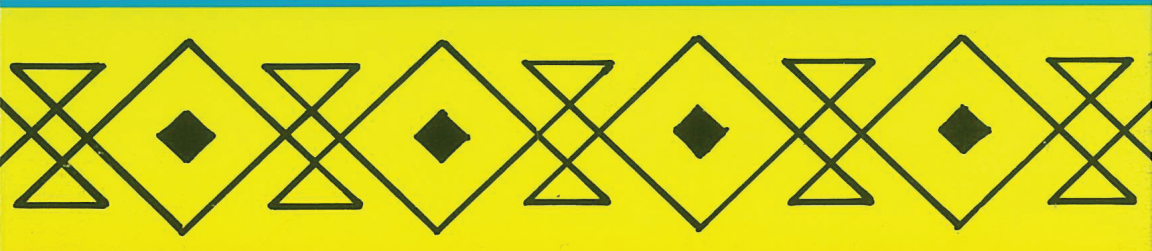
OSHKAABEWIS NATIVE JOURNAL



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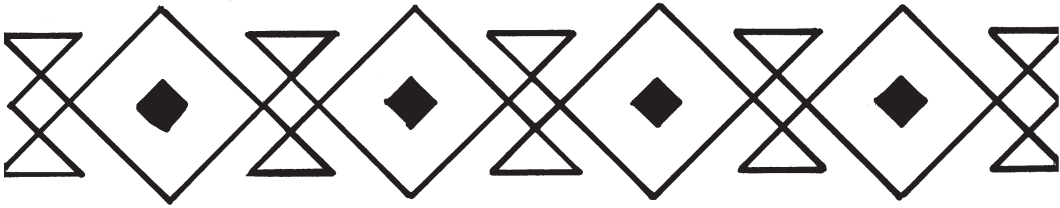

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OSHKAABEWIS NATIVE JOURNAL

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Oshkaabewis Native Journal is a scholarly quarterly providing an interdisciplinary forum for significant contributions to the advancement of knowledge about Native People. Authors are requested to submit manuscripts.

STAFF

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Preface

To the editor:

"...you should encourage young Indian scholars to do more writing. We will never get ahead unless the younger people start to take hold of things...why don't you younger people grab the reins and start moving on these things?...Good luck..."

With best wishes,

Vine Deloria Jr."
University of Arizona
January 18, 1990

Gerald Vizenor, author of many books, published a newsletter, *Oshkaabewis*, a few years ago, while he was at Bemidji State University. Kent Smith, now director of Native American Studies at BSU, continued to publish the newsletter. Last winter, I proposed that we publish a professional, scholarly journal so that we could publish our researched essays and book reviews, to make known our ideas concerning Native People. We need a publication in this part of the country that will allow us to speak to other Native People nationally and internationally, and permit us to communicate with other Native programs and departments at other universities across the country.

Native Studies Departments have been in existence for twenty years. And, UCLA (*American Indian Culture and Research Journal*) and UC, Berkeley (*American Indian Quarterly*) publish professional academic journals in the west and *Akwesasne*, the third journal, is published in the east by the Mohawk Nation. There was a gap in the middle of the country, the Midwest, and our journal, *Oshkaabewis Native Journal*, will fill that gap.

Oshkaabewis means "the messenger" in Ojibwa. When I mentioned the name of our journal to George Aubid Sr., an Ojibwa elder and oral historian in Minnesota, he reminded me that *Oshkaabewis* was a person in the village who knew everything, and if someone needed, for example, a naming ceremony for their children, *Oshkaabewis* would tell them what to do.

Also,*Oshkaabewis* was the spiritual envoy or go-between. The Great Spirit sent him down to earth to plant tobacco for the First People. Tobacco is used to offer prayers to the Great Spirit and to give thanks.

"In the beginning," Aubid said, "dinosaurs roamed the earth. So *Oshkaabewis* ran with a backpack over mountains and through valleys planting tobacco while the dinosaurs chased him. Then, he told the Great Spirit what he had done and what he had seen. The Great Spirit then did away with all the dinosaurs and others that would not allow the First People to exist. This is why today those in the scientific communities cannot find out why these dinosaurs disappeared." This was on my mind, while I was finishing, putting together, editing, and proofreading our journal. It is a journal in *the spirit of Oshkaabewis.* We want to plant ideas if the "dinosaurs" do not get us first.

The front cover of the journal has cultural meaning too. Earl Nyholm, the Ojibwa language professor at BSU, suggested blue for the universe, yellow for the path of the sun and red for the earth.

The essays and book reviews were selected and encouraged for this first publication of the journal because they reflect a current perspective on Native People. There are university faculty, university students, Native women, and nationally known writers in this collection of essays and book reviews. Ideally, it ought to reflect many voices within the academic and Native communities.

I encourage writers to contribute for our next issue. I plan on a Native women's issue, essays and book reviews, and a literary issue, fiction and poetry, for our next two publications.

A lot of work goes into a publication such as this one. Writing, teaching university courses, committee and faculty meetings, working with students, organizing running events in the communities, and so on, leaves little time for anything else. However, I always remember the jobless, homeless, uneducated, prisoners, and especially the very young Native children. I think of the seventh generations, of the land, of treaties and elders, and I keep working to offer a small contribution in hope of a better life for everyone in the indigenous communities across the country. A friend once told me that when you do good, you make enemies. If that is true, then this publication ought to create many enemies or "dinosaurs," for it is a good thing for our Native People.

Dr. Dave Gonzales, editor
Bemidji State University
spring 1990

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The Idea of Land in Emerging Native Literature

DR. DAVE GONZALES

"When we live according to the teachings of our elders, we are in balance. ***Illness follows from being out of balance.*** *In order to heal, we must again seek the center, to close the circle, to bring ourselves into balance."*

A Native American Environmental Forum
University of New Mexico / April 20, 1990

In emerging Native literature, beginning with 1968 to the present, the idea of land mirrors the heart of indigenous creative writing, owing to its spiritual significance for Native People. That is to say, land is viewed as sacred inasmuch as the spiritual-minded cultures of Native People are earth-bound, giving emphasis to a balance with the earth. Land is intricately related to the spiritual health of the individual and the whole community. This applies to the Native People of the American Continent, North America and South America.

Historically, a lot of earth-bound, Native, clandestine spiritual ceremonies were unpublic, after they were forcefully suppressed beginning with Hernan Cortes and the Spanish conquistadors in the sixteenth century in their attempt at Christianizing. The 1680 Southwest Pueblo Revolt overthrew Spanish rule. The Spanish had been persecuting them for nearly a

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century. After 1848, in the Southwestern United States the Christianization of Native People continued by zealous new missionaries. Often, this resulted in brutal and severe repression of the tribal medicine people. In North America, the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (1978) recently has permitted Native People "limited" legal practice of American Indian religion. However, on April 18, 1990 the Supreme Court declared - in a ruling concerning two Natives who use sacred peyote in their ceremonies - "we cannot afford the 'luxury' of striking down laws simply because they limit someone's religious practices."

To understand and appreciate emerging Native literary works, the use of land as motif must be examined critically. For this reason, we ought to inquire into the literary works of Leslie M. Silko, N. Scott Momaday, and Ignatia Broker, and compare and contrast them with James Welch and Gerald Vizenor's works by critically examining Vine Deloria Jr.'s concepts concerning land in his work *God Is Red*.

To begin with, what are the major differences between European and Native philosophies toward the land and methods of acquiring and disposing of it? When Native People speak of land they are talking about a sacred Mother Earth, a kinship relationship. Land and spirituality are not distinct experiences in Native traditional thinking. In Native thought, the earthly happy hunting ground, for example, is where Native spirits go after fleshly death. "White people have gone to the skies with their spaceships, and no one has seen heaven," an aging spiritual Anishinabe man, Bineshi, once told me. "For us, our happy hunting ground is right here. This, the elder said reverentially, is where our spirits go when we die." .

We have to keep in mind that everything on this Mother Earth has a special relationship with human beings. "The task of the tribal religions, if such a religion can be said to have a task, is to determine the proper relationship that the people of the tribe must have with other living things" (Deloria 102). This

proper relationship singles out the real difference between European philosophies and Native world views. Contextually, nothing on Mother Earth is alienated; nothing stands isolated and alone on the land. "Other living things are not regarded as insensitive species. Rather they are 'people' in the same manner as the various tribes of men are peoples" (Deloria 103). This concept does not contradict Western logic as much as some Europeans would like us to believe, if we give it some thought. "How Western man can believe in evolution and not see the logical consequences of this doctrine in the religious life of people is incomprehensible for many Indians" (Deloria 104). The earth is sacred and everything on it is related and sacred. There needs to be a balance. This is the sum and substance of indigenous philosophies toward land. Consequently, throughout this essay the words *land, nature, world,* and *place* will be interchangeable, because these authors often use these words to mean mutually the same idea, *land,* in Native philosophies. Hence, when we use these interchangeable words, we have to talk about trees, animals, birds, sky and so on, including the soil.

Accordingly, in reviewing emerging Native literature, we have to make distinctions between land as a living organism and real estate, between earth as a Mother and private property, between caretaker and property owner. The "proprietor" for Native People is the Great Spirit; for Western man it is the individual property holder. In U.S. law, a case in point, the whole right and title of the land rests with the owner, subject only to the laws of the state. In contrast, when Natives speak of land they speak of sacred hills, sacred sand dunes, sacred mountains, sacred canyons and so on. In Western terms, land is acreage, acres, parcel, plot, and piece of property. Philosophically, Western based land tenure systems are more secular than spiritual. For Natives land is inseparable from spirituality, religion, and culture. So it is difficult to speak of land without taking into consideration the individual's spiritual

health.

There has always been competition and conflict for land, and it has resulted in a clash of spiritual philosophies as well. The treaties between the United States government and the indigenous nations ceded lands. In Deloria's words, these documents have been given a lot of attention, and rightly so. It is rarely noted, however, that the signing of these documents involved sacred pipe ceremonies, making the treaties sacred for Native People. "Perhaps nearly as accurate would be the picture of settlement phrased as a continuous conflict of two mutually exclusive religious views of the world" (Deloria 249). As the case may be, a lot of lands have been acquired via treaties between the European governments and indigenous nations. And, promises have been broken, resulting in the loss of sacred lands.

In Elemire Zolla's *The Writer and the Shaman*, I visualized the gist for this essay. His work corroborates my suspicion that emerging Native literature will permit us to see a spiritual truth about land. "The conflict between the idea of progress, involving the destruction of the old, and the longing for a vanished, innocent Arcadia meant that for more than 400 years most colonists, poets, explorers, novelists, even ethnologists, failed to perceive the profound spiritual truths of the Indian's existence. The result: a consistently distorted image of reality. Only with the current renaissance of Indian literature does the author see a chance for redemption, for that sensitivity and awareness so tragically lacking in the past" (Zolla, Jacket-cover). In which case, it is in the ensuing native literature that we begin to perceive both sides of the skirmish, the sacred and the secular, and to examine both indigenous and Western philosophies with reference to the land. We can recognize and comprehend the spiritual resistance of the indigenous nations. This spiritual-minded resistance goes beyond white people, beyond rights and blaming white people for everything. What about the old stories?

Even so, Rex Weyler's *Blood of the Land* shows us the extent of the conflict for land. If his words disturb, dishearten, or bother the reader, if nothing else, his book describes the magnitude of the problem and the scope of the issue of land. In recounting the extent of colonizing, settling, and peopling Native lands, Weyler believes that: "The heart of the matter lies in two different philosophies of the relationship between people and land: stewardship and ownership" (15). What is the implication and signification of his statement, when we examine emerging Native literature? We need to raise these questions if we are to get at the heart of the literature.

Together with that, Daniel Berrigan, S.J. documents this historical conflict in his recent book, *The Mission: A Film Journal.* The book was composed on location during the making of the film, *The Mission* by Roland Joffe. It is the story of Native People victimized by European slave traders in South America in the 1770's. Indians were considered red gold. The Jesuits attempted to create a Jesuit Republic in South America. There was an acquisition of Guarani Indian lands by the Spanish and the Portuguese. Berrigan writes, "This is the text of Clause 18 of the treaty: From the villages which his Catholic Majesty cedes...the missionaries will leave with all their movable property, taking with them the Indians, to settle in Spanish territories. The said Indians may also take their movable property and the arms, powder, and ammunition which they possess. In this way the villages, with their church, houses, buildings, and property and the ownership of the land, shall be given to the Portuguese" (9). The sacrilegious desire of the Western world for Native land is set forth in this treaty clause, and it will be reechoed in more than 371 treaties with Northern tribes or nations. As history has shown, these treaties will be violated. Owing to this tendency, the conflict between Western people and indigenous people is epitomized in this Clause. In speaking of the film, Berrigan says, "We have here in the decision of the filmmakers, in their unwillingness to play God,

to create heroes or antiheroes, to stroke the one and damn the other, a rare and laudable wisdom. They have been true, as the saying goes, to the way life goes. Especially today" (26).

This wisdom can also be found in Edward H. Spicer's noteworthy and enthusiastic book, *Cycles of Conquest: The Impact of Spain, Mexico, and the United States on the Indians of the Southwest, 1533-1960*. The author straightforwardly uncovered the contest for land and moved the drama up to 1960. What is now known as the Southwestern United States was once deemed by the Spanish Conquistadors as Northwestern New Spain in the 1600's. Spicer reminds us that: "It quickly became apparent to the northward-pushing Conquistadors that they had here entered a different cultural world from the Aztec-dominated one which they had encountered in Mexico" (8). The importance of this historical probe and Spanish colonialization of Native People must be made use of in analyzing and critically reviewing Silko's novel *Ceremony* and her collection of short stories in *Storyteller*. These works are impregnated with the effects of Spanish, Mexican, and American colonial experiences in the Southwest, which is the setting for her narratives. One has to have a sense of the historical and geopolitical impact of all three European cultures on the Native populations in that part of the country, if one is going to honestly examine her literary works. The consequence of Spicer's investigation can also be brought to bear on N. Scott Momaday's novel, *House Made of Dawn*. The impact of Spanish, Mexican, and American competition for the land is all-important in understanding this emerging Native fiction set in the Southwest.

Briefly, I ought to speak about miscegenation, for it will be material and critical when we examine this emerging Native literature. In view of the fact that Europeans—Spanish, French, Portuguese, German, and English—colonized indigenous peoples in the Western Hemisphere for almost five hundred years, the mixedblood Native entered the historical picture. In

the course of time, the mixedblood character comes into view in the emerging literary works. Undeniably, the mixedblood is in the Indian camp as we examine the narratives.

I should also mention that today Native reservations extend over the present European partitions, counties, and states, or lines of demarcation such as international borders. The present bordering of land is a reflection of Western based land tenure systems, and the conflict of land still exists with the reservation system because reservations get smaller and treaties are broken. In some cases, such as the Pima, Papago, and Mohawk, Native reservations overlap into Mexico and Canada. Plus, some tribes had fled across these European borders, Mexican and Canadian, creating pockets of Native People on both sides. For example, we have Yaquis in Mexico, Arizona, and California, and there are Lakota Indians in the United States and Canada. Kick'a-poos, who once lived in a region along the Illinois River, now live in Mexico. So, we have Indians living in places they did not originally live in with English, Spanish, and French surnames, and speaking English and Spanish.

All this needs to be said before I bring to light the motif of land in a selected group of Native writers who have used the Southwestern United States as their settings in Native literature, keeping in mind that in the indigenous way of thinking, land is spiritual and inseparable from all life on earth. Silko reminds us in the old and new stories from the Southwest that growing away from the earth has caused problems for everyone.

Certainly, in researching emerging Native literature, I have discovered that there are not enough published novels nor published research based on existing Native literature. Furthermore, I am unaware of any published lengthy work on the idea of land in this literature. There is no biography that I know of on Silko. And the closest thing to a biography on James Welch is *James Welch ,the Confluence American Authors Series,* 1986, which is edited by Ron McFarland. However, there is a

recent book, a rarity, on the life and work of Momaday: *N. Scott Momaday: The Cultural and Literary Background,* by Matthias Schubnell. *Ancestral Voice: Conversations with N. Scott Momaday* by Charles L. Woodard, 1989, is biographical in nature, but not truly a biography. We need more biographical works on Native writers, undoubtedly, and more new publications and reprints of indigenous novels and fiction by indigenous authors. I found a lot of important books out of print in the field of Native literature.

The oldest novel, published in 1899 by a Native, is Simon Pakagon's *Queen of the Woods.* Unquestionably, though, emerging Native literature commences in 1968 with N. Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn.* He won the 1969 Pulitzer Prize for literature. Three major literary studies on indigenous authors exist, besides Matthias Schubnell's recent work. The foremost studies, in my judgment, are Charles Larson's *American Indian Fiction,* 1978, and *The Novel in the Third World,* 1976. Charles Larson, a Professor at American University, is an initiator of interest in emerging Third World literature, including domestic non-Western literature emanating from indigenous communities in North America. His shortcoming is that he is unable to review novels written by South American Indians who write in Spanish. We have to keep in mind that English and Spanish are both European languages that Indians in the Americas use to express themselves in writing. In the future there ought to be a literary inquiry and analysis of emerging literature authored by tribal writers in South America. There is an emergence of literature in South America as well as North America and Canada that a language barrier puts out of reach for English-reading American researchers. Recently, there has been a raising of consciousness in the North American Indian communities about indigenous nations in South America. Notably, William Means and the International Indian Treaty Council (IITC), which has a Non-Governmental Organization status at the UN, represent over ninety Native

nations in the Americas at the United Nations. The IITC successfully organized an International Conference on Discrimination Against Indigenous Populations in the Americas (1977 in Geneva, Switzerland).

The third major literary study of Native authors is Alan R. Velie's *Four American Indian Literary Masters*, 1982. This study includes literary works by Momaday, Welch, Silko, and Vizenor. However, I think, there are questionable ideas in Velie's literary criticism.

Nonetheless, Larson's striking and impressive studies have influenced the way non-Western fiction is viewed, especially the novel. He found something in the emerging literature that is contrary to Western concepts of the novel. He alludes to the "situational novel," defined in his words as a narrative in which the central character's importance is replaced by the collective group of people undergoing a commonly-shared experience. This perception of a situational novel is decisive and requires immediate attention with regard to the idea of land in Native literature, for land is communal in the indigenous communities. It is only reasonable to foresee American Indian writers creating literary works with a commonly-shared experience inasmuch as land is concern. What arises from this perception is the disappearance of the individual protagonist and the coming into view of the collective character in the novel, the Native People.

In all probability, Larson is accurate when he endeavors to group indigenous prose into three basic classes for the purpose of literary analysis in his study, *American Indian Fiction*. He arranges them as *assimilation*, *rejection*, and *survivors of the relocation*. I would exclude *House Made of Dawn* from Larson's *rejection* grouping. It belongs to the *survivors* class with Welch's *Winter in the Blood*, and Silko's *Ceremony*. Larson attributes the *survivors of the relocation* literature to the 1960's and 1970's cultural and political uprising in the Native communities. What he does not emphasize enough in his analysis is the idea

of indigenous spirituality, for it is Native spirituality that is intricately tied into the idea of land in these literary works. The 1969 Alcatraz Island takeover by Native People of all tribes, the Trail of Broken Treaties in 1972, and the reoccupation of Wounded Knee in South Dakota in 1973 by the American Indian Movement reflected a return to the land, a returning of the land, and a Native spirituality that was never completely suppressed in the indigenous communities across the country. In the late 1960's and early 1970's, Northern Natives began to travel to South America in spite of the language barrier. They traveled to other parts of the world too. Additionally, Vietnam war protesters in the indigenous communities impregnated the peace movement with a spiritual hue, *Red Power*. And the American Indian Movement familiarized the urban Natives with an indigenous spirituality, thus reviving a spiritual movement related directly to land and having a historical significance. This, and not politics, as in other urban movements of the 1960's and 1970's, was the spiritual aura, primarily, of the American Indian Movement.

What does the concept of a Third World and emerging Native literature have in common? If the first world is the capitalist world, and the second world is the communist world, then the third world is the underdeveloped world, a world resulting from Western economic exploitation, a world colonized by the West, a world without complete social and cultural sovereignty. However, many tribal people in the Americas think of themselves as the Fourth World, *Indian country*. The Fourth World is peopled by indigenous land-based communities. And the viewpoint is that, "We feel solidarity with these traditional people who love and respect the earth, who live in harmony with their environment" (Weyler 213-14) It is not my intention to box emerging Native literary works into the Third World category. Yet, for the sole purpose of analyzing this emerging literature, it is necessary for the moment to classify it as a Third World literature. That is, it is a literature

created and composed by Native writers living and writing under Third World economic, social, and political conditions. It is a domestic Third World literature, an internal colonized experience in the heart of the mother country. This Third World paradigm or model is momentarily essential to show the effects of the West on all Native writers, to understand the concepts of literary assimilation, rejection, and survival that Larson speaks of, to comprehend what Frantz Fanon discusses in *The Wretched of the Earth*—first, second, and third phases that Native writers experience and express in their writings and literature.

Leslie Marmon Silko

To initiate and evoke discourse about the idea of land in emerging Native literature, we have to consider Leslie M. Silko. She is a mixedblood, of American Indian, Mexican, and European blood, from the Laguna Indian reservation in New Mexico. In her praiseworthy novel, *Ceremony*, Silko gives life to a mixedblood character named Tayo. In the narrative Tayo is afflicted by the evilness in the world and suffers through symptomatic estrangement from the land, which he first begins to experience in a Pacific Island jungle in World War II. This war could have been Vietnam, because it is a metaphorical war. This novel is certainly not about World War II; it is a novel about alienation from one's people and one's land. There is a scene early in the story when Tayo and another soldier carry his critically wounded half-brother, Rocky, through the jungle. The brothers had enlisted together. Tayo damns the oppressive rain that is coming down hard on them, a rain unlike the rain back home on the reservation in the Southwest, where scarce rain is of great consequence for the land and essential for survival. In this scene Tayo chants the rain away because he believes it is contributing to his brother's death. It is a denial of what he has been taught: pray for the rain.

Together with that, in another scene Tayo refuses to kill a

Japanese soldier when his platoon decides to line up Japanese soldiers and fire on them. Tayo sees an image of his uncle's face on one of the soldiers. He maintains that his uncle, Josiah, back on the reservation will die if he shoots the soldier. For Tayo, distance is obliterated and time eradicated in that one instant. To kill him becomes monstrous in Tayo's imagination. Subsequently, Tayo returns home via the Los Angeles Veteran Administration Hospital. Inside, he feels like white smoke, hollow, wordless. He cries perpetually in the hospital. In vain, the white doctors try to convince him to stop crying, to talk, to be "normal." They are unacquainted with his "illness," his estrangement from the land and his cultural perceptions, except in Western medical terms such as postwar madness. Velie also makes the same error in judgment when he says, "Tayo is suffering from what, in medical terms, is probably catatonic schizophrenia" (113). Velie is thinking in Western psychiatric terms with regard to a culturally based phenomenon, detachment from Mother Earth, from the traditions. To whatever extent the symptoms are nearly alike, Tayo is indisputably not suffering from schizophrenia. Seemingly, Velie cannot get beyond Western clinical thinking in his inquiry. I think Tayo is alienated because he is out of balance with the people and land. The filament of his delicate world has been weakened by his turning away, his break, with that land and world. Restoratively and medicinally he yearns for a return to the earth of his ancestors, to be well again, by virtue of tenure on the land.

By contrast, the white doctors at the Los Angeles VA Hospital conclude that Tayo needs Western medicine and that he must assimilate into the white world, seeing that the doctors despise and show contempt for age-old Native curative medicines and therapeutic traditional ceremonies. Openly, the VA doctors tell him not to use Native medicine. In spite of them, when Tayo is released from the hospital and returns home to the reservation, his Grandmother thinks he should see a medicine man because she realizes he is out of balance with life as

she knows it. Tayo cannot stop crying. She says, "That boy needs a medicine man. Otherwise, he will have to go away. Look at him" (Silko 33). The auntie who has cared for Tayo after his mother could not do so hesitates since Tayo is a mixedblood. She is preoccupied and concerned with what the people on the reservation will say. The Grandmother thinks differently and stands in opposition to the auntie's notions. Thus, the Grandmother calls in Ku'oosh, an elder from the tribe, to assess Tayo's illness and decide what to do. Ku'oosh believes that evil causes illness in the world, and he says in a soft chanting voice, "Maybe you don't know these things...If he (the uncle) had known then maybe he could have told you before you went to the white people's big war" (Silko 35). The emphasis is on "before you went." Tayo would not have suffered if he had known about the devastating evil in the world, an evil that is world wide, an evil that is lethal. The dealers of destruction have no one skin color. They just work havoc upon the world, and the rainlessness and killing off of man is their work. Tayo's illness had to do with the war, but it could have been prevented. The old and new Laguna stories would have prepared Tayo for the extent of evil in the world, an evil that does away with rain, the life-giving source of the people, the life-blood of all natural creatures on Mother Earth, the life fluid of the land Herself. Without rainwater, the earth mother will dry up and die and so will the people.

These ideas contrast sharply with Western philosophy about the land and the responsibility of the people toward the land, and the aftermath of reckless collective behavior on the earth, of individual and community sickness that is the result of that misbehavior. Otherwise, why do we have so many polluted rivers and lakes and impure ocean beaches and contaminated and cancerous drinking water? Whole towns in this country have been evacuated because of poisoned water and cancerous contamination in the streets.

I think culture curbs catastrophic conduct. Human re-

straint emanates from within the individual. And Native culture cultivates that behavior through spiritual ceremonies and old and new stories. If not, the earth retaliates, and individuals and communities become unbalanced. In *Ceremony*, the eloquent elder tells Tayo that this world is fragile. The narrator says, "The word he chose to express fragile was filled with intricacies of continuing process, and with a strength inherent in spider webs woven across paths through sand hills where early in the morning the sun becomes entangled in each filament of web. It took a lot time to explain the fragility and intricacy because no word exists alone, and the reason for choosing each words had to be explained with a story about why it must be said this certain way" (Silko 35-36).

The idea of land, for the Lagunas, embraces everything on it, and everything is frail. This is why Tayo becomes nauseated and falls ill when he prayed for the rain to disappear. The Western doctors failed to perceive this. The Lagunas are very conscious of it. Their Native ceremonies and old and new stories help them to perpetuate their proper relationship with the earth and people. This is reflected in the old man's words when he says, "You understand, don't you? It is important to all of us. Not only for your sake, but for this fragile world...Everyone must act on it...The effects were everywhere in the cloudless sky" (Silko 36). The land was extremely dry and without rain for six years in the novel.

For Silko, the cause of illness in the world is analogous to witchery and the destroyers who perpetuate it. Gifted and creative, Silko brings into being old stories about witchery and its effects on the everything and everyone. She skillfully uses the theme of uranium that comes from the land near Laguna to illustrate the contrast and seemingly incompatibility of two philosophies toward the earth. Of course, she imbues her new stories imaginatively and not literally about how witchery created white people. *Ceremony*, that being the case, is the story of witchery in the world, as far away as the Pacific Islands and

how the destroyers hold the balance of the world in their lethal hands. "The old man only made him (Tayo) certain of something he had feared all along, something in the old stories. It took only one person to tear away the delicate strands of the web, spilling the rays of the sun into the sand, and the fragile world would be injured" (Silko 38). Witchery, old stories, and human behavior are all entangled, mazelike, and one acts on the other. In this way, the misuse of uranium serves as an example of linear thinking and resulting in a fatal poisoning which remains with the human race for thousands of years. That Silko's tribe lives very near the large uranium mines and where the first big bomb exploded, Los Alamos, New Mexico, is more than suggestive of a world gone insane, unbalanced. So the problem is not merely white people and racism. It goes beyond them, to the contest between evil forces and the earth-bound peoples of the world. These are opposing views in cyclical and linear thinking. Linear thinking ends with tons of poisonous material. Cyclical thinking looks upon the person as being accountable for seven generations into the future.

In the end, Tayo goes to Betonie, a Navajo mixedblood medicine man who lives on a hill overlooking Gallup, New Mexico. He lives there in a traditional Navajo hogan to watch over the people. Betonie and his boy helper, Bear, cure Tayo with the help of the Navajo sandpainting ceremony. At first, it was not easy for Tayo to trust Betonie or his medicine; the white schools and white doctors had their negative impact on Tayo. When Tayo is face to face with Betonie, "He wanted to yell at the medicine man, to yell the things the white doctors had yelled at him-that he had to think only of himself, and not about the others, that he would never get well as long as he used words like 'we' and 'us'" (Silko 125). The words we and us, I think, includes the land, our Mother Earth, and the animal people and tree people and so on. This is real pluralism. To the indigenous caretakers of the land, to not think of "everyone" and "everything" is to be culturally, emotionally, and spiritu-

ally disentangled from oneself, from one's relatives, thoroughly divorcing oneself from one's proper relationship to the earth. This is the source of alienation and estrangement in *Ceremony*. In this sense, how can Indians sell the land? Of course, this contrasts in essence with Western philosophy in reference to land as profit.

Furthermore, Silko skillfully incorporates American history into her fiction. "All but a small part of the mountain had been taken. The reservation boundary included only a canyon above Encinal and a few miles of timber on the plateau. The rest of the land was taken by the National Forest and by the state which later sold it to white ranchers who came from Texas in the early 1900's. In the twenties and thirties the loggers had come, they stripped the canyon below the rim and cut great clearings on the plateau slopes... The loggers shot the bears and mountain lions for sport. And it was then the Laguna people understood that the land had been taken, because they couldn't stop these white people from coming to destroy the animals and the land. It was then too that the holy men at Laguna and Acoma warned the people that the balance of the world had been disturbed and the people could expect droughts and harder days to come" (Silko 186).

To bring to an end my analysis of Silko's use of land in *Ceremony*, look at this paragraph. "The white man, Floyd Lee, called it a wolf-proof fence; but he had poisoned and shot all the wolves in the hills, and the people knew what the fence was for: a thousand dollars a mile to keep Indians and Mexicans out; a thousand dollars a mile to lock the mountain in steel wire, to make the land his" (188). Taking that into consideration, Silko incorporates the conflict of two very distinct philosophies toward the land, land is private vs. commual land. Momaday said *Ceremony* is a telling. I agree. She uses old stories and new stories and cements them with imagination creating something new but rooted in oral tradition.

Thus, the real hero-character is the people, inasmuch as

they are in direct and indirect conflict with evil in the world, an evil that has no skin hue, an evil that works against the people and land. Essentially, *Ceremony* is a situational novel.

N. Scott Momaday

House Made of Dawn, by N. Scott Momaday, represents another excellent example of emerging Native fiction and how Native writers incorporate the idea of land into their creative writing. Momaday, a Kiowa, winner of the 1969 Pulitzer Prize for literature, spent a lot of his youth in the Southwest on the Jemez Pueblo. In Jemez, Momaday sensed and felt himself to be an "outsider" but not as a mixedblood on the outskirts of fullblood traditional families as Silko perceived it in Laguna, where mixedbloods experience being on the edges of traditional life. Momaday was considered an outsider because of his tribal affiliations. The Southwest pueblo tribal people are very closely associated. Their hereditary ancestral lines and traditional cultures are intact, and perhaps this is possible because of their resistance to outsiders, even tribal outsiders.

The title of Momaday's novel suggests strongly the idea of land as an all-inclusive and spiritual perception. *House* stands for land, and *dawn* exemplifies spirituality. Each one is part of the entireness, especially those things normally not considered in Western thinking to be part of the land such as the sky and air. In Native thinking there is no distinction between these "untouchable" things: sky and air, the soil and grass on the earth. And the notion that a house is made of dawn perfectly illustrates this idea. Momaday expresses this beautifully, beginning with his title. It is a philosophy that says everything has the breath of life and is earth-bound, spiritually.

Momaday's principal character, Abel, returns to his land in the first chapter, "The Longhair," of the novel. As the story unfolds, Abel kills an albino Native who signifies evil. Abel's grandfather, Francisco, teaches him, by example, that evil must

be challenged, and the clan and tribal runners run after evil, stand up to it. Francisco, one of the old traditional runners who participated in the harvest and deer hunting runs as a young man, is Abel's tribal mentor. He is too old to be afraid of evil anymore and is fearless in evil's close proximity and presence in the community. Abel kills the evildoer and goes to prison. And when he is released, he is relocated in Los Angeles, California, where he experiences alienation. He partakes in sacred peyote ceremonies to cope with this alien feeling in an urban setting.

When Abel is removed, dislocated, and unconnected from the land, he experiences emotional, cultural, and spiritual distance. He is out of balance, in other words, with his world, and problems such as drinking are manifest, for he is not himself. It was no accident that Abel did not recognize his grandfather, Francisco, on returning home. Abel stumbles drunk from the bus that brought him home and falls against his grandfather. This stumbling symbolizes a cultural imbalance. The grandfather then turns away from the people on the bus, as tears come to his eyes; he recognizes it for what it is. However, he cries not because Abel is intoxicated, but because of the evil in the world, and its effects on the land and people. He cried mostly, I think, for a way of life that Abel was a part of, a philosophy that the land is sacred and each one is an essential element, even as the filaments in Silko's symbolic spider web that mirrors the fragility of the world.

Likewise, Momaday shows us that each individual person is responsible for this fragile world, demonstrating this traditional obligation with the role of the indigenous runners, the dawn runners, and those who run for harvest and deer hunting. Abel comes from an old tradition of Southwest footrunners. Running for these Native People is an intensified experience, because it keeps them close to the rhythm of the land, and it is the Native runner who is the "message" when he runs for a good harvest and a good deer hunt. He runs to maintain his

balance with the land. And he runs for the people. Peter Nabokov's *Indian Running* is a comprehensive study of American Indian running in the Southwest and at Jemez Pueblo, the setting of Momaday's novel. Momaday has said his character was partially recreated from someone named Abel, an Native man on the Jemez reservation. Perhaps, the real Abel was a runner.

Nabokov proposes that Native running can be a metaphorical image in literary works. He notes: "To novelist N. Scott Momaday...the cameo of the Indian runner flying across the landscape solved a problem with dramatizing Indian life. Novels generally hook on individuals and crises, but authentic fiction about Indians is hard put to lift individuals from the clutches of their cultures...The Indian of reality almost fuses with the Indian of fantasy, running 'like the wind', one with the earth and sky. The novelist can adapt this riveting image to convey the man of torn identity, running toward choice, resolution, reaffirmation, peck experience, without unduly stretching the facts" (Nobokov 43). It is no literary accident that Momaday used the traditional Native runner to show the reader the responsibility of each person in the Indian community in perpetuating the group through reaffirmation with the land, with Native culture. In the Native way, no one is separated from the earth and the community. And the runner is an excellent example of this.

More than that, Momaday calls attention to land tenure in his novel. He says of eagles, "They are sacred...These-and the innumerable meaner creatures, the lizard and the frog, the insect and the worm-have tenure in the land. The other, latecoming things-the beasts of burden and of trade, the horse and the sheep, the dog and the cat-these have an alien and inferior aspect, a poverty of vision and instinct, by which they are estranged from the wild land, and made tentative. They are born and die upon the land, but then they are gone away from it as if they had never been. Their dust is borne away in the

wind, and their cries have no echo in the rain and the river, the commotion of wings, the return of boughs bent by the passing of dark shapes in the dawn and dusk... For man, too, has tenure in the land; he dwelt upon the land twenty-five thousand years ago, and his gods before him" (Momaday 56).

Truly, in the story Abel is out of balance with the land until the end of the story. In the prologue, actually, Abel is finally home and running freely. Since the novel is cyclic in its plot, the first page is the last page, and the last page is the first. The story ends when Abel, like Tayo, is restored to health, made whole again; he returns to the land of his ancestors, and to spirituality and tradition. Momaday incorporates this encircling idea of land in his work. Writing of Abel and speaking through another character, Ben, Momaday narrates, "He was going home, and he was going to be all right again...'House made of dawn'. I use to tell him about those old ways, the stories, and the sings, Beautyway and Night Chant" (133). It is this Beautyway that denotes spiritual harmony and cultural consensus and emotionally good feelings. Abel, like Tayo, becomes attuned again to his land and all that it symbolizes. Abel has just left for home, and his friend, the character Ben, says, "I wanted to pray...House made of dawn/House made of grasshoppers/ Dark cloud is at the door/" (134). In this poetic prayer Momaday voices the notion that land is all-comprising. The web of life is within the circle of dawn.

In the same prayer we see Abel's spiritual restoration. "I have prepared a smoke for you/Restore my feet for me/ Restore my legs for me/Restore my body for me/Restore my mind for me/Restore my voice for me/This very day take out your spell for me/Your spell removed for me/You have taken it away for me/Far off it had gone/Happily I recover/" (134). Here, Momaday is speaking about Abel's restoration to the land, his spiritual revival. The key word is "restore." To be restored is to be one with the land, to be in balance with oneself and one's cultural world. In the last chapter, "The Dawn

Runner," Abel is running, restored to harmony. As a runner, he is the message, and the message is restoration and harmony with the earth. The dawn runners are the traditional believers of the Beautyway, and running is spiritual and helps them to communicate with and to be close to Mother Earth.

James Welch

James Welch's literary country is Montana, quite different from the literary southwestern setting of Silko and Momaday, where three waves of Western cultures acted on the indigenous people. The Blackfeet and Gros Ventre, Welch's tribal blood, did not have to compete for the land with these waves of Europeans. For this reason, we cannot say all Native People have identical collective experiences with regard to Westerners. However, the basic idea of land tenure is the same; the land is owned by the Great Spirit and Native People are caretakers, thus land is spiritual and communal. Not all Native writers have extensively expressed the idea of land in their works, such as Silko and Momaday. Apparently, Welch is more concerned with individual alienation insofar as one is alienated from oneself than with alienation from the land. The author's metaphor is memory. For instance, in *The Death of Jim Loney* Welch discloses a loss of memory. "He had been thinking of his life for a month. He had tried to think of all the little things that added up to a man sitting at a table drinking wine. But he couldn't connect the different parts of his life, or the various people who had entered and left it. Sometimes he felt like an amnesic searching for one event, the one person or moment, that would bring everything back and he would see the order in his life" (20-21). Jim Lonely is a mixedblood in search of himself, but also in search for his collective and historical memory.

James Welch does not make use of land as motif in literature as do Silko and Momaday. In *Winter in the Blood*, for example,

he begins his novel with a dim perception of land by using the metaphor of a log-and-mud cabin. "It was called the Earthboy place, although no one by that name (or any other) had lived in it for twenty years. The roof had fallen in and the mud between the logs had fallen out in chunks, leaving a bare gray skeleton..." (1). We soon learn that the nameless protagonist is more alienated from himself than from place. "...the distance I felt came not from country or people; it came from within me. I was as distant from myself as a hawk from the moon" (2). We learn this early in the novel.

Furthermore, Welch authored an indigenous surrealistic novel. What is indigenous surrealism? It does not simply depart from French surrealism; it is dissimilar in subject matter, and sanctions foretelling by the seer or dreamer. The dream in indigenous surrealism then is a prophesy and has its roots in the spiritual rather than the material as Sigmund Freud believed. For him, dreaming is a psychic process. For Native People, dreaming is spiritual and prophetic. "We believe in a Great Spirit, and we call Him Gitchi Manito. All things are carried on the wind to His presence, and the sun, the moon, and the stars speak to Him. In dreams He gives the power of the earth to the Ojibway" (Broker 55). In defining indigenous surrealism as a spiritual notion based on Native People's concepts of dreaming, we can characterize Welch's surrealism as non-Western in origin. The sprouting of his surrealism, I think, has come about in the American literary soil apart from Andre Breton's surrealistic literary movement in France and Europe. To what extent Andre Breton's Western surrealism impressed itself upon Welch is not documented. Apparently Andre Breton had a fascination with Native culture. What the two seem to have in common is that both, European and indigenous surrealism, are composed by a seeker of knowledge. Perhaps the Native influenced the European surrealist more than the other way around. "The first and most fundamental statement that Breton makes is that 'The eye exists in a

savage state.' It is the opening sentence of his book. The word "sauvage" in the French connotation has a much broader significance than in English and does not necessarily mean 'barbaric'; much more accurately it denotes 'primitive,' 'unrestricted,' 'natural,' and etymologically speaking 'free'... It is a liberation from the trite associations with which civilizations, one after the other, have encumbered our perceptions of the exterior world...The mind of the primitive man, on the other hand, was more free..." (Balakian 156).

What then is the European, surrealistic, standard pattern and formula with respect to novel writing? "Being then, as all creative surrealism must be, the expression of a mood of experimentation, the surrealist novel probes not only the potentialities of feeling and imagination, but also those of novelistic form...One cannot hope in this matter to discover a standard pattern, applicable in every case to the surrealist novel. If this were permissible then we could expect to identify a formula to which all intending to compose a surrealist novel might refer, even if they did not share surrealist beliefs. This, in turn, would mean that surrealism must cease to be what it has always remained-an expression of the need to explore beyond the known-to become instead simply a technique to be borrowed..." (Matthews 6-7). There is no surrealistic standard pattern or formula for novel writing. That being so, Welch, Vizenor, of all the Native writers, compose narratives that are inherent literary works of indigenous surrealism. "Our words are personal visions, we see words in our memories" (Vizenor xiii). This is an aboriginal persuasion, a way of looking at the world, a philosophy personified in Vizenor's literary characters.

Gerald Vizenor

Gerald Vizenor combines the idea of land in his American Indian surrealism. At first reading this may not be apparent.

Armed with a sense of Western surrealism, as Andre Breton argued for, and an awareness of Native dream interpretation, visions and philosophies concerning people and land, Vizenor's fictive works make sense. In his first major work, *Darkness in Saint Louis Bearheart*, Vizenor makes use of Native visions and experienced metamorphosis. That is, the characters in his novel become metaphorical and metamorphic: namely, bears and crows, even cedar trees. The characters change into a bear, and crows becoming members of the human race. The Ojibwa land turns into the Cedar Tree Nation, and Native People struggle to protect the surrealistic Cedar Nation. "We speak the secret language of bears in the darkness here, stumbling into the fourth world on twos and fours, turning underwords ha ha ha haaaa in visions. The bear is in our hearts. Shoulders tingle downhill on dreams" (Vizenor vii). Vizenor resorts to indigenous notions of visions and dreams, and making the most of dreamlike experiences in his two novels, *Darkness in Saint Louis Bearheart* and *Griever: An American Monkey King in China*. Anything is possible in a dream, so his narratives are dreamlike and surrealistic.

In *Darkness in Saint Louis Bearheart*, the Ojibwa land needs defending, but it is a masked defense in the indigenous surrealism of Vizenor. Like a prophet, Vizenor's narrator promulgates a bleak future for America and Western civilization. He forewarns the readers of an economic and cultural rupture, and an emotional disorderliness that has never been witnessed in this proportion. "When the oil is gone the culture is gone and when the culture is gone the government will take the trees on the reservations. Traditions will end and whitepeople will turn to the roads with evil and violent sex. When the oil is gone there will be nothing more to believe in here. White culture is refined from oil. No more habits to depend on, no transportation, no heating fuel, no chemicals, drugless, no plastics, no food from the sunbelts. People will gather in weird bunches based on their bizarre needs for sex and violence" (Vizenor xiv). The

trees symbolize the land. And who is the hero? There is no individual hero. When there is a takeover of a government building, the questions arise: "What are you and your movement doing with this building? Painting words on the walls. Hostile word demands. What is there here that the American Indian Movement wants or needs?" (Vizenor xv). The American Indian Movement corresponds to the collective people. Vizenor definitely advances the situational novel and indigenous surrealism with his first novel, *Darkness in Saint Louis Bearheart*.

With his novel,*Griever: An American Monkey King in China*, Vizenor perpetrates the Ojibwa trickster by adapting the traditional trickster to a modern setting and playing with surrealism. Vizenor gives us a less serious novel than *Darkness in Saint Louis Bearheart*. He composes a surplus of satirical and comparative Ojibwa and Chinese metaphors and symbolism, combined and seemingly fused, giving us scrambled images of the Ojibwa trickster and the Chinese Monkey King, two metaphoric characters in these two cultures. The people in *Griever: An American Monkey King in China* are dreamy and preposterous. The author certainly does not copy life in his new novel. Instead, he inspirits his characters with trickster mannerisms and quirks and temperaments found in the Ojibwa trickster and Chinese Monkey King personalities. In examining this book, there was an endness and perpetual probe of details and characters, and a never-ending search that makes the reader exert to the utmost for comprehension. Vizenor, beyond a doubt, does not attempt to give us an illusion of reality and is not seeking to imitate reality.

Vizenor divulges nonetheless in his Epilogue that he has made use of factual material. In my opinion the reader will be better off if he reads the Epilogue first rather than last, for you will find aberrant and incongruous characters explained there. That is, Vizenor provides a list of books and authors that he used to create his Chinese characters and overall theme.

Regardless, in many ways Vizenor's principal character in the novel is autobiographical and true to life. The character, Griever de Hocus, is a mixedblood Native, a trickster from the White Earth Reservation in Minnesota. The connection is unconcealed because Vizenor is a mixedblood from White Earth. There, realism finds its way into the book. Moreover, Vizenor tells us in the Epilogue that he and his wife were teachers for several months at Tianjin University in China. His principal character is a foreigner in China, but he is also a foreigner on the White Earth Reservation. Speaking of his grandmother at White Earth, Vizenor writes, "...she did not understand her trickster grandson. His urban mixedblood tongue, she snorted when he graduated from college, 'wags like a mongrel, he's a wild outsider.' Even at home on the reservation he was a foreigner" (42). In any case, Vizenor's combination of a literary fantasy with visionlike and dreamlike images and autobiographical material creates an impressionable, inventive, and clever novel rooted in indigenous surrealism. Vizenor and Welch give voice to a group of Native surrealistic writers in emerging Native literature.

Ignatia Broker

Ignatia Broker exemplifies the traditional Ojibwa storyteller. Like Vizenor, Broker was from White Earth. Unlike Vizenor, she was a fullblood and did not turn to surrealism in storytelling. She simply told a story in *Night Flying Woman*, as if the audience was there before her eyes, as if Ojibwa listeners gather around the winter fire, as if her world has not completely changed, and the story will be heard by the new storytellers who will retell their stories in the future. There is a sacred gentleness about her story, a story of Western cultural trespassers and land encroachers overrunning the quietness of the Ojibwa forest in Minnesota. Her narration is a story of Objiwa families trying to evade the trespassers and attempting

to sidestep what turns out to be impossible. When the European settlers do occupy the Ojibwa lands in Minnesota, the families begin to borrow cultural tools such as the English language and adapt to European housing and logging work. Of course, not everyone adapted to cutting trees. And it is a story about dreaming.

In the story there is a young girl dreamer who foretells the coming of white strangers. These images come to her from the Great Spirit and help the tribe to see the future. In her novel A-wa-sa-si or old man said to the young dreamer, "...I know you have dreamed. It is the custom of our people to be guided throughout their lives by their dreams. Some are especially blessed, for their dreams can tell us what will come, what must be, and what we must do" (Broker 54). Broker's narrative is credible and unveils spiritual perceptions about the land and people on the land. She skillfully incorporates the theme of land and spirituality: "We did not own the land acre by acre as is done today, but we respected the right of all people to share in the gifts given by the Great Being to the Anishinabe, which means us, the original people" (9). The author especially focuses on storytelling. "What good are these tales in today's world? asked many people, never realizing that the Ojibwa tales teach a philosophy for living. They tell of the purity of man and nature and keeping them in balance" (Broker 8). We learn of a philosophy that helps us to understand that when unbalance occurs the individual and the community and even the land will suffer. This philosophy is the very same idea about the earth and tradition found in Silko and Momaday, and of course, to some extent in Vizenor.

It is only with restoration of this balance with the earth that healing can happen, according to this philosophy. Tayo is restored to the land with the aid of the ceremonious sand-painting in *Ceremony*, and Momaday's Abel is restored when he returns to the land and becomes a dawn runner again. Contrast this with *Darkness in Saint Louis Bearheart* and *Griever:*

An American Monkey King in China. Vizenor's characters are surrealistic mixedblood tricksters attempting to perpetuate themselves by living the life of a cultural-hero, thus cultivating themselves. In *The Death of Jim Loney* and *Winter in the Blood*, James Welch's mixedblood Native characters are struggling to find themselves. They are not lost on the land; they are simply lost from themselves, and in a memorial maze they search for themselves. They are merely lost in the Western artificial cities of America. They can never be lost on the land, in view of the fact that they are essentially Native People.

Finishing, I set out to critically examine the idea of land in emerging literature by Native writers. The idea of land permeates Native literature. I tried to shed light on the idea of land as the underlying meaning in this emergentness. In the preceding years, Native writers composed acculturized literature to conform to Western literary works. Of course, there were exceptions such as Charles Eastman, who wrote nonfictive works. In novel writing, the Native authors of oppugnant and emerging literature create prose that gives evidence of an enlightened literature and a literature that springs forth from the indigenous communities. To comprehend this emerging literature, one must definitely interpret land as sacred; any divorcement from land will spiritually alter the individual personality, and surely the whole community will be afflicted. Virtually, anything that takes hold of the individual tribal member will have a fallout in the entire community. In the emerging narratives, there is an affirmation of the traditional cultural values, of a spiritual uprising, of religious revival, a revitalized proper relationship to the earth mother and all the creatures and plants, trees, and waters. This spiritual rhythm sustains the Native People.

Without question, Westerners in general view land as a marketable entity. They buy and sell land as a commodity, for profit. The title of ownership theoretically determines who owns the land, giving fencing rights to the individual owner.

U.S. law, for example, says that tenure rests with the individual owner who can sell the property for monetary gains if he wishes to do so. In other words, land is monetized in Western culture.

Furthermore, the Dawes Allotment Act of 1887 was designed to break up the communal tribal lands by forcing Indians into becoming individual landowners. In many cases the communal lands were taken illegally. White Earth Reservation in northern Minnesota is an example. For instance, land was taken under a 1906 Minnesota tax-forfeiture law that was declared unconstitutional in 1977. This involves 100,000 acres. Now present-day land holders have clouded titles and they are unable to sell it or use it as collateral because of the uncertainty of ownership. I mention this to show the complexity of the issue of land.

On March 30, 1990, as a result of the White Earth Land Settlement Act federal checks are being mailed to enrollees. This stems from the 1986 federal law designed to settle land claims.

January 16, 1990 the Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal by enrollees who claimed land ownership at White Earth as determined by WELSA was being dealed improperly (Littlewolf v. Lujan). The ruling is intact.

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Criminal Justice in Native American Literature: N. Scott Momaday, Leslie Silko, and James Welch

CAMILLE NASLUND

How is criminal justice reflected in Native American Literature? I will critically examine *House Made of Dawn* by N. Scott Momaday, *Winter in the Blood* by James Welch, and *Ceremony* by Leslie Marmon Silko, including one of her short stories from *Storyteller*, "Tony's Story." Particular scenes are focused on in which a literary killing occurred in the literature.

In each of these scenes, an antagonist was killed because he was seen as being evil in the eyes of the main character. Questions are being raised concerning whether or not the killings can be viewed as justified and in self-defense from perspective of Native American writers. In the essay I will also demonstrate how often people who work for the criminal justice system are only concerned with the *facts* of a case. It also points out the need for more research in this field of study, since there needs to be a better understanding. Perhaps examining this literature will enable people to understand how complex the issue is. A Western definition of crime and murder is looked at, plus a discussion concerning the insanity plea, in which it is assumed that a character out of *House Made of Dawn* used at his trial. A sense of what evil is in Native American culture is also examined. Hopefully, these questions about justification and self-defense in the literature will be considered so that additional research will be conducted.

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INTRODUCTION

How does western culture and Native American culture view the act of a killing differently in these particular works? I studied the literary works of three writers: N. Scott Momaday, Leslie Silko, and James Welch. In each of the literary scenes, Western society views the killing of the antagonists as an act of first degree murder. The Minnesota Statutes defines first degree murder as: "causes the death of a human being with premeditation and with intent to effect the death of the person or of another"(606.185. But when looking at these literary acts of murders in Native American literature from the Native American perspective, the acts can be interpreted or seen as being "justified" and in self-defense. You have to keep in mind that it is literature being discussed and not reality. I am only raising questions concerning criminal justice in Native American literature. I am not taking either side or justifying the act of a killing in the real world.

The idea is that in Momaday and Silko's novels, for example, the literary acts of killings can be viewed as acts of self-defense and could be interpretated differently. In both novels, the antagonist was killed because he [it] was viewed as being evil or a witch and not seen as a human being - rather as evil in the disguise of a man. My interpretation is that the protagonists, Abel and Tony, were sane.

The question is: how does the criminal justice system operate or how does it treat Native People? I am only applying legal statutes to literary acts of killings and how some criminal justice officials will interpret a situation by only focusing on the *facts* of the case in Native American literature. Keep in mind that Native American literature originated from oral tradition, songs, and storytelling. Traditional storytelling goes back many years, and religious beliefs have been passed down through storytellers.

The Native American authors of the novels I used for my

research are all professionals writers. N. Scott Momaday, a Kiowa Indian, is a Professor of English at the University of Arizona. His other works include *The Gourd Dancer, The Way to Rainy Mountain,* and *The Names.* Leslie Silko grew up on the Laguna Reservation in Arizona. She is of Laguna Pueblo, Mexican, and white ancestry and has taught at universities. Her poems and short stories have been included in many magazines and collections. Even though I could not apply James Welch's novel to my analysis directly, he is part Blackfeet and Gros Ventre Indian and recognized as a professional writer. He received his B.A. from the University of Montana.

DISCUSSION

"A crime is an intentional act or omission in violation of criminal law..., committed without defense or justification, and sanctioned by the state as a felony or misdemeanor" (McCaghy, 24). This is a definition of what is a crime in western society.

"For an act (or the omission thereof) to be a crime, it must not only be intentional and in violation of the criminal law, but it must also be committed without defense or justification. *Defense* is a broad term that can refer to any number of causes and rights of action that would serve to mitigate or excuse an individual's guilt in a criminal offense. Defenses that have been raised include insanity, mistake of fact, mistake of law, duress and consent, consent of the victim, entrapment, and justification" (Inciardi, 51). The defenses I will be raising questions about are insanity and justification. However, raising questions is as much a part of research as answering them. Not everyone will agree on which acts are criminal. Two different cultures such as the dominant Western culture and the American Indian culture can view the same act differently. My thesis demonstrates how two different cultures will do this in literature as opposed to "reality." I will explain how the

western culture can view an act as a crime, but the American Indian culture as reflected in N. Scott Momaday, Leslie M. Silko and James Welch will not view the act the same way. I will be using particular scenes from American Indian literature to show how two different cultures will view the same act differently. In each of these literary scenes, for example, the dominant western society views or would view the act as being a crime, but according to the Native American culture the act is justified in a literary sense and can be seen as "self-defense." I will examine the novel *House Made of Dawn* by N. Scott Momaday, *Winter in the Blood* by James Welch, and the novel *Ceremony* by Leslie Marmon Silko and make use of one of her short stories from *Storyteller*, "Tony's Story." Western culture may still view the act as an unjustified crime. Objectively, I am trying to show how each culture views the same act differently and hopefully raising some important questions in Criminal Justice. In researching, I looked at the novel *Winter in the Blood* by James Welch. This novel did not reflect issues of Criminal Justice in terms of literary acts of killing. This shows that not all novels by American Indians can be used in my research.

In each of the literary scenes, an act of "murder" was committed. According to Momaday and Silko, the antagonist was not a person that was killed but evil in the disguise of a human being. In their novels, evil takes on many forms. Western society, however, does not accept this American Indian belief and may even think of it as being wrong.

In the novel, for example, *House Made of Dawn,* for example, Abel, the protagonist, is a Native American on trial for murder. He is in the courtroom, in one scene, and tells his side of what happened. He tells the Western judge and the prosecutor that it was not a man he killed but something that was evil. The Western people did not understand what he was trying to say and thought of Abel as being insane. Yet, when Abel is given psychological tests, he is found to be sane. This can be viewed as a need for more research in Indian literature so that we have

a cultural understanding of Native Americans and the concept of crime in this literature. According to Dr. Dave Gonzales, Bemidji State University Professor, in a lecture in American Indian Literature 265, "In the dominant Western society, evil is usually viewed in the form of the devil, and this belief is acceptable. But the Native American belief in the "devil" or "evil" is not usually and completely acceptable in nonIndian society, and is often viewed as being wrong or completely unbelievable." I am raising questions here of whether it can be justified in literary works to kill someone or something because the antagonist was viewed as being evil or a witch by the protagonist. This is not a new idea in early American literature such as *Young Goodman Brown* by Nathaniel Hawthorne.

In my own words, *House Made of Dawn* is about Abel, a Native, who has returned home to a reservation in New Mexico from World War II. His grandfather who symbolizes tradition, goes into town to pick Abel up at the bus stop. When the bus comes to the stop and Abel gets off, the grandfather sees that Abel is drunk. Abel is so drunk that he does not recognize his own grandfather. The grandfather, Fransico, starts to get tears in his eyes and turns his head away from the faces in the bus windows. He is crying because his grandson is out of balance with his culture. While Abel is at home, he feels like he does not belong there. Also while he is at home, he kills a character named Juan Reyes, an albino. Abel kills him because in Abel's eyes he is not a man but something evil. Abel is put on trial and convicted of murder and then sent to prison. Once he is given parole, he is sent to Los Angeles. Abel finds out that he cannot adjust there. He goes back home in New Mexico to his reservation and takes care of his grandfather. His grandfather dies and Abel begins to purify himself to get back in balance with his own culture.

When Abel is on trial for the murder of Juan Reyes, he has told his side of the story of what happened. Father Olguin, a priest from the same reservation as Abel, is then called upon the

stand to testify. Father Olguin tries to explain to the Western judge,the prosecutor, and the Western spectators why Abel committed the act of killing.

"I mean," said Father Olguin, "that in his own mind it was not a man he killed. It was something else."

"An evil spirit."

"Something like that, yes."

"Can you be more precise, Father?"

"We are dealing with a psychology about which we know very little. I see the manifestations of it every day, but I have no real sense of it—not any longer. I relinquished my claim to the psychology of witchcraft when I left home and became a priest. Anyway, there is no way to be objective or precise about such a thing. What shall I say? I believe that this man was moved to do what he did by an act of imagination so compelling as to be inconceivable to us."

"Yes, yes, yes. But these are the facts: he killed a man—took the life of another human being. He did so of his own volition—he has admitted that—he was armed for no other reason. He committed a brutal and premeditated act which we have no choice but to call by its right name."

"Homicide is a legal term, but the law is not my context; and certainly it isn't his—"

"*Murder* is a moral term. *Death* is a universal human term" (Momaday: 1966: 94).

Furthermore, according to the *Barron's Law Dictionary* (1984) " The definition of murder is the unlawful killings of another human being with malice aforethought. This requires a premeditated intent to kill plus an element of hatred. It also defines first degree murder as an unlawful killing that is willful, deliberate, and premeditated; willfulness being the requirement of intent, deliberation requiring a conscious consideration of the decision to kill, and premeditation requiring the intent to kill be fashioned prior to thinking. Each one of the requisite elements can be formed within a moment's duration."

This definition could be used to interpret Abel's act of killing, where it says it "...requires a premeditated intent to kill plus an element of hatred." But according to Momaday, it was not a human being that was killed. It was a symbol of evil in the disguise of a man.

In the courtroom, Abel told his story once and refused to tell it again. Abel was observing, as Momaday says, how word by word the Western judge and prosecutor were disposing of him in their language. They wanted to dispose of him in their words by calling his killing an act of murder. Abel wanted to help them understand, but he remained mute after telling his story once. Abel was embarrassed and humiliated when he told his side of what happened, that it was not a man he killed but something which was evil, a snake. Abel wanted the western men to know if he would have another chance he would kill Juan Reyes again because he knew what Juan Reyes was. We have to understand this idea culturally. He would not hesitate at all to kill again because evil is man's worst enemy, Momaday seems to say.

In Momaday's words, Abel was trying to think of where the trouble had begun. He knew there was trouble, but he did not have an insight into his own situation. Maybe this was his trouble. He did not understand why these Western men were trying to dispose of him in their words. Here is the scene from the *House Made of Dawn,* in which Abel kills Juan Reyes.

"Abel and the white man paid no attention to them. The two spoke low to each other, carefully, as if the meaning of what they said was strange and infallible. Now and then the white man laughed, and each time it carried too high on the scale and ended in a strange, inhuman cry—as of pain. The Navajos became aware of him. And throughout Abel smiled; he nodded and grew silent at length; and the smile was thin and instinctive, a hard transparent mask upon his mouth and eyes. He waited, and the wine rose up in his blood.

And then they were ready, the two of them. They went out

into the darkness and the rain. They crossed the highway and walked out among the dunes. When they were midway between the river and the road, they stopped. Abel waited. The white man raised his arms, as if to embrace him, and came forward. But Abel had already taken hold of the knife, and he drew it. He leaned inside the white man's arms and drove the blade up under the bones of the breast and across. The white man's hands lay on Abel's shoulders, and for a moment the white man stood very still. Then he closed his hands upon Abel and drew him close. He was sick with terror and revulsion, and he tried to fling himself away, but the white man held him close. He withdrew the knife and thrust again, lower, deep into the groin. The white hands laid hold of Abel and drew him close, and the terrible strength of the hands was brought to bear only in proportion as Abel resisted them. In his terror he knew only to wield the knife. He turned it upon the massive white arms and at last the white man's hands fell away from him, and he reeled backward and away, whimpering now, exhausted. Abel threw down the knife and the rain fell upon it and made it clean. In the instant before he fell, his great white body grew erect and seemed to cast off its age and weight; it grew supple and sank slowly to the ground, as if the bones were dissolving within it. And Abel was no longer terrified, but strangely cautious and intent, full of wonder and regard. He could not think, there was nothing left inside him but a cold, instinctive will to wonder and regard" (Momaday 77-78).

My interpretation of this scene is that the character Juan Reyes is considered evil. Momaday describes him as having a laugh that was "a strange, inhuman cry—as of pain." Also, the Navajo Indians in the bar noticed Juan Reyes as being evil. I also interpret Abel as being terrified of Juan Reyes because he was evil and pulled out his knife for self-defense. From a criminal justice standpoint, Abel's act is considered as murder. According to the Minnesota Statutes (606.185 MURDER IN THE FIRST DEGREE), Abel's act would fall under section one

causes the death of a human being with premeditation and with intent to effect the death of the person or of another. The definition of "premeditation" in the Minnesota Statutes (609.18 DEFINITION) means to consider, plan or prepare for, or determine to commit, the act referred to prior to its commission.

The Western prosecutor views Abel's act as deliberate, premeditated, and unjustified. He does not see it any other way. Also, the prosecutor has Abel's testimony to collaborate with the evidence; he is not denying that he killed. Abel even wanted him to know that if he had another chance, he would not hesitate to do it again. The prosecutor does not understand what Abel was trying to say. He is only interested in the facts of the case.

Abel became embarrassed and humiliated when he told the Western people that it was evil that he killed. They thought that Abel was insane. In Abel's culture, evil is supposed to be confronted. In the novel, the Western people in the courtroom are not concerned about what is evil in Abel's culture. Often, people who work for the criminal justice system are only interested in the facts. According to Gonzales's lecture, "There is a section in the novel which demonstrates this. Abel is being questioned about his age, sex, height, weight, color of his eyes and hair; is he married or does he have any children? What is his religious affiliation, level of education, father and mother's name? These questions do not tell Western people anything about Abel's background or personality. These questions do not give them an understanding of why Abel had killed."

Abel is found guilty and sent to prison. I assume his defense attorney used the insanity plea to lessen Abel's criminal charges. It is not clear in the novel. "The insanity plea is one by which the defendant claims innocence because of a mental disorder or inability to reason that prevented him from having the sense of purposefulness [intent, willfulness, recklessness] that is a necessary element of the crime charged" (Barron's Law Dictionary, 1984).

Abel is being given a psychological test to determine his mental state. Some of the questions included: "Do you prefer the company of men or women? Do you drink alcoholic beverages to excess often, occasionally, not at all? Do you consider yourself of superior, above average, average, below average intelligence?" (Momaday, 1966, 97). Again, these questions do not tell Western society why Abel killed. After taking the psychological tests, Abel is found to be sane.

I am only assuming that Abel's defense was the insanity plea. This would be surprising because it is a defense that rarely wins and is rarely used. "The problem with the insanity defense is that insanity is a legal, not a medical term. Furthermore, there is little agreement on the actual meaning of the word. On the other hand, and in contrast to conventional wisdom, few serious offenders use the insanity plea to avoid incarceration. Studies demonstrate that the plea is used in less than one percent of serious criminal cases, is rarely successful, and its defendants generally spend more time in mental institutions than they would have spent in prison had they been convicted" (Inciardi 53).

What might have been helpful for Abel's defense would be to bring someone else, rather than Father Olguin, with more knowledge about evil in the American Indian culture and having the ability to explain it, into a Western courtroom to convince others that this is something "real" and not something that was made up or something that should be viewed as wrong just because it is different from their culture. Western society may still view the act of killing as being unjustified, but they would not think of it as being insane.

This issue in Momaday's novel can also be viewed as demonstrating a need for more Native American lawyers to defend American Indians. If an Indian lawyer defended Abel, of course we are speaking of literature, he could have raised some interesting legal, cultural, and social questions. Once an American Indian explanation of evil is given, including some

cultural background about Abel, an Indian lawyer could have raised questions such as: why, within Abel's culture, was Juan Reyes, the albino, not a human being, but something that was symbolic of evil. He was considered evil by those living on the same reservation with Abel; the whole community viewed him that way. Within Abel's culture, the killing would be justified, since Juan Reyes was not a man, but evil in the disguise of a person. Couldn't Abel's act be justifiable homicide within his cultural context? Abel was in terror when confronted by Juan Reyes. He wielded the knife in self-defense, because he *believed* what Juan Reyes was. Abel viewed him, for example, as a snake. Doesn't Christianity see the snake as a symbol of evil in the Bible? Couldn't this killing be seen as an act of self-defense in light of cultural perspectives? It could be viewed as being an act of self-defense when looking at it from his cultural point of view.

Furthermore,"Tony's Story" by Silko, which is found i*n Storytelle*r, is another good literary example of how Western culture and the American Indian culture would view the act of a killing differently. Paraphrasing Silko,"Tony's Story" is about a Pueblo Indian, Leon, who has just returned home from the army. It was a very dry summer that year. The story opens with Leon and Tony, another Indian character, at a carnival celebrating San Lorenzo's Day. At the carnival Tony hears his friend Leon call for the first time. They talk about the coming Corn Dance near a hamburgers stand, when he notices a big cop in sunglasses pushing his way through a crowd of people. The cop walked up to Leon without saying a word and punched him in the face, knocking him down. Leon was then carried away in a paddy wagon. Later that night, Tony was dropped off near his home. He began to have a sense that evil was all around him, and he began to remember the old traditional stories about the witches. That same night Tony had a dream. "The big cop was pointing a long bone at me—they always use human bones, and the whiteness flashed silver in the moon-

light where he stood. He didn't have a human face—only little, round, white-rimmed eyes on a black ceremonial mask" (Silko 72).

A few days later, Tony and Leon were going to pick up some barbed wire at a store. They stopped at a gas station to get some gas, and Tony was going to go inside to get some pop. Before he entered the store, he noticed that the cop was inside. Tony quickly turned around before the cop could see him, but if the cop was what Tony thought, he would not have to see him. Tony then gets inside the pickup and tells Leon to go because the cop is inside the gas station.

Finally, Leon is driving away from the gas station when he notices that the cop is behind them with the red lights flashing. Leon pulls the truck over and the cop gets out of his patrol car and walks toward them. The state patrolman tells Tony and Leon that he does not like Indians and that is why he was transferred here because there would not be many of them here for him to harass and beat. He tells both of them that he can still find Indians, that he goes out and searches for them. The cop then gets into his patrol car and leaves.

Leon kept saying that the cop had no right to do this to him. Tony could not understand why Leon was talking about rights because it was not rights that the cop was after. Leon could not remember the old stories about witches. Later that same day, Tony hands Leon an arrowhead on some string for protection against evil. Leon did not believe in *that* and pointed to a rifle and said he would use that for protection against the cop.

A few days later, both of them were driving to a sheep camp. They turned off the highway and onto a small road which led to the camp. Leon looked into the rear-view mirror and saw the cop following them. Tony started to become frightened because *he knew what the cop was*. He did not see the patrol man as a human being, but as evil in the disguise of a man. Tony says, "We've got to kill it, Leon. We must burn the body to be sure" (Silko:1981:76). Leon did not understand what

Tony was saying because he could not remember the stories about witchcraft.

They were pulled over and the cop started to walk toward the pickup, waving his billy club at Leon. To Tony, the billy club looked like the long bone in his dream. He saw it as a human bone painted to look like a billy club. "He moved toward Leon with the stick raised high, and it was like the bone in my dream when he pointed it at me—a human bone painted brown to look like wood, to hide what it really was; they'll do that, you know—carve the bone into a spoon and use it around the house until the victim comes within range" (Silko 77).

Tony picks up the rifle in the pickup and shoots and kills the cop. They put the body into the patrol car and burn it after Tony explains to Leon what it was. Leon did not understand what Tony was doing because he did not remember the witch stories. He only viewed the patrolman as a human because he forgot the stories. Tony then tells Leon, "Don't worry, everything is O.K. now, Leon. It's killed. They sometimes take on strange forms" (Silko 78). As the car was burning, rain clouds started to gather in the sky to bring rain for the land.

From a criminal justice point of view, this would be considered an unjustifiable murder. According to Professor Gonzales, "To Tony, it was not a man but evil in a state patrolman's uniform. This patrolman was evil. He was transferred from somewhere else because he searches for Native Americans and beats them. To Tony, he was protecting himself from evil when he killed and burned the cop. I'm speaking about literature. I'm making the point that the American imagination ought to be free to imagine these cultural laws concerning evil in the world, as it is reflected in Native literature."

Like Abel, Tony was not insane; they both saw evil in the form of a human being. In a literary sense, if these similar killings were committed today by an American Indian character, he or she might not even give the reason they killed, since it was not a person but something else. They would probably

not want to be humiliated or embarrassed or thought of as being insane, as happened to Abel in *House Made of Dawn*. There should be an understanding of both cultural perspectives about this subject matter in literature. Western culture would probably still view it as being unjustified, but they ought to understand different concepts of evil in other cultures. People of a different culture tend to view other cultures as being totally wrong and then label it negatively. Perhaps research in criminal justice in literature would contribute to a better understanding of it.

In Silko's novel *Ceremony*, a murder was not committed, but there would have been a killing if the character Tayo did not stop himself. In the novel, Tayo was going to kill Emo who was a witch, but Tayo stopped himself because that is what the witchery wanted him to do. This novel gives some explanation of what witchery is like in the Native American culture. Tayo did not see Emo, Pinkie, and Leroy, other characters, as men but as destroyers or witches.

Briefly, in my own words, Tayo, who was a prisoner of the Japanese during World War II and returns home to the Laguna Reservation, has been in a V A Hospital in Los Angeles, because he has nightmares. He returns home, still sick. He no longer fits in with the other veterans, though, who try to get rid of their alienation by drinking. He goes to a Navajo medicine man named Betonie who leads him back to Indian traditions and reminds him of the stories of evil and witchcraft. At the end of the novel, Tayo is well again after experiencing a Navajo sandpainting ceremony and learning to love again.

In Silko's words, Tayo on a road out in the desert sees the witches. He does not know who it could be so he climbs up some boulders and hides behind them. One of the characters, Emo, has told people that Tayo is going crazy and is living in a cave up in the mountains and thinks that he is still fighting the Japanese.

Tayo sees that it is a car; the car stops and someone gets out

of it and raises the hood. There's a fire burning and then he could recognize it was Emo, Pinkie, and Leroy, the vets. He begins to wonder where Harley was at. All of them were drinking buddies. The three of them had been drinking and were now passing around a wine bottle.

Behind the boulders, he looked down at them, thinking about witchery. He sees the three of them as destroyers, such as the witches in those old stories He thinks about how "...the witchery would be at work all night so that the people would see only the losses—the land and the lives lost—since the whites came; the witchery would work so that the people would be fooled into blaming only the whites and not the witchery. It would work to make the people forget the stories of the creation and continuation of the five worlds; the old priests would be afraid too, and cling to ritual without making new ceremonies as they always had before, the way they still made new Buffalo Dance songs each year" (Silko 249).

He then heard a scream; it was Harley. The three of them dragged him out of the car trunk and then started to throw his clothes into the fire. They took Harley and hung him from a fence and started to hurt him. They were making him scream so that Tayo would be able to hear him. Tayo reached for a screwdriver he had in his jacket. He knew what the destroyers were doing. What they were doing to Harley was intended for him. Harley had failed them, and now the destroyers had turned on him. Harley was supposed to bring Tayo to them.

In Silko's words, Tayo was gripping the screwdriver and getting ready to go down to stop them. He wanted to stop the destroyers because of all the suffering they caused. He was thinking that he would be able to kill Emo because he was drunk and that the other two were also drunk and would not be able to move as fast as he. As he was about to kill Emo, he moved back behind the boulders. He stopped himself because the witchery wanted him to kill Emo. If he would have killed Emo, "Their deadly ritual for the autumn solstice would have

been completed by him. He would have been another victim, a drunk Indian war veteran settling an old feud, and the Army doctors would say that the indications of this end had been there all along, since his release from the mental ward at the Veteran's Hospital in Los Angeles. The white people would shake their heads, more proud than sad that it took a white man to survive in their world and that these Indians couldn't seem to make it. At home the people would blame the liquor, the Army, and the war, but the blame on the whites would never match the vehemence the people would keep in their own bellies, reserving the greatest bitterness and blame for themselves, for one of themselves they could not save" (Silko 253). When he realized it was witchery wanting him to kill, he went back behind the boulders to hide and watched them put Harley's body back into the trunk and leave. Tayo stopped himself because he recognized that witchery wanted to use him to kill. If he hadn't stopped himself and had killed Emo, everyone else, not witchery, would have been blamed.

By examining these novels and short stories and focusing on particular literary scenes, I hope I have raised some important questions concerning justification and self-defense in Native American literature. There needs to be research done on this subject. I have included particular scenes from the novels so that others could have their own interpretations and arrive at their own conclusions. Hopefully this essay will contribute beneficially to research in criminal justice in Native American literature to develop a better understanding of it. I learned a different way of looking at Native American literature and how to apply criminal justice to it.

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Gaa-naadamaageyaan Gaa-ozhibii'ang

EARL NYHOLM

Gii-kwiiwizensiwiyaan mikwendamaan ganawaabamagwaa ingiw indinawemaaganag i'iw isa ezhichigewaad. Anooj igo gii-pi-izhichigewag ge-izhi-mino-bimaadiziwaad. Mii apane ko ingiw enda-ginzhizhawiziwaad i'iw isa wezhitoowaad igo.

Naaningim iko gii-pi-odishiwewag imaa endaayaang, waasa wenjiiwaad. Mii sa wedi wiishkonsing keyaa gaa-pionjiiwaad. Mii sa wedi miishigamiing gaa-tazhi-nitaawigiyaan niin, omaapii dash sa noongom minisootaang ingii-pi-daniz.

Ingoding dash igo naana'idaa bezhig gekaad indinawemaagan gii-pi-odishiwe, 'bwaaziwanishinaabewid', mii gaa-izhi-inenimag a'aw akiwenziiyiban. Aapiji sa go wawiinge gii-anishinaabewaadizi a'aw. Igo gayewiin a'aw gii-nitaawiigwaasijiimaanike.

Aa, ingoding dash ezhi-dazhiikang i'iw jiimaan maa sa biindig imaa agawaatechiganing, o'ow dash ezhi-izhid, "Haa noozis, giishpin sa naa giin bi-naadamawisiwan, gaawiin igo indaa-de-giizhitaasiin."

Mii dash iwapii azhigwa gwayak imaa gii-ni-gagwejigikendamaan gayeniin ji-ozhitooyaan i'iw anishinaabe-jiimaan. Geyaabi dash noongom endaso-niibin indoozhitoon i'iw wiigwaasijiimaan ezhinikaadeg.

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Nuts To State Hospitals

JOSEPH R. JOURDAIN

October twelfth, or was it the thirteenth? At least, for sure, it was 1976. They told me at the hospital that I'd accomplished something but it wasn't quite clear just what that something was; at any rate, they were sending me back to what I'd tried so hard to escape. I had no profound thoughts or words for my therapy group. Usually, those leaving us grabbed the occasion to expound on past experiences and their bright prospects for the future through open, enlightened eyes. They'd profusely thank the institution, the counselors, close friends, and the therapy sessions that had bestowed such benevolence, kindness, and patience to their well-being.

I had nothing to say. Nothing to be thankful about. No friends. I wasn't enlightened, just scared. All I knew was that my fears and weaknesses were taking me somewhere else and I was following. My counselor hung his head at the inarticulate display - maybe he's watching the cat that got my tongue, I thought. He shook his head slightly, negatively, when he heard I could try my best. That's all I said. But this nice guy, this fellow who spent his time for others, shook his head. It took longer, than my speech had, to sign my name on the discharge papers; then, it was out the door, wait for a bus, and leave for some strange town. It was near Bemidji, they told me, but it was impossible to think ahead. I could only remember what I had just gone through.

The middle of August, the same year, two months earlier. I walked toward myself in the glass of the big double doors at the state hospital. A year ago, it somehow occurred to me, was

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when I'd first made useless use of these facilities, and I giggled uncertainly, crazily. Passing myself at the doors, I stepped inside and walked to the admissions desk importantly. The lobby, it seemed, had an odor, defying description to others, but it was hard to imagine how others couldn't define a mental smell about the place. It was pervasive, strange, yet familiar. The smell was lonely, needed taking care of, somehow it reminded me of young ones, diapers, and baby innocence.

Admissions made slow work of me; but, they encountered little or no trouble, even in the condition I was in. The psychologist, or whatever he was, told me, later, later we'd talk, and that felt impressive, like preferential treatment extended to some dignitary. Always, they talked with everyone coming in. Instead, they hurried me upstairs to shower, introduced my new quarters, and encouraged me to try for a good night's sleep.

Morning, and I could hardly move, so sick even my hair hurt. Top shelf Canadian Club is as unkind to the hangover as is cheap wine, and the ninety-seven-dollar-a-case version was why I was here. It came to me, clarified with misery, that this place was a detox center. Gone were the feelings of magnanimity and self-importance of the previous evening; no, not gone, I recalled enough to add misery to an already pitiful situation. Mercifully, they let me suffer alone, for company was the last thing I needed - nobody had to see me like this. A kindly nurse took my vitals because they had to monitor my progress, if progress is possible at such a time. They gave me pills when I needed a drink, they fed me when a drink would've sufficed, and they made me listen to a lecture from some big book or other when an animated barroom discussion would have been much more interesting. When I got to feeling better, the psychologist, or psychiatrist, had his talk with me. It turned out to be a difficult session, for he made no attempt to understand the difference between suicidal and just wanting to not live. The result was that I was given medication to mellow out my

feelings. I never had cared about pills, so what they gave me is still a mystery. Normal people, they said, left detox after three days for regular chemical dependency treatment, and they made it clear I didn't fit that category. Twenty-one days they kept me, twenty-one days of daze, zombie-like, happier-than-most, but at-last-uncaring days. It was all pretty good until some patients, envious of my perpetual happiness, began to make nasty remarks, then I wanted out. The doctors agreed.

I moved upstairs with the others to take the cure. The first free time available, I took a stroll around, just for the enjoyment and to see what was what. A brochure said _____ State Hospital housed approximately 460 patients, of which 130 were chemically dependent. The hospital's mission, it turned out, was to restore, with special services, the functional level of the incompetents to the optimum; then, treatment done, they could be returned to society. It puzzled me, to note by the figures, that the hospital released more patients (from CD) than they admitted. In fact, it provoked scary speculation in me.

The cure, I found, turned out not to be a cure, and that disappointed quite a few of us. Why waste time and money telling me it's ultimately my choice whether to drink or not? I knew that. Eventually, information began to sink in. Once an alcoholic, always an alcoholic; at first, I felt good about that, my future looked certain, then it became apparent they meant something else, the only problem was, I wasn't alcoholic. A drunk maybe, but no more. Research was being done to determine if Indians had a predisposition to drink. Good, Mr. Counselor, then take the responsibility for your people's pushing of firewater on Indians to make easier the taking of what little they had. They created a new genetic trait in us. Don't say the problem is ours. Drink may be a problem of mine, but it's not our Problem. Look, Buddy, we spend millions of dollars trying to sober up Indians. If money is your beef, send Indians to their spiritual leaders, all it does is make things culturally appropriate and the cost isn't prohibitive - a little tobacco and

a small gift. No, I didn't go there because they said your way was better, and because you couldn't put a price on sobriety. No, you can't. But, you can. Anger. Resentment. Honesty. Fear. Rationalizing. More information, more confusion. You recognize feelings in others because those feelings are in yourself, and right now I see you're angry. Really, Counselor, and what are you angry about? Nothing, dammit, it's you who's angry. Fine, now we're both upset. Intellectuals, they call us. We think everything out, it's tougher for us to feel; not only that, but it's harder to sober up a thinker. Move me to the dummy group. I cry a little, for effect. You'd cry too, if you lost a loved one. You're blaming yourself. Why? Did I ask for her death? Acceptance. Sure, but I'm still sad. There are twelve steps to sobriety. Why not just one - quit? Keep it simple, Stupid. Alcoholism - nothing to be ashamed of, squirrels play with their nuts in public. Hi, my name is Bob, and I'm a nut. They give me no chance for recovery, and I lament normalcy. Talk and more talk. Groups talk incessantly about their feelings, I shy away, it would drive me batty not knowing what I talked about, but some things do make a little sense. Compulsion, now there's a good, useful word. Maybe they're on to something there. If you don't drink, you won't get drunk. My deceased grandmother could tell you that. She die from drinking? Never touched a drop. Inventory, you have to do a personal inventory, hurry, you have only three days till we have to cut you loose. I fake it, like one fakes first confession. I tell the minister, though, that I'm faking it seriously, and he understands. Three days later, they discharge me.

The bus taking me, to an uncertain future, was twenty minutes late. I'd thought about myself and the State hospital - was there really something wrong with me, and had the hospital done a good enough job? - and now, maybe, was the time to think ahead a little. Across the road, and down a couple blocks, familiar lights invited. A Hamm's beer sign that prom-

ised more inside; but, it was too early to give in to old habits. The depot happened to be in a restaurant, so I stepped inside to order a cup of coffee.

The coffee was good, not institutionalized, so I drank it hurriedly and called for another. Soon, the bus would come, and I'd be on my way to a halfway house, but there was still indecision as to what I should plan on doing. Hopefully, no more trips to the looney bin. Bus coming, someone said, and I rose to pay for my coffee. Opening the skinny billfold I kept in hiding, I sneaked out a dollar for what I owed. A picture smiled at me from the billfold, and I suddenly felt choked up, like when something beautiful happens. Four small, brown faces beamed at me: my children, aged two to six.

Stepping outside, I knew what I'd do. Try, find a job, get me a place, send for the little ones. Real soon I'd make a trip to see them. As the bus pulled in, I glanced around one last time, and noticed my reflection in the restaurant's glass doors. Was I different? Did I imagine I felt different? Turning, I walked away from myself.

The Beet Queen

By Louise Erdrich. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1986. 338 pp.

The Beet Queen is Louise Erdrich's second novel. (Her first novel, *Love Medicine*, won the National Book Critics Circle Award for fiction in 1984.) Erdrich's prose is dazzling and sleek. Each sentence has been carefully wrought, pared lean and then polished. I call this "poet's prose," and many of Erdrich's descriptions in *The Beet Queen* are right on target. Mary, as the newly arrived waif, describes her aunt Fritzie's butcher shop and residence:

I smelled the air, pepper and warm from the sausage-makers. I heard the rhythmical whine of meat saws, slicers, the rippling beat of fans. Aunt Fritzie was smoking her sharp Viceroys in the bathroom. Uncle Pete was outside feeding the big white German Shepherd that was kept in the shop at night to guard the canvas bags of money.

Erdrich's prose is an outgrowth of academic, post-modern, so-called experimental influences. The idea is to "set language free," to allow words to interact like magic chemicals in a word sorcerer's pristine laboratory, where a word and its possible relationships with other words may be seen "as they really are, in and of themselves" without the tiresome interference of any historical, political or cultural connections the words may have had in the past. Any characters or plot are imagined within a world that answers only to "itself," the inner created world of the novel or poem itself. Self-referential writing has an ethereal clarity and shimmering beauty because no history or politics intrudes to muddy the well of pure necessity contained within language itself.

Post-modern, self-referential writing reflects the isolation

Leslie Silko - Author of *Ceremony* and *Storyteller*

and alienation of the individual who shares nothing in common with other human beings but language and its hygienic grammatical mechanisms. Self-referential writing is light-years away from shared or communal experience that underlies oral narrative and modern fiction. Thus it is interesting to see how effectively the post-modern style of fiction functions in a family saga, rife with complexities of the heart, a saga that races back and forth from 1932 to 1972, from city to small white town to Indian reservation. Can this stylish post-modern prose refer itself to any world beyond?

The Beet Queen works best when Erdrich is exploring the depths of the subconscious, where her characters dream, hallucinate, fantasize and turn ever inward on themselves. Occasionally there is a confusing similarity in the imagery used to evoke the subconscious of characters who are supposed to be drastically different from one another. But for the most part, this is the level on which Erdrich's prose works best. So long as Erdrich writes about her characters' tenacious involvement with one another, their huge strange passions that coalesce into bisexuality, incest and love triangles, *The Beet Queen* is quite effective.

But then Erdrich leaves her element and tries to place her characters and action in places and points in history that are loaded with "referential" significance. Good fiction need not be factual, but it doesn't obscure basic truth. In Erdrich's hands, the rural North Dakota of Indian-hating, queer-baiting white farmers, of the Depression, becomes magically transformed. Or maybe "transported." Rural New Hampshire seems a far more probable location for The Beet Queen and its characters, white and Indian, straight and gay.

What Erdrich, who is half-Indian and grew up in North Dakota, attempts to pass off as North Dakota may be the only North Dakota she knows. But hers is an oddly rarified place in which the individual's own psyche, not racism or poverty, accounts for all conflict and tension. In this pristine world all

misery, suffering, and loss are self-generated, just as conservative Republicans have been telling us for years.

Although I read the novel three times, I am still not sure which characters are of Indian ancestry except for Celestine, who is half-Indian, and her half-brother, Russell, who is full-blood. Apparently Mary is part Indian, but I never figured out whether her glamorous irresponsible mother, Adelaide, was part Indian or whether it was Mary's father (who Adelaide claims is responsible for Mary's "stringy black hair"). Mary's brother Karl might be part Indian, too, but Adelaide claims the dead banker who kept them is Karl's father. In which case, does Karl get his possibly Indian looks from Adelaide?

You'd think that as the novel unfolded, who's who would become clear. After all, in 1932 in a small North Dakota town near an Indian reservation, whether one was white, Indian or part Indian mattered a hell of a lot. The fact is, it still matters. In Erdrich's North Dakota, the deepest levels of the human consciousness appear untouched by racism or bigotry. Though Mary, Karl and their infant brother are abandoned in a devastating way, never once do they wonder if being part Indian might have contributed to their abandonment. The rivalry and jealousy between Mary and her slender blond cousin, Sita, are portrayed as fierce, and Sita appears envious and shallow. But even when Mary "steals" Celestine from Sita, Sita's expressions of bitterness and hurt are curiously free of racial slurs we might expect from a high school-age girl obsessed with appearance, acceptance and status. The Sita that Erdrich shows seems unlikely to have had anything to do with someone as different as Celestine, let alone be best friends with her. Certainly not in 1932 in a small North Dakota town. After all, the Wounded Knee Massacre is only 42 years and 400 miles south of Sita and the others in Erdrich's novel.

Erdrich delves into the psyche of Celestine and Mary, and while they are not ordinary young women, still they have no consciousness (neither does Erdrich) of how their Indian ances-

try in a white town may be related to their feeling of separateness and difference from the others.

The issue of Indian ancestry might recede except Erdrich makes much of juxtaposing Mary's stolid dark looks and Celestine's towering half-breed stature with the blond, willowy "beauty" of Sita. Erdrich swallows white sexist standards of beauty rather than challenging them. Slender and blond, Sita is the beauty, but Erdrich trots out the old cliche in which the dark, ugly girls are nicer, smarter and work harder. Mary buys and wears hideously ugly clothing in loud colors, and Erdrich implies this propensity to violate fashion codes belies Mary's Indian ancestry.

The Beet Queen (sic) is Wallacette or Dot, as she is called, the result of one night of passion between Celestine and Karl, Mary's bisexual, wandering brother. Erdrich emphasizes the incongruity of Dot's stocky dark figure in a floor-length formal and high heels as Dot competes with the other contestants, "all and tanned orange from laying on their garage roofs smeared with iodined baby oil." The implications and the humor are clear: Dot doesn't fit in. Dot is as incongruous as the Beet Queen as Mary, Celestine and Wallace, a white homosexual, are as citizens in this small North Dakota town.

Erdrich never ventures near the reservation. The reservation is where, for most of the novel, Erdrich keeps Russell, Celestine's half-brother, a full-blooded Chippewa. What Russell does, who Russell visits and how Russell feels about moving back and forth between the white town and the Indian reservation are a mystery. The one time Erdrich shows us Russell's interior, his thoughts and feelings are flat and literal, focused only on the moment at hand.

Compared to the lush, sensuous chaoric inner worlds of characters like Karl and Mary and Celestine, Russell might be the stereotype of "primitive" man mercifully focused on what is concrete, here and how (sic), not like the other characters whose white blood pulses with abstract mental activity—

fantasy, desire and willfulness. Because Erdrich can't find much to put inside Russell, she forces him to spend much of the novel on the reservation. Strangely, Celestine never visits the reservation or ever even thinks about her elder Chippewa half-sisters who raised her. But most strange of all, after Mary and Celestine take over Aunt Fritzie's business, not one person from the reservation, not even one Indian cousin, ever steps through the door of the butcher shop.

Erdrich makes much of Russell's war wounds, which give him hero status. But we don't have a clue to what Russell feels about all the blood and bone he's lost defending a government and people who will always exclude him. We never know what reasons or feelings made Russell volunteer for two foreign wars. In the entire 338 pages, only once is any bitterness over racism ever expressed: On page 70, Mary relates that war hero Russell was offered a bank-clerk job in Argus "even though he was an Indian."

The Beet Queen is a strange artifact, an eloquent example of the political climate in America in 1986. It belongs on the shelf next to the latest report from the United States Civil Rights Commission, which says black men have made tremendous gains in employment and salary. This is the same shelf that holds the *Collected Thoughts of Edwin Meese on First Amendment Rights* and Grimm's *Fairy Tales.*

REVIEW

Native American Dissolve

GERALD VIZENOR

Ronald Reagan said, "Maybe we made a mistake in trying to maintain Indian cultures. Maybe we should not have humored them in wanting to stay in that kind of primitive lifestyle."

The former president must have been talking about Indians in the movies in Moscow. Many of his friends played Indians on screen. Maybe he made a mistake in trying to maintain a movie culture; he should not have humored his friends in western films.

Jeff Chandler, for instance, played Cochise in *Broken Arrow;* Rock Hudson became a chief in *Taza, Son of Cochise;* and Audrey Hepburn pretended to be a Kiowa girl raised by whites in *The Unforgiven.* Yul Brynner, Tony Curtis, Virginia Mayo, Debra Paget, Robert Wagner, and hundreds of other actors pretended to be Indians in feature films.

In *Making the Movies,* published in 1915, Ernest Alfred Dench wrote that white actors were the past masters in tribal roles, "for they have made a complete study of Indian life, and by clever makeup they are hard to tell from real Redskins. They take leading parts, for which Indians are seldom adaptable. To act as an Indian is the easiest thing possible."

Reagan inherited his view of Indians from photographs and earlier motion pictures; real tribal cultures were lost to racism on a righteous frontier, and then the movies invented savagism to explain civilization.

The insidious inventions of Indians in the movies abolished

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the comic nature and rich diversities of real tribal cultures. Crows were turned into Sioux who were concocted as Mandan in *A Man Called Horse,* and then saved by an Englishman.

In *Pow Wow Highway,* a Chicano pretends to be a macho Cheyenne, and no one is saved but romantic liberals; this recent movie is burdened with representations, as if what is tribal must be told in feathers, emblems, and tragic opposites, rather than comic subtleties. Philbert, for instance, the fat boy in a junk car who dreams about war ponies, offers a chocolate bar to the Great Spirit.

Reagan was right, a mistake was made, and as a result white novelists and movie makers find audiences eager to consume their fantasies of tribal cultures.

Ruth Beebe Hill made a small fortune with her novel *Hanta Yo;* she invented a tribe, a religion, and an arcane language that she attributed to the Dakota. When tribal healers and scholars were critical of her facts, she said they were touched by civilization and uninformed. Such rubbish captured an audience, the novel was a great success, and ABC Television bought the movie rights.

The Mystic Warrior, a five-hour "novel for television" was one more tragic and humorless invention of a tribal culture. Ahbleza, the precious buckskin hero in this melodrama, appeared on a white horse, a dubious tribal redeemer in a ten-million dollar variation of that tired and racist opposition, savagism and civilization.

"This film is for a secular audience," said the director Richard Heffron, but the film was promoted as an observance of the sacred; indeed, the fantastic, and he was told that traditional tribal people never "have eye contact, they never touch, and do not carry on conversations" like white people.

Vine Deloria, author of *God is Red,* doubts that the "Indian image will be any better a century from now....The whites are sincere but they are only sincere about what they are interested

in, not about Indians about whom they know very little. They get exceedingly angry if you try to tell them the truth and will only reject you and keep searching until they find the Indian of their fantasies."

REVIEW

No Resting Place

By William Humphrey. Delacorte/Seymour Lawrence, 1989. 249 pp.

William Humphrey's compelling new novel is a reader's dilemma. In the polished prose of a veteran fiction writer, Humphrey recreates a most repelling story, one of the saddest in American history: the forced removal of the Cherokee nation from Georgia to Texas.

Oh dear, you might think here, an Indian historical novel and a sad one besides.

Let me assure you that Humphrey's novel is more uplifting than it is sad.

No Resting Place, set mainly in the 1830's, tells the story of Amos Ferguson, a blond-haired Cherokee boy. Amos survives, even thrives, by his wit and by his dual lives. "When school was in session, on weekdays, he awoke as Amos Ferguson, and put on shoes; on Saturday he awoke as Noquisi and put on moccasins. The proportion of six days to one just about corresponded with the mixture of his bloods." Amos/Noquisi is the son of a physician in a prosperous, well-read family in Georgia. But he is Cherokee at heart, and not without a sense of humor. As Cherokee houses and land are increasingly appropriated by whites, Noquisi says, "Our Cherokee blood must be very strong blood. It takes so little of it to make one of us."

Nothing new so far, you think. The displacement of Indians, the tide of white settlers; hasn't this been covered by writers from James Fenimore Cooper through Larry McMurtry?

Yes, but Humphrey does it as well or better.

His narrative begins in the present with Amos Ferguson

Will Weaver - Author of *Gravestone Made of Wheat* and *Red Earth, White Earth*

Smith IV, and hopscotches backward through time to the first Amos, Amos/Noquisi. Along the way, Humphrey presents more than a little gritty southwestern history, particularly of Texas, the author's home state. Sam Houston, for example, was adopted in the Cherokee nation as a youth, became governor of Tennessee, after that became a drunkard who renounced his U.S. citizenship and spoke only Cherokee, and later still a hero in the wars with Mexico.

But the real story of *No Resting Place* belongs to Amos/Noquisi and his mentor and friend, the Rev. Malcolm Mackenzie. Mackenzie has sailed from Scotland to America to "save the Indians." His first pastoral duty is the baptism of Amos/Noquisi. On a blazing hot afternoon Amos/Noquisi, still bearing the "scratching" scars of an Indian rite of passage, appears unannounced at Mackenzie's doorstep. His purpose? To be baptized. To Mackenzie, the young Indian's boy's logic is unsettlingly clear: Amos/Noquisi has two bloods, two names, so why not two religions?

The stories of Amos and the reverend remain entwined throughout the narrative. Amos/Noquisi becomes Mackenzie's interpreter and friend and the spiritual mirror by which Mackenzie may examine his own faith. Humphrey links their stories in a fresh, forward-rolling narrative structure. Twists and turns with chronology keep this long-march book from becoming a long road, but Humphrey's time travels are not without risk. Amos, from his multiple lives and his many names, at times becomes elusive, a chameleon in the dust and heat and changing chronology of this story. It is Mackenzie who is the most vividly drawn character in this book, and who always moves the story forward.

On the Trail of Tears the reverend ministers publicly to the sick and dying, and prays privately "for Aaron's rod for a day. Had he had it he would have stretched it over the waters of Georgia and turned them to blood ... smitten the ground and brought on plagues of frogs, lice, flies, all-devouring locusts,

sores and boils upon the [white] people, a murrain on their herds, hailstones and whirlwinds and darkness that might be felt." Mackenzie's struggles with faith and doubt take on Dostoevskian proportions.

Amos/Noquisi, in the end, suffers the times better than Mackenzie. On the long march he becomes indispensable, the doctor for both soldiers and Indians alike, and the most well known of the survivors. Mackenzie's life, forever colored by the long march, takes on a darker hue.

As a novel, *No Resting Place* is flawed by a rather rapid conclusion and a somewhat muddled beginning. In the early pages Humphrey launches too many metaphors at the reader — roses, water, an eighth grade class' reenactment of the Battle of the Alamo — and too many dates as well. He does not find his rhythm until page 20, when we meet Mackenzie and Amos/Noquisi.

But in the end, *No Resting Place* is a fine achievement. It is a novel that gathers strength and grace in proportion to the hardships endured by its characters. It is a novel valuable both for its history and its fiction. It is a novel with a spirit larger than the sum of its pages.

Storyteller.

By Leslie Silko. Seaver Books. New York, 1981. 278 pages.

A Gravestone Made of Wheat.

By Will Weaver. Simon and Schuster, 1989. 205 pages.

Although the death and burial of a loved one is the central theme in a story from *Storyteller*, "The Man to Send Rain Clouds," by Leslie Silko and a story "A Gravestone Made of Wheat," in *A Gravestone Made of Wheat* by Will Weaver, both stories describe this natural phenomena from two very different cultural perspectives. Silko writes from an American Indian perspective that emphasizes the spiritual aspects of death and burial. Weaver, on the other hand, portrays an Anglo-American perspective which focuses more on personal grief and loss. These two cultural world views account for the contrast of the two stories. The two stories will be compared and contrasted on the basis of their death theme, length, and concreteness.

Weaver's portrayal of death and burial leaves one feeling as if death is a definitive end to life and that burial is a somewhat empty achievement, while Silko's story states quite simply that life is a circle and death is a part of that circle. In "A Gravestone Made of Wheat," the author opens with, "You can't bury your wife here on the farm...." This antagonism effectively sets an atmosphere that coupled with a sense of loss deepens Olaf's grief and intensifies his feelings of loneliness and separateness which eventually makes him bitter and further isolates him from the *Creator*. In contrast Silko starts her narrative with "They" which suggests community, and although death removes a physical presence it is seen as perpetu-

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ating life. Weaver's portrayal shows death as causing a "gray fuzz of loss of grief" requiring a major effort to "order thoughts" which deepen the sense of personal devastation. Contrasting this with "The Man to Send Rain Clouds" is the idea in the narrative that death is inevitable and therefore understandable and natural.

The length of the two stories is another interesting contrast. Weaver's story is easily three to four times as long as Silko's. Weaver uses it effectively allowing the reader insight into the negative social atmosphere in which the main character and his wife started their relationship. This somewhat explains Olaf's need to keep the funeral and burial a "family matter" for Torviks only. The author gives a good description of Olaf's thinking where he convinces himself that his wife is only real to those who knew and loved her. In a way one can feel or experience his isolation. This is really sad. He should have at least been glad that his wife did not have to endure the petty and hurtful treatment any longer.

Weaver's story does not show a spirituality or centeredness; rather it unwittingly shows self pity. Silko in a much shorter story deals primarily with the spiritual concept that says death is a transition from one phase of life's journey to the next. The feather, paint and use of the holy water in the death scene of Silko's story are descriptions of different aspects of this spiritual belief and carry important ritual meanings. If one does not comprehend the significance of this belief or understand the ritual symbolism described, the story might appear to be nondescriptive, very general and meaningless. If this is the case, the beauty of Silko's spiritual story might be missed altogether.

Although both stories differ in length and in cultural perspective they are very concrete and give strong and vivid descriptions. Silko starts out in the natural setting of a southwestern arroyo, where they find the old man dead. She describes closely the scenery, features of the deceased and the ritual. Her

characters then journeyed to the village, and our attention is directed to the setting, clothing, fixtures and furnishings of the dwellings, and eventually return to the burial scene. Weaver's images are as equally real. The main difference is that these images come from within Olaf's mind, such as horses, letters, earth, geese, and the train that brings his new wife to Minnesota. Additionally, we experience his emotional feelings, and the affects of those feelings associated with death. Weaver's descriptions come from within the individual's mind, whereas, Silko's descriptions cover a broader cultural picture.

The two stories share a common theme, death, and the protagonists face similar obstacles. However, they are very distinct both culturally and spiritually. "The Man to Send Rain Clouds" depicts the spirituality of an Indian community dealing with death. It shows the meaning and importance of traditional ceremony to the family of the deceased. "A Gravestone Made of Wheat" deals with the individual perspective, loneliness, isolation and self pity. After the burial, Silko's characters felt good and happy because now the old man could send them rain "for sure", which symbolizes life, while Olaf felt "the earth rising up to meet his boots as if he were moving into some strange room ..." Silko gives a strong portrayal of spiritual centeredness. Weaver gives a strong portrayal of emotion from an Anglo-American perspective. These two stories effectively show the vast differences between the two cultures.

Marxism and Native Americans.

by Churchhill, Ward ed. Boston: South End Press, 1983.

As Ward Churchill points out (e.g., p. 190), the primary guiding question of this book is whether or not Marxism, viewed as theory, worldview, and orientation in political activism, has anything to offer Native North Americans who are working to free their people from U.S. (and Canadian) imperialism. Framed in this way, such a theme already presupposes a non-assimilationist perspective which most often these days would be labeled "radical." The main issue dealt with in the book, then, is whether the "radicalism" traditionally proposed by Marxists is of a more helpful, or more harmful sort in relation to the "radicalism" of Indians who argue, for example, that the United States government abide by its treaties with the indigenous nations, that reservation land be free from further degradation by profit-hungry energy companies, and that the European culture of industrialization and disconnectedness with the rest of the natural world is itself the fundamental problem. One of the advantages of the structure of this text is that it is an anthology, so the reader is confronted with many different voices, each speaking to this general theme from a unique vantage point. Specifically, the book is comprised of ten different essays, plus an Introduction by Churchill himself, and a Preface by Winona Laduke. Half the authors (the non-Indians) in one way or another argue that Marxism can be a useful resource in Native Americans' struggles for change, and the other half (all Indian authors) provide a number of very compelling reasons for their conclusion that pessimism is the more justified position on this issue.

This is a very thought-provoking book on a subject about

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which still too little has been written, although of course the benefits from working through a text like this will vary somewhat depending on the socio-cultural worldview of the reader. In my own case, as one whose heritage is European and who also still finds the Marxist analysis of many contemporary human problems a very useful one, this anthology of writings provided a valuable eye-opening experience. Many people who affiliate themselves with a Marxist perspective have been uneasy over the years regarding the understanding (or the lack thereof) of native peoples found in traditional Marxian theory, and often have been unsure as to how to persuasively address what emerge as both conflicts of value and conflicts of anthropological fact for anyone who utilizes this theoretical approach *and* who believes that indigenous cultures have much to teach members of the dominant European culture. The essays collected here all helped me in various ways to clarify my own thinking on this issue (which is *not* to say that I have figured out definitive answers to the relevant questions), and in light of the relatively scant attention still paid by most North American Marxists to problems directly affecting Native Americans, in my estimation they too could benefit similarly from a serious reading of this text.

Most of the essays intentionally or unintentionally brought into sharper focus some of the ethnocentric (i.e., Eurocentric) limitations of classical Marxism, both as its principles were originally formulated (specifically, in the writings of Marx and Engels themselves) and as it is often articulated today. Since all human thought is historically and socially situated, and thus all thinkers are susceptible to ethnocentrism, this sort of critique of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Mao, and other influential figures in the tradition by itself shouldn't be too surprising or controversial. As is also brought to light, however, a problem does arise when Marxist theory, as a product of a particular European context, is treated as an all-encompassing, fixed, self-contained, "closed system," allegedly capable of omniscience. Clearly this has

been a tendency in the communist movement in the past hundred years or so, and it has reinforced a widespread unwillingness amongst Marxists to truly listen, with "open ears" and an "open mind," to native peoples' analyses of their own reality in their own terms.

On the other hand, many of the authors included in this text also identified an important commonality between Marxism and the Native American perspective with reference to the critique of capitalism and its especially destructive modern imperialist dimensions. Regarding the actual struggle to bring about significant positive change in the world generally and for Native Americans specifically, the reader is able to discover some agreement that working against the attitudes, practices, and effects that constitute North American capitalism is one common focus that can be productively pursued. Along similar lines, these collected essays point to the opportunity for both of these dramatically different viewpoints to nonetheless offer something of value to each other. For example, the critical analyses provided by Marxists of the internal workings of the international capitalist "system," of the role national governments play in such a system, and of the power of ideological indoctrination in the dominant North American culture, could be very useful to Indians as they work to improve their life-conditions in the face of such forces. On the other side, the Native American critique of industrialism generally (not just the predominant capitalist version, but also the version found in socialist nation-states), as well as of the accompanying traditionally anthropocentric beliefs about what constitutes "development" and "progress," must be taken seriously, in my judgment, by anyone who believes (as I do) that Marxism should be used as an open-ended theoretical framework, subject to revision and modification in correspondence with objective changes in the actual world, and *not* capable of comprehending *all* of reality within itself. As a number of the authors in the text pointed out, this also would be more in

accordance with how Marx and Engels themselves viewed their own theories.

The editor of *Marxism and Native Americans,* who presents himself as very skeptical about the possibility of Marxist theory having anything to offer Native Americans (given its European origins), beyond the one common focus already identified, still does call for more dialogue between adherents of these two worldviews. Such a dialogue primarily would amount to an inter-cultural exchange, but would *not* be guided by the attempt to arrive at any kind of single, comprehensive, unified vision of reality (which usually has been the goal of theorizing in the European intellectual tradition), since such attempts more often than not involve subsuming one perspective "under" the other. Beyond the possibilities of theoretical interchange, Churchill and some of the other Indian authors point to the need for *active* support by the North American Left (Marxist and otherwise) of the various ongoing organized actions and projects undertaken by Native American groups in different locations to stop the destruction of their peoples' lives, their culture, and the environment. Again, these writers make it clear that such support and localized "solidarity" in action cannot entail co-optation, but must remain grounded in mutual respect and the affirmation of diversity of needs and of cultural reality-construction. I think contemporary Marxists can learn a valuable lesson on this subject from Native Americans who, according to Vine Deloria Jr., "...reject a universal concept of brotherhood in favor of respectful treatment of human beings with whom they have contact. It is not necessary, they argue, that crows should be eagles" (136).

Although no one book can deal with all the relevant questions on a topic like this, much less formulate all the answers to those questions, this anthology of writings on the relationship Marxist theory can and/or should have to issues of concern for the indigenous peoples of North America has gone a long way in shedding some much-needed light on the subject. It is to be

hoped that an excellent text of this sort will precipitate a great deal more written work in this area, or at least a great deal more serious reflection by all those who believe in the need for radical socio-economic, cultural, and psychological change on this continent.

REVIEW

The Retention of American Indian Students: A Preliminary Literature Review

The Bemidji State University Minority University Student Retention Committee in meeting its charge to review the data which specifically addresses the minority student, in our case the American Indian student, has compiled a bibliography attached to its set of recommendations. The character of this literature is largely regional; only one primary material document is of national scope, namely Patricia Porter McNamara's *American Indians in Higher Education*. This monograph is the compilation of American Indian data included in Alexander Astin's *Minorities in Higher Education* (not listed in the bibliography).

Studies using primary data include materials from North Dakota, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. Most items in the bibliography using primary data have to do with dropouts (Klassen 1980) (Jeanotte 1981) (Gillespie 1982) (McNamara 1982) (Litzau 1984). Two studies focus on retention and persistence, Wilson (1983) surveys attitudes and data on persisters in the University of Wisconsin system, and Boates (1987) considers internal retention factors. The other indirect study, vis-a-vis dropouts, (Novack 1982) focuses on student service providers.

Secondary sources (Brown 1980) (Otis 1980) (Oppelt nd) (Cage 1989) (Mitgang 1989); conceptual models (Beaulieu 1987) (THE MADISON PLAN 1988) (AISES 1988) (ACE 1989) (Fagin 1989) (Fleming 1989); internal reports, minutes, and correspondence (Glennen 1988) (Hauser 1988) (Austad 1988) (Tangborn 1988) (BSU-AIAC 1988) (BSU-AIAC 1989) (BSU 1989) (MSUS

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1989); and anecdotal news or feature articles (Gardner 1988) (Johnson nd) (Giago 1988-89) make up the balance of the documents.

PRIMARY STUDIES

Brewton Berry in *American Indians in Higher Education: A Review of the Literature* (1968) reports finding only 21 references on the subject. The national report *Indian Education: A National Tragedy - A National Challenge* (U.S. Senate, 1968) gives only brief mention of the subject. The paucity of literature reflects my experience in higher education as one Indian student of 1600 students at a private college in 1961, and one of twelve American Indian students in a 1965 student body of 45,000 at a public university. Otis (1989) cites mostly studies in the 1970's. Research on American Indians in Higher Education seems to have peaked in the late 1970's and early 1980's, with the largest number of citations in the literature considered for this report being of that era.

The only broad national study to date on American Indians appeared as part of Alexander Astins' 1982 report, *Minorities in Higher Education,* referred to here as *American Indians in Higher Education* (1982). McNamara's findings were in the areas of:

Indian Professionals on Campus Underrepresentation, institutional ethnocentrism, lack of support, designation as "minority expert," and lack of real institutional commitment to recruit and retain minority students and staff.

Barriers to Educational Attainment Inferior precollege preparation, financial difficulties, lack of role models, culture conflicts, a need for better guidance, [personal problems including] low self-esteem, fear of failure, lack of a sense of purpose, lack of self-discipline, struggle to maintain identity

Comparison of Persisters and Nonpersisters (1971-1980) Persisters achieved goals at 68%, while nonpersisters achieved educational goals at 32%, a positive correlation of high school g.p.a.

and high interest and involvement. Persisters had a positive self image; nonpersisters had more non-school interests or concerns in social and financial areas.

Leigh Jeannotte's dissertation, *A Study of Contributing Factors Relating to Why American Indian Students Drop Out of or Graduate from Educational Programs at the University of North Dakota* (1981), seems to be the most comprehensive study of the regional and local areas.

His findings of: *Biographical Factors:* No differences in male/female persistence, older students persist as do married students and students with a greater number of dependents, blood quantum is not a factor, family structure is not a factor, parental income is not a factor as is parental occupation and parental educational level. [Jeanotte's findings contradict others (McNamara 1982), but considering his sample was made up in part of students from the Center for Teaching and Learning, they are not surprising. The Center at that time focussed on older-than-average students working on the reservations in education programs at the paraprofessional level. The Center provided a work-study learning environment which considered the students' family or dependents. Consequently, tribal identification, age, family status, and, I assume, financial problems are not factors. Parents' education, occupation, and income levels, normally predictors of success in higher education, are null factors due to uniformity (low income, non-college graduates, and possibly unemployed or employed in low level occupations in tribal programs)].

Precollege Factors: Location/type of high school not a factor; size of graduating class not a factor; GED/HS diploma not a factor; high school g.p.a. is a predictor, as is ACT score; high school preparation and guidance are found not to be factors (cf. McNamara 1982).

College Factors: Participation in the Center for Teaching and Learning; higher GPA; more semester hours completed; clear goals; study time not a factor; study method (groups) and place

(library) are positive factors; financial aids management is a positive factor with persisters where adequacy of financial aid is not; transition from home to college, culture conflicts, and encouragement are not factors (again the older than average, reservation employed and residing student possibly skews this apparent deviance from conventional thinking); graduates provided problem solving, financial assistance, and care to family members; graduates are more culturally involved than dropouts, have a positive self-image as Indian, perceive instructors feelings to be positive, and find other non-Indian perceptions to be irrelevant; graduates are more involved in social activities while dropouts cite involvement hinders academic performance; Jeannotte cites Indian services and academic offerings being taken for granted in that they are not seen as significant factors; graduates did, however, use those services with more satisfactory responses than did dropouts.

Janet Wilson in *Wisconsin Indian Opinions of Factors Which Contribute to the Completion of College Degrees* (1983) surveyed opinions and biographical data of successful students primarily in the University of Wisconsin system.

Findings of Opinion

1. School was enjoyable and interesting.
2. One or more adults had shown encouragement.
3. High school grades had been average or better.
4. English skills were adequate.
5. Math skills were inadequate.
6. Racism had been recognized in high school and success fully coped with in college.
7. A healthy body contributed to completion.
8. A college education was necessary to achieve goals in life.
9. There was an intention to use college-gained skills to benefit Indian people.
10. An inner sense of purpose and determination was necessary in order to complete college.

Commonly held opinions and facts concerning culture

1. English was the primary language spoken in the home.
2. Religious membership was in Christian churches.
3. One or more parents had been employed.
4. Uncertainty about Indian heritage had been experienced sometime during life.
5. Pride in being Indian was felt.
6. Indian identity was not lost when an education was gained.

Five most important factors which contributed to college completion

1. Financial aid
2. Family support
3. Having a personal goal
4. Determination
5. Intelligence

Steve Novack in his "Study of Indian Retention: Results of the Service Provider Survey" (1982) viewed the services provided American Indian students at community colleges, four year comprehensive universities, a major research university, and three private colleges in Minnesota and Wisconsin. He found most institutions offered "strong" efforts in providing the following services: tutoring, personal counseling, academic counseling, child care, special orientation for Indian students, special classes or workshops on study skills, financial counseling, career counseling, an active student organization, and active recruitment.

Survey forms were sent to support service personnel at each institution asking rankings of contributors or obstacles to Indian students completing a degree. *Contributors* ranked highest included: good academic preparation in high school, personal motivation, and adequate financial support. Significant *obstacles* included lack of personal motivation and lack of good academic preparation in high school. Parental and faculty support were ranked secondary in importance. An open ended ques-

tion asked service faculty to rank in importance their opinions on *"what would you do to maximize retention of Indian students?"* Highest in rank was "Faculty and staff who are American Indians;" second was for "special counseling programs;" third most important was "American Indian studies programs;" tied at fourth was "Indian student organizations."

Locally, Helen Klassen in "A Survey of Indian Student Drop-outs at Bemidji State University" (1980) based her conclusions on the results of a canvass of dropouts in an opinion-based survey instrument administered in 1979 and 1980. Main areas cited for dropout decisions were in the areas of: *Financial factors* including inadequate financial aids, unexpected expenses, too many bills, and employment; *Social Factors* which included transportation problems, child care problems, childbirth, and a decision to drop out or "...to take a temporary breather;" major factors in the area of *Academic Concerns* were poor attendance, not studying enough, and a disinterest in course offerings."

Robert Gillespie in his master's paper "Factors Involved with the Retention of American Indian College Students" (1982) took a somewhat different approach as did Boates (1987) in using students' academic records to statistically test a number of hypotheses related to retention. He found seven variables as predictors of academic success during their freshman year. (Boates uses similar factors with retention being defined as continuous attendance to the second quarter of the second year).

Variables of: g.p.a. first year; g.p.a. first quarter; credits completed first year; number of credits completed first year; number of quarters of attendance in the first year; number of quarters completed first year; number of quarters at full time (12 credits per quarter); and suspension fall quarter (?) when taken together serve as predictors of retention throughout the year. Apparently success breeds success. Both Boates and Gillespie propose using an analysis of transcripts as a diagnos-

tic tool to determine if and when intervention through intrusive advising is recommended.

CONCEPTUAL MODELS

Among the literature studied for this report are a number of documents characterized as conceptual models. These are secondarily based on empirical evidence from a variety of primary sources. These documents are also more comprehensive in their recommendations than the primary documents, perhaps reflecting an attitude of synthesis of a study group. The most august, emphasizing administrative modeling based on successful higher education programs, are *The Madison Plan* (1988), and the American Council on Education's *Minorities on Campus; A Handbook for Enhancing Diversity* (1989). Basic recommendations are shared such as: assigning one person for overall supervision; clear commitment and leadership toward diversification; broad institutional support; data based planning, monitoring, evaluation, and modification; more accurate assessment of incoming freshmen; and others.

The MADISON PLAN is a working document in place specifically for the University of Wisconsin, Madison campus. Instituted by the chancellor, it is a priority item on the university's agenda. Accountability is built into the plan with senior administration responsible for program areas, an associate vice-chancallor being responsible for overall coordination. Student access in the plan begins with an enhanced minority financial aid plan at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. recruitment and Outreach complete the access components. Diversity and excellence are key words in curriculum development, academic retention programs, and partnerships with the community.

MINORITIES ON CAMPUS; A HANDBOOK FOR ENHANCING DIVERSITY is more theoretical as a suggested plan for adoption by institutions ranging from community colleges

to universities. Elements of successful programs are included (with addresses and telephone numbers of contact persons) in recommendation sections. Three profiles, a community college, a four year college, and a comprehensive university, of successful institution wide programs are also included.

OBSERVATIONS

To reiterate, the literature on the retention of American Indian students is slim, perhaps reflecting the size of the population in institutions of higher education. Most of the literature reflects short term studies. As several authors have noted, a need exists for longitudinal studies. There is, however, enough literature to provide working hypothesis and guides for data gathering at the individual institutional level. Obviously, without primary data in key retention areas an institutional plan to increase its retention of American Indians is likely to fail. There is also enough literature citing successful specific or comprehensive programs to provide material for almost any institution to tailor a retention program to its particular needs. With long term institutional commitment, a plan, accountability, and data driven decision making, successful programs can be and have been established.

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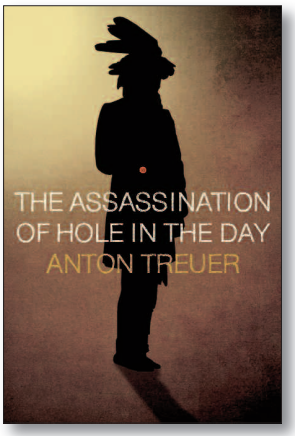

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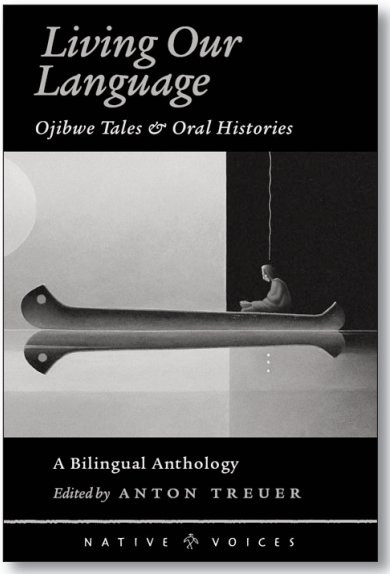

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As fluent speakers of Ojibwe grow older, the community questions whether younger speakers know the language well enough to pass it on to the next generation. Young and old alike are making widespread efforts to preserve the Ojibwe language, and, as part of this campaign, Anton Treuer has collected stories from Anishinaabe elders living at Leech Lake (MN), White Earth (MN), Mille Lacs (MN), Red Lake (MN), and St. Croix (WI) reservations.

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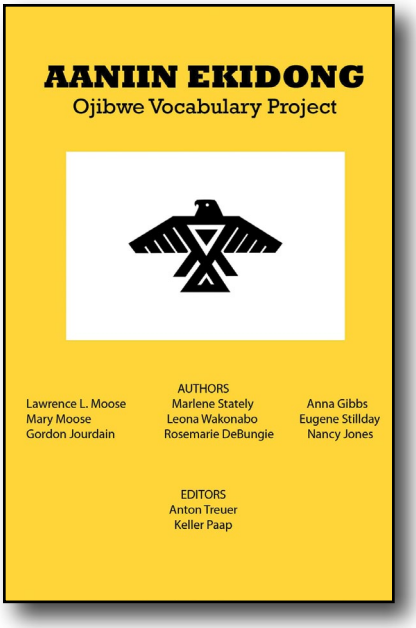

For the Ojibwe language to live, it must be used for everything every day. While most Ojibwe people live in a modern world, dominated by computers, motors, science, mathematics, and global issues, the language that has grown to discuss these things is not often taught or thought about by most teachers and students of the language. A group of nine fluent elders representing several different dialects of Ojibwe gathered with teachers from Ojibwe immersion schools and university language programs to brainstorm and document less-well-known but critical modern Ojibwe terminology. Topics discussed include science, medicine, social studies, geography, mathematics, and punctuation. This book is the result of their labors.

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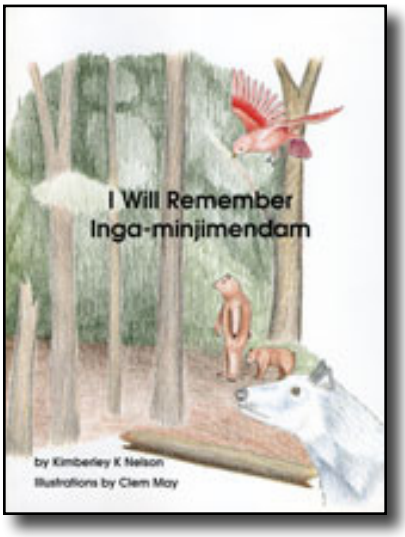

By Kimberly Nelson
Illustrated by Clem May
Translation by
Earl Otchingwanigan
(Nyholm)
Audio by Anton Treuer

I Will Remember: Inga-minjimendam

With these words the author introduces the young narrator who takes us through the everyday experiences that he most enjoys—a walk along the lakeshore or through the woods, "looking at all the little animals that are there," netting fish with his father, swimming, ice fishing, going to pow-wows. "But most of all," he says, "I like to listen to my grandfather tell stories. He tells all sorts of legends to me, and about all those things he did when he was small." The bilingual text—English and Ojibwe—is imaginatively and colorfully illustrated from the artist's own experiences living near the shores of Red Lake in northern Minnesota.

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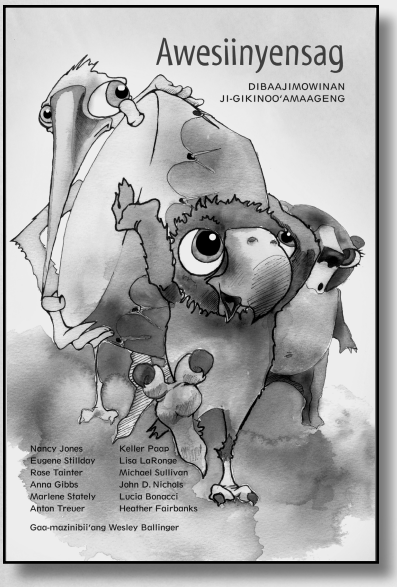

Nancy Jones, Eugene Stillday, Rose Tainter, Anna Gibbs, Marlene Stately, Anton Treuer, Keller Paap, Lisa LaRonge, Michael Sullivan, John Nichols, Lucia Bonacci, Heather Fairbanks

Illustrated by Wesley Ballinger

These original stories, written in Anishinaabemowin, delight readers and language learners with the antics of animals who playfully deal with situations familiar to children in all cultures. Suitable for all ages, this book can be read aloud, assigned to classes, shared at language tables, gifted to elders, and enjoyed by all who love Anishinaabemowin.

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Aapiji go ingii-minwendam agindamaan o'o mazina'igan, anishinaabewi-mazina'igan, abinoojiinyiwi-mazina'igan. Baatayiinowag ingiw anishinaabeg gaa-wiidookaazowaad o'o gii-ozhichigaadeg, aanind gii-dibaajimowag, aanind dash gii-ozhibii'igewag; ingiw gichi-aya'aag, weshki-aya'aawijig igaye, gikinoo'amaagewininiwag, gikinoo'amaagewikweg igaye. Gakina go onandawendaanaawaa i'iw ji-ozhitoowaad i'iw ge-naadamaagonid iniw odabinoojiimiwaan, weweni ji-nitaa-anishinaabemonid, ji-nitaa-agindamonid odinwewinini, weweni go ji-nitaaanishinaabewibii'aminid igaye. Awesiiyensag aajimaawag o'o mazina'iganing, mino-mazinaakizowag ingiw igaye.

—Dr. Rand Valentine, Native Language Instructors' Program, Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, Ontario

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RESTORING THE OJIBWE LANGUAGE

This inspiring new documentary about ongoing efforts to revitalize the Ojibwe language was produced by Emmy-award winning producer John Whitehead. Major segments are devoted to the community of Ponemah on the Red Lake Reservation, the immersion schools in Bena, Minnesota, and Reserve, Wisconsin, and resource development at Bemidji State University.

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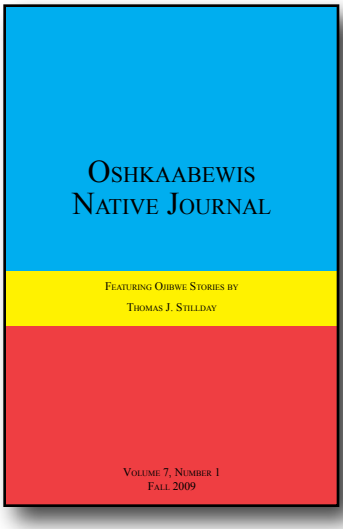
BEMIDJI STATE UNIVERSITY



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