("In These Moments"). In most cases, however, the lack of male characters warrants no special notice. It is the logical consequence of the gendered division of space that shapes Yucatec Maya experience. Cuevas Cob does not intend to explode the system of complementarity, but rather to restore power to the feminine sphere. By dwelling upon the relationships formed between women of different generations through communal work, she draws attention to their contributions to shaping and promoting a shared ancestral identity. She thus delinks the concept of *ch'i'ibal* from paternity to define it instead as a spiritual practice also passed between women.

The collection's twenty lyric poems roughly trace the process of human birth and maturation. They have been divided into three sections: the first dedicated to birth and childhood, the second to young adulthood, and the third to late adulthood. In the three laments of the final section, a single speaker mourns the death of her mother; this conclusion, complementing the celebrations of birth in the first section, completes the life cycle and implies the transition between one generation and the next. The structure of *Je' bix k'in*, furthermore, situates the entire life cycle within a metaphorical womb. The work contains the same number of poems as months in the *tzolk'in*; the ancient two-hundred-sixty-day calendar, which contains twenty months of thirteen days each, spans nine lunar cycles and matches the length of the human gestational period (Molesky-Poz 158). The tripartite division also calls to mind the three stones of the traditional Maya hearth. Culturally linked

to the maternal belly, this image is a symbol of home and women's labor that "confiere significado a numerosos aspectos de la condición de la mujer maya" ["lends significance to many aspects of the Maya woman's condition"] (Gutierrez Chong, "Nacionalismos" 200). Founding her writing on this logic, Cuevas Cob creates a discursive space that welcomes and authorizes female thought, experience, and expression.

The manipulation of sacred numbers in the text's structure foreshadows the control Cuevas Cob exerts over ritual language and symbols. Even as her poems describe women's everyday encounters, Cuevas Cob demonstrates a deep understanding of Yucatec Maya spiritual history, and her poems inscribe ancient wisdom in common speech and practice. "A yaax tup" ("Your First Earring") demonstrates this incorporation in its three brief lines:

Tumén chan x-ch'up síijikech,
a naè tu jiltaj jun t'in u bekech súumil u puksik'al
ka tu julaj ta xikín a yáax tupintej. (9)

Because a small girl you were born
your mother pulled one taut thin twine from her heart
then she plunged it through your ear, your first earring.

These verses, according to Chacón, depict a practice to protect the infant against *mal de ojo* (the evil eye), an illness contracted by the glance of an individual with an elevated or malignant energy ("Poetizas" 102). At the same time, they contain multiple images evoking pre-Columbian sacrifice rituals: the pulling of flesh from the heart, the piercing of the ear, and the passing of rope through an incision (Vail et al. 152). Such symbolic resonances link Cuevas Cob's poetry with the ancient grandeur of the Maya priesthood; this poem's speaker officiates a sacred rite. She inducts her daughter into the world by offering her child's blood to mobilize the natural and spiritual forces that will protect and guide her path. This private ceremony implies access to sacred knowledge for women excluded from more formalized public ritual.

A close reading of "Yan a bin xook" ("You Must Go Study"), which records a mother's command to and prophecy for her young daughter, further elucidates Cuevas Cob's strategy. Describing the educational formation expected of the young girl, this poem asserts "the agency that Yucatec women exercise in their daily lives" (Worley, "U páajtalil" 150):

*Le tu'ne siinikoob kaach tu cheejoob, tu kàyoob, tu yo'òkòtoob, tan
xan u baaxal u machmaj u k'aboob, lek u yok'oloob. Ko'lel siisabil,
let'è kun joichokoja'tikoob ua ku manak' taloob ich yalanaj*

Teche yan a bin xook.
Ma' tun p'atakech poluech.
Yan a tadmansik u paakabil u najil taj muk'ólal
tiólal a uoko ta uotoch
ma' tan a k'òpik jolnaj.
Le ken a paktabaj tu ich a laak'
bin a uil ti' a maatzab,
boox jul ch'iikil tu puksik'al luum,
ku tal u yéemel a juntadz ol
ti' xan ku bin u náakal u nojil a ch'iibal.
Teche yan a bin tu najil xook
bin a chuk u poojol u chun u nak' u ko'lel a ch'iibal.
Ti' a tunkuy
bin a na'na'jo'ot u uoj dziib mamaiki luum,
siis yétel k'in.
U nukuch yich a chaan ólal
bin u chaant u yim sáatal u yol
u dzokol u uekik kuxtal yok'ol kab.
Teche yan a bin tu najil xook
baale yan a sut ta taamaj,
ta yalanaj,
ka' boon yétel k'uxub u chun u nak' ka',
ka' u leedz a sak piik u yaak' sabak,
ka' u p'ul yétel u yik' a sak ol p'ulus-k'aak',
ka' u ch'òp a uich u k'ak'al yal u k'ab buudz,
ka' a xook ti' u paach a xaamach u p'iilis k'aak',
ka' a xook ti' u tooch' k'aak' u waak'.
Yan asut ta yalanaj
tumén ua'laan u paatech u k'anche'il tuux ka pak'ach uaj.
Tumén k'oben u taakmaj junp'el neen tu chun u nak'.
Junp'el neen tuux dzalal a pixán.
Junp'el neen ku yauat paytikech yétel u jum u t'an u leedz jul. (9–10)

*Then those ants broke off their laughter, their singing, their dancing,
and their playing; they clasped their hands, and their cries arose. A*

woman was born, she, who would douse them with hot water when they came to pass through her kitchen.

As for you, you must go study.
 You won't be left an armadillo-head.¹⁵
 You must fully traverse the walls where your strength dwells
 so that you may enter into your home
 and not shut the door.
 When you contemplate yourself in the eyes of your others
 You will come to see your eyelashes there
 black spikes driven into the heart of the soil
 Where your humility comes to descend
 where someday will also arise the greatness of your lineage.
 As for you, you must go to school
 You will come to catch afterbirth from the wombs of your lineage.
 On your heel
 will come to be deciphered the glyphs written in dust,
 coolness and sun.
 The large eyes of your admiration
 will one day take in with delight the fallen breasts
 that have spilled life over the Earth.
 As for you, you must go to school
 but you must return to your home,
 your kitchen,
 then you will paint the womb of your metate with achiote,
 and tongues of flame will lick your white slip,
 then you will fill the balloon of fire with wind from your lungs,
 and the skinny fingers of fire will blind your eyes
 then you will read the sparks on the back of your comal
 then you will read the blows of the fire in the dents they have left.
 You must return to your kitchen,
 because there awaits the stool where you pat tortillas.
 Because the hearth has hidden a mirror within its womb.
 A mirror on which your soul is imprinted.
 A mirror that invokes you with its humming voice of radiant light.

The epigraph with which Cuevas Cob begins the poem both recalls gender complementarity and establishes the gynocentric focus of the following verses. It conjures the difference between male and female experience through the ants who dance at the birth of a man who will

feed them corn in the field and cry at the birth of a woman who will chase them from their food in the kitchen (Wubbold 186–87). Through this reference, the poem reinforces women's unique relationship to the social and natural worlds. As the poem continues, the distinctly feminine space of the “yalanaj” (kitchen) becomes connected to both practical and spiritual knowledge as it, rather than the school building, becomes the site of study, or “xook” (Worley, *Telling* 154).¹⁶ This term, the meanings of which also include “to read” or “to count,” inheres overtones of divine knowledge and is associated with the work of holy men responsible for reading the future in sacred books and the day count. For instance, the xok k'in is a local tradition whereby the month of January is used to predict the weather for the rest of the year (Burns 87–88). The appearance of the word “xook” throughout this poem reinforces a connection between the quotidian tasks of the home, such as shooing the ants from the kitchen, tending the fire, and patting tortillas, and the knowledge embodied in sacred ritual. In learning household tasks, the young girl will play an important role in sustaining, developing, and transmitting the heritage of her people.

This process will transform her body, like the bodies of the women around her, into a manifestation of Yucatec Maya culture as it becomes marked by her interactions with her surroundings. Whereas works like *Muk'ult'an in nool* sexualize and objectify the female body, “Yan a bin xook” dwells upon its ostensible flaws. These marks left by a lifetime of work embody the Yucatec Maya identity. The cracked soles of the women's feet mirror the glyphs carved on the magnificent temples built by their ancestors. Their shriveled breasts prove their sacrifices for future generations: the untranslatable Maya expression “sáatal u yol,” which most closely means “having lost their animus,” implies a sacrifice of one's own lifeforce to ensure the lives of others. These women do not excite sexual fantasy, but they gain beauty and significance through the actions that mar their bodies. The poetic voice thus locates their cultural potential in their commitment to the difficult tasks of maintaining the home. These are the practices to which she commands her daughter return during the final third of the poem. The lines “yan a sut ta taamaj, / ta yalanaj” (“you must return to your home / to your kitchen”) indicate this return is both obligatory and inevitable through the use of the compulsory aspect marker “yan,” which indicates actions that must by will

of force or fate occur.¹⁷ As the smoke from her cooking fire stings her eyes, this girl will fulfill her cultural destiny.

According to this logic, the act of caring for the community, not merely giving birth to its members, characterizes the role of the Yucatec Maya woman. Indeed, the poem establishes a clear hierarchy between the acts of giving birth and nurturing. The verses never mention that the child will become a mother, but they dwell upon her role as a midwife. By developing her own skills and knowledge, she will become a healer whose expertise enables her to participate in the births of her neighbors and to facilitate the generational turnover of her entire community. Her great responsibility is symbolized in her power to catch the placentas of the women of her *ch'i'ibal*. Drawing from the anthropological work of Miguel Güemez on the role of midwives, Worley explains, “Whether literal or metaphorical, the young woman’s holding the afterbirth in her hands is akin to her holding the future and exercising agency over it” (*Telling* 155). In line with the Yucatec Maya vision of time as cyclical, local forms of prophecy closely link the past and the future. As the midwife literally cradles the child’s origins, she simultaneously touches its destiny. She occupies a position parallel to that of the Chilam Balam, the prophet charged with stewarding a community’s future by recording and interpreting its history. Exerting a similar power over the lives of children, this woman becomes a spiritual leader in her own right. She thus exercises the full privilege of the *ch'i'ibal*: she not only transmits it but also transforms it.

In this way, *ch'i'ibal* ceases to function as a simple patriline. Cuevas Cob underscores the centrality of women to their lineage by recalling the spiritual force of androgyny. As Deborah Miranda has explored, the “gendercide” enacted by European colonizers against non-normative genders and sexual practices, did not eradicate the cosmovisions that gave rise to categories transcending the gender binary. The need for a union between male and female forces to sustain humanity and the cosmos remains central to many Indigenous systems of belief. In Yucatec Maya ritual contexts, the boundaries of sex and gender frequently blur. The *Ritual of the Bacabs*, for instance, includes a passage in which a grandmother, mother, and daughter wield phallic symbols including a stinger, a needle, and a literal penis to conduct a ceremony uniting the concepts of blood, lineage, and healing (Sigal 168–73). Today, this gender and sexual fluidity filters into everyday speech and interactions. In

“El eroticismo androgínx en la cosmovisión y lenguaje maya” (“Androgynous Eroticism in Maya Cosmvision and Language”), Yucatec Maya author Isaac Carrillo Can shares “la experiencia de lo andrógínx por medio de mi proceso creativo literario, el cual me mostró, desde sus inicios tener una forma literaria ‘diferente’ a las formas o estructuras canónicas que utiliza la sociedad mestiza y blanca [. . .]” [“my experience of the androgynous through the creative literary process, which from the outset showed me it had a ‘different’ literary form than those forms or canonical structures used by white and *mestizo* society”] (73). As he goes on to explain, the very process of writing his novel *U yóok’otilob’ áak’ab/Danzas de la noche (Dances of the Night)*, told from the perspective of a female narrator, demonstrated to him the foreignness of the strictly enforced male-female binary to Yucatec Maya ways of knowing and being.

Cuevas Cob conjures this same androgynous energy in *Je’ bix k’in*. Throughout the first section, women, like the mother who punctures her child’s ear in “A yaax tup,” engage in acts of piercing that echo penetration. Furthermore, the recurrence of the term *jul* (puncture) frequently coincides with the transmission of Yucatec Maya spiritual knowledge. The first mention of *ch’i’ibal* in “Yan a bin xook” arises from precisely such an act, as the girl drives her eyelashes into the soil of her companions’ gaze. Here, the association between the girl and an aggressive penetration reverses expected gender roles by placing her in an offensive position. Her body, specifically her eyelashes, becomes a tool for inserting something of herself into the soil: her descending sincerity or humility works as a metaphorical seed. This act figuratively impregnates the ground with “u nojil a ch’i’ibal” (“the greatness of your race”), which subsequently returns to the girl as it grows. According to this image, the woman no longer serves as a passive channel for the reproduction of the lineage. She is the sower, rather than the inert soil. As a creative force, she has the power to imagine, articulate, and shape a future for her descendants.

It is worth noting that the young woman does not gain this power alone. Rather she does so surrounded by fellow women who have likewise sacrificed themselves in humility and service to the *ch’i’ibal*. This intergenerational community hearkens to the gathering of grandmother, mother, and daughter described in the passage from the *Ritual of the Bacabs*; in this case as well, the cooperation of women is necessary

to achieve healing. When the mother tells her daughter “*yan a suut ta taamaj / ta yalanaj*” (“you must return to your home / your kitchen”), she is not merely circumscribing the girl within a given location. She is commanding her offspring to incorporate herself into the community inhabiting that space. The Yucatec Maya kitchen is always a communal environment. Women carry out household tasks alongside family members and neighbors from multiple generations. The sense of identity the girl finds in her kitchen, symbolized by the mirror buried at the hearth’s center, is rooted not only in the land but also in the people around her. These women are her *ch’i’ibal*. Their communion enables her to claim ownership of their spiritual identity.

LOCAL VISION, TRANSNATIONAL ALLIANCES:
CUEVAS COB IN A HEMISPHERIC CONTEXT

The poetry of Briceida Cuevas Cob thus re-centers the seat of the *ch’i’ibal* in the heart of female space. The interactions between women—their exchanges, their daily tasks—exhibit the performative power definitive of the prayers and riddles used to identify rulers in the Chilam Balam. In other words, *Je’ bix k’in* not only establishes Cuevas Cob within a genealogy of writing as power, but also defends the authority of all women by placing their labor within the performative tradition of *ts’iib*. Her poetry contests constructions of Yucatec Maya identity that would relegate women to passive, ancillary roles as it asserts the centrality of female thought and action to secure the community’s intellectual and spiritual growth. Despite its highly-localized focus, Cuevas Cob’s poetry simultaneously opens outwards to invite dialogue with knowledges produced outside of the Yucatec Maya community: “*Yan a bin xok*,” (“you must *go study*”; emphasis mine), the mother commands her child. The girl must move beyond her immediate surroundings. She must exchange ideas with other people, and she must bring new knowledge into her home. Moreover, she must carry her own understanding into the world.

I would like to suggest that this imperative of exchange transcends the narrow scope of the “*najil xook*” (schoolhouse) to include exchanges with other Indigenous Peoples, especially women. As Anishinaabe scholar Molly McGlennen emphasizes, women across Abiyala can learn much from each other as they engage in parallel struggles to

reclaim their historic power “to initiate rites, to honor their bodies, to celebrate their bodies, to fend for themselves, to be by themselves, to be the seekers and purveyors of higher knowledge, to determine their route in life, and to be decision makers—but all in the name of their community’s survival” (McGlennen 29). When one looks across the historical and linguistic boundaries that distinguish Native American communities in the United States and Canada from their southern neighbors, powerful points of confluence begin to emerge. Take, as a brief example, the parallels between “Yan a bin xook” and a poem like Anishinaabe poet Kimberly Blaeser’s “Rituals, Yours—and Mine.” In the latter poem, as in the former, the familiar routines of cooking breakfast become a ritual that orients the speaker to her ancestry. Like the girl in Cuevas Cob’s poem, Blaeser’s speaker “reads the tribal language manifest in the small gestures of the older woman, which helps the narrator establish her position in the modern world” (Cox 186). Read side by side, the works of Cuevas Cob and Blaeser thus reveal connections between language, spirituality, and female labor that transcend geographical and tribal differences.

Consequently, *Je’ b’ix k’in* contributes to the political struggles of Indigenous Peoples in multiple arenas. First and foremost, it promotes a united politicized identity through which to frame demands for Yucatec Maya rights and recognition. Vindicating women’s place within local social and spiritual practice, Cuevas Cob expands the base upon which this movement can grow. In so doing, her collection also contributes to the global corpus through which Indigenous women “theorize the racialized, sexualized, and gendered dynamics of Indigenous women’s lives” (Archuleta 110). Briceida Cuevas Cob has much to offer to the community of writers creating the “theory in flesh” described in Elizabeth Archuleta’s article “‘I Give You Back’: Indigenous Women Writing to Survive.” Her poems envision a future that transcends survival: they open an imaginative space in which women’s daily labor not only sustains the local community but also reclaims the “nojl,” the greatness, of Indigenous rule.

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NOTES

1. Abiyala, also spelled Abya Yala, means “land in full maturity” in the language of the Guna Peoples of Panamá. At the suggestion of Guna elders, Bolivian Aymara leader Takir Mamani suggested Indigenous leaders adopt the term to refer to the American continents. Abiyala has since come to denote a locus of enunciation that contests the logic of coloniality and declares Indigenous sovereignty. For a full discussion see “For Abiyala to Live, the Americas Must Die” by Emil Keme, translated by Adam Coon.

2. All translations of secondary texts are my own.

3. I am deeply grateful for the expertise and patience of my teachers, including Fidencio Briceño Chel, Gerónimo Can Tec, Felipe Castillo Tzec, Marcelina Chan Canché, María Jesus Dzul Dzib, Gregorio Hau, Rosi Cuouh Pool, Felipe Kuyoc, Paula Uh Tuz, David Mora Marín, Grant Armstrong, and all of the families of Xocen, who have welcomed me into their homes to share tortillas and stories and laughter.

4. For an analysis of glyphic inscriptions on various mediums including ceramics, carvings, and books, see *2000 Years of Mayan Literature* by Dennis Tedlock.

5. The books of the Chilam Balam are a group of nine manuscripts recording historical, ritual, prophetic, and medicinal knowledge. Written in various locations across the Peninsula in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, they are named for the towns in which they were composed. Of varying length and content, they together demonstrate a will to preserve sacred tradition and knowledge in the face of colonization. For a more extended discussion about the role of the books of the Chilam Balam in Colonial-Era society, as well as their position within the trajectory of Maya literature, see Francesc Ligorred Perramon’s *U mayathanoob ti dzib: Las voces de la escritura*.

6. The Caste War (1847–1901) was an armed conflict between landowners and peasant rebels claiming Maya heritage. It has left a deep mark on the cultural memory of local residents, especially those in the eastern Yucatán State and Quintana Roo. The letters of the Talking Cross are public missives purportedly dictated by the sacred cross of Chan Santa Cruz (now Felipe Carillo Puerto) to the priest Juan de la Cruz beginning around 1850. They appeared as rebel forces were in retreat and rejuvenated troop resolve by declaring divine benediction for their cause. Five letters, along with two sermons, survive today (Reed 505).

7. Ts'ul is the term used by Yucatec Maya locals to refer to European colonizers and their descendants, including, in some cases, mixed-blood (mestizo) members of the upper class.

8. For a detailed history, see the chapter "How Peninsular Narrative Happened" from Volume 2 of Arturo Arias's *Recovering Lost Footprints*.

9. In *Mayas y coloniales*, Ligorred Perramon insinuates that some writers' training is "controlada" ("controlled") by "programas sociopolíticos de tintes indigenistas" ["sociopolitical programs with indigenista overtones"] (116). Meanwhile, Wolfgang Gabbert criticizes the work of government-aligned activists as perpetuating stereotypes of the backwards Indian that in no way challenge the Western monopoly on modernity (159–60).

10. Most Yucatec Maya-speaking residents identify as campesino, masewal, mayero, or mestizo and reserve the term "Maya" to refer to the Pre-Columbian inhabitants of the region. Campesino is a term with roots in the agricultural reforms of post-Revolutionary Mexico. Masewal, meaning "the people," is a loan from Nahuatl with wide circulation in the region; in some contexts, it can have a pejorative connotation. Mayero is a linguistic category that rose to prominence to distinguish Maya-speaking workers from other immigrants to the major cities like Cancun and Mérida. Mestizo does not carry the same cultural weight in Yucatán as it does in the rest of Mexico. It most often appears in the feminine to refer to a woman who wears the huipil and maintains traditional housekeeping practices. Oostil wiinik, the Yucatec Maya phrase for "poor people," is another identity category that I have often heard used in villages. For a discussion of the particular development and use of identity terms in Yucatán, especially mestizo, see Ronald Loewe's *Maya or Mestizo: Nationalism, Modernity, and Its Discontents*.

11. See Peter Hervik's *Maya People Within and Beyond Boundaries*, Juan Castillo Cocom's "Lost in Mayaland," and Quetzil Castañeda's "We Are Not Indigenous!" for a full discussion of this argument.

12. Spellings of the term vary. I have chosen ch'i'ibal, as it is the most frequently used in contemporary writing, including Cuevas Cob's later anthology *Ti' u billil in nook'/Del dobladillo de mi ropa (From the Folds of My Clothes)*. The term appears as ch'i'ibal in *Je' bix k'in*, which employs a slightly different orthography.

13. By the mid-twentieth century, women were fully excluded from the most important Yucatec Maya rituals, such as the cha'a chaak (Redfield and Villa Rojas 69). In *Chan Kom: A Maya Village*, Redfield and Villa Rojas record the care that is taken to ensure that no element of the offering has been tainted by female contact: the participants retreat into the outskirts of the town, abstain from intercourse, and draw water for the ceremony in the early morning hours before the first female visit to the cenote (138–39). While taboos have lifted somewhat today, women continue to be absent in many spaces of spiritual action. Their exclusion from these realms naturally forecloses the opportunity to serve as the most revered spiritual leaders, or jmen. Local testimonies affirm male control over this office. I have spoken with only one individual who claims to have met a female shaman, or xmen. All other people that I have spoken with deny this possibility.

14. Natividad Guitiérrez Chong treats Cuevas Cob's work in "Nacionalismos y etnocentrismos: la escritura maya de Briceida Cuevas Cob y Flor Marlene Herrera." Silvia Cristina Leirana Alcocer dedicates a chapter of *Conjurando el silencio* to a close reading of the poem "P'ul." Cecelia Esperanza and Oscar Ortega Arango's "Los labios de silencio: La literatura femenina maya actual" discusses Cuevas Cob's work alongside that of other Yucatec Maya writers, and Gloria Chacón includes her among the Mexican and Guatemalan poets discussed in "Poetizas Mayas: subjetividades contra la corriente" and the chapter "Indigenous Women, Poetry, and The Double Gaze" from *Indigenous Cosmolectics*. Paul Worley has dedicated both an article, "U páajtalil maaya ko'olel: Briceida Cuevas Cob's *Je' Bix K'in* and the Rights of Maya Women," and much of the final chapter of *Telling and Being Told* to selections from *Je' Bix K'in*. Finally, Manya Wubbold has offered a systematic close reading of "Yan a bin xook" in "Language and Symbolic Representation in Contemporary Mayan Poetry: A Linguistic and Literary Analysis of 'Yan a bin xook' by Briceida Cuevas Cob (2005)."

15. The phrase has the connotation of "birdbrain" in English. It expresses foolishness and empty-headedness.

16. In "U páajtalil Maaya ko'olel" Worley discusses the multiple valences of the term "xook." On the one hand, the term references the state-run "school," which has historically aimed to "Westernize" Indigenous Peoples and turn them away from their traditional heritage. On the other, it refers to Maya forms of learning from elders within the home. While the poem recognizes the necessity of mainstream education, it privileges the traditional forms of knowledge acquired by working alongside one's elders (154–55).

17. The Yucatec Maya language conjugates verbs according to aspect rather than tense. Linguist Fidencio Briceño Chel explains the use of the marker *yan* as reserved for obligatory actions (23). This aspect is significantly different from the marker *bin* used elsewhere in the poem, which is the marker most closely associated with prophecy and which indicates a distant and spiritual future related to the cycles of the cosmos. To capture this difference in my translation, I have translated *yan* as "must."

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“Language to Reach With”

Layli Long Soldier’s *WHEREAS* Connects Words to Reality

RACHEL B. GRIFFIS

As a National Book Award finalist and recipient of many other accolades, Layli Long Soldier’s debut book of poetry, *WHEREAS* (2017), has been praised for its messages about the way language participates in reality, particularly in response to the 2009 congressional apology to Native American people. Reviews of the book acknowledge the astuteness with which the poet criticizes and interacts with this spurious document. Natalie Diaz states that the book is “an excavation, reorganization and documentation of a structure of language that has talked the United States through its many acts of violence. This book troubles our consideration of the language we use to carry our personal and national narratives.” Similarly, Emilia Phillips describes the book as “dismantl[ing] the language that has long justified and euphemized the violent actions perpetrated by the US government through restrictive legislation, broken treaties, and formal apologies.” Crystal Alberts concurs, emphasizing how “Long Soldier’s poetry challenges the government’s declarations at every turn, while also figuratively reenacting the violence perpetrated against the many Indigenous nations using the very language of the US government” (117–18). These reviews celebrate how *WHEREAS* explicates and clarifies the deceptive, impenitent stance of the congressional apology. Long Soldier indeed holds the language of colonization accountable for its vast damage to Native American communities, both past and present.

Alongside her indictment of the congressional apology, Long Soldier works with language to demonstrate its possibilities for honoring lived experience and maintaining fidelity to material and spiritual realities. As a book ultimately about language’s deep participation in life, *WHEREAS* presents images, narratives, and impressions of words and actions that responsibly represent tragedy and trauma. Long Soldier’s presentation

of language is rooted in her understanding of its purpose, which she expresses when she states, "each People has been given their own language to reach with" and "I understand reaching as active, a motion" (75). The description of language as a kind of tool "to reach with" suggests language is a resource human beings are meant to use to engage in life and contribute to their communities. Instead of "reaching," however, the congressional apology prevaricates and obfuscates, often curtailing the poet into the silences and blank spaces she includes in her poetry. *WHEREAS* therefore explores opposing functions of language: its power to enact violence through manipulation and denial as well as its role in nourishing communities.

The following will engage Long Soldier's struggle against the congressional apology as she evokes and clarifies specific methods of the language of colonization, described as "the American casual" (72). Long Soldier ultimately challenges the language of colonization through non-traditional poetic forms and by modelling a philosophy of language that encourages writers and speakers to strive for congruence between words and reality. *WHEREAS* is a fluid exposition of human interaction that conveys—through lament, struggle, defiance, and description—healthy perspectives on language that demonstrate how one might apologize, and more broadly, how to communicate about profoundly traumatic experiences. By struggling against manipulative language and attempting to use it herself, Long Soldier exemplifies redemptive ways to work with words that counter oppression and promote responsible modes of speaking and writing about forms of individual and communal tragedy.

"THE AMERICAN CASUAL" IN *WHEREAS*

The 2009 United States congressional apology, "S.J. RES. 14," reflects a relatively recent genre of political writing in the West that officially marks the injustices Indigenous people suffered under various forms of colonialism. Other countries whose governments have issued such apologies include Canada, Norway, Sweden, and Australia. The apology written by the United States Congress begins with a clear statement of purpose: "To acknowledge a long history of official depredations and ill-conceived policies by the Federal Government regarding Indian tribes and offer an apology to all Native Peoples on behalf of the United States" (1). Filling six pages, the document proceeds to name and chron-

icle many acts and events the United States acknowledges as harmful to Native American people, such as the Trail of Tears, the Sand Creek Massacre, the boarding schools, and numerous violations of treaties. For example, the apology refers to the boarding schools as institutions “where their Native practices and languages were degraded and forbidden,” and in another section states, “the breaking of covenants with Indian tribes have contributed to the severe social ills and economic troubles in many Native communities today” (3). On a different note, the apology includes positive descriptions about European and Native American relations during the colonial period, such as “peaceful and mutually beneficial interactions also took place,” and “in the infancy of the United States, the founders of the Republic expressed their desire for a just relationship with the Indian tribes” (2).

Since the appearance of the congressional apology in 2009, a wide range of thinkers and writers have critiqued and interpreted its authenticity, effectiveness, and impact. For example, in an academic study that assesses authenticity and meaningfulness in several recent state apologies to Indigenous people, Sheryl Lightfoot declares that the 2009 apology from the United States Congress deserves a “low” rating on “content” as well as “method of delivery” (27). In an article for *Indian Country Today* published soon after President Obama signed the bill, Rob Capriccioso poses provocative questions: “Is an apology that’s not said out loud really an apology? What if the person expressing the apology doesn’t draw attention to it?” Further, Capriccioso quotes Robert T. Coulter, the executive director of the Indian Law Resource Center, who similarly wonders, “What kind of apology is it when they don’t tell the people they are apologizing to?” Anticipating Long Soldier’s qualms with the bill, Coulter adds, “For an apology to have any meaning at all, you do have to tell the people you’re apologizing to.” In Long Soldier’s introduction to Part II of *WHEREAS*, which directly responds to the congressional apology, she details the missing pieces Coulter draws attention to when she states, “No tribal leaders or official representatives were invited to witness and receive the Apology” and “President Obama never read the Apology aloud” (57). Beyond its inconspicuous delivery, Long Soldier and others also take issue with the document’s content. Evaluating an early version of the apology put forth by Senator Sam Brownback, Sherry L. Smith states that the “language is rather lame,” and Audra Simpson comments on the inadequacy of

the bill's final version when it is compared to Canadian and Australian apologies in 2008 that were written to a more specific audience (Smith 13; Simpson 207). Although the document opens by recognizing "official depredations and ill-conceived policies," many published reactions to the congressional apology nevertheless interpret it as akin to what Chadwick Allen calls the "discourse of treaties," which he describes as "platitudes of good faith, understatements of treachery" (62).

In addition to providing a poetic response to the congressional apology that complements discussions of the document in venues like *Indian Country Today*, Long Soldier's *WHEREAS* also resonates with broader discussions about the role of language in determining reality and perpetuating injustice. For example, in his well-known essay, "Politics and the English Language," George Orwell asserts that "Political language [. . .] is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind" (139). Wendell Berry asserts that the "increasing unreliability of language parallels the increasing disintegration [. . .] of persons and communities" (24). Moreover, sociologists Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, in *The Social Construction of Reality*, argue that language is a powerful and "essential [constituent] of the reality of everyday life and of the commonsense apprehension of this reality" (40–41). Further, Geneva Smitherman develops this claim to suggest that "consciousness and ideology are largely the products of [. . .] the sociolinguistic construction of reality" (117). Smitherman refers to "the use of language to create a new theory of reality," thus drawing attention to the manner in which vocabulary shapes identity, culture, and power dynamics (129). Though not as strident as Orwell and Berry, *WHEREAS* contributes to and affirms hypotheses positing that language is implicit in violence and greatly influences individual and cultural ideologies as well as perceptions of reality. As will be discussed further through Long Soldier's response, one example of the way settler-state discourse "create[s] a new theory of reality" is through stories and words that suggest colonialism was a well-intentioned endeavor on the part of Europeans and a positive experience for Indigenous communities (Smitherman 117). When the congressional apology states "peaceful and mutually beneficial interactions also took place," it elides a Native perspective of the European conquest, controlling reality through language (2).

Long Soldier's response to the congressional apology also contributes

to postcolonial theory, particularly as she grapples with the challenges of writing faithfully and responsibly in the language of the oppressors. As she describes herself looking through a dictionary for a word “in a language I dare to call *my* language,” she depicts the complicated situation wherein she uses the colonizer’s tools to protest and resist their abuse (44).¹ Exploring similar concerns, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o laments that African writers “came to be defined and to define themselves in terms of the languages of imperialist imposition,” and Trinh T. Minh-ha “wonder[s] time and again about my reading myself as I feel he reads me and my false encounter with the other in me whose non-being/being he claims to have captured, solidified, and pinned to a butterfly board” (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o 5; Minh-ha 48). In *WHEREAS*, Long Soldier mourns the absence of necessary words and concepts in the English language to explore reality. She writes, “I feel waḥpáníča I feel alone. But this is a spill-over translation for how I cannot speak my mind comma the metaphorical ache of being *language poor*” (44). Drawing on the Lakota word for “poor” and crafting a poem that expresses absence, Long Soldier suggests not only that the congressional apology itself is inadequate but that the words and narratives in English for correcting it, and writing appropriately about the trauma it circumvents, are themselves weak, impoverished, or simply nonexistent.

Long Soldier points to the dearth of linguistic and narrative resources in Euro-American contexts for communicating about regret, sorrow, and tragedy while she also confronts a problematic presence: the language of colonization or what she calls “the American casual” in a narrative poem in *WHEREAS* (72). “The American casual” is Long Soldier’s poetic description of what scholars have elsewhere called “manifest manners,” “white settler mythologies,” “American niceness,” and the language of “personal responsibility,” among others (Vizenor vii; Razack 2; Bramen 8; Coates 33). Gerald Vizenor explains “manifest manners” as a phenomenon that entails “the course of dominance, the racialist notions and misnomers” that initiated and continue to enforce the colonization of Native American people and communities (vii). Sherene H. Razack asserts that narratives and “white settler mythologies” deny reality through their construction of egregious fantasies:

A quintessential feature of white settler mythologies is, therefore, the disavowal of conquest, genocide, slavery, and the exploitation

of the labour of peoples of colour. In North America, it is still the case that European conquest and colonization are often denied, largely through the fantasy that North America was peacefully settled and not colonized. (2)

In her analysis of the congressional apology's content and delivery, Long Soldier likewise explores the "disavowal" of which Razack writes, especially in relation to "conquest" and "genocide," concepts that are neither named nor acknowledged in the document (2). As she notes the absence of these words in the apology, Long Soldier challenges the presence of words and stories that deceptively suggest the apology is genuine or that Europeans "peacefully settled" North America (Razack 2).

Carrie Tirado Bramen's recent study of "American niceness," through analysis of many documents constructed by the United States government, is particularly pertinent to the work Long Soldier accomplishes in *WHEREAS*.² In her interpretation of the Declaration of Independence, Bramen asserts that "American niceness" undergirds its language, a term which "implies that Americans are fundamentally well-meaning people defined by an essential goodness" (8). More pointedly, she writes, "Even acts of aggression are framed as passive, reluctant, and defensive acts to protect oneself against the potential aggression of another" (8). For Bramen, the Declaration's passive voice, such as, "it becomes necessary," "let facts be submitted to a candid world," and "they are absolved from all allegiance to the British crown," are exemplary of the ideology of American niceness. It is "a revolutionary text articulated in the politest of terms," Bramen states (26).

Long Soldier's response to the congressional apology suggests many similarities between this document and the Declaration of Independence as Bramen describes it. In *WHEREAS*, the poet quotes the apology quoting the Declaration: "Whereas I remember that abstractions such as 'life,' 'liberty,' and 'happiness' rarely serve a poem, so I have learned it best not to engage these terms anyway" (70). Like the Declaration of Independence, the 2009 congressional apology frames aggressive acts as passive, including the phrase, "the arrival of Europeans in North America opened a new chapter in the history of Native Peoples" (2). Long Soldier describes the effect of these words through a physical sensation: "I can't help my body. / I shake. The realization that it took this phrase to show" (66). "The arrival of Europeans," not unlike "it

becomes necessary” and other phrases of the Declaration, is a passive construction that minimizes the actions of Europeans, implying that their presence was innocuous or that their motives were non-imperial. Additionally, “opened a new chapter” is a calculated expression that distorts the truth without directly lying. As Allen states regarding the discourse of treaties, many documents constructed by the United States government “could be transformed into mere abstractions—platitudes of good faith, understatements of treachery—with no concrete relevance” (62). To name the European invasion “a new chapter” effectively misrepresents its destructive consequences to people, places, and nature. Resonating with the discourse of treaties, the phrases “The arrival of Europeans” and “opened a new chapter” are contemporary understatements, abstractions, and platitudes that mask perfidious or perfunctory motives regarding deeply serious matters.

WHEREAS is haunted by the tradition of manipulative language compounded by the painful absence of narratives and vocabularies that acknowledge grief and loss in American life.³ As Bramen suggests in her study of “American niceness,” the language of this ideology “functions precisely to disassociate Americans with acts of violence or even with negative emotions altogether” (29). Ta-Nehisi Coates expounds upon what is problematic about these linguistic and ideological absences in Euro-American culture as he challenges the language of individualism in the country’s education systems. He writes,

But a great number of educators spoke of ‘personal responsibility’ in a country authored and sustained by a criminal irresponsibility. The point of this language of ‘intention’ and ‘personal responsibility’ is broad exoneration. Mistakes were made. Bodies were broken. People were enslaved. We meant well. We tried our best. ‘Good intention’ is a hall pass through history. (33)

Bramen and Coates both notice that the language of “American niceness” or “personal responsibility” serves to minimize violence and injustice as it also exonerates abusers. *WHEREAS* levels a similar critique of Euro-American linguistic traditions, drawing attention to the link between language and the care, or lack of, people and communities. Long Soldier emphasizes the significant moral and communal loss when language does not exist to help people understand and acknowledge wrongdoing, tragedy, and sorrow. As Daniel Heath Justice argues,

"we must name our violent history to understand its continuing effects," and *WHEREAS* demonstrates the difficulty of understanding when the resources to describe tragedy are inadequate or unavailable (12).

One example of this linguistic problem that Long Soldier, Bramen, Coates, Justice, and others write about can be understood through a widely influential text in the Euro-American tradition: Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography* (1793). As Franklin narrates select mistakes and indiscretions of his youth, he refers to them as "Errata," a clever way of drawing upon the vocabulary of the printing business, his first professional success. When he writes about his apparent emotional abandonment of his future wife Deborah by sending her just one letter during a year he spent in England, he states, "This was another of the great Errata of my Life, which I should wish to correct if I were to live it over again" (43). Later, when he marries Deborah, he notes, "Thus I corrected that great *Erratum* as well as I could" (66). Beyond its cleverness, Franklin's use of the word "errata" to signify moral failure is indicative of the optimism that characterizes many national stories told from the perspectives of the powerful. Coates alludes to this optimism with his gloss, "Mistakes were made. Bodies were broken. People were enslaved. We meant well. We tried our best" (33). Jay Parini, in his analysis of Franklin's "errata," notes the significance of word choice: "*sins* were not something [Franklin] was much worried about" (62). Although Franklin uses the term "errata" somewhat ironically, as his decision to detail his failures indeed indicates that he thinks them problematic, his vocabulary, combined with his positive self-improvement narrative, nevertheless express congruence with the glib "language of 'intention' and 'personal responsibility'" that Coates interrogates (33).⁴ "Errata" is effectively an abstraction implying that moral failures are the equivalent of printing mistakes that can be corrected and forgotten, a perspective reflected in many United States government documents, including the Declaration of Independence and the 2009 congressional apology.

Long Soldier encounters this Franklin-like optimism about serious sins the United States committed against Native Americans in a poem that relates a conversation with a "string-bean blue-eyed man" in a bar (72). The man, seeming to have internalized what Bramen describes as a belief that "Americans are fundamentally well-meaning people," minimizes the gravity of an inappropriate apology and inadequate acknowledgement of wrongdoing with his statement, "Well, *at least* there was

an Apology, that's all I can say" (Bramen 8; Long Soldier 72). The man's remark suggests that the existence of the document itself, regardless of its contents or delivery, entitles the United States to a kind of moral credit, if not relief from further responsibility for the numerous ways it disrupted the lives of Native people. These words elucidate what Joy Harjo and Gloria Bird respond to as they promote Native women's writing that resists the colonizer's "determin[ation] to control the language of real life" (24). The blue-eyed man's simple, seemingly guileless statement posits that his, and by extension, the United States Congress's perspective, is unquestionably reasonable and morally acceptable. He unequivocally believes that his response is "the language of real life" (Harjo and Bird 24). As Yvonne Dion-Buffalo and John Mohawk argue, the ideological tools of "conquest and colonization" entail "the ability to coerce the peoples of the world to accept the rules by which European politics and ideologies claimed the power to determine what is legitimate about the human experience" (232). The blue-eyed man's guileless and reasonable rejoinder to Long Soldier's experience with the congressional apology participates in coercing the poet to accept his position by dismissing and erasing both her feelings and the document's failures.

Mark Rifkin's study of "settler common sense" is also helpful for illuminating the assumptions underlying the unassuming yet consequential statement, "*at least* there was an Apology" (72). In his study of "the ways non-native access to Indigenous territories come to be lived as given, as simply the unmarked, generic conditions of possibility for occupancy, association, history, and personhood," Rifkin shows "how everyday instantiations of settlement provide the materials out of which non-native ethics, ideals, and orientations emerge" (xvi; xvii). The man in Long Soldier's poem, who derives his beliefs about the congressional apology from "everyday instantiations of settlement," possesses a sense of ethics that elides the "conditions" for his own life in North America, which is connected to the dispossession, displacement, and murder of Native people. By quoting the superfluous words that surround the man's remark, "Well," and "that's all I can say," Long Soldier skillfully intimates the tenor of his ideological assumptions, or the tools of colonization, that undergird his commonsense argument (72). These filler words contribute to the man's unsubstantiated belief in Euro-Americans' eminent practicality and the self-evident logic of his suggestion that Native American people should be grateful to receive an

apology that the United States was gracious to offer. To be dissatisfied with what the blue-eyed man considers a well-meaning apology is not, as Dion-Buffalo and Mohawk state, a "legitimate" thought or feeling.

The blue-eyed man silences the poet, which indicates the difficulty of rationally engaging his perspective and what he considers common sense or self-evident (72). She describes him as "candid" and "offer[ing] to the circle each of them scholarly" and herself as "sit[ting] there painful in my silence glued to a bench in the midst of the American casual" (72). Long Soldier therefore names "the American casual": the practical and optimistic language that precludes tragedy, sorrow, and irreparable wrongs in both human history and the lives of individuals. In the poem, Long Soldier maintains her silence in the blue-eyed man's presence and later verbalizes her pain in an observation that the apology "rephrase[es] as 'conflict'" tragic events that should have been named "genocide" (72). Just as Franklin avoids employing the word "sin" in his *Autobiography* and uses the more optimistic term "errata," the United States Congress also opts for less a serious word that ultimately misrepresents reality and disrespects the people to whom it was ostensibly writing. Long Soldier suggests that the word "genocide" is not only the better representation of reality but a word, not unlike "sin," that more effectively conveys truth about tragedy and pain in human life. The candid blue-eyed man in the bar readily accepts the "rephrasing as 'conflict'" because "the American casual" informs his thinking (72). In the narrative embedded in the poem, Long Soldier refrains from engaging the man's reasoning, yet *WHEREAS* functions as its own challenge and corrective to the assumptions he and many others have in common with the congressional apology.

"THERE WAS NO TEXT":

LONG SOLDIER WORKS WITH LANGUAGE

In her interview with Krista Tippett for the *On Being* podcast, Long Soldier comments on the difficulty of responding to and exposing the linguistic manipulations of the congressional apology. She describes the document as "so carefully crafted" and "very astute and very aware of what each phrase [. . .] may carry, the implication of each phrase" ("The Freedom"). She exclaims at one point, "my goodness, these guys are poets" and as she discusses the particular phrase, "opened a new

chapter,” she calls the construction of words “almost poetry.” In the poem, then, wherein Long Soldier describes her physical reaction to the congressional apology’s phrase “the arrival of Europeans in North America opened a new chapter,” she provides guidance regarding poetic form in *WHEREAS* that counters “the American casual.” Long Soldier describes her daughter’s reaction to scraped knees and her own body’s interpretation of a false gesture when her little girl feigns bravery (66). “I couldn’t name it but I could spot it,” she writes, drawing attention to the body’s understanding and articulation of deceit (66). Long Soldier’s conundrum regarding her daughter, “I couldn’t name it,” expresses her larger struggle with the language of the oppressors: their expertly-manufactured words are difficult to dismantle and refute, though their divergence from truth and reality is apparent on a visceral level.

Given the difficulty of dismantling “the American casual,” particularly with a systematic argument, Long Soldier’s work with words is pointedly different from that of the blue-eyed man and the United States Congress. *WHEREAS* avoids assertions, arguments, or abstractions. The poet eschews the mode of communication employed by the United States Congress, just as Minh-ha in her own engagement with the colonizer admits, “I am therefore not concerned with judging the veracity of his discourse [. . .] a veracity he always implies through his scientism, professionalism, or ‘scholarism’” (49). Rather, Minh-ha speculates that she may “succeed in exposing some of the premises of oppression and hegemony I and you often accept into our discourse” (49). Although Long Soldier indeed makes clear that she strives to use language to express truth, she does not proceed with her task through traditional forms, regarding poetics or argument. Like Minh-ha, she “expos[es] some of the premises of oppression” in the congressional apology. With unconventional poetics, she dismantles and challenges Euro-American linguistic traditions. Just as she “spot[s]” rather than “name[s]” the deceit in her daughter’s gesture, her poetry engages the readers’ senses, conveying truth through impressions and experiences.

Many of the poems included in *WHEREAS* consequently identify disingenuous words and actions and then reshape or relocate those same words to reveal their true colors. Long Soldier’s poetics resonate with Toni Morrison’s description of work that “requires [her] to learn how to maneuver ways to free up the language from its sometimes sinister, frequently lazy, almost always predictable employment of racially

informed and determined chains" (xi). Furthermore, Long Soldier evinces Kimberly M. Blaese's claim that "Many Indian authors have purposefully chosen to ignore standard rules and forms that are ill suited to Native storytelling. They strive to introduce different codes. Their works teach readers and critics new ways of reading and interacting with voices on the page" (556). In *WHEREAS*, how the words look on the page contributes to the reader's response as much as the words themselves. The abundant white spaces, for example, signify what Katie Kane refers to as "the white space of history" as well as absences in the narratives and vocabularies in Euro-American culture that signify the failure of language to represent truthfully tragedy and trauma. Long Soldier undermines traditional poetic expectations to "free up the language" and express reality (Morrison xi).

Long Soldier's use of shape poems, in which the primary technique is the visual spectacle on the page, challenges "the American casual" and traditional poetic expectations.⁵ As she refashions the congressional apology to show that it means other than what it says, she echoes William Apess's argument about Euro-Americans' perspective of history: "Although in words they deny it, yet in the works they approve of the iniquities of their fathers" (287). To reveal inconsistencies between the United States Congress's words and works, Long Soldier excerpts the following phrase in the shape of a hammer, which she introduces with the statement, "*I express commitment to reveal in a text the shape of its pounding—*":

[The United States Congress] expresses its regret for the ramifications of former wrongs and its commitment to build on the positive relationships of the past and present to move toward a brighter future where all the people of this land live reconciled as brothers and sisters, and harmoniously steward and protect this land together. (5)

By reshaping words the writers did not intend to signify a hammer into a representation of their adverse effect, Long Soldier criticizes the United States Congress for using words that their actions contradict while also avoiding using her own words to argue against them. She accomplishes what Harjo and Bird have called "reinventing" the colonizer's language by "turning those images around to mirror an image of the colonized to the colonizers as a process of decolonization" (22). Furthermore, Long

Soldier selects a passage especially rife with abstractions, such as “build on positive relationships,” “move toward a brighter future,” and “reconciled as brothers and sisters” to represent as a pounding hammer (5). These phrases appear particularly insincere, given that the apology was signed quietly on a weekend without the presence of tribal leaders.

In addition to shape poems that arrange the exact words of the congressional apology into more truthful meanings, Long Soldier also uses select terms from the apology in new contexts. The United States Congress may have intended to use the metaphor “chapter” to cast in an overly optimistic light the consequences of the European invasion of North America, but Long Soldier’s creative incorporation of the word into her own vocabulary subverts this meaning. She experiments with the word “chapter” as she describes an experience involving the misuse of language, wherein she hears a renowned Native American poet conflate the terms “*myth*” and “*legend*” (68). The inaccurate language becomes part of her “hesitation,” and she explains, the “power,” “I could not work myself out from under” (68). As a result of being “under,” she does not challenge or counter the misused language; instead, she reports, “my supernatural chapter ended” (68). Using the word in a different context, Long Soldier conveys the experience of oppression when the “chapters” penned by the United States belie reality. Euro-Americans literally used chapters, in the form of narratives and official histories, to control and colonize Native American people. When Long Soldier uses the word “chapter” to signify her own diminishment under a misuse of language, she alludes to the ways the official histories of the Western world have oppressed, colonized, and lied about who she is and the histories of her ancestors.

In contrast to the abstract, polite, and manipulative language of the congressional apology, or other documents such as the Declaration of Independence, *WHEREAS* offers an alternative perspective on language and practices for working with it. Long Soldier’s perspective and modeled practices align with the purpose of language she articulates in her book, quoted above: “each People has been given their own language to reach with” (75). She again extends and interacts with other Native writers concerning the role of language in human life. N. Scott Momaday, for example, refers to spoken words as “the deepest sustenance of the human race” (87). Moreover, John Mohawk contrasts Native and Western ideologies and suggests, “as a general rule, Natural people do

not lie. Theirs is an oral tradition, and lying destroys language and the destruction of language means the destruction of culture, the nation" (261).⁶ Unlike Mohawk, Long Soldier avoids generalizing the veracity of Native people as a whole, yet she draws attention to the cultural traditions and resources that contribute to the development of language, ideology, and communal life.⁷ Accordingly, in her "Resolutions" (4), she contrasts English and Native languages, writing that often in the latter,

there is no word for 'apologize.' The same goes for 'sorry.' This doesn't mean that in Native communities where the word 'apologize' is not spoken, there aren't definite actions for admitting and amending wrongdoing. (92)

Long Soldier thus depicts the ironic situation, wherein English offers a word that tends to exist more as an abstraction than a participant in reality while in Native languages, apologies are real because of the "definite actions" that express appropriate remorse for "wrongdoing" (92). Beyond the poet's comparison of English and Native languages, this poem also imparts Long Soldier's admonition to herself and readers to "reach with" language, to connect words to actions and tangible signs of meaning.

The opening lines of *WHEREAS* fittingly announce that the poetry therein will be concrete and real, as it asks the reader to prepare for a physical experience with a spatial metaphor: "Now / make room in the mouth / for grassesgrassesgrasses" (5). This declaration suggests that the language in *WHEREAS* is sizable and edible, requiring the reader to "make room" because the words endeavor to exist on the page and in readers' lives. Long Soldier's use of the grass image at several points in *WHEREAS* also responds to and participates in shaping the Euro-American literary tradition. As Conor Bracken writes in his review of *WHEREAS*, the grasses are "a trebled nod to what both hid and revealed Dickinson's narrow fellow, as well as what Whitman thought of as, among other things, the hair of the dead. And now, whenever grass pops up in a poem, it will also be Long Soldier's grass" (296). Long Soldier's poetry indeed enriches and challenges the Euro-American literary tradition. Though she has an image in common with Whitman and Dickinson, she pushes the metaphor into further concreteness, proclaiming that the words themselves have a size. Her request that the reader "make room" also suggests that her grasses will occupy a space

that the United States government and Euro-American culture has historically denied her and continues to deny her through documents like the congressional apology.

The longest poem in *WHEREAS*, “38,” provides a narrative that expounds upon the grass metaphor and Long Solider’s expectations for language. By connecting her definition of poetry to a heroic action, she suggests a larger philosophy of language that expects words faithfully to nourish human beings and represent their material realities. “38” thus poetically reports an understudied historical event, the hanging of thirty-eight Dakota men the same week President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. Beginning with the assertion, “Here, the sentence will be respected,” this poem demonstrates both practically and ideologically Long Soldier’s vision for language’s participation in life (49). She proceeds to narrate, relying on image and fact, the realities of the Sioux Uprising, which led to the mass execution of Dakota men in 1862. Long Soldier quotes Andrew Myrick, who said, “If they are hungry, let them eat grass,” in defense of his refusal to give store credit to the starving Dakota people (53). She relates what became of him during the Sioux Uprising, including the fact that when his body was found “his mouth was stuffed with grass” (53). In her description of the merchant’s death, Long Soldier connects *WHEREAS* to the Dakota warriors’ insistence on their own survival when she opens her book with the “grassesgrassesgrasses” that readers must make room for in their mouths and bodies (5). This metaphor expresses her solidarity with the historical struggle of Native people against violence and genocide and functions as her own uprising against the dehumanizing words of the congressional apology, not unlike Andrew Myrick’s.

Long Solider’s retelling of Myrick’s execution at the hands of the Dakota men also deepens her contention that responsible language is inextricably connected to physical realities and material circumstances. She explains, “I am inclined to call this act by the Dakota warriors a poem. / There’s irony in their poem. / There was no text. / *‘Real’ poems do not ‘really’ require words*” (53). In “38,” Long Soldier thus holds poetry accountable to the purpose of language she articulates elsewhere in *WHEREAS*, that “each People has been given their own language to reach with” (75). In her perspective, poetry is an action or a reality that nourishes and supports communities and individuals, such as the Dakota people’s courageous act of retaliation and preservation during

the Sioux Uprising. Consequently, in her work, Long Soldier provides readers with words that gesture and appeal to the senses, such as the hammer-shaped words of the congressional apology or the box-shaped poem titled "Three" that visually signifies "the space in which to place me" (8). Diane Glancy's creative review of *WHEREAS* aptly describes Long Soldier's resolve to connect words and reality with the statement, "As writing at the alphabet will be the bone of existence" (29). Glancy refers to the pieces of text the poet works with—symbols of the alphabet that make words—and affirms the relationship between language and action with her suggestion that those symbols "will be" an essential part of life (29).

Long Soldier includes poems that depict the powerful connections between words and bodies to demonstrate the many failures of the congressional apology as well as to offer concrete signs of genuine healing words and gestures. In "Dilate," Long Soldier writes a portion of the poem in the shape of half-circle, stating, "*All is experienced / through the body / somebody told me*" (35). This statement, which also refers to the poet holding her newborn baby, alludes to the material, spiritual, and emotional effects of the congressional apology. In the first "Whereas" poem of the book, Long Soldier further establishes the link between words and bodies, particularly in relation to apologies. She writes, "WHEREAS when offered an apology I watch each movement the shoulders / high or folding, tilt of the head both eyes down or straight through" (61). She adds, "I read / each muscle, I ask the strength of the gesture to move like a poem," and the final line asks, "Where in the body do I begin;" (61). As in the poem exploring the translation of the English word "apology" into Native languages, the poet asserts that the strength of the word and its meaning depends on physical corroborating evidence. The words need to include "definite actions for admitting and amending wrongdoing" (92). Unlike the congressional apology, which contains words that dehumanize people and lie about reality, Long Soldier enjoins herself in *WHEREAS* to "begin" "in the body" (61). She not only provides "grasses," or poems grounded in reality, to respond to injustice and tragedy but also holds herself accountable to a more responsible way of using and working with language.

As she explores responsible ways of speaking and writing, Long Soldier depicts herself as working vigorously yet humbly with language rather than using it to accomplish a political task or to win an argument.

WHEREAS is as much an exploration of how human beings should use language as it is a response to the congressional apology. As she states, “I sat I wrote about writing. I write I sit about writing” (28). A responsible approach to language, Long Soldier suggests, signifies respect for its power combined with an awareness of one’s own limitations. She explains, “How much must I labor / to signify what’s real” and “I climb the backs of languages, ride them into exhaustion—maybe I pull the reins when I mean go. Maybe kick their sides when I want down” (74). With such images, Long Soldier delineates language as a powerful animal that she must respect and learn to work with. By confessing, “maybe I pull the reins when I mean go,” she acknowledges her own fallibility and the limits of her practice with and understanding of language as she “labor[s] / to signify what’s real” (74).

To concede that she does not have power over language, that she wrestles with it and makes mistakes with it, is a posture that contrasts with the writers of the congressional apology. Although the United States Congress most likely labored to produce a document the poet characterizes as “carefully crafted,” Long Soldier’s work is nevertheless philosophically and practically different (“The Freedom”). She endeavors “to signify what’s real,” whereas the congressional apology misrepresents, manipulates, and controls (74). In a reflection on the Lakota language, Albert White Hat, Sr. asserts “how we handle our language, how we develop it, can cause the Lakota people to grow or can destroy us” (593). In agreement with White Hat, Long Soldier pointedly admits through her struggles with the apology that language is often appropriated for perverse purposes and thus becomes destructive to people and their communities. Nevertheless, as she sits and writes about writing, she evinces her faith that language can indeed participate in growth and healing. For Long Soldier, language is a resource to be worked with, cared for, paid attention to, and learned from in a manner similar to the way one would work with a valued and respected horse.

Long Soldier provides an example of words that facilitate growth and healing in a poem she calls “almost the heart of this whole response” (“The Freedom”). In this poem, which is included in the “Whereas” section, she details her pain as a child due to parental neglect through a description of her own tense body on her bed, “rolled onto my side” and “face to the wall, blank” (65). When her formerly absent and alcoholic

father apologizes to her as an adult, he audibly cries, wipes his tears, and draws upon words to communicate his sorrow:

I heard him say *I'm sorry I wasn't there sorry for many things* / like that / curative voicing / an opened bundle / or medicine / or birthday wishing / my hand to his shoulder / *it's okay* I said *it's over now* I meant it / because of our faces blankly / because of a lifelong stare down / because of centuries in sorry; (65)

As a direct contrast to the congressional apology, Long Soldier's father gestures his remorse and uses words minimally. In contrast to the six detailed pages of the United States Congress, the apology Long Solider considers genuine and capable of healing a relationship provides few details about the "*many things*" for which the offender apologizes. Her father's admission of guilt resonates with expectations for language that Long Soldier includes in her book, such as "I ask the strength of the gesture to move like a poem," and "*'Real' poems do not 'really' require words*" (61; 53). Gestures, actions, and lived experiences should express the responsible thoughts and feelings that sustain individuals, communities, and relationships. As a result, Long Soldier accepts and appreciates her father's apology because tangible signs accompany his words. She writes "I meant it / because of our faces blankly" (65).

Long Solider also presents the expression of a genuine apology as a possibility for forgiveness and reconciliation. In her interview for *On Being*, the poet recounts the experience with her father as "the most effective and the most miraculous apology that I've ever received in my life." She explains that she could "physically feel" that it was a real apology and as a result, she healed from the pain of her childhood in relation to her father's neglect and alcoholism. She states, "I really have not had the need to go back and rehash things with him." When the apology is genuine, the poet suggests, the offended person can forgive and reconciliation is possible. One of the functions, consequently, of *WHEREAS* is to process the problems, the offenses, and the pain because the United States Congress has not expressed that it is genuinely sorry. The presence of the congressional apology in the book, especially in Part II, represents Long Soldier's "rehashing" of the pain. She rearranges, stretches, bends, shapes, and erases the very words of this apology, signifying its falsity and deleterious effects. As Diaz states in her review,

WHEREAS “ensures that this grief, this absence, will be given presence, be given a body to wonder.” Appropriately, the hammer-shaped poem Long Soldier writes “*to reveal in a text the shape of its pounding*,” splits the word “reconciled” between lines (93). In a study of national reconciliation, Pablo de Greiff argues that “Reconciliation, minimally, is the condition under which citizens can trust one another *as citizens*” (126). On the contrary, Long Soldier’s hammer-shaped poem stresses that the apology has not effectively “reconciled” the United States and Native American communities; rather, this specious document may have exacerbated the trauma and distance.

As she depicts her fraught experiences with language in *WHEREAS*, Long Soldier ultimately engages in the struggle for sovereignty regarding matters of truth and reality. When she laughs and shakes as she internalizes the congressional apology while also realizing that her daughter has learned to suppress the truth of her own experiences, she encourages the little girl, “*In our home in our family we are ourselves, real feelings. Be true*” (66). Long Soldier suggests that sovereignty in one’s home, family, and beyond depends not only on truth but the individual’s commitment to engaging and acknowledging reality. She affirms Robert Allen Warrior’s argument that “the struggle for sovereignty is not a struggle to be free from the influence of anything outside ourselves, but a process of asserting the power we possess as communities and individuals to make decisions that affect our lives” (124). By instructing her daughter to “*Be true*,” excoriating the manipulative patterns of “the American casual,” and working with language responsibly, Long Soldier “assert[s] the power [she] possesses” to adhere to reality (Warrior 124).

Although perfidious language causes the poet to shake, laugh, and struggle, *WHEREAS* presents poetry—that which does not require a text to be effective—as a purveyor of sovereignty because it grounds words in truth, reality, and fidelity to material phenomena. Given the linguistic and ideological absences in Euro-American contexts for communicating about the tragedies the congressional apology fails to address, Long Soldier offers readers and writers a poetics of resistance to begin filling those absences with resources to nourish individuals and communities. Morrison writes that “cultural identities are formed and informed by a nation’s literature,” and Long Soldier’s experimental work with language has the potential to form culture in ways that encourage communities to prioritize truth, eschew violence, and measure words against

actions (39). As both poetry and a corrective to harmful language usage more broadly, *WHEREAS* influences the trajectory of American poetry and directs the nation's literature to inhabit real spaces honestly and responsibly.

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NOTES

1. In this article, I refer to Long Soldier and the speaker in the poems as the same voice or entity. I have conflated the poet and the speaker in the poems because of Long Soldier's own explanations of her book, particularly in the *On Being* interview cited within the body of the article. In this interview, she acknowledges that many of the poems are about her own experiences with her daughter and father, which I believe is license to interpret the speaker's voice as the poet's.

2. Although Bramen does not write specifically about the congressional apology to Native Americans, her project nevertheless includes discussion of various functions of "American niceness" in relation to European settlers and Native American people.

3. Long Soldier emphatically states in the interview with Tippet that she wanted to respond to the congressional apology to illustrate that "this is what it's like here and now in my own lifetime. This is not history. This is not old history. It's present in my life." *WHEREAS* thus effectively represents the poet's own lifetime, and it also evokes the past, as reviewer Michael Wasson notes that the book contains "the ever-present hauntings of American conquest."

4. For a nuanced analysis of Franklin's stance on "sin," see Kerry S. Walters, who acknowledges that the *Autobiography* depicts the author as "the supreme optimist" despite Franklin's embrace of "the depravity of human nature" (117). David L. Holmes has also studied the extent to which Franklin accepted Enlightenment optimism about human nature and concludes that although Franklin's writings often encourage readers to strive for perfectibility, he nevertheless "remained skeptical" about such possibilities (55).

5. David Truer's literary criticism, although it is focused on fiction and not poetry, helps explain Long Soldier's task with language. He argues, "Most novels about and by Natives are visual documents—stories that craft sequences of images more than matrixes of human interactions" (75). Like the fiction Truer analyzes, the prevalence of shape poems and concrete images in *WHEREAS* make it a strikingly visual book.

6. I do not interpret Mohawk's statement, or Long Soldier's indictment of the congressional apology, to mean that Native writers have a limited capacity for non-literal, figurative language. Nevertheless, both writers suggest that Euro-American discourse is particularly adept at manipulation and deception through figurative

language. In contrast, Long Soldier's use of non-literal language in *WHEREAS* is strikingly self-aware, as if to recognize the dangerous line between creative expression and manipulation. For example, in the poem wherein Long Soldier refers to "climb[ing] the backs of languages," she directly acknowledges the horse metaphor in the final line (74). Furthermore, in one of her more ironic passages, at the end of "38," Long Soldier refers to "the body" of a hung Dakota warrior "swing[ing] / From the platform. / Out / to the grasses" (53). As a figurative moment in *WHEREAS*, the body that moves away from the platform is significantly connected to a concrete metaphor ("grasses") that holds the poet accountable to telling the truth.

7. In her contribution to the anthology *New Poets of Native Nations* (2018), Long Soldier writes a poem, "Obligations 1," wherein the speaker describes her familial tradition "to speak to speak to speak / truthfully carefully meaningfully," which is shaped like a diamond and includes substantial spaces between the words (27). In this poem, Long Soldier echoes Mohawk's point about the veracity of Native individuals and communities, though the speaker writes about the family and self rather than a nation or cultural group.

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What Looks like a Grave

Native and Anarchist Place-Making in New England

THERESA WARBURTON

When the Pilgrims first landed on Cape Cod in 1620, they discovered ‘a place like a grave’. Digging it up, what troubled the graverobbers were not these Indian things, but the contents of a larger bundle: a blond European sailor, shipwrecked or abandoned on the Massachusetts coast.

—William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*

they find what looks like
a grave
what looks like a grave
a grave and they
dig it up

—Cheryl Savageau, “Before Moving on to Plymouth from Cape Cod—1620”

INTRODUCTION

In the time I have been writing this essay, preparations for the commemoration of the 400th anniversary of the voyage of the Mayflower have been ramping up on both sides of the pond with a four-nation consortium of the UK, US, Netherlands, and Wampanoag Nations coming together to create hundreds of events that highlight the political, cultural, and historical significance of the Pilgrims’ journey.¹ For instance, from Plymouth, UK, an unmanned Mayflower Autonomous Ship will retrace the 1620 voyage of the Mayflower; Leiden, Netherlands, where the Pilgrims received initial refuge in the seventeenth century, will host

an exhibit called “From Columbus to Mayflower” that uses Rembert Dodoens’s *Cruydt-Boeck* to commemorate “the plants from America that were known in our region at that time”; Plymouth, Massachusetts will host an opening ceremony complete with “speakers, dignitaries, and military demonstrations”; and the Wampanoag Nation will continue its in-demand traveling public exhibit “‘Our’ Story: 400 years of Wampanoag History,” which “reveals little-known historic and cultural realities of the ‘people of the first light.’”²

Across multiple continents, events like these (and the hundreds of others with which they coincide) are meant to celebrate the voyage of the Pilgrims, “an event of global significance resonating down those four centuries . . . [whose] values have since guided all modern democracies.”³ These events deftly mark the connection between storytelling, place-making, and statecraft in the history of settlement in the United States. Like all places, Plymouth is a story. Plymouth is many stories.⁴ The making of “New England” out of the Northeast is a storytelling tradition that predates the US while also forming a foundational role in its consecration as an exceptional harbinger of Western democracy. This is the tradition upon which these commemorations of the 400th anniversary of the Mayflower build, making and remaking Plymouth and New England in the contemporary moment by drawing on the storytelling practices of place-making while solidifying in the present the structure of the US as a state whose honorable place in the history of democracy ensures its continued existence in the future.⁵ The contours of this commemoration and the sites of its replication are significant since the construction of a regional identity, a bounded territory, and a relational network all depend on stories we tell about ourselves, each other, and our places within larger sets of stories.

Here, I am interested in how the malleability of this narrative has enabled it to permeate surprising places, being remade within the contexts of stories that seem opposed to its moral and territorial claims. In particular, I am interested in how this narrative, and its concomitant method of place-making as a settler practice, is replicated within contemporary anarchist narratives about the history of anarchism in the United States. Though anti-statism is one of the central tenets upon which anarchists tend to agree, I locate within this particular narrative a confluence of anarchist and settler place-making in New England that works to supplant Native claims to place with anarchist ones.

For instance, what do we make of the Black Rose Anarchist Federation's insistence in 2019 that Albert Parsons, one of the four people hanged by the US government after the Haymarket Affair in 1886, "was the only US citizen of 'pure stock' among the Chicago Martyrs" since he had "ancestry going back all the way to one of the pilgrims in [sic] the Mayflower in 1632"?⁶ Though this refers to a later voyage of the Mayflower, it narrates a direct connection between American anarchists and US citizenship in the nineteenth century by drawing on the history of the settlement in the seventeenth century in order to honor May Day as an anarchist commemoration in 2019. How does this narrative reproduce settler claims to place in New England, even when discussing an event that happened in Chicago? How does it invoke particular settler claims to moral certitude by equating anarchists and Pilgrims, even in a seemingly innocuous way? How does the reframing of being a US-born citizen as 'pure stock' contribute to ongoing misunderstandings of indigeneity and Native sovereignty? As I show, this conflation of the history of settlement and the history of democracy bleeds into anarchist spaces through the adoption of such narratives about New England as a place.

Tracing this replication can help us to understand how particular settler claims to territory are enacted through stories that not only travel but adapt to contexts that we may assume are intrinsically opposed. Rather than suggesting an impenetrable claim to the future, this adaptability emphasizes how the unresolvable contradictions at the heart of the settler colonial state require a constant shifting of its logical terrain. As Kanaka Maoli scholar J. Kēhaulani Kauanui has pointed out, understanding the structure of settlement in this way helps us to recognize the related meanings of what she calls "enduring indigeneity"—that "indigeneity itself is *enduring* [since] indigenous peoples exist, resist, and persist" and that "settler colonialism is a structure that *endures* indigeneity, as it holds out against it."⁷ Through this essay, I explore both facets of this "enduring indigeneity" in the Northeast by exploring how settlement is adapted in seemingly incompatible spaces as part of its endurance against indigeneity while also evidencing the myriad ways that contemporary Native peoples of the Northeast endure against this structure.

In this sense, my interest here extends beyond the simple equation of anarchists with settlers—my sense is that such an argument is nei-

ther surprising nor transformative. Instead, I build on Kauanui's work to argue that being able to identify within these stories the structure of settlement in general and the continuous claims to land in particular "exposes the fact that colonialism cannot be relegated to the past, even though the past-present should be historicized."⁸ And, what is more, that it cannot be solely relegated to an affiliation with structures that are explicitly aligned with the settler state. Rather, in identifying the shared narrative practices of American anarchism and settler history in the Northeast, I take seriously the necessity of identifying the particular *ways* that settlement persists beyond the simple recognition that it does.

This is why, as the subtitle to this piece makes clear, I am not concerned here with juxtaposing anarchist and *settler* place-making since these are more related than distinct. Rather, I stage an interaction between anarchist and *Native* place-making in the region in order to capture both valences of "enduring indigeneity" to which Kauanui points. Tracing how anarchists have adapted settler narratives into the story of our own milieu demonstrates how settlement continually endures indigeneity. To emphasize the endurance of Native peoples and land in the region, I couple my exploration of this adaptation with a close reading of poems from Abenaki writer Cheryl Savageau's 2006 collection *Mother/Land* to show how she uses poetry to unmake settler narrations of New England.

In doing so, I also seek to emphasize how Savageau's work confronts parallel narratives of Native literary history that ignore the contributions of contemporary Native writers from the Northeast. As Siobhan Senier has observed in her work on Savageau's oeuvre, "the marginalization of Savageau's poetry is part and parcel of the marginalization of Indigenous New England writers within Native American literary studies as a whole—and therefore in the broader field of American literature."⁹ Though there are Northeast authors who figure prominently in the study of early Native literatures, such as Pequot writer William Apress and Mohegan writer Samson Occom, contemporary authors from the region remain relatively absent in current scholarship, a fact that Senier argues "replicates some common misconceptions about Indigenous people in New England—namely, that they vanished from the region early on."¹⁰ By staging here an interaction between Savageau's poetry and an analysis of how anarchists engage in settler practices of place-making in New England, we can also see how Savageau's poetry insists on the

contemporary vibrance of Native Northeast peoples, stories, and places contra the overarching narrative in both mainstream and Native literary histories that relegate the Native to the Northeast's past.

In the epigraph above, we see Savageau's rearrangement of a short sentence from William Cronon's formative book in the field of Native Northeast studies, *Changes in the Land*, where he describes a moment in which the Pilgrims came across 'a place like a grave' and found, among other things that they stole from these stores of local Native communities, the body of what they believed to be a European sailor, "buried in an Indian grave"—direct quotations he takes from *A Relation or Journal of the Beginning and Proceedings of the English Plantation Settled at Plimoth in New England*, often referred to as *Mourt's Relation*, written by William Bradford and Edward Winslow and first published in 1622.¹¹

Savageau is fundamentally interested then not in this primary document in which Pilgrims narrated their experiences, but in Cronon's quick repetition of this detail from a seventeenth century source document over 300 years later. In this, Savageau explores how particular historical narratives and their related claims to place persist through uncritical repetition. She notes that Cronon's swift mention of this detail is "how details of colonial history get lost in cultural assumptions." As a reader, she says, "I look at a sentence like this and say, they did what? Who are these people?"¹² What does it mean to accept the narration of New England as a place of Native extinction, as 'a place like a grave,' especially in passing? How does this contribute to our inheritance of this narrative and what are the effects of its reproduction?

In this essay, I stage the interaction between these two sets of intersecting questions by locating their literal connection through place. Though the anarchist reproduction of settler narratives and the obfuscation of contemporary Northeast writing in Native literary studies may seem initially disconnected, my aim here is to show that because they are rooted in particular narratives about this particular place, they are inherently related. For the remainder of this introduction, then, I take the time to more clearly outline the approach I use to place anarchist narratives of New England and Savageau's poetry in conversation and to demonstrate why doing so contributes to ongoing conversations about place-making in the Native Northeast during a time when one particular narrative, that of the Pilgrims, is being so fervently commemorated.

As Abenaki scholar Lisa Brooks has argued (referencing Keith Basso),

stories “not only emerge from particular place-worlds but engage them as active participants within them and, potentially, within other place-worlds at distant spaces and times.” Therefore, the “practice of place-making . . . is also a form of narrative art.”¹³ In this sense, our ability to even speak of a place called “New England” both depends on and extends a particular narrativization of space and its relationship to the history of attempts to make American space out of Native land and its people. For White Earth Ojibwe scholar Jean O’Brien, one of the most prominent stories that makes this particular place-world is “the myth of Indian extinction,” a narrative that persists as an intrinsic part of New England’s self-storying into the contemporary moment.

In the most general telling, this myth holds that despite the foundational role that Native peoples play in the history of New England’s settlement, Native peoples no longer exist in New England today. Often presented as a lamentable but unavoidable path in the linear progression of history, this myth of Native extinction creates a paradox at the core of New English stories about itself—that Native people are at once both foundational and peripheral to its story. There are a number of reasons that this myth persists, the least of which is how well it serves particular ways of constituting New England within the broader national imaginary of the US, a topic to which I’ll return. But there are also particularities about Native communities in New England that contribute to this myth.

For instance, there are less than a dozen federally recognized tribes throughout New England today. What is more, recognized reservations or trust lands in New England often exist on the periphery of these states, rather than in a centralized or highly-populated area. In Massachusetts, for instance, the two reservation communities are Mashpee Wampanoag, located on Cape Cod, and Aquinnah Wampanoag, located on an island off the coast called Martha’s Vineyard. Relatedly, the history of settler interactions with these tribes and nations predates the appearance of settlers elsewhere, sometimes by more than 200 years.

Most importantly, much of this history of settlement in the region predates the US itself. Thus, the story of Native people in New England is often told as a prelude to its founding.¹⁴ For O’Brien, this is what makes the study of this myth at the center of New English historical practices so pivotal for understanding the state of contemporary settler politics. In this sense, her point is not only about how the myth of

Native extinction is constitutive of New England as a place but also of how this claim “bolster[s] the heroic claims of New English modernity” and, then, of the claims to exceptional moral superiority that scholars like Amy Kaplan have pointed out have been essential to the expansion of US empire.¹⁵

In *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians Out of Existence in New England*, O’Brien traces distinct practices of historical narrativization that have been used to construct New England as such. She argues that, in the nineteenth century, New England settlers set about constructing a place-making narrative that established their claim over Native land. O’Brien identifies and names a set of historical practices which she terms “firsting,” “replacing,” “lasting,” and “resisting,” and argues that local historians of the region developed these particular forms of historical writing. O’Brien finds that these practices worked to insist “that non-Indians held exclusive sway over modernity, denied modernity to Indians, and in the process created a narrative of Indian extinction that has stubbornly remained in the consciousness and unconsciousness of Americans.”¹⁶ Here, I am interested in just how stubborn this vestige is, especially in cases where it coexists with seemingly asynchronous political claims.

In this essay, I use O’Brien’s framework to explore how the types of historical practices that she argues are fundamental to the construction of New England operate within the milieu of radical politics, particularly anarchism in the US. By employing O’Brien’s methodological framework, I seek first to come to a better understanding of how the structure of settlement persists in anarchist spaces which, for all their internal debate over the meaning of anarchism itself, are nearly unanimous in their commitments against the state. Furthermore, I explore the under-theorized process of place-making within the anarchist tradition, which has tended to be more about how place has made anarchists than how anarchists have made place.¹⁷ My exploration of the role of place-making in anarchist engagements with New England, then, is a case-study in this larger discussion. But there are also particular reasons that I’ve chosen to focus on New England.

To start with, this is the place from which I write. I grew up in Nipmuc territory in Massachusetts and began this while in Narragansett and Wampanoag territory in Rhode Island, so I have my own relationship to this material that is bound to questions of origins. What is more,

as someone who politically identifies with and has participated in anarchist movements for over a decade, I have a commitment to holding us accountable to our own visions of ethical life. However, my interest here goes beyond making sense of my own experience as someone with a personal relationship to place-making in New England and to anarchist politics in the United States more broadly. Stemming from this commitment to a place-based methodology, I am also interested in New England as an important location for the history of place-making in the narrativization of the US more generally.

As O'Brien notes, the processes by which settlers wrote Native peoples out of existence are especially constitutive of New England. She argues that though "the entire construct of firsting and lasting that I posit . . . can be found everywhere," the role of this narrative process in New England is particularly notable since it emerges during a time when "New Englanders insisted they commanded cultural power in the nation and were morally superior vis-à-vis Virginia and the slaveholding South"¹⁸ In this way, New England is understood as a metonym for the broader US in both a generalized and highly specific way: it both represents a node in which to identify strategies of the settlement within the US while also acting as a unique location in which locals have routinely insisted on the "enduring importance of New England in defining the nation."¹⁹

With this in mind, the structure of this essay mirrors that of O'Brien's analysis. In each section, I draw on a brief explanation of one of the four historical practices identified by O'Brien, then trace its replication within a specifically anarchist context to demonstrate how anti-state actors ostensibly reproduce the logic of the settler state. However, I also do not want to reproduce the idea that the use of narrative in place-making, especially literary writing, is exclusively a tool of settlers. Though I agree with Patricia Rubertone that "written accounts of colonialism . . . have been inscribed mostly by the colonists, rather than the colonized," I disagree with her assessment that this is because Native peoples "for the most part did not write and read."²⁰

Whereas Rubertone turns to "archaeological evidence, as the material record of everyday life, [to] compensate for the gap created by indigenous nonliteracy," I follow Brooks's understanding of Native writing as a practice that can "spin the binary between the word and image" or, in this case, material record, "into a relational framework" that is com-

posed of an expansive history of Native writing that includes wampum, birch-bark drawing, letters, petitions, journals, and myriad forms of treaty-making.²¹ I agree that understanding writing in this way helps to emphasize the fact that it “has been an instrumental tool for the reconstruction of ‘Native space’” in New England and, therefore, must be understood as an “adaptive tool and a map that guides communal activity in a changing landscape.”²²

With this in mind, I draw on Savageau’s poetry to demonstrate the central role that literary writing can continue to play in developing adaptive approaches to pressing political questions. After identifying the replication of those historical practices described by O’Brien within anarchist contexts, I analyze poems from Savageau’s *Mother/Land* to emphasize the existence of other forms of historical practices that anarchists might draw on in our thinking about place-making in New England and beyond. In centering Savageau’s poetry, I also want to assert the importance of contemporary Native writers from the Northeast in the study of Native literatures more broadly.

My hope is that staging this interaction between anarchist scholars and Savageau’s poetry can work to “challenge the very shape of ‘New England’ by showing how . . . tribal nations preexisted, and continue to traverse state and national borders.”²³ Just as Savageau reorders the words used in *Changes in the Land* to emphasize the embedded recognition that this place is not a grave but rather only appears to be one, I illuminate here the structure of the narrative of Native extinction in New England so that it can be recognized as a construction and so that we can see how local Native peoples have and continue to work against its maintenance in thoughtful, adaptive, and radical ways. And through this recognition, we can engage in more reciprocal methods of relationships that better understand other stories that live with the land and its people, as they have always done.²⁴

[ONE] FIRSTING—IN WHICH “LOCAL TEXTS
CLAIM INDIAN PLACES AS THEIR OWN”

O’Brien’s first category, “firsting,” describes the process by which “local histories claim Indian places as their own by constructing origin stories that cast Indians as prefatory to what they assert as their own authentic histories and institutions.”²⁵ According to her, this was a strategy espe-

cially prevalent in how New English settlers memorialized their early presence on the land during the nineteenth century, a time during which the sense of New England as American space *par excellence* was dwindling. The process of “firsting” required a memorialization of earlier New England history as a series of “firsts” that “relate in one way or another to the establishment of institutions New Englanders regarded as central to their identity, and as essential elements in the modernity of their social orders.”²⁶ In formalizing local histories during the nineteenth century, New Englanders established firsts such as first churches, first marriages, first prisons, first religious ceremonies, first maps, first interviews, first trading records, and first land deeds that worked to solidify their claims to modern New England through their reflection on their first few centuries.

For example, though Plymouth was not the first landing place of the Pilgrims in the seventeenth century, local histories narrativized it this way to “claim the Mayflower Compact and insist it constituted the ‘first essay in the civilized world to found a republican constitution of government.’” In this way, narrativizations of this place during the nineteenth century “entitled Plymouth to make the claim of establishing ‘the foundation of all the democratic institutions of America’” centuries earlier.²⁷

Roger Williams is a figure whose memorialization in New England history echoes this trajectory of retroactively establishing a narrative of firsting to assert justified claims to Native space. Today, Williams is a prevalent figure in regional and US history—according to Rubertone, “it has been estimated that more biographies have been written about Roger Williams than about any other figure in America born before Benjamin Franklin.”²⁸

As the story goes, Williams crossed the Seekonk River to land in what is currently Providence after having been cast out of the Massachusetts Bay Colony due to his staunch commitment to religious freedom—later read as a precursor to the separation of church and state which became a definitive characteristic of American democracy.²⁹ When he arrived, he was famously greeted by Narragansett sachems with the phrase “What cheer, netop?,” which has frequently been invoked as a metonym for Williams’s more honorable relationship to local Native people than those of his Puritan compatriots. Along with Anne Hutchinson, Williams is narrativized as the founder of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, a place whose simple motto of “Hope”

evidences its association with freedom contra the Puritanism of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Again, so the story goes.

Williams's legacy as the founder of Providence remains rooted in the landscape today, memorialized with many monuments throughout the city, including the Roger Williams National Memorial, the Roger Williams Landing Place Monument, and a fifteen-foot-tall statue of Williams in Prospect Terrace Park in the College Hill neighborhood, which overlooks the city skyline. His famed interaction with Narragansett people is also memorialized through the invocation of the famous phrase of greeting, from What Cheer Day, which offers the occasion for visitors to experience a living history display centered at the John Brown Memorial House, to the naming of a local watering hole called the What Cheer Tavern, which the owners describe as a name that can "reflect [the] sense of community" incumbent within the "first" encounter to which the phrase points.

However, as both Rubertone and O'Brien point out, this narrative of Williams emerges centuries after his landing. Both authors point to the mid-to-late nineteenth century as a time when Williams's legacy was reimagined and reasserted as central to the history of the US. During this time, Williams was "praised as someone who upheld the right of individual conscience for the nation," effectively recentering New England within the origin story of the US during a time when this sense of the "conscience for the nation" was again at the forefront due to the Civil War. According to O'Brien, "Providence's peaceable origins are sanctified in this story" which, through the narrativizing of "an anonymous first Indian [who], in a hearty greeting of welcome, authorized [Williams's] appropriation of Indian lands, and the first encounter [which] became enshrined in memory in the rock where this event supposedly took place."³⁰ For her, this retelling of Williams's story through a firsting framework is especially significant since Williams was not, in fact, the first European to arrive in Providence, evidenced perhaps most obviously in the story itself by the Narragansetts' use of a popular English idiom to greet him upon his arrival.³¹

It is perhaps not particularly surprising that Williams's legacy has been reimagined in such a way. As numerous yearly reenactments show, including those of the 1773 Boston Tea Party and Paul Revere's 1775 ride (also reimagined during this same time period by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's 1861 poem "Paul Revere's Ride"), asserting the centrality

of New England to the establishment of the US remains a significant part of the local sense of regional culture and belonging.³² What is more unexpected, however, is the replication of this place-making narrative within the attempt to establish narratives of a unique strand of American anarchism. Williams and fellow religious rebel Anne Hutchinson appear here, as well, though not as important progenitors in the establishment of the US state, since this would seem to be in conflict with the core anarchist tenet of anti-statism. Instead, Williams and Hutchinson are narrativized as some of the first anti-authoritarians in American history and, thus, as central figures in the genealogy of anarchism in what we might wryly refer to as New World anarchism.

For instance, anarchist philosopher Crispin Sartwell has argued that “although it is unlikely that any Americans referred to themselves as ‘anarchists’ before the late 1870s or early 1880s, anti-authoritarian and explicitly anti-statist thought derived from radical Protestant and democratic traditions was common among American radicals from the beginning of the 19th century.”³³ Dubbing them “precursors” to more prominent American radicals who are often read as part of the individualist anarchist tradition and whose contributions have been overshadowed by the overall emphasis on European collectivist tendencies within the field, Sartwell notes, “In 1637, Anne Hutchinson claimed the right to withdraw from the Puritan theocracy of the Massachusetts Bay Colony on the sole authority of the ‘voice of [God’s] own spirit to my soul.’ Roger Williams founded Rhode Island on similar grounds the previous year.”³⁴ Similarly, in his 1969 piece on famed anarchist Emma Goldman, communication scholar Vito N. Silvestri begins by arguing that “dissent in America is as old as Anne Hutchinson and Roger Williams.”³⁵ And, in 1975, controversial American anarchist economist Murray Rothbard dedicated a chapter each in his expansive, four-volume *Conceived in Liberty* to Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson, articulating them as America’s first individualist anarchists.³⁶

In these cases, scholars of anarchism from a range of ideological approaches have written a genealogy of its presence in the US in a way that naturalizes the state both historically and into the future. For instance, these genealogies that read Williams and Hutchinson as foundational to the development of radicalism, including specific genealogies to other prominent anarchists in the US such as Emma Goldman, create a pedigree of anarchism in the US that predates the

existence of both. In this way, articulating Williams and Hutchinson as progenitors of an anarchist lineage uphold what Eve Tuck (Unangx) and K. Wayne Yang have referred to as “settler futurity,” or the normalization of the US not only as an institutional structure but also as a permanent, inherent moral and cultural claim to place.³⁷ Through the process of “firsting” as delineated by O’Brien, such scholars participate in a tradition of place-making that effectively writes Native peoples out of existence in New England while simultaneously establishing this place as central in the development of American anarchism.

In both the dominant and anarchist narratives, invoking figures like Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson is an instance of firsting that works to create particular genealogies of anarchism in a time before it existed. This echoes colonial attempts to claim Native space as belonging to the US and to its constituents before even the whisper of its founding. In *Mother/Land*, Savageau engages in another method of place-making that considers the history of settlement without replicating its structure through the invocation of such narrative practices. Throughout her collection, she explores this history of settlement in New England through a centering of Abenaki storytelling, which Senior has read as a form of *awikhiganak* or Abenaki birchbark writing. According to her, this method centers a “radically Abenaki way of seeing the land and home”—one that, here, I want to emphasize as proof positive that there are other methods of place-making that anarchists can engage contra the narrativization of New England as an elemental part of the US.

Savageau’s poem “Pemigewasset” appears as the final piece in the section entitled *Ghosts at the Center of the World*, the same section in which she introduces the phrase “what looks like a grave.” Titled after the river which flows through the White Mountains in what is currently New Hampshire, eventually merging with the Winnepesaukee River to form the Merrimack River, which flows into what is currently Massachusetts and then finally to the Atlantic, the Pemigewasset (or Pemijoasik in the local language) is a significant place both in Abenaki cosmology and in the histories of resistance to settlement in the region. The poem centers on two friends visiting Profile Lake, where the Pemigewasset rises. It begins, “we are at the source / the place where the Pemi / streams out of the lake.”³⁸ Here, Savageau’s sense of origin and her application of it to a central body of water in Abenaki place-making works both within and against the type of firsting described by O’Brien.

As an opening, “we are at the source” draws together the origins of the poem and the place. Referencing the Pemigewasset in the diminutive, the narrator effortlessly establishes the indelible relationship between the two Abenaki women, the river, and a sense of origin. Whereas colonial practices of firsting are intimately concerned “with the issue of purification—of distinguishing between nature and culture,” Savageau’s invocation of the first emergence of the Pemigewasset on its journey to the Atlantic instead works to reiterate longstanding connections which refuse such discernment.³⁹ Culture, in Savageau’s first, is not about the instantiation of moral institutions but, rather, of that which has a connection to the source. In using this to confront anarchist practices of “firsting,” rather than articulating Williams and Hutchinson as some of the first anarchists, we might instead draw on the long histories of Native place-making in the region like Savageau’s to point to the instability of the territorial claims of the US settler state and the concomitant claims to sovereignty through which they are constituted.

In doing so, we make sure that Savageau’s emphasis on the source is not read as a desire to create a static notion of indigenous existence, a desire to locate an originary site of belonging to which all claims of indigeneity must return. Drawing on famed Standing Rock Sioux intellectual Vine Deloria Jr.’s work, Brooks argues that origin stories (such as the brief one offered by Savageau at the outset of “Pemigewasset”) are not a claim to space rooted in temporal antecedence. Rather, such “stories are actually much more concerned with geography and spatiality, ‘what happened here,’ than with chronological origin and temporality, ‘what happened then.’”⁴⁰ Savageau’s poem uses a focus on water to emphasize these geographic and spatial dimensions, thus centering the dynamism of Abenaki presence in New England throughout time and in the contemporary moment to emphasize the “here” as constitutive of the “then.”

The poem centers on the collective reflections of “two Abenaki women / gazing silently / into the water.”⁴¹ And while they stand still as tourists move around them, they observe: “below us / around us / water is flowing” and that, as the water “streams out of the lake / over the granite . . . the rocks / are full of / water / everywhere / water is flowing.”⁴² This focus on the dynamic movement of the water, as well as its relationship to the granite and the lake as formidable physical places, emphasizes the source as dynamic rather than static, a constantly mov-

ing story that continues from a particular place. The water is below, around, and everywhere; it is flowing, rather than having flowed; and it fills up the rocks, moves over the granite, existing in a dialogue with the other components of its shared space—including the two Abenaki women who look to it quietly.

This emphasis on movement echoes Brooks's insistence on the adaptive qualities of Native writing throughout its history, connecting Savageau's twenty-first century poetry and the pre-nineteenth century writing with which Brooks is concerned. She argues that Native writing has and continues to be "instrumental not only to the adaptation and survival of Native nations but to a deeper and more complex engagement with the past, present, and future landscape of America, however we might define it."⁴³ In this sense, both her and Savageau's (and my, for that matter) focus on New England is not about providing a limited, insulated, or provincial approach to the region, but rather can illuminate this place's narrative form to shift our broader senses of place as well. In this way, anarchists can draw on the work that Savageau is doing in reshaping settler narratives that create New England out of the Northeast in order to better identify the reproduction of such narrations in our own storying of place more broadly.

The prominence of adaptation and dynamism to which both Brooks's and Savageau's work points is also bound to the effort of both to reshape the spatial dimensions that underlie the writing of both New England and the US as particular places in both mainstream and radical thought. In "Pemigewasset," Savageau's positioning of the two Abenaki women at the center of the poem reflects her positioning of Native territory at the center of the world. In a short embedded conversation, one woman laments her relationship to the tourists buzzing around the lake: *"I feel like a ghost / she says / they can't even see us."* The other woman replies, *"that's because / they are in a state park . . . and we are at / the center / of the world."* Despite the shared space, the tourists and the two Abenaki women occupy different places. The tourists, a term that elicits a sense of visiting rather than an ongoing relationship to place, are "following the signs / to the next / attraction" because "they don't / want to miss / anything."⁴⁴

Of course, what they miss when they follow the signage set up by the state park is the very people who belong to this place they want to visit. The place-making narrative they engage is that solidified by the

state, rather than that of the two Abenaki women—a relationship that one of the women experiences viscerally, leading her to feel like a ghost haunting a place to which she belongs. When serving as interlocutor to this admission of a spectral sense of self, the other Abenaki woman's reply does not deny that they are ghosts. Rather, she agrees with this reading but insists that it is because they are “at the center of the world,” alluding to the title of the section itself. In this way, Savageau's “Pemigewasset” engages Brooks's question, “what happens when we put Native space at the center of America rather than merely . . . viewing Native Americans as *part* of or on the *periphery* of America?”⁴⁵ This is a question that anarchists can center as well in our thinking on place-making in general and the Northeast in particular.

Savageau's approach to firsting here, as one that explores the dynamic dimensions of origins and the recovery of Native space (to use Brooks's term), is especially important for contemporary anarchists since she specifically invokes the specter of the state by making clear that the source of the Pemigewasset is in a state park and that it is the place-making narrative of this state that directs tourists in their experiences of the place. The two Abenaki women offer a different narrative of the place, and a different method of firsting, one that is still bound to the recognition of it as a source or place of origin but that reads the subsequent orientation of that source differently. The relation to each other and to the land (including water) that is articulated here is not only an observation but a map for relational methods that arise from this place instead of its settler construction.

[TWO] REPLACING—IN WHICH “HISTORICAL PRACTICES
ARGUE THAT NON-INDIANS HAVE SUPPLANTED INDIANS”

O'Brien's second category is “replacing,” a term that references the process by which settlers instantiate European modernity as a form that has inevitably supplanted Native presence on and claim to place. Through the restructuring of place-specific histories, O'Brien argues that New Englanders developed scripts which she labels “replacement narratives” that “collectively . . . argue for the justice of the replacement of ancient Indians by modern New Englanders.”⁴⁶ In instances like the establishment of monuments both to Native and non-Native figures, historical commemorations connected to place, and the excavation of Native sites,

“replacing narratives” work not to erase historical Native presence but rather to justify its supersession by colonial social, political, and cultural forms.

In this case, there is no denial of the previous presence of Native peoples in New England. Rather, there is the assertion of moral superiority, rooted in the claims to diplomacy *with* Native peoples, that justifies not only the presence but the prominence of non-Native institutions throughout the region. We can see how deeply connected this process of “replacing” is to the practice of “firsting” described in the previous section, especially given the continuity between Williams’s memorialization as a figure whose interaction with Native peoples is read as a sign of national moral integrity and replacement narratives that assert the inherent superiority of European institutions. O’Brien’s emphasis here is important since it signals how claims to superiority were more essential to non-Native attempts to reckon with their presence in Native space than a denial of the fact of indigeneity.

Whereas in the last section, I was concerned with how contemporary anarchists attempt to narrate the genealogy of anarchism in the US during a time when neither the US state nor anarchism itself were yet definitive constructions, here I turn to anarchist attempts to articulate a definitively American anarchism in an era when both had come into existence. Paralleling the narrative of the US itself, New England plays a central role in this history of American anarchism both in terms of the presence of anarchist communities in the area and in processes of place-making that attach to New England particular claims of moral superiority and anti-authoritarian resistance.

The nineteenth century is an important era in the history of American anarchism, one defined by a desire to articulate the result of both anarchist actors and anarchist political philosophy jumping the pond. First of all, this was an era that saw some of the first anarchists who had been born in what was, by then, the US; a group that would later be referred to as “native American anarchists,” a term popularized by Eunice Schuster in her 1932 study of “left wing American individualism,” in which she also argues that there is a direct connection between the treatment of Anne Hutchinson and Emma Goldman. Even today, this term is still used in texts like *Quiet Rumours: An Anarcha-Feminist Reader* to describe this lineage of anarchist thought.⁴⁷ The rise of the “Boston anarchists,” a group that included prominent radical

political figures like Lysander Spooner and Benjamin Tucker, solidified Massachusetts as a pivotal location for the emergence of American anarchist thought and served as the locus for foundational debates that still animate the tradition today. Most especially, these debates center questions regarding the rise of individualist approaches to anarchism that conflicted with the communal-based approaches more popular among non-US-born figures like Emma Goldman, Nicola Sacco, and Bartolomeo Vanzetti (figures who also had strong connections to Boston).⁴⁸

New England's centrality here is not a coincidence. Rather, the place-making narratives that I have mentioned thus far as constitutive of New England seem to have figured significantly in the development of individualism as a distinctly American expression of anarchism. One of the most prominent figures in this history is Voltairine de Cleyre, a Midwestern-born contemporary of Emma Goldman whose influence in the American anarchist tradition has been recovered and highlighted in recent years. As an early figure in American anarchist history, de Cleyre is often best known for her discussions of the relationship between anarchism and feminism and for her intervention in the contentious debates around individualist and communist approaches to anarchism that I mentioned above. In terms of the latter debates, she is often highlighted for her insistence on the necessity of adopting an "anarchism without adjectives" as a way of preventing insurmountable schisms between people otherwise oriented towards similar political goals.⁴⁹

In what editors Sharon Presley and Crispin Sartwell refer to as "perhaps the best-known of Voltairine's writings during her lifetime," de Cleyre turned extensively to the question of the relationship between anarchism and American political thought.⁵⁰ Entitled "Anarchism and American Tradition," the essay appeared in the anarchist journal *Mother Earth* only a few years after it was founded by Goldman. In it, de Cleyre explores the connections between anarchism and "American traditions" which, she argues, "grew during the colonization period of one hundred and seventy years from the settling of Jamestown to the outburst of the Revolution."⁵¹ Insisting on the "fundamental likeness between the Revolutionary Republicans and the Anarchists," de Cleyre lauds the place-based approach of Revolutionary-era Americans who "instead of spending their efforts mainly in general Congress, devoted themselves to their home localities, endeavoring to work out of the minds of their

neighbors and fellow-colonists the institutions of entailed property, of a State-Church, of a class-divided people, even the institution of African slavery itself.”⁵²

De Cleyre’s extolling of New England colonists’ opposition to the enslavement of African people, however, does not appear in her writings as a moral imperative that extended into her thinking about settlement or Native communities. For instance, in her critique of compulsory government-sponsored education in “Anarchism and the American Tradition,” de Cleyre worries that the actions of the “Boston Tea Party Indians” are being taught as “the one sacrosanct mob in all history, to be revered but never on any account to be imitated” rather than making sure that “every American should know to what conditions the masses of people had been brought by the operation of certain institutions . . . and how [their] liberties had again and again been filched from them by the use of governmental force, fraud, and privilege.”⁵³ Editor Presley echoes de Cleyre’s invocation of the Boston Tea Party here, asking “How have we become inured to oppressive rules and excessive taxation that make the complaints that precipitated the pre-Revolutionary War Boston Tea Party look trivial in comparison?”⁵⁴

Here, we can see the narrative of “replacing” both in the literal word of de Cleyre’s account and in the claims to a distinctly American rebellious tradition that is rooted in the supposed moral fortitude expressed during the event. In the first case, de Cleyre’s description of the participants as “Indians” accepts the replacement narrative asserted by the Boston Tea Partiers and other pre-Revolution protestors who, as Dakota scholar Philip Deloria has pointed out, “often acted out their political and economic discontent in Indian disguise.”⁵⁵ According to him, this practice of “playing Indian” has been foundational to American identity since this era, wherein colonists worked to develop a sense of being American that “was both aboriginal and European and yet was also neither.”⁵⁶ By referring to these progenitors of rebellion in America as “Indians,” even as she recognizes that they were colonists and therefore non-Native, de Cleyre employs (and her twenty-first century editors continue) a historical practice that supplants Native presence in New England.

But this replacement narrative works beyond the literal ascription of Native identity to pre-Revolutionary American rebels. In her invocation of the “Boston Tea Party Indians,” de Cleyre also locates in the history

of New England colonists a rebellious American spirit that is continued by the tradition of American anarchism in the early twentieth century. In this case, anarchist ideals become the modern instantiation of the claims to moral superiority that are associated with the American revolution. As de Cleyre published this piece only a few years into the twentieth century, her narration of colonial history in New England as the progenitor of anarchist commitments to freedom hundreds of years later situates anarchism in the provenance of modernity.

De Cleyre's estimation of early American rebellion, then, reflects the paradox at the heart of US sovereignty: that the anti-colonial heart of the American Revolution provides both the literal and material foundation for the establishment of the US settler state. Contemporary anarchist invocations of these histories do nothing to work through that complexity, investing in place-making narratives that reproduce settlement on anarchist terms. Here, we can turn again to Savageau's poetry to see how she draws on Native practices of making and understanding place to confront this attempt at replacement while also witnessing the existence of other approaches to the relationship between settler history and Native presence that can help us to reframe anarchist histories in ways that confront the structure of the settler state rather than reinforce it.

In her poem "graduate school first semester: so here I am writing about Indians again," Savageau illuminates this process by which non-Native institutions are narrated in ways that supplant Native ones. In the poem, a Native student struggles with a non-Native professor who is frustrated at her student's insistence on "writing about / Indians" in response to each text they read. The poem begins with the student responding to Simon Schama's *Dead Certainties*, "a history text / about a famous painting / of the Battle of Quebec / that never mentioned the French / and only mentioned Indians twice, / once as nuisances, once / as the noble savage."⁵⁷ Upon reading, the student intervenes: "this was during / the French and Indian war / I said, soon thousands / of French and Indian people / would be displaced, sold / into indentured servitude / my own family among them."⁵⁸

This pattern textures the poem, with the student bringing up the obvious presence of Native peoples in the writing of academic histories where they don't appear such as Laurel Thatcher-Ulrich's *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785–1812* and Hilda Otano Benítez and Antonio Benítez-Rojo's *Sea of Lentils*. The professor

responds at first with flip, if perhaps genuine, gratitude (“thanks for bringing that / to our attention”) before demanding the student stop bringing up the topic with increasingly aggressive reasoning: “you’re making everyone / feel guilty,” “you have to allow authors / their subjects,” and finally “I’m really upset / you’re telling the same story . . . stop being racist.”⁵⁹ The only moment in which the professor invites the student to write about Native people is in the class discussion on the celebrated novel *Ceremony*, written by Laguna Pueblo writer Leslie Marmon Silko, whom the professor misidentifies as “a Cherokee writer.” The student wryly notes that “is a small mistake / sort of like saying that / Dante is Chinese, so / I overlooked it.”⁶⁰

This back-and-forth regarding the proper place of Native presence acts as commentary on the supplanting of Native stories by non-Native ones. In this, Savageau offers a complex exploration of how Native stories are both written out of existence, the barriers to their inclusion, and the tacit structures that insist on this exclusion in the first place. Here, the student is not insisting that all readings be about Native peoples or that the discussion be focused in that way, either. Instead, the student draws attention to the fact that Native peoples, Native lands, and, in some cases, Native knowledges, are an unspoken part of the story being told as if it were not connected to those things at all.⁶¹ That is, non-Native histories are told in such a way that they supplant Native histories even as those stories are mutually constitutive.

Savageau’s use of the student’s insistence on adding richer historical context that includes stories about Native peoples and lands does not erase non-Native histories but rather takes seriously Brooks’s question: “what happens when the texts of Anglo-American history and literature are participants in Native space rather than the center of the story?”⁶² Rather than only accepting and replicating the story as it has been previously told, as de Cleyre does in her naming of the “Boston Tea Party Indians,” the student insists on expanding the purview and recentering the focus of the stories through a place-based method. However, in doing so, the student does not resist the inclusion of settler histories or insist on their disuse. These narratives are significant in the process of place-making with which the student is concerned, as a descendent of Native people displaced during the French and Indian War in the eighteenth-century Northeast.

In its refusal to acquiesce the supremacy of Euro-American institu-

tions to contemporary histories of modernity, including narrative place-making, Savageau's "graduate school first semester . . ." works against the practices of replacing as described by O'Brien. The student's repeated interactions with the professor question the claims to inherent legitimacy on the part of dominant institutions (like academia) without completely rejecting their presence or the possibilities enabled through them (the student is, after all, in graduate school). For anarchists concerned with exploring the impact of the milieu's transatlantic migration, the method of understanding the covalence of multiple stories is essential to making sure that we do not replicate American claims to exceptionalism through these narratives of replacement. Instead, we can question anti-authoritarian commitments in the legacy of the American Revolution from the vantage point of the present while recovering histories of interaction that do not depend on supplanting Native land and stories with non-Native ones.

[THREE]LASTING—IN WHICH “TEXTS PURIFY THE
LANDSCAPE OF INDIANS BY DENYING THEM A PLACE
IN MODERNITY”

O'Brien's third category is "lasting," which she describes as a "rhetorical strategy that asserts as a fact the claim that Indians can never be modern."⁶³ Often, the process of lasting depends on settler lamentations of the "last Indians" to argue that "Indians reside in an ahistorical temporality in which they can only be victims of change, not active subjects in the making of change."⁶⁴ For instance, O'Brien offers the example of Martha Simon, a Narragansett woman who captured the imagination of prominent narrators of America including writer Henry David Thoreau, who recorded in his journals wistful observations about Simon's lack of ability to speak her language, and painter Albert Bierstadt, who painted a portrait of Simon in 1857 entitled *The Last of the Narragansetts*.⁶⁵ This example points to the prevalence of lasting in the work of both Thoreau and Bierstadt more broadly, both of whom drew deeply on the landscape of New England in their art to articulate a romanticized view of Native peoples as a vanishing race.

This process of lasting follows from those of firsting and replacing in that it attempts to reckon simultaneously with the presence of Native

peoples prior to settlement and the appropriation of their land under the auspices of moral integrity. In New England, O'Brien argues that lasting was not merely a practice that identified the "last" of Native tribes, but rather that lamented the contamination of Native people and communities to the point that they were no longer identifiable as Native. In these cases, narratives about primitivism and authenticity worked as a double-edged sword—often, settlers argued that Natives were incapable of adapting to modern life and yet, when it became obvious that adaptation was an ongoing practice in Native communities, this adaptation was used as evidence that they no longer had any claim to indigeneity. As O'Brien observes, "They are able to change but once they have changed, they are no longer Indian."⁶⁶

These practices were used together to claim the right to place, political authority, and economic dominance by denying Native peoples a place in the modernity that settlers believed their presence had instantiated. Many of those practices that I have described by anarchists up until this point participated in that undertaking throughout the nineteenth century as anarchists sought to articulate a distinctively American tradition. In this section on lasting, I am interested in exploring the result of some of these practices in a more contemporary moment. And, as it turns out, New England in general and Boston in particular remain especially important to this story.

Much as Boston was a central locus of the development of American anarchism at the turn of the twentieth century, it remained so at the turn of the twenty-first. Following the success of the 1999 protests against the Third Ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organization in Seattle, there was an upsurge of interest in anarchism and anarchist organizing across the US. In April of 2000, a group of over two dozen anarchists met in Boston to discuss the need to establish a more formalized revolutionary organization of anarchist communists throughout the region. The result was the establishment of the Northeast Federation of Anarchist Communists (NEFAC), a bilingual organization spanning from southern New England to Québec composed of "active collective, affinity groups and individuals from the region who identify with the communist tradition within anarchism."⁶⁷ Though NEFAC disbanded about eight years later, the group was revived in 2011 under the name Common Struggle/Lucha Común and, eventually, was absorbed into

Black Rose Anarchist Federation, which is one of the most prominent anarchist organizations in the US today and whose depiction of Albert Parsons I discussed in the introduction.

In this way, NEFAC is an important node in the genealogy of contemporary anarchism in the US. Because of this, the Northeast functions again as a fundamental part of the narrative of place-making in anarchist history. In light of the framework provided by O'Brien in her discussion of "lasting," what is especially interesting here is how NEFAC conceptualized the "Northeast" of which their organization's name spoke. "[I]n an effort to organize across national and linguistic borders," the original NEFAC attendees insisted on imagining the organization as one that united "predominantly English-speaking anarchist-communists from the northeastern U.S. with French-speaking Quebecois anarchist-communists."⁶⁸ This represents a significant shift in how anarchists in the US were thinking about the place of the Northeast within their politics.

In a welcome shift from the anarchist accounts of the Northeast that I have discussed thus far, the shapers of NEFAC worked to imagine the Northeast outside of the confines of "New England." For instance, in a number of the previously discussed texts, Boston appears as a metonym for the North contra a slave-holding South. For NEFAC, however, Boston appears as the southernmost place within their construction of the Northeast. This restructuring of place-narratives within US anarchism proved fruitful, with important protests in Montréal and Québec in the fall of 2000 garnering significant organizing support from activists in nearby locations in the US. As an effort at concerted place-making, the conceptualization of the Northeast here represents a significant shift in how anarchists in the US were thinking about the region.

However, this place-making practice also evidences some of the qualities of lasting as described by O'Brien. Most notably, this desire to create a sense of place that eschewed the construction of the US–Canada border was not new or even unique. In fact, many Native communities had established longstanding political alliances that worked against the instantiation of this border and, what is more, many of those confederations existed as NEFAC was being founded. For instance, by 2000 the Haudenosaunee Confederacy had existed for at least 540 years and prominent Haudenosaunee communities, including the Kanien'kehá:ka

reserve at Kanehsatà:ke, which was the location of the infamous blockade in 1990, as well as communities that spanned the colonial border like the reserves at Kahnawake and Akwesasne, were powerful actors within the territories imagined as part of the “Northeast” during the establishment of NEFAC.⁶⁹

Similarly, the Wabanaki Nations of the Mi’kmaq, Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet), Passamaquoddy, Abenaki, and Penobscot nations was established in the region in 1606 and saw a revitalization effort in the early 1990s after having met surreptitiously for more than a century following British orders to disband the confederacy in 1862. And, of course, Brooks’s book *The Common Pot* itself is grounded in the place-making practices developed through the network of relations that were established through the Dish with One Spoon Treaty of 1701. All of these agreements and relationships between Native nations not only pre-date the current US/Canada border but provide examples of existing “networks of relation” that make place contra colonial borders.

Despite the prominence of these examples both historically and in contemporary politics, especially in Canada, founders of NEFAC did not consider these models when conceptualizing either place-making in the Northeast or in developing solidarity networks across the border. Each of these cases evidences practices of place-making that sought to establish reciprocal and sustainable relationships between groups of people with common interests while maintaining protocols for recognizing rights to self-determination among those included. In this, they provide powerful and successful models for the kind of political network that NEFAC sought to build. The lack of consideration of these examples in attempts to establish a “northeast federation of anarchist communists” demonstrates a failure to consider the presence of Native networks of relations either as part of modernity or as relevant to actors in the contemporary world.

Even in the rare cases where such communities are mentioned, we can see the operation of a practice of “lasting” as described by O’Brien. For instance, one of the few examples of any discussion of Native peoples in the Northeast region as defined by NEFAC is Stephen Arthur’s “‘Where License Reigns With All Impunity’: An Anarchist Study of the Rotinoshóni:ni Polity,” which appeared in issue twelve of NEFAC’s *The Northeastern Anarchist*. In this article, Arthur offers a historical account of the Haudenosaunee, with a special focus on methods of governance,

to argue that there are inherent connections between indigenous and anarchist politics, “a claim that seems all that more plausible when anarchists study the traditional polity of the Rotinonshón:ni.”⁷⁰ He ends his explication this way: “the traditional polity of the Rotinonshón:ni has demonstrated that . . . there is an alternative to a stratified, hierarchical, patriarchal society and an exploitative economy—but we must build it now, and not wait idly for some far-off future when material culture has completed its development.”

Here, Arthur definitively writes Haudenosaunee forms of governance out of modernity, using the same rhetoric that O’Brien identifies in her study of “lasting.” Despite the fact that the Haudenosaunee Confederacy has continually existed since its founding, Arthur still writes it as an artifact of the past that anarchists can draw on in the contemporary moment. In this formulation, anarchists exist today (and in the far-off future) while Haudenosaunee people exist only in the past. Modernity then, allows for the influence of Native forms of governance in the present but not the presence of Native peoples themselves.

One of the most telling words in Arthur’s reading of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy is his use of the term “traditional” to relegate the Confederacy to the past. Many Native scholars have written about how the conflation of “tradition” with a desire to return to an undiluted “Native” past operates as a litmus test for authenticity that few Native peoples are able to fulfill. For instance, Onondaga scholar Theresa McCarthy has written extensively about how popular ideas about Haudenosaunee traditionalism have been used to create a “repressive authenticity” that is taken up to delegitimize Native confrontations of colonial power.⁷¹ In the case of the reclamation at Grand River, McCarthy traces this phenomenon among non-Native Canadians: “time and time again we were reminded that the bridge and tire fires, the van hurled over an overpass, the skirmishes with television cameramen, the backhoe ‘excavation’ of a provincial highway, and even the alleged vandalizing of a Hydro One tower were criminal—rather than traditional—acts.”⁷²

Here, McCarthy highlights both the sense among non-Native Canadians that they were the arbiters of Haudenosaunee traditions and that a failure to adhere to that sense of traditionalism meant a discrediting of the political acts by the public. And though one could surmise that Arthur’s reading of such an event would be more supportive

than those of mainstream Canadians described by McCarthy (Arthur is an anarchist, after all), his articulation of Haudenosaunee governance mirrors these claims to the ability to arbitrate authenticity in the service of particular readings of “tradition.” For Arthur, Haudenosaunee traditionalism is a form of governance that exists outside of those forms he finds reprehensible but that must be brought into the contemporary moment by radical actors. He spends the majority of his piece laying out the history of the Confederacy, establishing tradition as a form of historical purity. This speaks to the parallels between Arthur’s approach and the historical practice of lasting described by O’Brien, which depends on “erroneous notions of Indian authenticity calculated according to the degeneracy narrative” that assumes Native extinction as a matter of dilution rather than eradication.⁷³

Savageau takes up this issue of temporality, tradition, and authenticity in her poem “Tradition,” which follows the narrator and their mother as they make an apple pie together when the narrator is a child and again, twenty years later. At the outset of the poem, the narrator describes the precision they use in putting the pie together at the direction of their mother: “I am placing the cut slices / into the pie, following / her directions, placing / the half-moons curve side up.”⁷⁴ Here, Savageau emphasizes the continuity of the practice, using verbs in the present tense and ending lines with the active elements of her description. In this configuration, tradition is defined not only by the act itself but by its repetition across time. When we jump twenty years later, the narrator is making apple pie in this same way, “placing the cut apples / just so, not thinking why / secure in knowing the / right way” when the mother interjects and asks, “why are you doing it like that?” the narrator realizes that the mother does not have the same sense of tradition that seemed so precise and defined. The poem ends with this reflection on tradition: “That’s the thing with tradition. / Even now, peeling apples for pie, / I’m looking over my own / shoulder, wondering.”⁷⁵ One reading of this pivot is that tradition is essentially empty, that it is constructed through the subjective expectations of the practitioner.

However, attention to the broader context of the poem opens up another reading. The temporality of the poem is key here: there is a chronology that structures the poem, which progresses in a linear fashion from an early instance of making apple pie to a later one, twenty years down the line. However, this final stanza shifts the temporality of

the poem away from this linear progression in two ways. First, the final two lines, wherein the narrator looks over their shoulder and wonders, invokes a sense of looking back. Initially, this can support a reading that views adherence to tradition as a desire to return to the past. However, the second way in which this poem shifts this understanding of tradition and temporality is in the use of the present tense to formulate tradition as an adaptive interaction with continuous practices. In the last stanza, it is “*Even now*, peeling apples for pie,” that the narrator turns around and wonders.⁷⁶ This extant moment is the fulcrum of tradition in the poem—the “even now” roots the practice itself, so that in the final instance it becomes clear that it is not necessarily *how* the pie gets made that is the tradition (as the narrator thought) but rather it is the fact that the pie continues to be made “even now.”

Here, Savageau rejects the type of lasting described by O’Brien that depends upon the mediation of authenticity as the proper rendering of tradition. Instead, Savageau’s reflection on tradition, like McCarthy’s work on Haudenosaunee traditionalism, “resonates with the complicated lives and political realities” of Native people while adhering to many of the continued practices of Abenaki writers across time.⁷⁷ Throughout *Mother/Land*, Savageau engages with tradition in the way set out in this poem—she has multiple poems where she tells traditional Abenaki stories, revisits important traditional Abenaki locations, and reflects on traditional histories of the Abenaki people. In this way, Savageau engages the type of approach to tradition that she articulates in this poem, refusing to articulate it as a precise repetition or a stated desire to return to a pre-contact time that is held up as a model of Abenaki purity. Instead, she engages the practice of writing itself as an adaptive tool that works to reshape these stories, places, and people in a genealogy of continuous inhabitation and engagement.

Thus, when Savageau describes the way the apples in the pie “mound over the top like a / gentle hill or the / belly of a woman,” she is participating in the type of spatial writing tradition that Brooks argues is foundational to the history of the Native northeast.⁷⁸ What is more, her focus on apple pie gestures to a broader engagement with American traditions and indigeneity as well—after all, it is two generations of Native bakers whose continuous tradition is the making of something as American as apple pie.⁷⁹ In these instances, Native people are not denied a place in modernity but neither is tradition exiled to make room for them in

the present. Rather, Native people's own continuous practice of their traditions, especially in adaptive formats, is what signals the relationship between tradition and modernity. Within Savageau's framework, instead of asking how the history of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy might influence contemporary anarchists, we might ask instead how the current practices of the Confederacy help us to better understand the possibilities of building relationships between Native and non-Native cohabitants that work against those structures of interaction proscribed by settlement.

[FOUR]RESISTING—IN WHICH “CLAIMS TO TEXTS ABOUT
INDIAN EXTINCTION FAIL EVEN AS THEY ARE BEING MADE”

Most of the events commemorating the 400th anniversary of the Mayflower's voyage end in November 2020, culminating in an engagement with perhaps the most lasting story of place-making in New England: that of the First Thanksgiving. Much like many of the other stories that O'Brien discusses in her book, this story is one developed within specific practices of place-making throughout US history. As O'Brien and Lisa Blee note in their study tracing the movement of public monuments to 8sâmeeqan (more popularly known as Massasoit), “the widely accepted story of Thanksgiving inculcated in childhood . . . took considerable time to develop and has morphed repeatedly over time.”⁸⁰ In fact, Thanksgiving was not celebrated as an annual tradition related to the Pilgrims until “Abraham Lincoln declared one in 1863 as a gesture of healing and unity.”⁸¹

In this way, the story of Thanksgiving contains within it all of the historical practices identified by O'Brien that I've explored in this essay. We can see the process of “firsting” in the re-narration of a romanticized seventeenth century “First” Thanksgiving as part of the project of nation-building in the nineteenth century; “replacing” in how yearly reenactments in classrooms and communities across the country overwrite the Native ceremonial practices from which Thanksgiving emerged; and “lasting” in the narration of Tisquantum (popularly known by the diminutive “Squanto”) not only as a central figure in the story of Thanksgiving but also as the “last of the Patuxet,” a title by which he is often known.⁸²

In recent years, people have confronted the accuracy of this narrative

of the peaceful first Thanksgiving. Articles have appeared every November in outlets like the *New York Times*, *National Geographic*, and *The Huffington Post*.⁸³ In each case, the articles take issue with the historical inaccuracy of the narrative we are taught as children, emphasizing a critical engagement with the romanticization of the event. This is not quite the form of defiance that O'Brien points to in her last section on "resisting." Instead, O'Brien uses this term to argue not for a contemporary restructuring of these narratives through a claim to historical accuracy, but rather for a recognition that none of these historical practices was ever completely successful.

Indeed, their ubiquity in the current moment can be read as evidence of the fact that Native extinction remains a myth rather than a fact—the uncertainty at its core requires a constant reinscription. This is true also for a re-narration of the history of Thanksgiving, even as we approach the Plymouth 400th Anniversary celebrations. For instance, both Wampanoag elder Ramona Peters and Narragansett elder Dawn Dove have argued that at issue is not the correction of historical inaccuracies but a misrepresentation of the ethical commitments that emerge from the practice itself. As Peters notes, "rather than trying to get the historical facts correct, I'd like . . . to focus more on the sentiment of being thankful. Gratitude is the most powerful Thanksgiving story, from my perspective as a Wampanoag."⁸⁴

This echoes Dove's reflection on the narrative of Thanksgiving. Entitled "In Order to Understand Thanksgiving, One Must Understand the Sacredness of the Gift," Dove argues for the importance of understanding it not as a rendering of a historical event but as a story that provides us with traditional frameworks for building relationships that honor what she calls the "sacredness of the gift."⁸⁵ This is what is missing from anarchist engagements with place-making in the Northeast and what is most present in Savageau's rendering of the region in her poetry.

In Dove's rendering of the importance of Thanksgiving, it is the ideals of reciprocity and community well-being that form the root of the narrative. Its failure, then, is not its historical inaccuracy but is, instead, our failure to realize these types of relationships in the contemporary moment. Imagine if, indeed, there were an event every year where representatives from the state of Massachusetts and local tribal nations met to discuss how to live up to the responsibilities to place and each other that, Dove argues, guided the Wampanoag in their decision to

share their crop with the new arrivals. If, instead of digging up corn from “what looks like a grave,” settlers accepted the sacredness of the gift and the responsibilities that come along with it. In her repetition of the eleven words drawn from Cronon and *Mourt’s Relation* that make up “Before Moving on to Plymouth from Cape Cod—1620,” Savageau performs this transformation on the page. What would it look like for us, especially for anarchists who take as a central ethical commitment a confrontational orientation towards the state, if we engaged this in our everyday lives?

Rather than correcting Cronon’s historical narrative, Savageau pushes back against the idea that New England “looks like a grave,” that it is a place defined by death and extinction. Her repetition functions as semantic satiation, making the phrase a meaningless description that is empty of moral, ethical, or relational frameworks for building relationships in the contemporary moment. New England only looks like a grave when we use these same inherited stories to narrate its spatial and temporal directions. Anarchists participate in this project when we employ historical practices of firsting, replacing, and lasting as we narrate New England and its place in anarchist history. Instead, we would do well to pay better attention to how longstanding place-making stories can also make us, giving us better frameworks for building relationships than those limited options we are provided within our cultural shibboleth. Writers like Savageau provide us with connections to continuous practices of reciprocity rather than leaving us with the sense that we have no models on which to build or that such models have become extinct along with local peoples and places. Perhaps in order to understand the story of New England, we need to recognize the sacredness of the gift.

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NOTES

1. I first wrote this essay for the Fellows Seminar of the Cogut Institute for the Humanities at Brown University. I am grateful for the comments of my colleagues during this session. I am also indebted to the thoughtful and generous comments

from my two anonymous reviewers, whose feedback made this piece immeasurably stronger.

2. For more about the unmanned Mayflower, see Jen Copestake's "Unmanned ship to go on 400-year-old journey across the Atlantic," *BBC News*, October 16, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-50047449>; for more on the botanical exhibit in Lieden, see the Netherlands's Mayflower400 website, <https://www.mayflower400leiden.com/events/2020/from-2020-onwards/from-columbus-to-mayflower/>; for more on the celebration in Plymouth, MA, see the US's Plymouth400 website for the event, <https://www.plymouth400inc.org/event/plymouth-400-commemoration-opening-ceremony/>; and for more on the "Our Story" exhibit see both the description at the Plymouth400 website, <https://www.plymouth400inc.org/our-story-exhibit-wampanoag-history/> and Abby Remer, "'Our' Story: 400 Years of Wampanoag History," *Martha's Vineyard Times*, September 25, 2019, <https://www.mvtimes.com/2019/09/25/ourstory-400-years-wampanoag-history/>.

3. See the "United Kingdom" section of the Mayflower400 Leiden's website dedicated to "Our Shared Vision," <https://www.mayflower400leiden.com/about/vision-aims/>.

4. This way of narrating a particular place is taken from Ohlone/Costanoan-Esselen and Chumash scholar Deborah Miranda's 2013 *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir*, which begins "California is a story. California is many stories. As Leslie Silko tells us, don't be fooled by stories! Stories are 'all we have,' she says. And it is true. Human beings have no other way of knowing that we exist or what we have survived, except through the vehicle of story" (xi). Deborah Miranda, *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir* (Berkeley: Heydey Press, 2013).

5. As stated on the Mayflower400's UK site, "Through the themes of exploration, innovation, self-governance, religious freedom, immigration and thanksgiving, it will honour a collective past and engage people worldwide in building a brighter future" (<https://www.mayflower400uk.org/about/about-mayflower-400/>).

6. José Antonio Gutiérrez Dantón, "Albert Parsons: Anarchist and Labor Martyr in His Own Words," *Black Rose Anarchist Federation's* blog, May 10, 2019, <https://blackrosefed.org/albert-parsons-anarchist-and-labor-martyr/>.

7. J. Kauanui, "A Structure, Not an Event': Settler Colonialism and Enduring Indigeneity," *Lateral: Journal of the Cultural Studies Association*, 5, no.1 (Spring 2016): para. 1.

8. Kauanui, "A Structure, Not an Event,'" para. 9.

9. Siobhan Senior, "'All This / Is Abenaki Country': Cheryl Savageau's Poetic *Awikhighanak*," *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 22, no. 3 (Fall 2010), 1.

10. Senior, "'All This / Is Abenaki Country,'" 2. Only two scholarly articles have been written about Savageau's work: Michèle Lacombe's "More than Where the Heart is: Meeting Places in Wabanaki Poetry by Cheryl Savageau and Mihku Paul," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 29, no. 2 (Spring 2015): 133–49; and Senior's article, cited here.

11. William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Macmillan, 2011), 84.

12. Cheryl Savageau, *Mother/Land* (Cambridge, UK: Salt Publishing, 2006), 139.

13. Lisa Brooks, *The Common Pot* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), xxiii.

14. This argument remains prominent today, as in the current attempts by the US government to remove Mashpee Wampanoag lands from reservation status on the basis that the treaty signed between the tribe and settlers pre-dates the US and, therefore, does not require a continued acknowledgement of the sovereign status of the Wampanoag tribal nation as recognized in the treaty. In this case, the Department of the Interior draws on the myth of Native extinction to extinguish the recognition of the Mashpee Wampanoag in a desire maintain the inheritance of claims to land made by early settlers without inheriting the concomitant diplomatic responsibilities. For more, see Wampanoag tribal council member Jessie Little Doe Baird's "America Moves to Bite the Hand that Fed It," *Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe News*, September 10, 2018, <https://mashpeewampanoagtribe-nsn.gov/news/2018/9/10/america-moves-to-bite-the-hand-that-fed-it-the-mashpee-wampanoag-sole-surviving-signatory-tribe-to-americas-first-indian-titled-land>.

15. Jean M. O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians Out of Existence in New England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 4. See also Amy Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).

16. O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting*, xiii.

17. For instance, see Raul Zibechi, *Territories in Resistance: A Cartography of Latin American Social Movements* (Oakland: AK Press, 2012); James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010); Chris Ealham, *Anarchism and the City: Revolution and Counterrevolution in Barcelona, 1898–1937* (Oakland: AK Press, 2010); and Strangers in a Tangled Wilderness, *A Small Key Can Open a Large Door: The Rojava Revolution* (self-published, 2015).

18. O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting*, xiv.

19. O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting*, xviii.

20. Patricia Rubertone, *Grave Undertakings: An Archaeology of Roger Williams and the Narragansett Indians* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), xii.

21. Rubertone, *Grave Undertakings*, xii; Brooks, *The Common Pot*, xxi. These categories of early Native writing are those proposed by Brooks in *The Common Pot* as part of the project of "mapping the genres of indigenous writing in the network of relations" (219).

22. Brooks, *The Common Pot*, xxviii.

23. Siobhan Senier, ed., "Introduction," *Dawnland Voices: An Anthology of Indigenous Writing from New England* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014), 9.

24. I take this phrase from Nishnaabeg scholar and writer Leanne Betasamosake Simpson's *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resistance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017).

25. O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting*, xxiii.

26. O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting*, 10.

27. O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting*, 10.
28. Rubertone, *Grave Undertakings*, 3.
29. His Wikipedia article also claims that he was one of the "first abolitionists."
30. O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting*, 25.
31. O'Brien suggests that "Even a cursory glance at [William] Blackstone's résumé suggests the oddity of this amnesia. For William Blackstone could boast a plethora of firsts any modern would envy (and his story is told in no fewer than fourteen local histories across southeastern New England): first inhabitant of Boston and Rehoboth in Massachusetts before heading to Rhode Island to become the first there" (70).
32. Though there do not appear to have been reenactments of Williams's landing in Providence, there has been a pseudo-reenactment of his trip from Providence to Newport as part of an event humorously called the "Annual Arrogance of Self-Righteousness Row," which occurred yearly between 2009 and 2014. For more, visit the Village Community Boathouse's article about the voyage here: <https://www.villagecommunityboathouse.org/2014/09/fifth-annual-arrogance-of-self-righteousness-row-2014/>.
33. Crispin Sartwell, "Anarchism and 19th-Century American Political Thought," in *Brill's Companion to Anarchism and Philosophy*, edited by Nathan J. Jun (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 454.
34. Sartwell, "Anarchism," 454.
35. Vito N. Silvestri, "Emma Goldman, Enduring Voice of Anarchism," *Today's Speech*, 17, no. 3 (1969): 20.
36. Murray Rothbard, *Conceived in Liberty* (Auburn, AL: Ludwig Von Mises Institute, 1975), 172–86. William Gary Kline draws extensively on Rothbard's analysis to offer a similar argument in his book *The Individualist Anarchists: A Critique of Liberalism*, in which he discusses both Williams's libertarianism and the resistance to him by the Baptist Anarchists, including his brother, Robert Williams (4–5). See William Gary Kline, *The Individualist Anarchists: A Critique of Liberalism* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1987).
37. See Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization is Not a Metaphor," in *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, and Society* 1, no. 1 (2012): 1–40.
38. Savageau, *Mother/Land*, 84.
39. O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting*, 27.
40. Brooks, *The Common Pot*, xxiii.
41. Savageau, *Mother/Land*, 84.
42. Savageau, *Mother/Land*, 84.
43. Brooks, *The Common Pot*, xxxix.
44. Savageau, *Mother/Land*, 84.
45. Brooks, *The Common Pot*, xxxv. Original emphasis.
46. O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting*, 57.
47. For instance, see Marian Leighton, "Voltairine de Cleyre: An Introduction," in *Quiet Rumours: An Anarcha-Feminist Reader*, edited by the Dark Start Collective (Oakland: AK Press, 2012), 47–51.
48. Some read the debate over individualist and communist approaches as a

right-wing/left-wing divide, but contemporary scholars have worked to offer a more nuanced approach. Leighton's writing on de Cleyre, cited above, is one such example.

49. See Sharon Presley's introduction to Part II of *Exquisite Rebel: The Essays of Voltairine de Cleyre*, entitled "Loving Freedom: Anarchism without Adjectives." Sharon Presley, "Introduction," *Exquisite Rebel: The Essays of Voltairine de Cleyre*, edited by Sharon Presley and Crispin Sartwell (Albany: SUNY University Press, 2005).

50. Presley, "Introduction," 49.

51. de Cleyre, *Exquisite Rebel*, 91.

52. de Cleyre, *Exquisite Rebel*, 93.

53. de Cleyre, *Exquisite Rebel*, 94.

54. de Cleyre, *Exquisite Rebel*, 49.

55. Philip Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 12.

56. Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 27.

57. Savageau, *Mother/Land*, 74. Here, Savageau is referring to Schama's discussion of Benjamin West's 1770 painting, *The Death of General Wolfe*.

58. Savageau, *Mother/Land*, 74.

59. Savageau, *Mother/Land*, 74–76.

60. Savageau, *Mother/Land*, 77.

61. For instance, in the discussion of Thatcher-Ulrich's book about a midwife in Maine, the student notes that the midwife describes in her diary that "she was using herbs / not found in English herbals" (Savageau 75).

62. Books, *The Common Pot*, xxxv.

63. O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting*, 107.

64. O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting*, 105.

65. O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting*, 112–13.

66. O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting*, 106.

67. "The Founding of the Northeast Federation of Anarchist Communists," Northeastern Federation of Anarchist Communists (NEFAC), last modified May 11, 2000, <http://www.ainfos.ca/00/may/ainfos00210.html>.

68. "The Founding of the Northeast Federation of Anarchist Communists," NEFAC, May 11, 2000.

69. For more on the blockade at Kanehsatà:ke, see Kiera Ladner and Leanne Simpson, eds., *This is an Honour Song: Twenty Years Since the Blockades* (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring, 2010) and Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014).

70. Stephen Arthur, "Where License Reigns with All Impunity," April 10, 2015, <https://libcom.org/library/where-license-reigns-all-impunity-anarchist-study-rotinonsh%C3%B3nni-polity>.

71. Theresa McCarthy, *In Divided Unity: Haudenosaunee Reclamation at Grand River* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2016), 37–82.

72. McCarthy, *In Divided Unity*, 37.

73. O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting*, 208.

74. Savageau, *Mother/Land*, 60.

75. Savageau, *Mother/Land*, 61.

76. Savageau, *Mother/Land*, 61. My emphasis.

77. McCarthy, *In Divided Unity*, 230.

78. Savageau, *Mother/Land*, 60.

79. As Robert Cox has argued in *New England Pie: History Under a Crust*, “New England is a pie-loving culture in a pie-loving nation, and the fillings are deep . . . pies in New England are expressions of the values we place on sociality, thrift, austerity, and innovation: they can stand in for the bounty of our soils or our ability to make do with what is on hand” (6). See Robert Cox, *New England Pie: History Under a Crust* (Charleston, SC: American Palate, 2015).

80. Jean O’Brien and Lisa Blee, *Monumental Mobility: The Memory Work of Massasoit* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019), 20. Here, I am following the spelling that O’Brien and Blee provide through their consultation with the Wômpanâak Language Reclamation Program.

81. O’Brien and Blee, *Monumental Mobility*, 21.

82. As part of the “Our’ Story: 400 Years of Wampanoag History” exhibit, the Mashpee Wampanoag most recently unveiled a new display that “features three panels and a 7-minute video depicting Tisquantum’s . . . return to Patuxet village short after the Great Dying of 1616–1619,” on display at the Tantaquidgeon Museum in Uncasville, CT. See “Our’ Story Wampanoag History Exhibit Unveils New Chapter: The Return of Tisquantum,” December 1, 2019, <https://mashpeewampanoagtribe-nsn.gov/december-2019-mittark-blog/2019/12/1/ourstory-wampanoag-history-exhibit-unveils-new-chapter-the-return-of-tisquantum>.

83. See Maya Salam, “Everything You Learned About Thanksgiving is Wrong” in the *New York Times*, November 21, 2017; Becky Little, “A few things you (probably) don’t know about Thanksgiving” in *National Geographic*, November 20, 2018; and Richard Schiffman, “The Truth About Thanksgiving: What They Never Taught You in School,” in *The Huffington Post*, updated November 22, 2016, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/the-thanksgiving-truth_b_1105181.

84. Ramona Peters, “Ramona Peters: Sharing a Wampanoag story of Thanksgiving,” November 25, 2015, <http://www.indianz.com/News/2015/11/25/ramona-peters-sharing-a-wampan.asp>.

85. Dawn Dove, “In Order to Understand Thanksgiving, One Must Understand the Sacredness of the Gift,” in *Dawnland Voices: An Anthology of Indigenous Writing from New England*, ed. Siobhan Senier (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014), 484.

“Now for the Indian Story”

Reconceiving George Bent as a Warrior-Writer

RACHEL LINNEA BROWN

When advertising its upcoming October 1905 issue, the Colorado Springs periodical *The Frontier: A Journal of Early Days and Their Thrilling Events* declared, “We have read the other side of the story. Let us see what the red man has to say about it.” The “red man” in question was George Bent (1843–1918), a sixty-two-year-old Southern Cheyenne writer, historian, translator, Confederate veteran, Crooked-Lance (or Bone-Scraper) Society warrior, and Sand Creek Massacre survivor.¹ His “story” was “Forty Years with the Cheyennes,” a six-part autobiography that ran as the *Frontier*’s leading article from October 1905 to March 1906.² Despite his literary ambitions, “Forty Years” is one of just two publications that appeared in Bent’s lifetime; the University of Oklahoma Press published the more widely-known *Life of George Bent* (1968), a book-length expansion of “Forty Years,” fifty years after Bent died.³ Though rarely read today, “Forty Years” greatly complicates our understanding of early twentieth-century Native and non-Native collaborative writing. Among its diverse interventions, “Forty Years” centralizes Bent’s authorial agency (especially in contrast to *Life*); establishes his tribal belonging by engaging with Southern Cheyenne, Northern Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Lakota warrior culture and communal identity; critically addresses narratives by white writers like Hamlin Garland; and privileges Southern Cheyenne orature.⁴ More closely studying Bent’s early writing and editing—particularly surrounding his development of “Forty Years”—thus crucially defines Bent as one of the “active agents in history, innovators of new ways, of Indian ways, of thinking and being and speaking and authoring in this world created by colonial contact,” to quote Creek-Cherokee scholar Craig Womack (6). Bent’s “Indian” way of authoring and editing reveals that US Western history and literature

are *not* simply defined by straightforward conquest. Rather, the Euro-American, Southern Cheyenne, Northern Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Lakota perspectives that Bent interweaves in “Forty Years” form a provocative international narrative that resists essentialist views of Native and non-Native collaborations of the assimilation era. In the end, Bent’s unique serialized autobiography radically refigures the US West as a narrative landscape deeply shaped by Native orature, kinship, and persistence.

Many contemporary readers—both Native and non-Native—valued George Bent’s Southern Cheyenne vantage. In a letter dated April 17, 1906, Bent tells his longtime collaborator, amateur Euro-American ethnographer George Hyde (from Omaha, Nebraska), that “people down here [in Indian Territory, or present-day Oklahoma, where Bent lived in the early 1900s] wanted more *Frontier* Magazines. of this month they think our accounts in it were good” (Beinecke, box 1, folder 7).⁵ This account of praise for Bent’s *Frontier* narrative is supported by *Transactions of the Kansas State Historical Society, 1905–1906*. A footnote to Kansas State Historical Society President Robert M. Wright’s autobiographical “Reminiscences of Dodge” article in *Transactions* describes “Forty Years” as a “story . . . well told, and without passion,” seemingly admiring Bent’s fact-oriented approach and restrained tone (73).⁶ Prominent Euro-American ethnographer James Mooney further proclaimed “Forty Years” a “valuable series of papers of personal recollections” in 1907 (429). National recognition followed with the 1921 publication of the *Cambridge History of American Literature*, which announced that the “Indian side of much of the trouble of the years following 1861 may be read in ‘Forty Years with the Cheyennes’” (Dellenbaugh 148).

A few Mountain West figures, however, lambasted “Forty Years” for casting Euro-Americans as antagonistic—particularly in Bent’s account of the Sand Creek Massacre. Their responses reveal the racism and uneasiness about diverse views that contextualize Bent’s turn-of-the-twentieth-century *Frontier* writings. The *Frontier* magazine circulated among a mostly white audience of first- and second-generation Colorado settlers. Its readership at the time was not large. When Part Six of “Forty Years” appeared in 1906, the *Frontier* had just 4,875 subscribers (Ayers 85).⁷ Part One, which addressed the Sand Creek Massacre, reached a wider audience when reprinted by the *Denver Times* on November 2, 1905.⁸ An anonymous editorial accompanying the reprint

suggests that Bent's first published narrative was shaped to cause discord among Colorado settlers, especially since Bent's descriptions "vary widely from the accounts written by white chroniclers" (*Denver Times*, 2 Nov. 1905). Finally, Colorado historians David F. Halaas and Andrew E. Masich identify a scathing November 5, 1905, *Denver Times* editorial in *Halfbreed* (2004), the only full-length George Bent biography available.⁹ In this editorial, Jacob Downing (a white Denver attorney), responded to Part One of "Forty Years" by calling Bent a "cutthroat, and a thief, a liar and a scoundrel, but worst of all a halfbreed" because "Bent's father . . . was a renegade. Bent's mother was a squaw. Bent's father was too much of an outcast to marry a white woman" (Halaas 339). Such reactions demonstrate some white settlers' unwillingness to give credence to Bent—on the one hand because he challenges their stories of 1860s US Western events, and, on the other, because his mixed-race background renders him, like his father (Euro-American trader William Bent; George Bent's mother was Owl Woman, the daughter of White or Gray Thunder, a prominent Southern Cheyenne Arrow Keeper), "an outcast" who should not be heard. Such comments illustrate how some white readers—and later, editors—focused on Bent's ethnicity as somehow disqualifying him from historical and autobiographical authority.

More recent reception of Native texts has similarly denied Native writers the authority they deserve, ultimately presenting Native writers and subjects as passive and granting most of the credit to their Euro-American collaborators as the active figures. For example, Arnold Krupat lists seven activities for non-Native collaborators in *For Those Who Come After* (1985), but none for "Indian" participants. Krupat explains, "Indian autobiographies are . . . jointly produced by someone who translates, transcribes, compiles, edits, interprets, polishes, and ultimately determines the form of the text in writing, and by an Indian who is its subject and whose life becomes the content of the 'autobiography'" (30). This view, which characterizes much previously published George Bent scholarship, ignores the fact that the story nevertheless belongs to the Native subject. More recently, scholars like Lisa Brooks have developed a more expansive view of Native agency by challenging binaries; as noted in the book description for Brooks's *The Common Pot* (2008), for instance, "[l]iterary critics frequently portray early Native American writers either as individuals caught between two worlds or as subjects

who, even as they defied the colonial world, struggled to exist within it.” By reconceiving Bent as a multifaceted agent who authored his own identity (instead of a struggling figure who was “Caught Between the Worlds of the Indian and the White Man,” as Halaas and Masich subtitle their biography), I—in the vein of Brooks—seek to complicate long-standing binaries used to describe Bent, whose “Forty Years” articles have not yet been examined by American literary scholars.

Overall, I expand upon efforts like Brooks’s by tracing the rarely recorded collaborative process between a non-Native editor who was intrigued by Native history (but often hindered by his own biases) and an English-fluent Native author who was deeply committed to seeing Southern Cheyenne experiences into print. When read alongside “Forty Years,” George Bent’s dynamic visual and textual artifacts, which include letters, maps, drafts, and photographs, reveal that he was instrumental in shaping his personal writings into publishable texts, a process that in turn closely aligned him with the Southern Cheyenne. Bent—to paraphrase Margaret M. Bruchac (Abenaki)—thus balanced “power relations” between Natives and non-Natives in the early twentieth century and preserved tribal “communities” in US print culture (10). In doing so, Bent became a *warrior-writer*: a strategically expressive tribal advocate who used English—the language of the colonizer—as both a weapon against settler-colonists and as a mechanism for preserving Southern Cheyenne views.¹⁰ Bent’s complex role strongly recalls that of his fellow 1860s “warrior-artists,” a term introduced by Laird and Colleen Cometsevah (Southern Cheyenne) in their joint foreword to *Cheyenne Dog Soldiers: A Ledgerbook History of Coups and Combat* (1997) (ix). Though similar in sound, my coinage for Bent diverges from Gerald Vizenor’s (White Earth Ojibwe) rhetorically oriented “word warrior.” A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff defines a “word warrior” as “a fine storyteller and acute commentator” rather than a physical fighter (36). In my use, a *warrior-writer* merges both *physical* and *rhetorical*, *literal* and *literary*. Bent, for instance, fought United States forces as a Crooked-Lance warrior until the late 1860s while harnessing English as a strategic military tool for the Southern Cheyenne. After being forced from the Mountain West to Indian Territory in the late 1860s or early 1870s (Bent leaves the date of his removal ambiguous), Bent—a warrior of many guises and talents—defended Native experiences in print, often despite facing settler-colonial opposition from readers and editors. Although Bent did not describe his

English writing in militaristic terms, applying a warrior-writer lens to his work stresses Bent's lifelong tenacity. George Bent was a survivor, a protector, and a dogged recorder whose 1860s experiences both informed the content of texts like "Forty Years with the Cheyennes" and prepared him to remain steadfast when circulating Southern Cheyenne histories in the turn-of-the-twentieth century US West.

"I HAD TO WALK SOME BEFORE I COULD EVEN MOUNT":
SURVIVAL AND AUTHORSHIP IN THE US WEST

George Bent's 1905–1906 letters and articles best demonstrate his warrior-writer role by showing that this identity evolved over a series of historical events and literary efforts. In particular, narratively revisiting the 1864 Sand Creek Massacre allowed Bent to transition from a fact-oriented survivor into a strategically expressive advocate for Southern Cheyenne, Northern Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Lakota experiences. Perhaps wary of how white readers would receive "Forty Years" and/or reluctant to revisit the traumatic event, Bent initially adopted a restrained tone in his letters (and thus in "Forty Years"). This tone belied the depth of his memory and the intensity of his physical and emotional pain. As Harvard psychology professor Richard J. McNally explains, "For people with posttraumatic stress disorder, remembering trauma feels like reliving it," and "[p]eople with PTSD remember trauma all too well" (105, 125). On November 29, 1864, Bent and his siblings (Charley, Robert, and Julia) survived the Sand Creek Massacre, in which Colonel John M. Chivington led the Colorado Volunteer Cavalry in an unprovoked attack against Black Kettle's (Southern Cheyenne) peaceful village. Chivington and his volunteers killed and mutilated as many as 500 Cheyenne and Arapaho men, women, and children.¹¹ Bent's memories of the Sand Creek Massacre, compiled into a linear narrative by George Hyde, conclude Part One of "Forty Years." As published, Bent recalls,

It was not light yet next morning when I was awakened by people shouting that soldiers were coming. I jumped up and ran out of the lodge. By the dim light I could see the soldiers, charging down on the camp . . . When I looked toward the chief's lodge I saw that Black Kettle had a flag up on a long pole, to show the troops that the camp was friendly; then the soldiers opened fire from all sides. (6)

After explaining that he fled with “ten middle-aged Cheyenne warriors,” Bent notes, “We passed a great many dead Indians, lying in the wet sand . . . men, women and children were lying together and many had already been scalped and mutilated by the Colorado One-hundred days’-men” (6). Just before reaching the shelter of sand pits two miles from camp, Bent “was wounded, but got into a pit,” where he waited for Chivington’s forces to withdraw (6). Such Native-authored testimony in “Forty Years” was significant, as Ari Kelman notes in *A Misplaced Massacre* (2013), because it clearly identified Chivington’s attack as a “massacre and [fixed] blame on John Chivington and his men for the years of violence that followed”—a sharp contrast to contemporaneous Mountain West narratives that lauded Chivington and downplayed the death and mutilation of Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho men, women, and children (34).¹²

Though presented as a cohesive narrative in “Forty Years,” George Bent’s 1905–1906 correspondence shows that his Sand Creek Massacre account emerged across at least seven different letters to Hyde; the event was on his mind before, during, and after “Forty Years” appeared in the *Frontier*.¹³ Hyde combined the two earliest letters into Part One’s five-paragraph “Sand Creek Massacre” narrative. Blunt facts drive these letters (and thus Part One) rather than personal impressions. Bent’s first Sand Creek letter (March 9, 1905), for example, lists friends and family members present in Black Kettle’s camp when Chivington attacked, including Jack Smith, a young “half-breed” killed by Chivington’s men, and Robert, Bent’s older brother, who was “forced by Chivington to guide him to Black Kettle’s camp” (DPL, box 1, FF15). Rather than describing the Sand Creek Massacre here, Bent ends by telling Hyde, “If you can get the Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for 1866 you will find in it all about this affair” (DPL, box 1, FF15).¹⁴ Bent’s next letter (March 14, 1905) shares more of his experiences, though it still refers Hyde to white-authored sources. This second narrative, with few emendations, became the Sand Creek Massacre narrative published seven months later in “Forty Years” (DPL, box 1, FF16). In his letter, Bent shares, “I was in Black Kettle’s camp when the soldiers attacked. I had not got out of bed yet, when I heard that soldiers were coming . . . As we retreated up the creek we passed a good many dead—men, women and children—many of them had been scalped. Just as we reached the holes I was wounded” (DPL, box 1, FF16). Bent concludes this letter by reminding Hyde, “You

have read how the dead were cut up by the soldiers” (DPL, box 1, FF16). Hyde seems to have interpreted Bent’s allusions to other sources as reticence, amending Bent’s phrasing to comment that the Sand Creek “fight needs little description” in Part One (6).

The Sand Creek Massacre, whose narrative was almost entirely one-sided before “Forty Years,” however, desperately *did* need further description. Few post-Sand Creek accounts (even sympathetic ones) included Native views. Euro-American writer and activist Helen Hunt Jackson, for instance, cites Robert Bent’s Sand Creek Massacre memories in an 1879 *New York Tribune* letter, but curiously does not identify him as Southern Cheyenne.¹⁵ All other testimony in Jackson’s piercing letter is from white officers. As Kelman affirms, “federal officials inquiring into the violence apparently sought neither [George Bent’s] testimony nor that of any other Native survivors,” underscoring the need for Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho representation in mainstream accounts (33). And, as one would expect, defensive Sand Creek Massacre narratives entirely disregarded Native perspectives while downplaying the violence Native peoples endured. Jacob Downing (the Denver attorney who blasted Bent as an “outcast”) claimed after reading Part One of “Forty Years” that “only one squaw and only one papoose in the lot” died at Sand Creek (Halaas 339). For his part, John M. Chivington blamed the Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho for the massacre, asserting in his “Synopsis of the Sand Creek Investigation” (1865) that

[t]he morning of the 29th day of November 1864 finds us before the village of the Indian foe. The first shot is fired by them. The first man who falls is white. No white flag is raised. None of the Indians show signs of peace, but flying to rifle pits already prepared, they fight . . . no more women and children were killed than would have been killed in a white village under like circumstances . . . the women and children that were killed could not have been saved if the troops had tried . . . there were very few women and children killed. (6)

Perhaps fueled by reactions such as Downing’s and Chivington’s, Bent’s post-Part One correspondence more overtly counters such biased records by offering vivid descriptions of the Southern Cheyennes’ injuries and recoveries—an approach that humanizes and concretizes Chivington’s victims. In his April 25, 1906, letter, Bent explains, “Black

K's wife was wounded 9 times . . . after the fight he went back and found her alive and carried her on his back . . . She said the soldiers shot her several times after she fell. Genl Harney and Sanborn counted her wounds when the treaty was made where Wichita City now is" (DPL, box 1, FF36).¹⁶ Bent recognized that Medicine Woman's wounds preserved a record that other white officials could not dispute. In a second post-Part One letter, Bent elaborates on his own injuries. On December 21, 1905 (the month Part Three of "Forty Years" appeared), Bent tells Hyde, "I was badly wounded in hip, but could walk, as no bones were broken. Few miles up the cr we began to meet some Inds who had gone out before day to hunt some ponies" (DPL, box 1, FF29). Bent and the other survivors then traveled *eight* more miles after Chivington's Volunteers withdrew, only stopping so "those who had not got up could join us" (DPL, box 1, FF29). After a night in which "[n]o one slept a wink, all were think[ing] about what had happened that day and the wounds pained so" and "[t]here was no wood . . . Some of the wounded had their friends covered them up with grass to keep from freezing," Bent and the other survivors headed for a "village on Smoky H. 50 ms away" (DPL, box 1, FF29). They completed the journey even though "all the wounded [were] awfully sore and stiff"—a remarkable physical feat; Bent, for his part, "had to walk some before I could even mount. My hip was very swollen and sore from cold" (DPL, box 1, FF29). When he arrived, Bent found that "the wh[o]le camp was in an uproar of crying and weeping, as it was customary for whole village to mourn" (DPL, box 1, FF29). Such details, many of which the *Life of George Bent* preserves (see pages 151–158), make visceral the intense suffering that Bent, the Southern Cheyenne, and the Arapaho experienced. That Bent chose to share these points only *after* Part One of "Forty Years" sparked outcry among some white Mountain West readers is significant. His graphic imagery defied a hostile white readership and highlighted Native endurance in the face of overwhelming brutality, embodying the bravery and tenacity of a warrior-writer.

"MY PEOPLE, THE CHEYENNES":

MANIFESTING TRIBAL IDENTITY

Casting white settler-soldiers like Chivington as *antagonists* and Native peoples as *protagonists* who deserve readers' empathy not only countered

biased official narratives of events like the Sand Creek Massacre, but it also cemented George Bent's belonging with the Southern Cheyenne. To encourage this reframing even further, Bent's letters minimize his international childhood while emphasizing his adult participation in Southern Cheyenne warrior culture. In doing so, Bent's writing reveals that collaborative military effort and communal identity outweigh individual heroism or achievement in Southern Cheyenne narratives—crucial context for understanding his warrior-writer status. As Christina Gish Hill, paraphrasing “Ms. DG” (Northern Cheyenne), explains, “Cheyenne leaders and warriors were brave, and they led the people with intelligence and strategy, but they did not determine the course of Cheyenne history as individuals . . . non-Native scholars [have often] missed the centrality of kinship relations as a motivating factor in Cheyenne history” (8).¹⁷ Bent, invoking such kinship, saw himself as closely linked to Southern Cheyenne warrior society despite spending a decade in Euro-American schools. Part One of “Forty Years” reflects this desire for connectedness by condensing the first nineteen years of Bent's life into only one paragraph (quoted below). This short summary accomplishes two goals: first, it shows that Bent adopted a warrior role in several guises and cultures (Bent enlisted in Colonel Martin E. Green's Missouri Cavalry, a Confederate force, in 1861), and second, it allows Bent to dedicate the rest of “Forty Years” to his early adult life as a Southern Cheyenne warrior.¹⁸ Part One (“My Early Life”) begins,

My mother was Owl Woman of the Southern Cheyenne tribe and my father was Colonel William Bent, fur-trader and Indian-agent, the owner of Bent's Fort on the Arkansas River, about one hundred miles southeast of Denver. Most of my boyhood was spent at the fort on the Arkansas but in 1854 I went to Missouri to attend school, where my half-brother Charley, younger than I, also came to be educated. When the war broke out, Charley and I joined the Confederate force commanded by General Sterling Price; but before we had seen very much service we boys were captured by the Union troops. Soon after this we were paroled and went up the Arkansas, where shortly afterward we joined the Southern Cheyennes.¹⁹ (3)

Bent stresses his Southern Cheyenne heritage in this brief introduction by listing his mother before his father; unlike contemporaneous

autobiographer Zitkala-Ša (Yankton Dakota), Bent acknowledges his Euro-American parent. But perhaps like Zitkala-Ša, he also brushes over details about his Euro-American experiences, such as studying at three Missouri institutions (one in Westport and two in St. Louis) and participating in Civil War battles across multiple states.²⁰ Bent's breakneck pace slows right after Part One's first paragraph; his passing attention implies that the story of his first nineteen years impeded the cohesive Southern Cheyenne identity he hoped to project by discussing his 1860s warrior life. The section immediately following "My Early Life," "Causes of the Indian War," begins, "For some time after Charley and I came home the Indians were at peace; there were rumors of war afloat and plenty of 'Indian scares,' but nothing really occurred" (3). Peace did not last long, however; Bent continues, "Some men in Colorado talked about 'Rebel Plots,' called me a 'Rebel Emissary,' and said that the hostile Sioux had held a war-council with the Cheyennes and Arapahoes, in the Republican River Country, east of Denver, and there induced these two tribes to consent to an uprising, which was to begin as soon as grass was up next spring" (3). Unlike the clipped prose and hastened chronology of "My Early Life," Bent's more profuse exposition in "Causes of the Indian War" (which geographically locates three Native tribes while also addressing Civil War-era international politics), signals his commitment to literally and literarily dwelling among the Southern Cheyenne.

"Forty Years" most vividly reinforces Bent's tribal belonging and warrior-writer role by folding his individuality into a communal identity, particularly when discussing soldier-societies and skirmishes. Bent's six articles frequently recount wars, battles, fights, raids, attacks, burnings, and massacres.²¹ Privileging such "stories of the old-time warriors" serves several purposes (Killsback 85). First, it helps Bent rewrite "our humanity . . . back into history," an ongoing need identified by Leo Killsback (Northern Cheyenne) (85). Second, this strategy affirms Bent's warrior status for both non-Native readers of "Forty Years" and fellow Cheyennes; as Hill explains, "Collective identity for the Cheyennes was not as simple as marking all people who participated in the nation as Tsistsistas. Every person's identity was layered, manifested by memberships on various levels" (57). Bent stresses his warrior membership in Part Three, for instance, by sharing that "I belonged to the 'Bone-scrapper' or 'Crooked-lance' Society, to which Roman Nose [Northern Cheyenne] and Young-man-afraid-of-his-horses [Oglala Lakota] also

belonged”—both prominent warriors with layered intertribal identities (5). Such textual support for Bent’s multifaceted belonging is mirrored in the *Dog Soldier Ledgerbook* (1864–1869), which visually preserves his warrior status alongside Southern Cheyenne heroes such as Brave Bear, White Bird, and Red Lance (see figure 1).²²

Afton, Halaas, and Masich note that in this image, “Beaver,” or George Bent, “wears close-cropped hair in the style of a white man; his face is unpainted; and he has outfitted himself in a US regulation 1857 pattern frock coat of dark blue broadcloth . . . one end of his modified breechclout hangs beneath the skirt of his coat” (98). They further explain that Bent’s “name glyph—a beaver with its round ears and black tail,” which hovers over him, pinpoints the warrior as Bent (98). Bent seized the uniform during a retaliatory post-Sand Creek raid on the Julesburg Stage Station (present-day Colorado) in January 1865 (*Life* 173). The uniform not only confused and perturbed white soldiers, but it also marked Bent as a warrior of various forces (US Army, Confederate, and Southern Cheyenne). In *Life*, for instance, Bent references a report on a spring 1865 Southern Cheyenne raid on a small stockade near present-day Casper, Wyoming. It amuses Bent that in this report, Lieutenant Colonel Preston B. Plumb says, “the Indians were led by a white man” (204). Bent shares, “I suppose that I was the man he meant,” but asserts that he was “dressed and painted just like the warriors” (204). Whether or not he wore the US Army coat when battling Plumb, Bent’s insistence that he was “just like the warriors” underscores his desire to belong with the Southern Cheyenne, particularly through military exploits.

Other features of Bent’s ledger artwork (which was likely drawn, as Afton et al. assert, by Red Lance, a fellow Cheyenne warrior) illustrate his deep commitment to Southern Cheyenne defense and tradition (98). According to Afton et al., Bent’s “plain shield is decorated with clusters of three eagle feathers at the cardinal points” (98). Interestingly, this design is almost identical to the shield that Red Lance carries in a self-portrait that appears earlier in the *Dog Soldier Ledgerbook*; like Bent’s, Red Lance’s shield is unpainted with “three eagle feathers at the cardinal points” (see Plate 11). As bearers of the only recurring shield design in the *Dog Soldier Ledgerbook*, Bent and Red Lance—or subject and artist—are inextricably connected. The shield’s color is also significant: Father Peter J. Powell, Honorary Chief of the Northern Cheyenne, explains that white is a “symbol of life, light, morning, and the spring

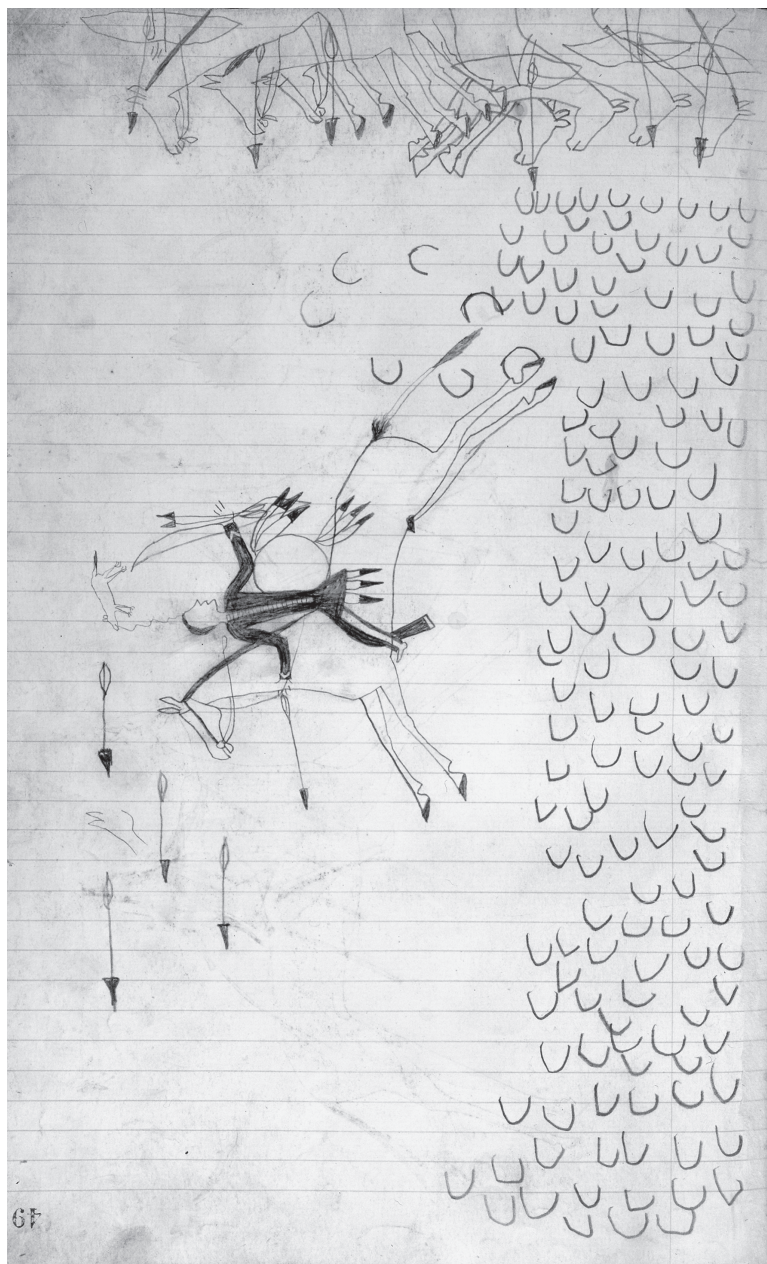


Fig. 1. George Bent (Hi-my-ike) Ledger Artwork (c. 1865), Stephen H. Hart Research Center at History Colorado, scan number 10036138, plate 49, p. 99. Reproduced by permission of History Colorado.

that brings new life to all creation" (2). Bent's plain shield thus reflects a deliberate choice; it trades aligning its bearer with a specific clan (i.e. Crooked-Lance imagery) for invoking broader Cheyenne symbolism for "new life." The three eagle feathers further invoke Cheyenne beliefs by "symbolizing the Four Directions" and warrior culture; Powell notes, "Eagles, who are also holy birds . . . are among the warrior birds," in part because they are "especially fleet of foot if they choose to run. Because of the great birds' power, their feathers are fastened to shields" (2, 19).²³ And in this scene, Bent must move quickly: Bent's horse gallops over hoof prints that disappear to the left, indicating that many fellow Southern Cheyenne warriors have already retreated (perhaps to regroup and charge at the enemy again). Bent—pursued by at least seven Native warriors (identified by Afton et al. as Crow Indians)—acts as a lone rear-guard for the fleeing Cheyennes (98). Bent readies an arrow in his right hand and holds a bow and two arrows aloft in his left, revealing his expertise with Southern Cheyenne weapons as well as his superb horsemanship—he does not seem to be holding the reins. Bent, as Red Lance drew him, is thus brave (he prepares to fight even as he faces enemy fire), self-sacrificing, capable, and well-versed in Southern Cheyenne warrior symbolism—a strategically expressive tribal member.

As he shows in "Forty Years," such membership (and particularly his status as a Crooked-Lance warrior) allowed George Bent to interact with an elite community among the Southern Cheyenne. For instance, Bent could join the "warriors of all the 'soldier-societies'" in events like the "big shield-dance" of May 1865 (Part Three, 5). He doesn't fully explain what a shield-dance is in "Forty Years," but his narrative implies that it was associated with warfare—in this case, the dance occurred as the "head men of the soldier bands" met to plan "a big attack on Platte Bridge in mid-summer" in further retaliation for the Sand Creek Massacre (5). In this attack, which occurred in present-day Casper, Wyoming, twenty-two US soldiers died (Bent "counted them" himself after the attack) (Part Four, 4). When describing his tribe's preparations for such encounters, Bent stresses collective effort rather than individual accomplishment. Such an approach is most vividly captured in the following passage, when Bent remembers how the Southern Cheyennes saved a party of "Sioux" (likely Lakota) from US soldiers. Bent writes,

In August I was with a big village of Cheyennes and Sioux, on Republican River, near the southwestern corner of Nebraska. One day our men were nearly all out hunting. One party of about twenty Sioux had gone up a small stream which there flows into the Republican [River]; so when we heard firing in that direction we of course supposed these Sioux were running buffalo. Then Hawk, a Cheyenne man, came over a hill, riding his pony as hard as it could run, and signaling with his hands that soldiers were running the Sioux.

About fifty of us seized bridles and blankets and ran for ponies. As soon as we were all mounted we charged over the hill and came in sight of the Sioux all scattered out, with the soldiers following them in small detachments. The soldiers saw us coming and quickly bunched together . . . It was too hot a place for such a body of troops, and they at once began to retreat. We rode after them, but could not catch them. (4)

Although Bent helps the Southern Cheyennes chase the US soldiers away, he only uses one singular pronoun—"I"—in the entire episode.²⁴ In contrast, seven plural pronouns appear: "we" (five), "us" (two), and "our" (one). In keeping with Southern Cheyenne oral traditions, Bent's readers have a clearer sense of the warriors' exploits than of Bent's actions, including whether he killed or wounded any of his opponents.²⁵ Significantly, Bent *only* ever claims responsibility in "Forty Years" for acts that he alone—as an English-literate warrior—can contribute, including writing a letter for Black Kettle in Part One (Bent explains, "the Cheyennes and Spotted Tail's Sioux . . . held a council and had me write [a] letter to Indian-agent Colley") and reading stolen mail in Part Three ("the Indians brought me [a soldier's] saddle-bags, in which there was a letter addressed to the commander at Ft. Laramie") (5). As David F. Halaas notes in a 1995 article, "for most whites George Bent was an intimidating figure," in large part because he was "fluent in English and presumably able to intercept dispatches, thereby disrupting the army's plans" (7). Rather than isolating him from the Southern Cheyenne in "Forty Years," then, Bent's Euro-American education becomes an invaluable Southern Cheyenne military tool, underscoring his warrior-writer status.



Fig. 2. Magpie (Mo-he-hy-vah) and George Bent (1867). Stephen H. Hart Research Center at History Colorado, scan number 10025735, 84.100.1. Reproduced by permission of History Colorado.

As “Forty Years” demonstrates, another key aspect that shaped Bent’s tribal identity involved fulfilling Southern Cheyennes’ diplomatic needs with US officials. In 1867, that meant becoming a translator at the Medicine-Lodge Council (present-day Kansas), an experience Bent describes in Part Five. According to a Kansas Historical Society

article, this international council produced treaties between the United States and Kiowa, Comanche, Plains Apache, Southern Cheyenne, and Arapaho that “cleared the way for railroad construction, relinquished land claims between the Platte and Arkansas rivers, and approved reservations in present-day Oklahoma where tribes would farm using equipment from the government.” It marked, in short, the beginning of a major intertribal shift that Native attendees observed with formal attire. Arapaho translator Margaret Adams, for one, wore a “crimson gown, specially” for the Medicine Lodge Council (Kansas). An image of Bent and his wife, Magpie (who was Black Kettle’s niece), preserves their own ceremonial clothing. Their choices overtly (in Magpie’s case) and subtly (in Bent’s) invoke Southern Cheyenne culture. This worn photograph represents the only personal image of Bent that appears in “Forty Years.”²⁶ Captioned as “[t]he writer of the Bent articles, George Bent, and his wife, Magpie,” the photograph appeared in Part Six of “Forty Years” (see Figure 2).

This photograph depicts Bent not as he was when he wrote “Forty Years” (a man in his sixties; see Figure 3, which shows Bent informally dressed and posing in front of a covered porch), but as a young man on the cusp of transitioning from the warrior culture he had experienced in 1862–1867 to Indian Territory ranch life. While Magpie wears a traditional elk-tooth dress that had “been in her family for 200 years, handed down from mother to daughter” (and often worn in weddings), Bent wears a three-piece suit, long black tie, and beaded moccasins (Hyde 1928, HC, object ID 84.100.1).²⁷ According to his collaborator George Hyde, Bent likely acquired the suit at the Medicine Lodge Council. As Hyde claims in a note about the *Frontier* picture found in History Colorado’s archives, “Bent certainly had no citizen’s clothes in 1865–1866; but he must have gotten a new outfit when he was made official interpreter during the Medicine Lodge council” (HC, object ID 84.100.1). Although he donned formal “citizen’s clothes” for the Council, the picture reveals that Bent is still grounded in Southern Cheyenne culture; Bent wears moccasins, whose bands of light and dark beads mirror the patterns sewn into Magpie’s heirloom dress. At a pivotal historical event, then, Bent remained linked to Southern Cheyenne traditions. Uniquely positioned to both articulate Southern Cheyenne views *and* shape them for non-Native audiences, Bent shifted from tactically reading and writing English in the 1860s to harnessing US

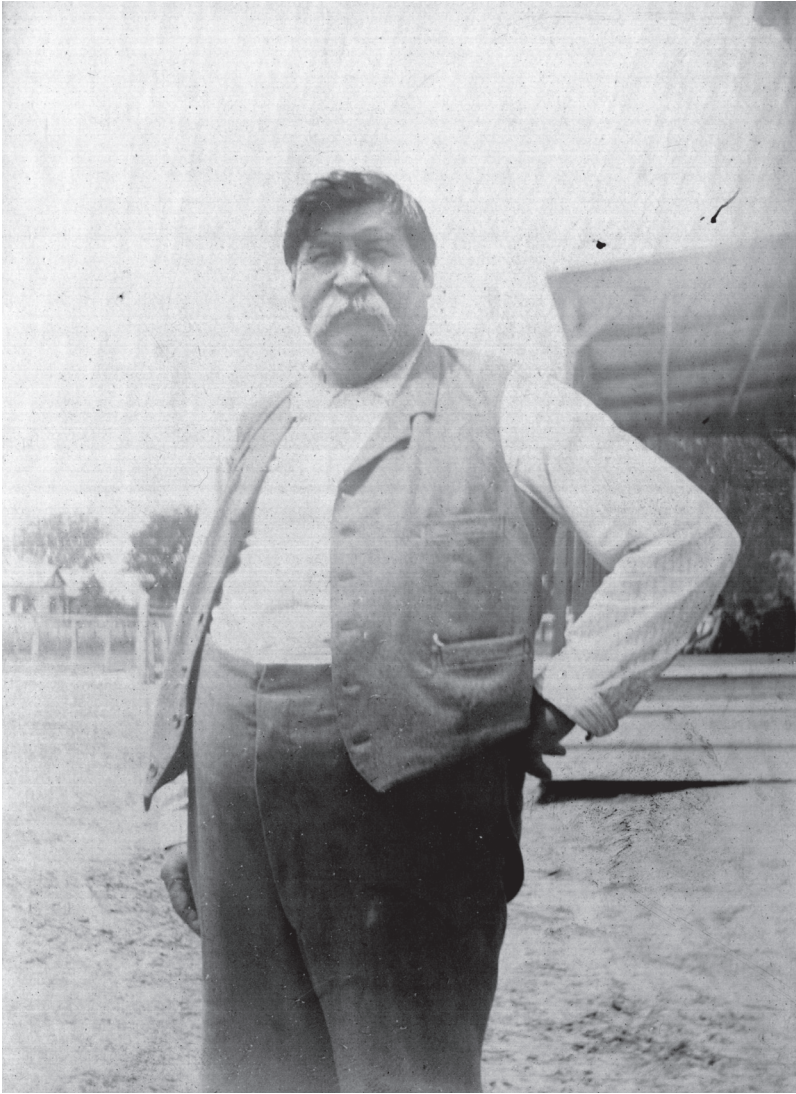


Fig. 3. George Bent in Colony, Indian Territory (1905). Reproduced by permission of the Oklahoma Historical Society.

print culture in the assimilation era. Turning to Bent's 1905–06 drafts (composed from his new home in Indian Territory) shows that Bent was willing to fight for his version of Southern Cheyenne history—even down to the margins of his manuscript.

“BENT, THIS IS NOT FAIR”: RECONCEIVING
THE BENT–HYDE PARTNERSHIP

George Bent's authorial and editorial agency, a key facet of his warrior-writer identity that has been lost in misunderstandings about his working relationship with George Hyde, is unmistakable when we closely investigate the Bent–Hyde collaborative process. Bent handwrote the content that became “Forty Years”—and later “Old Times in the Southwest” (1906) and *Life of George Bent* (1968)—in hundreds of letters to Hyde between 1904 and Bent's death in 1918.²⁸ Bent and Hyde never met in person, so all of the work they did together was through mailing letters and drafts. In these letters, Bent shared stories, interviews, details of Southern Cheyenne skirmishes, rituals and customs, and maps with penciled-in geographic features, camp locations, and trails. He also expressed enthusiasm about upcoming projects with Hyde. When Hyde contracted “Forty Years” with the *Frontier*, Bent declared: “I am glad you have sold our writings to Magazine. Now we can write good deal more” (September 2, 1905, HC, FF20). Hyde responded to Bent with questions, reading materials, and maps. To prepare for publication, Hyde typed Bent's letters, annotated the typescripts with colored pencils (red and blue), compiled them into drafts, and then mailed those drafts to Bent for editing and approval. While Bent never received official credit as an editor, his letters show that he reviewed Hyde's writing. Bent expresses affirmation for Hyde's compilation (likely an early draft of “Forty Years”) on March 9, 1905: “I went over what you have written,” Bent tells Hyde. “It is all right” (DPL, box 1, FF15). Additional 1905–1906 records, including the *Life of George Bent* drafts that date to 1905, further illuminate Bent's labor. In the absence of a similar record for “Forty Years” (of the three Bent–Hyde publications, only *Life* survives in manuscript form), this section will draw on the *Life* drafts to reinforce a narrative—often overlooked—of mutual labor in the Bent–Hyde partnership.

Hyde's biased beliefs about American Indians, and in particular, Bent, contextualize Bent's *Frontier* articles; after fighting in physical battles with US forces in the 1860s, Bent had to remain narratively resolute when working with a white editor in the early 1900s. In a recent essay, Steven C. Haack, an independent scholar, alludes to minor tensions in the relationship, observing that “Bent was generally accommodating . . . though Hyde's notes occasionally express frustration over Bent's lack of

cooperation" (4). Halaas and Masich (Colorado historians), however, downplay Hyde's "frustration" in their biography, instead simply asserting that Hyde "loved Indians—he had loved them ever since he met real live Indians when the Trans-Mississippi Exposition came to town in 1898" (336).²⁹ With some conditions, professor emeritus and George Bent enthusiast Lincoln B. Faller also views Hyde's attitude toward American Indians, and toward Bent specifically, more altruistically. In "Making Medicine Against 'White Man's Side of Story'" (2000), Faller argues against reducing Hyde to a "rearguard imperialist":

It's all too easy to bash Hyde (and his patron, Grinnell) for oversights and omissions, to see them for all their friendly disposition toward Indians and even their advocacy of the Indians' lost cause as rearguard imperialists, seeking to fill out the 'other' side of the history of the conquest of the American West so that that history might finally seem to be decently and honorably closed. (72)

But Hyde's "disposition toward Indians" was not always "friendly," and he certainly embodied both "rearguard" and vanguard imperialistic impulses. In his September 2, 1929, letter to Euro-American bookseller John VanMale (of Denver), Hyde minimizes Bent's knowledge and reliability, writing, "[Bent] did the be[s]t he could in telling this story. He knew the Indian side only in most instances, and he showed some bias, naturally, but if he ever lied I have not noticed it" (DPL, *Life Accession Records*). Hyde then shares, "I am not an Indians' Friend man. I think they usually got about what they deserved; I do not assume, as such people do, that the Indian is always right, and I kept a watch of Bent's statements" (DPL, *Life Accession Records*).³⁰ As a literary imperialist, Hyde admits that he policed Bent's writing during their collaboration rather than merely editing it. Further, Hyde's callousness in the above statement raises questions about how he viewed instances of genocidal violence, especially the Sand Creek Massacre, that recurred throughout Bent's correspondence.³¹ Hyde's letters do show that he found Bent's stories disjointed. Hyde complains in a September 25, 1929, letter to VanMale that Bent "[s]ometimes . . . told a story and then, two or three years later told it again, and then a third time, and I had to combine these versions" (DPL, *Life Accession Records*). In Hyde's desire for linear narration, we can see a disregard for the nuances of traumatic memory, circulation, and audience that likely informed Bent's evolving approach.

Hyde's prejudiced views are further apparent from notes he left on Bent's maps, transcribed letters, and eventually manuscript drafts. In the top right corner of a South Platte map that Bent and Hyde traded, for example, Hyde penciled this comment: "Sent to Bent Cant get him to locate the camp before this one He's either in doubt or lazy. Probably Lazy" (original punctuation and emphasis).³² A similarly charged complaint about failing to adhere to Hyde's demands appears in his introduction to *Life*: Hyde writes, "George Bent differed from all the other mixed bloods I ever knew in that he liked to write letters. The other mixed bloods would fail to reply to your inquiry or would write a half-page in faint pencil a year after receiving your letter, and then they gave up" (x). Along with leaving notes on maps, Hyde also sometimes inserted parenthetical quips when transcribing Bent's letters. Several notes are simply innocuous questions to ask Bent later, such as "12 tyoung [sic] Cheys belonging to Medicine Lodge (*a chief or society?*) . . ." (April 10, 1905, DPL, box 1, FF17; my emphasis). In such an instance, Hyde acknowledges the limits of his own understanding and signals his desire for clarity. Some of Hyde's other comments, though, reveal underlying prejudice. Hyde's typescript of Bent's February 15, 1905, letter reads, "One day some Mexican traders came to the Arapahoe village with the coat and wanted 2 or 3 ponies for it. Just then an Arapahoe who had found (*I bet!*) a fine American mule rode into the village . . ." (DPL, box 1, FF10; my emphasis). Hyde's "(I bet!)," interjected as he typed Bent's explanation of the mule, snidely implies that the animal was stolen. Although he relied on Bent as a narrator and informant, then, Hyde assumed American Indians were lazy and dishonest. Such comments thus reveal inherent tension in the Bent–Hyde relationship; Hyde surrounded his partner's accounts with his own racially charged perspectives.³³

Bent's and Hyde's handwritten edits show that the collaborators clashed on such perspectives before publication—but even more crucially, they reveal *Bent* as having the final say. As an example of Bent's editorial resolve, consider the following unedited sentences, which appear in a "Disaster at Sand Creek" *Life* chapter draft. In this passage, Bent discusses US Major Scott Anthony's role in lulling the Southern Cheyenne into a false sense of safety before the Massacre. Bent writes, and Hyde has typed up, "From what the major said [the Southern Cheyennes] believed that peace was going to be made and

that they were under the protection of the fort. Further to decieve [sic] the Indians, Major Anthony permitted John Smith accompanied by a soldier from the fort, to visit the Cheyenne camp and remain there, trading with the Indians" (DPL, box 2, FF8). In the left margin, Hyde remarks, "Bent, this is not fair. Change to 'Indians were further deceived.' G.H." Hyde's edit shifts Bent's accusation from active to passive voice so that it becomes a series of actions that deceived rather than a series of intentional deceptions by the US military. Hyde's comment also, in a troubling move, advocates "fairness" for Euro-Americans in a passage (and, more broadly, a book chapter) otherwise dedicated to atrocities experienced by the Southern Cheyenne.

Bent alters the sentence in response, but does not precisely follow Hyde's suggestion. Bent crosses out "Further to decieve" and instead writes, "The Indians were deceived when Major Anthony . . ." Not only does Bent rectify Hyde's typing by spelling "deceive" correctly, but he also uses Hyde's phrasing to sharpen his critique; Bent's revision establishes a more direct cause/effect relationship between Major Anthony and the deception he orchestrated. In the end, the final version makes very clear Bent's view of the deception, ignoring Hyde's plea for "fairness" altogether and attributing both intent and responsibility to Major Anthony. The final version in *Life*, which reflects Bent's editorial triumph and reverts closer to the original wording, reads, "In order to deceive the Cheyennes still further as to his intentions, the major permitted John Smith to leave the fort . . ." (148). Such a debate, though rare, in *Life's* manuscript margins helps expose Hyde's prejudiced undertones and Bent's editorial doggedness. Overall, this valuable example counters the persistent scholarly narrative that sees Euro-American collaborators as strictly exploitative and Native subjects as mostly passive participants. Whatever Hyde's role, Bent ultimately directed his text.

Interrogating Bent's marginal comments privileges his agency as an editor (not merely a correspondent) from 1905 onward, a role that scholars have previously overlooked or simplified. In doing so, they naturalize Hyde's authorial appropriation; although Bent is listed as the author of both "Forty Years" and "Old Times," and although the collaborative process he shared with Hyde in these early publications was the same used for developing *Life*, Hyde is listed as *Life's* sole author—not Bent. Faller writes that "Hyde's *Life* . . . is Hyde's effort to make the stuff of [Bent's] letters into a single, well-told, interesting,

and readable story,” and Halaas and Masich likewise call *Life* “Hyde’s manuscript” (Faller 67, Halaas 349).³⁴ Without negating Hyde’s time and effort in helping prepare and publish *Life*, then, I would like to suggest a more skeptical approach to accepting “Hyde’s manuscript” as “Hyde’s.” Hyde himself minimizes Bent’s editorial contributions by twice alleging that Bent made “few” corrections to *Life*. In his September 25, 1929, letter to VanMale, Hyde explains, “I thought it best to leave the MS as it is, with scribbling on the margin, a few in Bent’s hand” (DPL, *Life* Accession Records). Hyde writes in his next letter (October 24, 1929) that “I submitted all the chapters of this MS to Bent, one by one, as they were finished, and he read them through and made a few corrections” (DPL, *Life* Accession Records). While Bent’s edits are not necessarily extensive (often emending a word or phrase), they did impact *Life* (and likely “Forty Years,” developed alongside early drafts of *Life*). For example, in addition to rewording his accusation of Major Anthony, Bent makes four corrections or edits on the same page of the previously quoted “Disaster at Sand Creek” chapter draft: Bent changes Hyde’s “decieve” to “deceive,” “recure” to “secure,” “Anthony says in his own statements” to “Anthony says in his own reports” (thus eliminating the “says”/“statements” repetition and also emphasizing the authority of an “official” record), and inserts “ordered them” in an otherwise incomplete sentence (DPL, box 2, FF8).³⁵ *Life* preserves all of these adjustments, underscoring Bent’s editorial eye.

Perhaps Bent’s contributions as a warrior-writer *have* been previously discounted because they less easily fit an essentialist narrative familiar in the study of white–Native collaborations: the Native’s impenetrability and the Euro-American’s mastery. Even Bent encourages this storyline. In an October 3, 1905, letter (the same month Part One of “Forty Years” appeared), Bent deftly uses flattery as a rhetorical device, writing, “I want you to write out my writings better as you understand better than I do. any thing you will put in will be much better” (HC, FF22). Halaas, Masich, and Faller imagine Hyde’s difficulty in standardizing and reorganizing Bent’s letters, but do not dedicate the same attention to contextualizing these documents as informal drafts, nor do they acknowledge Hyde’s imprecisions when drafting. For instance, Halaas and Masich stress that “Bent’s letters were [not] easy reading . . . Bent’s style defied all known rules of capitalization, punctuation, and grammar” (336). Faller adds, “Though Bent’s handwriting is not difficult to decipher and

his spelling is fairly accurate, his letters can be a chore to read . . . His use of capitals is erratic, and his punctuation seems to follow rules of its own" (72–73). Faller acknowledges in his article's footnotes that "Bent is still at times a very effective writer" who "could write with far greater formal 'correctness' when he chose," but this concession follows his more extended description of Bent's opacity (87). Emphasizing Hyde's efforts when reworking Bent's letters amplifies the white ethnographer's achievements while overlooking his own nonstandard or poor grammar and downplaying his Southern Cheyenne partner's contributions.

I assert, instead, that cross-referencing Hyde's typescripts of Bent's original 1905–06 letters establishes that Bent's spelling, phrasing, and explanations are often much richer and more precise than the copies that Hyde created—key context for understanding the development of "Forty Years," "Old Times," and *Life*.³⁶ While Hyde's typescripts were in turn reworked for publication through extensive editing (and thus exist in a sort of draft mode), comparing Bent's informal letters to Hyde's informal typescripts more fairly illustrates the ways each George challenges readers when drafting. Consider, for instance, the first two pages of Bent's February 26, 1906, letter to Hyde in their original form (Beinecke, box 1, folder 7):³⁷

Dear Friend

I have been very [busy ?]. the
reason I have not written to you
sooner than now but now I will have lots of
time to write. the Indians that I wanted
have their Photos taken are all here
now. but the man that takes. them
is sick now. he wants to take them
as he wants such photos for Mission
ary papers and will cost me nothing
to have him take them. I think he
will be able to take them. in few
days. I have borrowed Buckskin
suits for Brave Bear Good Bear
Yellow Nose and Two Crows. to wear
in these pictures. you do not say what
size those 2 pairs of Moccasins should
[page break]
be to have them made nice they will

cost \$100 pair. all kinds of bead work is
 done right here send me the size
 I can get them made for you
 you ask me what year I was born
 I was born July 7th 1843 at Bents
 Fort on Arkansas River. I first went
 to school at Westport MO in 1853
 was there 4 years . . .

Bent's letter indicates his investment in the photographs and moccasins as well as his overall conversational approach; Bent first informs Hyde about his preparations for the photographs and reminds Hyde about sending his foot size. Only then does Bent address Hyde's inquiry about his early life.³⁸ Hyde's typescript sounds very different. Among other changes, Hyde condenses most of Bent's photograph discussion into one new sentence. He also tweaks "buckskin suits" to "buckskin shirts" (altering the garment type); rephrases "was there" to "remained"; shortens "photos" to "phos"; abbreviates "first" as "1st"; adds process words like "and" and "a"; and introduces several typos, including "No e," "1843. at Bent's Fort," and "schhool" (and maybe "phos"). Hyde's typescript of the same pages much more succinctly reads

I have been very busy lately. *We will have some phos taken soon.*
 I have borrowed *buckskin shirts* for Brave Bear *and* Good Bear,
 Yellow *No e and* Two Crows to wear. I can get *moccasins* made for
 \$1 a pair. I was born July 7 1843. *at Bent's Fort; I 1st went to schhool*
at Westport in 1853 and remained 4 yrs . . . (changes italicized,
 DPL, Microfilm Reel 1)

Despite his effort to smooth out Bent's writing with additional process words, concise phrasing, and conventional punctuation and capitalization, Hyde's version of Bent's letter disrupts the reader through its own errors. It also less precisely conveys Bent's character and agency; Bent's original letter demonstrates that he is organized, well-connected (arranging several prominent "Indians" for the photograph), and resourceful (drawing on a photo-seeking missionary to take the picture at "no cost"), among other traits that vanish in Hyde's version. The other Bent letters that exist in both longhand and typescript forms exhibit similar corrections and errors.³⁹ Reading Hyde's typescripts alongside Bent's original letters therefore decenters perceptions of Hyde's writing

mastery. George Bent was always essential to the Bent-Hyde collaboration, not merely its opaque, passive subject.

Hyde's relationship with Bent was complicated and not strictly exploitative, as Hyde's obituary for his partner suggests. Hyde—in a dogged moment of his own—appears to be invested in seeing Bent's voice into print.⁴⁰ After Bent died on May 19, 1918, Hyde strove to publish a ten-page obituary in the *Rocky Mountain News* titled "LAST OF COL. BENT'S SONS DEAD: George Bent Dies Among the Cheyennes. Had Many Adventures" (UCB). This document, which parallels "Forty Years," includes over a page of "Bent used to say" material, giving Bent a voice in his own obituary.⁴¹ In his November 19, 1918, letter to editor Frank Farrar (written after Farrar initially rejected the obituary), Hyde shares,

I wrote the enclosed article for you at the time of George Bent's death, but on sending it in, you informed me that the great press of material on the war made it impossible for you to use my article. As I understand the stream of material on the war has now let up a little, I thought I would take a chance and submit this article to you once more.⁴² (UCB)

Farrar refused this resubmission, so Hyde sent it a third time on February 28, 1919. He also included a handwritten note: "Mr. Farrar—I am a persistent cuss, but if you do not want this stuff this time I shan't bother you by submitting it again. Just making a Last Try." Farrar typed a curt reply on the bottom of Hyde's letter: "We do not seem to get things to a point where we can expand as we would like, so I am compelled again to refuse your story. You might try the K.C. Star or Chicago Tribune with it" (UCB). By nudging Hyde out of the Denver area entirely—and also refusing to suggest that he submit a shorter version of Bent's obituary (which Farrar could have done if space to "expand" were the only concern)—Farrar seems to demonstrate an enduring imperialist mindset, which manifests as a reluctance to circulate Native views and experiences in the turn-of-the-twentieth century US West.

"GARLAND COULD NOT GET IT": ENRICHING THE
EURO-AMERICAN LITERARY RECORD

George Bent perhaps best embodies his warrior-writer role in "Forty Years with the Cheyennes" by providing a voice for the Southern

Cheyenne against turn-of-the-twentieth century white writers' misrepresentations. Such an approach—which establishes Bent as a fully conversant tribal member—most vividly arises in Bent's responses to prominent Euro-American fiction writer, autobiographer, and critic Hamlin Garland.⁴³ Bent and Garland met in 1905 (just as Bent started publishing his *Frontier* articles) when Garland visited Indian Territory. Bent documents Garland's trips in letters to George Hyde. He writes on September 2, 1905, for instance, that "Hamlin Garland the writer is coming. he is story writing. he is going to write life of John H. Seger. he will be here in few days" (HC, FF20).⁴⁴ On October 12, 1905, Bent shares that "Hamlin Garland, writer, came in this morning; went to Washita R with John H Seger, with whom he is doing some writing" (DPL, box 1, FF22). Twice introducing Garland as "writer" underscores Bent's awareness of (and perhaps pride in) Garland's reputation. Bent further links himself with Garland by including in "Forty Years" an interview with Two Moons (a Northern Cheyenne chief), whom Garland had interviewed in 1897. Bent acknowledges his shared interviewee in Part Four: he writes that "[s]ome years ago Hamlin Garland wrote Two Moons's account of the Custer battle for McClure's Magazine and called it 'Custer's Last Battle as Seen by Chief Two Moon'" (5).⁴⁵ In this moment, Bent is not merely attempting to gain authority by showing his relationship to Garland or sharing his awareness of Garland's *McClure's* story. Instead, citing Garland allowed Bent, a fully conversant tribal member, to counter Garland's narrative, which Bent's version shows to be presumptuous and misinformed.

It may not be surprising that Garland often privileges his own white aesthetic in "General Custer's Last Fight."⁴⁶ At his 1898 article's outset, Garland relies on imperial imagery to describe Two Moons's home: he writes that the "barn-yard and buildings were like those of a *white settler* on the new and arid sod. It was all barren and unlovely—the home of poverty" (444, my emphasis).⁴⁷ After Wolf Voice (a Northern Cheyenne interpreter) introduces Garland and Two Moons, Garland demands, "Two Moon, I have come to hear your story of the Custer Battle, for they tell me you were a chief there. After you tell me the story, I want to take some photographs of you. I want you to signal with a blanket as the great chiefs used to do in a fight" (444). Garland essentializes Two Moons by imposing his vision of what the Northern Cheyenne chief should look and act like; as Kiara M. Vigil explains, around the turn of the twentieth

century, "Native leaders were . . . navigating the occasions when they were called upon to perform Indianness according to primitivist ideologies that aimed to define Indianness only in terms of the past" (4). Garland's self-serving, essentialist approach mirrors that of other turn-of-the-century Euro-American ethnographers, who, as Hertha Dawn Wong has shown, "asked their native informants about issues that interested them (the Custer battle, for instance) rather than allowing indigenous people to select their own concerns" (9). As *Two Moons* reveals through an interpreter later in his interview, such "concerns" involve the reservation system and education.⁴⁸ *Two Moons* "does not like to talk about" the "Custer battle" (444). Garland imaginatively spins *Two Moons*'s "long silence" before speaking as the "required time to go from the silence of the hot valley, the shadow of his little cabin, and the wire fence of his pasture, back to the days of his youth" (444). He does not consider that *Two Moons* might feel uncomfortable—or even unsafe—speaking with him. Garland's assumptions prevent "General Custer's Last Fight" from offering a more nuanced record of Northern Cheyenne views. Moreover, since he could not understand *Two Moons* directly, Garland might have felt even freer to impose his own perspectives onto his Native subject.

Bent, in contrast, more knowledgeably articulates Northern and Southern Cheyenne perspectives, including loaded silences, by establishing himself as a trusted tribal confidant in "Forty Years." In other words, Bent presents himself as the only writer capable of understanding and conveying another "Indian's" story. In his December 21, 1905, letter to Hyde, Bent writes, "I am sending you copy of Brave Bear's statement of Custer Fight. I got this from him for Garland. Garland could not get it, as Cheys are afraid to talk about this fight, won't talk to anyone except me" (DPL, box 1, FF29). Bent's role as confidant and recorder, first declared in letters to Hyde, becomes a common theme in "Forty Years." In Part Five, Bent shares, the "Indians, of course, were very shy of speaking of [the 1867 Kidder Fight, in which Lakota and Cheyenne warriors killed eleven US 2nd Cavalrymen] to white people; but some months ago I got from Two Crows and Good Bear . . . a short account of how Kidder and his party fell" (4). And in Part Six, his last article, Bent says,

The Cheyennes always speak of Brave Bear and Yellow Nose as the two bravest men in the Custer battle. Some weeks ago I went to see

Brave Bear and got him to come to my lodge and give me an account of the part he took in the fighting. At first he did not wish to talk; he had never told the story of the battle and was rather afraid he might get into trouble if he told about it; but I told him a good many white people believed that Custer did wrong in attacking the village and that no one would bother him for taking part.⁴⁹ (6)

Like Garland, who finds that Two Moons is slow to reply, Bent initially encounters reluctance when interviewing Brave Bear about the “Custer battle.” Because he is fluent in Cheyenne, however, Bent understands that fear drives Brave Bear’s hesitation. Drawing on his ethos as a fluent English speaker versed in Euro-American public opinion, Bent reassures Brave Bear about his safety—or supposed safety—in finally sharing his story with white *Frontier* readers. It is worth noting that, according to Margaret M. Bruchac, “relationships” between “Indigenous” informants and non-Native collaborators such as Bent and Hyde “began to blur the roles of anthropologist/informant, kin/outsider, and collector/collected” in the early twentieth century (9). Certainly, Bent stood to profit by acting as a gatekeeper of Southern Cheyenne knowledge; in his November 30, 1905, letter to Hyde, Bent expresses interest in sending more material to the *Frontier* “as long as they pay us” (DPL, box 1, FF25). Bent also sought to publish the same material he gave Garland, thus preempting the white writer. After explaining he has mailed a copy of “Brave B’s statement” to Garland, who “wanted this to compare [w]ith other accounts,” Bent asks Hyde whether he thinks the “Frontir would like to print” it (13 Dec. 1905, DPL, box 1, folder 7). Although additional pay might have influenced him, other clues in Bent’s letter reveal a tribally oriented motive for wanting to publish Brave Bear’s “Custer” account in the *Frontier*: before asking if the *Frontier* would take Brave Bear’s story, Bent shares that Garland “has been up among [S]ioux. All the writings I have seen about Custer fight have been from Sioux” (13 Dec. 1905, DPL, box 1, folder 7). Bent knows that telling the “Indian side” of a complex intertribal event like the Battle of the Greasy Grass requires multiple angles; without Cheyenne (and, as Bent would likely agree, Arapaho) accounts to accompany the Lakota narratives, the Battle of the Greasy Grass’s story is incomplete. Regardless of his potential financial motivations, then, Bent cultivates a crucial intertribal narrative in “Forty Years” that challenges literature circulated by white writers like Garland who often imposed their own biases on Native stories.

Interweaving interviews with fellow warriors roots Bent's writing in Plains Indian oral traditions, a notable difference from Garland's linguistic distance as a non-Cheyenne speaker. As a well-connected warrior-writer, Bent forces "Forty Years" readers to grapple with multiple Native perspectives—not only from the Southern Cheyennes he most closely associated with, but also from the Northern Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Lakota. "Says" and "told me" cues, for instance, permeate "Forty Years" (and later *Life*), as do actions that emphasize Native peoples' mobility, conversation, and kinship in the early twentieth century. In Part Four, Bent writes, "Two Moons says small parties of Sioux and Cheyennes had been running off stock from Fort Phil Kearney for some time" (5). Later, Bent reveals, "I once had a talk with a Sioux who came down here on a visit and he told me the Sioux whipped [Colonel Nelson D.] Cole," and "Charley told me [General Patrick E.] Connor used two cannons in this fight. Black Elk, a Cheyenne who still lives down here, told me he had a pony shot under him during the engagement" (5). Such a multi-voiced approach, in which Bent becomes a tribal listener and translator (not merely an individualistic narrator), manifests John Stands In Timber's (Northern Cheyenne) summary of Northern Cheyenne storytelling. Stands In Timber explains that Northern Cheyenne storytellers "have arranged that—if that man starts going off, or kind of mixed up the story, they stopped him, and kind of talked it over, and if he cannot remember all of it another starts in" (189). Such a collaborative oral process further represents what Simon Ortiz (Acoma Pueblo) describes in an interview with Laura Coltelli as "a lifestyle. That whole process of that society in terms of its history, its culture, its language, its values, and subsequently, its literature. So it's not merely a simple matter of speaking and listening, but living that process" (Coltelli 104).⁵⁰ This conversational method—which involves intertribal networking as well as synthesizing oral and alphabetic literatures—in turn prompts Bent's readers to *listen* to and *comprehend* Native protagonists, not merely to observe or essentialize them.

Bent's storytelling network extended to contemporaneous non-Native writers and commentators as well. Although we may critique white writers for only knowing or valuing settler perspectives, Bent frequently demonstrates his knowledge of diverse, and often contradictory, viewpoints in "Forty Years." Bent's detailed references to non-Native sources thus disproves the allegation from his biased collaborator Hyde

that Bent “knew the Indian side only in most instances” (2 Sept. 1929, DPL, *Life* Accession Records). For instance, Bent explains in Part Three of “Forty Years”:

The other day when I was in Weatherford, Oklahoma, I saw an old man who was formerly a teamster in a government wagon-train. He was talking about these raids at Julesburg. He told how the burned stage station looked and described these eleven men whom our war party killed. He had passed along the road just after we raided it and had seen all these—all the wreck our raiders had left behind them. He did not know that one of his listeners had been with the Indians who killed those eleven men whose bodies he had seen in the road. (4)

Bent recognizes that the Euro-American teamster’s story is one-sided, and hearing it prompts Bent, a participant in the fight (versus an observer of its aftermath), to reflect on his own participation and knowledge. And as it turns out, Bent “knows” quite a bit, especially about Euro-American views. In Part Four, Bent quotes reports from General Grenville M. Dodge and General Henry B. Carrington that are “not at all correct” (4).⁵¹ And in Part Five, Bent explains, “the only story ever written about [the Kidder Massacre] was constructed by General Custer from facts gleaned by following Kidder’s trail and examining the dead bodies of the soldiers” (4). Custer, like the teamster (and as we would expect from a white writer), reconstructs a story from his own perspective rather than incorporating Native views. Bent addresses this omission by first summarizing Custer’s version of the Kidder Massacre, then observing that “[t]he Indians, the only living beings who witnessed the affair, were afraid to speak of it to whites, so up to the present time Custer’s version has been generally believed correct” (4). Bent continues, “Now for the Indian story of the fight” (4). He then critically reveals that the Southern Cheyenne and Lakota reacted defensively to Kidder and his men—a key difference from Custer, who believed that Kidder was surprised, and thus a victim of Native aggression. Parallel discrepancies exist among turn-of-the-twentieth-century Lakota and non-Native writers. As Raymond J. DeMallie notes, “Lakota and non-Lakota documents provide complementary perspectives based on different cultural premises; in a fundamental sense they represent conflicting realities” (516). As a well-informed warrior-writer carefully

attuned to “conflicting realities” in official and autobiographical, oral and alphabetic accounts, Bent both acknowledges non-Native records such as Custer’s and Garland’s and *emends* them, a vital move toward enriching US Western narratives.⁵²

CONCLUSION

George Bent’s “Forty Years with the Cheyennes” provides an alternative sense of Native agency in the archive of US Western collaborative narratives. Throughout “Forty Years,” Bent carefully interweaves Native and non-Native experiences, memories, reports, and desires, significantly casting himself as an “active agent,” or warrior-writer, in a post-contact United States (Womack 6). Bent’s writing thus vividly embodies Hill’s assertion that “the stories the Cheyenne people are currently telling about themselves emphasize survival over destruction, connectedness over fracture, and commitment to land and community over dispossession” (14). By engaging both Native and non-Native contributors (and concentrating on Southern Cheyenne military engagements), “Forty Years” preserves a tribally specific history of a transitioning region that also crucially embeds its author in Southern Cheyenne warrior culture. In fact, while establishing himself as a chronicler of both past and present Southern Cheyenne narratives, Bent shows that literary preservation can bleed into—and sometimes mystify—historical truth. In an article that appeared in the *Ponca City Daily Courier* [Oklahoma] on June 25, 1906 (three months after Part Six of “Forty Years” was published), questions arise about Bent’s role in cultivating interest in the Southern Cheyenne⁵³:

Found Indian Parchment. *Newspaper Man Makes Lucky Find in Some Old Documents.*

Watonga, Okla., June 25.—A local newspaper man at this place made a very lucky find the other day by accidentally running onto an old Indian history. The details are written out on old parchment paper and proved to be an accurate history of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians. It gives an account of their religious rites and beliefs along with the traditions of the tribe. It deals freely with the tribal government for over one hundred years and is very extensive in covering the relations with the United States government. Many important fights with troops and a description of the

burying grounds where some officers were interred are among the things. It was originally written in Indian language and has been translated by George Bent, an old time Indian scout and plainsman.

The affairs of several other Indian tribes who have been affiliated with the Cheyennes and Arapahoes is dealt with in the history.

Among the things dealt with is the history of the sacred arrows, that were stolen by the Pawnee Indians and secured only recently by the Cheyennes by exchanging several hundred ponies.

The translation will be put in shape and published in some newspaper or magazine.

The content described in this “Indian parchment” aligns exactly with the content of George Bent’s letters, and thus much of “Forty Years.” Did George Bent contribute and/or contribute to the *Daily Courier* article? If so, was it promotional for “Forty Years”? If not, did he use the parchment as a source? Did the parchment actually exist, or was it a standard literary device to spark interest? If it did exist, what became of the parchment and Bent’s translation? Regardless of the answers, which are impossible to discern (the location of the parchment, if it existed, is now unknown; the translation was never published), the *Ponca City Daily Courier* article accentuates Bent’s central role as a “walking encyclopedia of Great Plains history” (Hardorff 355). “Forty Years with the Cheyennes,” which exemplifies Bent’s agency and reflects a unique collaborative effort, deserves to be more widely regarded as an invaluable example of Southern Cheyenne efforts to combat literary erasure and deepen our knowledge of self-narration in settler culture.

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NOTES

1. According to the *Life of George Bent* (1968), Southern Cheyenne warriors belonged to different bands or “soldier societies” (335). Bent and/or George Hyde (the authorship of this particular passage is unclear) introduces them by noting,

the Dog Soldiers were the most famous of the Cheyenne bands and the least understood by the whites. This band was originally one of the six Cheyenne soldier societies. These societies or brotherhoods are very old; each has its own peculiar dances, songs, ceremonies, and regalia. In the old days almost every Cheyenne man belonged to one of these societies. (335)

Life subsequently identifies the “six warrior societies” as follows: “Woksihitaneo, or Kit-fox Men”; “Himoioyoquis, the Crooked Lance or Bone Scraper Society”; “Mahohivas, Red Shields or Bull Soldiers”; “Himatanohis, or Bowstring Men” (who, as *Life* notes, were also known as “Konianutqio, or Wolf Warriors”); “Hotamimasaw, Foolish or Crazy Dogs”; and “Hotamitaneo, or Dog Men; called Dog Soldiers by the whites” (337).

As a clarification note, *Life*’s authorship is solely attributed to George Hyde (and so I have alphabetized *Life* under Hyde’s name in my Works Cited page). This is a problematic circumstance; Hyde outlived his writing partner by fifty years, so he could claim credit for Bent’s work (an issue I discuss in more detail later in this article). To avoid further naturalizing Hyde’s act of authorial appropriation, I parenthetically cite *Life* as “*Life*” in this article instead of using Hyde’s name.

Regarding sources, it is worth acknowledging that I do not cite several historical Euro-American studies of the Southern Cheyenne. Such omitted texts include Donald J. Berthrong’s *The Southern Cheyennes* (1963) as well as George Bird Grinnell’s *The Fighting Cheyennes* (1915). Since Berthrong and Grinnell heavily rely on George Bent to shape their discussions (whether or not they overtly acknowledge him), I go directly to their source and cite Bent’s published and unpublished writings instead.

2. Altogether, Bent’s *Frontier* articles total twenty-seven pages across six issues, ranging from three to five pages per article. Bent was the only Native writer ever published in the *Frontier*, which predominantly circulated poems, short stories, and editorials that celebrate white settler culture. Previously envisioned as the *Garden of the Gods Magazine* in May 1902 and then briefly reconceived as the *Frontier Monthly* in April 1903, the *Frontier* rebooted a third time in April 1904. It ceased publication for good in November 1906.

Interestingly, George Hyde published two articles in the *Frontier* right after Bent. They include “Kit’ Carson’s Fight at Adobe Fort” and “Custer in Virginia” in the April and May 1906 issues. “Kit’ Carson’s Fight” memorably ends with “extracts from a letter” that Hyde “recently received from George Bent,” which both “gives the Indian story of this fight” and signals Hyde’s personal projects as part of an ongoing conversation with his Southern Cheyenne writing partner (5).

3. “Old Times in the Southwest: A Reminiscence of Kit Carson” (December 1906), Bent’s second article, appeared in the *Great Southwest Magazine*, a short-lived Denver periodical. The *Great Southwest* editors prominently list Bent as the author at the top

of the page; they identify George Hyde in tiny print at the bottom as the copyright holder. An unpublished, undated, and untitled manuscript by Bent also currently resides at History Colorado; this two-page document covers the period of 1826 to 1856 and discusses how William Bent (George's father) and his brothers established forts on the Arkansas and Purgatoire Rivers. A second unpublished manuscript by George Bent, according to James Mooney in *The Cheyenne Indians* (1907), also once existed: Mooney writes that it was called "Cheyenne Personal Names, with Meanings" (1888), and that a record of it appeared in James Constantine Pilling's *Bibliography of the Algonquin Languages* (1891). However, this manuscript, which Mooney explains had been housed "in the library of the Bureau of Ethnology . . . seems to have disappeared" (428).

4. The Northern and Southern Cheyenne share a close history. According to Christina Gish Hill, "Over time, the Northern Cheyennes developed stronger alliances on the northern plains, and the Southern Cheyennes developed alliances on the southern plains" (54). This occurred around 1830, or when William Bent (George Bent's father) built Bent's Old Fort. Hill continues, "the people were not divided into two sociopolitical bodies. The Cheyennes still visited, traded, intermarried, helped each other as military allies, and shared the Sacred Buffalo Hat and the Medicine Arrows" (75).

5. I have faithfully preserved George Bent's and George Hyde's punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and grammar throughout this article. In the few cases where an error obscures a topic relevant to my analysis, however, I mark the correction in brackets.

I accessed four main repositories while studying Bent's letters, maps, drafts, and notes. The following acronyms will clarify each item's source in my parenthetical citations: Denver Public Library (DPL), Yale's Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library (Beinecke), History Colorado (HC), and the University of Colorado Boulder (UCB). George Hyde's archival materials, which I reference in the endnotes, are held at History Nebraska (HN).

George Hyde was a self-taught ethnographer who often struggled for acceptance in the academic community, in part due to his eccentric methods. In a February 19, 1960, letter to John L. Cotter (Regional Archeologist for the US National Park Service), Marvin F. Kivett (Museum Director for the Nebraska State Historical Society) explains,

George Hyde, as you may have gathered, is somewhat of a 'character.' . . . We all feel that Hyde has made a contribution. It would be much better if he would document his sources more fully. He doesn't expect or care whether we all agree with him. He is almost blind, deaf, and carries on a conversation only by writing notes with the aid of a powerful glass. . . . I disagree entirely with some of Hyde's statements. Others I like. (HN, box 1, folder 1)

6. Either Wright or Kansas State Historical Society Secretary George W. Martin, who edited the volume, wrote the unattributed footnote.

7. In contrast, Hamlin Garland's article "General Custer's Last Fight as Seen by

Chief Two Moon,” which appeared in September 1898 (and which I discuss in more detail at the end of this article), was widely circulated: *McClure's Magazine* [New York] had over 320,000 monthly subscribers in November 1898 (Thompson).

8. In turn, *The Brand Book of the Denver Posse of Westerners* (1963) reprinted the November 2, 1905, *Denver Times* article in its entirety, including Bent's narrative. In a second instance of reprinting, the *Wray Rattler* (Wray, Yuma County, Colorado) circulated a slightly condensed version of Part Five of “Forty Years” in its October 1, 1909, issue.

9. Halaas and Masich's title seems to point toward the historians' own implication in white settler culture. Namely, using a derogatory term like “halfbreed” without context—as Halaas and Masich have done—risks naturalizing it. Quickly surveying *Halfbreed* reviews underscores this fact. Reviewer Adam Kane, for one, writes of *Halfbreed* that “[t]he controversy surrounding the publication of Bent's memoirs is one of the more intriguing aspects of this work, and certainly one of the least well known aspects of *the halfbreed's* long life” (91, my emphasis). Lincoln B. Faller, himself a prominent Bent scholar, does not question the book's title in his own review. James Lieker parenthetically notes that “half-breed” was “a polemical name common to the nineteenth century,” and Mark Anderson substitutes “mixed ancestry,” “mixed heritage,” and “mixed blood” when discussing the term (328, 115). Just two reviewers directly confront *Halfbreed*. R. Eli Paul explains, “Some readers . . . may object to the book's title itself, less so because of its somewhat jarring usage than for the minimal explanation of why the authors used it as the primary descriptor of their hero” (77). And B. B. Swann notes, “The very title of this 448-page book might not sit well with certain readers, and not just because the noun ‘half-breed’ is hyphenated in most dictionaries. Half-breed is generally regarded as an offensive term” (58). The limited debate about *Halfbreed's* title, when combined with Halaas and Masich's decision to feature this charged term so prominently, highlights the embeddedness of settler-colonial discourse in modern scholarship.

10. Such an argument invokes Renya K. Ramirez's (Ho-Chunk-Ojibwe) assertion that *Standing Up to Colonial Power* (2018) “is a family-tribal history that argues that the Clouds were intellectuals who combined Native warrior and modern identities as a creative strategy to challenge settler colonialism, to become full members of the U.S. nation-state, and to fight for tribal sovereignty” (3). My lens differs from Ramirez's by focusing on how George Bent used his warrior-writer identity to preserve and circulate Southern Cheyenne history among a predominantly white readership and alongside a white collaborator; Bent was less concerned with questions of citizenship and sovereignty.

Amelia V. Katanski similarly explores multifaceted English use in *Learning to Write “Indian”: The Boarding School Experience and American Indian Literature* (2005). She explains, “American Indian boarding-school students” like Bent “turned their ability to read and write in English to their own uses despite a curriculum that made English literacy the marker of lost tribal culture and achievement of ‘civilization’” (6). One such use, according to Katanski, was “staking a claim to continued tribal identity and connection to land, history, and language through the telling of

boarding-school stories” (6). Bent, in contrast to contemporaneous Native writers such as Charles Eastman (Santee Dakota) and Zitkala-Ša (Yankton Dakota), did not write about his Euro-American educational experiences, though he certainly used English to “stake a claim to continued tribal identity” (6).

11. Lindsay Calhoun explains that “[c]ontemporary estimates number the dead at 160, although Chivington boasted that as many as 500 had been killed . . . As a point of comparison, the Third and First Calvary regiment lost nine men; forty were wounded” (3).

Walter Hixson points out in *American Settler Colonialism: A History* (2013) that “Sand Creek . . . illustrates how massacres functioned not as isolated and episodic events but rather as engines of the larger genocidal removal” (121). Hixson further notes that John Evans, who helped Chivington orchestrate the killings as Colorado’s territorial governor, believed, “The benefit to Colorado of that massacre, as they call it, was very great for it ridded the plains of the Indians” (122).

12. While Kelman notes violent episodes in “Forty Years,” his analysis overlooks Part Two, which is the only installment of Bent’s autobiography with its own title. Part Two, or “Battles Beyond the Border,” falls between Bent’s articles about the Sand Creek Massacre (Part One) and its aftermath (Part Three). It contains two Southern Cheyenne stories: “The Battle of the Medicine Arrows” and “Touching Sky and His Coat-of-Mail.” While they initially seem to disrupt Bent’s autobiographical arc, the two stories significantly link his family to prominent events in Southern Cheyenne history. They also engage with past (early 1800s) and present (early 1900s) oral traditions. In what might otherwise seem like an article-long interlude or digression, then, Part Two crucially argues for continuity, survivance, and cultural heritage—profound work following Bent’s account of the Sand Creek Massacre in Part One.

13. The Sand Creek Massacre arises in letters sent to Hyde on March 9, 1905 (DPL, box 1, FF15); March 14, 1905 (DPL, box 1, FF16); October 3, 1905 (HC, FF 22); December 21, 1905 (DPL, box 1, FF29); April 2, 1906 (DPL, box 1, FF34, and Beinecke, box 1, folder 7); April 14, 1906 (Beinecke, box 1, folder 7, and UCB); and April 25, 1906 (DPL, box 1, FF36). I focus on these letters since they directly inform “Forty Years,” though as Jean Afton, David F. Halaas, and Andrew E. Masich note in *Cheyenne Dog Soldiers: A Ledgerbook History of Coups and Combat* (1997), Bent also discusses Sand Creek in 1889 letters to Samuel Forester Tappan (housed at History Colorado) and in an April 30, 1913, letter to Hyde (found at Beinecke) (354).

14. Interestingly, this report contains little detail about the Sand Creek Massacre, though it does recommend “donations of land” for “the widows and orphans of those killed” to “heal the wounds caused by the Chivington affair” (United States 3). Bent might have referred Hyde to this source because of the sympathy it demonstrated for Cheyenne and Arapaho survivors.

15. In this letter, which she reprinted in *A Century of Dishonor* (1881), Jackson quoted Robert Bent as testifying:

I saw one squaw lying on the bank, whose leg had been broken. A soldier came up to her with a drawn sabre. She raised her arm to protect herself; he struck, breaking her arm. She rolled over, and raised her other arm; he struck,

breaking that, and then left her without killing her. I saw one squaw cut open, with an unborn child lying by her side. (344–45)

16. This was likely the 1865 Little Arkansas Treaty, which Black Kettle signed. It was intended to negotiate peace between the United States and the Southern Cheyenne, Arapaho, Apache, Kiowa, and Comanche after the Sand Creek Massacre.

17. Some of Hill's Northern Cheyenne contacts wished to remain anonymous, so she "encrypted these conversants' names and represented them using initials" (6).

18. Other than briefly acknowledging his Civil War service in "Forty Years," Bent gives little attention to his experiences as a Confederate cavalryman. His role in the Confederate cavalry allowed him, particularly after a decade of boarding school, to express a warrior identity. Bent's choice to join the Confederates is likely tied to his personal experiences; William Bent (his father) enslaved several African Americans at Bent's Old Fort (where George Bent grew up), and Missouri was a "border state" during the Civil War. Bent remembers, "One of my Cheyenne uncles was named Black White Man. My father had a slave at the fort, a very black Negro, and as the Cheyennes had seen few if any Negroes before, they thought this slave was very wonderful. They called him the black whiteman and this Cheyenne uncle of mine adopted the name of this slave" (*Life* 64).

19. According to Camilla Kattel, "Price was the same officer that William [George Bent's father] had served with during the Mexican War" (148).

20. For more detailed information about Bent's Euro-American education, see pages 73–80 of Halaas and Masich's *Halfbreed*. For additional context about his Civil War service, see pages 80–91 of *Halfbreed*. It is worth noting that Halaas and Masich's biography presents a speculative (rather than strictly historical) version of Bent's life, albeit one grounded in research—a fact that Faller likewise recognizes in his review of *Halfbreed*.

21. All descriptive words found in "Forty Years."

22. As Laird and Colleen Cometsevah stress, "These drawings represent *real* people and *real* events. The warrior-artists who drew these images intended them to be a record of the coups and combats that characterized this period of unprecedented warfare against traditional enemies as well as the white newcomers who now invaded our homeland" (ix).

23. Bent was quite knowledgeable about Southern Cheyenne shield-making conventions; he describes a variety of ceremonies, paints, and points of etiquette surrounding Southern Cheyenne shield manufacture and culture in Part Six of "Forty Years" (pages 7–8). On a related note, Powell introduces Southern Cheyenne shield painting by describing this scene: "In the Southern Cheyenne Sun Dance camp of June 1902," Powell writes, "with Wolf Chief and George Bent present, someone told [George Bird] Grinnell: 'Each clan had its own peculiar fashion of painting their shields. By looking at a man's shield one could tell the clan to which he belonged'" (15).

24. When annotating his typescripts of Bent's letters, Hyde kept an eye out for Bent's individuality; when Bent recounts Wolf Chief's story of an 1864 fight, Hyde notes in the margin, "Here Bent speaks as himself," to distinguish Bent from the rest of the communal pronouns (March 26, 1906, DPL, box 1, FF33).

25. A possible strategy to avoid censure from an already hostile white readership.

26. While much of what Bent intended to write can be categorized as a first-person Southern Cheyenne “history,” Bent’s letters frequently mention his desire to include family photographs in the “Book” (Faller 74). Many of the pictures that Bent describes seem to be missing today (or privately held), though the Smithsonian Anthropological Archives does preserve a variety, including images of Bent’s children taken by James Mooney in the early 1890s.

Bent’s attention to these photographs proves that he envisioned a personal/familial *and* historical/tribal final project. In his March 9, 1905, letter to Hyde, for example, Bent writes, “I have photographs of myself, wife and eldest daughter. They are scattered around in our family, but when I get them I will send them to you, as you may want to put them in the book” that he eventually wanted to publish with Hyde (DPL, box 1, FF15). His November 30, 1905, letter continues to emphasize family: “My niece at Atchison Kas has best Photograph of Myself and My Wife,” he writes. “She has Elk Teeth dress in this picture. This was taken 37 years ago. I will get this in few days and send it to you for you to copy” (DPL, box 1, FF25). On December 4, 1905 (the same month Part Three of “Forty Years” appeared), Bent further describes this picture, including his desire for it to appear in the *Frontier* (DPL, box 1, FF26). He states,

She had Elk Teeth dress on in this picture. her Indian name. “Mo-he-hy-vah” meaning ‘Mag. pie’. send copy of this photo to Frontier Magazine so they can put in the Magazine. I will send you more of photos soon as my daughter goes to Darlington Agency. all Indian pictures so can put them in Book.

The *Frontier* did publish other photographs in “Forty Years,” though other than George Bent and Magpie, none of them depict American Indians from Bent’s narrative. A photograph of Geronimo (Apache) appears in Part Three, for instance; the *Frontier* editors seem to have simply incorporated Native pictures regardless of whether their subjects were relevant to “Forty Years” (6).

27. Magpie’s elk-tooth dress became a “historic trophy” at the turn of the twentieth century when the Bent family—in financial straits—sold it to a white man. A 1901 article in the *Chickasha Daily Express* (Chickasha, Indian Territory) sensationalizes the elk-tooth dress’s story, associating O. L. Richards’s (Euro-American) purchase with settler conquest. The article reveals

Yesterday, O. L. Richards purchased for a big round sum in spot cash [\$1,600], a famous squaw dress, ornamented with 1024 elk teeth. The elk teeth ornamentation has been in one Cheyenne Indian family for a period of 127 years, and for a long time speculators and lovers of curios have tried to purchase it.

Photographs of the dress have been taken scores of times, and fully forty squaws have been married in it for luck, but all offers to buy have been rejected until now.

The dress has at last passed out of the hands of the family, and into the hands of the white man.

Here, George Bent suddenly inserts himself into the story; even at the point of transaction, Bent teaches the dress's new white owner—and the newspaper's subscribers—how to “read” the elk teeth and appreciate their significance. The article shares that “George Bent . . . called at the office today and stated that several of the teeth on the dress were gifts from Joseph, the great Nez Peres [sic] Chief. They have the chief's mark on them.”

After purchasing the dress, O. L. Richards posed in it for *The Strand Magazine*, the turn-of-the-century British periodical that published Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes series (240). He subsequently resold the dress to two Elks Society members; according to an August 2, 1902, *El Reno Evening Bell* (Oklahoma) article, “the probability is that [Magpie's dress] will become the property of Elks' order and be treasured as one of its brightest and most historic trophies.” An image of Richards wearing Magpie's dress can be viewed at the following URL (page 240): <https://books.google.com/books?id=bXBPAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA240&dpq=PA240&dq=o>.

28. Savoie Lottinville, a University of Oklahoma professor, discovered and edited the *Life of George Bent* manuscript in the 1960s. To compile the final version, Lottinville referenced both a forgotten draft discovered in Hyde's attic and a draft the Denver Public Library purchased from Hyde in 1930.

It is worth noting here that none of Hyde's letters to Bent survive. Lincoln B. Faller explains, “We have only one side of their ongoing, fifteen-year conversation, and yet, as with hearing (or overhearing) only one half of a phone call, it is possible to say quite a lot about what went on between them . . . Hyde was in his early twenties when he began writing to Bent; Bent was in his early sixties. The letters don't indicate they ever met” (68).

29. Halaas and Masich also allege that “Bent's pressure” to write a book “overwhelmed Hyde,” and that “Bent's pestering had even brought on a nervous attack” (342). This led to a hiatus on the *Life of George Bent* until “Hyde simply could not refuse his old friend's pleadings” and continued writing in the mid-1910s (345). Halaas and Masich's description of the collaboration thus depicts Hyde as a friendly victim of Bent's ambition and makes Bent seem inconsiderate.

30. This opinion seems to contextualize Hyde's dedication of *Life of George Bent* to his “good friend” Lottinville rather than to George Bent, who often addressed Hyde as “My Dear Friend” in his letters.

31. Hyde's personal letters reveal that he viewed Native peoples possessively. In a March 18 (no year) letter to Carol (no last name), Hyde writes, “This month I collected another Indian: Knife Scabbard, 93 yrs, a Brule Sioux. He can't write English, but a man named Odell up on the Rosebud has been writing for the old man” (HN, box 1, folder 1). And in a July 17, 1941, letter to Stuart Anderson, Hyde writes, “My Sioux are giving a 3-day rodio [sic] at Pine Ridge and are howling for me to come. Not a chance” (HN, box 1, folder 1).

32. An image of this map is available at <https://history.denverlibrary.org/colorado-biographies/george-bent-1843-1918#PhotoSwipe1529800773552>. The same map appears with this prejudiced note in the *Life of George Bent* (167). Neither Hyde nor

Lottinville acknowledge Hyde's comment. Bent probably never saw this note since Hyde wrote it after sending the map to Bent several times. For an engrossing discussion of Bent's Sand Creek maps, see Kelman's *A Misplaced Massacre* (2013), Chapter 4 ("Accurate But Not Precise").

33. Hyde did occasionally reflect on—and dismiss—his own racism in personal correspondence preserved at History Nebraska. In an August 22, 1959, letter to Marvin F. Kivett, Hyde writes,

The critters [Hyde's name for critics] nearly all Liberals, and they have just one view about Indians: 'The Indian was a nice peaceful friendly person, before the whites came and brutalized him.' They can't say that about the present book, because I deal with Indians the whites had had not chance to brutalize, and some of them were eating the captives they took from other tribes [sic] Goody. Well, they can say I have race prejudices. Nope, I have not. I think my own ancestors were probably eating the neighbors, back in the stone age. (HN, box 1, folder 1)

34. To contextualize Hyde's and Lottinville's authorial and editorial appropriation, consider *Cheyenne Memories* (1967), a collaborative project released one year before *Life*. *Cheyenne Memories* lists both John Stands In Timber (Northern Cheyenne) and Margot Liberty (Euro-American) as authors. Stands In Timber died the year *Cheyenne Memories* was published, leaving Liberty (like Hyde, who outlived Bent by fifty years) to curate his historical and literary legacy. Unlike Hyde, Liberty acknowledged her Native collaborator with co-authorship. Of all the Bent–Hyde scholarship, Kelman's *A Misplaced Massacre* (2013) comes closest to balancing Bent's and Hyde's roles. Kelman explains, "Since its publication, Bent and Hyde's *Life of George Bent* had served as a reference," attributing the book to both Georges (143).

35. Bent's correction reads, "after ten days he returned the arms which the Arapahos had surrendered to him and brusquely [ordered them] to move away from the fort" (DPL, box 2, FF8).

36. The letters held at the Denver Public Library represent a mix of handwritten and typescript copies; of DPL's ninety-two Bent–Hyde letters, thirty-five are typed (the typed versions thus likely reflect changes by Hyde). Interestingly, most of the Beinecke's and all of History Colorado's letters are handwritten. Only a few letters are duplicated in both typescript and longhand form, allowing a comparison between the two. They include correspondence from February 26, 1906 (the typescript is held by DPL on Microfilm Reel 1, Mflm174, and the handwritten version by Beinecke, box 1, folder 7); April 2, 1906 (DPL, box 1, FF34, holds the typescript and Beinecke, box 1, folder 7, holds the handwritten version); and April 14, 1906 (UCB holds the typescript and Beinecke, box 1, folder 7, owns the handwritten version). While still a valuable resource, the typescript letters should be read with an understanding that Hyde likely altered them as he transcribed.

37. This transcription is my own; I have rendered Bent's line breaks, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation as faithfully as possible. Hyde transcribes the first sentence as "I have been very busy lately"; while I agree that there seems to be more to

this sentence than just the word “busy,” I cannot decipher Bent’s writing, and thus have marked that uncertainty with a [?]. Preserving the line breaks is important. As Faller points out, “Often only the right margin of the page indicates the end of a thought unit, as if each line of his handwritten letter was to be seen, potentially, as standing by itself” (73). This phenomenon can be observed in the lines “I can get them made for you” and “you ask me what year I was born” from my transcription; the margins of Bent’s letter mark the start and end of both sentences.

38. Interestingly, Hyde should already have had this information; a section on Bent’s early life appeared in Part One of “Forty Years.”

39. History Colorado’s *George Bent Papers* finding aid (which includes a detailed calendar and index of its twenty-four letters) lists other errors made in its transcriptions of Bent’s correspondence. History Colorado’s typescripts do not contain handwritten notes from Hyde to identify them as his own; it is thus unclear whether Hyde or another researcher introduced the errors in History Colorado’s typescripts, which accompany the handwritten copies.

40. Hyde’s “investment” potentially represents both capitalism and affection. DPL’s Accession Records for *Life of George Bent* show that Hyde profited by publishing the collaborative text (money of no benefit to Bent, who died fifty years earlier). Certainly, however, Bent and Hyde shared a long working relationship, and Hyde likely cared about preserving Bent’s memory.

41. Jo Ann Kessel (Oklahoma Choctaw) shares Julia Bent’s reaction to her brother’s death in *Piavinnia* (2014). She writes,

George Bent contracted influenza during the pandemic siege of 1917–1918, and died on May 19, 1918, at the age of seventy-five. When a friend came to tell Julia of his death and escort her to his home in Colony, Julia’s grief came pouring out in sobs. She had not known he was ill, and was shocked with the news . . . His death presented her with a great loss, and left her the only remaining child of William Bent and Owl woman [sic]. (245–6)

42. Hyde provides a similar reason for why *Life* could not be published during Bent’s lifetime. He explains in his introduction to *Life* that the “first World War made it impossible to find a publisher, and the manuscript was put away in a box and forgotten” (vii). Lottinville adds that “[t]hirty-six years had elapsed since Mr. Hyde had closed out of his thinking the frustrations he had experienced in trying to get the manuscript published in the early Depression years” (xv).

43. Garland won a Pulitzer Prize for *A Daughter of the Middle Border*, a sequel to *A Son of the Middle Border* (his 1917 autobiography), in 1922.

44. Seger founded both the Seger Indian School and the town of Colony. Several of Bent’s letters to Hyde are written on Seger Indian School letterhead (see May 3, 1905, HC, FF 10). The University of Oklahoma published Seger’s *Early Days Among the Cheyenne and Arapahoe Indians* in 1924 (reissued in 1934).

45. The full title of Garland’s article was “General Custer’s Last Fight as Seen by Chief Two Moon.” While leaving off “General” in “Forty Years” might have been an accident, Bent’s emendation significantly downgrades Custer’s rank while at the

same time preserving Two Moons' status as "Chief." Further, Bent refers to Two *Moons* (with an "s") rather than Two *Moon* (without an "s") like Garland. I follow Bent's spelling (except when quoting Garland).

46. Despite his shortcomings in this article, Garland was likely well-intentioned; Bent asserts to Hyde that Garland "wants to get things right, just as Inds tell them" (December 13, 1905, DPL, box 1, FF28).

47. Garland, perhaps unsurprisingly, sees only the "poverty" associated with early "white" settlement rather than the adaptation that Chief Two Moons and the Northern Cheyenne were then exploring. Hill explains, "As they took up homesteading, the Northern Cheyennes were again adapting to the new world that was upon them while maintaining their own cultural perspectives and securing themselves as an autonomous people" (250).

48. Two Moons ultimately resists Garland's essentializing pressure by sharing Northern Cheyenne concerns at the end of his interview. Through Wolf Voice, Two Moons explains,

You have talked with me about fighting, and I have told you of the time long ago. All that is past. I think of these things now: First, that our reservation shall be fenced and the white settlers kept out and our young men kept in. Then there will be no trouble. Second, I want to see my people raising cattle and making butter. Last I want to see my people going to school to learn the white man's way. That is all. (448)

Two Moons envisions a future in which Native peoples are "living," "singing," "dancing," "raising," "making," and learning—not romanticized or stagnant (448). He thus embodies Robert Warrior's (Osage) observation that "[t]he fact is, Eastman, [Luther] Standing Bear, Bonnin [Zitkala-Ša], and others wanted what the schools they attended offered. Yet they also wanted to have a stake in their own destiny" (116). Garland, who intended to stage a photograph of a "great chief . . . in a fight," struggles to describe Two Moons in light of the chief's cross-cultural, future-focused views. After Two Moons finishes, Garland writes that "[t]here was something placid and powerful in the lines of the chief's broad brow, and his gestures were dramatic and noble in sweep" (446). Garland continues, "There was no anger in his voice, and no reminiscent ferocity . . . He seemed the leader and the thoughtful man he really is—patient under injustice, courteous even to his enemies" (448). Garland's description, despite filling a whole paragraph, is indistinct. "There was something" and "[h]e seemed" are imprecise phrases, and words like "placid," "powerful," "dramatic," and "noble" invoke stereotypes rather than distinct character traits. Likewise, ending on "enemies" recalls the violence that Two Moons wishes to disregard, therefore privileging Garland's aesthetic interests. Concluding "General Custer's Last Fight" through Garland's eyes—without commenting on Two Moons's desires—therefore underscores Garland's role as a colonial outsider to this Northern Cheyenne community.

49. Bent's 1905 views about what "white people believed" might also have been informed by public sympathy from Euro-American figures like Rodman Wanamaker, whom Debra Buchholtz describes as a "wealthy East Coast businessman and self-

styled ‘friend of the Indian’ (107). In 1909, Wanamaker helped organize “The Last Great Indian Council” at the Battle of the Greasy Grass site. DeMallie reveals that “[white-authored] history demanded a personal victor for this very personal defeat, and the assembled Indians decided to accommodate that demand by electing one of their number—Brave Bear, the Southern Cheyenne chief—to the status of Custer’s official slayer” (518).

50. In the spirit of Bent’s Sand Creek writings, Ortiz offers pointed critiques of Euro-American participants in *from Sand Creek* (1981), expressing, “Colonel Chivington was a moral man, believed he was made in the image of God, and he carried out the orders of his nation’s law; Kit Carson didn’t mind stealing and killing either” (52).

51. Bent provides General Dodge’s account of an 1864 meeting with “Red Cloud and two Cheyennes, Bull Bear and Dull Knife” verbatim before countering with his own version; Bent attended the meeting as a translator (4).

52. Bent’s perspectives also arise in an unlikely (and previously unstudied) location: *The Second William Penn: Treating With the Indians on the Santa Fe Trail 1860–66* (1913), a self-published autobiography by William H. Ryus (from Kansas City, Kansas). At the end of *The Second William Penn*, Ryus reprints an October 1908 letter from George Bent to Colonel Moore, in which Bent shares:

Sir: I have seen published in a Western periodical your paper now in the archives of the Kansas Historical Society relating to a battle your train had with a war party in August, 1864, near where Fort Dodge was . . . As I was with the Cheyennes at the time I knew what took place. The Kansas Historical Society ought to get the Indian side of the history of all these wars between the whites and Indians. (172–73)

Bent’s call for archiving “the Indian side of the history” introduces a key conversation about who records stories, which stories are preserved, and how and where these stories are subsequently stored. In a May 4, 1913, letter to Bent, Ryus provides advice about self-publishing a book; although Bent did not self-publish *Life* or any other text, reaching out to Ryus shows he was invested in seeing his version of history into print (HC, folder FF26).

53. This article was subsequently reprinted in newspapers as far away as Indiana.

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Unghosting Bones

Resistant Play(s) versus the Legacy of Carlisle Indian Industrial School

JEN SHOOK

“Flesh can house no memory of bone. Only bone speaks memory of flesh.”

—Rebecca Schneider, “Archives: Performance Remains”

“We talk about historical trauma . . . A hundred and thirty years later, this still has an impact on our youth. We’re trying to make peace with those spirits and bring them home.”

—Russell Eagle Bear, Rosebud Sioux Historic Preservation Officer

In N. Scott Momaday’s *The Moon in Two Windows*, Luther Standing Bear, the first graduate of Carlisle Indian Industrial School, returns years later to catch a football game between Carlisle and the Army team. *Moon* closes as Luther and his son walk through the graves of Carlisle’s cemetery, a resonant site for those who refuse to forget the genocidal legacy of the boarding school system launched at Carlisle, Pennsylvania. The young boy points to distant figures of a man and a child holding hands, swinging “round and round” (Momaday 177). Though the script does not identify them, the image echoes an earlier moment when Etahdleuh, an older member of Luther’s transitional generation, swings round and round with Grass, the ghost of a girl who died on the train from the reservation to the school.

The joyful yet haunting, lively yet dead, Grass and Etahdleuh surface as remains from Carlisle founder Richard Pratt’s assimilationist mantra, “Kill the Indian, save the man.” While the Pratt who Luther sees at the football game totters with age, throughout the earlier era portrayed in most of *Moon* Pratt organizes his school with vigor with Etahdleuh serving as his cultural translator. *Moon*, in other words, travels back

and forth through time, stitching connections for the audience between Carlisle's graves, Pratt's commands, and the students' transcultural negotiations.

Grass's death troubles Pratt's orderly plan, and what to do with her remains gestures toward another ongoing Native and US negotiation: protection and repatriation of the dead. That football game that Luther watches features another historical Carlisle alumnus, Olympian Jim Thorpe. Like the students beneath the Carlisle gravestones, Thorpe's remains also lie in Pennsylvania, but his family has been fighting for their return to his native Oklahoma for over fifty years. This legal battle plays out in a fictionalized documentary in Suzan Shown Harjo and Mary Kathryn Nagle's play, *My Father's Bones*.

Together, *The Moon in Two Windows* (2006), by N. Scott Momaday (Kiowa), and *My Father's Bones* (2013), by Suzan Shown Harjo (Cheyenne/Hodulgee Muscogee) and Mary Kathryn Nagle (Cherokee), resist the dismissal of anti-Native violence as a closed past event, calling to action both Native and non-Native audiences through embodied ghosts, cultural translation, empathy-modeling onstage audiences, and family/kinship interpellations. Both plays not only unghost the past in service of necessary and portable debate for present and future community health, they bring ghosts to life onstage in their activist memorializing of two specific issues: the generational loss perpetrated by the residential school system and the cultural genocide of looted human remains and sacred objects.

By "unghost," I mean to make visible or acknowledge the presence of figures that have been obscured or ignored. To deal with ghost language in the landscape of Indigenous art carries a danger of reinscribing the erasure of Native peoples, the romantic obsession with their vanishment that fueled even so-called "Friends of the Indians" social movements. Yet *unghosting* both attends to that erasure and amplifies the resilience, the survivability, of the peoples and cultures who remain and thrive despite centuries of genocide. While stage Indian ghosts haunted early US drama (and fiction and poetry and more) to perform an assuagement of settler guilt, the dead characters of *Moon* and *Bones* unsettle history and weave time to promote survivability.¹ Unquiet memory in unburied bones circles like Grass and Etahdleuh in the Carlisle cemetery, unghosting hidden or ignored presences. Ghost characters might veer dangerously close to vanishment, the ongoing elegiac obsession

with “the last of the” that leads to convenient assumptions that Native peoples are extinct.² Yet these stage ghosts must be played by actual actors, visibly present. As such, their unghosting parallels Harvey Young’s formulation of the “undead,” the precarious bodies marked for death by the assumed inevitability of the white supremacist imagination. In his reading of lynching souvenirs, Young details the way that bodily remains and materials related to a death circulate to continually re-perform that death (Young 655). Young insists that theatre provides an ideal site to examine precarity and death because of the possibility of reanimation.³ Likewise, while the dead characters in *Moon* and *Bones* assert their presence through the bodies of live actors, the plays’ buried bones also resist the imposition of colonial narratives.

Cemeteries feature prominently in both plays, obvious sites of contestation for the particular events, but also, since the relation of the dead to land, space, and place marks cultures, debates about memorializing, disturbing, or interring “dead Indians” have always been “inseparable from the ongoing geopolitical campaign to seize Indian lands and expunge Indian cultures,” according to Jacqueline Fear-Segal. The “spatial politics of burial,” though changed over time, have long been active in the work of colonization (Fear-Segal 155). For these Native playwrights, the past remains *in* the present, not distant at all, nor safe. By “remains,” however, I also of course mean bodily remains after death, the bones (and sacred burial objects), but also the excess, the remainder left over from uneven equations, the unaccountable humanness dismissed by early anthropology and genocidal policy. What *remains*, after all that happened has been accounted for, cannot easily be documented, yet it *remains* ghosted in the archive. These plays work to unghost those remains, to make visible the transcultural world created in the mix.

In that work, these plays engage and remediate spectacle, not in the Aristotelian or commercial sense of the word, but as a “series of social relations mediated by images,” to borrow from Diana Taylor (Taylor 13). The plays unite printed documentation and bodies, demonstrating cultural memory to be more a process of recycling than of invention. In doing so, their ghosts link the past and present as well as bridge multiple audiences through their spectacle, developing transcultural shared spaces and writing them into bone memory. Within the plays, too, onstage audiences provide audience pedagogy by sharing questions and explanations, and by modeling responses.

With Carlisle, Colonel Richard H. Pratt began what Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz calls the “most pernicious” of the late-nineteenth century colonization efforts, a military prison-inspired boarding school system for Native youth collected from their reservations. By the time Carlisle closed in 1918, over 25,000 Native students attended federally-funded boarding schools (Bloom xii). Momaday, as many authors do, anchors readers using recognizable landmarks of historical people and events. His title, *The Moon in Two Windows*, suggests variation in perspective, but also suggests the “windows” the playwright uses to frame the play’s world(s). A window connects and separates. Not just “this was” but “this does.” Momaday’s screenplay⁴ dances in and out of chronology in the Carlisle years (1879–1918). Its opening image introduces a “play” version of settlers versus “the Indians” through its locker-room setting—not play as in pretend, since football then as now was serious business—but rather “play” as “counting coup,” fighting for honor rather than for physical injury (Momaday 111). While the 1912 Carlisle/Army game date might not stand out on many calendars, with it, Momaday evokes both the sublimation of historical memory into the supposedly-assimilated overculture and he provides recognizable landmarks for contemporary audiences through the game’s competing heroes: Jim Thorpe for Carlisle, Dwight Eisenhower for Army. When “we follow” the Carlisle team into the “Visitors” locker room, the camera aligns the audience with Carlisle’s players; yet the original continental hosts have now been deemed visitors, “wards” of the structures of power. Such displacement registers much more deeply in the following scenes set earlier in time, particularly as children from Rosebud and other reservations travel by train to the barracks-turned-boarding school. Yet that first scene, in 1912, shows Carlisle founder Richard Henry Pratt as a “tired old man,” and gives its starting and ending voiceovers to Luther Standing Bear, and its closing image to Luther’s young son, watching the football soar (Momaday 113). Momaday begins with Native resilience.

Career soldier Pratt had overseen the capture, transport, and imprisonment of seventy-two Cheyenne, Kiowa, Comanche, Arapaho, and Caddo people after the Red River Wars of Oklahoma and Texas ended in 1875. His assimilation tactics in their Fort Marion, Florida, prison—including forced haircuts, name changes, and the banning of Native languages—would follow him to Hampton Institute, where he was posted to expand that African-American school to include Native chil-

dren, and then on to his founding of Carlisle Indian Industrial School, installed in former army barracks in 1879. In his accompanying note, Momaday reminds readers that the “Indian Wars” continued actively during the school’s tenure; the Battle of Little Big Horn was only three years past, and the 1890 Wounded Knee massacre still to come. Most Native peoples existed in a state akin to “prisoners of war,” whether in actual prisons, holding camps, or disease-ridden reservations. Indeed, the real-life Pratt would later title his memoir *Battlefield and Classroom*. Momaday emphasizes the connections between genocidal military policies and culturally genocidal institutional racism.

Yet Momaday “center[s]” not Pratt but the “children, children who were forced to pass from one world to another across a cultural distance all but impossible to imagine” (Momaday 109). He dedicates the piece “*To all the brave children*” (Momaday 108). Pratt sells educational value to the Lakota people at Rosebud by connecting their impoverished situation with need for better translation. If the next generation can read and write, he argues, they will be able to negotiate treaties and “make a better life.” Yet even this speech begins by criticizing the “great man . . . great warrior . . . great chief” Spotted Tail who cannot read or write; it ends ominously with “I have come for your children” (Momaday 117–18). Although the scene dissolves before the decision has been made, the next scene’s goodbyes suggest both agreement with the need for the children to learn, and deep sorrow at the children’s loss. Bravery echoes again, as Luther’s father, embracing him, intones “You will do a brave thing.” “Yes, my father,” the boy Luther answers, “I will do a brave thing.” The women, meanwhile, make cradles for “the unborn, who were coming into a bleak, despairing world,” while they keen (Momaday 119). A man cuts his hair, signaling mourning to Lakota-literate audience members, while also teaching unversed audience members to associate hair-cutting with grief, a knowledge that will resonate when the school insists upon cutting the students’ hair.

Such issues of cultural translation continue throughout the play. Etahdleuh, a veteran of Fort Marion,⁵ acts as go-between and translator, with all the complications of that job.⁶ In the train to Pennsylvania, Pratt asks why Plenty Horses watches the landscape so closely, and Etahdleuh explains that he memorizes his way home, as any warrior “marks his way.” For Pratt such memory work is “remarkable”; for Etahdleuh it is “common sense” (Momaday 124). In such moments, Pratt serves as an

internal audience, asking questions that a white audience might share, so that Etahdleuh may serve as bridge, tour guide, and translator for the audience as well as the white characters. Such enacted instruction functions like the internal discussion of a Greek chorus. Other grouped audiences within the play include the Lakota who judge power shifts in Pratt's and Spotted Tail's speeches, the children watching Pratt's performances, and the townspeople who gather to see the children arrive at the train station. Those last "gawking citizens," however, also perform for the children in unintentionally grotesque insults, some issuing "war whoops, in the dancing, mouth-clapping stereotype." Despite their "delight," the outer audience must also take in the children's response, as "Some of the children take cover in their blankets. Some cry. All are confused, bewildered" (Momaday 126). We will not be allowed the luxury of pretending that this behavior, no matter its intent, does not wound our protagonists. Nor that their new life erases their losses, since the shots of gawkers intersperse with Gray Calf's burial. The gawkers' inability to see from the children's point of view suggests that they view the children as less than human, illustrating why the contemporary mascot fight matters, and unfortunately paralleling attacks on teens at recent sporting events.

While the gawkers supply villainy, we recognize Etahdleuh as a hero even before his first line: he rides in on a "splendid" horse, "dismounts with a flourish and hands the horse to Spotted Tail . . . in the traditional manner of a Plains Indian give-away, an expression of honor and generosity" (Momaday 120). As with Pratt, Momaday adapts Etahdleuh, Luther Standing Bear, and several other characters from historical personages. He credits county archivists and Carlisle historians for their help in opening up archives. He finds power in retracing his subjects' steps on the land, staying in Jim Thorpe's old room during his Carlisle visit (Momaday ix). Historical characters brought back to life by plays like *Moon* carry ghost doubles, not only in the actors' bodies and playwrights' versions of events, but also in the futures already determined for them, which some audience members will know.

Moon and *Bones* converge at Carlisle, on the football field, and in the transits circling the graveyard. Understanding Carlisle is necessary for understanding Thorpe, and the way that mixed blood athletes get read as American Icons for the US. Understanding Thorpe, conversely, is necessary for understanding Carlisle. John Bloom argues that "the

inspiring stories of triumph and success associated with the Carlisle football and track teams can easily mask the fundamental pain and destruction caused by assimilation politics,” yet Shown-Harjo and Nagle find in the actual complexity of Thorpe’s life and death more reverberations of those assimilation politics (Fear-Segal 124). Thorpe’s ability to pass, and to play Indian, allows him movement, while nearly two hundred children remained in the graveyard. Yet Thorpe’s acculturation now traps him in a strange land in Pennsylvania, while in August 2017, a Northern Arapaho court victory required the Army to begin repatriating the children’s remains, starting with three boys (Richards).

In recent decades, scholarship on the boarding school system in general and on Carlisle in particular has proliferated, in part because of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission investigating Canada’s residential school system, but even that TRC stemmed from Indigenous-led recovery of the stories from the survivors and descendants of both countries’ school systems. Brenda J. Child’s influential *Boarding School Seasons: American Indian Families, 1900–1940*, for instance, models a descendant perspective, centering student, parent, and administrator letters. As Andrew Woolford points out, in what is currently called the United States, narratives of boarding school experiences have tended to represent the schools “as benevolent institutions, as an antidote to the Indian Wars, or as spaces of Indigenous resistance,” while in what is currently called Canada, the TRC process developed a wider variety of “templates” (Woolford 265). The 2018 Playwrights Canada Press anthology *Indian Act: Residential School Plays* certainly demonstrates a wide variety of testimonies and responses to boarding schools, with its seven dramatic pieces, three prefaces, and references, including Article 11 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. As Jacqueline Emery demonstrates with the collection *Recovering Native American Writing in the Boarding School Press*, students repurposed school training and resources, including using Carlisle’s printing and distribution network, to tell their own stories in ways accessible to Euro-American audiences and within parameters acceptable to the schools. In fact, for many, “being an educated Indian meant challenging the notion of the vanishing Indian with their own counter-representations of Indians as capable of change” (Emery 11, 26). Luther Standing Bear, who published four books late in his life, published two letters in Carlisle’s *School News* as a student. Although, as Emery notes, Standing Bear’s early writings

warn students to obey Pratt and conform to school rules and Christian codes, his later works denounce Carlisle and the school system as “a curse and blight” for his people (Emery 43).

On both sides of the Great Lakes, organizations and initiatives that address boarding/residential school survivors and descendants do so within a larger ecology of harm and healing; they seek to reestablish cultural transmission across generations, mending the ruptures that the colonial project employed to destroy Indigenous cultures (Woolford 276, 290). While Momaday’s play depicts Carlisle in the template of “spaces of Indigenous resistance,” even locating “seeds of Indian unification” in “the curious and perhaps unforeseeable backlash to the boarding school experiment,” *Moon*’s insistent resistant mourning emphasizes the healing work that has yet to be done, in which the play itself takes part but cannot complete (Fear-Segal 45). As Daniel David Moses writes in a preface to the *Indian Act* anthology, “These plays help us make clear the human costs of their—at best—misguided project. These plays, to put it more humanely, show us how to heal” (St. Bernard vii). Plays such as *Moon* and *Bones* and those in *Indian Act* exist within an ecology of activism, archival recovery, physical commemoration, and scholarship. For instance, the 2016 volume *Carlisle Indian Industrial School: Indigenous Histories, Memories, and Reclamations* collects materials from a 2012 symposium held at Carlisle, and the royalties for the volume go to the Carlisle Indian School Project Fund (housed at the Community Studies Center, Dickinson College) to “continue to future Carlisle symposia and other events and projects (such as converting the Carlisle Farmhouse into a heritage center) that increase and disseminate knowledge of Indian boarding schools and preserve the memory of the students who attended Carlisle” (Fear-Segal v). Groundwork began in May 2016 to transform a farmhouse once used to teach Carlisle students agriculture into a memorial heritage center. Earlier plans to demolish the farmhouse and build modern Army College housing “sparked an outcry among descendants of Indian school students, which prompted the Army to reexamine the historical significance of the farmhouse.” Having completely different oral and written archives of the place, Carlisle descendants unghosted the building’s “significance” for the army, and a new Carlisle Farmhouse Coalition now surveys tribal leaders and descendants on its “interpretive plan.” One hundred and

twenty-four descendants responded (Cress). Again, the descendants drive the work.

In a 2012 introduction written for the reprinting of *Boarding School Seasons* (originally published in 1998), Child questions assimilation as the main goal of segregated American Indian education, when other groups encouraged to assimilate were not segregated in the same kind of massive system. Like others, Child posits the schools as part of the “land grab,” since “what is unique in the U.S. context is that segregation in American Indian education was inextricably linked to land policies the United States exploited for the enrichment of its citizens” (Child v–vi). By focusing on the sites of burial, *Moon* and *Bones* continue to resist that landgrab and insist upon sovereignty for bodies and memories.

Fear-Segal describes the Carlisle cemetery during the twentieth century as “a romanticized, sanitized . . . site to commemorate Indian nobility and mourn tribal disappearance” rather than “grappling with a problematic past nor acknowledgement of the existence of living descendants of the schoolchildren” (Fear-Segal 171–73). Reclaiming the cemetery became a key part of reclaiming the story and the children’s sovereign memories, from the internet campaign-funded Carlisle Historical Marker installed in 2003, to the descendants and representatives from over five hundred Native nations who converged on the grounds on Memorial Day 2000 for “Powwow 2000: Remembering the Carlisle Indian School” and for the first time openly-held traditional ceremonies on those grounds (Fear-Segal 174–177).

In 2013, Dickinson College of Carlisle, Pennsylvania, launched the Carlisle Indian Industrial School Project, and began sending teams from Dickinson’s Community Studies Center and Archives and Special Collections Department to the US National Archives to digitize related items from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) papers. In January 2014, Archivist Jim Gerencser estimated it would take three more years to capture the BIA information; as of as of September 5, 2019, the Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center (CISDRC) held 17,738 student files, as well as thousands of images, rosters, and publications such as the student-produced magazine *The Red Man* (ICTM, CISDRC). The CISDRC project “plans to offer individuals the ability to contribute their own digitized photos, documents, oral histories, and other personal materials to the online collection,” and

has also been soliciting information and stories through a “Carlisle Descendants” Facebook page. In addition to the BIA files, they intend to include materials from “other repositories, including Dickinson College [and] Cumberland County Historical Society,” where Momaday found much of his research. Dickinson’s CISDRC also points back to an earlier (begun in 1992) and more basic website run by Barbara Landis, then a library assistant for the Cumberland County Historical Society, fielding inquiries from Carlisle School descendants. Landis, now Carlisle Indian School Biographer, and thanked by Momaday in his preface, describes the original site as “an online history of the school, biographical pages, bibliographic pages including primary and secondary sources, samples of transcribed publications, news of relevant speakers and events, and links to outside pages tied to American Indian boarding school and assimilation themes.”⁷ She began to collect emails from descendants who interacted with the pages and traded “snippets of knowledge” with them. She “resolved,” as she began to learn the students’ names, that she would make those names “available to the nations” (Fear-Segal 89). She sees this work of recovering names as repair work “to restore some of the familial connections that were broken when children were taken away from home to have new clothes, religions, values, and names forced on them at Carlisle” (Fear-Segal 102).

Searching the CISDRC and Landis’s page by names reveals files related to several of *Moon’s* characters. Etahdleuh, for example, left imprisonment at Fort Marion to follow Pratt to Carlisle, married in Carlisle’s first wedding, and died shortly after his son’s birth. Landis identifies Etahdleuh as the Fort Marion prisoner-become-“model Indian” for the school’s patrons. His “acculturation” helped Pratt establish an “Outing” program, where students spent summers working for local farmers, businesses, or craftspersons. Luther Standing Bear worked during one such “Outing” for Wanamaker’s department store in Philadelphia.⁸ Standing Bear boasts one of the larger CISDRC files, in part, due to several newspaper clippings celebrating his 1911 return as the “first Carlisle graduate.” His files also document his film work and bureaucratic correspondence. It is not surprising, then, that Momaday centers Luther’s role as student and adult, particularly since he also makes use of Luther Standing Bear’s four memoirs, especially *My People the Sioux* (Roemer 87).

In fact, even the inspiration for Grass/Gray Calf may come from

that memoir, enhanced by tenacious school legends. According to Landis, students living in the barracks (now housing for the US Army War College) continue to report ghostly incidents; they attribute them to Take the Tail/Lucy Pretty Eagle, the first student to be buried in the Carlisle cemetery. Unlike Grass, Lucy lived through one winter; like Grass, she came from Rosebud. The school newspaper published her father's response to notification of her death: "she had died the year before but had come back to life again." Visitors still leave mementos on the grave marked "Lucy Pretty Eagle," and at least one young readers' book romanticizes her story. Landis responds, "These *Lucy Pretty Eagle* stories embody the one-dimensional Indian stereotypes that so influence our ideas about who Indians really are. Until the stories are written by Indian people themselves, these stereotypes will persist." Here again, the role of ghosts varies by perspective. Momaday certainly employs Grass in symbolic and metaphoric ways, but he does so with other characters too.⁹

Grass first appears as the sickly bespectacled young Lakota girl, Gray Calf, who dies on the train to Carlisle. Yet she reappears in a later classroom scene. As Miss Mather entices the girls to choose new "Christian" names, Gray Calf emerges, takes the teacher's pointer, and selects the name "Grace." The scene comes to Momaday in part from Luther Standing Bear's memoir, where he recounts the opaque task of name-choosing on his first day of school.

In a stage direction, Momaday identifies her as "*what the Pueblo people call a Koshare, one of the society of holy clowns, a figure both worldly and otherworldly.*" The children "*react with a kind of formal silence, some bare acknowledgement of that which is beyond their understanding.*" The silence hangs only briefly, though, since when asked by Mather to say her name, the clown exclaims, "GRASS," leading the children to a gleeful, uncontrollable explosion. Momaday explains, "*There has entered an unaccountable presence upon the Carlisle Indian Industrial School*" (Momaday 131). Perhaps "unaccountable" best describes Moon's approach to history—that which happens, though unfathomable, and that which happened, though unreported.

Gray Calf/Grass may be a ghost, but she is actually, materially, present as an actor. Because she died before receiving a uniform, she wears her old dress. Along the way, however, she has lost her thick glasses, so as a ghost student, she squints. Etahdleuh bundled and dropped her

from the train at Pratt's instruction, one of many colonial casualties disrespected in death. Because Etahdleuh negotiates the space between, however—the new world of the assimilated yet remembering, the double consciousness of the transition—he returns later to bury the girl with as much ceremony as he can find. The play emphasizes that the students know and grieve her loss and Pratt's dismissive treatment of her body, and also that they know both that they all share this knowledge, and that they must hide it from those who want to keep it from them.

In a voiceover, Luther muses, "Perhaps it happened because we were in need of her. We were so disheartened when she died . . . It seemed . . . the worst possible beginning . . . Gray Calf had gone, but Grass came to be with us. She was our little sister, and we looked out for her" (Momaday 131–32). That they would see this brave and brash ghost clown as someone to "look after" speaks to the solidarity of the children, supporting each other far from home, even across their own cultural differences. One powerful but unintended byproduct of repeated colonial moving and clumping of Native peoples on reservations, boarding schools, and later urban areas, has been the development of pan-Indian movements and traditions. The Carlisle boys form a secret society, blending what they remember from their homes into new rituals. Young Luther addresses the group, "Some of you speak in tongues that I do not know, and some of you do not know my tongue, but I will speak. Somehow we will understand each other; such things happen when there is need" (Momaday 133–34). These, too, are transcultural collaborations, reminding the audience that whatever the colonialist projects might think, the children represent hundreds of nations.

Kenneth Roemer classifies the students' adaptive rituals as "making-do survivance ceremonies," transcultural negotiations that he also traces in Momaday's fiction and poetry. For Roemer, such making-do rings as "wrong," but as the best available option in climates of assimilation. However, Momaday counters that adaptation has always been tradition for many Native peoples, including the Kiowa. By Carlisle's opening, Natives and Eurowesterners had been exchanging with and adapting to one another for centuries; even before that, Native peoples had moved, merged, split, and revised their lives and ceremonies in relation to environmental and other changes. Despite Momaday's insistence that "If Richard Henry Pratt was possessed of good intentions in

his missionary zeal, they were negated by the imposition of mottos and clichés,” *Moon* dramatizes Pratt’s insidiousness not through lampooning his righteousness but by allowing him to present his case seriously, with all its racialized hatred, its inseparable military and Christian trappings, and its white savior mania (Fear-Segal 45). The students’ ceremonies, meanwhile, transculturally adapt.

In keeping with Momaday’s reminder that outright official war between the US and Native nations continues into the Carlisle era and that many of the peoples whose children attend Carlisle live “in effect [as] prisoners of war,” the entangled relationship of war and play echoes throughout *Moon* (Momaday 109). The playwright does not need to impose war upon Carlisle since records and photos document the students’ barracks housing, their military uniforms, and soldierly parades for generals. Rather, *Moon* evinces the adaptive agency of survivability necessary in an ongoing cultural war. Play can be serious, and humor can be found amid fighting. Genocide and daily life coexist. In the first scene, stage directions specify that the Carlisle team are “not here to play a game . . . but to commit a decisive act, an act of bravery, of ‘counting coup’” (Momaday 111.) In scene two, the children of Rosebud calmly shoot gaming arrows, basking in their last day of traditional childhood. We can see what the Lakota had to lose before we are confronted with their loss; even within the scene opening, the “destitute” adults gather only after the children’s game introduces the Lakota (Momaday 115).

Momaday’s patterns tell us larger truths. For example, when we first see Etahdleuh and Grass swinging “round and round,” this uncontextualized moment, set in daylight with the sounds of laughter, follows Luther and Etahdleuh’s first exchange about Grass:

ETAHDLEUH: She is everywhere, and nowhere.

LUTHER: She does not see very well, I think.

ETAHDLEUH: I know. I have her glasses. I will give them to her.

(Momaday 138)

For Roemer, the ending, though “ambiguous,” “suggests the possibility of endless returns of hopeful ceremonial spins even in a world grounded in cemeteries” (Roemer 94). Since the small yet powerful Grass carries a sense of “age, even old age,” Roemer counts her among Momaday’s “ancient children,” a type most elucidated in his novel *The Ancient Child*

(Momaday 188, Roemer 90). He also argues that “‘Grass’ pronunciation of Grace grounds a Christian concept in what Vine Deloria Jr. would define as Native spatial images . . . in this case Plains grasses, rather than in Euro-American temporal images” (Roemer 90). Certainly Grass, like the play’s overall structure, enacts a spiraling form of time, returning and ongoing. In a sense it begins and ends with Thorpe, yet that very last image, of Luther and son watching Grass and Etahdleuh, the embodiments of Carlisle’s first death and first marriage, combines the extraordinary with the rituals of human life.

Grass also leads the keening after another “making-do” ritual. Pratt, possibly unaware that for many Plains peoples haircutting accompanies mourning, sends in a barber to give his “corps of cadets” military cuts. One student, Plenty Horses, refuses, and then alone that night cuts his own hair (Momaday 132, 143). For Laura Grace Godwin, Plenty Horses has decided to “conform” after all. Yet Plenty Horses’s decision, especially followed by Grass also cutting her hair, then beginning a wail that reaches the Pratts’ bedroom, performs survivability, pragmatism joined to sovereign honor. Godwin does recognize that whether hair cutting represents birth or death “lies in one’s perspective, and Momaday’s audience is given ‘both/and,’ not ‘either/or’” (Godwin 27). While Godwin can recognize the play’s nuanced perspectives in that moment, she fails to see it other times, finding some characters “flat” and red paint spilling after Luther hears of Etahdleuh’s death “cliché” (Godwin 26–27). Critics bent on European dramaturgies somehow fail to see Momaday’s theatrical world as a part of a transcultural spectrum that includes similar presentational spectacle choices, yet also draws upon specific Indigenous traditions like the Koshare. While critics have taken issue with the humor vibrant amid such sorrow—or with “heavy-handed” symbolism, as in children wearing red dots to presentationally evoke smallpox—the play itself teaches its audiences how to read it, in this case through Gray Calf placing red dots on her doll in her first scene (Momaday 118). The clown so often expresses sorrowful excess through play. Rather than allowing the Indigenous to claim a place in transcultural American performance, Godwin declares Momaday ignorant of his own “acculturation” when he links the indigenous oral tradition to Shakespeare and the Bible (Godwin 27). Godwin seeks separate performance genealogies, while Momaday sees the connections between performance cul-

tures. Native theatre remediates history partially to unghost such Native presences. Once entangled, American cultures continue to develop entwined.

Carlisle, then, is neither only a military site nor a Native site, but both at once. On Memorial Day in recent years, Native activists filled social media with tributes to Native veterans. Alongside the Navajo code talkers and others in military uniform and military graves scrolled photos of flower-decked graves at Carlisle. While these additions shifted the valence of “Memorial” Day, they also, if unconsciously, reenlisted the children as warriors, more martyrs than victims, warriors asked to choose a side, but instead inventing a new ground. Haunted, home of graves, repository of information, Carlisle’s land is now also Native land—but then of course it had been so before William Penn. The care taken with the Carlisle graves illustrates both the power of place and the centrality of memorial in ongoing communal life. “All our relations” includes not just everything living, but everything that has lived, all people, all events. Nothing can be ignored or omitted from that web, not even the ghosts.

Continuing that web of relational responsibility, Mary Kathryn Nagle connects theatrical representations to legal realities, declaring, “In a country where the Supreme Court continues to define us as ‘racially inferior,’ ‘heathens,’ and ‘savages,’ and in a country where redface remains a popular performance, the absence of our voices from the American stage constitutes nothing less than a constitutional crisis.” In fact, Nagle so strongly judges the relationship between theatrical representation and daily realities that although she entered law school in order to continue her family’s Cherokee survival legacy, she soon “realized that [she] could spend the rest of [her] life fighting legal battles, arguing for courts to recognize that a change in the law is constitutionally required. But all of [her] efforts would amount to nothing if [she] didn’t first change the story.” Reviewing the nineteenth-century Supreme Court decisions that still provide legal precedents, the documents that register Native peoples as “racially inferior,” Nagle sought the discrimination’s sources and found her answer in “redface” portrayals populating the era’s stages. To change the law, she would have to change the prejudice; to change the prejudice, she would have to change the portrayals. “I was in my second year of law school,” she writes, “when I realized: I had to

be a playwright” (Nagle, *HowlRound*). Through these statements, Nagle exemplifies why so many Native playwrights counter “redface” through so many forms.

Nagle and Shown Harjo’s Thorpe play, written neither for film nor for elaborate staging, opens with verbal detail to evoke ghosts in the land:

So here we are. This is it. These are the trees that surrounded him. Can you hear them? The birds. Those are the birds that sang to him. Oh and the sky, that big pink Oklahoma sky. And the red earth. My dad played in this dirt, when he was a kid. This is home. My home. His home. We were born in this dirt, and when we die, we go back to this dirt. Or at least, that’s what Dad wanted. (Harjo and Nagle 3)

In *My Father’s Bones*, playwright/lawyer/activist Nagle and playwright/journalist/policy-maker Harjo dramatize the ongoing battle of Olympic athlete Jim Thorpe’s children to return his remains to the family burial site. While a small but factual example of contested Native remains, Thorpe stands in for larger struggles for sovereignty over the sacred. While leaving behind the ancestors’ bones formed part of removal’s cultural genocide, many Native remains were also looted for museum collections or for “scientific” measurement. Shown Harjo helped craft the 1990 Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), a major step in recognizing the equal humanity of Native peoples and cultures of the past, yet one that still requires transcultural communal grappling with issues such as ceremony, policy, and economics. Yet despite both Nagle’s and Harjo’s legal prowess, they choose “creative and not litigative . . . stance and tone,” illuminating the way that embodied imagination can approach truth from a different angle (Harjo and Nagle ii). After all, even in legal terms, an appellate court ruled¹⁰ that NAGPRA did not apply to Thorpe’s case due to the “absurdity doctrine,” a protection against the size and sweep of repercussions in US systems that would result from actually requiring immediate repatriation (Harjo and Nagle 2).

The play makes its case with an emotional appeal, as Thorpe’s son Jack brings to life the Oklahoma landscape through his descriptions. Before acknowledging what the audience may know or “think [they] know” about his father, Jack makes them picture the birds, the sky, and the dirt where his dad played as a kid. He points out family gravestones

as if introducing his family members. “We’re all here,” he concludes, “Except Dad. They took him.” This “they” ranks Thorpe’s absence in the ongoing theft by Eurowesterners, suggesting ancient binary antagonism. Indeed within the play’s opening moves, Jack claims his father’s central identity as “always Sac and Fox” no matter his travel or fame. Yet even as Jack emphasizes sovereign specificity, he frames his cause not as “Indian” but as human, as kin to all people: “We’re no different than white people, or any other kind of folks. We want to bury our loved ones with our loved ones” (Harjo and Nagle 1). In assigning narration to Thorpe’s son, Nagle and Harjo invoke familial empathy and tribalographic responsibility.

Jack Thorpe, we learn, is himself a ghost, dying before the task of reclaiming his father’s bones is complete and handing that task to his family, while also through narrative direct address enlisting the audience in the cause in much the same way Luther Standing Bear enlists the audience in unghosting Carlisle students’ memories. The play directly connects religious sovereignty and respect with Thorpe’s bones, and its production contexts promote even more connections. Amenable to minimal staging or readings with actors at music stands (its life thus far), *My Father’s Bones* benefits from what Nagle learned writing and producing *Sliver of a Full Moon*, a play about the campaign to extend the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) to all tribal lands. Like *Sliver*, *Bones* attracts museums and policy forums, as when staged at the Penn Cultural Heritage Center of the Penn Museum in conjunction with the Museum’s Native American Voices exhibition in February 2015, with panel discussions as part of its event.

Suzan Shown Harjo, meanwhile, might have been quaintly identified as “The Native American Grandmother Who . . . Beat The Washington Redskins” by *Business Insider* when the US Patents and Trademarks Office cancelled the team’s federal trademarks, but those cases were certainly not Harjo’s first rodeo. Journalist and poet, curator and policy advocate, Harjo has been involved in the recognition and return of Native rights since before the 1978 American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA). In 2014, she received the Presidential Medal of Freedom. While producing radio in New York in the 1970s—the era of Geiogamah—Harjo also produced and performed in several plays. She returned to theatre in 2013 to co-write *My Father’s Bones*. Unsurprisingly, then, Native cultural commentators have linked sovereignty battles

both with #BringJimThorpeHome and with #NoMoreMascots hashtag activism. The rhetoric of the Sac and Fox Nation and of the Thorpe family also places Thorpe's bones in the larger context of respecting Native bodies. As son William Thorpe puts it, "Fulfilling our father's dream of being buried on his beloved tribal lands has become our life's work . . . But this case extends beyond our family. It represents the proper recognition of a law intended to protect the rights of Native Americans. . . . In taking this case, the Supreme Court can not only help our family finally have closure, but it can help prevent continuing discrimination against Native Americans across the country." For Chief George Thurman, "Our campaign speaks to the same issues of fairness, equality and justice at play in the debate over the use of Native American team names and mascots in professional sports. Why do the religious and cultural traditions of Native Americans continue to be diminished, disrespected and disregarded in American society?" If hashtag *no more* forms one approach to change, then hashtag *instead of* forms another. Mary Kathryn Nagle champions #InsteadOfRedface to draw attention to performance created *by* Native peoples.

Yet like Momaday, Nagle and Harjo do not merely dabble in agitprop playwriting. *Bones* received its first reading at the third annual short play festival produced by Native Voices at the Autry Center of the American West in Los Angeles, a major home for developing work by Native American playwrights, in 2013. That festival featured work by "veteran playwrights" responding to the theme "Legal Briefs: Lawmakers and Activists." As Native Voices' promotional materials explain, "We challenged Native American playwrights from across the nation to explore how the American legal system, the law, and our daily lives are shaped by Native American identity and culture and the lawmakers and activists it has given us" as well as "how Native American lawmakers, activists and laypeople uphold and honor, question and investigate, or create and change law within our society." Nagle has returned to Native Voices with several plays since *Bones* and has achieved recognition from the feminist play development group The Kilroys. In 2015, she became Executive Director for the new Yale Indigenous Performing Arts Program. In 2018, Arena Stage commissioned and produced her *Sovereignty*, and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival premiered her *Manahatta*; that same year she was one of three young Indigenous women playwrights featured in *American Theatre* magazine as "Native

Women Rising” (Sayet). Nagle’s plays, in keeping with Native Voice’s mission and her own Cherokee mixed-blood heritage, address both Native and non-Native audiences, and call both audiences to action.

Native and non-Native audiences around the world worshipped Thorpe, who could be assumed white by some marketers and consumers. Thorpe’s parents were both mixed-blood; enmeshed in the Oklahoma Native community, they named their son “Wa-Thu-Huk, or as you would say in English: The Bright Path the Lightning Makes as It Goes Across the Sky” (Harjo and Nagle 4). In addition to playing for Carlisle, his other teams included the Oorang Indians, an all-Native football team, and amusingly, the Cleveland (Indiana) Indians. Later in life he took several gigs as a movie extra in feathered headdress, and even for a time organized “an all-Indian song and dance troupe” called “The Jim Thorpe Show.” As an Olympian and a star athlete, though, he is usually portrayed as quintessentially “American.” Yet he found Olympic glory while still a student—that 1912 game where Eisenhower received the injury that kept him from professional sports came after King Gustav V presented Thorpe with two gold medals, exclaiming “Sir, you are the greatest athlete in the world.”¹¹ “He was the most incredible athlete of the 20th Century,” Jack declares proudly, “He won both the [Olympic] decathlon and the pentathlon, a feat no one’s ever duplicated. His scores in the combined 15 events were off the charts. He set records that took decades to break” (Harjo and Nagle 4). *Bones* builds upon Thorpe’s refusal to bow to the odds against him, as when a lawyer warns that “Indians lose about 98% of the cases they bring to the Supreme Court. . . . Indians don’t have a good track record in front of the Court,” and Jack’s brother Bill Thorpe responds, “Dad always said he never saw a record he couldn’t break” (Harjo and Nagle 3).

Our ghostly narrator Jack follows this exchange by questioning the audience: “What do you remember my dad for? The medals that he won? The records that he broke? Or the town that changed its name to his? Me, I just remember him as Dad. Because that’s who he was” (Harjo and Nagle 4). Which Thorpe an audience summons depends upon which photograph they call to mind. Carlisle’s most famous photos probably include both Thorpe kicking a football, and the “before-and-after” acculturation tableaux of students at arrival, blanketed and long-haired, next to students after haircuts and uniforms. *Bones* capitalizes on these multiple perspectives of Thorpe much as Thorpe himself marketed

aspects of his personality in his speaker's brochure. Whether Jim Thorpe himself or his managers at W. Colson Leigh in Chicago chose the brochure photos, they display student football uniform and rearing on horseback, suit and tie next to tribal regalia (University of Iowa Special Collections). On Father's Day 2015, the @BringThorpeHome Twitter account chose yet another photo of Thorpe for their targeted ad: Jim in suit and porkpie hat, playing football with his two sons. Like the play, this ad quotes Jack, "I just remember him as 'Dad,' because that's who he was to me" (Bring J. Thorpe Home). These memorial layers capture Thorpe's knowing identity performances, his multidimensionality, and reveal the editorial choices made by all who select from archives.

The play's battle over Thorpe's resting place overtly wrestles with which Thorpe is most "American." The Borough's mayor insists that honoring their contract is "about as American as you can get," especially since "Thanks to us, Americans know more about your dad than they ever did before. They drive through our sleepy little town just to see his grave, and there they read about his achievements." Jack's reasoning remains about home and family, that "He wanted to be buried in Oklahoma . . . He wanted to be buried with his family. . . . This isn't his home." "It is now," the mayor retorts. "You're standing in Jim Thorpe, Pennsylvania. We named it after him. He has his own zip code," as if fame were Thorpe's greatest wish. But that name, Jack reminds him, only tells one story:

JACK: Wa-Tha-Huk.

MAYOR: What?

JACK: His Name Is Wa-Tha-Huk.

Not knowing that name, the mayor cannot fully know the person, and the kinship and tribalography he continues to inhabit after death.

However, though Nagle and Shown Harjo's position remains clear, the play does not submerge characters with different ideas any more than *Moon* does. Thorpe's bones came to be in Pennsylvania when his third wife interrupted the burial to claim his body, and went in search of a town who would pay to put up a memorial to him. Thorpe's sons believe her motive was money. While Patsy Thorpe serves as villain, insulting the local Pennsylvania diner's coffee and its servers, the play allows some sympathy to the present-day townies. Patsy signed away

the rights of Thorpe's "children, and their children. And their children's children." As she signs, she announces, "The biggest mistake I made in life was marrying an Indian. My mother warned me. She said Patsy, don't marry that man. Once a redskin, always a redskin" (Harjo and Nagle 22, 24). Yet the agreeable town, now Jim Thorpe, Pennsylvania, has for over sixty years named businesses after Thorpe, drawn tourism because of him, and thought of themselves as part of his story, and he part of theirs. As one resident argues,

. . . by the time my dad was old enough to work, the mines were all shut down. Not a single one left open. So Daddy always said Jim Thorpe's all we have. We don't have mines anymore, and we don't have the ridge above the river where folks used to come and hike, 'cause they mined it away. So all we got in this town is a dead Indian. He's buried here, we're honoring him. They can't ever take that away from us. (Harjo and Nagle 5)

Though Thorpe had attended school in Pennsylvania, he never to his sons' knowledge visited that town. Even in court the defense lawyer states, "Pennsylvania's not rich with Indian heritage. Well, I shouldn't say that. We're rich with Indian heritage. . . . But not with Indians in that we get familiar with their practices" (Harjo and Nagle 14). For the Pennsylvanians as for many in the contemporary United States, the burial and the events of the past are over and done. The town's mayor argues for status quo. Funnily enough, he cites faith in oral testimony:

There was a contract. But then again, you're asking me if I have any proof of that or any documentation on that, and I can't show you that. If I could take you back to 1954, I'm sure I could take you to a coffee shop, I'm sure I could take you to a breakfast area and say, hey—they sat down at a kitchen table or a dining room table or they sat in a diner and discussed, hey, what are we going to do about this? But as far as the official Borough documentation that I could show this was being discussed at the time, no, I have nothing that I as the mayor right now can show you. (Harjo and Nagle 8)

For Jack and Bill Thorpe, as for many Native people, settler-colonialism continues, resulting in higher suicide rates and lower education rates for Native teens, higher incidences of alcoholism and diabetes, poverty, sexual assault, and abuse from police. Jack, our ghostly tour guide,

bridging like a Chorus between times, as Luther does in *Moon*, describes NAGPRA as

a little thing Congress put together . . . for our civil rights, Native American human rights. . . . For some reason, a lot of non-Native folks think they should be able to buy and sell our remains. And the remains of our ancestors. Our hair and bones and skulls. Scientists were digging up our heads to study them. Some were collecting our bones for trophies. Others were using them as tourist attractions. But we're human. We're people. And just like any other folks, we have the inalienable right to be buried in the same soil as our relatives, or to have our ashes sent to the many directions from places of our choosing. (Harjo and Nagle 6).

Unlike Grass, Jack the ghost does not appear to the living. Yet like her, the audience invests Jack as a living character before, in his case, finding out that he is already dead. Jack's direct-address narration once again calls upon the power of family, as he translates legal decisions about his father's image back into the family perspective. Not being able to influence the court, he turns to the audience, interrupting the mayor's testimony with the question "Why won't you let my dad come home?" Once we learn his identity as ghost, we see that the dead still work, for the dead and for the living.

Jack leads the audience through time from court to court from 1953 to 2013 charting the ups and downs of the case. "We lost!" Bill rails against the "absurdity doctrine" defense. "We won!" he exults at the appeal. His lawyer warns him that in the US justice system, few endings mark a true end. Although Jack, meanwhile, controls what the audience sees, he as onstage ghost audience watches helplessly while others wage his legal war. The attorney for the Borough of Jim Thorpe tries to argue that the Pennsylvania ground was made sacred by virtue of Thorpe's burial there, and that even though the original ceremony was interrupted, their half-sister performed a ceremony:

WILLIAM SCHWAB: So the Sac and Fox burial by your half sister Grace in Pennsylvania—

BILL: That wasn't a Sac and Fox burial.

WILLIAM SCHWAB: Okay. If someone showed you that it was a Sac and Fox burial, would your opinion be different as to its legitimacy?

JACK: No. We don't need you to show us what is and is not Sac and Fox.

BILL: AND JACK I know what's Sac and Fox.

BILL: And you aren't Sac and Fox.

JACK: Before my father's passing, no one had ever interrupted a Sac and Fox burial. So when Patsy walked in there and took his body, we didn't know what to do. We just sat there. In shock.

I remember, I had my brother Bill next to me, and my relative Henrietta, she was on my right, and suddenly, outta nowhere, this white guy bursts in. Henrietta gasped. Bill grabbed my hand. We knew something was wrong. The white guy, he came in the wrong door. The door he came through, that was the door for death. Only the dead come in and out that door. (Harjo and Nagle 15)

The sons, together, in the drama, both share the court proceedings and expand that archive with local traditional knowledge, unghosting and translating the court's failures for the offstage audience.

Bill, meanwhile, takes over the case when Jack announces he's dying. Jack insists, "Someone has to bring Dad home," and Bill accepts by promising, "We'll bury him next to you" (Harjo and Nagle 17). The play saves Thorpe's interrupted 1953 ceremony for its second-to-last scene, with Patsy declaring, "I don't have time for this Indian nonsense!" Yet the final scene leaves the family and audience with hope. In 1953, Bill says to his brother, "We didn't finish his ceremony," and Jack assures him, "We will. Someday we will finish his ceremony." In the play's last moments, the brothers echo this promise, as Bill brings prayer tobacco to his brother's grave, back in the Oklahoma cemetery "where it all began." Bill apologizes, "You're here. Dad's still in Pennsylvania. This isn't the way things were supposed to be. You weren't supposed to be here before Dad. . . . But we're gonna appeal to the Supreme Court. I'll never give up. I promise. Someday, we'll bring him back." "Someday," Jack responds, and together, living and dead, they repeat, "We'll finish his ceremony." This hope, in turn, leaves the audience with shared active responsibility for the uncompleted task of repatriation. Momaday's Thorpe bids farewell to his opponent Eisenhower not with forgiveness, but with a recognition of the presence of the past, and with insistence upon greater honor: "We will not pursue you, and we will not kill your horses" (Momaday 173). Thorpe reverses the old Army commands from not-so-distant massacres—Sand Creek, Washita, Wounded Knee.

The Carlisle players and the Thorpes who fight the supposed “honor” of the name Jim Thorpe, Pennsylvania, connect across times because they know that the colonial racism undergirding bone collecting and the boarding school system was woven inextricably into concepts of “Americanness.” Curtis M. Hinsley Jr., for instance, notes the “deeply psychological and patriotic” beliefs encouraging nineteenth-century digging, as the “explorers” of ancient sites “created” their new nation by “absorbing and domesticating their predecessors . . . into themselves” (Mihesuah 3). The direct address in both plays resists such bone theft, instead balancing unique perspectives with commonalities. Jack F. Trope and Walter R. Echo-Hawk describe NAGPRA as a major shift in American Indian law and policy, toward recognizing the sacred from an Indigenous perspective. Yet they also call the repatriation struggle “a test for our country’s commitment to the underlying values of the Bill of Rights and to our American sense of social justice” (Mihesuah 124). Like their statements, *Moon* and *Bones* move constantly between specific cultural or individual viewpoints and easily-recognized “American” values like family and football.

In these playwrights’ hands, archives inform the writers, the audience, and the characters. Deftly signaling between what the characters would know and what a current audience may know, historical references move the audience in and out of the characters’ positions. Although the plays discussed here only require simple sets, and though many of the playwrights insist upon scenes flowing simply one into another, they of course take sensory experience into account. Native communities, too, struggle with how to go about paying for and moving and properly treating reburial of sacred remains even after NAGPRA works.

Annette Arkeketa’s essay “Repatriation: Religious Freedom, Equal Protection, and Institutional Racism” reveals NAGPRA struggles to be not merely dramatizable issues, but central to defending constitutional and human rights against institutionalized racism. As Arkeketa points out, the oldest institutionalized racism in the Americas involves the original Americans. As the essay’s title suggests, guaranteeing equal protection requires real religious freedom, which in turn requires repatriation of human remains and funerary objects. *Moon* and *Bones* connect physical repatriation with the repatriation and recovery of names and stories. Landis’s website origin story echoes NAGPRA’s dedication to return sacred belongings to their home nations. As she puts it,

“One passion Genevieve and I share is to get the names to the nations to whom they belong. That passion brings with it distractions, as with each name comes not one story but a web of stories connecting child to family and family to clan and clan to nation.” Momaday’s essay “The Stones at Carlisle” reinforces the importance of names in Native cultures, a point he has elucidated in many works, including his book, *The Names*. The essay, originally delivered at the Carlisle symposium, begins with lines from his poem for the “tombs of the unknown children,” who suffered loss of life, loss of name, loss of home, even relocation and in some cases, mislabeling on new tombstones (Fear-Segal 43).

Sounding much like Jack Thorpe in *My Father’s Bones*, Senator Ernie Chambers proclaimed, “everybody on the face of the earth is allowed to be concerned about what happens to the remains of their ancestors . . . except the indigenous populations of this country” (Waters 244). Not only, then, does achieving repatriation form a necessary part of equal human rights, but taking funerary art and human remains seriously requires an end to exoticization, meaning an end to stereotypes. Repatriation cannot undo centuries of institutionalized racism,¹² but it takes one step toward healing intergenerational trauma, and demonstrates respect for the humanity of Native peoples.

Momaday speaks often of “memory in the blood,” and these plays address “memory in the bones,” similarly suggesting the genetic inheritance of experience, but also calling attention to the relation between the dead and the living. Survivability applies, but so does a ghostly continuum of time, with relational responsibility looking both backward and forward, linking individual struggle, like *Moon’s* Luther and *Bones’* mission, to the People’s survival and resistance. In light of the overwhelming losses of the past and the overwhelming complications of repatriation, reading NAGPRA and Carlisle together illuminates the way that treating Native bodies as objects affects the lived experience of Native children. Additionally, they demonstrate the entwining of documentation and culture that continues in today’s systems, where Native nations still function as “wards of the state.” The plays and Carlisle’s documentation—including the most recent addition to CISDRC, “Cemetery Information,” build a counter-archive. Through this unghosting, the bones’ memories become humanized, and the familial appeals make the audience responsible.

These plays’ cultural resonances continue to echo in current events.

Although now committed to the repatriation of remains and sacred objects, the Smithsonian was as of 2004 the largest holder of Native bones, many acquired by the US Army. As Pawnee attorneys Walter and Roger Echo-Hawk explain, “Many of the Smithsonian’s dead bodies were taken from fresh graves and battlefields by army personnel under an 1867 order of the US surgeon general, to procure Indian crania for government sponsored studies” dependent upon discredited racial theories (Waters 241). The fight to actually apply laws like NAGPRA continues; as Sac and Fox Principal Chief Kay Rhoads stated in 2015 after the Supreme Court declined to review the lower court’s ruling against applying NAGPRA to the Thorpe repatriation case:

The Supreme Court’s decision not to review the Third Circuit’s ruling . . . gives the family, the Sac and Fox Nation and Indian people concern about the lack of respect and love for this great man and tribal religious beliefs when non-Indian people choose to exploit Mr. Thorpe’s remains and disregard his final wish to be buried among his people and family. It also saddens and concerns me that the plain language of important civil rights legislation like NAGPRA can be overridden based upon judges’ subjective views about what they believe a law was intended to address. (Ward 5)

Regardless of the case’s status, the Thorpes’ battles live within the greater landscape of post-boarding school recovery work.

Carlisle remains for many a symbol of child theft and cultural genocide. Social media plays a large role in Carlisle commemoration, as those who travel to the annual commemoration post images of the decorated graves with Memorial Day hashtags, reminders that these students too gave their lives in Army Service. Yet physical presence began the latest development, when a group of Rosebud Lakota youth returning from the first White House Tribal Youth Gathering in July 2015 reacted so strongly to a Carlisle cemetery visit that they set into motion the repatriation movement. A few weeks prior to the 2016 commemoration, “leaders of the Rosebud Sioux, Northern Arapaho, Cheyenne River Sioux, Northern Cheyenne, Standing Rock Sioux and Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate Tribes met with representatives from the federal government and the U.S. Army to begin negotiations over the repatriation of the children’s remains” to their home nations (DeJesus). Of the ten thousand students who passed through Carlisle, nearly two hundred perished on

site and are buried “in sight of the U.S. Army War College . . . just a few feet from busy traffic” (DeJesus). That number includes Etahdleuh and a young girl who died on the train.

In *Moon*’s final scene, when grown Luther Standing Bear recalls seeing the moon switch train windows, Pratt replies “It happens to me, too. There are many turns in the road, isn’t that so? You had been turned around without knowing it. You were disoriented.” But Luther counters, “There was more to it than that, I think. The moon in two windows. It is a strange thing, somehow, an unnatural thing.” Pratt suggests that Luther’s “natural world” pre-Carlisle was “hopeless,” and his escape a “miracle,” and in response, Luther asks, “have you been to the cemetery? . . . At the school. The graves of the children. Many people go there now. They bring flowers and ribbons—sometimes tobacco and cornmeal, pollen” (Momaday 175). Speaking to the 2012 symposium, Momaday called Carlisle’s tenure “a landmark in the cultural history of the United States” (Fear-Segal 355). Together, *Moon* and *My Father’s Bones* argue through excavating, imagining, and building archives that historical remains carry more than just bone memory—their treatment creates and maintains cultural survivability.

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NOTES

1. Though very similar to the more commonly referenced “survivance” theorized by Gerald Vizenor (Anishinaabe), “survivability,” defined by Kiowa playwright Hanay Geigamah as “our ability to hang on, to trust each other and not give up, in spite of poverty, alcoholism, and oppression,” combines “possibility” with “responsibility” (Geigamah 6).

2. Of the many, many writings on Euro-American elegies for Native peoples, significant examples include Jonathan Ellmer’s *On Lingering and Being Last: Race and Sovereignty in the New World* (2008), Jean M. O’Brien’s *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians Out of Existence in New England* (2010), and Arnold Krupat’s *All That Remains (Varieties of Indigenous Expression)* (2009) and *That the People Might Live: Loss and Renewal in Native American Elegy* (2012).

3. While referenced in his early writings, Young’s “undead” formulation as I em-

ploy it relies most heavily upon his remarks to the Mellon School of Theatre and Performance Studies at Harvard, June 7, 2017.

4. While *The Moon in Two Windows* is most certainly a screenplay, most critics call it a play, and I argue that it works like a play. Not having been produced in either form, its text remains fluid to the imagination. Godwin claims that the “move from stage to screen marks a shift away from the participatory nature of live performance,” but I disagree—though a film would not *guarantee* a live communal watching experience, and would not allow for the perpetual uniqueness of a live performance, it works much the same way aurally and visually (Godwin 26). Aside from theorizing film, however, *Moon* could be produced as a play with few changes.

5. Etahdleuh was nineteen when he was imprisoned in Fort Marion, where he and other imprisoned Kiowa produced soon-famous ledger art (Fear-Segal 99).

6. While Northern Irish playwright Brian Friel’s *Translations* beautifully stages translation and its failures in a colonial context, further reading in the colonial Americas includes Diane Glancy’s formal experiments in her novel and play *Stone Heart*, featuring Sacajawea, and of course Latin American feminist writings on Cortez’s translator/lover Malinché, the “mother/betrayer” of mestizaje.

7. See www.carlisleindianschool.org.

8. Fairly mind-boggling, considering the links between Wanamaker and the great Hiawatha spectacles Alan Trachtenberg describes in *Shades of Hiawatha*.

9. For that matter, we could say the same of most plays transforming history into drama: think of Abigail Williams in Arthur Miller’s *The Crucible*. Think, for that matter, of *Hamlet*.

10. This ruling reversed an earlier judge’s decision.

11. Because he had already played semi-professional baseball, Thorpe’s Olympic medals and records were revoked retroactively—but this controversy probably only increased his legend.

12. In fact, NAGPRA has raised many new questions for Native communities as well as institutions with no experience or budget or ritual precedent for the business of sorting, identifying, returning, and reburying. See, for instance, “Ethics and the Reburial Controversy” by Lynne Goldstein and Keith Kintigh, and Jack F. Trope and Walter R. Echo-Hawk, “The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act: Background and Legislative History,” both in Mihesuah’s *Repatriation Reader*.

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The Necessity of Lived Resistance

Reading Leslie Marmon Silko's *Gardens in the Dunes*
in an Era of Rapid Climate Change

REBECCA TILLET

In its complex readings of a range of fictional gardens, gardeners, and gardening practices, Leslie Marmon Silko's 1999 novel *Gardens in the Dunes*¹ engages with and foregrounds Indigenous relationships with the Earth as powerful alternatives to the unsustainable and damaging ways that many Euro-American and European societies live today. Set at the close of the nineteenth century, *Gardens* focuses primarily on a single, all-female Indigenous Sand Lizard family, the only group still using the traditional dune gardens. Told from the perspective of the young Sand Lizard child Indigo, the story follows Indigo and her older sibling, Sister Salt, once they are captured by Indian agents after their mother goes missing at a Ghost Dance in Needles, Arizona, and their grandmother, Grandma Fleet, dies and is buried by her granddaughters at the old dune gardens. Declared orphans by the state, the sisters are separated with Sister Salt sent to the Parker Reservation on the Colorado River while Indigo is sent to Indian boarding school in California. The story then follows two separate strands: Sister Salt's life as a successful "business entrepreneur" offering laundry services at the site of the construction of a new river dam; and Indigo's successful escape from Indian school, her temporary "adoption" by the Euro-Americans Edward and Hattie Palmer, and her subsequent tour of the eastern United States then Europe. While both sisters battle to understand the sociopolitical situations and geographical locations in which they find themselves, both nonetheless show resistance as they aim constantly to return to the gardens in the dunes and to a future with one another guided by Sand Lizard cosmologies. In this context, Silko's depiction of Indigo and Sister Salt clearly shows how the sisters' ability to "remember the past and

imagine futures” helps them—and Silko’s readers—“to think critically about the present” (Streeby 5).

As a counterpoint to the depictions of a series of ecologically damaging Euro-American ideologies and worldviews, *Gardens* foregrounds Indigenous Sand Lizard gardens and gardening practices as an articulation of alternative sustainable ways of being (and of seeing) for an extra-textual world informed by the realities of climate crisis. In this context, *Gardens* demonstrates the necessity of an everyday lived resistance to the dangerous and potentially fatal way that we are encouraged, perhaps even *required*, to live in patriarchal capitalist societies. And so we see how some of the novel’s diverse gardens, gardeners, and gardening practices give us templates for more sustainable and cosmopolitical ways of living that, to cite the Mississauga Nishnaabeg scholar Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, depend instead upon a “deep reciprocity” that emerges from “respect,” “responsibility,” and a recognition of the “relationship” between humans and the other-than-human world.² Reading Silko’s novel from the perspective of Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge systems (TEK), we can engage with the Yellowknives Dene scholar Glen Sean Coulthard’s assertion that Indigenous TEK practices are so “*deeply informed by what the land as a system of reciprocal relations and obligations can teach us about living our lives in relation to one another and the natural world in nondominating and nonexploitative terms*” that the term that Coulthard conceptualizes to describe them is “*grounded normativity*” (13, original emphasis). Silko’s novel very clearly juxtaposes a range of dominating and exploitative interactions with the natural world with a series of non-dominating and non-exploitative relationships. It is these non-dominating and non-exploitative relationships that point directly to an emphasis upon reciprocity and obligation, upon the “ethical engagements with the world and our relationships with human and nonhuman others,” that is evident within the practice of grounded normativity as outlined by Coulthard (13).

SAND LIZARD ETHNOBOTANICAL RESISTANCE

In discussing Sand Lizard resistance, it is crucial to begin with an analysis of what exactly is being resisted. Silko herself has stated that *Gardens* “is about what capitalism makes people do to one another”

(Arnold 21), and the novel clearly traces some of the attitudes that encourage unsustainable and fatally harmful ways of living, while carefully showing what a more equal and caring society might look like. As the Potawatomi botanist Robin Wall Kimmerer has noted in her comparison of the Indigenous creation story of Skywoman with that of the Christian story of Eve, the resulting relationships of both figures to the other-than-human world demonstrate that “one story leads to the generous embrace of the natural world, [and] the other to [human] banishment” (7). Moreover, the Christian story is one embedded in notions of dominion, where man (and man only) is divinely gifted control over the rest of creation in order, quite literally, to subdue it. As Kimmerer goes on to argue, “we are inevitably shaped by” the cultural stories that we tell and so, in predominantly Christian countries, our relationships to and with our environments can clearly be traced to those originary cultural stories of dominion, which in the subsequent narratives of patriarchy, imperialism, and capitalism soon become stories of domination (7). In *Gardens*, these fatally damaging, indeed deadly stories, are especially evident in the characters and actions of the Euro-American plant collector Edward Palmer and his “society” sister Susan Palmer James, and more widely through a series of commercial botanical and mining ventures and business partnerships that Edward undertakes. Here, *Gardens* not only expands the individual and the domestic to demonstrate how it is connected to the wider processes and impacts of capitalism and proto-corporate enterprise, it also quite literally brings those bigger relationships *home*, allowing both its characters and its readers to *see* how manmade climate crisis is created, and how we all *as individuals* contribute to our changing climate. As Rob Nixon has so eloquently argued, climate crisis is a “slow violence” that “occurs gradually and out of sight,” which is so “dispelled across time and space” that it is “typically not viewed as violence at all” (2). And this is true even when it is increasingly undeniable that our natural world is under violent assault. In short, because manmade climate crisis is difficult to *see*—because there are often no immediate or cataclysmic visible effects—it is also difficult to convince the general public of the need to mobilize and take action: to individually and collectively *resist*. *Gardens* directly addresses this problem of invisibility by exposing the relationships between the cultural stories that we tell, the dominating and exploitative individual human relationships with the earth, and the

environmentally damaging practices and processes of global capitalism and the proto-corporate/corporate extractive industries.

I have analyzed both Edward's and Susan's attitudes and actions in detail elsewhere (see Tillett, 2016), and so my focus here is on how, through the Sand Lizard gardens in the dunes, we are shown not only that a different kind of world is possible but also that we can—indeed, we *must* in the Anthropocene era—all participate in the necessity of a lived resistance to the kinds of harmful attitudes and relationships to the Earth that we have been persuaded to accept as natural. In this context, it is crucial that we can clearly see that Sand Lizard traditional ecological knowledge informs Indigo and Sister Salt's everyday lived resistance to the deadly cultural stories around them. Silko's fictional Sand Lizards are, as Adamson notes, based “on an actual band of the Tohono O'odham people known as the Hia C-ed O'odham or Sand People” who were forced out of their traditional desert lands by the drought caused by the damming and rerouting of the local river in the 1920s (229). Known primarily as “Sand Papago,” the Hia C-ed O'odham were, from the earliest Spanish contact, portrayed in European records as “a marginal people on the verge of extinction” due “to their land's apparent lack of resources, namely, water,” who subsided on what the later American records identify as “the sand foods of Sonora” (Martínez 132, 145). As Gary Paul Nabhan, Wendy Hodgson, and Frances Fellows note, the scant historical written records present a “polarized stereotyping of the Sand Papago as either impoverished primitives or noble savages” (515). And these records, as Martínez comments, dismiss the Hia C-ed O'odham as having no real “agricultural tradition to speak of” with only “a single known site” where the Hia C-ed O'odham “grew corn, beans, and squash” (149). While Nabhan's own acclaimed 1985 study, *Gathering the Desert*, introduces more information about Hia C-ed O'odham foodstuffs and their harvesting and use, especially in his descriptions of the uses of “sandfood,” a plant “parasite” (51–59) and of “amaranth” (93–104), there is still little discussion of the connections between such ethnobotanical practices and Indigenous cosmological concepts. However, Nabhan does speculate that the historical record is poor in part due to differing cosmopolitical ideologies and worldviews, as the Hia C-ed O'odham are defined according to a profoundly Spanish viewpoint:

Poor. No gold to give to the conquistadores. No agriculture that an outsider can recognise as such. No permanent housing or fixed residences. No cuisine except that prepared from herpetological oddities and plant parasites. (55)

It is in direct response to the brevity of these early written European/Euro-American records and to their misinterpretations of Indigenous cultural traditions that Silko carefully crafts the Sand Lizard gardens to present a very different and much more comprehensive “record” of sustainable Indigenous gardening practices in the sand dunes, practices that both create and maintain a delicate ecological balance and demonstrate a profound cosmological and cosmopolitical understanding of the workings of the natural world and humanity’s place within it. *Gardens’* Sand Lizards exemplify the kinds of traditional Hia C-ed O’odham gardening practices that rely on a “sandfood” that, as Nabhan argues, “defies domestication” and so requires highly specialized knowledge to locate. Moreover, the very harvesting of these sandfoods is not simply essential to their continuation, but also itself an expression of Indigenous understandings of the interconnection of all life: as Nabhan comments, “While gathering food, you have participated in a wild kind of mutualism,” an ecological interaction between species to the benefit of all that occurs because the harvesting of sandfood sheds its seeds in exactly the right places for its own regeneration (55).

In her descriptions of Grandma Fleet’s gardening practices, Silko demonstrates Sand Lizard cosmopolitics where the responsible and respectful way to behave is to ensure that all living things have enough to sustain them: “Sand Lizard warned her children to share: Don’t be greedy” (17). Accordingly, Indigenous harvesting practices are carefully demonstrated to show their cosmopolitical origins and aims:

The first ripe fruit of each harvest belongs to the spirits of our beloved ancestors, who come to us as rain; the second ripe fruit should go to the birds and wild animals, in gratitude for their restraint in sparing the seeds and sprouts earlier in the season. Give the third ripe fruit to the bees, ants, mantises, and others who cared for the plants. A few choice pumpkins, squash, and bean plants were simply left in the sand beneath the mother plants to shrivel dry and return to the earth. . . . Old Sand Lizard insisted

her garden was reseeded in that way because human beings are undependable; they might forget to plant at the right time or they might not be alive next year. (17)

Here, the Sand Lizard community is shown to be much wider than its human component; there is clear recognition of the role of many multispecies gardeners both living and dead, including ancestors, birds, animals, insects, and the earth itself. Importantly, all are required to work together to produce a successful harvest, and all are therefore entitled to share in the wealth of that harvest: no one group is privileged over any other. As I have argued elsewhere, Silko's description here shows a recognition of "the contribution of this wider community to the continuance of human life," as Sand Lizard emphasizes "the fragility and impermanence of human life" that is "undependable" and also "expresses Indigenous understandings of the complex interdependencies between human and non-human life that are endangered by the short-term thinking, aggressive acquisition, and exclusive appropriation characteristic of capitalism" (235). Sand Lizard's teaching here is thus both spiritual and ecological: her demand for sharing recognizes the unbreakable links between physical and non-physical worlds and her emphasis upon the equal value of all lives illustrates that any ecological threat to the sand gardens is also a threat to all life, including human life. It is her profound understanding of the interrelationship of all life that leads Grandma Fleet to remind Indigo and Sister Salt of the cycle of life, commenting that after death "[s]ome hungry animal will eat what's left of you and off you'll go again, alive as ever, now part of the creature who ate you" (53). In turn, her granddaughters' embracing of Sand Lizard cosmologies encourages them to bury Grandma Fleet "under her little apricot trees" in the understanding that her physical body will nourish the plants as it is supposed to do (54).

Silko's fictional descriptions of the sand gardens actively refute the poverty of the factual historical record. Although Indigo is too young to remember the dune gardens, she nonetheless imagines them from the stories she has been told: "tall corn plants swaying gracefully in the breeze, surrounded with bushes of bean pods and black-eyed peas, their golden-green tendrils tangled around the thick pumpkin vines" (36–37). Moreover, the descriptions of the gardens trace the complexity and fragility of a desert ecosystem based on carefully maintained balances,

where Sand Lizard traditional ecological knowledge can utilize the “precious moisture from the runoff” in the sandstone cliffs that is held by the “deep sand” (16). Indigo is taught that every human member of the Sand Lizard community has a responsibility to the plants allocated to them, “Every person had plants to care for” and took care of their plants “as if . . . [they] were babies” (18, 16). Moreover, Indigo understands that plants have senses and are responsive to human emotions, “The plants listen . . . Don’t argue or fight around the plants—hard feelings cause the plants to wither” (16). Above all, Indigo is taught to treat plants “respectfully” (16). As she approaches the end of her physical human life, Grandma Fleet’s focus turns to passing on key Sand Lizard ethnobotanical knowledge: “where to plant the beans, corn, and squash seed, and how deep,” how to avoid the full heat of the desert day by working “all night,” how to supplement their diet by hunting, how to “raid the stores of seeds and mesquite beans” collected by the pack rats, how to preserve foods for the winter (47, 49, 52). The bountiful nature of past harvests in the dune gardens is evident in Grandma Fleet’s descriptions of the “terraces where sweet black corn, muskmelons, and speckled beans used to grow” and the future potential of the dune gardens can be detected in the “wild gourds, sunflowers, and datura [that] seeded themselves wherever they found moisture” (49).

Significantly, the dune gardens are shown to provide traditional Indigenous “sandfoods” even during times of shortage: “Amaranth grew profusely . . . When there was nothing else to eat, there was amaranth” and Sister Salt shows Indigo how to prepare the amaranth in two distinct harvests: boiling up “amaranth greens just like Grandma Fleet taught her” and, once “the amaranth went to seed,” grinding a flour to make “tortillas” (116). Silko’s incorporation of the amaranth here is quite deliberate: as Adamson has argued, amaranth “connects” Indigo “to the Aztecs” and so also to “the [colonial] politics that suppressed knowledge of this once important staple crop” (Adamson 218). Described by Nabhan as “the meat of the poor people,” amaranths are significant for not only “combining water and energy use efficiently” in ways that are crucial to a desert region, but also for their nutritional value: compared to 100 grams of lettuce, raw amaranth greens “contain nearly three times as many calories . . . eighteen times the amount of vitamin A . . . twenty times the amount of calcium . . . and almost seven times the amount of iron” leading Nabhan to describe the amaranth as “worth their weight in

nutrition” and a key component of a traditional Hia C-ed O’odham diet (96, 97, 98). Indeed, the significance of amaranth for the Sand Lizards traces and exposes complex and violent histories of colonial settlement by both Europeans and Euro-Americans: it is these histories that show “the devastation that results when a food central to a culture’s health and well-being is [deliberately] eliminated” by the colonizers (Adamson 218).

Equally exposed, however, are the ongoing impacts of settler-colonialism as early in the novel the sand gardens are devastated by “starving” Indigenous peoples who are “fleeing the Indian police and soldiers sent by the government” attempting to impose the new reservation system (Silko 19). *Gardens* describes the arrival of these people in political terms as “refugees” and then in terms of a natural disaster that emphasizes the profound impact of settler-colonial policies on Indigenous lives: “It was as if a great storm has erupted far in the distance, unseen and unheard by them at the old gardens” as people arrive as “a trickle, then a stream, and finally a flood” (20, 19). The interconnections between humans, their environments, and all forms of life are made clear, as the Indigenous peoples are forced by their hunger to reject and discard their Sand Lizard cosmopolitical teachings as “they ate everything they could find” including the “first harvest offerings” and the “seeds set aside for planting next season” (20). Here, we can see a clear illustration of the Potawatomi scholar Kyle Powys Whyte’s analysis of how the profound cultural and natural dislocations caused by settler-colonialism resonate with those currently being caused by rapid climate change, such as “ecosystem collapse, species loss, economic crash, drastic relocation, and cultural disintegration” (226). Moreover, settler colonialism has always “inflict[ed] anthropogenic environmental change on Indigenous peoples” and Whyte argues that “indigenous perspectives on how to respond to anthropogenic climate destabilization” are, significantly, “based on having *already lived through* local losses of species and ecosystems” (Whyte 208, 207, 213, emphasis added). There is, Whyte argues, an active questioning of the narrative of “finality” by Indigenous groups who have “already . . . endured one *or many more* apocalypses” (236, original emphasis), and this is crucial to the lived resistance of Silko’s novel.

At this point of ecological destruction, the Sand Lizards are for the first time forced to leave the dune gardens—and so their own traditional

ways of life—as a direct result of settler-colonial policies. But, importantly, it is in the local Euro-American town of Needles that the Sand Lizards’ ethnobotanical resistance extends its scope, collecting and reintroducing plants formerly in the dune gardens alongside the introduction of new plants to ensure the continuation of Sand Lizard cosmopolitical and horticultural traditions. It is, significantly, at the “town dump” that Grandma Fleet repurposes the “refuse” of others to “retrieve [the] valuables the townspeople carelessly threw away” (Silko 24). Here, Grandma Fleet “saved seeds discarded from vegetables and fruits to plant at the old gardens when they returned,” including the “apricot pits” by which she will successfully reintroduce “the apricot trees of her childhood” to the dune gardens (24). It is this looking outward and its strengthening effects upon Sand Lizard ethnobotanical traditions that is explored throughout the rest of the novel: first with the reintroduction of Grandma Fleet’s apricot trees to the dune gardens; then later as Indigo travels first to California and New England, and then to England and Italy, discovering how far seeds have travelled and how they have been collected and traded, before bringing new seeds home to populate the dune gardens. In its juxtaposition of the theft of horticultural specimens by Edward and the ways in which those specimens are subsequently jealously guarded for profit with Sand Lizard practices of the sharing of seeds freely, *Gardens* “interrogates the ethics of plant breeding, hybridization, and biotechnologies that enrich colonizing nations and corporations” (Adamson 218). *Gardens* also encourages readers to consider the development of those imperial horticultural practices into the profit-driven multinational agribusinesses we see today, where powerful multinationals have the right to genetically modify and patent seeds, disrupting the ways in which seeds naturally cross-fertilize and so impacting upon ecosystems on a global scale. This modern practice is doubly problematic: it not only imposes a requirement that all farmers purchase patented seeds, and even pay compensation if their own Indigenous seeds become cross-pollinated, but it also fails to recognize or acknowledge the complex and ancient Indigenous ethnobotanical traditions that can be traced in Grandma Fleet’s careful seed collection: a practice that Adamson identifies as a “time-tested agro-ecological metho[d] . . . of innovation, the basis of which is free exchange, hybridization, and domestication in order to increase botanical biodiversity” (22). The Sand Lizard gardens thus present a picture of highly success-

ful Indigenous ethnobotanical resistance to federal attempts to impose assimilation upon sovereign Indigenous groups. And, in this context, the assimilation demanded of the Sand Lizards is successfully subverted, as Becca Gerken notes, as useful “western practices” are “adopt[ed]” and incorporated rather than “Sand Lizard traditions” being “abandon[ed]” (182).

WIDENING THE RESISTANCE: EUROPE AND EURO-AMERICA

Importantly, Indigo’s collection of seeds in accordance with Indigenous ecological traditions is not the only form of lived resistance, and it is significant that Silko widens her analysis of resistance in *Gardens* to look at forms of European and Euro-American gardens and gardeners who embrace more respectful and responsible alternative behaviors that resonate with Sand Lizard cosmopolitical values. Through the figures of Hattie’s Aunt Bronwen in Bath, England, and Aunt Bronwen’s friend, the Italian *professoressa* Laura, *Gardens* thus shows us a range of European and Euro-American individuals and individual stories that hold the power to create and re-create the world through compelling counter-narratives of sustainable and sustaining lived resistance that recognizes the profound and undeniable relationship between human and other-than-human worlds. Via *Gardens*’ depiction of a range of domestic gardens, it becomes clear that acts of collective resistance must begin with the individual, and that individual resistance must begin at home. Resistance derives directly from the ways we choose to live our lives; it is a *lived* resistance. Consequently, my focus here is upon Silko’s sustaining and sustainable European and Euro-American stories that act to extend and widen the ecological and cosmopolitical resistance of the novel.

Through its depiction of a range of ways of living *with* rather than simply *upon* the land, *Gardens* shows us that, if we are able to change our damaging attitudes toward the earth and put those changes into practice as part of our everyday lived experience, then we can all participate in and contribute to a necessary “lived resistance” to the growing risks of ecological disaster. Crucially, this lived resistance applies not just to Silko’s textual world, but also offers suggestions for continued human existence within our own increasingly ecologically precarious extra-textual worlds: in 2020, the notion of *individual* resistance to climate crisis is crucial. *Gardens* thus widens the ecological and cosmopolitical

resistance of the text to include sustaining and sustainable European and Euro-American stories via the gardens and gardening practices of Aunt Bronwyn and the *professoressa* Laura. Reading Silko's novel as a narrative of lived resistance explores how we might understand those fictional European and Euro-American gardens in the context of the increasingly pressing need for all humans to take urgent international action over climate. And so the gardens of Aunt Bronwyn and Laura serve as timely reminders of long forgotten pre-Christian and pre-capitalist European traditions to which we should pay closer attention. Silko presents the gardens of Aunt Bronwyn and Laura as spaces in which interrelationships between human and other-than-human beings can be relearned, and which influence and encourage more human stories and acts of resistance. As Kimmerer has suggested, if we want to restore "the relationship between land and people," then we need to "plant a garden" because "it's good for the health of the earth and it's good for the health of people. A garden is a nursery for nurturing connection, the soil for cultivation of practical reverence" (126–27). Moreover, "once you develop a relationship with a little patch of earth, it becomes a seed itself" (Kimmerer 127). Alongside the Sand Lizard gardens in the dunes, these additional gardens can be read not only as sowing seeds of individual resistance but also through their abilities to nurture connections and kinship, as restorative in every way.

The European gardens in Silko's text demonstrate ancient and all-but-forgotten pre-Christian and pre-Capitalist English and Italian traditional ways of being in the world that, much like the Sand Lizard gardens in the dunes, are *lived* experiences that position themselves outside of and in opposition to the death cultures that surround them. Hattie's Aunt Bronwyn therefore engages in daily lived resistance, both refusing and refuting the deadly stories of the patriarchal capitalist world around her. In this context, it is notable that those characters who do succeed in telling new cultural stories are female, and so less invested in the patriarchal narratives of capitalism. The stories of Aunt Bronwyn and the Italian *professoressa* Laura thus point to the ways that Simpson has asserted that we can understand "land as pedagogy" where our lived experiences act to "generat[e] and regenerat[e] continually through [an] embodied practice" that is both "contextual and relational" (7). Aunt Bronwyn's concerns are thus not only with and for the gardens that she works and tends and her relationships with the other-than-

human beings who reside with her, but also with the wider local environment: with the ancient trees and stones that have always been a part of the complex spiritual interactions between human and other-than-human beings in her local ecosystem. Aunt Bronwyn therefore openly decries the “development” of Bath which has led to the felling of “stands of ancient oaks . . . preserved since the time of the Celtic kings” that has resulted in “wide scars” being carved into “the bellies of the hills” in order to clear the way for “more mansions of gigantic proportions” for “business tycoons from London and Bristol” (Silko 237). Moreover, Aunt Bronwyn is highly active in the preservation of the “ancient hill forts and stone circles” that are also threatened by urban development, openly expressing her concern that, unlike in the past when the local inhabitants of the land had a profound symbiotic relationship with the stones, in an era marked by the loss of common lands “people nowadays cared nothing” (237).

Aunt Bronwyn’s home—a Norman cloister formerly inhabited by nuns—is a profoundly female space where the distinctions traditionally made in patriarchal capitalist societies between human and other-than-human simply do not exist. Accordingly, Aunt Bronwyn not only shares her domestic space with livestock and pets who wander her home freely and are treated as family much to Edward’s bewildered incomprehension, but also places her books “three feet above the floor” to accommodate the waters of the River Avon that regularly flood the dwelling (239). In her stewardship of a “stone garden,” Aunt Bronwyn clearly continues the work of her grandfather, who has “rescued” many “fragments of old [standing] stones smashed to pieces” as reminders of Britain’s non-Christian past “by order of the parish priest” and is himself buried unmarked “among the standing stones” in the garden, where the implication is that, in death, he continues to interact with these other-than-human beings as he had in life (252, 254). Importantly, Aunt Bronwyn tells the stories of the stones, and those stories not only “identif[y]” them as individual life forms but also narrate their lives: there are “broken stone[s] with a double spiral carving to help plants grow faster,” “the broken pieces of a stone destroyed by an angry mob of Christian converts,” “praying stones and cursing stones,” “stones that turned slowly in the sun to warm both sides of themselves, stones that travelled at night to drink from the river,” and “stones that danced at high noon” or “in the light of the moon” (254). In many ways, Aunt

Bronwyn's varied gardens act to answer the questions posed by Matthew Wildcat, Mande McDonald, Stephanie Irlbacher-Fox, and Glen Coulthard when they ask "what does it mean to think of the land as a source of knowledge and understanding? How do our relationships with the land inform and order the way humans conduct their relationships with each other and other-than-human beings?" (ii). In this context, Aunt Bronwyn clearly cultivates what Simpson identifies as "an ecology of intimacy" in her gardens and gardening practices (8). Asserting that "if a garden wasn't loved, it could not properly grow," Aunt Bronwyn has painstakingly restored and recreated the convent gardens, complete with their original purposes (Silko 242). These purposes are both physical, to ensure the nuns had sufficient food and medical supplies; and spiritual, to promote an understanding of the relationships between culture and nature, and between human and other-than-human beings through a proximity to the land. In Simpson's terms, Aunt Bronwyn "learn[s] both *from* the land and *with* the land" (7, original emphasis). In this sense, Aunt Bronwyn is the antithesis of Susan Palmer James, as her emphasis upon restoration not only rejects the deadly stories and politics of death worlds, but engages with and facilitates both sustainability and continuity.

Aunt Bronwyn states that it is her sincere belief that the plants in her gardens "have souls"—a concept that echoes and is echoed by her relationships with the other-than-human beings represented by the sacred groves and stones (Silko 242). Importantly, Aunt Bronwyn asserts that "if plants and trees have individual souls" then she is determined to "acquaint herself with as many different beings as possible" (244). Accordingly, her garden includes and offers space to plants from a multitude of different cultural and geographic locations, including "tomatoes, potatoes, pumpkins, squash, and sweet corn" from "the Americas" that grow alongside "garlic, onions, broad beans, asparagus, and chickpeas from Italy" and "peppers from Asia and Africa" (242). While it is clear that these plants derive from the pursuit of British imperialism through horticultural collection—emphasized throughout the book by Edward's own horticultural expeditions and in this section of the text in particular by Silko's reference to Edward's clandestine "employment" by the locus of British horticultural imperialism, the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew—Aunt Bronwyn's gardens are depicted as a form of lived resistance to the deadly stories of this imperial

national narrative (241). And so, unlike Edward whose only interest is in the financial value of horticultural specimens and controlling the international markets for and profits from those specimens, Aunt Bronwyn by contrast recognizes those imperial stories in the designs of her gardens. These designs, which separate yet join plants from different geographical regions and climates, expose the horticultural histories of Britain: “the plants the Romans and Normans introduced” that demonstrate “how few [of the] food crops and flowers” now widely accepted as British “were [actually] indigenous to England” (245). Like the Sand Lizard gardens in the dunes, Aunt Bronwyn’s system of planting respects the ways in which plants “preferred to grow together to protect one another from insects” and so “flowers [grow] among the vegetables, with herbs and medicinal plants scattered among them” (247). In this way, we can read Aunt Bronwyn’s gardens and her understandings of other-than-human beings and the relationships between living beings via Kimmerer’s contention that sustainable ways of living and being involve those varied life forms “cooperating [and] not competing,” the antithesis of both Edward’s cultural worldview and his way of living (Kimmerer 132). Accordingly, upon Indigo’s departure, Aunt Bronwyn gifts her with an abundance of seed packets that not only illustrates Indigo’s own assertion that seeds are the “greatest travelers,” but, through Aunt Bronwyn’s additional inclusion of advice on the “best conditions and methods” for cultivation, also offers a blunt refusal of Edward’s capitalist and materialist evaluation of plant beings (Silko 269). What we read in Aunt Bronwyn’s gardens and gardening practices, therefore, is not only a lived resistance to the deadly stories of the patriarchal capitalist world, but also the kind of paradigm shift that is required for the telling of new cultural stories.

This paradigm-shift is equally evident in Aunt Bronwyn’s “dear friend” Laura, the Italian academic and *professoressa* with whom Aunt Bronwyn shares a “mutual interes[t] in Old European artifacts and gardening,” and together, the two characters’ physical and social locations can be read as a crucial part of their ability to successfully change their worldviews and ways of living and being in the world (283). Aunt Bronwyn thus not only refuses established cultural conventions to live alone as a widow in the socially and geographically isolated and emphatically female space of a former convent, but is also suspected by her niece Hattie of having “left the [Christian] church altogether!”

(265). Laura also lives alone as she has been abandoned by her socially disgraced husband (he is an “army colonel” who has deserted on the eve of a major battle), but this sociocultural isolation is compounded by her unusual pursuit of a career: she is “a scholar and collector of Old European artifacts” as well as a gardener (305, 287). Significantly, Laura is, to Hattie’s surprise, “much younger than her aunt,” and this realization acts to emphasize how both the desire and the ability to change worldviews in the text crosses generations (283). The gardens of Bath and Lucca are connected by the care and respect shown to other-than-human beings by both Aunt Bronwyn and Laura, yet Laura’s gardens are also an Italianate original of the “copy” that Susan Palmer James tried to create in Oyster Bay. Significantly recalling Susan’s desire to make and remake, to subdue and impose her will upon the natural world around her, Hattie sees the gardens as a “primordial forest” and interprets them as an example of “what became of even the most elegant gardens over time” (290). Hattie’s failure to recognize the gardens *as* gardens emerges from her inability to recognize these as the result of Laura working with the other-than-human beings that surround her, an illustration of what Kimmerer has called a “partnership” between human and other-than-human (126). Laura’s gardens house her collections of pre-Christian European statues, and Laura’s garden designs and her positioning of the statues echoes the emphasis within ancient European cultures upon the significance and centrality of an active relationship with the land. Laura’s decision to leave “fallen trees . . . to nurture the earth for seedlings” thus illustrates her respect for and deep engagement with the existing local ecosystem, which overrides any desire to follow horticultural “fashions” like Susan or to impose her will on the land like Edward (291). Laura’s gardening practices therefore demonstrate her understanding that “plants answer questions by the ways they live” and that the role of human beings is to “liste[n] and translat[e] the knowledge of other beings”: in other words, Laura knows that “paying attention is a form of reciprocity” (Kimmerer 158, 222).

Perhaps the most powerful story of sustainability concerns Laura’s collection of sacred ancient artefacts. Here, Edward’s museological mentality and his desire to preserve out of cultural context is scandalized by Laura’s decision to place the stone statues in “fresh air and sunshine” rather than let them suffer “burial in a museum” (296). Edward’s outrage is, tellingly, demonstrated via the established routes by which patri-

archal authority asserts itself: Laura is decried as “an affront to science and scholarship” for exposing the ancient statue collection to the elements, her gardens are derided as an example of “what happened when irreplaceable scientific data fell into the wrong hands,” and her collection is “claimed” as rightly belonging “in the hands of scientists and scholars” and certainly not in the hands of a “frivolous woman” (295, 296, 295, 296). However, Laura’s desire to house the stones outside not only refuses the deathly stories of cultural stasis told by museums, but also attempts to reimagine their original locations as a means by which to also reimagine their original sacred and ceremonial meanings and purposes. In other words, via a careful positioning of the stones, Laura attempts to create and maintain a dialogue with other-than-human beings. Edward’s patriarchal ire seems to be equally provoked by the abundance of stone fertility goddesses that populate Laura’s gardens, which he finds “far more monstrous than the centaur or minotaur” he has already seen: the intricately carved “human vulva”; the abundance of snake figures that resonate with the Old Snake guardian at the Sand Lizard dune gardens; and the “rain garden” of aloe, shells, and sand that is full of figures of hybrid human and other-than-human nursing mothers whose presence exposes the interconnections of all living beings through the equation of equally essential and nurturing “raindrops and drops of breast milk” (299, 292, 303). While Edward is disturbed and horrified by the human-animal hybrids that point to a world beyond his understanding as structured by Cartesian order and Linnaean classification, Indigo is reassured and comforted as she makes crucial connections to Grandma Fleet’s practice of “talk[ing] to the big snake” in the Sand Lizard gardens as she and Laura “exchang[e] snake stories” (299, 301).

While both Aunt Bronwyn and Laura successfully resist the deadly stories of the patriarchal capitalist world by telling new cultural stories, it is notable that both also resist patriarchal capitalism’s deadly ways of living. In direct contrast to the ways in which Edward’s individual way of living and being in the world reflects powerful and damaging global imperial processes through his desire to own and profit from the horticultural specimens he collects, both Aunt Bronwyn and Laura engage in the kinds of exchange and knowledge transfer practiced by Grandma Fleet. Grandma Fleet’s storage of “seeds discarded from vegetables and fruits” in “little glass jars” and her careful “instructions” to Sister Salt and

Indigo regarding the specific care required by each plant being is mirrored by the wax seed packets and written notes of care given to Indigo by Aunt Bronwyn and Laura (24, 37). Crucially, here Silko's readers are forced to re-evaluate Indigo's gleeful statement that "seeds must be among the greatest travelers of all!" (293). While, ostensibly, this seems to point to the imperial horticultural project, in the context of Grandma Fleet, Aunt Bronwyn, and Laura, it seems also to illustrate not only the reciprocity of the relationships between human and other-than-human beings, but also the *agency* of other-than-human beings. In this context, the exchanges and reciprocal interactions of the text do not evade or ignore the imbalances of power between human and other-than-human beings, but rather subvert, invert, and transform them through an emphasis upon Indigenous Sand Lizard philosophies; upon the lived resistance of sustainable stories founded within the tenets of grounded normativity. In this way, both gardening (the local) and horticulture (the global) within the text are transformed from an explicitly imperialist endeavor into a means of exchange, dialogue, and reciprocity.

LIVED RESISTANCE: CREATING SUSTAINING AND SUSTAINABLE STORIES

Reading Silko's *Gardens* as a narrative of lived resistance requires us to consider the ways that the text depicts the role of humans in the creation of ecological damage, both overt and covert. It requires us to see the ways in which the *global*—actions of nation states; the practices of industries (and later multinational corporations); and the ideological drivers of imperialism, capitalism, and patriarchy—are directly related to and inseparable from the *local*—the ways in which we, as individuals and communities, live our lives. Silko's novel also presents a way of understanding the global "natural world" via the local garden, where the textual gardens are depicted as places where "a moral universe is mapped" (Klindienst xx). In order to fully understand our own roles in taking the kinds of unprecedented paradigm-changing action required to avert climate disaster, we need to be able to connect these dots; to embrace the UN IPCC climate report of 2018; and to accept, as Klein has argued, not only that "we need to think . . . radically differently" but also that "a very different worldview can be our salvation" (23, 60). Crucially, those of us located within non-Indigenous societies and worl-

dviews need to remember that “we never lost our connections with nature. . . . A great many of us just forgot about them for a while” (Klein 446). Importantly, Silko’s text shows us how we can begin to remember, by tracing those elided histories and relationships, and by foregrounding more sustainable and respectful ways of living and being in the world.

In allowing us to “think critically about the present,” Silko’s novel can therefore be very profitably read as a narrative of lived resistance (Streeby 5). Indeed, Silko has openly declared that “*Gardens in the Dunes* really is about *now*. . . it’s offering people another way to see things and possible ways to connect up, in a spiritual way, to withstand” (Arnold 21–22, emphasis added). Moreover, by showing us how “wisdom is generated from the ground up,” *Gardens* can be read as a narrative of lived resistance that has a very specific Indigenous focus (Simpson 8). In this context, we can certainly read *Gardens* as a demonstration of “grounded normativity”: of how a system of “reciprocal relations and obligations” might work in “non-dominating and non-exploitative terms” not just among the Indigenous communities of the text, but also among non-Indigenous communities (Coulthard 13). Indeed, *Gardens* begins to ask a similar question to that posed by Wildcat, McDonald, Irlbacher-Fox, and Coulthard: “what does it mean to understand land—as a system of reciprocal social relations and ethical practices—as a framework for decolonial critique?” (ii). And *Gardens* also begins to provide some solutions to Kimmerer’s question regarding “How, in our modern world, can we find our way to understand the earth as a gift again, to make our relations with the world sacred again?” (31).

Above all, reading *Gardens* as a narrative of lived resistance allows us to move beyond what Kimmerer has identified as a “breeding [of] despair” in the current deadly cultural stories of climate crisis that “robs us of agency” by enforcing “paralysis” (327, 328). If Silko’s stories of Edward and Susan tell us anything about the naturalization of dominant patriarchal capitalist relationships with the natural world and its human and other-than-human inhabitants, they tell us that a different kind of world is necessary. In this context, Kimmerer has argued that the story of the capitalist market is “just a story” and “we are free to tell another,” even “to reclaim the old [Indigenous] one” (31). We need, as Klein has suggested, to accept that “core” western economic, religious and political “cultural narratives” are driving environmental destruction, we need to “unlearn the myth that we are the masters of nature,” and we

need to effect “a shift in worldview” from “domination and depletion” to “regeneration and renewal” (41, 395, 424). In short, Silko’s narrative of lived resistance tells us that we need to reject the unsustainable—the established narratives of domination and exploitation—and embrace and enact the sustainable: the Indigenous tenets of grounded normativity. In this context, Mascha Gemein has argued that Silko’s *Gardens* acts specifically to “explai[n] Indigenous perspectives . . . for the sake of a cosmopolitical paradigm change” (491). For Gemein, therefore, *Gardens* showcases a series of “changed concepts and practices that [can] lead to a more successful communication, one that negotiates multicultural and multispecies experiences” (486). The Cree/Métis botanist Mary Siisip Geniusz has commented that “reality is not concrete. It is fluid. And that fluidity is influenced by personal actions. . . . What we do, even what we think, changes what happens. It changes reality for everyone” (17). In the narratives of lived resistance in Silko’s novel, we can see that “it is not the land that has been broken, but our relationship to it”; that, if we can “restore the land . . . the land restores us” (Kimmerer 336). In its emphasis upon an interspecies resistance that travels, connects, and exchanges, *Gardens* thus begins to sow what Kimmerer has identified as “the precious seeds for . . . [an essential] change of worldview” (369).

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NOTES

1. Subsequently abbreviated as *Gardens*.
2. Naomi Klein, “Dancing the World into Being: A Conversation with Idle No More’s Leanne Simpson,” *Yes* magazine, March 5 2013, <https://www.yesmagazine.org/peace-justice/dancing-the-world-into-being-a-conversation-with-idle-no-more-leanne-simpson>.

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Getting on with Things

Ontology and the Material in Louise Erdrich's *The Painted Drum*

JANET DEAN

Faye Travers, the initial narrator of Louise Erdrich's novel *The Painted Drum* (2005), has a thing for things. Her work as an estate appraiser gives her a professional interest in material objects, but her inclination is also personal: she is drawn to "the stuff of life" because she seeks in it a refuge from the pain of living.¹ The novel's first section, which opens in a New Hampshire children's cemetery, catalogs a series of losses, each a degree closer to Faye. A car accident kills Kendra, the daughter of Faye's lover Kurt Krahe, along with Kendra's boyfriend and a local man, John Jewett Tatro. Faye recalls the long-ago deaths of her father and younger sister, Netta. Living people offer Faye little comfort; her relationship with Kurt is troubled, and she and Elsie, her mother and business partner, keep secrets from one another. A more historically-rooted loss is cultural: Faye is of Ojibwe descent but has no connection to her tribe. Overwhelmed by suffering—her own and that of others—Faye dives into work involving other peoples' possessions. Her "pulse ticks" at the thought of sorting through a deceased person's closets (28). She imagines that in organizing an estate, she is making peace with dead owners who are "safely in the next world" (32). Attention to the material exempts her, she seems to believe, from messy human interactions. When she is hired to handle the Tatro estate, she feels relief. "Finally," she thinks, "to get on with things!" (29).

Yet the Ojibwe drum Faye finds in Tatro's closet confounds her efforts to escape. Like a person, the drum is animate and expressive, and it influences human feelings and actions. Instead of freeing her from emotional involvement, it stimulates her responses to others. It intervenes in her relationships with loved ones and brings her into contact with her Ojibwe community, uncovering a tribal history of violence, survival,

and love. Indeed, as subsequent chapters reveal, the drum has had and will continue to have a profound impact on social worlds, redressing wrongs, rescuing and healing Faye and others, and “gather[ing] people in and hold[ing] them” (180). It is not anthropomorphic but may be considered an “other-than-human ‘person,’” a being that, in Ojibwe spiritual tradition, functions relationally alongside humans and other entities to shape existence.²

Faye’s initial retreat into the material reflects the Western dualism that draws a firm distinction between humans and other entities, but her encounter with the drum upends this understanding. The drum is “an actor in the present situation, a being with agency and purpose that effects change in the world,” as Jean Wyatt argues.³ Its central presence invites Faye, and Erdrich’s readers, into an Indigenous ontology in which personhood can inhere in a broad variety of entities, including man-made artifacts. Faye’s encounter with the drum shifts her from “the world of commerce wherein American Indian ceremonial objects function as commodities. . . . into an Ojibwe discourse within which sacred objects replenish the lives of the Ojibwe—as the drum replenishes Faye’s spirit.”⁴ More broadly, the centrality of the drum and other significant artifacts in the novel emphasizes the relationality of existence, an ethic central to Ojibwe ways of knowing and being. Anishinaabe scholar Lawrence Gross explains how in traditional tribal understanding, a variety of human and nonhuman entities exist in the world in a web of interdependence; leading a good life, or *bimaadiziwin*, requires being “a good relative” to human and nonhuman kin.⁵ Faye, in contrast, has internalized the anthropocentric worldview of European-American culture. In this view, structured by the requirements of colonization and capitalism, humans dominate rather than cooperatively coexist with the nonhuman. In the novel’s logic, this orientation causes profound dysfunction. Faye is scarred by traumas associated with the humans in her life—her sister’s death, her lover’s infidelity, her grandmother’s assimilation—but she also suffers because she has failed to be a good relative to *things*. To suture rifts among the living, restore ties between the living and the dead, and locate herself properly in the world, Faye must expand her understanding of personhood and adopt a relational view of existence. So, too, must other characters.

In this essay, I describe the ambitious reparative project at the heart of *The Painted Drum*. The shift to a more traditionally Ojibwe view of the

nonhuman experienced by characters in the novel calls attention to the profoundly interdependent nature of existence. The novel encourages, in Erdrich's words, "devotion to this world"—a sense of human responsibility to interact with the environment in ethical, cooperative, and healing ways.⁶ Erdrich's call for devotion is also a command to acknowledge our relationship with and our responsibility to everything around us. In his book on spiritual traditions, Vine Deloria Jr. (Standing Rock Sioux) describes an Indigenous understanding of relations in the world as "'kinship' cycles of responsibility" in which "the essence of [responsible] behavior is the maintenance of dignity throughout our organic world."⁷ When humans fail to act in responsible ways toward their human and nonhuman kin, dignity is eroded and suffering is inevitable.

Descriptions in the novel of human interactions with a number of biological species (ravens, orb spiders, jewelweed, a dog, wolves, a bear) point to Erdrich's ecological philosophy and her activism in defense of nature. However, I focus here on non-biological, human-made entities—including the titular drum, beadwork, and a Victorian keepsake—with an eye toward expanding the sense of devotion to this world.⁸ In the novel, artifacts engage with humans in ways that challenge the Western dichotomy between subjects and objects and encourage a relational view of existence. I read Erdrich's novel as a lesson in Ojibwe ontology intended to awaken us to the disease of post-Enlightenment materialism and the social division it produces. The novel offers a model of existence based on responsible interaction and mutual respect among human and nonhuman entities rather than anthropocentric competition, possession, and mastery.

Focusing on the artifacts that organize the plot can expand our understanding of the material in contexts both scholarly and cultural, Indigenous and non-Indigenous. My reading intervenes in material culture studies by calling for an indigenization of theoretical approaches to the nonhuman. I draw on recent anthropological theories that emphasize relationality in animistic traditions like those of the Ojibwe. At the same time, this reading intersects with initiatives underway beyond the academy to revise our understanding of the meaning, function, and value of artifacts. Radically reimagining our relationship with things in the way Erdrich proposes has bearing on the ways sacred objects and other artifacts are treated in light of the 1990 Native American Graves

Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). Yet Erdrich's attention to the meaning of the material extends beyond Native American contexts, as evidenced by the box of handkerchiefs Faye encounters among a white woman's possessions. Indeed, *The Painted Drum* is unusual in Erdrich's corpus because it is set partially outside of Indian country and features an initial narrator reluctant to acknowledge her Native American heritage.⁹ The opening setting in New England and Faye's evolving relationship with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous objects invite us to change our understanding of the material *throughout* our profoundly relational world. In that sense, the novel is more than a story of one woman's cultural reawakening or one Indigenous community's healing through repatriation. It is also an appeal for an integrative ethic that crosses lines of generation, region, race, and nation. Thus my aim is not simply to show how *The Painted Drum* contextualizes Indigenous peoples' struggles within a specific tribal tradition, but to demonstrate how the novel promotes Ojibwe understanding as a universal answer to dysfunctional relations among humans and between humans and other entities in the world. As a non-Indigenous scholar, I cannot claim access to Ojibwe understanding in the ways that others might; still, I attempt here to respond to Anishinaabe scholar Margaret Noodin's call to "view literature and language from a tribal perspective that involves creating new frames of reference based on indigenous ways of knowing."¹⁰

THE LIFE IN THINGS: "NEW" MATERIALISM, ANIMISM, AND REPATRIATION

How should we humans "get on with"—as in "get along with"—"things"? Recent trends in material culture studies have provided useful models for thinking anew about our interactions with the nonhuman. The emergence of thing theory, investigations of the post-human, interest in object studies and critical museology, and other variations on what has been called "the new materialism" urge us to question anthropocentric defaults and rigid subject-object binaries.¹¹ Scholars in a range of disciplines explore the ways significant objects forge individual and communal identities and influence social interactions, suggesting how seemingly inert, non-biological entities may be invested with agency and interiority. In literary studies, Bill Brown, a founder of thing theory, builds on Heidegger's distinction between "objects" and "things" in

order to identify material entities that exert pressure on us “to engage them as something other than mere surfaces.”¹² Whereas *objects* remain fixed within an ontological system that defines them in terms of their use or exchange value, Brown argues, *things* are powerful in their own right, capable of conferring meaning and realigning social relationships. In this view, things challenge assumptions that only humans have subjectivity and that relations among entities must be hierarchical in nature, and, in doing so, they escape the logic of capitalism. This literary-critical development, with its emphasis on revaluing the material and rethinking relations between human subjects and other human and nonhuman entities, has potential to help us address the crises of the anthropocene.

Yet new materialism, which calls for us to recognize the agency of the material and the ways human and nonhumans interact, generally ignores Indigenous philosophical traditions that already assume “the liveliness of matter” and the relationality of existence.¹³ Indigenous perspectives that attribute life, agency, and personhood more broadly than post-Enlightenment anthropocentrism allows remain missing from critical conversations about the material. When, in a collection of essays on new materialisms, editors call for “returning to the most fundamental questions about the nature of matter and the place of embodied humans within the material world,” they assume that those questions have always been answered in the same (Western) way.¹⁴ Even Brown’s exploration of material culture in the work of Dane-zaa artist Brian Jungen, “Objects, Others, and Us (The Refabrication of Things),” has little to say about First Nations philosophies of the material; indeed, the universalizing “us” in his title has the effect of erasing Indigenous perspectives altogether.¹⁵

As Jessica L. Horton and Janet Catherine Berlo argue in the context of contemporary Native American art, “Once we take Indigenous worldviews into account, the ‘new materialisms’ are no longer new.”¹⁶ In Indigenous animistic traditions, nonhuman entities may have sentience, volition, mobility, and the capacity to metamorphose, and with these qualities they coexist with humans in a complex web of social relations. The Ojibwe worldview, specifically, attributes personhood broadly and non-hierarchically, recognizing in nonhuman things a capacity for agency and a role in complex social relationships. Anthropologist Irving Hallowell’s influential 1960 study “Ojibwa Ontology, Behavior, and World View” describes how in Northern Ojibwe understanding,

“the concept of ‘person’ is not, in fact, synonymous with human being but transcends it,” with a range of nonhuman entities considered other-than-human persons.¹⁷ Gross recalls a lesson from tribal elder Tom Shingobe on the liveliness of matter that confirms nonhuman persons as both *animate* and *agent*: “I remember him saying so clearly, ‘The whole world is spiritualized.’ He really meant it, too. . . . All things are alive and acting alive.”¹⁸

An expansive notion of personhood produces a worldview that is highly relational in which humans and nonhumans function interdependently. In recent decades, scholars have turned away from Western anthropology’s framing of animism as “primitive” to retheorize it as “a *relational* (not a failed) epistemology.”¹⁹ Hallowell notes that in Northern Ojibwe ontology, “the same standards which apply to mutual obligations between human beings are likewise implied in the reciprocal relations between human and other-than-human ‘persons.’”²⁰ Bimaadiziwin is possible when there is cooperation and reciprocal respect among humans and other-than-human persons.²¹ By the same token, when humans interact inappropriately with other-than-human persons, disastrous consequences may follow. Kenneth M. Morrison summarizes: “antagonistic relations among persons [human and other-than-human] create disorder, including hunger, illness, and social estrangement.”²² Put differently, as Gerald Vizenor (White Earth Band of Ojibwe) expresses it, “The cause of most diseases is understood to be an imbalance in the individual and the world.”²³ Vizenor describes the very imbalance that thing theory seeks to address: the mistaken assumption that humans are the sole repositories of subjectivity and the primary agents in the world.

While indigenous philosophies about the life in things are missing from many theoretical considerations of material culture, they are an underlying presence in the fight for repatriation of Indigenous cultural patrimony. European and European-American theft of Native American art, artifacts, and remains has been a powerful apparatus of the colonizing machine. It has been used to define Indigenous people as inferior, as in the practice of looting graves to prove pseudoscientific theories of white supremacy or the staging of museum exhibitions of “primitive” Indigenous art. It has also undermined tribal communities by removing and decontextualizing materials vital to their spiritual, social, and cul-

tural existence. Activists respond not just by calling attention to the colonizing violence of Western ethnographic collection, but by emphasizing the subjectivity and meaning-making agency of the material within Indigenous social worlds, by calling attention to the life in things and the way they function relationally. Bradley Marshall, a member of the Hoopa Valley Tribal Council, protested a French auction house's plans to sell hundreds of Native American artifacts by asserting, "these objects are living beings to us."²⁴ Ho-Chunk historian Amy Lonetree asserts, "in the presence of objects from the past, we are privileged to stand as witnesses to living entities that remain intimately and inextricably tied to their descendant communities."²⁵ These activists and others work to reframe NAGPRA, legislation that is grounded in European-American ideas about the material, within an Indigenous understanding of being.

Repatriation efforts, Indigenous animistic traditions, and new materialist theories all describe a world in which things are both alive and in complex relation with other beings. These contexts can help illuminate the relational world of *The Painted Drum*. Erdrich's novel joins a number of literary works by Native Americans published since the passage of NAGPRA that address the appropriation of Indigenous cultural patrimony.²⁶ In it, the amassing of a huge number of Ojibwe artifacts by John Jewett Tatro's grandfather, who served as an Indian agent on the reservation where Faye's grandmother was born, is figured as both a theft and an assault on the Ojibwe community. Faye tells Elsie that the Tatro ancestor "walked away with everything—dolls, beadwork, cradle boards. You name it" (41). "The thieving bastard!" Elsie laments. "So he got away with the good stuff" (42). As the mother and daughter seem to intuit, the items in the Tatro hoard have a worth beyond their market value. They are "the good stuff" because they are vital to the traditions that maintain Ojibwe identity and preserve tribal integrity. Yet the events that follow the discovery of the Tatro hoard suggest that such things as dolls, beadwork, and cradle boards are vital in another sense: they are themselves living beings, imbued with agency, capable of acting on social worlds. The universe of the novel is crisscrossed with affiliations, associations, and interactions among many different types of autonomous nonhuman actors. The painted drum, in particular, proves itself both "a living thing" and intimately involved in human existence (43).

GIMISHOOMISINAAN, “OUR GRANDFATHER”:

THE PAINTED DRUM’S REPARATIVE WORK

A contest between Western and Ojibwe perspectives of the material creates a principal tension in the novel, with the failure to recognize the relationality of all beings presented as profoundly dysfunctional. Though Faye and Elsie have a clear understanding of the ways European-American collecting practices bleed the life out of Native communities, they remain resistant to an Ojibwe understanding of the material. Both women are aware of but quick to dismiss traditional ideas about the agency in objects. Elsie, who was raised in New England by a thoroughly assimilated Ojibwe mother and white father, asserts that the drum Faye discovers in Tatro’s estate is “more alive than a set of human bones,” but adds, “that is a traditional belief, not mine” (43). Faye insists, “I do not believe of course that the drum itself possesses a power beyond its symbolism and antiquity” (43).

The two women’s entrenchment in Western ideas about objects is an occupational hazard, for to inventory items for the marketplace is to assign them a purely economic value and function. In their dealings with things, mother and daughter both concentrate on the bottom line. Elsie modelled entrepreneurial proficiency for her daughter by buying and selling Navajo rugs at great profit. When she describes coming across a pair of earrings that she recognized from a little-known Curtis portrait of a Native American woman, she admits that the discovery moved her but quickly assures Faye, “I got them for a good price” (68). Faye has learned from her mother’s example to search estate holdings for rare figurines, first editions, and antique kitchenware worth thousands of dollars. Though she notes that some items in an estate might be “revelatory” and “trigger all sorts of revisions to family history,” she primarily concerns herself with their dollar value (29). As Faye has it, having spent a lifetime “see[ing] the most intimate objects proceed to other hands, indifferent to the love once bestowed,” she cannot believe that things have significance beyond the money they return (39). In Faye’s Westernized worldview, things are uninvolved in the social world; even “the most intimate objects” remain “indifferent” to other beings.

Yet Faye herself is equally indifferent, or at least she strives to be. As Wyatt notes, “the most salient feature of Faye’s life is her detachment from other people.”²⁷ The visit to the cemetery in the novel’s opening

might suggest an effort to connect with her lost loved one but for the fact that she does not mention her sister until some seventy pages later. She gets along well enough with her mother, with whom she shares a home, but their lives are stitched together by routine and self-protective silences, and they never discuss Netta's death. Though there are times Faye "nearly spill[s] over with [her] need and wish to confide [her] feelings," the women "live privately" (14). If Faye's grief is unspoken, so is her passion. She keeps her midnight trysts with Kurt a secret. The love affair is passionate but always constrained by Faye's terror of losing control, and, like her relationship with her mother, this one is characterized by silence. Threatened by emotional intimacy, Faye distances herself "without a word, without a sound" (21).

Rather than feel for and with the people closest to her, Faye embraces cynicism and remoteness. She identifies with a half-wild stray dog being blamed for the deaths of pets in her neighborhood, imagining the creature trailing a "snapped length of chain," wishing to stare into her eyes, and wondering "would the sad eye see me or the hungry eye? Which one would set me free?" This reverie moves her to leave Kurt, as the broken chain becomes a metaphor for her disconnection: "He has weakened, Kurt, he needs me these days. . . . Shame, pleasure, ugliness, loss. They are the heat in the night that tempers the links. And then there is forgiveness when the person is unforgivable, and the man weeping like a child, and the dark house soaking up the hollow cries" (26).²⁸ Striving to be as impassive as the building, she eventually finalizes a break by changing the lock on her door.²⁹

Similarly, Faye holds her Ojibwe community at arm's length. She identifies her mother and grandmother as Native American but not herself. At most she practices a kind of a *la carte* traditionalism, as when she avoids wearing red at work because of the Ojibwe belief that the color attracts the dead (33).³⁰ Although this performance of tradition would seem to acknowledge the significance of the material in shaping human existence, it is at best a vague gesture toward tribal belonging. In this regard, Faye is not far removed from her white neighbor Kit Tatrow, a wannabe Indian with a stereotype-inflected fantasy of Indigenous identity, which he advertises by wearing a poorly tanned leather vest and random amulets. While she looks down on his shameless appropriating, Faye partially identifies with Kit, admitting, "I understand his longing and confusion all too well" (53). In fact, Faye and Elsie's pri-

vate collection of Indigenous artifacts, including a Pueblo wedding vase, an Ojibwe bandolier, and silver and turquoise jewelry from unidentified southwestern tribes, betrays a similarly superficial understanding of the relation between things and tribal belonging. Faye claims the interest in Native American antiquities stems from the Travers's "personal connection," but the collection seems as random as Kit's assortment of accoutrements (29). For Faye and Elsie as for Kit, artifacts that hold something more than exchange value remain nonetheless purely representational; they can be called into service as signs of Indigenous identity, but they are not acknowledged as significant agents in their own right, and they have little bearing on the women's ties to the Ojibwe community. The characters' failed human relationships thus are bound up with their unhealthy, Westernized approach to things.

To heal herself and to restore her relationships with others, Faye must develop a more Ojibwe understanding of the material. That development begins with the discovery of the drum. From its introduction, the drum is animate and interactive, sounding by itself and creating in Faye a visceral sense, "pulled through [her] like a nerve," that she must take it home (40). That the drum "exerts the most connective hold" on Faye suggests its relational role, as does her recognition that the drum is an instrument for multiple players that brings people together—she imagines "what it sounds like when struck with force, by many and in unison" (77, 43). Faye's felt connection to the drum establishes social bonds, as she commits to repatriating it and to learning the songs that belong to it. The drum produces more personal reunions as well. Under its influence, Faye dreams about her sister as she hasn't in years; touching it, she thinks of Netta and feels stronger. At the same time, the presence of the drum restores the bond between mother and daughter. Inspired to confront Elsie about Netta's death, Faye recognizes her mother's extraordinary sense of guilt for not saving her daughter and forgives her. She also reconciles with Kurt, understanding, "You have to love. You have to feel. It is the reason you are here on earth" (274).

In fact, the drum has a long history of repairing human relationships, as Faye and Elsie learn when they return it to the tribe in North Dakota. It first intervened in the life of its creator, Old Shawaano, a man overwhelmed by the loss of his daughter. His daughter fell to the wolves when Old Shawaano's wife, Anaquot, left with her and an infant, the result of an affair, to live with her new lover. Old Shawaano became

suicidal, turned to drink, and neglected and abused his remaining child, Shawaano. Yet once directed by his daughter's spirit to make the drum, Old Shawaano changed. Drawing on tradition, his community, his daughter's spirit, and the natural world for help, he painstakingly constructed the drum. The process cured him of his "sick uneasiness of grief," reconnecting him to his dead daughter, his living son, and his tribe (148). The drum's reparative work continued in the years that followed, as it "cured people of every variety of ill" (179). On a frigid night after the drum's return to the community, it performs another rescue: as a family's house burns down, it sounds autonomously to guide a young girl, Shawnee, and her two siblings to the home of Bernard, Old Shawaano's grandson, saving them from freezing to death. The drum is then brought into a hospital for a ceremony to cure Shawnee's sick brother.

The drum's effect on the tribe is powerfully centripetal. Ojibwe people came from miles away, "both hopeful and curious," to visit Old Shawaano as he constructed it (174). When it was completed, members of the community "repaired it or gave it gifts or even helped the people who came to see it," and the community "grew strong" (179). In turn, when Bernard tells the story of the drum's creation, he brings together an audience of more scattered tribe members, including Faye, Elsie, Chook (the widow of a caretaker of the drum), Judge Nanapush, and Nanpush's wife, Geraldine.³¹ Bernard's biography of the drum "fits the scraps together," filling gaps in familial and tribal history and thereby cultivating a renewed sense of belonging for the Travers women and those who live on the reservation but don't know "the whole story" (250, 107). In a letter sent to Faye in New Hampshire, solidifying a tribal connection that transcends geographical separation, Bernard reports, "*With the drum back, there is a good feeling here. People have come together around it*" (268). As Karah Stokes points out, the drum becomes "the focus of tribal regeneration through relationships."³² "Salvation seems a complicated process with many wobbling steps," but it begins, for Faye and others, with a strengthening of relationships—those among human family members, those among human members of a tribal community, and those among human and significant nonhuman persons (269).

As the drum rescues and heals human bodies and repairs human relationships, it also awakens humans to the web of existence, reminding them of their obligations to their human and nonhuman kin. Gail

Guthrie Valaskakis (Lac du Flambeau Chippewa) confirms that in her community, drums are animate beings that function relationally: “The power of drums lies in the relationships that drums enact and the strength of the spiritual force drums inhabit in the exchange of social relations.”³³ Thomas Vennum notes that Ojibwe drums are afforded deep respect; community members are expected to visit, dress, and feed them and to maintain decorum in their presence. Such practices reflect the sense of intimate relationship between human and nonhuman beings in Ojibwe understanding, and it is not surprising that the word for dance drum, *gimishoomisinaan*, means “our grandfather.”³⁴ In *The Painted Drum*, members of the Ojibwe community give the cedar wood used to produce the drum the care and respect one would bestow on an elder: “From each generation certain men and women had been chosen to look after the wood, to visit and talk to it, to catch it up on local history and smoke the pipe with it” (155–56). When the drum is eventually returned, a community member instructs others, “If someone comes in where the drum is, uses bad language, you got to put them out” (105–06). Even Faye, while claiming not to believe the drum is a living being, keeps it off the ground and sets a tobacco box beside it to feed it; she instinctively knows that “there are obligations to be met” when interacting with other-than-human persons.³⁵

MANIDOOMINENSAG, “LITTLE SPIRIT THINGS”:
BEADWORK’S REALIGNMENT OF RELATIONS

The drum intervenes in human relationships in mostly restorative ways: it brings far-flung tribe members back into the fold, mends the broken chains between individuals and their loved ones living and dead, and binds the community closer together. But other nonhuman beings function as necessary disruptors of the social world, radically realigning established relations among humans and between humans and things. A story about the extraordinary beaded suit created by Anaquat and Ziigwan’aage, the wife of her lover, demonstrates this disruptive capacity. Initially rivals for the love of Simon Jack, the two women bond over their hostility toward the man who was unfaithful to both of them. They begin to create a beaded garment “to take away their man’s power and divide it between the two of them” (143). Beads, Bernard explains in telling the story, are “more than just decorations. They have a life of their

own" (182). Accordingly, the beadwork the two women begin has "amazing vitality" and it compels its own creation: though the two women "didn't understand where the outfit was going or what would happen to Simon Jack once he put it on, they sewed" (144, 145). The beadwork transforms rivals into allies, encouraging a connection between the two women, who "stitched each other still closer, became true sisters" (145).

At the same time, the suit explodes another character's misguided understanding of his place in a hierarchy of social and physical relations. Simon Jack is a self-centered man who brags about possessing two women, though it is well-known in the community that Anaquot and Ziigwan'aage control him. He is immensely proud of the suit because he sees it as a sign of status and an emblem of the women's devotion to him, and he never takes it off. For him, the suit is purely representational, a possession in service to his ego. His interactions with both human and nonhuman relations are out of balance, a condition emblemized by the contrast between the beautiful beadwork and his bodily filth. Failing to understand beadwork as powerful in its own right, he ignores the warning sign that the makizinan, with their fully-beaded foot soles, are the kind only worn by the dead.

As Bernard says, the beads in the suit are "not just flowers, not just vines, not, as I said, little beads," but animate, agent, and disruptive beings (182). Even as the beaded design is still coming into view as the two women stitch, its latent power is evident in the way "the horned white vine twisted like a snake down the two front pieces and coiled itself around the back" (144). When Simon Jack enters the drum circle wearing the suit, the ceremonial songs become distorted and the men strike the drum out of time, as "they all were caught—drummer, singers, dancer, drum itself—in a dark outpouring of energy" (184). Seemingly driven by this energy, Simon Jack begins to circle the drum in the wrong direction, going "the spirit way," and soon falls dead (184). Erdrich presents this scene with a characteristic ambiguity that allows for both rational and supernatural explanations. Simon Jack may have collapsed from the weight of the beads, symbolic of his guilt for betraying his two loves and endangering his families. Or the beads may have worked more directly to disorder the dance and push him into a path toward death. In either case, the beadwork literally reverses human norms, toppling assumed social hierarchies and giving the lie to any notion that humans have control over the material. As if to supply a further lesson

on the radically nonhierarchical nature of relations between human and nonhuman beings, a coda to this story explains that, according to the women who prepare his body for burial, the reason Simon Jack never took off the suit was because it was stitched directly onto his skin. In this merging of man and suit, the presumed boundary between human subject and nonhuman object disappears; possessor and possession are interwoven into one.

This story sets the stage for a more prosaic, modern-day intervention by traditional beadwork. Faye has a counterpart in the rescued children's mother, Ira, an impoverished Ojibwe woman who creates beautiful beaded regalia and accessories. Like Faye, Ira is detached from her family and her tribe. Though she was raised in the woods in a traditional household, she moved away to the cities for a time and now is disconnected from the community, suspicious of offers of help, and uncertain of her role. She rejects Indigenous spirituality, telling her Ojibwe drinking partner in a North Dakota bar, "If you're here, you've made a choice. That choice is not to be spiritual. That choice is to be like me" (202). Though she loves her children, she struggles to be a good mother, alternating between guilt and resentment; indeed, she has come to the bar, abandoning her children in a freezing house, to escape. She wishes to stay "halfway drunk forever," because she feels "sterilized inside" (203, 197).

Ira's alienation, like Faye's, correlates with her Westernized relationship with things, especially Ojibwe art and sacred items. An indication that she has been "careless with . . . old beliefs" related to things is the fate of her father's ceremonial pipe: she hid it in the woods as her father instructed before he died, but then promptly forgot about it (252). She is an artist who crafts traditional quilts, powwow regalia, and beadwork, but she values these creations primarily for the money they bring. In the bar, she boasts of the thousand-dollar men's fancy regalia she created (225). In the hospital where her children are recovering, she hopes to sell a beadwork clip and some earrings to the nurses (238). Trapped in her poverty, Ira can be forgiven for thinking of her beadwork only in terms of its market value, but her pain and withdrawal suggest the need to return to an Ojibwe understanding of the material. Because she is caught up in the Western competition for economic survival, she has failed to recognize the greater tribal significance of traditional artifacts, their role as relatives, and their capacity for acting on social worlds.

Specifically, she has forgotten that beads are “Manidoominensag, little spirit things,” as Bernard explains. Attention to the etymology of this word reflects an Ojibwe view of material things as being endowed with both life and power: it derives from *minen*, the term for small berries or seeds, combined with the prefix *manidoo*, indicating spirit or god.³⁶ Ira does not recognize their power explicitly, but she does begin to shift away from a Westernized, capitalistic relationship to her beaded creations, and in doing so begins to reconstruct her human relations.

Rather than sell the beadwork clip for forty dollars, she gives it to Chook's son Morris, a visually impaired veteran who helped her get to her children after the fire. The gesture precipitates a series of human connections and reconnections. She reconciles with her children, who wordlessly forgive her for the neglect that endangered their lives. As Ira embraces Shawnee's sister, the older girl sees that “her mother's face seemed to open up like a flower. She smiled and a softness flowed from her and wrapped around Shawnee and held her” (240). Soon after, a relationship blossoms between Ira and Morris, one that promises redemption for both of them. She also reconnects with her community, softening at the kindness of an Ojibwe social worker, and begins to embrace her history as Bernard shares with her stories of her father. Perhaps inspired by the intervention of the drum and the generosity of her tribal community, she demonstrates a new understanding of her responsibility to the human and other-than-human persons around her. Realizing that her father's pipe, buried under the snow, must have survived the fire, Ira resolves to find it; moments later she whispers to her son, “I am going to take care of you real good when you get well” (253). In the present as in the past, Ojibwe things intervene in human social circles, rescuing the vulnerable, addressing imbalances, and, above all, repairing and strengthening bonds of mutual care and respect.

A BOX OF HANDKERCHIEFS: CROSS-CULTURAL AFFILIATIONS THROUGH THINGS

Traditionally crafted items like the painted drum and beadwork are vital for the ways they connect members of tribal communities. Old Sha-waano reunites with members of the tribe who cared for the wood that would become the drum and with others who help him find it. Running his fingers over the perfect rows of beads on the clip, Morris falls

in love with Ira. These bonds are made possible because significant artifacts have the capacity to gather and hold human emotion and meaning. Even before they begin the suit, Anaquot warms to Ziigwan'aage when she sees a beaded vest she remembers Simon Jack wearing and recognizes a merging of the artist, Ziigwan'aage, and her creation: "How hard his wife had worked, placing each bead just so, and how many hopes she had sewn into the colorful centers of the roses!" (133). Understanding how Ziigwan'aage's subjectivity permeates the vest raises a "new feeling" of empathy in Anaquot that is the foundation of their sisterhood (133). When the boundary between subject and object disappears, so too does the boundary between subject and subject.

If Indigenous things can help break down barriers between human subjects, might non-Indigenous things do the same? And, if so, could a different general understanding of things—specifically, a recognition of their vitality and their personhood and an appreciation of their impact on social worlds—help us repair breeches not just *within* but *between* societies and cultures? I turn briefly to a seemingly minor moment early in the novel that points to Erdrich's effort to extend an Ojibwe ontology beyond tribal contexts in order to reach toward a global human understanding and a more robustly relational existence. In it, her first protagonist unknowingly demonstrates how things act on human social worlds divided by race, class, and generation in potentially reconciliatory ways.

Thinking about her work appraising estates, Faye recalls a time she opened a wooden chest containing a number of Victorian-era women's handkerchiefs, each embroidered with the initials L. M. B. and each accompanied by a piece of paper identifying occasions when the handkerchief was used to dry its owner's tears: "Teddy's Christening. Venetta and John Howard's Wedding. And then, Teddy's funeral. Brother Admantine's Wake . . . And far down at the bottom . . . a child's square of fabric clumsily sewn with the initials and labeled My Mother's Funeral" (35). Initially, Faye experiences "a sudden bolt of prejudice . . . *Just like a white lady, so stingy with her tears she kept them*" (35). But sitting with the material embodiment of L. M. B.'s feelings, she finds her own eyes filling with tears. She dabs her eyes with one of the handkerchiefs and returns it to the collection.

When Faye "add[s her] own tears to the box," the substance of her body becomes part of the collection of embroidered keepsakes (36). As elsewhere, a kind of bodily merging of human and nonhuman beings

erases the presumed boundary between subject and object. Equally importantly, this action begins to bring down the barrier between subject and subject, both in the physical sense, as Faye's tears intermingle with L. M. B's, and in the abstract way the encounter cultivates Faye's empathy for a woman she never met. Prejudice gives way to shared grief as the box of handkerchiefs produces an unacknowledged, tenuous link between women from vastly different social worlds. The moment passes; Faye remembers hearing later that L. M. B. "was a ferocious old bore in her age" (36). Yet here, as in other parts of the novel, Erdrich presents evidence that significant artifacts can reorganize human relations, if only fleetingly. The episode offers a striking example of the ways artifacts can bring together humans not just locally or within specific families, communities, and cultures, but across wide historical and political divides. Faye senses the significance of the moment; even if she does not quite understand the meaning of her actions, she knows that "what had happened was exactly right" (36).

"WE [ARE] ALL MADE OF THE SAME STUFF":

THE INTEGRATION OF HUMAN AND MATERIAL REALITIES

Like other significant encounters with the material in *The Painted Drum*, Faye's experience with the box of handkerchiefs is complicated, and it would not do to reduce it to sentimental allegory, to fit generations of violence, pain, and othering into a tidy wooden box. Still, the episode gestures toward a radical vision of relationality that surfaces again and again. Like the drum and the beadwork, the box of handkerchiefs offers an entry point for retheorizing the material in terms of Ojibwe perspectives that foreground relationships in different social worlds and material environments. The artifacts in the novel literally save human lives and restructure human relationships. But they are curative in more abstract ways, for they stimulate a breakdown of the subject-object dichotomy and bring humans closer to an understanding of their place in the networks of the universe. Faye begins to articulate this integrative dream at several points. The first night she brings the drum home, she experiences a syncopation of sounds in which the creaking of the house, the echoing reverberations inside the drum, and her breathing blend together (44). She later imagines, "I am part of the chain of events that began when Davan gunned his engine on Revival

Road. And the drum is part of it, too, and my taking of it” (65). And she remembers an experience she had as a girl that affirms this idea of universal integration. Standing in a field of orb spider nests just after her sister’s death, she had a revelatory understanding of materiality, an awakening that brought her back from the precipice of a psychic break:

Thinking saved me. Perception saved me. I saw that the spiders were just substance. Not bad, not good. We were all made of the same stuff. I saw how we spurted out of creation in different shapes. How for a time I would inhabit this shape but then I’d be the lace on my sister’s shoe that had dropped off her foot onto the weeds and tamped grass, or I’d be the blue pot my parents argued about, or maybe something else. There was nothing but the endless manufacture of things out of nothing. I saw the changing and exchanging of shapes. The grass growing all around me, now, would one day be the cow, the milk, the flesh of the calf, then me. (94)

While one reviewer reads this passage as a description of “the evanescence of existence,” I see it, conversely, as an inchoate statement of endurance through a conceptualization of existence as endlessly, dynamically, and profoundly integrated.³⁷ In the meditation, the subject-object binary collapses and Western anthropocentrism is disrupted. Imaginatively moving in and out of forms of material being, Faye situates herself in a vast, sacred kinship of human and nonhuman entities.

The vision might be a gloss on the Ojibwe perspective described by Hallowell, in which “all other ‘persons’—humans or other than human—are structured the same as I am” and “other-than human persons share their power with human beings.”³⁸ In such a worldview, human and nonhuman entities impact other entities, and all exist in a complex network of kin with mutual obligations for care and respect. The final sentence, in which Faye pictures a cycle of life involving grass, cow, calf, milk, “then me,” suggests her sense of responsibility as a participant in a shared experience of biological existence. But her incorporation into entities like the shoelace and the pot points to the ways a sense of integrated life and mutual obligation encompasses the nonbiological, an understanding that all entities are made of the same stuff.

That the vision “saved” Faye indicates the ways Erdrich’s novel begins laying a pathway for redemption through a renewed relationship to the material world. The vision refuses entrenched Western dichotomies

that separate Faye and the nonhuman entities around her, and in doing so it breaks down barriers between Faye and other humans. The scene underlines the idea that we live in “integrated realities,” to borrow from Valaskakis.³⁹ In Valaskakis’s history of a Midé drum and its effects on a tribal community, “integrated realities” refers to the overlapping of Ojibwe and other ontologies. But it also might describe the Ojibwe sense of a universe in which human and nonhuman beings share experience, act on one another, and bear mutual responsibility as kin. Erdrich’s novel calls us to recognize such integration and to act in accordance with it. It encourages us to think through the material, to adopt an Ojibwe-guided appreciation for the power of things, as a way of moving towards our own salvation.

JANET DEAN is Professor and Chair of English and Cultural Studies at Bryant University. She is the author of *Unconventional Politics: Nineteenth-Century Women Writers and U.S. Indian Policy*, as well as essays, chapters, and reviews in a number of journals and collections. Her current research explores the significance of the material in Indigenous literatures and cultures.

NOTES

1. Louise Erdrich, *The Painted Drum* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2006), 28. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

2. Alfred Irving Hallowell, “Ojibwa Ontology, Behavior, and World View,” in *Contributions to Ojibwe Studies: Essays, 1934–1972*, eds. Jennifer S. H. Brown and Susan Elaine Gray (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010), 535–68; 538. Hallowell’s research challenged established anthropological constructs that privileged the Western perspective and dismissed Indigenous worldviews as “primitive.” Revisiting Hallowell’s work, Nurit Bird-David points out that the Western concept of personhood privileges individuality in ways inconsistent with many animistic ontologies of human-nonhuman kinship. She argues instead for the use of “relatives” (or, in the understanding of the South Indian Nayaka people she studies, *sonta*) as an alternative. Nurit Bird-David, “Persons or Relatives? Animistic Scales of Practice and Imagination,” in *Rethinking Relations and Animism*, ed. Miguel Astor-Aguilera and Graham Harvey (London: Routledge, 2018), 26–34. For another reappraisal of Hallowell, see Pauline Turner Strong, “A. Irving Hallowell and the Ontological Turn,” in “Voicing the Ancestors II: Readings in Memory of George Stocking,” ed. Richard Handler, *HUA: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 7, no. 1 (2017): 468–72.

3. Jean Wyatt, “Storytelling, Melancholia, and Narrative Structure in Louise Erdrich’s *The Painted Drum*,” *MELUS* 36, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 13–36; 25.

4. Wyatt, “Storytelling, Melancholia, and Narrative Structure,” 25.

5. Lawrence W. Gross, *Anishinaabe Ways of Knowing and Being* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014), 258–60. *The Ojibwe People's Dictionary* defines bimaadiziwin as “life,” but elsewhere the meaning is described as “the good life,” “a healthy way of life,” or “living in a good way.” “Bimaadiziwin,” *The Ojibwe People's Dictionary*, <https://ojibwe.lib.umn.edu/main-entry/bimaadiziwin-ni>. For a detailed discussion of the concept, see Gross, *Anishinaabe Ways of Knowing and Being*, 205–24.

6. Kevin Nance, “Earth Mother,” *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine*, January–February 2015, <http://dartmouthalumnimagazine.com/articles/earth-mother>.

7. Vine Deloria Jr., *For this Land: Writings on Religion in America* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 131.

8. Others have noticed this attention to material objects in Erdrich's writing, though they tend to see objects as supplying metaphors rather than functioning as agents in their own right. See, for example, Jonathan Little, “Beading the Multicultural World: Louise Erdrich's *The Antelope Wife* and the Sacred Metaphysic,” *Contemporary Literature* 41, no. 3 (2000): 495–524; and Deborah Weigel, “Elucidating Abstract Concepts and Complexity in Louise Erdrich's *Love Medicine* through Metaphors of Quilts and Quiltmaking,” *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 31, no. 4 (2007): 79–95.

9. Erdrich lived in New Hampshire for more than a decade but once said she could not set any of her fiction there. Claire Kirch, “Marching to the Beat of Her Own Drum: Louise Erdrich on Living, Writing, and Bookselling,” *Publishers Weekly*, September 9, 2015, 38–39; 38.

10. Margaret Noodin, *Bawaajimo: A Dialect of Dreams in Anishinaabe Language and Literature* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2014), 19.

11. See, for example, Bill Brown, “Thing Theory,” *Critical Inquiry* 28, no. 1 (2001): 1–22, and *A Sense of Things: The Object Matter of American Literature*; Brown, ed., *Things* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); Bruce Clarke and Manuela Rossini, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and the Posthuman* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Sherry Turkle, ed., *Evocative Objects: Things We Think With* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011); and Babette Bärbel Tischelder, *The Literary Life of Things: Case Studies in American Fiction* (University of Chicago Press, 2014).

12. Brown, *A Sense of Things*, 12.

13. Jessica L. Horton and Janet Catherine Berlo, “Beyond the Mirror: Indigenous Ecologies and ‘New Materialism’ in Contemporary Art,” *Third Text* 27, no. 1 (January 2013): 17–28; 18.

14. Diana Coole and Samantha Frost, eds., *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 3.

15. Bill Brown, “Objects, Others, and Us (The Refabrication of Things),” *Critical Inquiry* 36 (Winter 2010): 183–217.

16. Horton and Berlo, “Beyond the Mirror,” 18.

17. Hallowell, “Ojibwa Ontology, Behavior, and World View,” 537.

18. Gross, *Anishinaabe Ways of Knowing and Being*, 102.

19. Nurit Bird-David, “Persons or Relatives?,” 69, emphasis added. For a history of

uses of “animism,” see Graham Harvey, *Animism: Respecting the Living World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 3–29.

20. Hollowell, “Ojibwa Ontology, Behavior, and World View,” 560.

21. Hollowell, “Ojibwa Ontology, Behavior, and World View,” 559.

22. Kenneth M. Morrison, “The Cosmos as Intersubjective: Native American Other-Than-Human Persons,” in *Indigenous Religions: A Companion*, ed. Graham Harvey (New York: Cassell, 2000), 23–36; 26.

23. Gerald Vizenor, *The People Named the Chippewa: Narrative Histories* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 146.

24. J. Weston Phippen, “The Auction of Native American Artifacts,” *The Atlantic* (online), May 27, 2016. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/05/native-american-auction/484316/>.

25. Amy Lonetree, Preface, *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), xv. See also Karen Poremski, “Voicing the Bones: Heid Erdrich’s Poetry and the Discourse of NAGPRA,” *Studies in American Indian Literature* 27, no. 1 (Spring 2015): 1–32; 1.

26. For recent analysis of this trend, see Ami Regier, “Bone Plots: Narratives of Repatriation in Contemporary Native American Fiction,” *Memnonite Life* 61, no. 3 (September 2006), <https://ml.bethelks.edu/issue/vol-61-no-3/article/bone-plots-narratives-of-repatriation-in-contempor/>; Lee Schweninger, “‘Lost and Lonesome’: Literary Reflections on Museums and the Roles of Relics,” *American Indian Quarterly* 33, no. 2 (2009): 116–99; Penelope Kelsey and Cari M. Carpenter, “‘In the End, Our Message Weighs’: *Blood Run*, NAGPRA, and American Indian Identity,” *American Indian Quarterly* 35, no. 1 (Winter 2011): 56–74; Poremski “Voicing the Bones”; and Amelia V. Katanski, “Embodied Jurisgenesis: NAGPRA, Dialogue, and Repatriation in American Indian Literature,” in *The Routledge Companion to Native American Literature*, ed. Deborah L. Madsen (New York: Routledge, 2016), 181–91.

27. Wyatt, “Storytelling, Melancholia, and Narrative Structure,” 16.

28. I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for bringing this element of Erdrich’s language to my attention.

29. Wyatt argues that the repeated metaphors of closing off and encapsulating in the first section of the novel reflect Faye’s melancholia, a result of the loss of her sister and a function of her western epistemology. For Wyatt, the dynamics of Ojibwe storytelling move Faye toward a more positive relationship with the dead (18, 20). My own reading, I believe, compliments this one in its suggestion that a shift toward an Indigenous understanding of materiality has a similarly healing effect.

30. As Karah Stokes points out, where Faye references actual Ojibwe traditions, it is largely to note her divergence from them. Karah Stokes, “‘Who they are, what it means’: Native American Identity in Louise Erdrich’s *The Painted Drum*,” *Kentucky Philological Review* 21 (2006): 53–57; 55.

31. David Stirrup notes one of the effects of the drum’s repatriation is “returning story to the cultural centre.” David Stirrup, *Louise Erdrich* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2011), 151. As Seema Kurup argues, when we consider

The Painted Drum in the context of Erdrich's other fiction, the reconnections produced by the story of the drum multiply. Judge Nanapush is the nephew of old Nanapush, the adoptive father of Fleur Pillager in Erdrich's *Tracks*; Faye is Fleur's grandniece (the granddaughter of Fleur's half-sister) and thus a member of the Pillager family, which is believed to have "mainly died out" (103). The drum thus reconnects two families separated when Faye's grandmother was sent to boarding school in the East. Seema Kurup, *Understanding Louise Erdrich* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2016), 34.

32. Stokes, "Who they are, what it means," 56.

33. Gail Guthrie Valaskakis, *Indian Country: Essays on Contemporary Native American Culture* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2005), 181.

34. Thomas Vennum, *The Ojibwa Dance Drum: Its History and Construction* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institute, 1982), 61.

35. Hollowell, "Ojibwa Ontology, Behavior, and World View," 560.

36. "Manidoominen," *The Ojibwe People's Dictionary*, <https://ojibwe.lib.umn.edu/main-entry/manidoominens-na>.

37. Art Winslow, "Mingled Voices: Intriguing Characters Revolve around 'The Painted Drum' in Louise Erdrich's New Novel," *The Chicago Tribune*, September 18, 2005, http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2005-09-18/entertainment/0509170227_1_louise-erdrich-drum-faye-travers.

38. Hollowell, "Ojibwa Ontology, Behavior, and World View," 557, 561.

39. Valaskakis, *Indian Country*, 7.

Book Reviews

Melissa K. Nelson and Dan Shilling, eds. *Traditional Ecological Knowledge: Learning from Indigenous Practices for Environmental Sustainability*. Cambridge UP, 2018. 978-1-108-42856-9. 276 pp.

Geoff Hamilton, *Medicine Hat College*

As its title suggests, this book explores Indigenous peoples' Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and its relevance to conceptions of environmental sustainability. The fourteen essays collected here, the majority of them by Indigenous scholars, focus on North America and cover a range of disciplines and methodologies. The essential philosophical assumptions bound up with TEK, some of its ongoing practical applications, and its profound significance for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, are incisively and compellingly set forth in these chapters. A particularly attractive element of this collection, moreover, is the way it offers distillations by a number of scholars of their own larger bodies of work, making it especially useful as a primer on complex discussions published elsewhere.

The first grouping of essays, "Introduction to Key Concepts and Questions," provides an illuminating orientation to the book's core concerns. Dan Shilling identifies some of the important commonalities that can be discerned in Native American environmental attitudes—most crucially, an ethical emphasis on "*restraint and reverence*" (12; italics in original) in human relations with the land—and places them in relation to Western counterparts. He rightly notes the prominence and fuzziness of conceptions of "sustainability" in public and scholarly discourse, along with a tendency—now, it would seem, gradually and profitably being overcome—to neglect the significance of such conceptions within Indigenous traditions. Gregory Cajete (Tewa) explains "Native Science," a set of holistic, TEK-informed beliefs and practices which, in contrast to a Western tendency to make sharp distinctions between the human and nonhuman, encourage an appreciation for the reciprocal relations among all creation. Focusing on plant life and Indigenous creation sto-

ries, Robin Wall Kimmerer (Potawatomi) explores how language and worldview shape our environmental relationships. Kyle White examines how TEK might best be used to benefit Indigenous peoples themselves, taking into account how such knowledge might contribute to a particular people's political autonomy and management of its own relations to a specific locale.

The second grouping—"Bedrock: Toward a Kincentric Ethic"—explores the characteristics and significance of Indigenous formulations of environmental communalism and reciprocity. Simon Ortiz (Acoma Pueblo) reflects on the interdependence of land, language, and community as it relates, in particular, to the Pueblo peoples. Jeannette Armstrong (Syilx Okanagan) considers how the environmental ethic of the Syilx, which favors thinking collaboratively with nonhuman presences, models sustainability. Michael Paul Nelson and John A. Vucetich reflect on Indigenous notions of nonhuman personhood in the natural world, and trace out how adopting such a worldview might impact Western lifeways. In an especially rich discussion gauging some of the fundamental ways in which TEK can be distinguished from Western scientific knowledge, Joan McGregor investigates correspondences between TEK and ecofeminism, arguing that both replace a commitment to domination (of nature and women) with egalitarian ideals.

"Extended Web: Land-Care Practices and Plant and Animal Relationships," the third grouping, begins with Dennis Martinez's (O'odham, Chicano) consideration of a "kincentric" approach to salmon harvesting as an example of how TEK might "serve as an ethical-economic model for the world when it most needs it" (151). Priscilla Settee (Cree), in an illuminating discussion of "Indigenous Food Sovereignty," explores how colonialism has impacted food production and consumption, moving it out of a local community's control, and how it might be revitalized with TEK. Linda Hogan's (Chickasaw) personal essay charts an Indigenous appreciation for the interdependence of all creation and argues for the importance of an ethic of restraint and cooperation.

The final grouping, "Global and Legal Implications of Indigenous Sustainability," begins with Rachel Wolfgramm (Ngai Takoto, Te Aupouri, Whakatohea, Tonga), Chellie Spiller (Māori, Pākehā), Carla Houkamau (Ngati Porou), and Manuka Henare's (Te Aupouri, Te Rarawa) consideration of Māori "economies of well-being" (213) and their lessons for sustainability. Rebecca Tsosie's (Yaqui) essay examines

legal questions related to the definition, dissemination, and protection of Indigenous peoples' TEK. Melissa K. Nelson (Anishinaabe/Métis) concludes the collection with a keen summary of the major thematic emphases of the collection's authors.

Taken together, these chapters offer an illuminating survey of the field of sustainability studies as it relates to TEK, and inform and sharpen an appreciation for how such wisdom is being and could be applied. They provide, moreover, a useful anatomy of the self-constructions associated with Western and Indigenous traditions and their ecological implications. The moral and practical urgency of cultivating an environmental ethic, and the various roles to be played by Indigenous wisdom in guiding not just sustainability studies as a discipline but all human relations with the nonhuman, are forcefully and persuasively explicated here. The importance of acting on such explications is eloquently summed up in Nelson's conclusion:

What many of us in this book say is, if sustainability is to mean anything relevant for us, our more-than-human relatives, and future generations, then we must put our environmental ethics into action and get back in our tracks by re-rooting to specific landscapes. If we are able to embody kinship with our natural world and practice reciprocity as if the future mattered, then we may once again become keepers of the green world. (265)

GEOFF HAMILTON is the author of *A New Continent of Liberty: Eunomia in Native American Literature from Occom to Erdrich* (University of Virginia Press, 2019). He teaches courses in the humanities at Medicine Hat College in Alberta, Canada.

Ofelia Zepeda, ed. *When It Rains: Papago and Pima Poetry/mak hekid o ju, o'odham, ha-ceg'itodag*. U of Arizona P, 1982, 2019. ISBN-10: 0816538875; ISBN-13: 978-0-816538874. 82 pp.

Geary Hobson, *University of Oklahoma*

At a time when it seemed as if anthologies were being issued rather over-excessively—c. 1970–early 1980s—*When It Rains* made its entrance in such a unique way so as to create a whole new—and much needed—category and format: the bilingual presentation of work honoring indi-

vidual tribal areas, rather than those works in English only. At the time, most anthologies were the big New York press offerings of generally the same poets and very few prose writers, and the same reprinting of their work. (I am somewhat guilty of this myself when considering my anthology, *The Remembered Earth*, where I reprinted some of the then-contemporary Native poets, but hopefully, it will be remembered that in my book there is much new work of theirs that was new then, as well as a great deal of prose, plus a great number of “first-timers-in-print.”) *When It Rains* features Papago and Pima poetry, in first the native languages, and then in English translation. The result is a work that electrifies the reader, while immediately situating them in the tribal milieus. Ofelia Zepeda, well on her way to becoming a renowned academic and poet at the time the first version of the book was published, was eminently qualified for the task at hand—being a fluent speaker and writer in not only her native O’odham (Papago) language but also in the neighboring one of Pima.

When It Rains features the poems/songs of seventeen fluent speakers of their languages, including Zepeda herself, and also the late Ken Hale, a non-Native scholar well-known for his scholarly work in the two languages, as well as in a number of other Native languages. Now, thirty-seven years later, *When It Rains* reappears in a second edition. Many changes have occurred in the teaching of Native languages, as Professor Zepeda points out: “Today, many tribes must necessarily move the teaching of their languages outside the schools and into the community.” And that is what we have in *When It Rains*.

As the title points out, the essential binding and defining image of O’odham and Pima people—rain—in their poetic and religious outpourings is highlighted in a number of the poems here. Water is ever holy to desert people. An extremely short, but greatly vibrant statement of this can be seen in “Olla,” by Helen J. Ramon, which greatly exemplifies this. The poem is a vital pronouncement on the extremely necessary deifying of this totally essential element of life. Ramon only needs four words to justify water’s dynamism.

Ofelia Zepeda has devoted more than four decades toward the preserving of the Papago and Pima languages. In addition to her teaching at the University of Arizona, she is also deeply devoted to her community’s needful work. As well, in 1999, she received a MacArthur Fellowship award for her work. At present, she is the former director of

the American Indian Studies Department at the University of Arizona and also the senior editor of the Sun Tracks Series with the University of Arizona Press. She is also recognized by many of her contemporary Native writers as one of the major figures in the field.

GEARY HOBSON is a retired professor of English at the University of Oklahoma. His areas of teaching and scholarship are Native American literature, American literature and American Studies, and creative writing. He taught at the University of Oklahoma from 1988 to 2016. He is the author of the novel *The Last of the Ofos* (2000) and a book of poetry, *Deer Hunting and Other Poems* (1990); editor of the anthology *The Remembered Earth: An Anthology of Contemporary Native American Literature* (1979); and coeditor of *The People Who Stayed: Southeastern Indian Writing Since Removal* (2010) and a collection of short stories, *Plain of Jars and Other Stories* (2011). Two book-length poetry manuscripts—"The Road Where the People Cried/Nunna da ul Tsunyi" and "From Deep Woods"—are currently in press. He has published poems, fiction, critical essays, and book reviews in more than 100 magazines and anthologies. Of Cherokee and Quapaw/Chickasaw ancestry, he has been involved in Native literary studies and teaching for more than forty years, as well as with several national Native American literary organizations. In 2003, he received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Native Writers' Circle of the Americas. He lives in Norman, Oklahoma.

Sean S. Sell and Nicolás Huet Bautista, eds. *Chiapas Maya Awakening: Contemporary Poems and Short Stories*. U of Oklahoma P, 2017. ISBN: 978-0806155616. 200 pp.

Denisa Krásná, *Masaryk University*

Chiapas Maya Awakening: Contemporary Poems and Short Stories (2017) edited by Sean S. Sell and Nicolás Huet Bautista is a rare collection presenting remarkable examples of contemporary Maya writing that contest the perception of the Maya as silenced and submissive peoples.

This unique multilingual edition gives readers the opportunity to read the works in the Mayan languages of Tsotsil and Tzeltal as well as in Spanish and English. The choice to publish the original version alongside their translations (and have them always come first) is a significant acknowledgment of the importance of the thriving Mayan languages that have survived countless efforts of the colonial authorities to eradicate them and to silence their speakers who nevertheless resisted and

kept their languages alive. Moreover, the book's multilingualism allows for the works to transcend borders and spread their messages beyond Chiapas.

That the book can be treated as an example of literature of resistance is apparent from its original title *Ma'yuk sti'ilal xch'inch'unel k'inál: Silencio sin frontera* ("silence without border") and an affirmation on its back cover that the book's themes "break their cultural and linguistic borders" and challenge "the apparent calm and submission of indigenous peoples" (Hernández-Ávila 3). In addition, the writers counter the dominant discourse and combine features from their own cultures with those typical for Western literatures in order to "write back" about discrimination in "the language of empire to rebut its dominant ideologies" (Yang), complying with John Yang's definition of resistance literature. Miguel Ruiz Gómez, the author of one of the three short stories published in this collection, is a fitting example of this writing strategy as he "intentionally uses what he has learned from Western literature in his own work" (Hernández-Ávila 10) while maintaining a distinctive voice. Dealing with forced emigration, Gómez's short story is arguably the most politically-charged one in this collection and employing Western narrative strategies thus seems especially suitable.

The present multilingual edition's title reflects the current flourishing of Maya literature and art in Chiapas that has been supported by several organizations, most notably CELALI (State Center for Indigenous Languages, Art, and Literature), which also played a major role in the formation of this collection. The volume is a valuable recognition of contemporary Maya agency and voice that is represented here by twelve outstanding writers, some whose work is also complemented by subtle artwork either drawn by the authors themselves or, in most cases, by other Maya artists, for example Roberto Antonio López de la Cruz whose painting "Quietude" also appears on the collection's front cover.

The book is divided into two major parts—poems and stories respectively. Oral tradition and collective voice characterize the collection as well as an emphasis on the natural world and the interconnectedness of all life on Earth. Ancestral knowledge and tradition are other recurring themes and the resplendent quetzal, sacred bird of the Maya, is evoked by multiple writers. Its importance for the Maya people is reinforced by choosing María Concepción Bautista Vázquez's imagery poem "Quetzal" as the opening piece of the whole collection. In just a few words,

the poet paints a vivid image of the divine bird who “sings the story of my ancestors” and completes her work with a beautiful representation of Quetzal, “in the arms of a young Ceiba tree” (Vázquez 31), drawn by the author herself. Other notable symbols recalled by various writers include serpents, hummingbirds, trees, mountains, orchids, pox, time, memories, silence, night, and death, to name just a few.

While not all works in this collection are political and all of them are primarily exquisite examples of fine writing whose artistic value should not (and cannot) be overlooked, the ongoing colonization and oppression of Indigenous peoples is naturally reflected in these works as it constitutes an integral part of the reality of the Maya people. Many pieces thus depict the poverty and hardships of contemporary Maya rooted in their discrimination, as well as their brave resistance and efforts to escape these rough and unjust circumstances. The short stories in this collection all portray what Miguel Ruiz Gómez calls “the reality that we live [that] is so critically dire, not to say criminal” (Hernández-Ávila 10). His short story entitled “In the Middle of the Desert” vividly describes the suffering endured by those forced to leave their families in search of a solution to their financial difficulties on their months-long journey across the scorching desert and the inhumane treatment they receive from patrol officers. Gómez leaves no doubt about who is to blame for this involuntary emigration as he writes, “If it weren’t for the failure of the potato, bean, and corn crops, I wouldn’t be stuck in this misery here. The crop enhancements and fertilizers the government sent us didn’t work” (140–41).

Not only in Gómez’s story does the desert symbolize death and suffering, but it is contrasted with the lush forest of Chiapas that is full of life. Nonetheless, bad things happen here too as Alberto Gómez Pérez shows in his story “I Never Knew Anything” in which he masterfully evokes the feeling of an approaching danger and unidentified evil that is awaiting a group of travelers on their journey back home through the Chiapas mountains. Suspense also pervades Juan Julián Cruz Cruz’s story “Carnival Disaster” that is arguably the most violent work in the whole collection. Possibly for practical reasons (limited space), poetry prevails in this volume and there are only three short stories that leave the reader yearning for more. Each of them a captivating read, the stories are tied together by their dreary mood and dark themes, continuing in the tone set by the poems. Hopefully English-speaking readers will

have more chances in the future to read more works from the pens of these talented writers.

In brief, although putting together this collection could not have been an easy task given the rising number of emerging talented writers in Chiapas, the editors did a wonderful job. Both are distinguished scholars in the field and this collection is the fruit of their meticulous research. Moreover, Sean S. Sell's translation is of the highest standard and his commitment to do justice to the original and retain its cultural specificity is evident throughout the whole volume. He explains the challenges he encountered during the translation process in "Translator's Note" that follows Inés Hernández Ávila's introduction, another noteworthy part of this volume as it provides an informative background to the collection's creation as well as the writers included in it. It also helps to illuminate some aspects of Maya life and culture which may be especially useful for readers unfamiliar with the history and socioeconomic reality of this part of the world. Finally, a glossary of the untranslated Mayan language words and phrases is provided at the end of the book as well as the contributors' short bios. It is the editors' hope that "[t]his volume is one step toward bringing indigenous writers and intellectuals from the north and south closer to one another" (Hernández-Ávila 18) and hence toward strengthening connections that transcend borders.

Chiapas Maya Awakening is a must-read for anyone involved in the field of Indigenous studies, Chicana studies, Latinx studies, comparative literature, American studies, and other related areas of research. However, I would also highly recommend this collection to any reader who enjoys beautiful poetry and appreciates exquisite storytelling. I strongly believe that this collection will inspire its readers to hunt for more stories from Chiapas and witness this exciting awakening of Maya writers and artists whose voices are now louder than ever before.

DENISA KRÁSNÁ is a doctoral student in the Department of English and American Studies at Masaryk University, Czech Republic, specializing in Indigenous Studies. In her research, she focuses on decolonization, colonial gender violence, critical animal studies, and the exploitation of Indigenous lands and the environment. In her dissertation, she explores the emerging framework of anarcha-Indigenism and decolonial animal ethics. Her case studies include Indigenous resistance movements in southern Mexico, Canada, and Hawaii. Besides English, she has written and translated in Spanish, Czech, and French; holds BA degrees in English and

Spanish; and is currently pursuing a French degree at the Open University of Scotland.

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Smokii Sumac. *you are enough: love poems for the end of the world*.

KegeDonce, 2018. ISBN 978-1-928120-16-2. 105 pp.

James Mackay, *European University Cyprus*

KegeDonce Press, the venerable and brilliant Indigenous publishers behind Smokii Sumac's debut collection, sent me an electronic reading copy of *you are enough*. Normally, this wouldn't be something to comment on in a book review, but in this case reading the poems on screen felt oddly appropriate. Like his near-contemporary, Joshua Whitehead, Sumac is a member of a distinct new wave of Canadian First Nations writing that is characterized by a "digitally native" sensibility, and many of these poems seem shaped by an online environment—not least in the way that they are curated into six thematic sections, respectively titled "#nogoserries," "#courting," "#theworld," "#recovery," "#ceremony," and "#forandafter." As you may have noticed from that list, hashtags also sprinkle the text (#justiceforcolten, #morelove, #makesexgreatthefirst-time) alongside Ktunaxa phrases such as "ʔa-s k̓ciḡmitiḡnukqa" (16).

In addition, the cover is made up of a collage of selfies and landscape shots that closely matches the poet's Instagram feed (@smokiisumac), and I note that in the period since this collection was published, Sumac has also used #instapoet and #instapoetry on public posts as a way of describing his new work. This seems right, and although the bulk of this particular collection was not first published on social media, there is a very contemporary digital sensibility at play here.

To describe a serious writer as an “instapoet” might well seem like a slight, and certainly the term has taken on prejudicial overtones since “The Cult of the Noble Amateur,” Rebecca Nicholson's full-throated polemic against the Instagram generation, was published in *PN Review* in early 2018. And indeed, if one takes the self-consciously soulful Tyler Knott Gregson or the insanely prolific rm drake as models of instapoetry, there is something mass-produced and plastic about their verse (as indeed there is about the writing of Hollie McNish, whose book *Plum* inspired Nicholson's rant). One only needs to look at rh sin's terrifyingly bland Instagram feed to see how commercialized such poetry can become. Critics of the movement react negatively to the attention paid to visual aesthetics in the form of multiple uses of antique typewriters, calligraphy, artfully posed selfies, as well as the much-publicized declarations by some instapoets that they don't choose to engage heavily with their forebears. The more serious generational divide, however, is over the choice of many instapoets to emphasize emotional honesty and direct statement over figurative language, complex symbolism, or even metaphor: confessionalism shorn of craft.

Smokii Sumac's writing is free of antique typewriter fonts and other such obvious clichés, thank goodness, but it does have some of the punky spirit of raw confession that one can detect in the better instapoets such as Lang Leav. The poems in *you are enough*, for instance, mostly dispense with capital letters, titles, and other such paraphernalia. The major form used repeatedly is the haiku—indeed, when this collection was written, Sumac's public feed on Facebook contained examples hashtagged #haikuaday—but these are the looser Western form, closer to senryu, and marked mainly by attention to syllable count rather than the haiku's precise concern with a single moment. Other formal devices include the use of a left-aligned stanza taking up approximately half a page, followed by a right-aligned stanza taking up the bottom, creating a “tearing” effect (a delezogouarratrian “schizo”?); like the haiku, and like

much poetry for screen environments, this form emphasizes the purity of the white space on the page.

As with many previous iterations of punk, this poetry has a particular value in creating space for voices that have seldom been represented previously: working class, non-gender-conforming, racially-othered by whitemain society, and particularly those whose identities intersect in these areas. This fits with Claire Albrecht's term for social media poetry, *therapoeia*, indicating a form in which the primary purpose of art is healing. Sumac, a trans man, includes pictures of himself before and after transition on the cover, and confronts the many personal issues he has faced from family disruption due to addiction. The very title of the collection is a therapeutic commonplace, and many poems consist of statements of emotional truth ("poets good at that / the emotion of the thing" (26)). This has value in the context of sensibilities, like Sumac's, that are little represented in any tradition. When he writes glowingly about the company, Transethic, that made his prosthetic penis, the complex of ironies in being a trans man adopting a stereotypical male discourse—boasting about the size of one's dick—is tempered with a reference to Quill Christie Peters, whose beautiful artworks of First Nations women masturbating inspire the sentiment "self love is a revolution for an NDN" (36). If this collection can be said to have a unitary purpose, this is it—a radical act of self-love that has healing at its core.

The emotional intimacy of the poems is carefully constructed. It is notable that while the poet is willing to talk about his most private concerns and feelings, there is not as much in the way of concrete autobiographical fact as one might expect (the best poem in the collection, "at 29 i lie naked on the beach and think of you" (25), gains its power from the brief snippet of autobiography at its heart). That is not to say that the poems are overly generalized: Sumac writes frequently and feelingly about being part of a group that "[carries] saying no in our / dna" (86), and about the central place that the natural world occupies in his Ktunaxa sensibility. The constructed persona here, therefore, is offered as a crafted form of healing, and one that I suspect will appeal particularly strongly to undergraduate readers: certainly this would make an excellent textbook for any contemporary Indigenous poetry class.

In closing, one line that deserves to be pulled up and examined comes in the penultimate section, "#ceremony," where Sumac writes a

short but revolutionary sentiment: “never read silko / learn ceremony right here” (88). The punkish energy of instapoetry meets the traditions of First Nations writing, where the more normal attitude has been one of performative respect for trailblazers and predecessors. Sumac’s work here enters the dynamics of what David L. Moore, reviewing Adrian Jawort’s self-published anthology *Off the Path*, termed the “next wave of Native American writing” (77). This is the first generation of writers to have grown up immersed in the digital technologies that enable them to escape the need to satisfy the taste of Euro-Canadian publishers and university departments with specific agendas. Or, indeed, the tastes of awards juries, as it’s notable that Sumac has won the only major Indigenous-curated and largely crowdfunded literary prize for this collection.

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Cynthia Leitich Smith. *Hearts Unbroken*. Candlewick P, 2018. ISBN: 978-0763681142. 304 pp.

Mandy Suhr-Sytsma, *Emory University*

After a decade publishing gothic fantasy bestsellers, Cynthia Leitich Smith (Muscogee) returned to realism with her 2018 young adult title *Hearts Unbroken*. This book is not just realist; it is the most vivid, timely, gut-wrenchingly realistic YA novel I have read.

Hearts Unbroken opens with Muscogee protagonist Louise (Lou) Wolfe deciding, during a post-junior prom brunch, that she has “had enough” of her “WASPy” boyfriend Cam’s “ego and attitude” (10). *SAIL* readers will readily see why. In this brief first chapter, while discussing his mom’s disapproval of his brother’s Kickapoo fiancé, Cam jokes that “Kickapoo sounds like a dog,” untenably claims to be “part Cherokee,” laments that “Girls are so sensitive,” lashes out at the food service employee who stands up for Lou, and dismisses Lou’s concern that his family could turn their anti-Native sentiments on her by policing Lou’s identity: “It’s not like you’re *Indian* Indian. You live in East Hannesburg. Your dad is a dentist” (7–9). Cam’s behavior may sound over-the-top,

but Smith's prose renders this scene entirely believable. In fact, some readers may side with Cam—portrayed with some sympathy as a tired guy who just doesn't want to “fight at prom”—while others cringe at the disturbingly commonplace nature of his chauvinism (9). Smith's brilliance, here and throughout *Hearts Unbroken*, lies in her ability to illuminate everyday intersectional oppression while telling a story that is as riveting as it is realistic.

After dumping Cam, Lou leads us, with increasingly self-reflective first-person narration, through the summer and into her senior year in the fictional town of East Hannesburg, Kansas. She navigates her new role as a journalist for her school paper, a new romance with a fellow reporter named Joey, and new expressions of old bigotries. The loudest bigots belong to Parents Against Revisionist Theater (PART), a group created to protest the inclusive casting policy of the school's drama teacher after two students of color and one Native American student—Lou's younger brother, Hughie—land leading roles in the school's production of the *Wizard of Oz*. Lou supports Hughie as he deals with PART's bullying and wrestles to decide whether or not he should quit the play when he learns that *Oz*-author Frank Baum wrote newspaper editorials advocating for “the total extermination of the Indians” (176).

Astute readers will connect the dots between Baum's and PART's rhetoric. While less overtly genocidal, PART similarly suggests that the United States exclusively belongs to white settlers. In addition to their public anti-affirmative action and anti-immigrant statements, PART affiliates deliver anonymous threats to Hughie and his Black and Latinx fellow *Oz* cast members. Every threat includes the same phrase: “‘There is no place like home.’ Go back to where you came from” (101, 105, 142–43, 158, 224). Beyond the simple irony of descendants of European immigrants telling an Indigenous person to “go back” somewhere, these bullies' reference to the famous *Oz* line, especially when read in relation to Baum's editorials, opens larger questions about whose home and what kind of home North America has been, is, and can be.

Baum's editorials and PART's threats are not the only bigoted expressions in *Hearts Unbroken*. As in the opening chapter with her soon-to-be ex-boyfriend Cam, Lou experiences and witnesses everyday forms of colonialism, racism, sexism, classism, and homophobia throughout the novel. Early in the story, Lou is turned off by a potential love interest when he casually associates American Indians with alcoholics

(25). Later, Lou's lunch outing with her family gets disrupted when the restaurant's four TV screens, tuned to a fashion channel, flash to a white model strutting down the runway in a "turquoise mini" and "enormous Plains-Indian-inspired headdress" (100). On her first date with Joey, at the local bowling alley, Lou becomes distracted from their conversation by the Kansas City Chiefs decor dominating the venue, including "photos of frenzied fans in red face" (135). And the appropriation assaults just keep coming. On Halloween, in a chapter titled "Horrors," after Lou and Joey, who is Lebanese American, greet trick-or-treaters dressed as Princess Jasmine and a blue-feathers-and-fringe "Indian," Lou concludes, "Suddenly exhausted, I sought rejuvenating refuge in the sweet combination of sugary treats and Joey's kisses. We deserved a holiday, too" (170). Even though Lou attempts to hide her Native identity and pass as white with Joey for much of the novel, her relationship with him, along with the newspaper story series she reports on her peers' experiences with different types of bullying, enables her to better understand the nature and impact of various forms of oppression and to better empathize with those whose experiences overlap with and diverge from her own.

Kirkus, an important platform in the children's and YA literature world, criticizes *Hearts Unbroken* for "overly didactic attempts to teach readers about verbal and visual microaggressions and Native stereotypes." I disagree. Smith's nuanced treatment of everyday bigotry stems naturally from her novel's setting, plot, and structure. More importantly, Indigenous girls like Lou experience systemic and interpersonal oppression on a daily basis; despite Lou's wishes, they don't get a "holiday." Indigenous families also wrestle with how to confront past, present, and potential future forms of injustice. That's why Debbie Reese (Nambé Owingeh), in her positive review of *Hearts Unbroken*, describes Hughie's struggle over whether or not to stay in the play, Lou's struggle over whether or not to reveal her Native identity to Joey, and their parents' struggle over whether or not to tell Hughie about Baum, and concludes, "That is Native life." While it takes on different forms, relentless bigotry is a reality for young people of color, too. A recent study showed that Black teens in the Washington, DC area experience racial discrimination an average of five times per day (Ao). Smith's sustained attention to such experiences isn't didactic; it's realistic.

Lou's relationship with Joey does not provide a complete escape from

the constant barrage of oppression they experience, but it does provide some joyful relief for Lou, and for Smith's readers. Some of my students have wondered if Smith avoids tackling the pressing realities of sexual violence against Native girls and women in this book because of the young target audience. I think *Hearts Unbroken* helps illuminate the ideologies behind that violence, and we can thus productively teach it—at the high school as well as college level—alongside other crucial books like *Elsie's Business*, *The Round House*, and *The Break* that directly represent rape and murder. At the same time, the story of positive Native female sexuality Smith tells through Lou's and Joey's romance is also a story that we and our students need to hear. Ultimately, Lou experiences empowerment—a deeper pride in her Muscogee identity and a deeper commitment to fight bigotry—through her romance with Joey and her writing for the paper. Smith is by no means the first Indigenous writer to invite us to consider the relationship between self-representation, erotic pleasure, and resistance; Beth Brant, Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm, and Deborah Miranda are among those who've addressed these ties before. But there's something about Lou—maybe her youth, her fallibility, or her living in a time that feels so much like right now—that pulls us into these connections afresh.

I've just scratched the surface here of this finely-crafted book; *Hearts Unbroken* promises to foster rich intellectual conversations in our scholarship and our classrooms. Smith's novel will also be a breath of fresh air to her young readers from Indigenous and other oppressed communities whose experiences—both joyful and painful—are affirmed by this book. So, read *Hearts Unbroken*, and watch for more new Indigenous YA books, including those forthcoming with Heartdrum, Smith's new HarperCollins imprint (Lodge). These are essential reads, not just for the young people in our lives, but for all of us.

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