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# Studies in American Indian Literatures

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## FROM THE EDITORS

As this issue goes to press, another job season has arrived. Like its recent predecessors, it's a grim one. Education expenditures are always favored targets when government coffers are threatened, and the sloppy stereotype of the pampered professor serves critics whenever colleges and universities protest against systemic underfunding. Lawmakers want to be seen as champions of rigorous education, and citizens want access to affordable and high-quality education, but neither seems to want to invest the financial and social resources required. Few educational institutions have escaped financial cuts, and some have experienced the trauma of wholesale amputations. Entire departments in some schools have been eliminated, while others have been merged or reduced to such a degree that their ability to function is significantly diminished. As class sizes grow and more students enter higher education, the number of tenure-track faculty positions is shrinking, and institutions are finding themselves increasingly dependent on part-time or limited-term appointments with comparatively few benefits or protections.

And as the recent passage of anti-immigrant and anti-ethnic studies legislation in Arizona and other states has demonstrated, those fields of inquiry that are deemed threatening to a particularly narrow view of national identity or that offer thoughtful challenge to jingoist exceptionalism are particularly favored targets. This would, of course, include Native studies and the study of Indigenous literatures.

Yes, things are grim. But they are not hopeless. Though there are

fewer jobs than applicants, positions haven't atrophied completely; in fact, some of the most interesting jobs of recent years have been posted this season, and the quality of applicants doing work in Native studies is extraordinary. Hard economic times bring a more diverse population into classrooms, and those students bring ideas and experiences that challenge complacency and offer opportunities for everyone to learn and speak across difference. And while the ugly exclusivist politics of xenophobia and racism are always poisonous, the fact that these ideas are again being expressed so openly gives us both the opportunity and the duty to more clearly articulate ethically and intellectually rigorous responses to the general public.

There are many ways of offering such responses. Some people are extraordinary organizers and activists, taking their ideas and arguments to the picket line, the sidewalk protest, the spiritual or ceremonial center, the legislative chamber. Others teach in classrooms and living rooms, prisons and nursing homes; some begin at the kitchen table or with the weekend sports team, while others go on-line. Some do all of the above.

Yet one way of responding to the growing backlash against "area studies" that is given short shrift, even among a surprising number of academics, is in our scholarship itself. Last year's controversy around whether or not the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA) should boycott Arizona for its annual conference is a case in point. We are not here taking a position on whether the NAISA leadership should or should not have participated in the boycott—there were compelling arguments on all sides, and a lot of good people took very different positions. What is significant here is the fact that, for some who did attend, there was a surprising gap between the work they did as scholars and the work they did as activists.

One needn't be an activist to be a scholar, nor a scholar to be an activist. But scholarship can be rigorous in its intellectual capacity and still be fully engaged with the ethical regard for equity, inclusivity, and transformative possibility. They need not be mutually exclusive categories. This was driven home when one of us overheard another academic ask a senior scholar if she was going to attend a

planned protest against the anti-immigrant legislation in downtown Tucson. The senior scholar—whose activist credentials are every bit as impressive as her scholarship—responded quite simply, “I’m going to listen to scholars give their papers. That’s my protest.” For her, the very fact that this scholarly organization existed was meaningful. She saw value in listening to other scholars share their ideas with one another. She understood one of her roles as an activist to be supportive to the emerging scholars who had often travelled long distances to present papers, young academics who were struggling to make a space for Indigenous ideas, texts, and perspectives on campuses and in communities that were sometimes indifferent or even hostile to Native peoples.

Good scholarship can be good activism simply by *being*. One of the greatest threats to Indigenous peoples has been the idea that they have nothing of intellectual significance, that there are no ideas of merit or worthy of regard to be found in Native cultures, communities, and traditions. Engagement with the world beyond academia is important, but what we do as scholars, teachers, writers, artists, and knowledge keepers is important, too, even the seemingly mundane tasks like going to panels and sharing papers. Scholarship and social commitment need not be mutually exclusive. Indeed, they rarely are, especially among practitioners in our field. Considering the fact that the Arizona legislation also targeted the teaching and study of Mexican American and Chicano/a history and studies, we would do well to remember that the very existence of Native studies carries meaning well beyond its content.

The work we do as literary scholars and writers won’t likely provide food or clothing or housing to anyone; it’s unlikely that it will stop the passage of racist laws or prevent acts of violence. But it can change minds; it can open hearts and light the spark of dignity and self-acceptance; it can help us to reach across difference and open ourselves to understanding; it can offer a guiding illumination in a time of blinding fear and anger. We should not—*must not*—ignore the transformative possibilities that emerge from the writing, sharing, teaching, and analyzing of these ideas. The impact needn’t be big to be meaningful. The irony is that those who are opposed to Native

studies are often far more respectful of its potential power than are some of its practitioners. We dismiss that power to our detriment as individuals, as a field, and as a profession that can bring its skills to bear in service of Indigenous sovereignty, self-determination, and continuity.

The contributions to this issue of *SAIL* engage these concerns in different but complementary ways, together articulating the rich breadth and depth of Native literary expression. Each essay honors the power of Indigenous story through its rigorous attention to the ideas presented by the texts under discussion.

In the opening essay, Mark Rifkin explores the “multivectorred struggle over the contours of US-Indian affairs” in Mohican sachem Hendrick Aupaumut’s “A Short Narration of My Last Journey to the Western Country,” giving particular attention to the political function of Indigenous kinship values in Aupaumut’s response to US intrusions and diplomatic presumptions. Lydia Cooper shifts the discussion from the late eighteenth century of Rifkin’s essay to the late twentieth with her provocative study of the failure of sacrificial “violent atonement” in Sherman Alexie’s *Indian Killer* and David Treuer’s *The Hiawatha*. For Cooper, these novels “assert the critical importance of subjugating religious symbolism to practical and ethical critique,” and she tracks the larger religious and political implications of such an assertion. The final essay of the issue, “Landscape as Narrative, Narrative as Landscape,” is unusual in that it is two essays with two authors interwoven into a mutual and fascinating conversation about literature, place, and religion. Theresa S. Smith and Jill M. Fiore look to Anishinaabe sacred history and Linda Hogan’s *Solar Storms* as the firm grounding for the resulting discussion. We end with insightful and incisive book reviews by Stephanie Wheeler, Marcos Julian Del Hierro, Joshua B. Nelson, and Eric Wayne Dickey, with texts on subjects ranging from Plains Indian sign talk to the rhetoric of the Americas, the journals and poems of Creek writer Alexander Posey, and the latest collection of short fiction from Ralph Salisbury (Cherokee).

The contributions to this issue—and to all of the issues of *SAIL*—are testament to the extraordinary intellectual depth and diverse

concerns of our field. It is proactive in its purpose, not reactive; constructive in its effect, not divisive. With such scholarship and such scholars, our field offers the best and most affirming response to those who would diminish the significance of what we can do in this field. Scholarship is only one part of the difference we can make toward a more just and respectful world, but it has its part to play. We are honored to share this issue of *SAIL* with you.

Daniel Heath Justice and James H. Cox



# American Indian Quarterly

## Edited by Amanda Cobb-Greetham

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U N I V E R S I T Y O F

NEBRASKA  P R E S S

# Remapping the Family of Nations

The Geopolitics of Kinship in Hendrick Aupaumut's  
"A Short Narration"

MARK RIFKIN

In the 1832 US Supreme Court case of *Worcester v. Georgia*, the majority found that treaties with Indian nations were no different from those with countries recognized as "foreign": "We have applied them to Indians, as we have applied them to the other nations of the earth. They are applied to all in the same sense" (560). This statement has been cited by many as a formal acknowledgment of Native sovereignty, as admitting that the United States has engaged with Native peoples as separate polities and that treaties are the mark and vehicle of that engagement. However, to what extent do treaties, and US policy writ large, seek to manage modes of political recognition in ways ultimately conducive to US aims and interests? In *This is Not a Peace Pipe: Towards a Critical Indigenous Philosophy*, Dale Turner notes, "there are intellectual landscapes that have been forced on Aboriginal peoples. . . . These intellectual traditions, stained by colonialism, have created discourses on property, ethics, political sovereignty, and justice that have subjugated, distorted, and marginalized Aboriginal ways of thinking" (88). Analyzing the force with which those "landscapes" are imposed on Native peoples and the particular ways they constrain Native self-representation begs the question of how Indigenous nations map their own geopolitics—both in terms of their sense of selfhood and their relations with other peoples.

The discursive and institutional landscape of federal Indian policy in the early to mid-nineteenth century required the imposition of centralized governance on Native peoples in order to facilitate consent to land cessions. The United States further attempted to

isolate peoples from each other on discretely delimited lands, disallowing shared or overlapping territory and routing intertribal relations through the United States and seeking to negotiate with each “tribe” individually in a contractual fashion without reference to the desires and interests of the peoples around them.<sup>1</sup> The subject-positions produced by US policy, however, tended to have little connection to extant Native modes of collective decision-making, land tenure, or diplomacy. In particular, this process effaced traditional kinship systems operating within and among peoples, networks that militated against imperial strategies of insulation and translation. These systems served as more than merely a series of political metaphors (such as brotherhood), instead providing a conceptual framework for peoplehood and regional geopolitics.<sup>2</sup> Encompassing yet far exceeding the issues of reproduction, childcare, and household formation usually grouped together in Anglo-American discourses of “family,” kinship dynamics served as the basis for internal governance for numerous peoples in the Great Lakes region as well as generating the grammar for interactions among peoples. Put more precisely, kinship gave shape to the nexus of peoplehood—the contours and content of recognized Indigenous modes of collectivity and diplomacy. In presuming a liberal model of statehood as the basis for political identity and negotiation, one predicated on a representative government with jurisdictional authority over a clearly delimited territory, US Indian policy sought to create kinds of political subjectivity and geography that would reshape Native political economy in ways that lubricated US preemption claims and expedited white settlement. The ensuing conflict over what would constitute US-Indian politics, however, was disavowed by the United States in its portrayal of its action as fully predicated on Native assent, ignoring the persistent discrepancies between the official narration of Native identity and the formulations and formations of Indigenous peoples.

In “A Short Narration of My Last Journey to the Western Country” (1792), his account of his service as a US envoy to peoples in the Ohio region, Hendrick Aupaumut highlights the multivector struggle over the contours of US-Indian affairs, illustrating

the complex ways kinship can serve as an idiom of governance and thereby challenging the organizing logics of US policy. A hereditary sachem, Aupaumut had been raised amid and trained in Euroamerican social life, including service in the Continental Army during the Revolution, in which he earned the title of “Captain,” and in the 1780s, he led his people from western Massachusetts to Oneida territory to evade increasing forms of white intrusion and exploitation.<sup>3</sup> His role as a US negotiator began in 1791, when he volunteered to serve US Indian Commissioner Timothy Pickering as a liaison with western peoples. From 1791 to 1793, he went on four missions of peace; “A Short Narration” is the chronicle of his third trip west. It contextualizes US policy initiatives and Aupaumut’s de facto role as ambassador within an extended meditation on the longstanding and ongoing dynamics of Native diplomacy. The text articulates a set of principles for diplomacy and geopolitics predicated on a recognition of the central role of kinship in Native peoples’ self-conceptions and engagement with each other. In this way, his narrative insists on the centrality of these traditions in understanding and negotiating with Indigenous polities, positioning kinship as a paradigmatic mode of a Native-centered internationalism with which the United States must engage if there is to be peace.

Scholarly accounts of Aupaumut, however, have a tendency to focus on his individual role as a mediator rather than highlighting the vision of Native peoplehood and mapping of Indigenous geopolitics offered in his writings.<sup>4</sup> For example, in “Captain Hendrick Aupaumut: The Dilemmas of an Intercultural Broker,” Alan Taylor presents Aupaumut as an intermediary moving back and forth across a “cultural” boundary, “pass[ing] through two worlds” although “he was never fully trusted in either” (448). The emphasis is placed on the special capacity of certain persons to transect Native-settler difference, as well as the costs to them of doing so.<sup>5</sup> When set within the conceptual backdrop of “world”-ing, any effort to articulate Native perceptions and principles to Euroamericans can be understood as a hybridizing gesture, occurring in a (phantasmatic) *middle* space.<sup>6</sup> This framing further directs analytical attention toward Aupaumut’s “motives,” which Taylor asserts “were rooted in . . . tradition and in

service to the pressing needs of his people” (443), and away from the specific political cartography enunciated in Aupaumut’s writings. What is lost in that process is discussion of the ways Aupaumut’s narrative does not so much testify to his supposedly liminal position in between “cultures” as evidence the effort by Native intellectuals in the period to articulate Native geopolitical principles in order to get the United States to recognize and participate in them.

A similar interpretive problem emerges in Rachel Wheeler’s reworking of the notion of “revitalization.” In “Hendrick Aupaumut: Christian Mahican Prophet,” she suggests that the concept “has become so closely linked to resistance movements that we miss important opportunities to understand ‘nativist’ and ‘accommodationist’ movements as two distinct answers to the same question of how best to adapt to new circumstances,” adding that the privileging of a “nativist” orientation occludes “native Christianity” as a revitalizing force (190). In offering a spectrum of revitalization options and placing Aupaumut on it, Wheeler’s essay still retains the nativist-accommodationist dichotomy it seems to want to displace, except now it appears as an expression of the beliefs of Native leaders themselves.<sup>7</sup> The focus of this distinction seems to be the degree to which whites are embraced within a particular notion of Native identity: “Aupaumut’s Christian-inflected vision extended the reach of native fictive kinship ties to forge fraternal bonds of mutual obligation between the citizens of a diverse American republic” (193).<sup>8</sup> This reading ignores the ways that kinship as articulated in Aupaumut’s writings, at least during the 1790s, was not a metaphor for bonds among “citizens” of the United States but a complex system of relations among distinct polities, particularly Indigenous ones. The assumption that kinship in Aupaumut’s writings refers to something like a concept of Christian brotherhood ignores its active role in Native governance, a point that, as I will show below, the narrative indicates quite explicitly. The effort to locate a *cultural* boundary in which Christianity belongs to the “accommodationist” rather than the “nativist” side presumes a synecdochic relation between an intellectual’s adoption of white “ways” (a phrase Wheeler uses several times) and the political imaginary within which he works,

such that Aupaumut's clear commitment to Christianity and literacy in English must mean that he accepts US jurisdictional frameworks (like that of citizenship).<sup>9</sup> In Wheeler's account, Aupaumut's role as a mediator seems necessarily to lie in reconciling Indian and white *ways* rather than in promoting a particular understanding of peoplehood and international engagement that largely parallels the model offered by "nativist" intellectuals.

Put another way, the idea of the mediator or broker seems to require positing a division in which that person is aligned with a particular *cultural* orientation or positioned in a middle space, instead of examining that person's representation of and role within Indigenous *geopolitics*. From the latter perspective, the emphasis is less on an effort to move between or reconcile "worlds" or "ways" than on how a given Native intellectual seeks to make extant modes of Indigenous peoplehood intelligible within the legal and political discourses of the settler state—how, in Turner's terms quoted above, Indigenous "ways of thinking" about collectivity and diplomacy can be situated within the "intellectual [and institutional] landscapes" of settler governance. As an envoy reporting on his activities to US officials, Aupaumut in "A Short Narration" certainly is engaged in conveying information across a divide, but his aim seems to be less to find common ground between Native and settler positions than to mark a distinction between *kinds* of geopolitical systems. His narrative lays out the geopolitics of kinship that structures relations within and among Native peoples, suggesting that accepting Indigenous norms as a frame for Indian affairs would help considerably in ending the violence between the United States and Great Lakes peoples.

In conceptualizing Aupaumut's attempt to intervene within US policy discourses and logics, Antonio Gramsci's notion of political *maneuver* might be helpful in moving discussion away from a notion of cultural *mediation*. Gramsci distinguishes between a war of maneuver and a war of position in political struggle, describing the former as "a question of winning positions which are not decisive" and the latter as when "only the decisive positions are at stake" in what amounts to "siege warfare" (239). The fact that the United

States sought something like a Native ambassador to negotiate with peoples to the west indicates a willingness, at least temporarily, to move away from the strategy of diplomatically asserting US authority by virtue of “conquest” and militarily enforcing that decree when confronted with Native objections. Aupaumut’s mission itself was indicative of changed tactics on the part of the United States, and his narrative takes advantage of this shift, proposing that the United States *reposition* itself in relation to Indigenous expectations. In doing so, the narrative marks the disjunctions between the assumptions of US officials and the working principles of Indigenous diplomacy, ordered around notions of kinship. This way of reading draws attention to the possibilities of intelligibility for Native self-representations within extant US policy discourses, the relative potential for negotiation among varied geopolitical imaginings in this particular historical conjuncture, and the ways description of Indigenous practices by Native people can function as counterhegemonic leverage—playing on tensions and shifts in Indian policy to expose the limits of US assumptions and the presence of alternative modes for framing US-Native engagement. As Gramsci suggests, “the most important observation to be made about any concrete analysis is the following: that such analyses cannot and must not be ends in themselves . . . , but acquire significance only if they serve to justify a particular practical activity or initiative of will” (185). By introducing a tropology organized around kinship as the framework through which to offer his analysis of the situation in the Ohio region, Aupaumut attempts to alter the “practical activity” of US policy. As Daniel Heath Justice argues, “Indigenous intellectual traditions have survived not because they’ve conceded to fragmenting Eurowestern priorities, but because they’ve *challenged* those priorities,” adding that “kinship is best thought of as a verb, rather than a noun, because kinship, in most indigenous contexts, is something that’s *done* more than something that simply *is*” (150–51). Aupaumut illustrates such a challenge, demonstrating how kinship can provide a different way of *doing* diplomacy and international relations. The shift away from the reifying and segregating dynamics of the treaty system toward a more flexible vision of Native peoplehood works to

facilitate the recognition of persistent Native political geographies and modes of diplomacy.<sup>10</sup> In his narrative, Aupaumut uses his position in relation to the emergent bureaucracy of the new nation to assert the validity of existing Native sociopolitical networks, structured around a kinship imaginary, emphasizing the importance of accepting Native political formations and epistemologies if there is to be peace.

#### WE ARE FAMILY

The failure of the United States to engage with, or even acknowledge, Native geopolitics immediately in the wake of the Revolution produced volatile confrontations with nations northwest of the Ohio River. In the immediate aftermath of the war, the United States attempted to treat Native peoples, particularly those who had sided with the British, as conquered subjects to whom policy could be dictated. Such unilateralism involved the imposition of several treaties between 1784 and 1786, which if accepted by some chiefs were greeted by many of the Indians in the region as an illegitimate intrusion on their lands. The US attempt to extend its boundaries northwestward through treaty-making was both an effort to impose terms of peace on former enemies and to acquire land that could then be sold to white settlers in order to offset the extensive debt from the war. In response to these incursions, a confederacy emerged, with representatives from a range of peoples including the Six Nations of the Iroquois, Miamis, Delawares, Shawnees, and Potawatomis meeting regularly at Brownstown, a village south of what would become Detroit, in the late-1780s with on-again, off-again support from British officials. The coalition demanded that the United States cede all claims to lands north of the Ohio River, acknowledge that lands in the Ohio region were under the joint control of members of the confederacy, and accept that their unanimous support for sales would be necessary for any US purchase to be valid. In 1789, the council fire of the confederacy was moved to Kekionga (Miami Town) on the Maumee River. In 1790 and 1791, Josiah Harmar and Arthur St. Clair, respectively, led disastrous assaults on the village,

the latter resulting in the death of six hundred US soldiers and an additional eight hundred casualties.<sup>11</sup>

Within this context, Aupaumut's 1792 report on his trip to the Ohio region can be read as an effort to make Native understandings intelligible to US officials while also positioning the Mahicans as vital players in US-Indian affairs, a significant strategy given the increasing pressures on them from both New York state and their Oneida hosts.<sup>12</sup> In his orders to Aupaumut, Pickering indicates that he should "convince them of the moderation, justice, and desire of the United States for peace," further emphasizing that "the business on which you are employed is of high importance to the United States" (*American State Papers* 1:233). A central part of Aupaumut's mission was to find a basis for rapprochement through which the United States and the peoples of the Ohio could engage in meaningful dialogue. As he makes clear at the beginning of his account, the political matrix into which the United States seeks to enter is shaped first and foremost by relations of kinship. He observes, "Before I proceed in the business I am upon, I think it would be necessary to give a short sketch what friendship and connections, our forefathers, and we, have had with the western tribes" (76), and he then details the web of relations in which the Mahicans, Iroquois League, and the peoples with whom he was sent to negotiate are enmeshed: the Delawares are the Mahicans' grandfathers; the Shawnees are the younger brothers; the Miamis, grandchildren; the Wyandots, uncles; the Ottawas and Chippewas, grandchildren; and the Six Nations of the Iroquois, uncles (76–79). These familial connections are not simply individual links between the Mahicans and other peoples but also express the relative positions of the latter with respect to each other. All these peoples belong to a shared system in which kinship terms encode the dynamics of their past (for "near 200 years" [77]) and shape their ongoing interactions. Aupaumut intimates that the struggles of the present cannot be resolved without knowledge of the sociopolitical framework inherited from "our forefathers," implicitly insisting that the United States can enter into this internationalist network only by appreciating and accepting its organizing structures.

This initial conceit works to place the United States within a Native-centered history and geography, and the text uses the recounting of diplomatic exchanges to indicate the coherence of these peoples as peoples. Rather than using letters and documents, Native nations transmit messages through speeches in council. Within each one, the speaker names his audience by invoking the kinship relation that obtains between their peoples. For example, “the Chief of Shawanese” begins his address to Aupaumut with the following:

Elder brother Muhheunconneew—

We now speak in one voice to you—we all rejoice that you have come to us—you have taken great pains to come on the long and tedious journey. Our ancestors have long ago fixed our feelings which we ever maintain—and it is so ordered by the Great Good Spirit that we this day see each other after a great length of time, and that we now set together. (90)

Similarly, in a later address to a council of Delawares, Aupaumut observes:

Grandfather—

We the poor remnant of our ancestors are met together. Our good fathers have left good customs, and path to go by, so that in all occasions we are to put each other in remembrance of the ancient Customs of our fathers as well as the friendship. (99)

These moments illustrate that the familial idiom is less an expression of individual feelings and relationships than of enduring bonds among collectivities. The Shawnee chief and Aupaumut speak as part of a “we” who have a longstanding connection with the Mahicans and Delawares, respectively, both invoking a “friendship” that subsists not between villages or enclaves but among peoples. These relationships emerge out of and are sustained by shared “customs” that provide a framework in which kinship “feelings” can serve as the basis for enduring modes of collective solidarity and self-understanding.

Each tribe has a unity, a cohesive identity as a sociopolitical

entity, that enables it to be personified as a relative, and conversely, the language of kinship reinforces such collective subjectivity as a vital feature of interactions within and negotiations among Indigenous communities. The presentation of intertribal ties as an inheritance from “ancestors” suggests more than simply their duration, further expressing something of their form and content. Unlike a contract, a mutually agreed upon set of conditions and responsibilities between two or more parties, the double-sided invocation of kinship—as an intratribal familial legacy and an intertribal familial connection—casts diplomacy as an ongoing participation in a network of intimate relationships that depends on periodic renewal. In a speech to the Delawares, Aupaumut observes,

It is a happy thing that we should maintain a Union. But to us it is not a new thing. For our good Ancestors (who used to have compassion to each other,) many, many years ago, have agreed to this. And we, who are of their descendance, should not hesitate, or, as it were, ask one another whether we should like it. But we must always remind each other how our ancestors did agree on this Subject, that we may never forgo that. (101)

The ongoing expression of “compassion” and care is crucial to sustaining the “friendship” among people. Moreover, the familial idiom marks a sense of interdependence and reciprocal responsibility that is not reducible to the notion of contingent national self-interest that shapes Euroamerican policy decisions. After each speech, strings of wampum are given, suggesting that they are not incidental gifts but integral parts of the message itself. The connection between the transfer of wampum and longstanding relations of kinship among peoples is suggested in Aupaumut’s indication of his need to bring his “bag of peace, in which there is ancient wampom,” a reference clarified in his history of the Mahican people (written around 1790): “In this bag they keep all belts and strings which they received of their allies of different nations. The bag is, as it were, unmoveable; but it is always remain at Sachem’s house, as hereditary with the office of a Sachem” (“History” 31).<sup>13</sup> The language of kinship, then, suggests that each people functions as a distinct, differentiated

entity while at the same time indicating that such identity gains its meaning within an intertribal matrix that provides the geohistorical context for formation and identification as peoples.

These relationships are replicated at a smaller scale as well. Once he has reached the Maumee River, Aupaumut encounters a fellow Mahican who lives in the area. Named Pohquonnoppeet, he is “one of the chiefs” and “has been with these nations ever since he was a boy.” However, his residence has not cut him off from other Mahicans; rather, he “has long[ed] to see us” and “has been strengthen[ing] our message these several years” (87). This seemingly isolated figure is situated within a broader geography of alliance in which peoples continually renew the bonds established in generations past. The rendering of the alliances among peoples in kinship terms allows for individuals to live with members of other Native nations without altering their sense of belonging to their own. In his “History,” Aupaumut articulates this connection even more explicitly. After noting that “our forefathers . . . had allies, even in the remotest nations; and according to the ancient custom many of these nations made renewal of the covenants with us which their forefathers and ours had made,” he tells the story of Mahican warfare and subsequent peacemaking with the Miami nation: “From that time [a] tract of land has been reserved for our nation to this day, and that covenant had been renewed at different times, and a number of our nation live on that land these several years past to this day” (27). The presence of Mahicans on Miami land, perhaps living in Miami villages, is interpreted not as an attenuation of Mahican identity but as an expression and fortification of the “covenant” between peoples.

Pohquonnoppeet’s local connections are presented as an extension of broader patterns of intertribal affection and alliance, his relationships of kinship with those around him mirroring, renewing, and helping concretize bonds among peoples. Such residence can be understood as a miniature version of the larger pattern of intertribal kinship, a local instance that helps cohere and sustain the broader network of “friendship.” Kinship provides a flexible framework for Native geopolitics, indicating the presence of a geopolitical

system organized around shared principles of alliance and association among peoples that emphasize ongoing forms of engagement and reciprocity—designated in familial terms. Kinship operates at multiple levels simultaneously (national, village, and individual bonds), allowing them to serve as metonymic signifiers for each other in ways that reinforce the vitality of “ancient customs” of “union” while still recognizing the autonomy of social actors at various scales.

#### THE LIMITS OF CONTRACT

Aupaumut’s detailed account of both Mahican kinship relations with other peoples and the active rehearsal and renewal of those connections as a central feature of their present engagement with each other subtly contests the norms of US Indian policy. His report’s foregrounding of the role of Native tradition as an indispensable part of diplomatic routine implicitly indicates that US preemption claims and modes of treaty-making have no place in the Ohio country. The assumption that the peoples with whom Aupaumut has been sent to negotiate reside on US territory and that they can be approached individually for cessions of territory simply makes no sense in his narrative. The narrative sketches, in Dale Turner’s terms, an *intellectual landscape* in which Native peoples do not remain insulated from each other on isolated reserves mapped and managed by non-Native governments. In this vein, not only does kinship offer a different understanding of the social topography of Native life than that of European and Euroamerican regimes, but through this optic, the attempt to use the legal structure of the settler state to mediate the relation between peoples, to cast that structure as a neutral vehicle for registering Native geopolitics, is itself an intrusion on Native sovereignty and self-determination.<sup>14</sup>

In fact, claims by non-Natives to superintend intertribal relations appear not merely presumptuous but preposterous. During a conference with Aupaumut, the Delaware sachem Big Cat recounts an exchange he had with Captain Matthew Elliot, a British agent in the region. After Elliot asks “where these Indians come from, and

what is their business,” Big Cat responds, “how came you to ask such questions? . . . Can you watch, and look all around the earth to see who come to us? or is what their Business? Do you not know that we are upon our own Business? and that we have longed to see these our friends, who now come to us, and for which we rejoice?” (103) The inclusion of this dialogue can be seen as an effort to put US officials on notice that meddling in Native international affairs, and especially insisting on the right unilaterally to set the terms of US-Indian relations, will not be tolerated. Aupaumut here, via Big Cat, challenges the imperial arrogation of metapolitical authority to determine the proper contours of political identity.

Aupaumut’s account further presents the conditions that precipitate his mission as themselves arising out of ongoing negotiations among Native peoples guided by existing kinship alliances. If the United States often seeks to position itself as the prime mover in Native affairs, it instead appears in the narrative as following in the wake of Indigenous diplomacy, in some ways scrambling to keep up. Recounting his speech to the Senecas delivered at Buffalo Creek on June 13, Aupaumut observes that after the Seneca delegation had left Philadelphia in the wake of the most recent conference with federal officials, “a messenger arrived with a message of the Seven Nations of Canada, to let the United States know that they the Seven Nations were invited by the Western Tribes to attend a great Council on Miami.” Not wanting the United States to believe their movements indicated a commitment to war, the Seven Nations, the Haudenosaunee and allied groups who had relocated in the late seventeenth century to north of the St. Lawrence and had converted to Catholicism, sent word that they were going “to meet the Five Nations” (the Haudenosaunees on land claimed by New York) at Buffalo Creek and set out to the Miami region together (79). Although noting that US leaders had approved of this plan, Aupaumut’s rendition of this exchange highlights that the Seven Nations were acting on a request from the western tribes, which itself indicates a pre-existing relationship of the sort I discussed in the previous section. Moreover, the idea to stop at Buffalo Creek first speaks to the clan and confederacy connections that continue to tie Haudenosaunee peoples

to each other, despite their disparate locations within Euro-centered mappings. There is no sense of them requesting permission to traverse US space or acknowledgment that they are crossing what the United States believes to be an international boundary and thus are, within that logic, invading national territory. Instead, the message seeks to clarify that sustained alliance need not necessarily mean a shared belligerence.

The message from the Seven Nations, then, is in some ways pedagogical, teaching the United States how Native networks operate, and Aupaumut's circulation of the message in this layered way (a report to the United States that repeats Aupaumut's relaying of the message to the Senecas) amplifies this lesson while also implicitly decentering the United States, illustrating that the geopolitical imaginary of the settler-state does not provide the conceptual framework for interactions among Native peoples nor is it of central importance in their determinations about when and how to engage with each other. Similarly, after his later account of a council meeting with Delaware leaders in Big Cat's town on August 1, Aupaumut notes, "This nation had delivered a speech to my nation twice before—as a query whether my nation would accept the plan of Union" (100). Mahican and Delaware relations echo those among Haudenosaunees as well as their link to the western tribes. This diplomatic matrix, coordinated through the terms and logics of kinship, further is figured as facilitating a "plan of Union," a phrase that for a US readership cannot help but recall the federal union on which the nation is predicated. However, here that image refers not to a constitutionally contracted series of limited obligations and nested jurisdictional hierarchies but to the encompassing and renewed "compassion" among peoples maintained over generations (91).<sup>15</sup> At such moments, the narrative subtly yet insistently indicates that there is more than one system of Indian affairs at play in shaping the circumstances of peace and war, and that the system accepted by Native peoples themselves is of far longer duration and greater scope than that which the United States seeks to impose.

If, as I suggested earlier, the United States' failed efforts to resolve conflict in the Ohio region through combat opened the political

space for maneuver, Aupaumut uses this opportunity both to expose the limits of US political paradigms and to reorient policy in ways that align the federal government with the promotion of “friendship.” This process emerges perhaps most visibly in the issue of how to narrate the relationship between the violence of backcountry settlers and the official actions of the new nation. More specifically, the text keeps circling around the question, who are the “Big Knives”? Appealing for peace and reconciliation, Aupaumut differentiates the “Big Knives” (the white squatters and assailants in Native territories) from the government, insisting that these intruders are not representative of the new nation and that the United States has promised to deal with them (see Gustafson 261; Taylor, “Captain Hendrick,” 444). Aupaumut observes that in a council meeting on July 16 he “faithfully deliver[ed] the message of the United States” to those in attendance, which says in part, “We have informed you that we speak from our hearts and in sorrow—because there are difficulties subsisting between you and the Big Knives,” adding, “If the Big Knives have done any injuries to you, you must manifest it to us. Or if our servants have wronged you in any matter, or have defraud you with regard to your Lands, you must inform us the same” (92–94). While observing that there are settlers who are responsible for “injuries” done to Native peoples in the Ohio region, the US government distinguishes between itself and those persons, indicating an official “us” that is utterly separate from the actions of those engaged in violence. Moreover, in acknowledging the possibility of “fraud” by US “servants,” the message differentiates these agents from the aggressions of the Big Knives (“or if”). From this perspective, there are three sets of actors (Big Knives, servants of the US government, and US leaders in Philadelphia), and the different kinds of wrongs committed by the previous two are not extensions of the will of the last, who act only from good feelings and experience deep “sorrow” at the failure of some US citizens to behave appropriately. Their lapses, then, are not symptomatic of state policy.

Yet the narrative offers numerous instances in which speakers from various Native nations use the phrase “Big Knives” to refer to the United States, not simply to intruders who are US citizens.

Responding to the above message, a Delaware sachem notes that “we never receive such pure good Message from the Big knives” (96), and a Wyandot leader responds, “I never had such a pure Message from the Big knives” (107). Thus, even in affirming the good will and gesture of peace and friendship offered by the United States, these statements subtly repudiate the government’s attempt to distance itself from violence in the west. Rather, the message appears here as potentially indicating a salutary change of heart in which the United States will now cease implementing its larger project of invasion and occupation. In a council on October 9, the Shawnees, however, in a speech to the Six Nations, assert, “And be it known to you that we could not speak to the Big knives at the forts for in those places is blood. The United States have laid these troubles, and they can remove these troubles. And if they take away all their forts and move back to the ancient line [the Ohio River], then we will believe that they mean to have peace” (121). More than collapsing the supposed gap between the US government and combative backcountry settlers, the Shawnees implicitly combine the “blood” spilled by the latter with the loss of Native life due to US military campaigns (issuing from “the forts”) while explicitly indicating that violence against Native peoples in the region can be traced back to the larger expansionist aims of the United States. The government’s desire to claim territory beyond “the ancient line” provides the context for all “these troubles” while further enflaming them. A true “peace” would entail fully recognizing and respecting Native geopolitical claims and principles.

Aupaumut’s answer to the Big Knives question, especially alongside his reproduction of other Native leaders’ answers, can be read as a way of negotiating the United States toward the confederacy’s goals. He indicates that in his discussions with peoples in the west he sought to distinguish between the prior British regime and that of the new nation:

First principal thing they argue is this—that the white people are deceitful. . . . [They] have taken all our lands from us, from time to time until this time, and that they will continue the same way, &c. Then I reply and say it has been to much

so, because these white people was governed by one Law, the Law of the great king of England; and by that Law they could hold our lands in spite of our dissatisfaction. . . . But now they have new Laws their own, and by these Laws Indians cannot be deceived as usual, &c. And they say, but these Big knives have taken away our lands since they have their own way. And then I tell them, for this very reason, the United Sachems invite you to treat with them that you may settle these difficulties[.] (126)

The treatment of Native peoples, and specifically recognition and respect for their territoriality, is framed as a signal feature of US independence. As opposed to enacting a continuity in “white”-ness characterized by deception and displacement of “Indians,” the “new Laws” institute a relation in which Native “satisfaction” plays a central role. Active US disidentification from the actions of the Big Knives is linked to the project of the Revolution itself, presenting explicit or implicit support for settler violence as a violation of founding ideals. If the figure of union highlights differences between the principles guiding the western confederacy and those of US governance, Aupaumut here not only indicates the potential for the latter to engage in peaceful and productive ways with the former but also presents such cooperation as a vital part of the unfinished work of overturning “the Law of the great king of England.” Positing a fundamental distinction between the militarized settlers and “the United Sachems,” then, allows room for political maneuvering, calling for the United States to move toward Native conceptions of *friendship* and *compassion* as the fulfillment of its own opposition to imperial tyranny. In this way, the text offers a scathing and sustained indictment of the persistence of the ideology of conquest and its role in producing cycles of warfare, but that perspective is voiced in the narrative by others, leaving Aupaumut in the role of articulating the possibility of a change in course couched in the face-saving form of a yet-to-be-fully-realized actualization of the “new Laws” that will restrain settlers and “settle these difficulties.”

Aupaumut further presents the situation of the Mahicans as evidence of the US commitment to peace. He indicates that in discus-

sions with western peoples he has observed, “If the great men of the United States have the like principal or disposition as the Big knives had, My nation and other Indians in the East, would have been along ago anihilated” (127). His very presence serves as evidence of the claims he is making about US good will. However, if that is what he says to members of the confederacy, the narrative observes that a very different account could be offered about the status of the Mahicans. Toward the end of the narrative, Aupaumut observes that he has omitted some quite damning details in his talks with western peoples:

I have as it were oblige to say nothing with regard to the conduct of Yorkers, how they cheat my fathers, how they taken our lands Unjustly, and how my fathers were groaning as it were to their graves, in loseing their lands for nothing, although they were faithful friends to the Whites; and how the white people artfully got their Deeds confirm in their Laws, &c. I say had I mention these things to the Indians, it would agravate their prejudices against all white people, &c. (128)

Referencing current pressures on the Oneidas’ territory and New Stockbridge as well as struggles earlier in the century over extensive tracts of land in the vicinity of Albany, this passage denounces the seizure of Native lands as a violation of the “faithful friend”-ship between the Mahicans and whites. In light of the report’s repeated use of “friendship” to represent intertribal kinship, the term’s appearance here portrays Anglo-American modes of land acquisition as having failed to uphold Native notions of right conduct, as a wholesale inability to be a good relative and to offer appropriate forms of respect and reciprocity. As Lisa Brooks suggests, this moment shows Aupaumut “was not just a messenger of the narrative of false treaties, but a character within it” (148). By indicating that such actions, if revealed to western peoples, “would agravate their prejudices,” Aupaumut both seeks to leverage more just treatment for the Mahicans and to signal the nonviability of the usual Euroamerican documentary and bureaucratic sleights-of-hand in negotiations with Native nations. Legalistic “artfull[ness]” must be

replaced with a compassion predicated on a sense of sustained connection among peoples.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, the inclusion of this aside about what he has not revealed to the other participants in the confederacy subtly suggests to his US readers that he sees the clear-cut distinction between the Big Knives and the US government that he offers in his talks with Native peoples as a tactic, further highlighting the critique of the United States as having “laid these troubles” and suggesting that an active policy change from *cheating* to *friendship* is necessary to make true the story of national dedication to peace.

The self-interested nature of US policy, and the wary stance of the Mahicans toward it, is made explicit in one of Aupaumut’s addresses to a mixed council of Shawnees and Delawares. He states,

I will acquaint you some things of our situation, lest you may have wrong apprehension. Since the British and Americans lay down their hatchets, then my nation was forgotten. We never have had invitation to set in Council with the white people—not as the [Iroquois] Nations and you are greatly regarded by the white people—but last winter was the first time I had invitation from the great man of the United States to attend Council in Philadelphia. (92)

Beyond simply providing background on his status as an envoy, Aupaumut here offers critical commentary on the guiding principles of US Indian affairs. In contrast to the rituals of renewed kinship that mark ongoing intertribal memories of ancestral affections, relationships with the United States are shaped by a capricious forgetfulness in which governmental “regard” waxes and wanes depending on perceived national need. The “invitation” to Aupaumut to meet in council with US officials appears here as a fickle gesture, unlike the sustained relations of friendship among Native peoples. Even though he speaks on behalf of the US government, Aupaumut distances the Mahicans from it, implying that the idea of an intimate alliance between them would be a “wrong appr[e]hension” and raising questions about the ability of the United States to engage in good-faith diplomacy.

Including this speech in his report serves as a way of chastising

US officials for previously ignoring Mahican presence and interests while also suggesting that substantive engagement with Native political networks will require a reformed attitude toward such relations. In this way, the text not only provides a kinship-centered mapping of Native geopolitics, which increases US intelligence on peoples in the Ohio region, but intimates that the failure of the United States to adhere to Indigenous political norms will result in diplomatic disaster and further bloodshed. Thus, while indicating Aupaumut's effort to speak well for the United States, the narrative also insists in various ways that the condition of possibility for changed diplomatic relations is the substantive acknowledgment of Native political processes with their own modes of address, engagement, and responsibility.

#### CONFLICT AMONG KIN

While challenging the United States to change its *modus operandi* in order to bring itself in line with Indigenous internationalism, the narrative does not imply that the diplomatic matrix it discusses is untroubled and free of conflict. Rather, the report carefully chronicles disagreements among peoples and captures some incredibly pointed accusations leveled by various participants against others. Scholars in various ways have traced how Native peoples developed strategies and tactics for addressing increased Euroamerican intervention in the mid to late eighteenth century, seeking to position themselves advantageously within shifting political and economic networks, and these efforts often produced conflicts within and among peoples, or exacerbated existing tensions, due to the results of choices by a given community or nation on those differently situated within extant geographies of trade, land use, and alliance.<sup>17</sup> Even if cast and conceptualized in kinship terms, then, associations among peoples were never untroubled, since decisions and actions by any group (of whatever scale) would ramify in complex ways in light of existing patterns of occupancy, resource distribution, and affiliation, but Aupaumut's account represents Native leaders as understanding and assessing such effects in terms of peoples' mutual

participation within an extended network organized around shared principles. In other words, the critiques launched against other members of the confederacy are predicated on the idea that peoples over a vast area (stretching across the entire expanse of the Great Lakes and extending to the Atlantic and the Mississippi region) are responsible to each other due to their enmeshment in a formation whose contours are mapped through kinship.

At the very beginning of the narrative, Aupaumut places intertribal contention within the context of this larger geopolitical framework. He observes that “some of the principal chiefs of the Five Nations did oppose” his mission; they claimed that “the business ought to be negotiated by the Five Nations and the British.” Aupaumut counters by saying, “I have hitherto had a persuasion on my mind, that if the Western Nations could be rightly informed of the desires of the United States, they would comply for peace, and that the informer should be an Indian to whom they look upon as a true friend, who has never deceived or injured them” (76). In other words, the problem in sending a representative from the Iroquois League would be that peoples in the west would understand that person’s presence as part of a longer history in which bonds of *friendship* had been compromised. While Aupaumut here leaves the exact nature of the betrayal ambiguous, although the quotations from western leaders on the problematic intimacy between the British and the Six Nations later in the narrative suggest an answer, he intimates that the latter have violated common understandings of right conduct among peoples. The character of proper diplomacy is made apparent immediately thereafter, when Aupaumut refers to “the path of my ancestors” and provides “a short sketch what friendship and connections, our forefathers, and we, have had with the western tribes”—the list of kinship relations among peoples discussed earlier (76). While not included within this initial description, the Six Nations soon appear addressed as “uncles” by Aupaumut (to whom they speak as “nephew”), demonstrating that they too are part of the system of “friendship and connections” indicated by kinship terminology (79–80). The accumulation of these moments indicates that the distrust of the Six Nations by western

peoples is due to their failure to behave as good relatives. The narrative positions tensions among peoples less as a function of their discreteness (separate tribes each pursuing its own isolated interest) than their lapses in “friendship,” itself correlated with longstanding kinship ties, so that the conflict signifies in terms of a Native geopolitical imaginary very much distinct from that of US policy.

This set of concerns returns in the narrative’s recounting of confrontations among the peoples assembled at the various councils Aupaumut witnessed or heard tell of during his journey.<sup>18</sup> When confronted with the Wyandot delegation’s desire to wait for more representatives to arrive before setting up a meeting with US officials, Puckonchehluh, the head warrior of the Delawares, asserts,

You gave me the tomahawk—You laid the foundation of our ruin—now you are setting still, as soon as you hear me speaking of peace you are displeased. Why—because you live in a safe place—yonder. You use me as your front door, now let us exchange our seats, let me live or set yonder, and you set here as my front door see whether you would not rejoice to hear the offers of peace. (111)

More than an annoyance with perceived obstructionism, this assertion offers a structural analysis of the ways Delawares are situated with respect to peoples farther north (the Wyandot sachems partially speaking for the “Ottawas, Chepawas, and Potawatommies” as well [96]). Living closer to strongholds of Euroamerican authority, the Delawares occupy a more precarious position, bearing the brunt of struggles over settlement and thereby providing a buffer for peoples more removed from the pressures of Euroamerican expansion. In marking the discrepant interests of these groups, though, Puckonchehluh highlights that they have a standing relationship with each other, albeit one that has become dysfunctional. The phrase “you use me as your front door” envisions the Delawares and Wyandots within a single dwelling, reaffirming the notion that they belong to a familial network while also underlining how that bond has been exploited. Castigating allies for what is presented as their somewhat cynical manipulation of longstanding ties among

peoples, the Delawares simultaneously seek to mobilize those kinship connections in order to maneuver the “back nations” to join a peace agreement (95), thereby sparing their relatives who are more exposed to the aggressions of the Big Knives.

Similarly, charges are made against the Iroquois League for pushing the larger confederacy into war. A combined group of Shawnees, Miamis, and Cherokees argue that “the English and the Five Nations did lay a foundation for our ruin. They gave us the tomahawk, and the English are at the bottom of this war ever since. . . . Let the English and Five Nations lose their lands” (115). The reference here is to the ways the United States used Native participation on the side of Great Britain during the Revolution to legitimize a discourse of conquest through which it unilaterally claimed Native lands as the spoils of war, particularly annexing territory beyond the “ancient line” of the Ohio River. The Six Nations are accused of failing to take responsibility for the consequences of their appeal to Native systems of alliance. A little over a week later, the Shawnees say to the delegates from the Iroquois League, “Now you may return home, and tell your white people all what you have heard” (121). The inclusion of this last statement by Aupaumut seems somewhat ironic, since it appears to function as a critique of British intervention in Indian affairs, especially the alliance with the Six Nations, but Aupaumut in the report is in fact “tell[ing his] white people all what [he had] heard.” The difference seems to rest in the idea that the Six Nations have lied to other Native peoples in order to serve British interests, whereas, as one of the Delaware sachems observes of the Mahicans, “we could not [find] any instance wherein your ancestors have deceived our fathers” (130). In this vein, the confrontations Aupaumut describes stem from the perception that particular peoples are using the longstanding network of relationships inappropriately, invoking the customs of kinship only to twist them for selfish ends. Thus, rather than undermining the principles of Native diplomacy articulated at the beginning of the narrative, the discussion of quarrels among peoples actually confirms them.

Even as he speaks on behalf of the United States as an official envoy, Aupaumut maintains a distance from the dynamics of US

policy. He argues that the United States desires “to lift . . . the Indians up from the ground,” gesturing toward the incipient civilization program and distinguishing it from British policy that seeks simply “to cover them with blanket and shirt every fall” (127). Yet these initiatives are presented in the context of a reaffirmation of a traditional matrix of intertribal solidarity whose structuring idiom is familial. As portrayed in the narrative, this framework does not merely use the terminology of kinship but privileges forms of memory, intimacy, interdependence, and periodic renewal associated with intratribal kinship systems. Moreover, the text subtly, and sometimes by proxy, refuses Euroamerican preemption, intervention, and legalism, casting them as presumption, deception, and violation while indicating the integrity of Native modes of diplomacy and the necessity of respecting them if the United States seeks lasting peace. The geopolitical and diplomatic matrix the text sketches draws attention to the presumptions in US policy logics and the ways the settler state relies on casting its political paradigms as a neutral framework for engaging with Indigenous peoples, such as in the contractual model of treaty-making that privileges isolating interactions with individual tribes while trying to circumscribe not only Native territoriality but US responsibility. The kinship-centered vision Aupaumut articulates highlights ongoing friendship and compassion as the measure of right conduct, instead of compliance with a limited set of documented propositions.

However, more than tracing differences between Indigenous and Euroamerican conceptions of alliance and negotiation at this particular historical conjuncture, my reading of the narrative has sought to suggest that Aupaumut’s description be taken as an intervention, an effort to shift the terms of negotiation with the United States by reframing the process itself. What possibilities were available at a given moment for narrating peoplehood? How were they articulated, by whom and in what venues, and in what relation to each other? How were they circulated? In what settings were they placed in conversation or contention with the programs, logics, and discourses of settler-state governance, and what sorts of maneuvering did they facilitate or at least aim to make possible? These kinds

of questions strike me as crucial for developing modes of analysis that direct attention less toward the anomalous position of Native intellectuals poised between “worlds” or “ways” than toward exploring how such figures (re)map the landscape of possibility for Native self-definition and self-determination and actively seek to realize such potential.

#### NOTES

In writing this essay, I owe a debt of thanks to Lisa Brooks, who very generously shared her work on Aupaumut with me, provided me with copies of his other narratives (from the collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society), and offered extensive and incredibly helpful comments on an earlier draft of the essay. Research for this essay was funded by a New Faculty Grant from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

1. See Rifkin, *Manifesting America*.

2. On the value of “peoplehood” as a central concept within Native studies, even as against “tribe” or “nation,” see Holm, Pearson, and Chavis; and Deloria and Lytle 1–15. In “Go Away Water!?: Kinship Criticism and the Decolonization Imperative,” Daniel Heath Justice argues that the adoption of a kinship framework in which Native people(s) see themselves as bound to each other in complex, enduring reciprocal relations could provide an alternative to a framework, largely based on blood, that seeks to proclaim the inauthenticity of claims to Native identity. That process, he argues, largely adopts Euroamerican legal categories as its basis while leaving aside the differential effects of histories of settler imperialism on varied peoples. His essay explores the legacies of the very policies of division Hendrick Aupaumut addresses and to which his narrative serves as a response.

3. Aupaumut was born in Stockbridge in May 1757. The village had been granted township status by the Massachusetts General Court in 1736, on the heels of the founding of a mission there two years earlier. Over the prior sixty years, the Mahicans had been displaced from their earlier role as trade middlemen in the region. Having maintained extensive relations of friendship and exchange with surrounding and western peoples, they were very well positioned to take advantage of the Dutch fur trade in the early to mid-seventeenth century, but during the latter half of the century, they were pushed out by Mohawks eager to make themselves the mediators in existing commercial networks. By the 1730s, the Mahicans largely had coalesced

in western Massachusetts, combining with remaining local groups and in the late 1740s moving the council fire of their people to Stockbridge. On Aupaumut's background, see Brooks, 127–36; Occom, 133, 139; Taylor, “Captain Hendrick”; Wheeler; and Wyss. On the Mahicans in this period, see Brooks 21–50; Frazier; Miles; and Wyss 81–122.

4. See Ronda and Ronda; Taylor, “Captain Hendrick”; and Wheeler.

5. On the problems of discussing settlers and Natives as occupying different “worlds,” see Cheyfitz. In *Eloquence is Power*, Sandra M. Gustafson offers a similar formulation. While considering the relation between oral tradition and alphabetic writing in Aupaumut's service for the United States, she presents Aupaumut as having “a dual cultural identity” and serving “as a cultural mediator” in ways that tend to replicate the notion of discrete “worlds” between which he is situated, rather than understanding Aupaumut's knowledge of Euroamerican practices as being incorporated into a traditional articulation of Native geopolitics (257–58).

6. This logic allows Taylor to cast Aupaumut and the Mohawk leader Joseph Brant as rivals “for the same role: to be the one man with the right connections to broker the peace” (“Captain Hendrick” 445), envisioning them as trying to occupy a singular position of dominance in the (imaginary) limbo space between Native and Euroamerican *cultures*. In a fascinating and well-detailed discussion of Aupaumut's service as a US envoy and his various journeys west in the early 1790s, Lisa Brooks also maintains the contrast between Brant and Aupaumut as a structuring frame in order to highlight the presence of multiple ways that Native intellectuals conceptualized Native space (106–62), but this approach seems to me to lead to a limiting reading of Aupaumut's geopolitical vision as well as to minimize Seneca leaders' efforts to gain prominence as the “western door” to the Ohio region and the conflicts between Mohawks at Grand River and Senecas at Buffalo Creek over being the seat of the council fire for the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. On the Senecas' role in US-Native politics in the early 1790s, see Abler 58–96; Ganter 1–68; Jemison and Schein; and Wallace.

7. While offering a reading of Aupaumut that situates him more firmly in Mahican history and peoplehood, Hilary Wyss also recapitulates the “subversive”-“acquiescence” dichotomy, presenting the Mahican people as “mov[ing] uneasily between the opposite poles of the Christian and the Indian” (122).

8. Wheeler later suggests that he “rejected a racialized division of humanity, insisting that good and evil people could be found among Indians and white[s]” (213). Yet in the narrative, Aupaumut in speaking to a council of

Shawnees and Delawares notes the importance of “contemplat[ing] the welfare of our own colar” (91), a formulation he had used previously in conversation with US officials (Taylor, “Captain Hendrick” 447).

9. For a critique of this set of equivalencies in the context of Cherokee writer John Rollin Ridge, see Rifkin, “For the wrongs.”

10. In *The Common Pot*, Lisa Brooks provides an extraordinarily detailed and exquisitely researched account of relations among Algonquian and Iroquoian peoples in western New England and into the Ohio valley, exploring how their complex, shifting, and enduring relations create forms of Native space whose ordering frameworks and logics differ greatly from those of Euroamerican political structures. Within that larger project, this essay seeks to pick up certain elements, amplify them, and redirect attention in a different direction. Highlighting kinship formations, indicated and implied in Brooks’s work but not its central conceptual matrix, I explore how they function in contrast to the isolating, opportunistic, and property-centered dynamics of the US treaty system, providing both a viable model of Native internationalism and an alternative to available notions of *cultural* mediation.

11. See Barnes; Cayton; Edmunds 30–42; Hurt 103–115; and White 413–68. As a result of these defeats, Major General Anthony Wayne was appointed commander of US forces in the West in 1792. In 1794, he led a campaign against the remaining forces of the confederacy, which had dwindled over the previous year, and on August 20, in what has come to be known as the Battle of Fallen Timbers, he pushed them back to the gates of Fort Miami, at which point the British refused to give them protection, thereby effectively ending the armed conflict. The Treaty of Greenville was signed in August 1795, reaffirming the terms of the previous treaties. Some have claimed that Aupaumut served as a counselor and translator for General Wayne in his campaign (Ronda and Ronda 49; Taylor, “Captain Hendrick” 450). The basis for this assertion in particular documentary records or oral traditions, however, is unclear, especially given that Aupaumut is not listed as one of the eight translators in the Treaty of Greenville (Kappler 45). Additionally, participating in Wayne’s campaign would be fairly difficult to reconcile with the evidence of Aupaumut’s sustained diplomatic and kinship connections with the peoples of the Ohio region over the next twenty years. See Taylor, “Captain Hendrick”; Wheeler. However, Aupaumut is listed as one of the translators for the Treaty of Fort Wayne in September 1809, which involved a number of the same peoples (Kappler 102), suggesting that some scholars may have confused the latter with the former.

12. On the politics of Indian policy and land tenure in western New York in the late eighteenth century, see Hauptman; Taylor, *Divided Ground*.

13. For discussion of Aupaumut's invocation of ritual and the significance of his bag of wampum, see Brooks 139; Wyss 110–12. On the relation in Aupaumut's narrative between oral tradition and various kinds of writing, including wampum, see Gustafson 257–64. For an extended account of nonalphabetic writing, including the role of wampum in these negotiations, see Brooks.

14. Despite noting Aupaumut's appeals to relations among "ancestors" in his engagements with Native leaders, Gustafson claims that the narrative "recall[s] the official Indian policy of the Washington administration" (261), and she further suggests that he was "a committed patriot who believed in the justice and sincerity of the United States government's intentions toward the northwest nations" (263). This reading strikes me as confusing Aupaumut's maneuvering within the possibilities opened by the failure of a military solution in 1790 and 1791 with an acceptance of US rule and the existing principles of Indian policy.

15. The "Union" here more specifically refers to the confederation of peoples in the Ohio who had been meeting since the 1780s. Thanks to Lisa Brooks for clarifying this point.

16. For complementary readings of this passage, see Brooks 148; Wyss 115. However, Wyss further argues that Aupaumut "challenges the basis of the current pan-Indian confederacy" by undermining its "racialized character," and in doing so, he "distances himself from other Natives" (114). This reading overlooks the role of kinship, rather than race, as the basis of union among peoples, and due to the emphasis on race, Wyss does not address the narrative's effort to call on the United States to be a good relative.

17. For examples, see Barnes; Brooks; Dowd, *War under Heaven*; Fenton; Hinderaker; Jennings; and White.

18. For discussion of these exchanges, see also Brooks 151–53.

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## The Critique of Violent Atonement in Sherman Alexie's *Indian Killer* and David Treuer's *The Hiawatha*

LYDIA R. COOPER

John Smith, the disturbed, violent Native American protagonist of Sherman Alexie's *Indian Killer* (1996), decides that his pain and the suffering of all Indigenous people will end only when "one white man . . . [dies] for all the lies that had been told to Indians" (132). John's belief that his and his people's salvation will be attained in the death of a white victim becomes the disquieting issue at the heart of *Indian Killer*, a question that is answered but not resolved when John decides to kill himself instead of his chosen white victim, imagining his suicide as a reenactment of the Spokane Jesuit priest Duncan's Christ-like trek into the desert, bearing in his soul the suffering of his people (412). Because of the horrifying violence at the end of the novel, *Indian Killer* remains Alexie's most controversial book to date, disturbing to critics, reviewers, and the author himself. In one interview, Alexie claims that the novel "still, to this day, troubles me the most" of all his books (Campbell par. 15). *Indian Killer* is undeniably challenging with its relentless anger and despair. John Skow's often-cited description of the book, for example, calls it "septic with . . . [an] unappeasable fury" (88). The "septic" violence of *Indian Killer*, rooted in the protagonist's self-inflicted martyrdom, reflects the same problematic sacrificial action at the heart of David Treuer's *The Hiawatha* (1999). In Treuer's novel, the main character, Simon, claims responsibility for murder on behalf of his nephew in order to atone for accidentally killing his brother. His expiatory act solidifies his mother's belief that he is like Cain, the prototypical Judeo-Christian scapegoat condemned to wander in

penance for fratricide (Treuer 23). *Indian Killer* and *The Hiawatha* thus describe acts of suffering that are manifestations of the symbolism and rhetoric of religious violence. What makes the respective death and exile in these novels so disconcerting, however, is that the acts are committed by men intent on fulfilling archetypal savior roles who nevertheless fail to save themselves or anyone else. Their failures suggest that the novels assert the critical importance of subjugating religious symbolism to practical and ethical critique.

In general, examinations of religious symbolism in Native American fiction tend to focus either on celebrations of tribal ceremonies, rituals, and beliefs as authenticating or liberating images or on criticisms of imperialist, missional aspects of American Christianity. However, in order to understand the critique of violent atonement in Alexie's *Indian Killer* and Treuer's *The Hiawatha*, it is necessary to place these novels within the context of theological and literary studies that move beyond the binary breakdown of tribal versus Christian ideology. In his article "Native and Christian: Religion and Spirituality as Transcultural Negotiation in American Indian Novels of the 1990s," Karsten Fitz draws attention to a reluctance among literary scholars to explore "the issue of whether or not it is possible to negotiate a middle ground" between "traditional tribal and Christian religions" in Native American fiction (1).<sup>1</sup> This reluctance to navigate the admittedly tricky terrain of religion in Native fiction, particularly the contentious area between religious assimilation, syncretism, and adherence to tribal traditions, creates a gap in literary scholarship. In fact, Fitz suggests that religious contact zones in Native fiction "operat[e] as a relational cultural model" by promoting exchange over and against exclusion, a relational model that often plays out in religious forms and symbolism that are varied and generative (13). Therefore, studies of how religion and religious symbolism play out in contemporary fiction by Native authors may yield surprising and important insights into the capacity of narrative to negotiate meaningful syntheses of competing religious ideas, practices, and beliefs. Furthermore, such a study may illuminate practical methods for incorporating what Fitz calls "transcultural," or culturally hybrid, identities.

Fitz's claim is part of a growing critical interest in how Native American writing describes meaningful ways of negotiating contrasting and often competing cultural contact zones through the lens of religious syncretism. James Treat, in his history of the American Indian ecumenical movement, identifies several basic approaches to religion in tribal communities, ranging from vehement arguments in favor of complete adherence to tribal religions to creedal and cultural adherence to specific Christian denominations. Perhaps because of these varying approaches, Treat identifies an emergent movement that attempts to synthesize such different views on religious syncretism. This predominating movement emphasizes pragmatic social concerns instead of creedal differences. The ultimate goal of American Indian interreligious dialogue, he says, is to "moderate . . . textual devotions in deference to the priority of interpersonal experience" (306). In other words, Treat suggests that transcultural contact has increased religious syncretism, which in turn has led many religious leaders and practitioners in tribal communities to subject their religious creeds to ethical considerations. Treat celebrates this movement, one that is consistent with—and in fact at times merges with—liberation theology. Liberation theology attempts to fit religious belief into a hierarchical ethical framework, in which those beliefs that damage an individual's rights or quality of life are rejected in favor of creeds that assert or defend basic human rights. Orthodoxy, in other words, takes second place to pragmatic ethical concerns.

One particular example of the subjection of religious rhetoric to ethical concerns can be found in liberation theology's rejection of the symbolism and rhetoric of sacred violence. René Girard describes the basic assumption of violent atonement theories as a belief "in a union between life and death. . . . Death, then, contains the germ of life. There is no life on the communal level that does not originate in death" (255). Destructive and escalating violence can be controlled, this theory proposes, through cathartic performances of violence that ritualize and contain bloodshed. Girard describes religions based upon this belief as systems that, in general, tend to celebrate the regenerative nature of "sacred" acts of violence. These

ritualized performances, however, require a scapegoat, something or someone who bears the brunt of the communal bloodlust. Many liberation theologians have offered incisive critiques of violent atonement narratives, pointing out that such belief systems have too often been used to justify systematic violence against certain groups of people. Robert Warrior, for example, argues that Native American theologians must read the Exodus and conquest of Canaan narratives “with Canaanite eyes.” As victims of land-conquest narratives themselves, “indigenous people of this hemisphere” cannot accept the Exodus myth as a “vision of justice, peace, and political sanity” (Warrior, “Canaanites” 8). Warrior’s claim reflects the basic argument at the heart of the critique of sacred violence posed by liberation theologians, namely that rituals depicting acts of violence as individually and communally cathartic are untenable within certain historical and cultural contexts.<sup>2</sup> While such arguments have gained traction in theology and ethical philosophy, few literary critics have examined how Native American novels navigate religious rhetoric in ways that critique damaging symbols and propose alternative systems.

Alexie’s *Indian Killer* and Treuer’s *The Hiawatha* are bleak, violent novels that have prompted varied and contentious critical reactions. Yet an examination of religious symbolism, particularly the symbolism of violent atonement, demonstrates that these novels construct nuanced arguments in favor of the exigency of subjecting religious creeds to practical and ethical behaviors. Alexie and Treuer thus participate in what Fitz would call transcultural discussions of violent atonement as they examine European religious symbolism from the perspectives of Native protagonists. In particular, these two novels explore negative examples of what happens when there is not this ethical hierarchy imposed on religious worldviews. Both novels depict Native characters steeped in Judeo-Christian symbolism and beliefs, beliefs that in many ways are syncretistic. However, in both novels, it is neither Christianity nor syncretism that is at fault. Instead, the characters fail to find redemption because they do not submit their religious beliefs to ethical critique.

In these novels, symbolism represents syncretistic visions of

cathartic violence in tribal and in Judeo-Christian thought, and ritualized violence is depicted as a sometimes authentic and necessary expression of rage, suffering, and despair. But such symbolism is nevertheless undermined by images suggesting that these ideas reinscribe patterns of colonial thought that resulted in genocide and that cannot therefore bring redemption to individuals or to communities. Finally, however, the novels juxtapose such images against alternative images in order to emphasize the layered meanings of symbols and to open multiple possible means of grace in a world tragically short of that quality. Thus, examining Treuer's and Alexie's critiques of violent atonement in the two novels demonstrates the significance of studying transcultural approaches to religion in contemporary American Indian novels. By depicting the justification for, then offering critiques of, the damaging effects of tribal, Christian, and syncretistic symbols of sacred violence, Treuer and Alexie suggest that religious syncretism has an ethical responsibility to adopt, reject, and recreate inherited religious rhetoric. Therefore, this study will examine how Alexie's *Indian Killer* and Treuer's *The Hiawatha* utilize the symbolism that draws on tribal and Judeo-Christian imagery, critiquing and reinventing those symbols.

*Indian Killer* and *The Hiawatha* are both novels in which the protagonists define their personal identities and explain moments of conflict in terms of transcultural religious imagery deriving from competing traditions and simultaneously bearing multiple meanings. What makes these novels significant participants in the examination of what Catherine Rainwater calls "counter colonial" approaches to religious symbolism, however, is that images of sacred violence in both novels are signs imposed and interpreted by the Native protagonists (9). The symbols are internal, not external, forces driving the men toward their doom. While the men have internalized symbols that predominantly reflect Christian ideas and images, the critique of violent atonement in these novels is not a critique of certain parts of Christianity per se; that is, Christianity is not depicted as dangerous because it is external to tribal experience. Instead, the critique proposes that syncretism is not the successful result of cross-cultural encounter but rather is a result of

cross-cultural encounter, and not necessarily a positive one. Within syncretistic perspectives, symbols contain both pernicious and healing interpretations.<sup>3</sup>

Religious and cultural syncretism, while accepted as a *fait accompli* in both novels, is nevertheless inextricably linked to the two protagonists' failures to find meaningful redemption. For instance, Alexie's protagonist, the adopted Native boy John Smith, is sent to a Catholic school, St. Francis's, in which he becomes "a nice trophy" for the school, a "successfully integrated Indian boy" (19). The success of that integration is of course profoundly flawed, as John internalizes and represses an intense rage that manifests later as schizophrenia and homicidal ideation. But at one level, at least, the integration is successful: John ultimately pins his very life on the efficacy of the mythology of self-sacrifice, what he believes is "a Catholic way to die" (16). And Treuer's *The Hiawatha* plays with similar themes of troubling sacrificial impulses based upon dark and violent Christian imagery. As the novel's epigraph from T. S. Eliot's "The Love Song of St. Sebastian" suggests through its religious rhetoric soaked in sadism, the willing sufferer, "mangled" and "no longer beautiful" to anyone but the beloved, is beatified through violence. This epigraph, from a poem building on the life of a European saint, explicates the central action of the novel. Demonstrating St. Sebastian's belief that love is proved through suffering, Simon accepts the blame for his nephew's murder, permitting his mother to condemn him and committing to a life on the run, believing that he will earn redemption through pain "instead of [taking] comfort or understanding for himself" (301). John's and Simon's violent actions are described using primarily Christian images, but ritualized violence is depicted as a transcultural reality in both novels. The Indian Killer, for instance, employs a fluid synthesis of Christian and tribal images of ritual slaughter. And *The Hiawatha*'s Simon once kills a goose using—and parodying—tribal rituals in a manner meant to indicate his desire to be more authentically Ojibwe and his concurrent recognition that this violent ritual cannot redeem him from his great crime, an act of accidental violence (173). In other words, both Alexie's *Indian Killer* and Treuer's *The Hiawatha* depict men who

have internalized the rhetoric of renewal through sacrificial violence to the extent that they physically embody those beliefs through syncretistic rituals and symbols.

Yet syncretism is not the cause of John's suicide or Simon's exilic fate. Instead, the novels suggest that syncretism is inevitable, but ethical choice remains. Some ideas must be rejected as destructive, while others must be embraced as regenerative and healing. So, for example, John's rage stems from an inability to identify and excise damaging aspects of Roman Catholic symbolism, a catastrophic failure that is juxtaposed against significant glimpses of communal healing through transcultural contact. In fact, *Indian Killer* demonstrates the complicated response necessary to responsibly analyze violent imagery in a context steeped in historical violence. At one point in the novel, Reggie Polatkin, a half-Spokane man who attended the University of Washington until he was expelled, remembers growing up with a white father who brutally inculcated in his half-Native son a belief that nonviolent Indians or Indians who fought for the US government are "right" and those who resisted were "cowards" and "dirty Indians" (93–94). Reggie's childhood experience is offered as an example of the cultural oppression in which John is raised, an oppression resulting from the insidious idea that "good" Indians must be peaceful. In another scene, Marie Polatkin debates with Dr. Mather, a Euroamerican professor of Native American studies, about the violence inherent in the pacifist, syncretistic Ghost Dance movement in the late nineteenth century. Mather claims that the messianic religion was peaceful, and Marie points out heatedly that, while Ghost Dancing did not advocate the commission of violence, the goal of the movement was the total eradication of white Americans. An ethically minded Spokane woman who offers John love and befriends homeless communities, Marie nevertheless finds herself attracted to the implicit violence of Ghost Dancing. After her argument with Mather, she realizes that she "wanted every white man to disappear. She wanted to burn them all down to ash and feast on their smoke" (85). Marie's rage, like Reggie's anger and John's desire to see fear in a white man's eyes (30), suggests that an unquestioning commitment to peace is, in some contexts, as dangerous as a predi-

lection for violence. The characters in *Indian Killer*, in other words, evince a rage that readers may accept as a necessary, even inevitable, corollary to the idea, appearing in so many iterations throughout Euroamerican culture, that only peaceful or pro-US government Indians are “right.” Thus violent rituals are themselves syncretistic, the violence of Christianity and the violence of Ghost Dancing cohabiting the same physical landscapes and often the same individuals, like Marie.

Yet, while the anger the characters in *Indian Killer* evince is justified, violence itself is undermined through the narrative’s juxtaposition of John, who imagines a dark fantasy world of vengeance, and the Indian Killer, who acts out those dark fantasies. For example, when Marie invites John to dance the owl dance, he balks, understanding that the owl “was death itself” and uncertain how to dance with the image of death. He wonders if the dancers dance out of spite or courage, and he finally bows out, too clumsy and inarticulate to move his feet or his tongue nimbly enough to explain his confusion and his lack of experience (37). Throughout the novel, John’s twisted wanderings through the schizophrenic maze of his mind and the physical maze of Seattle are shadowed by narratives depicting the unnamed Indian Killer who begins to ritually murder white people. The Indian Killer also dances, a “powerful ceremony that would change the world,” and leaves white owl feathers on his victims’ bodies (192). Yet even though John identifies the owl dance as a devastating recognition of the ubiquity of violence, and even though Marie recognizes that Ghost Dancing implicitly requires mass death, the Indian Killer’s version of owl dancing is nevertheless subtly stripped of its legitimacy.

The owl dancing Marie demonstrates for John and the grass dancing that John fantasizes as part of his edenic alternate life in which his Native mother kept him and loved him are both dances that affirm cultural vitality and romantic and familial love (36, 45). By contrast, when the killer dances, rather than confirming his identity or expressing his connection to a particular tribal group, he loses his identity: his face “shimmered and changed” (153). In other words, owl dancing cathartically expresses the nearness of death, the

tragedy haunting the tribal group that dances, but it simultaneously asserts the continuity of life and the possibility of laughter and love. The killer's dance brings a form of vengeance without the melioration of hope.

The killer also merges Native and Christian rituals, adopting the darkest aspects of both and subverting them by leaching any healing potential from those rituals. He "prays" over the body of a mother whose son he will kidnap, a dark pun that the narrator later underscores as the killer once again prays and "preys" in a cemetery (419). And upon kidnapping the boy, the killer becomes a "Christian plague" like the angel of death in Exodus, stealing "the first-born son" (153, 192). On the one hand, the killer's action may play a symbolically retributive role. John was, after all, "kidnapped" away from his capacity to connect to his heritage in meaningful ways by mistaken yet well-meaning white parents. But the killer's actions do not legitimize John's sufferings. On the contrary, when John finally refuses to kill a white man and instead kills himself, he is posthumously accused of being the Indian Killer, his own suffering subsumed by the hatred and fear heaped upon his memory. Marie claims that accusing John of being the Indian Killer defames John, "killing him all over again," while blinding society to the killer's frenzy of revenge killings that are not "going to stop" (418). In the novel's final scene, ironically titled "A Creation Story," the killer masks his identity and creates boundless death. In kidnapping a white child and killing white people, the Indian Killer acts out John's violent urges, but the actions, once realized, fail to justify or redeem John or achieve any measure of justice. Set into this complicated analysis of the need for anger and the danger of unrelenting rage, John's commitment to Christian myths of violent redemption illuminates the dangers inherent in unethical or untenable interpretations of religious symbols. As James R. Giles argues, the novel's "repressed rage contaminates both the material and mental spaces" of the novel and "distorts any potential they [the characters] might have for imagining a redemptive third space" (144).

Treuer's *The Hiawatha* likewise seems infected by a rage potent enough to destroy lives but utterly impotent in terms of its cathartic

or redemptive capabilities. Almost inexplicably, Simon, committed to being his family's savior, becomes their destroyer. When Simon returns home after ten years of incarceration, he looks at the kitchen and at his mother, and the narrator informs readers that "He won't remember stepping in, his hands shoved deep in his pockets, Betty's slow retreat to the kitchen. He won't remember how the house has changed. It will stay in his mind as it was when he lived there. . . . So memory always murders the present" (8). In this novel, memory is a form of brutality that the characters cannot escape. Simon, who witnesses the death of his father, will ultimately kill his younger brother and fail to save his nephew's life. The family's disintegration seems a physical manifestation of the insidious disease of melancholy haunting the reservation, a melancholy the broken family brings with them when they move to Minneapolis. And just as the kitchen, traditionally an image of familial warmth and sustenance, becomes a symbol to Simon of his own unforgivable crime and his alienation, so all the redemptive symbols in the novel are inverted into damaged and damaging realities. In the end, the almost unalleviated darkness of both novels seems to spring from the same source. John and Simon seem to have repressed and concentrated a communal and historical rage, but when they attempt to expel that rage through religious images of salvation—images in which salvation is achieved through suffering and sacrifice—the act, rather than healing, creates only catastrophic pain.

*Indian Killer* and *The Hiawatha* offer cogent critiques of religious rhetoric predicated upon sacred violence, where sacred violence is the belief that violence sanctifies or cleanses the community, whether those brutal rites are articulated in tribal religions or Christianity. Each novel articulates this argument through depictions of the process through which individuals and communities internalize beliefs that valorize suffering. John and Simon respectively undergo a rather familiar dark alchemy in which poverty and humiliation turn to enraged brutality. Schizophrenic John decides to slaughter a white man to quiet the voices in his head, and in a drunken fury Simon kills his brother. Then, after their externally expressed violence, the men commence quests to redeem themselves

and their similarly broken communities. Once they begin their quests, both men are described with imagery linking them to Judeo-Christian scapegoat figures. For example, *Indian Killer's* depiction of John's descent into suicidal despair is explicitly Christological. An Indian child raised by white parents, John grows up idolizing a Jesuit Indian named Duncan whose precarious identification with both white and Indian worlds reduces the priest to a suicidal agony. At one point, John recalls a scene from his childhood in which he found Duncan crying while looking at stained-glass images of Spokane Indians killing Jesuit priests. Duncan explains to the young John that he is crying because the crazed violence depicted in the stained glass is "[h]appening inside me right now" (15). Later, Duncan carries this conflicted grief with him as he wanders into the desert. In an attempt to mimic Duncan's Christlike embodiment of sin and sorrow, the experiences of both perpetrator and victim, John jumps from a high-rise holding his arms up so that his falling body is shaped like a crucifix (412).

*The Hiawatha's* depiction of Simon's spiraling self-destruction is equally Christological. When Simon is released from prison, his mother looks at him and recalls the biblical Cain's agonized cry to his enraged God: "*You have driven me this day away from the ground; and from your face I shall be hidden; and I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will slay me*" (23; emphasis original). Cain is a scapegoat exiled from his community when he murders his brother, Abel, in a fit of jealousy because God favored Abel. And just as the biblical Cain's rage seems at least partially justified—God did, after all, reject him and favor his brother—so also Simon's rage seems to be forged in a fire not entirely of his own making. After his father's death, he is forced to undertake responsibilities and face dangers that no child could shoulder with ease. Then, after he has been released from prison, Simon commences a life of penitence and self-flagellation that transmutes him from the guilty archetype of Cain to the innocent sacrificial victim, Christ. At one point, fleeing the Minneapolis police after illegally fishing in a defiant attempt to return to a more Native lifestyle, Simon jumps into the river and floats downstream as if "on a crucifix" (207). Later,

his suffering in the wilderness makes him look “like a sacrifice,” foreshadowing his subsequent attempt at self-immolation when he offers himself in place of his nephew, Lincoln (211).

John and Simon thus attempt to fulfill biblical religious archetypes as they punish themselves by exile and death respectively, attempting to limit or control an escalating communal violence. In *Violence and the Sacred*, Girard divides the practical use of sacred rituals of violence into two categories, or two types of function. First, he claims that the West has long associated ceremonial violence with catharsis. This Aristotelian concept proposes that a community’s urge to commit unlimited violence can be controlled if the members of the community are persuaded to project their vatic impulses onto a single public performance of violence. The second reason is based on the idea that violence can atone for individual and communal wrong-doing; social guilt can be displaced onto an individual whose suffering will expiate the corporate sin. In *The Hiawatha* and *Indian Killer*, Simon and John demonstrate very traditional Judeo-Christian attitudes toward violence. For example, Simon believes that taking the blame for a murder he did not commit will help him atone for the murder he did commit, and John believes that his public slaying of a white man will ease the pent-up rage of the historically brutalized Indian community. Both novels are narrated in the close third person with the majority of the text devoted to the perspectives of the protagonists. Since audiences are permitted to see much of the events of the novels through the eyes of the main characters, they are also encouraged to interpret those events in the same way that John and Simon interpret them. The two protagonists consistently view their worlds through the lens of a culture steeped in Judeo-Christian symbolism, and the novels provide extensive textual evidence that the men “buy into” Girard’s two premises justifying ritualized violence. The novels’ larger narratives, however, are deeply skeptical of these assumptions. And in fact the narratives explicitly undermine both rationales used to justify belief in the sanctity of ritualized violence.

First, John and Simon repeatedly indicate that they believe controlled public performances of violence will ease the rage building

in themselves and in their communities. But public performances of violence in the novels comprehensively fail to mitigate the tension in the men or in their respective cities, Minneapolis and Seattle. For example, toward the beginning of *Indian Killer*, Father Duncan tells a young John Smith that Christ “died so that we may life forever” (15), and John subsequently adopts and clings to Duncan’s belief in the life-affirming principle of ritual sacrifice. Christ’s crucifixion is the means by which the community renews and regenerates itself. In a horrifying yet perhaps reasonable leap of logic, John believes that murdering a white man will provide Indians with a sacrificial victim on which to displace their anger, enabling them to move beyond the unbearable pain of their history. John’s belief in the efficacy of violent atonement is based on his Jesuit influences. At one point, John describes Duncan as a man who would have made a wonderful lightning rod, a “priest who wanted to be closer to God” and who was therefore willing to suffer the inevitable fiery martyr’s death of all fanatics. But, John thinks, “Maybe Duncan was the lightning” (307). Drawn to violence like a moth to flame, John cannot decide whether he—and all Indians—must endure violence in order to be “close” to a European God intent on destroying all things “native,” or whether violence is *from* God, making God a karmic force that justifies John’s mission to visit vengeance on Euroamericans. This odd thought process reflects John’s fatal defect, his inability to decide whether to internalize or externalize violence.

After all, John’s rationale for killing runs parallel to the rationale of the shadowy Indian Killer. In his review of the novel, Skow actually suggests that John is the Indian Killer, which would make the protagonist of a novel about race a racist serial killer (88). Yet this interpretation, problematic enough as it is, is in fact less troubling than the novel’s actual narrative arc. John’s belief that public performances of violence are able to contain social chaos results in his suicide. Meanwhile, the real Indian Killer lives on, continuing to practice John’s belief in sacred violence by ritually slaughtering white people. Yet, of course, the killer and the community become increasingly aggressive rather than finding their aggression diminished. For example, the killer describes his victims’ death, claiming

that “the blood was beautiful but not enough” (54). And when he eats the heart of his victim, instead of finding the act strength-giving or violence-sating, he finds himself “depleted but unfulfilled” (328). Thus in *Indian Killer*, all rituals of violence, tribal and Christian, are born out of a false premise—that salvation is achieved through the shedding of blood.

Likewise, *The Hiawatha* depicts the deranging effects of communal internalization of religious imagery that hallows violent atonement. For example, when Simon first hears a demolition crew preparing the way for a high rise, he thinks that the “steady pace of defeat” is being beaten back by the percussion sounds, and he imagines the city being liberated by the rampant destruction (58). But Simon’s expected liberation never arrives. When he is drunk and finds out that his brother irresponsibly got a girl pregnant, Simon reacts instinctively, doing what he has been trained to do: he demolishes his brother with a tool (275). The novel later departs into a relatively minor yet shockingly violent side story in which Simon, in the process of walking home from work, passes by a man who jumps from a high window and kills himself. The suicide scene is explained in the novel as the passersby stop to watch because they “need a public display of their private worries” (280). The community here expresses the same idea that Simon initially has about the role of demolition. Through a flamboyant public display of destruction, internal fear and anxiety may be displaced and thereby eased. But after the suicide scene, the novel’s narrator follows the generic public who continue to replay the horror of the death in all its mundane details until they finally realize that “He would jump, and will jump, as long as [they] close [their] eyes” (284). Simon’s demolition work, rather than draining his anger, fosters it until he destroys the person he loves most. And the audience watching a man’s suicide, rather than finding their anxieties alleviated, become haunted by recurring reminders of death.

Understanding *The Hiawatha*’s subversive depiction of public displays of death or ruin is critical to any interpretation of the novel. After all, the title refers explicitly to a Chicago-Minneapolis train that has fallen into ruin, a physical image of decay, of stopped motion,

and of broken connection. Although *The Hiawatha* has so far not received much critical attention, both an early review by Dianne Comisky and Padraig Kirwan's article on the novel agree that the title reflects the book's haunting sense of placelessness, of the deracinating effects of urbanization. The train, *The Hiawatha*, features as the meeting place between Lester and his girlfriend, Vera. The motionless, broken-down train thus "underscore[s] the displacement of the local Ojibwe . . . under the shadows of the skyscrapers they built," Comisky writes (81). And Kirwan cites the doomed love affair that takes place in a motionless skeleton of a train as emblematic of "an expressive vacuum" within the novel, a motionless void in which the characters travel in dysfunctional circles and arrive nowhere (6). These interpretations are helpful and doubtless correct, but the even-more-obvious association of the title with Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's epic poem has so far not been discussed beyond a cursory mention, despite the fact that a comparison suggests the significant role played by public death in Longfellow's poem and in Treuer's novel.

Longfellow's poem, in the process of mangling Native words and his eponymous Indian hero beyond recognition of any possible historical analogs, concludes with the profoundly disturbing image of the sanguine Hiawatha sailing into the sunset and leaving his people in the generous care of Black Robe missionaries (192–93). Longfellow's Hiawatha, in other words, dies so that Europeans can live in his place. He verbally cedes his own authority to the Black Robes, commanding his people to "Listen to their words of wisdom, / Listen to the truth they tell you" (193). This earlier Hiawatha's deranged command seems to echo over Treuer's contemporary Native community, ringing in the ears of its doomed protagonist. At the end of the novel, Simon offers himself in place of his nephew and burns the empty hulk of the train, symbolically torching the place his dead brother loved and where his dead nephew was conceived. After sending their memory up in flames, Simon leaps into his final action: sending himself into obscurity. *The Hiawatha* ends with Simon running away, erasing his identity with a finality even Longfellow's long-winded Hiawatha would have lauded. Hiawatha, after all, voices his

intention to “come again to see you [his people]” (193), an assertion that becomes questionable once the poem’s narrator points out that Hiawatha’s canoe has taken him “To the land of the Hereafter!” (194). But Treuer’s novel’s narrator claims absolutely that Simon will disappear and “His passing will never be marked into the earth” (310). The novel seems to answer Longfellow’s poem with an eviscerating depiction of the spiraling ramifications of Christian sacrifice myths. According to the Black Robes’ religious worldview, death births life. So, just as Christ’s death created the church, Longfellow’s Hiawatha dies to create a way for a new Christianized (and Europeanized) America. So also Treuer’s Simon sacrifices himself. But in Treuer’s version of the sacrifice myth, Simon’s suicidal impulse gives birth to nothing. Simon exiles himself for a dead nephew, atoning for a dead brother in an act that brings no one back to life and that creates no communal bonds. Simon’s sacrifice thus happens in a bleak void, suggesting that the mythology of a religion based on sacrifice might be comprehensively antithetical to communal survival.

In addition to inaccurately predicting the cathartic effects of public, ceremonial violence, the protagonists of *Indian Killer* and *The Hiawatha* also fail to comprehend the role of violence in personal and communal atonement. In *Indian Killer*, John contemplates the possible redemption to be found in killing Wilson, the pseudo-Native American novelist who consistently caricatures and misrepresents the Indian community. Although John refrains from killing the man, he does cut Wilson’s face, marking him as Cain was marked, to show the world that he is “not innocent” (412). John then kills himself. But neither Wilson’s wounding nor John’s suicide result in any penitence or regeneration. Wilson, after his near-death experience, goes on talk shows explaining that John’s suicide was an obvious result of white parents adopting an Indian baby. Marie claims that this opinion proves Wilson “doesn’t know shit about Indians,” but he continues peddling his misinformation much as he did before being marked by John’s knife (416). John, meanwhile, dies, and his shade wanders into a desert, seeking reunification with his lost mother, his lost identity, and—as far as the reader is told—never finding it. Later, Marie claims that John did not even succeed

in killing himself, since he was “dead from the start” (417). Similarly, in *The Hiawatha*, Simon discovers that the worst punishment he endures after killing his brother is that his brother is no longer there. His anger has deprived him of his brother’s healing presence in his life. When his brother’s son, Lincoln, kills a man, Simon takes the blame for that murder, thinking to atone for his own unforgivable crime. But Lincoln dies and Simon is exiled from the only remaining home he has, so that his self-sacrifice compounds his initial punishment—the loss of a brother and friend—rather than alleviating it.

Clearly, neither John nor Simon succeeds in siphoning violence into themselves and away from their communities. The violence in these novels, in other words, is described in sacred terms but is shorn of its sacramental and redemptive meaning. Simon’s expiation cannot bring back the dead, and the boy for whom he takes the blame dies anyway. John kills himself but leaves behind an unrepentant racist and a nameless, faceless, racially motivated serial killer (420). Yet both men undertake their final actions believing that they are fulfilling religious symbols radiant with regenerative power. But if, as Christianity would have us believe, Christ’s sacrificial death is able to lead believers to repentance and inner healing, why are the effects of John’s and Simon’s imitative sacrifices so tragically different? The answer to this question lies in the very tragedy of their failures. John and Simon dramatically and categorically fail to achieve their ends, so that their doomed attempts at salvation in fact offer a stunning critique of Judeo-Christian assertions about the redemptive nature of sacred violence.

Perhaps most tellingly, the weight of the symbolism of healing through violent ritual blinds the two protagonists to alternative means of redemption that appear in the novels and that the novels suggest do actually have the potential to heal both the individual and the community. For instance, John consistently rejects moments of kindness that threaten to derail his single-minded pursuit of redemption through destructive actions. In one of his first encounters with white men in downtown Seattle, John goes into a bar and is accosted by a man who calls him “chief.” John immediately turns savagely on the man and his white friends, demonstrat-

ing the same metarepresentational fallacy that they did: he assumes that they represent all racist white men, just as they assumed he represented all Indians. John decides to stalk the white men, presumably imagining they might be his first sacrificial victims, but when he follows them out of the bar, one of the men “flashed him the peace sign” (42). This rather unspectacular conciliatory gesture startles John, “momentarily disarm[ing] him” (42). Later, at the end of the novel, John is on his way to confront and—he believes—kill Wilson when he runs into Marie. She does not know his intentions, but she attempts to persuade him to stay with her by offering him sandwiches. He refuses, and one of Marie’s homeless clients repeats her offer of a sandwich more insistently. The homeless man, John sees, is a “crippled white man, who had lost almost everything,” and that man holds out a sandwich, a “small offering” (378). John rejects the sandwich, symbolically rejecting a moment of communion with a fellow sufferer, a communion significantly lacking in his subsequent scene with Wilson in which white man and Indian comprehensively fail to arrive at any consensus about guilt, suffering, or atonement.

In *The Hiawatha*, Simon’s fratricidal rage is set off by many factors, but one minor incident involves his drunken stumble and his brother reaching out a hand to help him. Simon reads into that gesture his brother’s condemnation of his inebriation and, by extrapolation, the pain-derived alcoholism of his Indian community as a whole. Simon scales skyscrapers and demolishes large buildings to support his family, but his work drives him to an irrepressible rage, and he kills his brother (275). Later, however, Simon looks back on his brother’s gesture and realizes it was an expression of “studied love” (192). The adjective *studied* suggests that his brother paid the same meticulous attention to gestures of kindness that Simon paid to destroying buildings in order to provide for his family. While Simon spends the whole novel valuing redemption through demolition, he realizes too late that his slain brother offered an alternative means of healing, a helping rather than destructive hand.

The novel underscores Simon’s failure by comparing him to One-Two, a physically disabled man whose steady presence has the potential—although it is never realized—to provide Simon with a

meaningful father figure. After he gets out of prison, Simon “fix[es] everything that was broken” in his girlfriend Irene’s house, but he finds himself incapable of fixing her or their relationship (280). By contrast, One-Two is as inept at hard labor (because of his physical deficiencies) as Simon is proficient at it. So for example, when Betty asks One-Two to fix a car radio, he is not even certain he can accomplish that minor task. But Betty and One-Two, both broken and inept people, hold hands and forge a new, tenuous hope for connection in the face of overwhelming despair (306–07). Lester’s helping hand and One-Two’s kind grasp on Betty’s work-worn hand are images that suggest that the reconstruction of a family unit may be possible after all, if such a goal is pursued through constructive acts of grace rather than acts of sacrificial cruelty.

These brief glimpses of grace are further illuminated by the novels’ complex treatment of the violence inherent in generalizations and the beauty of recognizing common humanity, a seeming opposition that in fact provides a redemptive counterpoint to the novels’ depictions of the ubiquity of suffering. That is, both novels suggest that the dehumanization of stereotyping and class or racial discrimination creates a vicious and potentially endless cycle of rage and violence, but at the same time, an individual’s recognition of shared humanity with others can be both ethical and salvific. The two novels elucidate the fundamentally different assumptions underlying these two seemingly similar acts. *Indian Killer*, for example, consistently depicts generalizations as tools wielded by colonizers, used to categorize Indigenous communities. But communal suffering itself has the potential to provide a means for empathetic connection. So, for example, John is born and abandoned on “any reservation, a particular reservation,” an equivocation underlining the generic suffering of Indians (3). But the oppressive poverty on reservations is globalized when John decides to kill a white man in revenge for *Indian* suffering and realizes that the subjugation of the poor by the wealthy is not a white-Indian conflict but a universal one and, as such, is unstoppable: he realizes that he could “kill a thousand rich white men and not change a thing” (28). Perhaps even more graphically, *Indian Killer* asserts the potential devastation wrought by such

generalizations as John Smith, whose name is as ubiquitous as his story, is born in a hospital ringing with “anonymous” cries (3). John is delivered by a white doctor who views the reservation’s inhabitants as beautiful but interchangeable; even the reservation, which the narrator refuses to identify, calling it only “this reservation, that reservation” (3), has a landscape that is “beautiful, generic” (5). And the novel concludes with a terrifying image of a serial killer dancing on “this reservation or that reservation” (419).

The novel in fact proposes that generic identifications of oppressed communities may be a sort of psychological genocide in their own right. That is, the poor or minority community is categorized in the dominant community’s collective psyche as “oppressed” and (so goes the tautology) “suffering.” The reality of an “oppressed” community’s social bonds, familial ties, or individual personality fails to register on the larger community. *Indian Killer*’s protagonist is prey to this psychological trauma only moments after his birth. As a Native child adopted by white parents, John will, a social service agent predicts, “be saved a lot of pain” (10). Of course, John grows up alienated, psychologically shattered, incurably wounded by a life meant to spare him pain. Ironically, at one point in the novel, John imagines his birth mother crying for him, a vision that is painfully cathartic and that “touches something” inside him (292). Because he understands that he is part of a race communally scarred by atrocity, John is wounded by the *absence* of pain in his upbringing, unable to find solace in the arms of a white mother who can never fully understand him. Finally, at the novel’s narrative climax, John confronts Jack Wilson, the pseudo-Native novelist whose books, Marie says, “are killing Indian books” with their facile and homogeneous depictions of Native suffering and heroism (68). John begs the author to “let us have our own pain” (411). His plea helps to elucidate his crisis and the crisis of all the alienated Indians in the novel. They are denied the right to their own individualized suffering, in its ugly and joyous particularity, by a society intent on escaping its overwhelming guilt by insisting that they are eternally beatific, suffering and stoic.

John is victimized by generalizations, but he ultimately suffers

throughout the novel from an inability to recognize his connection to others, in particular his *sameness*. Near the novel's climax, John witnesses a group of homeless, displaced urban Indians who live in an ad hoc social group that, despite its inherent fragility, is one of the novel's few numinous images of functioning communities. The miracle of their communal wholeness, John thinks, is that "Despite all their pain, and suffering, these Indians held together" (377). In the world of this novel, it is perhaps because of their pain that they are able to cohere when all other societies fracture along racial stress lines. John's realization that the homeless Indian community may possess some strength that neither he nor Euroamerican society understands is reiterated several times throughout the novel. In a poignant scene near the beginning, for instance, John witnesses a basketball game at a reservation high school. During the game, the Spokane community is boisterous and vibrant, always "telling jokes, and laughing loudly." John wants "to own that laughter," desperate to experience some of that salvific joy (21). The narrator comments that John fails to understand that this laughter is a communal coping mechanism. And *Indian Killer* concludes with a dark reminder of the consequences of forgetting one's shared and common humanity. A chapter titled "Testimony" relates a conversation between Sean, one of the white boys who beats John up, and a police officer. Sean testifies that he joined his friends in the act of unprovoked violence because "it's like this white-Indian thing," a "thing" that is like "with the blacks and Mexicans. Everybody blaming everybody" (386). The young hoodlum here recognizes that rage resulting in racial violence is common to all oppressed minorities and indeed to all people, an unquenchable and devastating disease. But violence cannot diminish the rage; it only reinforces the degrading lines drawn between ethnic groups.

Treuer's novel constructs an equally complicated and nuanced description of the critical importance of negotiating the fine line between generalizations breeding social exclusion and denigration and an ethical philosophy that underscores the redemptive potential in recognizing one's shared humanity with others. For example, *The Hiawatha* begins with a scene in which a deer wanders into a

church parking lot in the Southside of Minneapolis. The city district is described in terms of its generalized suffering, its faceless poverty-stricken inhabitants, including “whole families” who freeze in the winter, police who “shoot teenagers point-blank,” and bill collectors who ravage this human detritus (3). Into this non-specifically oppressed neighborhood, the deer ambles. The novel’s protagonist, standing in line, reaches to touch the deer. His touch startles the deer, which jumps over a fence, is hit by an on-coming car, and dies. Simon’s inadvertent killing of the deer will be symbolically revisited upon him as the novel concludes with his frantic, undirected flight reminiscent of the deer’s (310). The death of a deer precipitates Simon’s doomed narrative arc, but is Simon truly the deer’s killer? The urban wasteland seems instead to be the faceless, protean agent behind the animal’s and the man’s deaths as indeed it causes the death of all the human souls caught within its bounds, an entity that destroys simply *because* it subsumes the individual into a generic identity, the “Southside” of a midwestern American city.

If Treuer’s exilic Ojibwe community in Minneapolis represents a particular instance of collapsed social order, the specific society is explicitly linked to a more general failure of urban America. In the novel, Simon’s Ojibwe family has been removed from tribal land, relocated to a city, and trapped in a vicious cycle of poverty and the futile pursuit of the ever-elusive American Dream. Yet his family’s specific suffering is symbolic of a more universal, Dreiser-like urban blight brooding over the novel (298). So, for example, when Simon’s demolition crew tears down the low-rent house in Minneapolis into which his family moved when they left the reservation, Simon imagines the house’s demise as symbolic of his family’s ruin. Recognizing the pernicious betrayal of the American Dream, Simon “suspects [his] family was bought cheap” (158). They are, in other words, yet one more Native group betrayed by empty promises from the federal government. But at the same time, Simon reflects that the house also represents the similar houses in South Minneapolis that sprang up to accommodate a burgeoning “1906 middle-class” comprised of struggling Americans of many races, all of whom are now equally betrayed, equally failed by that ever-elusive dream (152). That recog-

nition provides a moment of potential grace that Simon tragically fails to grasp. At the end of the novel, Simon departs his mother's house for a life of exile, and in so doing, the narrator informs readers, Simon "will never know" a truth that could have "offer[ed] him some solace." That truth is "that the city, the Mall, the buildings and streets, much like the reservation up north, have been designed to sluice not just his happiness, but everyone's." If Simon had recognized that his suffering was common to all wounded people, and that all people are, at some level, wounded, he would perhaps have found some "comfort" (298). In other words, the generic landscape and populace in this novel's urban wasteland represent the dehumanization of poverty and racism. The narrator draws readers' attention to Simon's blindness, his failure to recognize the psychological healing possible if he were to reassert his own humanity through recognizing and empathizing with the shared plight of others.

Thus, although both novels construct central images of ritualized violence, those images are drained of any regenerative capacity. However, fleeting glimpses of almost-ludicrously minute gestures of kindness and complex arguments about the redemptive potential of recognizing shared suffering seem to provide a frail yet luminous counterpoint to the novels' overwhelming darkness. Although *Indian Killer* and *The Hiawatha* in many respects have very little in common, the similarity in their treatments of sacred violence should not be underestimated. In the United States, the destruction of American Indians for the sake of a divinely mandated national project was routinely couched in religious terms, rhetorically transforming mass genocide into a "necessary" sacrifice. Longfellow's *Hiawatha*, for example, conflates violence with mission work and translates that violence as something numinous and beautiful. *Hiawatha*, of course, heads into the "dusk of evening" to make way for the Jesuits who come from the "land of light and morning," leaving his Native people behind on "the margin"—a physical beach to which the Jesuits bring them and a metaphorical location from which, one assumes, Longfellow does not predict they will emerge (193). Even more disturbingly, of course, the Jesuits preach their message of the crucified Christ, and their words are like the sun-

beams that “Shot their spears into the forest, / Breaking through its shields of shadow” (192). Christian redemption, in other words, arrives in glory and at the end of a spear, triumphing over pagan “shadow.” Such imagery, juxtaposed with history, becomes ridden with genocidal guilt. But the argument posed by *Indian Killer* and *The Hiawatha*, that religious imagery used to propagate genocidal rhetoric must be consciously recognized and rejected from the cultural psyche, is situated inside the perspectives of men who have internalized the symbolism of sacred violence. After all, as *Indian Killer*’s Indian Killer suggests through his syncretistic praying, dancing, and murdering, religious syncretism has perhaps become a fact of contemporary existence, but the question of ethical interpretation must therefore be all the more imperative.

The novels thus suggest the necessity of a general reorientation away from symbols and rhetoric that venerate bloodshed. If there is to be any hope of cultural reconciliation or regeneration, it must come through commitment to a new set of sacred images—like the “studied love” of Simon’s brother, reaching to steady him, or the homeless white war veteran offering John a packet of sandwiches. Set against a backdrop of overwhelming tragedy, the small gestures in the novels, like a kind hand and a shared sandwich, stand out in bold relief, the possible sacraments and rites of a new symbolism that affirms life and compassion and that finds no beauty in violence and no redemption in suffering.

#### NOTES

1. Fitz’s article presents a summarized version of the argument he more fully explicates in his book, *Negotiating History and Culture*.

2. In *God of the Oppressed*, James H. Cone defends liberation theology’s desire to subject religious creeds to ethical critique by citing Warrior’s argument. Warrior claims that the symbol of the Exodus is not a “paradigmatic event of liberation for indigenous peoples but rather an event of colonization” (Cone xii), and for Cone this reinterpretation of the symbol of the exodus exemplifies the central tenet of liberation theology, that an ethical hierarchy must be imposed upon narrative events and those signs or symbols that violate universal ethics must be deemed pernicious rather than redemptive.

3. Rainwater claims, in fact, that recent Native American fiction assumes the presence of cultural syncretism and focuses more on the pragmatic application of syncretism than on finding alternatives like the retrograde binary Warrior critiques, assimilation or traditionalism. Rainwater's specific interest is in identifying how syncretism is often described in ways that are "counter colonial"—that is, in ways that hold disparate traditions in tension in order to destabilize monovocal rhetoric and introduce polyglot discourse (9). For example, she says, Marie Kashpaw in Louise Erdrich's *Love Medicine* carries beads that are used in Cree religious ceremonies. At the same time, Marie also uses the beads as a Roman Catholic rosary. These two competing interpretations for the symbol (beads) are "not conventionally reconciled" in the novel (40). Instead, Marie is able to "see from both perspectives," so that the beads "are not a bridge between religions or an expression of synthesized religious values; instead, they remind us that noumenal aspects of material existence provoke a spiritual yearning that religion does not necessarily satisfy" (41). Rainwater's reading of Erdrich's novel thus assumes the presence of syncretism while drawing attention to the manner in which syncretism is used as a foil for monovocal, "colonial" impulses. In so doing, Rainwater's argument draws attention to the existence of syncretism and to the importance of interpreting how syncretism is described and how it is used in Native fiction.

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# Landscape as Narrative, Narrative as Landscape

THERESA S. SMITH AND JILL M. FIORE

## INTRODUCTION

In his interpretive essay on Linda Hogan's *Solar Storms*, Geoffrey Stacks calls the novel a "defiant cartography, one that is historically rooted in indigenous culture, narrative in nature, and connected to the land and therefore able to resist rather than assist colonization" (161). Through mapping land, individual healing and growth, and the struggle for Native sovereignty, Hogan's work suggests ways in which the reader may learn to navigate a world that is both familiar and strange to the Euroamerican consciousness. Hogan indicates that seeing the land with a Native eye means learning to dwell in community. Safely travelling that land signals reclamation of identity in a natural world that can be described but never defined by directions and distance. And listening to that land teaches one to hear and eventually to retell the stories embedded therein.

The late Vine Deloria Jr. was a great interpreter of Native North American life ways and a lucid and provocative writer and speaker. In his work he told the story of this continent, and like any good storyteller, he spoke of memories and dreams, creating an anamnesis for Native people while instructing non-Natives about the character of American Indian religions. In reading Deloria we understand that the colonizing religion of Christianity was very much an orphan washed up on the shores of North America and that this orphan, removed from its roots, failed to understand that it had found high ground upon a sacred and peopled landscape. The European Christians stood in stark contrast to Indigenous people like the Hopis,

who, traveling in hollow reeds fashioned for them by Spider Grandmother, emerged from a flood to stand and dwell in a home that they still understand and protect through ritual. Deloria's critique of the alien and alienated mindset of Christianity is further developed in his contention that while the Abrahamic monotheisms may have been born in revelation, in their overemphasis on transcendence, they quickly desacralized the world and prioritized time and history over space and place. As Deloria was fond of noting, Christianity is largely a commemorative religion while Native American traditions are revelatory. This means that Christianity, in its myth and ritual observances, marks past events by construction of churches and doctrines while Native people continually receive direct, unmediated revelation from a sacred landscape and the *genii loci* that populate that landscape. Memories and dreams as told in myth and enacted in ritual are constantly being formed and re-formed, in a continuously present moment, informed by the past and oriented toward a future. As Deloria put it, in religious worldviews, "Space generates time but time has little relationship to space" (71).

While many born again and, especially, charismatic Christians who seek direct and often thaumaturgical revelations of god's power might rightfully disagree with Deloria's characterization of their religion, mainstream Christianity certainly conforms to his description. Further, even among the Christian seekers of miracles and the fully one third of Americans who say they have interacted, personally, with angels, direct experience remains curiously dislocated—or we should say, un-located. Houses of god are built upon, not discovered in, landscape, and religious experience gestures toward a heavenly rather than an earthly reality. This lack of location, this inability to "dwell" on the earth, is indicative of a larger contemporary North American malaise permeating a mobile society that moves through and consumes land as resource. In speaking of American geographical insensitivity, Barry Lopez describes a natural world that, when not being destroyed by consumption, is romanticized into a sort of theme park: "a magnificent garden, a colonial vision of paradise imposed on a real place that is, at best, only selectively known" (82). It is a place that is understood as scenery and visited

through pictures and infrequent vacations in state, provincial, and national parks. Referred to in songs like “America the Beautiful” and “O Canada,” contained, controlled, and stripped of its power, the natural world has even been transformed into an insipid soundtrack for Euroamerican national identity. As Lopez puts it, Euroamericans “no longer . . . know where they live, except as those places are described and fixed by numbers” (89).

In creating myths, people tell themselves the stories they need to hear. It would appear that Euroamericans, heirs to a transcendent monotheism, a capitalist and colonial mobility, and an adherence to the demands of linear time, have told themselves stories about rising above this earth, journeying, dominating, and always searching for a sense of home and wholeness that is only truly realized on the other side of death, in a world of pure spirit. For Native Americans, who are at home in this world and know where they live, the stories are quite different. Attuned to immanence, cyclical time, and a compelling sense of place, American Indian myths tell stories of people, human and otherwise, who do not travel toward eventual meaning but who dwell in and move through an inherently meaningful arena. The explorations described in myth are inseparable from the landscape that acts as a kind of metanarrative itself.

In writing new stories, contemporary Native American novelists draw upon this sense of place and are frequently informed by a corpus of myth that serves as a foundation for their narratives. The stories that contemporary Native Americans often need to hear are ones that acknowledge dislocation and isolation while enacting healing for both the individual and a community that includes the natural environment. By definition, these stories must grow out of the landscape—indeed, must participate in the landscape—in order to be efficacious. In analyzing Linda Hogan’s novel, *Solar Storms*, it was clear to us that any understanding of the therapeutic journey she inscribes for her characters necessitated an appreciation for the metanarrative of the Ojibwa and Cree landscape. To this end we constructed this two-part essay to explore both landscape as narrative and narrative as landscape in order to illuminate the rich dialectical conversation that continually occurs between place and

individual, between writer and environment in the Ojibwa/Cree life-world. Part 1 of this essay is grounded in religious studies and in participatory field studies while part 2 is informed by feminist theory and literary analysis. It is our hope that this multidisciplinary approach to landscape and text will serve the dialogical function of locating Hogan's work as a written response to an environment that, despite the ecological damage done to it, continues to speak to and instruct on methods of healing.

## PART 1

### Landscape as Narrative

#### *Traveling the Sacred Geography of the Anishinaabeg*

THERESA S. SMITH

Dennis Tedlock, who has written extensively on both the Quiche Mayans and the Zunis, refers to Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutic as it applies to Zuni narrative. Ricoeur frequently describes the way in which discourse "projects a world," and Tedlock notes that, in the case of the Zuni, the relationship between narrative and landscape is dialectical. He refers to Andrew Peyneta's telling of the Zuni Emergence tale, "The Word of Kyaklo," which describes the ruins of the ancients, the foaming waters, and the activities in the kiva: "But when the ruins are all around the land, as you can see; when you can see how water can make foam, can make suds; when you have seen Nepayatamu and the Molaawe yourself, at the kiva. I don't know whether the text is opening up the world, or the world is opening up the text" (240).

This reciprocity of text and world exists across Native America and is clearly experienced by the Ojibwas and Crees of the Great Lakes—or Anishinaabeg, as they collectively name themselves. Unlike the Zunis, Hopis, and Navajos, the traditional Anishinaabeg were neither farmers nor herders and so do not share the sense of fixed abode found among the southwestern tribes. Yet as seasonal

travelers over an immense terrain, they are no less sensitive to location or to how that location both reflects and determines storytelling and even language itself. This point was first made to me some twenty years ago when, as a graduate student in Boston, I began searching for a place in which to study the Cree and Ojibwa languages. I traveled to Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ontario, where I found myself lost in a foreign landscape and in languages that had no English cognates and were divided according to the unfamiliar gender categories of “animate” and “inanimate.” What was bewildering about the genders was that while the “animate” category included all living beings, it also included things that English speakers understand as objects. Given an example of such a gender-animate object—*ahsin* (stone)—I found myself facing the same confusion experienced by the ethnographer A. Irving Hallowell, who asked a Northern Ojibwa man about this grammatical marker: “Are all the stones we see about us alive?” [The old man] reflected a long while and then replied, ‘No! But some are.’” (147). What the man was saying was not that everything in the natural world is alive in any romantic, anthropomorphized, or even animistic sense but that many parts of the world have the potential for movement, for speech and volition—for personhood. Years of living in Ojibwa territory were to teach me that humans, animals, *manitouk* (spirits), and the cosmos of sky, earth, and water in which we are contained hold this potential personhood within them. Whenever and wherever one travels in Anishinaabe territory, one is never alone, and this overwhelming sense of community is evident in myths and lands that constantly open themselves to one another. Further, the sense of place and direction in this world is so marked that my Cree tutor berated me for my insensitivity to place. Noting that I frequently pointed my finger, he explained that it is considered a rude overstatement to point directly to a place. It is as if one were shouting at a listener whom one assumes is hard of hearing. Clearly, if I wanted to hear Anishinaabe narratives I would need to learn not only how to listen but how to look.

One of the first places that I began to see as well as hear stories was at Mt. McKay, a butte just to the west of Thunder Bay. This for-

ested mountain is crowned by a flat top supported by sheer rock cliffs, and while local Anishinaabeg regularly hold powwows under its shadow, few attempt to scale the cliffs to its summit. It is considered a sacred place, and, especially when clouds obscure its top, people still consider the Thunderbirds to be in residence there. Many tales, both ancient and modern, speak of humans who attempt to visit the Thunderbirds in their nesting places, and without exception, those who go without respect and propitiation are doomed. The Thunderbirds, or Animikeek, travel roughly from west to east over the Great Lakes, bringing life-giving rain, displaying their power as they hunt monsters, watching over and protecting humans and always acting as messengers. Sometimes their messages are in the form of feathers or thunderstones, but most often they speak to humans in various and highly individualized voices.<sup>1</sup> Humans must offer Thunderbirds what they offer to grandparents—respect and tobacco (either burning or burying the latter as a gift)—and in return the Animikeek will not attack them. And while these Manitouk move across the sky, they are always understood to have a particularly favored local home. On Manitoulin Island, that place is the quartzite hills of La Cloche where they, like the eagles that resemble them, make their nests. It is impossible to read or hear a tale of the Thunderbirds without looking to the sky, without listening for their approach, or without feeling the wind that precedes them, just as it eventually becomes difficult to do any of these things without thinking of Thunderbirds.

In the power that the Thunderbirds carry in their storms, Anishinaabeg access long-remembered stories and experience dreams of hope and healing. Sam Oswamick, a medicine person, told me many stories of Thunderbirds, including one in which a young man who was very ill was taken up into the sky by his grandfathers and enlisted in their battle against a monster. Oswamick says:

And the boss [Thunderbird] said—there's a boss, you know—he told them that somebody should take this man back where you got him. And give him something, for helping us out. So they bring him back. Finally they got to the house where he

lived and that man [the Thunderbird] told him, “After I’m gone, come and look where I left.” And that man just disappeared in the clouds. So he stayed there thinking about what happened and he went outside and looked. So he found a feather, thunderbird feather. He picked it up. “I guess this is the one that was given to me” [he said]. So he felt different. He felt so good he ran around. “Well, I guess I’ll go down and see my dad and my mother.” So he started walking.

So they were outside there, those sisters and brothers, so when they saw him coming they took off, they were so scared, you know. They ran to their camp. “We saw him coming. I guess he’s dead already. That’s his spirit we seen over there.” . . . Everyone was so scared and he talked to them. “It’s me.” So he told them the story and his dad told him, “They’re Thunders.”

That’s why the Indians believe there are thunder spirits. They help people, you know, looking all over, seeing everything’s going on alright. That’s why they travel around. That’s why those Indians have faith in that feather. They believe in that. So those white people they don’t believe in that. I heard them saying it. (Smith 89)

This lack of belief that Oswamick notes really translates into a lack of respect for the story, for spiritual experience, and for the natural world itself. Respect for the spirit of the story and the world that reflects and determines it includes a willingness to break down cognitive boundaries and accept a new plausibility structure that admits the possibility expressed in this myth. It requires that one acknowledge that the landscape itself possesses an energy that fuels and is fueled by Anishinaabe activity upon that landscape. As the artist Leland Bell once said to me, “The energy exists within the land—the North American continent. It exists within human culture—the Anishinaabe’s origins, history, present and destiny. It exists within the Anishinaabe’s spiritual teachings which sustain him/her on the earth” (Smith 191). Acknowledgment of this energy has clear behavioral consequences, for it is said that people who do not sit quietly and wait for the manitouk to pass over and fail to offer tobacco

or thanks are much more likely to be struck by the Thunderbirds. According to Anishinaabeg, this accounts for the greater frequency of lightning strikes experienced by white people.

As protectors, the Thunderbirds demand respect not only from humans but from the monsters like the one mentioned above—Mishebeshu, the great water monster who is actually a multitude of creatures and spirits appearing as a giant underwater panther (the source of his name) or serpent.<sup>2</sup> He is the owner of the waters, the force that makes the lake turn rough, the hidden form beneath the ice that may suddenly crack in early spring, the one who pulls boaters and swimmers to their deaths and who makes the ground go soft beneath your feet. Whenever these conditions are encountered, the person and the story of Mishebeshu is present, and the only thing to do is to act quietly, to retreat, and/or to make an offering to the water of tobacco, flour, or bread. While he is hugely powerful and often appears malevolent, there are some important things to remember in this context. First, Mishebeshu can be avoided because one knows where he is to be found. While all waters are his domain and he may travel through underground passages to any lake or swamp, he favors certain places over others. Hence, his mythology, like his presence, is most often located in highly specific bodies of water. Often called “bad” lakes, these places can be identified by their physical characteristics, which may include dark or oddly colored water; relative inaccessibility; great depth or extreme differences in depth; a lack of fish; frequency of rough water conditions; and the presence of whirlpools, strong currents, or undertows. Mishebeshu reacts negatively to incursions into his world, as exhibited in his battle with Nanabush in the earth diver creation narrative. Further, in Hogan’s novel, Mishebeshu shows his anger at the re-routing of rivers by increasing the violence of the current where the women are attempting to ford. It is only Dora-Rouge’s reading of the water and her barter with the monster that makes it possible for them to proceed, for Mishebeshu also responds to respect. But his relational demands, as Dora-Rouge will discover and as I discuss below, are terrifyingly huge.

On Manitoulin Island, where I lived for many summers while

working with Anishinaabe consultants, Whitefish Lake and Quanja Lake were both known as bad lakes, and sightings of Mishebeshu were relatively common in Wikwemikong Bay. The Ojibwa artist James Simon Mishibiniijima told me about such a sighting, saying that at first he thought it was a huge sturgeon—despite the fact that it was forty feet long. Mishibiniijima went to speak with an elder, William Trudeau, about what he had seen, and Trudeau told him he should consider the experience “a gift to [his] eyes” (Smith 96). To see the monster is to participate in his power and to experience the force of a natural world that has not been stripped of its stories.

When the stories of the water monster are told, it is almost impossible to determine whether storytellers are recounting actual events, old tales, or dreams, and the longer I lived on an island in his territory the less I felt a need to differentiate among the narratives. In answer to the question, “Is Mishebeshu a spirit, a vision, an actual physical creature, or a symbol of the danger of water,” I would have to answer, “Yes.” What I know for sure is that every Anishinaabeg person I ever spoke with understood that Mishebeshu could not only be seen but also communicated with. His very name is never spoken—even by Christianized Anishinaabeg—except in the winter months when he is trapped beneath the ice, for when one calls him, he responds, and his response is not usually positive. Like the Hebrews who understood the power of the true name of god, Anishinaabeg usually refer to Mishebeshu as “the one who lives under the water,” “the serpent,” “the one down there,” or, most often, and most obliquely, “that guy.” As noted above, avoidance or propitiation is the safest course of action with Mishebeshu, but people can and do ally with him and/or battle him. In the first case, stories abound of humans—especially medicine people—entering into relationships with him in order to partake of his power, often evidenced by the possession of a piece of copper that is said to come from his horns. However, Mishebeshu’s demands of those who seek a relationship with him are huge, so huge that sometimes one must, eventually, give up a human life (even one’s own) in order to appease him. It is always best to seek other manitouk as guides through the landscape

and to leave Mishebeshu to himself, traveling cautiously and quietly through his waters.

On occasion, though, one can neither avoid nor appease the monster, and one of my favorite tales of a human battle with Mishebeshu is recounted in versions recorded by William Jones in 1919 and Victor Barnouw in 1977. Jones's version follows; note that the narrator locates the tale in a specific place:

Long ago people used to see something in places, especially where the current was swift. The people feared it; and that was the reason of their practice of sometimes throwing offerings to it in the water, even tobacco. Now, once yonder, at what is called Shallow-Water, was where some women were once passing by in a canoe. Accordingly there happened to rise a mighty current of water, nearly were they capsized; exceedingly frightened were they. While they were paddling with all their might, they saw the tail of a Great-Lynx come up out of the water; all flung themselves up into the forward end of the canoe in their fright. Now, one of the women that was there saw that the canoe was going to sink; accordingly, when she had gone to the stern, she raised the paddle in order to strike the tail of Great-Lynx. And this she said: "While I was young, often did I fast. It was then that the Thunderers gave me their war-club." Thereupon, when she struck the tail of Great-Lynx, she then broke the tail of Great-Lynx in two. Thereupon up to the surface rose the canoe, after which they then started on their way paddling; and so they were saved. (Jones 259; see also Barnouw 132-33).

The woman who defeats the monster does so because she invokes the power of the Thunderbirds. In calling upon the memory of her dream/vision, she acts in concert with manitouk, in a community of persons. There is no denying that the world of this narrative, or the narrative of this world, is full of danger. In fact, to deny the danger of the world is to romanticize it. But the true dangers of this world threaten one most when one is alone, bereft of spirit helpers, forgetful of dreams. Like Angela in *Solar Storms*, who only learns to dream

after being reintroduced to her female relatives, the isolated person is at great risk not only of becoming the prey of malevolent forces but also of becoming malevolent oneself.

The danger caused by isolation appears often in Anishinaabe stories, but it is nowhere more pronounced than in the tales from far northern Ontario. Here, among the Cree and northernmost Ojibwa, people speak about the Windigo, a terrifying cannibal ice monster that has its genesis in stories of people forced into cannibalism by the long winter. The first Windigo is sometimes said to have been a man who, driven mad by hunger and snow blindness, mistook his family for a group of beavers, killing and eating them. The Windigo is understood as both a mythic character and as a present threat to humans. It will stalk you over the snow fields, and if you are attacked, rather than killing you, it might infect you with Windigo sickness by biting you. Once ill, you might eventually “go Windigo” yourself, fall into despair, become gluttonous, or develop a taste for human flesh. In fact, the word Windigo is derived from the Cree *wihtikowiw*, “he eats greedily,” indicating that gluttony, especially as it indicates a refusal to share in community, may be the root cause of Windigo sickness. The Windigo’s cannibal existence is both frightening and immensely sad inasmuch as this creature with a heart of ice is literally a lost soul. And so it is especially appropriate that, in taking her inspiration from the northern Ojibwa/Cree territory, Hogan describes Angela’s abusive, infected, and infecting mother as a Windigo.

Among the Swampy Cree, “Windigos are sometimes referred to as ‘He-who-lives-alone’” (Norman 4). While even Mishebeshu lives in community with his underwater tribe, only the Windigo is always solitary, lost in a landscape and hunting those humans who are foolish enough to travel alone. The fear of isolation and of losing one’s way is as strong in the Windigo narratives as is the fear of starvation and threat of cannibalism. In his book of Cree Windigo tales, *Where the Chill Came From*, Howard Norman refers to snow snakes, “those swirls of hissing snow that rush along the surface of the earth. . . . They can take the four directions away from you, so that you shiver and hold still, totally lost. Then the snow snakes spin you away” (13).

In the Windigo's territory, all sense of place is stolen, no landscape is discernable, and herein the world opens a text that tells the Cree they will survive the winter only in community with persons—human and otherwise.

It is worth noting that while the Windigo can be killed, it usually takes the work of a group of humans who must attack its heart with heat. Alternately, humans may be aided by a magical weasel that eats the Windigo's heart after diving into its mouth. In both cases, cooperation—like that found in the cosmogonic earth diver narratives of the Great Lakes as well as in the community of women in *Solar Storms*—is essential. Society, food, warmth, and, eventually, the advent of spring destroy the Windigo and make the landscape a recognizable place once again. In the Cree story, “The Moss Falls Windigo,” all these themes are articulated. Here a man named Nepaskaw is lured away from his companions by a voice calling him. He climbs a cliff on which a waterfall has begun to be covered by fast-growing moss. The moss grows at an unnatural rate and soon he and the companions who try to rescue him are trapped in the magical moss, the creation of a Windigo. One last companion, Tawipussawao, remains and has the presence of mind to leave the place and travel south, where he enlists the aid of Frog and Heron who send a moose who “carries summer on his back.” While the Windigo is distracted by the moose, Tawipussawao takes a deer hide, covers it in sturgeon glue, and flings it at the Windigo:

The hide full of summer stuck to the Windigo's chest. And there was a great HOWLING . . . a howling of . . . all animal voices at once. More rocks fell. Many things in the region held their ears against this loud howling. Summer was melting the Windigo's heart then. But it still had enough strength to climb the moss, biting at it . . . it climbed to the top. It lay down there to die. This is why there is still a dripping sound there . . . why it is heard . . . because of the sound of its heart melting from up there. It was too late to save the men, whose shapes are now rocks. But the Windigo died and the place remains . . . it remains to remind us what happened. That is how it happened. (Norman 88)

In the waters of Lake Superior near Thunder Bay, there is a promontory that resembles a man lying on his back. Widely known as The Sleeping Giant, it is, according to the Anishinaabeg, the fossilized form of the culture hero Nanabush, who with the help of earth diving animals originally created the North American continent. When the European invaders came and began mining the land for copper, Nanabush, in his grief, lay down to sleep upon the water. His shape is now a rock too, but he is not just a memory or a lesson, for the people say that one day soon he will awake. When he does and steps onto the land, his head touching the sky, Nanabush will take back this world and banish the invaders who were able to strip the earth because they never really learned to see this place or listen to it. His form is a memory and a dream/vision, in turn and at once, a narrative connected to a cycle of narratives that constitute revelation rather than commemoration.

As the Anishinaabeg might say, “That is how it happened. That is where it happened. And this is how and where it will happen.” Yet even as they await the next chapter in their continuing metanarrative, the Anishinaabeg—and Native Americans generally—work to construct articulations of memories and dreams. In reclaiming tradition through cultural revival, they remember the ongoing story of creation and re-creation, and in articulating individual visions of the future, they create a space in which to dream in a transformed world. And when I reference dreaming I use it in the sense of the Anishinaabe word *naabndanwin*, which also refers to vision—an active, meaningful, and ultimately healing engagement with the spirit world. In articulating their own dream worlds, Native American novelists are not just storytellers in the secular sense but share the responsibility of medicine people, their words serving to heal even as they inform and allow access to the power of dreaming. And, like the prophets Wovoka and Handsome Lake, Native novelists take on the task of making sense of the present through reference to the past and the future—filling people with a sense of hope, then in the face of soldiers and missionaries, and now in the path of land-destroying corporations. Individual creativity is thus not just grounded in tradition, not merely located in landscape; rather, it

holds itself responsible to a larger community vision of what is and what could be. This is certainly the sense that one gets in reading Linda Hogan's *Solar Storms*, and it is to this text that we now turn in order to hear how a voice that has listened to the spirits of the land contributes to a constantly evolving conversation on this continent. The map that Hogan draws reorients her characters to damaged internal and external landscapes, the wounds of which will be healed with acts of reciprocity.

## PART 2

### Narrative as Landscape

*A Home Beyond Boundaries in Linda Hogan's Solar Storms*

JILL M. FIORE

In Linda Hogan's novel *Solar Storms*, narrative creates and ultimately defines a landscape through which characters move toward transformation. A Chickasaw from Oklahoma, Hogan chooses to place her narrative in the north country—specifically, the Boundary Waters between Minnesota and Canada. These labyrinthine waters serve as a metaphor for her story as her characters, four generations of women, journey beyond external and internal borders in order to complete their quest. It is significant that the characters are traveling through a Native American landscape that, as Theresa Smith has illustrated, is an actual spirit-filled place and that the eldest woman, Dora Rouge, who initiates the trip with her desire to return to her home in the far north, has already begun to step over the boundaries of this world into the next. The real journey for these women, and especially the protagonist and narrator, Angela, is the journey of inner healing that brings one home to self, a self that can only be fully realized in community and relation to family and the natural world. Barry Lopez's observation about Navajo storytelling applies to Hogan's narrative: "A story draws on relationships in the exterior landscape and projects them onto the interior landscape. The pur-

pose of storytelling is to achieve harmony between the two landscapes, to use all the elements of story—syntax, mood, figures of speech—in a harmonious way to reproduce the harmony of the land in the individual’s interior” (9). The protagonist does not so much find a home in the north as she creates one in concert with the land and her fellow travelers/teachers, just as Hogan’s narrative, by participation in an actual meaning-laden place, inscribes a path toward home and wholeness.

Set in 1972, Hogan’s novel begins when seventeen-year-old Angela Jensen returns after twelve years to Adam’s Rib, her birthplace and the home of her maternal grandmothers. Angela bears the scars, both physical and emotional, of her mother Hannah’s abuse and the succession of foster homes that came afterward. Having recently found the name of her great-grandmother Agnes in court records, Angela writes to her and receives the message “Come at once” (23). Stepping off the ferry in Adam’s Rib, Angela is greeted by a stark landscape that mirrors her own scarred state. Taking in the “weary houses” strung along in a line, all of them “dark brown and dreary,” Angela says, “In a glance, I was sorry I had come” (24). In spite of this first impression, Angela trusts on a deeper level that she is on the right path and therefore remains open to this place and the women there who are about to reenter her life. “I was traveling toward myself,” she says, “like rain falling into a lake, going home to a place I’d lived, still inside my mother, returning to a people I’d never met” (26). The old women, who are of Cree and Ojibwa descent, having predicted and awaited Angela’s return, welcome her into their lives and their home. They also recognize in her a deep woundedness and prepare for the role they must play in her healing. In their task, the grandmothers—Dora-Rouge, Angela’s great-great-grandmother; Agnes Iron, her great-grandmother; and Bush, her grandfather’s abandoned first wife who cared for Angela as a baby—offer Angela love and acceptance as well as protection. As Angela is drawn into this fold of elders, she develops a shared sense of meaning, value, and purpose that calls for her willing participation and her voice in a larger story, in which she will come to play an invaluable role.

But first, Angela must be healed of the horrible psychic wound-

ing she endured at her mother's hands. Agnes, relating old stories she'd heard from the Cree, "stories about the frozen heart of evil that was hunger, envy, and greed, how it had tricked people into death or illness or made them go insane" (12), tells Angela what happened to her mother: "We all knew your mother, Hannah Wing, stood at the bottomless passage to an underworld. She was wounded. She was dangerous. And there was no thawing for her heart" (13). Having succumbed to the terrible and violent spirit of the Windigo, Hannah is a destructive force. "My mother," Angela comes to understand, "was stairs with no destination. She was a burning house, feeding on the air of others" (96). Bush, however, reveals how she had loved Hannah in spite of this and tried everything to heal her when, pregnant with Angela, she came to live with Bush. What Bush discovered is that Hannah was, seemingly, not the first-generation Windigo in her family. Indeed, Hannah's own mother had begun a cycle of abuse that left her daughter's body covered in scars, burns, and incisions. Because a true Windigo's heart cannot be melted this side of death, in the end there would be no ceremony, no healing for Hannah. Yet Bush and the others are now prepared to stop the Windigo sickness that has begun to infect Angela, whose face bears the scars of her mother's vicious bites.

Part of this healing involves a reintroduction to the land, one that almost immediately initiates Angela's remembering of her ties to this place and her family there. Specifically, she recalls the connection she once shared with her grandmothers, and especially with Bush, who had fought for and lost custody of her when she was a baby. Angela recalls, "[S]he was one of the women who had loved me. Between us there had once been a bond, something like the ancient pact land had made with water, or the agreement humans once made with animals" (22). As Dora-Rouge, Agnes, and Bush begin to provide missing pieces that mirror the reality of Angela's identity, and as she finds her place among them, Angela begins to see possibilities of a very different self. With this shift comes a marked transformation of Angela's relationship to the natural world. About her initial attitude, she says, "Like the missionaries, I was threatened by [the land's] life and the way it resisted human efforts to control it" (71). The ele-

ments, however, constitute living presences that approach Angela at every turn. Vines entwine themselves through her windows, and plant spirits enter her dreams. Dubbed a “plant dreamer” by Dora-Rouge, who reveals the significance of this family gift, Angela is spiritually transformed as she recognizes her place among the interconnectedness of all life. Revealing this new outlook, she says, “Maybe the roots of dreaming are in the soil of dailiness or in the heart, or in another place without words, but when they come together and grow, they are like the seeds of hydrogen and the seeds of oxygen that together create ocean, lake, and ice. In this way, the plants and I joined each other. They entangled me in their stems and vines and it was a beautiful entanglement” (171).

At this point Angela begins to take a more reciprocal role in her relationship with her grandmothers, a role that mirrors the reciprocal relationship between humans and manitouk, who are always understood as grandparents. Angela gets her opportunity when Bush proposes that she accompany them on a canoe trip north across the Boundary Waters to the land of the Fat-Eaters, the place of Dora-Rouge’s birth where she wishes to return to die. Of course, Angela recognizes that what is being asked of her will inevitably involve much more than practical help. “Somehow,” she says, “I knew I would lose a part of myself on this journey, as if, when we cast off into water, I would step outside my skin. It was a kind of dying. And I was afraid” (159). However fearful, Angela moves forward with courage. Once their journey is underway, she contributes by rowing the canoe and carrying Dora-Rouge, who does not walk, in a chair when they cover distances on land. In her behavior she illustrates the Anishinaabe necessity of returning the grandmothers’ gifts of healing and wisdom with those of respect and service. No longer plagued by the illness of the Windigo, she casts off isolation in favor of community. “The four of us became like one animal,” she explains. “We heard inside each other in a tribal way. I understood this at once and was easy with it. With my grandmothers there was no such thing as loneliness. Before, my life had been without all its ears, eyes, without all its knowings. Now we, the four of us, had the same eyes” (177).

In addition to achieving identification with the other women,

Angela finds herself merging with the natural world. Stepping outside of time into a landscape in which “there [is] no such thing as empty space,” she begins to experience the immediacy of the water and land and to feel at home in the midst of her journey: “[W]e no longer needed time. We were lost from it, and lost in this way, I came alive. It was as if I’d slept for years, and was now awake. The others felt it, too. Cell by cell, all of us were taken in by water and by land, swallowed a little at a time. What we’d thought of as our lives and being on earth was gone, and now the world was made up of pathways of its own invention” (170).

As women who have spent their lives living in concert with the land, and having charted their course with the use of an old and very detailed map, the older women expect to navigate their way with little trouble. However, what they do not anticipate is the drastic change caused to the land and waterways by the human redirection of the rivers. Unbeknownst to them, dams to the north have reinvented the pathways of the world, remapping the landscape and confusing the elements. At one impassable point, they discover that “[t]he water of two rivers, forced into one, was deeper and wider than it should have been, hitting the walls far up the sides and spreading out wherever it could in other places, taking down trees” (192). They are at a loss for how to proceed until Dora-Rouge explains that she is going to talk to the churning river and convince it to let them pass safely. Dora-Rouge understands that Mishebeshu, the water monster, is angry at what has been done to the rivers and his anger is expressed in the violence of the water. “That is why it was a strong roar, she said, so loud it sounded like earth breaking open and raging” (192). Dora-Rouge barter with Mishebeshu in private and then, against reason and even faith, the women enter the turbulent waters with great hesitance, only to find that the waters carry them through. Unsure of what Dora-Rouge had worked, Angela recognizes, “[s]he had tricked something, all right. . . . Maybe it wasn’t water she’d bartered with, after all, but she’d struck up one hell of a deal with something. . . . What she’d traded in exchange, she wouldn’t say, but this much was clear: something godly was bringing us through” (195).

Their arrival in the Land of the Fat-Eaters, however, is not the end; it is merely another beginning in their journey, reflecting again the cyclical nature of time. To begin with, their arrival feels incomplete without Agnes, who becomes ill and dies unexpectedly along the way. And they are disappointed for Dora-Rouge, whose homecoming is ruined when, in place of her idyllic vision, they discover instead a kind of ecological nightmare wreaked by a hydroelectric dam project. The women in the novel grieve the “murder of the soul that was taking place there. Murder with no consequences to the killers” and begin to contemplate their own role in this ongoing tragedy (343). And they mourn for those who participate in the dam project and for their lack of appreciation for the land or the vision to see beyond their own immediate gains. Angela goes so far as to liken those behind the destruction to Windigos: “They were the cannibals who consumed human flesh, set fire to worlds the gods had loved and asked the humans to care for” (343). Like Windigos, the murderers of the land are gluttons who, with greed and trickery, seal their own lonely fates in a landscape that offers no sustenance anymore. Like Hannah, who once tried to kill her newborn daughter, they can only live by attempting to take life, both literally and figuratively, from others.

The women choose not to become lost in their grief, however, but instead establish themselves as allies with the land and its Native dwellers. Angela says, “I could see Dora-Rouge thinking, wondering: how do conquered people get their lives back?” (226) In their search for an answer, the women begin to understand that “the protest against the dams and river diversions was their only hope” (226); they had no choice but to get involved. And, as Dora-Rouge reveals, she has a special duty to get involved, a debt to pay to Mishebeshu. In exchange for granting them passage through the turbulent river, she had promised him she would give up her desired death and use her life in service to the waters. Only afterward does Dora-Rouge wonder if she had “made a bad deal” (215), realizing too late that Mishebeshu may well have chosen to take the life of Agnes, her daughter. Yet whatever terrible costs the water monster added to the bargain, Dora-Rouge must still honor her promise.

A week after their arrival, the women meet Tulik, a tribal judge whom Dora Rouge discovers is a distant relative and who invites them to move into his home with him and his adult daughter. The women join Tulik and other members of the Native community, to plan their strategy against the developers. Their goal is to put a stop to the rerouting of the rivers that will flood lands and villages and cause untold devastation throughout the ecosystem. This desire to fight back places Angela and the members of this community in a new relationship with one other, with political systems, and with nature, as they work to establish a collective voice to defend the natural world and their way of life there. She explains, "We had pride. We were in something together. We no longer allowed others to call us Fat-Eaters. We were again the Beautiful People" (313). In the process of political resistance, Angela, once wounded and scarred, stands strong and speaks in the name of those (human and otherwise) who cannot speak for themselves.

By fighting to sustain the land, the characters of Hogan's narrative strive to create a landscape of their own, one that both reflects and determines their vision and enables them to hold strong against the wreckage they witness around them. In both their purpose and connectivity, the women become like the once near-extinct sturgeon who are now returning to their home in the Boundary Waters. Called *Namewag* in Ojibwa, the sturgeon, according to Winona LaDuke, were swimming the inland waters of North America 136 million years ago. To the Anishinaabeg, the sturgeon is a creature of mythological status, revered as a relative and a source of sustenance for generations. Once plentiful, the sturgeon were brought to near extinction by the early part of the nineteenth century, due to "the advent of the white community's commercial fishing and resource exploitation, dams, and, finally, the incredible pollution of the pulp mills" (LaDuke 229). Now that the Great Lakes have begun to recover, due in part to enforcement of the Clean Air Act, the sturgeon have returned. Like the sturgeon, the grandmothers and their granddaughter of Hogan's narrative teach us all a lesson, one of returning, of connectivity and the importance of sustaining and reclaiming our relationships with each other and to the land.

Like the women, the sturgeon are survivors who dwell in boundary waters. Both traverse those waters with ease and grace, understanding that real boundaries only exist where humans have dammed the inherent connections that allow for freedom, balance, and the capacity to be born, to live, and to die in the proper place and time. The sturgeon's way of life is instructive and asks nothing beyond the perpetual willingness to rise again and again in a dance of renewal, healing, and transformation.

Through their relationship with one another, the elder women and their young granddaughter, along with the larger community of which they are part, establish continuity and a common purpose that ensures a way of life rooted in hope. By giving all they have to the present, Angela explains, "[W]e'd thrown an anchor into the future and followed the rope to the end of it, to where we would dream new dreams, new medicines, and one day, once again, remember the sacredness of every living thing" (34). In this way, hope, unlike optimism, expands beyond the belief that things will turn out well; rather, in the words of Vaclav Havel, "It is an orientation of the spirit, an orientation of the heart" (82). In *Dwellings* Hogan offers not an answer but a refrain of questions in her ongoing effort to create a home beyond boundaries:

How do we get there from here, I wonder, to the center of the world, to the place where the universe carries down the song of night to our human lives. How can we listen or see to find our way by feel to the heart of every yes or no? How do we learn to trust ourselves enough to trust the chanting of earth? To know what's alive or absent around us, and penetrate the void between our eyes, the old, slow pulse of things, until a wild flying wakes up in us, a new mercy climbs out and takes wing in the sky? (258)

In asking the questions that pertain to us all, Hogan enables readers to feel a sense of empathy for the characters, events, and larger political struggles represented in the story. As Laura Virginia Castor notes, "In texts such as Hogan's . . . empathetic connections among characters, narrators, and readers make it possible for readers with-

out direct experience of having their land, language, and culture taken, can nonetheless participate in revising American collective memories in ways that acknowledge the importance of indigenous rights” (174). In this way, Castor explains, the events of the novel become “a springboard for speaking of larger truths about personal, cultural, and ecological survival” (175). Hogan’s novel is transformative insofar that it transmits a global message that influences her readers’ understanding, ensuring for them, as for her characters, a way of life rooted in hope.

#### NOTES

1. So distinct are the Thunderbird personalities that they have been given a number of names: *nigankwam* (First Thunder), *beskinekkwan* (Thunder That’s Going to Hit), *besreudang* (The Echoer), and *bebomawidang* (Searching Thunders), to name a few. See Smith 74–75.

2. The use of the word *monster* here is based not only upon Sam Oswamick’s usage but also upon the use of this word by other elders when referencing *Mishebeshu*. I would add that the English word derives from Latin *monstrum*—a portent, a sign, a supernatural manifestation—and refers back to Latin *monere*, to advise or warn. I would argue that the Latin roots are quite in keeping with the character and behavior of this manitou.

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## Book Reviews

Brenda Farnell. *Do You See What I Mean? Plains Indian Sign Talk and the Embodiment of Action*. Austin: U of Texas P, 2009.  
ISBN: 0-8032-2282-3. 382 pp.

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Plains Indian Sign Talk (PST) is a sign language that served as the lingua franca among various Native Americans of the Great Plains. It was commonly held that PST had all but disappeared after the establishment of reservations and the forced adjustment to the English language, but Brenda Farnell's work proves otherwise, examining how PST remains an integral part of storytelling in Assiniboine (Nakota) culture. Originally published in 1995, *Do You See What I Mean?* explores how PST challenges traditional ways of understanding language, culture, and the body. For Farnell, words and gestures work in tandem to create meaning, and to hold one in higher regard than the other is to ignore the myriad of ways human beings make meaning.

Chapters 1 and 2 serve as introductory material, situating Farnell's position on the nature of language and the relationship between speech and manual gesture. Using the work of E. B. Tylor on "the gesture language," Farnell explores the ways in which power, language, and the body influence anthropological and linguistic thought (6). Nineteenth-century anthropologists believed that languages reflected the mental capacity and development of those who spoke them; therefore, gesturing was seen as a "primitive pre-

cursor to speech” (33). Tylor rejected this idea, instead suggesting that gesture reflects the primitive nature of the *language*, not the people who speak it. Farnell goes further and argues that sign language—or what Tylor would call gesturing—should be understood as a medium of expression that is part of a complex system of iconic signs. This understanding allows Farnell to analyze PST as part of a spoken language, not as a sign language that can create full meaning on its own.

Chapters 3 through 5 offer detailed analyses of three Assiniboine narratives to demonstrate three distinct ways gesturing is integral to the language. Farnell presents these stories in terms of their relationship to space, organizing them into chapters called “Geographical and Historical Spaces,” “Moral and Ethical Spaces,” and “Spatial Orientation and Deixis in PST and Nakota.” Farnell’s choice to present the narratives in terms of space is useful to her argument, as it demonstrates how fundamental the body and the sense of place are to both the Assiniboine narratives and to language as a whole. For Farnell, this relationship is bound by the political and historical attempts to control spaces and the bodies within those spaces. It is in this chapter that Farnell introduces the concept of the four directions and its operation as an organizing principle for Assiniboine culture. The relationship between body, space, and language is further emphasized in chapter 6, “Storytelling and the Embodiment of Symbolic Form.” Farnell analyzes how the cultural importance of a circle is reflected in language and, by extension, everyday life. The circle operates as a symbol of the shared community, a symbol and a unifying concept that surfaces in both storytelling and daily life. In chapter 7, Farnell more thoroughly examines Assiniboine philosophies and how language and body movement are central to meaning, particularly meaning in social life. The gestures that Farnell discusses throughout the book emerge here as the essential part of Assiniboine being-in-the-world, and language, by extension, is only a part of expressing that knowing.

Farnell’s position as an anthropologist and a former dancer inspires valuable viewpoints about language and gesture. To focus on the body as opposed to speech is in the realm of pre-Saussurean

thought, where language is an assortment of meanings as opposed to a system. This is a direct challenge to Western conceptions about language, and a good one, I might add, though by its very nature—an unsystematic understanding of what has always been understood to be a system—it is vulnerable to criticism, especially from linguists.

This is a great feat, to be sure, one that should not be taken lightly or easily forgotten, though admittedly Farnell's discussion leaves much to be desired. For all the emphasis on speaking *from* the body and valuing body language (i.e., sign talk) as effective as speech, Farnell glosses over the use of PST among the deaf and hard-of-hearing members of Assiniboine communities, mentioning only in passing that deafness played an important part for her main consultant, James Earthboy, to learn PST. And although Farnell asserts that PST can only gain full meaning alongside speech but not vice versa (236), she is eager to use American Sign Language (ASL) and British Sign Language to illustrate the myriad of ways that PST works. The sources she uses to support her assertions about ASL, however, are dated (the most recent is cited as 1979) and provide few insights about either ASL or PST. As a result, Farnell's attempt to align ASL with PST falls short, and while her analysis of PST reads very easily and can be very intriguing at times, most of what she argues about PST has already been observed by linguists about ASL. This could have provided an impetus for Farnell to say something new about ASL via PST, or she might have simply avoided the connection to ASL in those respects altogether, thus giving her more room to analyze PST outside of the ASL framework that she established early on.

It is also problematic for Farnell to argue about the "Native American view" of language when she admits that there are only a handful of elderly Assiniboines who are familiar with PST. Because of its scarcity of use, it is not possible to claim that PST represents all of Assiniboine ways of knowing, let alone all of Native American ways of knowing. Farnell makes an excellent point that language, in all of its forms, is representative of culture and worldviews specific to that culture. Yet to claim that this representation is acceptable for all cultures that are familiar with it is problematic, despite

her refrain that PST once served as the lingua franca among most Great Plains Indians. But as a supplementary language, it is difficult to conceive of a language system or culture that is as dependent on PST as Farnell leads the reader to believe. While an analysis of PST is useful in understanding Assiniboine culture, it is important to recognize that it is not the only way to understand Assiniboine culture or Native American culture. I think that Farnell certainly knows this, but she makes it unclear as the book progresses; by the end of the book, the reader is left with the sense that all Native Americans are familiar with PST, and as a result, the reader is tempted to claim a holistic understanding of “Native American ways of knowing.”

As this particular version of the book is a paperback of the original 1995 hardback, I had hoped to see some minor, albeit helpful changes to the structure of the book. Farnell makes wonderful use of Labonation, a script for writing human actions, when analyzing the gestures used in the narratives presented. What is difficult, however, is the lack of explanation of Labonation for those not familiar with it. A helpful guide is located at the back of the book, but the ease of reading Farnell’s well-written analyses is hindered by the extensive diagrams with no way of interpreting them and no direction or reminder to look to the back of the book for a key. The key is useful, but a brief explanation of the signs as she used them would have been even more useful to a reader unfamiliar with Labonation. Furthermore, the diagrams inserted in the middle of the chapter are poorly placed, as they often come in the middle of a sentence, making the reader skim through the diagrams to find the end of the sentence, usually many pages later. Farnell also occasionally refers to a CD-ROM that accompanies the book, which provides video clips of the particular movements that she refers to in her analyses. This CD-ROM, however, does not come with the book; rather, it must be purchased separately. With the type of analysis Farnell is doing in this book, the CD-ROM, in my opinion, is vital, and its absence has an impact on the strength of her conclusions, given that she must rely on description and Labonation.

It is easy to see how many of Farnell’s conclusions could be construed as problematic, and while I do agree there are elements of the

book that are indeed problematic, it should not detract from what she is doing for anthropology, linguistics, and Native American studies. Farnell should be applauded for her challenge to Western conceptions that constitute the three areas she tackles. By directly challenging the way we think about the relationships between language, culture, and the body, Farnell's work can inspire promising scholarship in the years to come. But Farnell's innovative approach is overshadowed by her inconsistencies and problematic delivery; her conclusions threaten to perpetuate the limited understandings of Native American language and culture that she is attempting to dismantle.

Victor Villanueva and Damián Baca. *Rhetorics of the Americas: 3114 BCE to 2012 CE*. New York: Palgrave/MacMillan, 2010. ISBN: 978-0230619036. 288 pp.

Marcos Julian Del Hierro, *Texas A&M University*

Heeding the call by Native scholars for more work privileging Native concepts, contributions, and ways of knowing in rhetoric and composition studies, Victor Villanueva and Damián Baca serve as coeditors of the collection, *Rhetorics of the Americas*. Baca sets the tone in the preface by stating that the book's intention is "to begin to fill a gap" within rhetoric studies that must go beyond proving formidability against the Greco-Roman tradition (ix). In this sense, the reader must recognize that each chapter's rhetoricity extends beyond conventional notions that characterize academic writing and work as "lifeless" texts serving as referential artifacts upon completion or publication.

In this spirit, Baca and Villanueva introduce the collection through the first two chapters rather than in a formal introduction. In the first chapter, Baca recognizes that "every communicative act is tied to rhetorical production . . . whether material or epistemological" to set up the necessary rhetorical shift required to read the collection (4). In the second chapter, Villanueva tells the story of the Tainos, while fully recognizing that he cannot tell the story without limited, Eurocentric resources, such as the diary of Dr. Diego Alvarez

Chanca. Villanueva intentionally uses these sources in order to complicate their reliability, which is also emphasized by the short length of the chapter and of the story Villanueva can tell. In other words, the story of the Taínos is brief only when told through a Eurocentric center, using Eurocentric rhetorics. Villanueva next repositions the story to the Native-centered Americas, stating, “[b]ut this book, like this history, opens here, in the West Indies. In the home of my ancestors” (19). This statement physically places the scholarship contained in the collection away from the Greco-Roman center, challenging the reader to think from a different position. The act of reading the book creates movement and the possibility for thinking about rhetorical practices beyond dominant modes and locations.

It is at these moments, when the rhetoricity of the book actively interacts with the reader, that the collection presents its most compelling moments. In the chapter “Practicing Methods in Ancient Cultural Rhetorics: Uncovering Rhetorical Action in Moche Burial Rituals,” Laurie Gries warns how interpretation often furthers colonization, especially when examining artifacts belonging to ancient ancestors. In situations where artifacts exist without the proper explanatory knowledge bases, Gries argues that we must learn to listen to the rhetoricity of artifacts “on [their] own terms” (90). Gries suggests that scholars should “listen to the embodied discourse in the ancient practices themselves to uncover the rhetorical actions of those very practices,” so that the artifacts may speak for themselves (91). While the use of patience and waiting as rhetorical devices for interaction offers fascinating and even radical ways of conducting research, Gries takes this notion a step further by offering her own reading of Moche mortuary practices and then following up with a critique of her own interpretation. Gries’s example proves that “[i]n letting go of our need to appropriate the purpose and meaning of ancient rhetorical traditions, we confront our own desires to master the ‘other’ through interpretation” (93). The call for maintaining self-awareness reminds scholars of the need to scrutinize their research regardless of intentions or expertise.

A second instance of active interaction with the reader occurs in Dylan A. T. Miner’s chapter, “‘When They Awaken’: Indigene-

ity, Miscegenation, and Anticolonial Visuality.” In discussing and theorizing how visibility functions differently within Western colonial and Native contexts, Miner purposefully delays presenting any examples until midway through his chapter, encouraging the reader to first work through the theoretical concepts he presents before analyzing any texts or objects. He states, “I hope to allow each and every one of us . . . to continue theorizing these concepts and engage these alternative modernisms,” inviting the reader to actively engage, challenge, and think about the chapter’s content beyond a top-down structure where the chapter stands as the source of academic knowledge and the reader stands as the receptor (180). Again, this sort of rhetorical strategy maintains an always active relationship between the reader, the author, and the text.

Miner’s chapter is also the only one prominently featuring Native voices from lands now occupied by the continental United States and Canada. There is a noted absence of primary discussion of rhetorics coming from any communities in these regions, which begs the question: why not title the book *Rhetorics of the Lower Americas*? With the exception of Georganne Nordstrom’s chapter on Hawaii, all of the chapters primarily privilege Native peoples from regions encompassing Mexico, Aztlán, and South America. Although the collection certainly cannot contain authors and views from all of the Americas, the noted absences of representation seems ironic, specifically because many of the actual contributors are US born or currently work at universities in the United States.

Nevertheless, the collection presents an important contribution to moving beyond the shadow of the colonial, Greco-Roman tradition. Tracy Brandenburg’s chapter, “In Search of the Invisible World: Uncovering Mesoamerican Rhetoric in Contemporary Mexico,” brings into active conversation the continual war of images and erasure between the Catholic Church and Native communities. During the recent canonization of Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin in 2002, commissioned Native artists continued the tradition of utilizing the rhetoric of *tlamantinime*, “those who know something,” to esoterically keep important Native symbols and images in religious artwork (152). One of the primary artists, Nicéforo Urbietta,

soon found his images altered by the Catholic Church once he explained in media interviews how he represented Native traditions. The chapter calls to mind the continued proliferation of discourses positioning Native concepts and traditions as inherently threatening toward Western, Christian religion.

This collection offers a building block for future scholars to learn, examine, and build work that not only challenges the accepted notion that all rhetoric begins with the Greco-Roman tradition but also seeks to push Native scholarship further into respectful, ethical, and innovative directions.

Alexander Posey. *Lost Creeks: Collected Journals*. Ed. Matthew Sivils. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2009. ISBN: 978-0-8032-1628-0. 204 pp.

———. *Song of the Oktahutche: Collected Poems*. Ed. Matthew Sivils. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2008. ISBN: 978-0-8032-2053-9. 288 pp.

Joshua B. Nelson, *The University of Oklahoma*

Every spring in central Oklahoma we would look forward to the thunderstorms that would flood the South Canadian River so we could be sure the family reunion float trip would offer a little adventure. Usually sleepy and occasionally bone-dry, come May the meandering river would turn high, fast, and unpredictable. One thing we could count on by the time we pulled the tractor tire tubes out was pockets full of red mud. Alexander Posey, the Creek writer whose Fus Fixico dialect letters put a hilarious spin on the very unfunny allotment of Indian land under the Dawes Act, lived most his life a ways east and one branch up from where we were, on the North Canadian River. As Craig Womack and Daniel Littlefield recount, at the early age of thirty-four, Posey too much of water had, and drowned in the waters he knew and loved so well.

The river weaves in and out of Posey's recently published collected journals and poetry, edited and introduced by Matthew Sivils. Practically unavailable until now, these autobiographical sketches

and poems about Muscogee politics and place offer a fascinating look into Posey's formative writing life during a crucial historical moment, even if they occasionally glide by less picturesque details of the Oklahoma landscape. No one who has tried to wash the Canadian's mud out of cutoff Wranglers would buy Posey's description of its sky-blue tide or fail to shudder at the remark, "This river water ain't so bad, is it? Tastes pretty good, I think" (*Lost Creeks* 103). Despite the occasional casting of local flavor in felicitous terms, Posey in these books previews the acute eye and ear for detail that made his *Fus Fixico* letters such an innovative contribution to American literature.

The volumes of journals and poems thematically overlap to some degree, especially in their attention to the natural world that shapes and is shaped by Posey's concerns with allotment, progress, Creek traditions, and literature. The primary material in *Lost Creeks* mainly consists of the journal Posey kept when he worked as superintendent of the Creek Orphan Asylum. The entries largely focus on his family, the natural world, and his literary readings. The approximate latter half collects two accounts of a float down the Oktahutche (the Creek word for the North Canadian), a short autobiographical account, and a too-brief journal of the time he spent as a field clerk and interpreter for the Dawes Commission. For this last assignment, he was charged with instructions "to secure additional evidence in applications for enrollment, search for 'lost Creeks' and conciliate the 'Snakes'" (121). This fascinating section recounts his interview with Chitto Harjo, the leader of Creek resistance against allotment. A list of Posey's personal library now held by Bacone College is also included, as is Sivils's useful biography and thorough introduction.

Here Sivils makes a strong case for Posey's thoroughgoing Creek-ness, divesting the construction of mixed-bloodedness of its imputed requisite identity crisis. He does, however, in diversifying the different ways in which Creeks can be Creeks, maintain that Posey's attitude toward full-bloods or traditionalists was rooted in romanticized and tragic appraisals of their chances in the face of progress, approximating mainstream sympathies for noble savages. To be sure, Posey's melodramatic language supports such a reading,

but his irreverent undercurrents should also caution against taking him too credulously.

Posey is by no means at his most ironic in the journals, but he has several clever moments, especially concerning his interactions with Creek traditionalists. Posey tells one at his own expense, speaking of Dickey,

“just a common everyday Indian” who generally gets the best of me. For instance, he will come, as he did today, and draw me into a conversation, appear to take much interest in the welfare of my business . . . and then get me in the notion to lay my lar-der under contribution in advance for a little work. (63)

Dickey reappears to confound him, but so too does Posey’s bemused, patronizing attitude. Of another not-so-progressive Indian refusing his grandchildren’s allotment, he snipes, “The blind will not be led” (125). He would not speak so of Chitto Harjo, however. Though he tersely narrates his meeting with Harjo over allotment, in a (probably) earlier poem in *Song of the Oktahutche* he grandiloquently celebrates Harjo’s “stately mien” and declares, “He is the noble red man still . . . I bow to him, exalt his name!” (187). As perhaps every critic who has written about Posey has noted, his life and writings defy easy understanding, oscillating as he does among admiration, condemnation, and resignation concerning progress, conservatism, and supporters of both.

Such stilted language as he uses to describe Harjo characterizes many poems in *Song of the Oktahutche*, which is mostly given to personal pieces about family and to transcendentalist and romanticist natural observations. Sivils here collects nearly two hundred of Posey’s poems, nearly all long out of print and many coming to light for the first time. The introductory matter here focuses on the poems’ publication history and Posey’s wife Minnie’s editorial alterations, a concern reiterated in several footnotes. For the relevant, concise introductory and biographical coverage, together with Posey’s commentary on his literary thinking, the journals of *Lost Creeks* make an excellent companion to *Song of the Oktahutche*.

While in his twenties, Posey composed the bulk of these poems

between 1893 and 1900, about two years before he would take up the Fus Fixico letters. Sivils admits of Posey's poems, "much of his writing remained rooted in romantic clichés inspired by his emulation of poets such as Shelley, Burns, Whittier, and Longfellow. Virtually all of his poems address aspects of the natural world, but the nature found in these works exists as an abstract concept rather than the concrete world of Indian Territory" (*Lost Creeks* 29). When Posey attempts the combination of the general and the specific, the results are often amusingly incongruous. He apostrophizes a friend,

go get thee to a hut  
 Along some Tulledegan creek.  
 High life ill suits thy muse. Go put  
 Her up an altar on the moor. (*Song* 47)

This would have made for a long trip. Later poems that confine their focus to Posey's world at hand achieve a more relaxed resonance. Posey writes of spring near Eufala:

There are drifts of plum blooms, snowy white,  
 Along the lane and greening hedge;  
 And the dogwood blossoms cast a light  
 Upon the forest's dusky edge. (*Song* 165)

While these are pleasant enough, they rarely transition to the broader philosophical considerations of his literary models. His character sketches like "To Jim Parkinson" and "Saturday," however, favorably figure between those of Edwin Arlington Robinson and Edgar Lee Masters in their confident celebration of local detail.

Still, these are but shadows of the robust Creek voices Posey would develop in the Fus Fixico letters. We hear just a hint of this particular genius moved into verse in "Hotgun on the Death of Yadeka Harjo," where he eulogizes the passing of one of the conservative holdouts he had known:

"Well, so," Hotgun he say,  
 "My ol'-time frien', Yadeka Harjo, he

Was died the other day,  
 An' they was no ol'-timer left but me.  
 . . . Wolf Warrior listens close,  
 An' Kono Harjo pay close 'tention too;  
 Tookpafka Micco he almos'  
 Let his pipe go out a time or two." (213)

While an identifiably Creek voice emerges most forcefully in this poignant piece, poems like "The Warrior's Dream," "Red Man's Pledge of Peace," "The Burial of the Alabama Prophet," and "The Indian's Past Olympic," and to a lesser extent the journals, contain other references to Creek cultural elements that will interest many tribalist scholars.

A fascinating theme running through both volumes is Posey's implicit and explicit literary criticism—he keeps good account of what he reads and what he thinks of it, with more than one eyebrow-raising remark. The poems drop several sympathetic allusions to William Shakespeare, William Cullen Bryant, and others, while the journals discuss the favor Posey finds for Washington Irving and especially the dialect poetry of Robert Burns, from whom he no doubt learned some tricks. His general reflections also suggest how he might have liked us to read his own work:

The serial stories I pay no attention to—be they Conan Doyle's, Kipling's or others who write because it takes and pays. I have but little use for fiction. . . . I want facts—truth elegantly dressed—interpretations of nature—something to build on and to broaden my views—something to give me a deeper understanding in all that pertains to life. (*Lost Creeks* 78–79)

Posey has particular artistic ideas in mind for what he reads and presumably for what he writes. That these might not line up perfectly with contemporary tastes in American Indian literary studies is no particular fault of his, and today's critics would do well to pay close attention to the historical, literary, and political circumstances in which his aesthetic projects developed.

Standout poems in *Song of the Oktahutche* like “The Fall of the Redskin,” “Ye Men of Dawes,” and “The Squatter’s Fence,” along with the imbedded commentary in the “Journal of the Creek Enrollment Field Party,” wed Posey’s aesthetics with the pressing political issues of his time. They mount stinging indictments of allotment administrators and land grafters. In these and similar polemical poems, Posey raises an urgent, satirical voice that, as Craig Womack suggests, in its pointed politicality is aimed not simply at amusement or reflection but at improving the material world in which he and other Creek people lived. By turns indignant and mocking, Posey demonstrates his personal artistic and philosophical investment in the future of the Creek Nation.

Of course, by certain measures, all of Posey’s writing is in some way political. It presents particularly unexpected challenges to our own unexamined principles of modern literary criticism. Current critical references to Posey’s poetry regularly berate it as derivative and, above all, sentimental. These evaluations reveal as much about contemporary critics’ historically produced tastes and senses of distinction as they do about the literature at hand. Such ostensibly objective predilections have likely played some hand in the reception, or lack thereof, extended to Posey and others writing near the turn of the twentieth century, including Alice Callahan, John Oskison, and even better known authors like Mourning Dove. Until we can reconcile our modernist rejection of sentimentality, we will obscure much in the literature of this period.

Readers attuned to several perspectives such as in feminism, animal studies, and more will find several exciting passages in these volumes, from the journals’ description of his meeting a Creek woman running an independent farm to Posey’s and his companions’ wanton killing of snakes and tarantulas on their river trip. Here he describes acting in ways far from keeping with understood Indian precepts of place relations. How to interpret these and other anomalies—say, as evidence of his distance from Indian values, or as impetus to expand our ideas of what thoughts and behaviors Indians might have for better or worse—presents as important a challenge to critics as any we might present to Posey’s work.

Ralph Salisbury. *The Indian Who Bombed Berlin*. East Lansing: Michigan State UP, 2009. ISBN 978-087013847-8. 210 pp.

Eric Wayne Dickey, *Oregon State University*

Ralph Salisbury's book of short fiction explores the American Indian perspective during a time of war. It offers an in-the-trenches account of racism toward Native American men and a glimpse of the obstacles they encounter as they mature and cope with their own quests for masculine identity and national validation. It reveals the ugly face of discrimination by friend and foe, and it painfully calls for unity and peace amid rioting and bombing, as we lie, in uniform, face down in the mud with blood on our hands. This book explores masculine identity, sexual maturity, racism, imperialism, and nationalism while weaving together the stories of young men who become soldiers and who go on to recognize the futility of war.

Salisbury is dedicated to language and metaphor in his fiction, as he is in his poetry: his metaphor strikes deep into the belly. In "Bathsheba's Bath, Bull Durham's Bull, and a Bottle of Old Granddad," Salisbury writes of Lack, a twelve-year-old Cherokee, in a coming-of-age tale. Kenny, Lack's twenty-year-old cousin, is hiding a bottle of whisky in his boot. Kenny has just returned from war and is possessed by "the eighth deadly sin," liquor: "Each day, Lack saw that the level of amber had, like thermometer fluid, fallen; but each time it reached zero, it returned to full summer" (19). The metaphor in this line paints a heartbreaking picture of the cousin's future. Lack's own future is thrown into uncertainty, too, as he takes a "ritualistic" pull off the bottle that burned "like a jigger itch all the way down" (21).

There are many such gems of poetic language throughout this collection of treasures, albeit gems with a piercing glint. In "A Volga River and a Purple Sea," Salisbury writes of Cyrus Littlehorse Jones, nicknamed "Sy," a would-be figure skater, in another coming-of-age tale. This time the protagonist is fifteen years old, growing closer to adulthood and closer to being a soldier. Sy's future is starting to come into focus, but he doesn't realize it: "At sex-and-guilt-rid-

den fifteen, Sy could not foresee Municipal Pool and Volga River's becoming Pacific Ocean" (33). Salisbury captures how oblivious young teens can be with a worldview clouded by puberty, and his words cast into perspective the immensity of Sy's uncertain future. There is thus a kind of chronology in the book. Starting with a young boy in elementary school, each protagonist advances in age. Each tale adds to the preceding story as Salisbury marches us toward adulthood and onto an uncertain and painful victory in Berlin.

This weaving together of stories also highlights Salisbury's genre-crossing techniques. Already steeped with metaphor and poetic language, this collection of short stories can also be read as a novel. I would find myself questioning, "Is this poetry, or is it fiction?" I often went back to check the names of the protagonists, too, questioning how the stories were linked: "Are these short stories, or is this a novel?" By changing the names of the characters, Salisbury gives us multiple perspectives from which to see through a Native American man's eyes. In the process, Salisbury forces us to question the boundaries between short fiction and the novel.

The issue of masculine identity that plagued Sy and other protagonists along the way is brought to a surprising victory in the story "The New World Invades the Old." Sher Sheridan serves as a State Department translator to diplomats and international liaisons in Europe. But the surprising and rewarding part of Sher's work is how he excises a small victory for Native Americans by invading the old world using romance languages and his sexual magnetism as his weapons: during many nights, weekends, and occasional vacations, he made love to diplomats' daughters or wives who found his dark face "exotically handsome" and his manners "charmingly French" (55). Later, Sher meets a Greek woman who begs him to bed her without contraceptives. She wants to have a baby to help save her marriage. Sher is dark, "like a Greek, dark like [her] husband" (55). She does go on to have Sher's baby, and Sher takes pride in knowing that his own "Indian War" against the invading Caucasians can claim a victory. "The bed," he claims, "was his battleground" (55). All those years of pent-up sexual repression are now rewarded in full.

“The New World Invades the Old” is a pivotal story in the narrative arc of this collection. Not only does it resolve Salisbury’s protagonist’s quest for masculine identity, but it also brings Salisbury’s position on race and US imperialism into a sharp and cutting focus. Sher Sheridan started out as an army translator before rising through the ranks and into the State Department. In the army, he witnesses the interrogation of an elderly Filipino tribesman and is “sickened by the sight of knives moving over skin as brown as” his (54). He “wished it was the US imperialism’s contemporary commander” being tortured (54). By calling the diplomats and international liaisons “inept political appointees” (54), Sher’s disrespect for those for whom he translates also reveals Salisbury’s disdain of imperialism and those who hold the reins of war.

Racism has always been a tool of war. But when it is used against you by your own family or by your own troops, it is especially bitter and heartbreaking. Interracial families are a common element in Salisbury’s stories. His examples are so specific that I suspect he draws from personal experience. In “A Vanishing American’s First Struggles Against Vanishing,” Juke Dark Cloud was “[h]is quite pale English-Cherokee father’s darkest-skinned child.” Whenever Juke’s father got crazy drunk, he would taunt him with “durned little nigger-skinned Indniun” (123). Such questions of troubled, mixed-blood families pepper many of the stories in this book with sadness and worry.

I also suspect that Salisbury draws from his own personal experience of enduring the bigotry of his fellow soldiers. The protagonists in many of these stories suffer the taunts of their brothers-in-arms, who called them “dagos,” “redskins,” or whatever derogatory term they could spew. In the story “Hole Soldiers, Madonna and Child,” Parm Dark Cloud (Juke’s brother from other stories), is ordered by his captain to crawl into a tunnel, “Spick, Indniun, Dago, whatever you are—I need me somebody small, from one of them underfed and undervitaminsed races. I need me a Hole Soldier” (147). Parm Dark Cloud was like many of the protagonists throughout this book, disregarded by family and friends.

This collection rewards with each turn of the page. In it, we begin to understand the Native American perspective of what it was like growing up on a reservation with all of its economic and racial stressors. This firsthand account of the cruelties of war, of the contradictions of the imperialized First Nations fighting for the imperialists themselves, will leave readers re-evaluating their own lives.

## News and Announcements

Reprinted from the Tulsa City-County Library website  
(<http://www.tulsalibrary.org>).

LIBRARY TO HONOR OKLAHOMA AUTHOR,  
POET AND PLAYWRIGHT LEANNE HOWE

LeAnne Howe, an enrolled citizen of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, will receive the Tulsa Library Trust's "American Indian Author Award" March 5, 10:30 a.m., at Central Library, Fourth Street and Denver Avenue.

Howe writes fiction, poetry, screenplays, and plays dealing with American Indian experiences. Her works have been translated in France, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, and Denmark. Currently, Howe is Professor of American Indian Studies and English at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Her first novel, *Shell Shaker* [Aunt Lute Books, 2001], received the American Book Award in 2002. The story is a parallel tale of a family in the mid-18th century and the familiar traps their ancestors face in 1991. The French translation for *Shell Shaker* was a finalist for Prix Medici Estranger, one of France's top literary awards.

Howe's second novel, *Miko Kings: An Indian Baseball Story* [Aunt Lute Books, 2007], was chosen by Hampton University in Virginia as their 2010 "Read-in" selection. Chapter three of *Miko Kings* is set at Hampton University and also documents the ethical challenges [of citizenship and belonging] throughout Indian Territory in 1906.

*Evidence of Red* [Salt Publishing, UK, 2005], an introspective look at American Indian persistence and struggle, received the Oklahoma Book Award for poetry in 2006.

Howe also is active in American Indian film productions, serving as co-producer along with Jim Fortier [on] *Playing Pastime*, a 30-minute documentary of Indian Baseball Leagues in Oklahoma; and screenwriter and on-camera narrator of the PBS documentary *Indian Country Diaries: Spiral of Fire*, a 90-minute documentary on the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians which aired nationally in 2006.

Founder and director of WagonBurner Theatre Troop, her plays have been produced in Los Angeles, New York City, New Mexico, Maine, Texas, and Colorado. Her one-act play, *The Mascot Opera, A Minuet*, was part of a production at Mixed Blood Theater in Minneapolis.

In 2003, she was the Louis D. Rubins Jr. Writer-in-Residence at Hollins University, VA. She has received an Artist-in-Residence grant for theater from the Iowa Arts Council. In 2004, she was the Regents Distinguished Lecturer at University of California, Riverside. She was the John and Renee Grisham Writer-in-Residence at the University of Mississippi at Oxford, MS, in 2006-2007.

“LeAnne is the perfect example of a successful Oklahoma author who connects the traditional ways and thoughts with scenes in the 21st century,” said Teresa Runnels, American Indian Resource Center coordinator. “Through complex characters and moving imagery, she explains how we are all connected within the natural cycles of life. She is the perfect example of what the American Indian Author Award represents.”

Inaugurated in 2001, the American Indian Author Award recognizes literary contributions of outstanding American Indian authors. It is the first and only award given by a public library to honor an American Indian author. The award is given in odd-numbered years, alternating with the “Circle of Honor” award. Recipients receive a \$5,000 cash prize and medallion. Past award-winners include Joy Harjo, Vine Deloria Jr., Leslie Marmon Silko, and Carter Revard.

Following Howe’s presentation, the American Indian Festival of Words will feature dancers, storytellers, and crafts programs for families from 11:30–2:30 pm. Each March, Tulsa City-County Library’s American Indian Resource Center hosts family programs to share the voices and visions of our county’s Native sons and daughters.

“Oklahoma is my home and where I grew up, so this award means more to me than anyone will ever know,” said Howe. “So much so, that I’m flying home to Oklahoma from Amman, Jordan, where I’m currently a William J. Fulbright scholar.” Howe went to Jordan to research her newest novel and to teach American Indian Studies at the University of Jordan.

TCCL’s American Indian Resource Center, located at Central Library, provides educational and informational resources, activities, and services honoring American Indian heritage, arts, and achievements. The center provides access to more than 7,000 books and media for adults and children by and about American Indians, including historical and rare materials, new releases, videos, and music compact discs. Recent additions to the collection include Native-language printed materials and compact discs for independent learning. The goal of this particular collection development is to promote, revitalize, and preserve our country’s Native languages.

For more information on the Circle of Honor ceremony, call the AskUs Hotline at 596-7977, or visit the library’s website, <http://www.tulsalibrary.org>.

## Contributor Biographies

LYDIA R. COOPER is currently a visiting assistant professor of American literature at Monmouth College, where she teaches contemporary American literature. She has a book on Cormac McCarthy forthcoming from Louisiana State University Press in 2011 as part of the Southern Literary Studies series. Her articles have appeared in or are forthcoming from *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*, *Critique*, *The Canadian Review of American Studies*, and *Papers on Language and Literature*. She received her PhD from Baylor University.

ERIC WAYNE DICKEY is a poet and translator. He is a Vermont Studio Center Fellow and a John Anson Kitredge Fund for Individual Artists grant recipient administered by Harvard University. His poems and translations have appeared in journals such as *Rhino*, *International Poetry Review*, and *West Wind Review*. He lives in Corvallis, Oregon, and teaches poetry writing at Oregon State University.

JILL M. FIORE studies women and aging and takes issue with the marginalization of old women, offering empowering feminist responses to the marginalization of aging women. She has written several articles and presented at a number of conferences on the subject. She currently teaches as an online instructor for the Center for Lifelong Learning at Mt. Aloysius College in Cresson, Pennsylvania.

MARCOS JULIAN DEL HIERRO received his MA from the University of Texas-El Paso and is pursuing his PhD in English at Texas A&M University-College Station. His research interests include Native and Chicano studies, particularly the examination of hip hop rhetorics.

JOSHUA B. NELSON (Cherokee) is an assistant professor of English and affiliated faculty member with Native American studies and film and video studies at the University of Oklahoma. He earned his BA in psychology from Yale and his English PhD from Cornell. His current project, *Progressive Traditions: Cherokee Cultural Studies*, dismantles the pervasive assimilated/traditional dichotomy to explore the adaptive potential of traditional practices.

MARK RIFKIN is an assistant professor in the English Department of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. He is the author of *Manifesting America: The Imperial Construction of US National Space* and *When Did Indians Become Straight?: Kinship, the History of Sexuality, and Native Sovereignty* and the coeditor of *Sexuality, Nationality, Indigeneity: Rethinking the State at the Intersection of Native American and Queer Studies*.

THERESA S. SMITH is a professor of religious studies at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. She has worked with Anishinaabe people for over twenty years and is the author of *The Island of the Anishnaabeg: Thunderers and Water Monsters in the Ojibwe Lifeworld* as well as numerous book chapters and articles on Native North American religions.

STEPHANIE WHEELER is a first-year doctoral student in the Department of English at Texas A&M University. Her research interests include disability studies and Holocaust history.

## Major Tribal Nations and Bands

This list is provided as a service to those readers interested in further communications with the tribal communities and governments of American Indian and Native nations. Inclusion of a government in this list does not imply endorsement of or by *SAIL* in any regard, nor does it imply the enrollment or citizenship status of any writer mentioned. Some communities have alternative governments and leadership that are not affiliated with the United States, Canada, or Mexico, while others are not currently recognized by colonial governments. We have limited the list to those most relevant to the essays published in this issue; thus, not all bands, towns, or communities of a particular nation are listed.

We make every effort to provide the most accurate and up-to-date tribal contact information available, a task that is sometimes quite complicated. Please send any corrections or suggestions to *SAIL* Editorial Assistant, *Studies in American Indian Literatures*, Department of English, 1 University Station, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX 78712, or send an e-mail to [klbrown@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:klbrown@mail.utexas.edu).

Cherokee Nation  
PO Box 948  
Tahlequah, OK 74465  
Phone: 918-453-5000  
Website: <http://www.cherokee.org>

Chickasaw Nation  
PO Box 1548  
Ada, OK 74821  
Phone: 580-436-2603/580-436-7259  
Fax: 580-436-7297  
Website: <http://www.chickasaw.net>

Coeur d'Alene Tribe  
850 A Street PO Box 408  
Plummer, ID 83851  
Phone: 208-686-1800  
Fax: 208-686-1182  
Website: <http://www.cdatribe-nsn.gov/>

Fort Belknap Indian Community (Gros Ventre and Assiniboine)  
Fort Belknap Agency  
RR 1 Box 66  
Harlem, MT 59526  
Phone: 406-353-2205  
Fax: 406-353-2797  
Website: <http://www.ftbelknap-nsn.gov/>

Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes  
501 Medicine Bear Road  
PO Box 1027  
Poplar, MT 59255-1027  
Phone: 406-768-5155  
Fax: 406-768-5478  
Website: <http://www.ftpecktribes.org>

Jatibonicu Taino Nation of Boriken  
US Regional Tribal Affairs Office  
PO Box 210  
Vineland, NJ 08362-0210  
Phone: 856-690-1565

Oficina de Asuntos Tribales  
Taino de Boriken  
PO Box 40715  
San Juan, PR 00940-0715  
Phone: 787-977-2983  
Website:  
<http://www.taino-tribe.org/>

Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe  
115 Sixth St. NW Ste. E  
Cass Lake, MN 56633  
Phone: 218-335-8200/800-442-3909  
Fax: 218-335-8309  
Website: <http://www.llojibwe.com>

Miami Nation of Oklahoma  
202 S. Eight Tribes Trail  
Miami, OK 74354  
Phone: 918-542-1445  
Fax: 918-542-7260  
Website: <http://www.miamination.com>

Muskogee/Creek Nation  
PO Box 580  
Okmulgee, OK 74447  
Phone: 918-732-7700  
Website: <http://themuskogeeandcreeknation.com>

Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohican Indians  
N8476 Moh He Con Nuck Road  
PO Box 70  
Bowler, WI 54416  
Phone: 715-793-4111  
Fax: 715-793-1307  
Website: <http://www.mohican.com>

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