Title

Narratives of Resistance in Contemporary Native North American Ficton: (Re)Writing the Past

Abstract

This dissertation examines Native North American historical novels as instrumental in realizing Native self-determination. The research presented considers literature as both product and producer of extra-textual reality, and thus as necessary in challenging established political, social and cultural practices. The novels read are shown to actively reframe Native existence in North America, unsettling and reframing the national narrative of the United States while focusing specifically on Native North American realities.

The following chapters draw on novels, as well as on literary, cultural and political theory. Examining Native North American historical novels at this intersection allows for a comprehensive approach that addresses the writing of history as a narrative act while also exploring the reasons that engender these narratives. History is located as an exercise of white power, written and remembered to maintain definitive hierarchies that disenfranchise Native North Americans and other racial others. Fiction that examines the past, on the other hand, upsets these hierarchies and creates explicitly Native North American histories that engender a productive present.

The dissertation works within an Indigenous framework that favors Native North American theory, particularly when relating to concepts such as sovereignty, philosophies of time, and the telling of stories

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"Natives must create their own stories; otherwise, the sources of their identities are not their own."

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Introduction: Native North American Historical Fiction

In her seminal work *Decolonizing Methodologies* (1999), Linda Tuhiwai Smith (Ngati Awa/Ngati Porou) states that "history is . . . mostly about power. It is the story of the powerful and how they became powerful, and then how they use their power to keep them in positions in which they can continue to dominate others" (34). While relevant to all of history, this observation is particularly pertinent with regards to the history of global colonization and the narratives constructed around violent white expansion. As Métis author Howard Adams argues:

> the native people in a colony are not allowed a valid interpretation of their history, because the conquered do not write their own history. They must endure a history that shames them . . . and causes them to reject their heritage. Those in power command the present and shape the future by controlling the past. (43)

Adams not only reiterates that power creates history, he also emphasizes the contemporary effect of having ones past written by someone else; in particular by those who have obtained and maintained their positions of power by oppressing those made unable to tell their own pasts.

In the United States, national history is founded on the idea of an ever-expanding frontier, a "wide-open land of unlimited opportunity for the strong, ambitious, self-reliant individual to thrust his way to the top" (*Regeneration* 5). Based on an ideal masculinity that lionizes independence and grit, this frontier mythology remains central to the cultural and political imaginary of the United States. Continuous repetition by those who benefit from such a portrayal – Thomas Jefferson's use of the frontier myth to hasten geographical expansion, John F. Kennedy's portrayal of outer space as the new frontier, and George W. Bush's insistence on "extending democracy" around the globe to Iraq and Afghanistan – has superimposed this version over other tellings of the U.S. American past, glossing

over the violent reality of westward expansion that appropriated the ostensibly "wide-open land" and encouraged the killing and displacement of Native North Americans.

Power and repetition then create history, turning specific versions of the past into recognized fact. Negotiated by and through language these facts are revealed as merely reflective of the past and not as ad hoc equivalent realities outside of the historical narrative. Julie Cruikshank succinctly argues that "power inevitably involves deciding who can talk, under [which] circumstances, in what order, [and] through [which] discourse procedures" (23).[1] And while this does not imply that history is entirely subjective, existing "only . . . linguistically, as a term in a discourse", it does demand that a distinction be made between the past (the event) and its history (the telling of the event) (Barthes 153). In *A Poetics of Postmodernism* (1988), Linda Hutcheon vehemently insists on this distinction, elaborating that while there is no question about the empirical existence of past events, the transmission of these events is ambiguous at best and demands close analysis, particularly within a socio-political context. Hutcheon considers history as a narrative created to instill meaning and impose a specific order on that which has happened.

Thus, the dominant mode of telling U.S. American history – the celebration of a triumphant white settler-colonizer society that overlooks Native North American existence – soon unravels as a specific means of ordering and telling the past, as a "monologic narrative of male Anglo-American progress that constructs others as peoples without history" (Peterson 983).

This idea of "peoples without history" anticipates the problematic position of history itself. Hayden White has determined the practice of history as "a specifically Western prejudice by which the presumed superiority of modern, industrial society can be retroactively substantiated" (*Metahistory* 2). Both Peterson and White indicate the value and use of western history in creating both a progressive self-

[1] Precursors here are Ferdinand de Saussure and Pierre Bourdieu; Bourdieu argues that "one should never forget that language by virtue of the infinitive generative but also originative capacity . . . which it derives from its power to produce existence by producing the collectively recognized, and thus realized, representation of existence, is no doubt the principal support of absolute power" (42). There are also Native North American theorists such as LeAnne Howe (Choctaw), David R. Newhouse (Onondaga), and Cora Voyageur (Athabasca Chipewyan), who state that "not all stories are heard and acknowledged. We cannot separate history from power", and that "native stories have power. They create people. They author tribes." (Newhouse et al. 6, Howe 29). Thus, while the realization of power through story exists in western discourse, it is also firmly established in Native North American thought and theory.

image and a backward concept of the other. Smith is even more direct, arguing that history is the "story of a specific form of domination, [of] the negation of Indigenous views of history" (Smith 29). She asserts that history is subjective, an established tool of subjugation and control. Echoing White and Smith, Arif Dirlik describes history as the most fundamental location of Eurocentrism, marking history not only as a narrative designed to center western versions of the past but also as essentially western in its overall conception (65).

Telling U.S. American, and thus Native North American pasts has been, and continues to be, the prerogative of the settler-colonizer, using a western framework that arranges the past to represent settler-colonizer ascent and Native North American decline.

Euroamerican Modes of Native North American History

Nancy Shoemaker and Craig Howe (Oglala Sioux) outline the different approaches that settler-colonizers have taken in telling Native North American history. Howe determines "two distinct avenues of inquiry concerning the past of Indigenous peoples", the predominant method focusing on the confluence of settler-colonizers and Native North Americans, moving chronologically through time and examining the relationships between the two groups (161). As Howe writes, this kind of history presents the past as "an objective, chronological narrative" that is temporally restricted, "beginning with the appearance of immigrants [in the United States]"; he defines it as "an analytical model requiring the presence of both Natives and non-Natives" to tell the history of the United States (161). The focus of this approach lies on establishing the history of the settler-colonizer state, sidelining any information on Native North America. The other, less dominant, method looks at Native North American history beyond the limitations of white settlement, reaching backwards past 1492 (161). Both methods, however, rely on a western chronology and written documentation, approaching the past from a euroamerican perspective that – while claiming to give space to and include Native North America – superimposes a settler-colonizer ideology.

Shoemaker further details the trajectory of Native North American history writing: categorized first as ethnohistory, which "[incorporates] written, historical documents as sources of information and [highlights] changes over time", Native North American history was recast in the 1970s. Robert Berkhofer here introduced

the idea of a "New Indian History", his goal to "put more Indian" into history (Shoemaker 8). Berkhofer locates the central concern of this new direction in the "remarkable persistence of cultural and personality traits and ethnic identity in Indian societies in the face of white conquest and efforts at elimination or assimilation" (Berkhofer 358). This writing of history moves "Indian actors to the center of the stage and [makes] Indian-Indian relations as important as white-Indian ones have been previously" (358). Such an approach, Berkhofer suggests, not only involves Native North Americans in the larger history of the United States, it also, importantly, "broadens the spatial and temporal limits of [North American history] to a time before white contact and beyond the reservation of yesterday to the urban ghetto and national Indian organizations of today" (358).[2] Discussing Native North American pasts, so Berkhofer, is essential in understanding United States history; discovering and reevaluating pre-contact and post nineteenth century history contextualizes contemporary realities, both white and Native North American.

While Berkhofer's methodology has become established practice within academia, there remains an unspoken popular consensus that "after 1800, American Indians ceased to be central to the development of North America, and their experiences did little to inform the major currents defining American society" (Rosenthal 964). Accordingly, discussion of Native North American history post-Indian Removal in the 1830s and '40s is marginalized as Native concern only, having little bearing on a broader U.S. history. Berkhofer's suggested emphasis on extending the historical timeframe and scope of Native North American history is thus again limited, breeding both isolation and insularity within academic discussion. Berkhofer's approach also maintains a chronological history that emphasizes progress and continuity, a western approach to how the past relates to the present and future.

Within popular history this stance is even more pronounced. Native North American history here remains temporally restricted, existing almost exclusively between the arrival of the Mayflower and the middle of the nineteenth century, implying both an absence and insignificance of Native North Americans prior to 1500 and from 1850 onwards. In a 2009 paper, Journell states that U.S. American schools teach Native American existence only up until Indian Removal, maintaining

[2] Berkhofer's writing coincides with the burgeoning of the American Indian Movement (AIM), as well as with the rise of civil rights activism during the 1960s and '70s more generally.

a “traditional version of history that identifies American Indians as victims and marginalizes them by failing to identify key individuals or examples of societal contributions”, an approach congruent with the settler-focused ethnohistory identified by Shoemaker and Howe (28). Consequently, argues Shoemaker, “neither ethnohistory nor the New Indian History [have] provided models or overarching interpretations of past events” maintaining a settler-focused approach to U.S. American history (Shoemaker ix).

History (and traditional historiography) thus reveals itself as an inadequate rendering of Native North American pasts; consequently, there has to be a turn towards other ways of telling, away from the perceived objectivity of western history and towards “an understanding of history not as an objective narrative but as a story constructed of personal and ideological interests” (Peterson 288).

Reading Historical Fiction as History

Prominent among other tellings of the past is the historical novel. Where history aims to present a definitive version of the past, historical fiction encourages a rethinking, highlighting the difficulties of objectively knowing the past. Historical fiction comes to work both as a playful exploration of alternatives and as a means of resistance, filling in gaps and rewriting established narratives.

While historical fiction and history are customarily placed at opposite ends of a spectrum, one categorized as storytelling, the other proclaimed as factual reproduction of the past, recent scholarship has proceeded to “[dismantle] the notion that history and fiction are mutually exclusive opposites”, insisting instead that the two are “inseparably intertwined” (Teo 301). Working from the theory of new historicism which posits that there is no singular “real” past and that, importantly, literary texts and non-literary texts (in this case historical fiction and historiography) coexist and need to be read as complimentary, recent theory understands history as using the same narrative conceits as fiction, calling attention to the similarities between the two, and illuminating the storied quality of history itself (Veeser xi).

It is important to note that this shift is more prevalent outside of the academy. As Dirlik writes, “historians have been notably absent from recent discussions over history as epistemology”; he argues further that positivist historians in particular continue to argue that the “limitations of the archive” are primarily responsible for the dearth in representing alternative pasts – not the limitations of euroamerican

historical practice as such (83). Although Dirlik writes in the year 2000, this idea of the inadequacy of the archive persists, historians excusing the lack of new histories with the paucity of documentation.[3] Such an emphasis on history as necessarily factual implies objectivity as a central characteristic, abandoning the idea of shaping the narrative. Furthermore, this shift towards accepting a certain narrativity as basis for historiography (and thus for an understanding of the past) remains almost elusive within popular history. Chronologies and established versions of the past remain foundational in teaching school history, as well as in presenting the past to the general population.

Within this changing but ultimately static landscape, the historical novel has become a popular means for examining the silenced past of historically marginalized others: that of women, people of color, the LGBTQI+ community, people with disabilities, the poor. Novels such as Octavia Butler's *Kindred* (1979) – which tells of Dana, a young African American writer, who begins to time-travel between her present-day 1976 Los Angeles and antebellum Maryland where she encounters her ancestors, a freewoman and a plantation owner –, Sebastian Barry's *Days Without End* (2017) – a sprawling queer history of the mid-nineteenth century U.S. that follows a chosen family of two white men and a Sioux girl – or, Sarah Water's *Fingersmith* (2002) – a lesbian rewrite of Dickensian London – challenge the established past, and undermine the "totalizing effects of historical representation" while "[pointing] out that what is known is always partial, always a representation" (*Remaking History* 14). These novels upset a master narrative that insists on a linear, heteronormative, white-centric past, offering instead a multitude of histories that open new avenues for approaching the past.

Despite this widespread use of the historical novel to redress varied pasts, Native North American historical fiction is rare prior to the end of the twentieth century. Thomas King (Cherokee) argues that this outward paucity is largely due to the continued deprecation of Native North Americans as contemporaneous. Arguably, the current incarnation of the United States relies on the non-existence of

[3] There I, in fact, an existing problem with the archive; a certain "impossibility of recovery" prevails when engaging with records that negate and confuse the historical subjects that they deal with (Helton et al. 1). Few written records by Native North Americans exist; those that do, are categorically excluded from the archive. Those by the settler-colonizer, the maker of the archive, are included. There is thus already a bias in how history is documented and retained in the archive. This impasse is further discussed in chapter three, focusing specifically on recovering the pasts of Native North American women – and how these recoveries are problematic at best.

Native North Americans: successful westward expansion, the agriculturalization of the Midwest, the National Parks system, large parts of the tourism industry, the idea of the melting pot, depend on the quiet disappearance of Native North Americans. Formally relegated to the past, Native North American writers first needed to anchor themselves in the present, writing stories that declared their existence in the now, firmly locating Native North Americans in the contemporary.[4] In contrast, members of the LGBTQI+ community, for example, are considered as almost exclusively "of the present", the extended history of queer people obscured by dominant historiography. There is thus a concerted effort within that community to establish a past that emphasizes historical presence and continuity.

Arguably, this is also a question of genre. Leslie Marmon Silko's (Laguna Pueblo) *Ceremony*, published in 1977 and set in the mid-1940s, James Welch's (Blackfeet) *Fool's Crow* (1986), set in the 1870s, and Scott Momaday's (Kiowa) *House Made of Dawn*, published in 1968 and set in the immediate aftermath of World War 2, were not readily classified as historical novels, despite clearly being historical. Considered as too close to the events discussed (particularly *House Made of Dawn* and *Ceremony*), as well as concerned primarily with Native North American concerns they were marketed and received simply as Native American novels; a genre categorization that resonates with the academy's isolation of contemporary Native North American social and political concerns. Native North American novels are classified not as part of canonical genres (such as historical fiction) but as relevant and related only to themselves. Essentially, novels by Native North Americans could only be Native North American fiction, marking genre, artistic nuance and literary diversity as canonically white.

Defining the Native North American Historical Novel

Despite this need to write the present, Native North American writers have been producing a growing number of cross-genre fictions, historical novels

[4] A parallel argument is presented by Craig Womack in *Red on Red* (1999). He states that "it is way too premature for Native scholars to deconstruct history when we haven't yet constructed it" (3). He alludes here to the postmodern style ascribed to many (if not most or all) contemporary historical novels; where a postmodern approach necessitates a deconstruction of the historical master narrative, Womack suggests that these novels have something to write back to, an established history that they can now unsettle and rewrite. Native North Americans however, so Womack, have yet to construct their own history before they can move to unsettle the settler-colonizer version thus establishing themselves as non-postmodern in style, and, importantly, as iterations of their own histories. Native North American historical fiction does not write back to the canon, instead it writes its own history.

prominent among them, since the end of the twentieth century. While routinely categorized as iterations of the euroamerican historical novel, Native North American novels that write the past refuse the framework of the canonic historical novel and participate in a unique aesthetics that (re)constructs culture for Native, as well as white and other, audiences.

As Craig Womack (Creek/Cherokee) argues, "tribal literatures are not some branch waiting to be grafted on the main trunk of [North American fiction]; tribal literatures are the tree" (7). Understood within the context of American literature, Womack sees Native North American fiction not as a subgenre, but as the beginning of fiction on the North American continent. For Native North American historical fiction this consequently means the same: these fictions originate from a unique Native North American storytelling aesthetic independent of the, for example, postmodernity of canonic historical fiction. It is not a reactive literature but dialogic, engaging continuously with the socio-political realities of contemporary Native North America.

Native North American historical fiction is thus defined as a text written by someone Native North American, that engages the past, intent on supplementing and replacing established historiography. Like Native North American fiction more generally, it:

> acknowledges and validates Indigenous peoples' experiences by filling in the gaps and correcting the falsehoods in the master-narrative. [It] comprises a counterstory that resists the oppressive identity [assigned by settler mythology] and attempts to replace it with one that commands respect. (Episkenew 2)

Native North American historical fiction functions within its own aesthetic cosmos, engaging Native North American conceptions of time and space that complicate linearity. The Native North American historical novel implicitly and explicitly challenges the production and limitations of history. Inherently political, it retells the past to create both theoretical and practical space for Native North Americans in the United States.

Importantly, Native North American historical fiction participates in Gerald Vizenor's (White Earth Band of Ojibwe) politics of survivance, establishing an "active sense of presence [and] continuance of native stories" that renounces "dominance, tragedy and victimry" (*Narrative Chance* 13). Native North American historical

fiction continues Native existence through storytelling, creating "narrative resistance" to the dominant settler-colonizer narrative of Native erasure and disappearance (*Native Liberty* 1). This narrative resistance is best summarized in Momaday's conception of storytelling. He states that:

> we are what we imagine. Our very existence consists in our imagination of ourselves. Our best destiny is to imagine at least, completely, who and what, and that we are. The greatest tragedy that can befall us is to go unimagined. (qtd. in *Trickster Discourse* 67)

Accordingly, Native North American historical fiction is necessary in creating a past that extends into the present and future, establishing Native North Americans as having a continued presence in northern America.

Native North American historical fiction further moves across genres, encompassing science fiction, horror, romance, poetry, autofiction and more. Neither comprehensive nor totalizing these novels tell individual stories that "may leave many things unsaid" thus producing varied and unique pasts that then create a pantheon of histories; ultimately coming close to approaching a multiplicity of Native North American pasts (Nabokov 1).

Scope and Contribution

While historical fiction, Native North American fiction, and the narrativity of history are widely discussed, there is currently no comprehensive study that combines the three. This comparative dearth of scholarly engagement can be traced back to the current state of both literary studies and Native North American studies more generally, both of which consider Native North American literature as a genre in and of itself. This categorization however disregards the constructive power of identifying and reading Native North American historical fiction at the intersection of literature and historiography. Native North American story is a means of creating existence, of writing the self into being, and nowhere is this as necessary as in the construction of a usable past. There is a long history of "Indigenous peoples in the United States . . . voicing resistance through literature to destructive policies and attitudes of colonialism", fiction that writes the past is an essential part of this resistance (Dunbar-Ortiz ix). Daniel Heath Justice (Cherokee) claims further that:

> given the cultural capital of literature in this age, more accurate literary representations are some of the most vital and vibrant means for pushing

> back against the colonial imaginary, with Indigenous realism standing in contrast to colonial fantasy. (Apex)

Realizing this long literary tradition of formulating resistance allows for a contextualization of historical novels within an extensive Native North American literary (and intellectual) tradition that establishes presence though storytelling and specifically through writing. As Michael Wilson argues:

> while the audience of resistance fiction and indeed all Indigenous literature remains relatively small, and while fiction of any stripe has hardly motivated social change in America, these novels help to bring Indigenous narrative possibilities from the shadows to the light, and contribute to a growing conversation among Indigenous writers, activists, grass roots organizations, and academics, who steadfastly assert the rightful freedom of Indigenous nations. (161)[5]

Concurrently, Jeannette Armstrong formulates that Native North American literature is not only shaped by "history, politics and public policy . . . documenting Indigenous peoples' reality in a way that promotes empathy and understanding", it also "has the ability to shape history, politics and public policy" (186). Accordingly, this dissertation offers a necessary analysis of an under-researched instance of Native North American literary and political storying.

Looking at a wide range of historical fiction allows for finding both similarities and differences, be they author- or nation-specific. Not only does Native North American historical fiction suggest new ways of looking at settler-colonizer history, it also turns inward, revisiting Native North American communal and national histories. Such a reframing allows for a greater plurality of Native North American histories independent of the master narrative and falling outside of the scope of settler-colonizer historical interest. Reading Native North American historical fiction in its many forms thus increasingly allows for the inclusion of other histories (those of women, two-spirit, teenagers, and urban Natives) building a more complete picture of Native North American life.

This dissertation does however limit its scope to read only Native North American fiction from what is currently considered the United States. Despite the

[5] Although this dissertation does not read Native North American historical fiction (or Native North American literature generally) as exclusively "resistance" fiction (there are of course texts that very explicitly function as such), Wilson's argument regarding the political potential remains relevant.

arbitrarily drawn line between "the territories now claimed by Canada and the United States" it is important to recognize nation-specific characteristics in culture, society and politics that impact Native North Americans living in the United States differently than those living within the lands claimed by Canada (*Our Fire Survives* xviii). While First Nations, Métis and Inuit have to contend with political genocide, the trauma of residential schooling, and the specifics of a white Canadian mythology that grounds its existence in the idea of the cultural mosaic of "peaceful coexistence" and "mutual respect", the national mythology of the United States depends on manifest destiny and the idea of the frontier. Both the frontier and manifest destiny rely not only on the establishment of the settler-colonizer state against all odds but also, importantly, on the disappearance of Native North Americans. Consequently, Native North American fiction from the geography of the United States considers a different history, writing from a different socio-political baseline.

Literature Review

This dissertation derives its understanding of canonical historical fiction from theory developed by György Lukács and Jerome de Groot – both have curated the discussion around historical fiction as a distinct genre. Lukács offered the first major exploration of the historical novel in the 1930s; *The Historical Novel* (1937, published in English in 1955), is rooted in Marxist theory, understanding the classic historical novel as "an affirmation of human progress" that ultimately follows a conservative agenda, strengthening cultural and political sympathies (Anderson). De Groot updates Lukács original theory, posing a contemporary approach that forgoes rigid categorizations and enquires into the subversive potential of historical fiction. He specifically explores the potential of rewriting history for historically marginalized groups, demonstrating how the contemporary historical novel creates space for voices otherwise silenced. De Groot also explicitly considers "the ways in which fiction has challenged existing historical narratives", engaging with the idea that history is basically a narrative that constructs the past, and how this is, at its core, similar to historical fiction (Teo 300).

However, Lukács and de Groot present an almost exclusively euroamerican framework for historical fiction; their theories, while helpful, are inadequate for a productive discussion of Native North American historical fiction and must therefore be extended and critically reassessed.

An important mention here is Alan Velie's article on the "Indian Historical Novel" (1992). Analyzing Welch's *Fool's Crow* and Vizenor's *The Heirs of Columbus* (1991), Velie remains within a euroamerican framework, relying on Hayden White's conception of emplotment, outlined in chapter one, and applying this to the two novels. While Velie offers a comprehensive analysis of both novels, he fails to extend the framework of examination and thus remains at a remove.

Similar to historical fiction, the discussion around the narrativity of history has also remained within a predominantly euroamerican context. Criticism of the objectivity of a totalizing history is primarily found in poststructuralist or postmodernist criticism, both of which are largely white. This dissertation refers to Hayden White as a theoretical starting point; reading history as a "mode of discourse" and not as exact representation remains foundational. However, White's observation is one that has long been made by non-whites. As Linda Tuhiwai Smith argues, "[White's] critique of history is not unfamiliar" to those who have been colonized (33). Smith has been hugely influential here, shifting research practices towards Indigenous frames of reference; delineating euroamerican history as "an Enlightenment or modernist project", and "[its] negation of Indigenous views of history . . . [as] a critical part of asserting colonial ideology" (29). She very clearly identifies historical narrative as ideological and designed to cultivate euroamerican dominance. This dissertation further builds on theory formulated by Vine Deloria Jr. (Standing Rock Sioux), who to an extent prefigures Smith's argument, stating in *God is Red* (1973), that:

> we are faced today with a concept of world history that lacks even the most basic appreciation of the experiences of mankind as a whole . . . indeed, world history as presently conceived . . . is the story of the west's conquest of the remainder of the world and the subsequent rise to technological sophistication. (108)

Both *God is Red* and Smith's *Decolonizing Methodologies* refine and condense central arguments made by Native North Americans and Indigenous peoples globally – their approaches and methodologies are central for this dissertation.

Despite this realization of history as fundamentally biased, Native-authored histories remain the exception. Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz's 2014 *An Indigenous History of the United States* and David Treuer's (Ojibwe) *Heartbeat of Wounded Knee: Native America from 1890 to the Present* (2019) are two rare examples of "big"

histories that aim to "counter the familiar narratives of invisibility", by relying on (among other things) "stories from family members, the voices of policymakers and assessments of contemporary youth culture" (Blackhawk). Both Dunbar-Ortiz and Treuer contribute to what Smith terms "a new agenda of Indigenous research", based around the twenty-five "Indigenous Projects" outlined in her monograph (Smith 142). Both texts function as "history books" telling a predominantly chronological, document-based history of the United States that follows the norms of writing history while telling new stories. *An Indigenous History* and *Heartbeat* are both important for unsettling the master narrative and presenting Native North American histories; they inform the historical substructure of the following literary analysis.

Discussions of Native North American history and historical fictions are necessarily concerned with conceptualizations of sovereignty. Based in the theories of Taiaiake Alfred (Mohawk), Joanne Barker (Lenape) and Scott R. Lyons (Ojibwe/Mdewakanton Band of Dakota) the research presented formulates its own understanding of Native North American sovereignty. While Alfred argues against using the euro-centrist theory of sovereignty for Native North American concerns, Lyons and Barker offer rather an analysis of the term and a contextualization of sovereignty as a terminology that can be appropriated and reframed for Indigenous use. Similarly, David Carlson suggests that sovereignty is, despite its European origins, an important and necessary concern for Native North Americans, an argument shared by this dissertation. The methodological section in chapter one elaborates on these questions related specifically to a literary manifestation of self-determination.

While histories such as those by Dunbar-Ortiz and Treuer have contributed to rewriting events like the Trail of Tears from a Cherokee perspective, such histories remain predominantly authored by whites. Accordingly, this dissertation engages with research by James Mooney, an anthropologist who lived with the Cherokee from 1887 until 1890.[6] Trail history is further entangled in official United States policy; particularly relevant here are the Nonintercourse Act of 1790 as well as the 1830 Indian Removal Act. These acts demonstrate a continuous U.S. American preoccupation with ridding itself of Native North American actors and removing them further and further towards the West.

[6] Mooney's accounts of the Trail are based on stories told to him by the Cherokee and reflect their memories and experiences with Removal.

Chapter two further relies on two interviews held with Diane Glancy (Cherokee), both concerning the Trail of Tears and, specifically, her Christian fundamentalist views. A 2020 interview with A. M. Juster is particularly relevant here as it details Glancy's religious beliefs, her understanding of how history is constructed and a reexamination of her *Pushing the Bear* duology with regards to both history and religion. The discussion of Blake M. Hausman's (Cherokee) *Riding the Trail of Tears* presents new research and analysis that draws primarily on the novel itself, as well as on Gina Caison's *Red States: Indigeneity, Settler Colonialism, and Southern Studies* (2018) and Miriam Brown Spiers's "Reimagining Resistance: Achieving Sovereignty in Indigenous Science Fiction" (2016). While Caison offers an analysis grounded in her overarching discussion of how the U.S. American South has been shaped by Native North American presence (and absence), Spiers discusses the centrality of Native science fiction in Hausman's novel.

Chapter three builds on the concepts of sovereignty introduced in chapter one, further including Richard Slotkin's concept of national mythologies and Robert Zacharias's theory of "originary crisis" as essential for creating the nation. Slotkin in particular has been critical in envisioning the importance of mythmaking to the modern United States. As Slotkin and Zacharias argue, national mythologies are highly dependent on instances of violence, these violences "essential … in the creation of the nation" (Renan 3). This chapter further draws on Alison Bernstein's *American Indians and World War 2* (1991), Paul C. Rosier's *Serving Their Country: American Indian Politics and Patriotism* (2012), as well as several surveys and studies on Native North American veterans by Tom Holm (Cherokee). While there is a growing interest in Native North American participation in the world wars and beyond, research remains limited, primarily due to a lack of accessible primary sources and a calculated erasure of Indigenous military action by whites.

Finally, chapter four draws together discussions on writing history and historical fiction in a wholly Native North American context. Essential here is Deloria's 1973 *God is Red*, as well as discussions on non-linear time by Leslie Marmon Silko (Laguna Pueblo) and Diane Glancy. Whereas this dissertation disregards Deloria's theology, it insists on his observation that euroamerican society is determined by its loyalty to a linear history founded in Judeo-Christian epistemologies (*God is Red* 103). The chapter also looks at the Lakota winter counts as an example of Native North American time keeping; a relevant source here is *The*

Year the Stars Fell: Lakota Winter Counts at the Smithsonian which reprints several winter counts (2007).

Structure

This dissertation is separated into six chapters, including this introduction and a coda; it also provides an appendix that lists Native North American historical fiction. The chapters focus on thematic clusters and offer parallel readings of two texts that tell the same historical events.

The theoretical framework of chapter one addresses canonic interpretations of historical fiction, focusing on the already mentioned theory developed by György Lukacs in *The Historical Novel*, as well as by Jerome de Groot; de Groot is particularly relevant as he introduces the idea of rewriting marginalized history through historical fiction, a characteristic also found in Native North American historical novels. It then delves into Hayden White's theory of historical emplotment, elaborating on the ways that historiography conforms to fictional narratives, before establishing a definition of the Native North American historical novel. This section draws specifically on Vizenor's politics of survivance, Justice's analysis of maintaining and presenting identity through story, Vine Deloria Jr.'s conceptions of Native temporality and, finally, Linda Tuhiwai Smith's approach to decolonization.

Chapter two moves to textual analysis, focusing on nineteenth century Indian Removal as a pivotal moment in North American history. The Removal of the Cherokee from their ancestral homelands in contemporary Georgia and North Carolina to Oklahoma, so-called Indian Territory, marks a decisive point in the socio-political existence of the Cherokee, while also being a critical for settler- colonizer history. The novels discussed are Diane Glancy's *Pushing the Bear* duology (1996/2009) and Blake M. Hausman's *Riding the Trail of Tears* (2011). While these texts differ profoundly in how they tell the Trail – Glancy recounts a realist history, following a community from their home to Oklahoma and beyond into the 1850s and 60, while Hausman recreates the Trail as a virtual reality experience in the early twenty-first century – they share a desire to negotiate Cherokee history as a reclaiming of Removal while detailing the lasting impact of the past on the present. Both Glancy and Hausman engage with the trauma of forced removal and relocation, telling how the Cherokee include this period in their national history. While both question the production of history (and its effects), they insist on the healing

properties of telling stories and rewriting the past, ultimately recasting sustained existence post-Removal as survivance instead of victimization.

Chapter three centers narratives of war, focusing on the First and Second World Wars and the movement of Native North Americans across the globe that these wars entailed. Native North Americans in the United States have played a significant role in these conflicts, but their presence has largely been erased, marginalized within history. While the past decade has seen an effort to include Native North American soldiers into the history of war, it has been slow and mainly focused on exceptional contributors – such as Ira Hayes (Pima) and Francis Pegahmagabow (Ojibwe) who have been cast as war heroes while experiencing sustained discrimination and marginalization after returning home – glossing over those who have had less "heroic" experiences. The novels discussed here are David Treuer's *Prudence* (2015) and Gerald Vizenor's *Blue Ravens* (2014). Both writers establish intellectual sovereignty and survivance – both within and outside of the texts. While Vizenor tells a story that affirms Native North American artistry and intellectual traditions, securing these as the cornerstones of a global Native life, *Prudence* offers a scathing indictment of war, demonstrating how violence is used by those in power to maintain socio-political hierachies. Both novels directly engage questions of Native North American sovereignty, revealing an innate disenfranchisement of Native communities as the basis for the continued existence of the United States. War novels are particularly important in this context, as violence is essential to the modern nation state. Native North American war stories – particularly those that focus on euroamerican or global wars – push to question the continued existence of these nation states and (re)introduce alternative understandings of war into a global context.

Chapter four extends the discussion of Native North American historical fiction to less traditional tellings of the past that question how time itself is structured and maintained in a euroamerican epistemology that necessitates linearity and progression as the only way of experiencing time and existence. The novels read here present Native North American renderings of the past, present and future that are not necessarily discernible as self-contained periods, consequently unmooring a euroamerican understanding of history and the self, while strengthening and legitimizing Native North American concepts of presence. Sherman Alexie's (Spokane/Coeur d'Alene) *Flight* (2007) and Stephen Graham

Jones's (Blackfeet) *Ledfeather* (2008) both overtly play with the concept of time by offering non-linear narratives and introducing time travel while telling distinctive histories. In both texts the past influences the present, while the present also refracts backwards to challenge the past. As Native North American historical novels, *Ledfeather* and *Flight* show glimpses of the past that underline the continuities of racialized oppression and make explicit the interconnections of past and present while also pointing to an end of Native North American victimry. Like the narratives of war in chapter three, these collapses of time refer back to Native North American self-determination, arguably, "nonlinear understandings of history are key elements of the narrations of indigenous nationhood found in American Indian literary texts" (Bauerkemper 28).

The coda formulates a coherent and usable set of common themes and tropes used throughout Native North American historical fiction. It brings together socio-political and literary aspects of the Native North American historical novel and stresses the necessity of a storied past to create a usable present. It also offers a further look at other historical fictions. The concluding chapter again considers the necessities of looking at Native North American fiction as a cohesive whole, versus separate national, tribal or communal histories. Reading Tanya Tagaq's (Inuk) *Split Tooth* (2018) reveals a very specific history that centers women and girls within an Inuk frame of historicity and mythology. The conclusion further introduces the history podcast as another iteration of Native North American historical fiction.

This final chapter also ventures to formulate a clear connection between the writing of Native North American historical fiction and the fostering and establishment of Indigenous self-determination and sovereignty. Rewriting history brings into question established master narratives as well as the national histories and identities built around them. By challenging these narratives, Native North American historical fiction offers new ways of imagining the present that counter totalizing histories and challenge United States ownership of Native North American space – both figuratively and literally. The conclusion also importantly advocates for a more sweeping reevaluation of history, positing the necessity for multiple histories that diverge from euroamerican models and offer space to others.

Questions of Language

This thesis looks specifically at texts written in English. Partially a necessity, it is also based in the conviction that Native North American use of English in writing history is a political act, as well as "an act of healing that provides the foundation for the process of decolonization" (Episkenew 12).[7] It is a current reality that many Native North American writers have limited access to their ancestral languages – the genocidal schooling system in the United States instrumental in limiting language retention – and as Simon Ortiz argues, "English [has become] the main language and cultural force in the United Sates . . . no matter how hard Indigenous peoples have struggled against the loss of native languages, loss has occurred undeterred" (8). While this suggests a certain bleakness, it has also enabled a linguistic challenge to the supremacy of settler-colonial English, allowing many Native North American writers to reclaim the language of the colonizer and adapt it to the needs of Native North American realities within northern America. Moreover, Bruchac argues that:

> even in American Indian communities where the indigenous language has vanished or is spoken fluently by a diminishing number of people, the supposedly common language of English often becomes subtly different when it is spoken by American Indians. (*Our Stories Remember* 29)

In *The Empire Writes Back*, Ashcroft et al further theorize that:

> by abrogating the assumptions of language, appropriating it to local needs, and marrying it to local syntactic and grammatical forms, postcolonial writers provide a model for the agency of the local in the face of apparently overwhelming global pressures. (204)

Bruchac as well as Ashcroft et al. here present language-appropriation as a tool for taking power from the colonizer. Billy J. Stratton echoes this argument, stating that "according to Diné [Navajo] epistemology, language is not only a means of describing reality but also a dynamic force that creates and orders reality itself" ("Reading Through Peoplehood" 69). Thus claiming and using the language of the dominant culture to tell Native North American stories (and histories in particular), appropriates and changes that language to reflect contemporary Native needs, effectually ignoring those of the dominant culture. Episkenew calls this process "reinventing the enemy's language" and she argues similarly to Ortiz that:

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[7] This dissertation is aware that exclusively reading English-language texts explores only a "small part of a much broader expressive archive in many languages and forms" and will thus always be limited (*Our Fire Survives* 21).

> although English is not always their language of choice, today's writers use it to create literary works that aspire to accomplish many of the same aims as the oral stories did – to explain the history of the people, to buttress cultural practices and norms, and to articulate their relationship with the world. (11)

Episkenew here points to the fact that the English language has become part of a Native North American linguistics and that as such it has changed and is now as powerful in telling stories as Native languages are. Using the colonizer's language is thus not a tragic result of violent language loss but a conscious choice and challenge to the predominance of this language in its current form. Texts in English are thus necessary in reclaiming space.[8]

Additionally, while this dissertation uses Native North American as a general term, it does not attempt to change the terminology offered in the research used. Quotations will retain the author's intended choices. Using Native North American as a general term of course again raises the issue of generalization, as well as the settler-colonizer effort to homogenize the people indigenous to the United States.

This dissertation also moves between the terms settler-colonizer, euroamerican and western to denote different instances of a similar framework. Again, this is generalizing, and the dissertation is aware of this.

Note

It is further crucial to locate myself within this research: as a direct descendant of settler-colonizers, I am writing both from the outside and from a position of sustained historical privilege and power. As a white scholar, I hope to counter this existing bias by prioritizing Native scholarship, "not as a political gesture but as a sincere attempt to produce the most effective criticism" ("Strategies For Ethical Engagement" 64). I am keenly aware of the responsibilities inherent in the presented research; I do not stand to inherit direct adverse social effects (such as continued disenfranchisement, socio-political marginalization, cultural appropriation, acute climate anxiety, among others) that are connected to this dissertation in the way that are those that I have chosen to write about. My work is clearly limited in how it relates to Native North American communities, tribes and nations, and thus must function on multiple levels. I aim to write as an effective ally,

[8] There is of course also the very practical choice of writing texts in English; English language novels are easier to market and able to reach a wider audience than texts in other languages. Not only is this an essential monetary consideration, it also allows for a much wider dissemination of content.

offering research that intentionally upsets power-structures and creates the potential for change while realizing my own limits as a white person.

Chapter 1: The Native North American Historical Novel in Context

Introduction

Emerging alongside the realist novel in the nineteenth century, the historical novel is equally formative for the Western imagination. Where the realist novel arises from an intellectual shift "[rooted in] the position that truth can be discovered by the individual through [their] senses", historical fiction is seen to have evolved circumstantially in the aftermath of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars (Watt 12). Both the realist and the historical novel demonstrate an increasing interest in mimesis, moving away from speculative or supernatural elements, and towards truthful representation.

György Lukács argues that this period of political change saw unprecedented cross-border turmoil and movement, leading the general populace to realize their interconnections, their actions mattering across both space and time, spanning political boundaries and provoking future consequences (20). The realities of the French Revolution reverberated through Europe (and across the Atlantic), changing all aspects of euroamerican life, from political engagement, to governmental processes and the workings of private life and the military. History, for the first time, became a "mass experience" on a "European scale", transcending local realities (20). Being part of this mass experience determined connections between individuals and communities, creating an understanding of the existence as historical, as "an uninterrupted process of change" that directly impacted the lives of everyone, both in the present and future (20). History was, therefore, realized as development and progress, as gradually shaping society and creating community between the past and present, as well as between different groups of people, and across political boundaries. Consequently, life, as the expression of the lived past and present, was recognized as explicitly historical, as "steeped in the process of history" (de Groot, *The Historical Novel* 25).

Aim

This chapter begins by examining history as a concept, reserving particular attention to its inherent narrativity. History is understood as an act of narrative creation, the similarities between historiography and historical fiction striking and highly relevant. Both function as written accounts of the past, their objective truths reliant on cultural and political frames of reference. The theory considered includes

White's 1973 study *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth Century Europe* and his essay "Historical Emplotment and the Problem of Truth" (1992); the chapter here asks how history is written and remembered in a specifically western context, as well as a western product, and, in turn, how this western version of the past comes to control and shape the social, political and cultural status quo worldwide.

The chapter then moves away from a euroamerican framework and delineates Indigenous methodologies for approaching the past and its telling. Working with Smith's *Decolonizing Methodologies*, this section stipulates a critical reevaluation of euroamerican history and its written form. It pays particular attention to how western histories intentionally divest Indigenous peoples of power, and how, conversely, a reclaiming of history (specifically through text and story), reassigns power to Indigenous people. The chapter then seeks to define a theory of Native North American sovereignty anchored in the works of Taiaiake Alfred, Joanne Barker, Scott R. Lyons and David E. Wilkins, four Native North American theorists who consider different aspects of sovereignty as crucial for self-determination. The give-and-take between claiming history and claiming sovereignty is especially relevant here, and the approach presented includes prose as well as more canonically coded theory.

The chapter concludes with a foray back into western literary theory, discussing the historical novel as theorized by Lukács and de Groot. It delineates the genesis and development of the historical novel, as well as its place within the literary canon and its relationship with history overall. Finally, considering Velie's essay on the "Indian Historical Novel", as well as narrative theories formulated by Arnold Krupat, Leslie Marmon Silko and Gerald Vizenor, the chapter offers a definition of the Native North American historical novel as a distinct genre, hugely significant in the ongoing struggle for tribal, national and community sovereignty in northern America.

Writing History

In *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (1995), Michel-Rolph Trouillot suggests that history is a hybrid: both "the facts of the matter and a narrative of those facts", both "what happened" and "that which is said to have happened" at the same time (2). This distinction is nearly synonymous with Linda

Hutcheon's separation of the event (Trouillot's "what happened") and its history, or narrative (Trouillot's "that which is said to have happened") detailed in the dissertation's introduction. Both Hutcheon and Trouillot assert that while past events exist factually, these events have no meaning in and of themselves; it is the story created around the event that assigns meaning. Arguably, the narrative supersedes the event itself, and history is always already a storied version of the past. Within this framework, history is understood to be a narrative that tells "that which is said to have happened".

However, within a western context, history is commonly understood (and portrayed) as an objective and factual representation of the past, unaffected by considerations of narrative choice and ideology. Beginning in the nineteenth century, when history became more formally established as a science, the historian Leopold von Ranke introduced a new approach to writing history. Based in the study of (predominantly written) primary sources, he insists on a new historiography that was to tell "wie es eigentlich gewesen" (as it really was), casting historiography as a "sincere and valid reconstruction" of past events (de Groot, *The Historical Novel*, 33, 47). Previously, history had been much closer to a narrative telling of the past (and thus closer to the newly arising historical fiction) based less in analysis and interpretation of primary sources and more in a totalizing philosophy.[9] The shift proposed by Ranke cemented the belief that history was to be evidence-based and thus objective. This allowed both for its establishment as a science and for the development of a perceived dichotomy between the factuality of historiography (and thus popular history), and the fictionality of all other historical accounts (primary among them historical fiction).

This separation between fact and fiction is however difficult to maintain. While historiography insists on objectivity, historical fiction reveals the importance of narrative design to content: by merit of its composition as a formalized and structured text, historical fiction calls attention not only to its own narrativity but also to that of historiography. As de Groot argues:

[9] Ranke objected to Georg Friedrich Hegel's totalizing philosophy of history, arguing that human agency was more important than sweeping historical concepts. This criticism is essentially also the reasoning behind Ranke's turn towards written sources, thus allowing those who had documented past events to be crucial in the telling of history. Despite its claim to objectivity, Ranke's approach also introduced a first turn away from chronicles and macro history, and towards smaller histories.

> the type of novel [i.e., the historical novel] that gestures towards historical authenticity, but which consciously deploys fictional tropes to attain that quality, in some ways must demonstrate the gap between written text and truth. (de Groot, *The Historical Novel* 111)

By presenting the past in an explicitly fictional universe, the historical novel reveals the narrative strategies used in writing history. Consequently, history emerges not as an objective retelling but as a narrative that organizes, interprets and contextualizes the past in ways that are inherently similar to those used to develop plot and characterization in historical fiction. Historiography, and the history that it tells, is revealed as selective and constructed. Consequently, the distinction between historiography and historical fiction should be realized not as a question of fact versus fiction but as a question of genre ("Fiction for the Purpose" 223). Slotkin clarifies further that history and historical fiction need to be read as complimentary, as different in style and intent, yet comparable in expressing that which is said to have happened in the past. Thomas King formulates a similar idea in *The Inconvenient Indian* (2018), stating that history is always only a story told of the past, and that euroamerican history has been elevated to imply authentic representation, conversely marking other versions of the past (by Native North Americans, African Americans, Latinxs, etc.) as subjective and inaccurate.

Hayden White's Theory of Emplotment

Hayden White is arguably central to a western canon that regards history as narrative; rigorously scrutinizing the idea that history is a "neutral container of fact", he suggests instead that it works as a discourse ("Historical Emplotment" 37). Presaging Slotkin's proposed categories of genre, White separates historiography into four distinct categories, or modes of emplotment, ways "in which a sequence of events is fashioned into a story . . . gradually revealed to be a story of a particular kind" (*Metahistory* 7). White identifies these different modes as romance, tragedy, comedy, and satire. Each can be told using different formats of argument and from within different ideologies. Consequently:

> one narrative account may represent the same set of events as having the form and meaning of an epic or tragic story, and another may represent the same set of events – with equal plausibility and without doing any violence to the factual record – as describing a farce. ("Historical Emplotment" 38)

The histories ultimately diverge in the manner of telling, organization and interpretation, with the narrative told being essential to how history is ultimately understood and utilized.[10] White argues further that these various emplotments, arguments and ideologies are exhaustive, and that history writing from the nineteenth century onwards works solely within these parameters. It follows that every telling of the past is contingent on the historian's choice within these limitations. As Velie reiterates, "White's categories of emplotment apply to segments of histories, series of events, as well as complete historical works", consequently history as a whole is bound to specific ways of telling (392). Historians, who are constantly making theoretical and methodological choices while working from within a particular socio-cultural and political context, choose specific narratives to tell specific histories. Historiography is thus exposed as subjective, bound to a set of narrative conventions, similar to historical fictions.

History and Power

While White critically delineates how history is told, he does not elaborate on why particular histories take precedent over others. King addresses this peripherally, explaining that euroamerican history imagines the past as:

> a grand structure, a national chronicle, a closely organized and guarded record of agreed-upon events and interpretations, a bundle of authenticities and truths welded into a flexible yet conservative narrative that explains how we got from here to there. (*Inconvenient* 3)

King here emphasizes that history is structured and organized, as well as conservative and chronological; clearly marking it as something created that follows a specific trajectory.[11] Episkenew further defines what King calls the "grand

[10] This is of course fundamental. An example here are different approaches to telling nineteenth century westward expansion across northern America. A romance would center the stalwart character of the pioneers, telling history in a contextualist mode and from a conservative ideology that describes the move westward within the framework of manifest destiny and white progress, ultimately marking the United States as purveyors of civilization. Alternatively, westward expansion can be written as a tragedy, stressing Native-settler contact, ultimately lamenting the demise of Native North American peoples. Within a contextualist argument and liberal ideology, this tragedy stresses the recurrent demise of "less advanced" peoples in the face of "more advanced" groups and presents the U.S. as spreading democratic values across the continent. The events here remain the same while the narrative changes; the United States expands towards the West during the nineteenth century, exerting claims to land; the Native North American populations decrease. Further Reading: White, "Historical Emplotment and the Problem of Truth", CUP 1992.

[11] King here also alludes to the linearity inherent in telling western versions of history. Deloria argues that not only is euroamerican history dependent on the idea of progress through time, euroamerican identity itself necessitates the "assumption that time proceeds in a linear fashion", allowing history to

structure" of history as "a summary of the stories that embody the settlers' socially shared understanding", stressing that North American history is a narrative written by and for the settler- colonizer (Episkenew 2).

In *Decolonizing Methodologies*, Smith explicitly investigates the power structures that underlie the primacy of the euroamerican master narrative, focusing on the role of history. Like King and Episkenew, she assumes a grand narrative that is used systematically to maintain a reality that privileges the West. Smith argues that colonizers actively worked (and continue to work) to establish their presence and ideologies as truth, while simultaneously erasing and replacing Indigenous thought and histories (29).[12]

Jean O'Brien (Anishinaabe) elaborates on this erasure, detailing the practice of "firsting, replacing, and lasting" in United States historiography. Analyzing "local texts" from nineteenth-century New England, O'Brien argues that these early texts told very particular "stories about the Indian past, present and future" (xiii). She writes that:

> the collective story these texts told insisted that non-Indians held exclusive sway over modernity, denied modernity to Indians, and in the process created a narrative of Indian extinction that has stubbornly remained in the consciousness and unconsciousness of Americans. (xiii)

Essential for these narratives is word choice; repeated use of words such as "discovery", "settlement" and "first" create a picture that indicates the beginning of the United States as inherently bound to the arrival of the settler-colonizer. O'Brien writes that the pervasive use of the word "first" in naming and commemorating houses, business, schools, and towns, as well as "acts of civilization", casually and categorically suggests a former absence, "as if there had never been occupants who thrived in those places before Euro-Americans" (Dunbar-Ortiz 9).

"document" the development from savagery to civilization and beyond (Singer 63). Based in Hegel's understanding of history, euroamerican history is presumed to be "a succession of events" following "logical" categories (63). Such a version of history anticipates change over time, a forward movement which allows for placing Europeans and settler-colonizers at the pinnacle of civilization while relegating others to various grades of savagery. This is discussed further in chapter four, contextualizing the links between linear history, Christian theology and the establishment of nation states and colonialism.

[12] There is a similar argument in *The Empire Writes Back*; Ashcroft et al. write that in a colonial context, "control is always manifested by the imposed authority of a system of writing", implying that all interactions between colonizer and colonized perpetuate a power imbalance based in the colonizer's ability to control that which is being written, and thus the historical narrative (78). Asserting this kind of control allows the colonizer to structure the history of colonization, thus creating the prevailing master narrative.

Labeling a settler school as the "first school" within an area immediately implies that there were no schools before; this not only suggests an act of "civilization" – schooling – being absent before, it also necessitates the settler-colonizer in this act and denigrates the peoples who existed before as "un-civilized" and thus consigned to a "savage" past.

Other instances of "firsting" exist already in the titles of local histories. O'Brien names, for example, Enoch Sanford's 1870 *History of Raynham, Massachusetts, from the First Settlement to the Present Time*, as well as Sidney Perley's *The History of Boxford Essex County, Massachusetts, from the Earliest Settlement Known to the Present Time, a Period of about Two Hundred and Thirty Years* (1). Both Sanford and Perley's titles delineate local history as bound to settler-colonizer settlement, erasing any history or peoples that or who had come before. Another example of firsting is the titling of "first landings" and "first steps" on North American land, again implaying an absence of others already existing there. O'Brien here quotes from James Thatcher's *History of the Town of Plymouth*, detailing the "first landing". Thatcher writes, "this, then, is to be considered as the first stepping on the Rock of the Pilgrims from the shallop belonging to the Mayflower, and this is the birth day of our nation" (qtd. in O'Brien 8). Again, there is the insistence on "first stepping", as well as the "birthday" of the United States as such. Both assert a beginning in the arrival of the settler-colonizers, ignoring the existence of the Indigenous populations of Massachusetts. One further example, which returns to the idea of civilization, is the depiction of the "first washing-day at Cape Cod", an etching showing women washing near the shore protected by a group of armed men. O'Brien argues that "such depictions suggest that the English brought cleanliness and domesticity with them to a place where they never existed before" while also establishing a euroamerican understanding of gender dynamics at the same time (11).

Concurrently, the grand narrative insists on replacing and "lasting" Indigenous existence. An important part of replacing is the commemoration of both national and local moments of settlement. While national celebrations of the Fourth of July or Thanksgiving supported the "forging of political culture and nationalism in the early Republic" (stressing the modernity of the settler-colonizers), local commemoration of settlement and incorporation emphasized tradition, "claiming indigeneity for [the settler colonizers]" (72, 73). By repeatedly arguing and

celebrating "first settlement", "local texts insist that Indian settlements and political organizations failed to assert plausible claims to place" thus emphasizing settler-colonizer right and "indigeneity" to their current place (74).

In addition, replacing was achieved through the use of designations such as "the oldest" in describing houses, businesses, etc. Ralph D. Smith's *The History of Guilford, Connecticut* (1877) shows the picture of "The Old Stone House, Erected A. D. 1639" describing it as "the oldest dwelling-house now standing in the United States" built by Mr. Whitfield "erected both for the accommodation of his family and as a fortification for the protection of the inhabitants against the Indians" (qtd. in O'Brien 102). This again suggests not only that the oldest building in the United States was built by settler-colonizers, it also simultaneously claims the non-existence of Indigenous dwelling houses and thus of Indigenous peoples overall.[13]

The final step in attempting to erase Indigenous presence is the insistence on Native North American lastness: the "last Indians", or "last tribes", such as "the last of the Mohicans", or "Ishi, the last Indian", imply a final disappearance of Native North Americans in northern America (Dunbar-Ortiz 9). Native North Americans were often times celebrated and remembered, particularly if the narrative established purported "noble Indians" who helped the settler-colonizers, yet these remembrances were inseparably bound to the idea of the "vanishing Indian". While the settler-colonizers signified civilization, progress and modernity, Native North Americans were established as static, unable to change and progress, and thus of the past.[14]

These nineteenth century writings would form the basis for future understanding of Native North American history; they clearly demarcate the arrival of the settler-colonizers as the beginning of U.S. American history while attempting to erase Native North Americans from a national history, except as a quaint anecdote of times past. Smith and O'Brien here point towards both the conscious effort and the lasting impact of narrative construction within history – establishing historical

[13] Incidentally, it also necessitates the existence of Native North Americans, as a reason for the erection of the house. However, it also immediately suggests that a stone house – a sign of western civilization – is all that is needed to protect against the "savagery" of the Indigenous population; by extension this also implies that many stone houses (of which this is the first) will prevail over the Indigenous population – finally indicating that civilization tops savagery.

[14] The summary of O'Brien's argument presented here is by far not exhaustive; her detailed analysis of the importance of capitalism, as well as the nuanced portrayal of the racialized components of firsting, replacing and lasting in particular are only sketched here. Further reading: O'Brien, Jean. *Firsting and Lasting. Writing Indians out of Existence in New England*, University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

"truth" creates a contemporary reality that does not have to contend with Native North Americans by virtue of their commensurate "lastness".

Excursion: Discovery

As mentioned above, the claim of discovery – which goes hand in hand with the idea of the "virgin land" – is an elemental part of firsting, replacing, and lasting. Both discovery and the virgin land imply that there was nothing substantial (culturally, socially, or politically) in the Americas before the arrival of the Europeans. Like the "first landings" and "first steps" of the Pilgrims, Christopher Columbus's encounter with the Americas has been carefully crafted and curated as foundational to the origin story of the United States. Discovery has been established as fact in popular history despite the vast proliferation of Indigenous peoples in North and South America at the time of Columbus's stumbling across the Bahamas.[15] Continuous use of the word "discovery" not only negates centuries of Indigenous histories while presupposing the beginning of U.S. American history as contingent on the settler-colonizer, it also suggests the necessity of white arrival in utilizing the land and its resources. Discovery implies an antecedent idleness that is further perpetuated by the idea of "discovering gold", or "discovering oil", etc.[16]

It also facilitates a settler-colonizer narrative that categorizes Native North Americans as closer to local flora and fauna, than as human beings. In *The Truth About Stories*, King quotes Columbus's commentary on Indigenous Americans:

> these people are poor in everything . . . they go quite naked as their mothers bore them . . . They bear no arms, nor know thereof; they are generally fairly tall and good-looking . . . they ought to be good servants and of good skill, . . . I believe they would easily be made Christian, because it seemed to me that they belonged to no religion. (70)

[15] While recent decades have seen a process of revision in the United States, both within academic and popular history, schoolbooks maintain the idea of discovery, and Columbus Day remains a national holiday, the celebration of which was viewed positively by around 60% of the U.S. population in 2015 (qtd. in Edwards-Levy). Columbus remains a cornerstone of U.S. American identity.

[16] Both gold and oil existed before the arrival of the settler colonizer; in *Riding the Trail*, Tallulah Wilson comments on this depiction of discovery, telling her audience that "De Soto never actually discovered any gold in 1540. And the Americans never actually discovered any gold in 1828 either. And this takes us back to the uncomfortable question of whether a traveler can actually discover something that is already common knowledge for the people who actually live in that area" (65). While Tallulah presents this as an anecdote to challenge her group of tourists, it is clear that Hausman is trying to fundamentally unsettle the idea of discovery, casting it as a settler-colonizer invention that yet again privileges white experiences while overwriting those of Indigenous populations.

Despite the statement that they "ought to be good servants" and "would easily be made Christian", this observation does not seem aggressively negative. King states further that the "explorers who came after Columbus would describe Native people in much the same way", stressing their civility, good looks and intelligence (*Truth About Stories* 70).[17] With increasing settlement these narratives however changed, "the language used to describe Indians intensified" (73). Not only did the overall narrative shift towards firsting and lasting, it also began to depict Native North Americans as "savage" and "uncivilized", "fit only to be pushed aside and subordinated" (75).[18] King finally quotes Reverend Johannis Michaluis who described Native North Americans as "savage and wild, strangers to all decency, yea, uncivil and stupid as garden poles" (77).

Importantly, this shift also manifested in the histories of early Puritan settlement. While O'Brien's firsting and lasting focuses principally on erasing and replacing Native North American presence from United States history, the insistence on marking Indigenous peoples as violent and dangerous also fed the discussion around the treatment of Native North Americans. As "uncivilized" Native North Americans "needed" to be removed, they had to make space for settler colonizer "civilization" to unfold. One important historical narrative is Cotton Mather's *Magnalia Christi Americana* (1702) which documents religious development in New England (with a focus on Massachusetts). Mather, a Puritan clergyman, is considered one of the first to document and historicize a captivity narrative, telling the story of Hannah Dustan who was taken captive by a group of Abenaki in 1697. Mather interviewed Dustan after her return, including the story of her escape in his history. Dustan claims that after being kidnapped by the Abenaki, they killed her baby; she finally managed to escape after killing and scalping ten members (including

[17] King also remarks that Amerigo Vespucci and Francis Drake described "Indians as indecent, immoral and cannibalistic", while worrying about the "influence that the Devil held over them", demonstrating that there were negative portrayals from the beginning of contact (*Truth About Stories* 71).

[18] The narrative of firsting and lasting in historical narratives (as described above) was further compounded by portraying violent Native North American behavior in fiction; King here mentions John Richardson's 1852 novel *Wau-Nan-Gee, or, The Massacre at Chicago*, which has detailed descriptions of a group of Potawatomies cannibalizing a group of pioneers. "Squatted in a circle, and within a few feet of the wagon in which the tomahawked children lay covered with blood, and fast stiffening in the coldness of death, now sat about twenty Indians … passing from hand to hand the quivering heart of the slain man" (qtd. in *Truth About Stories* 100). Clearly, cannibalism and dead children suggest a frightening and unnecessarily violent Native North American population, easily juxtaposed with the civilized and forward thinking settler-colonizer.

children) of the family holding her captive. Dustan's captivity narrative set a precedent for others of its kind (usually removed however from New England to a setting closer to the Frontier), used as a reason for defending settler colonizer aggression against Native North Americans: the violence against "innocent" women and children justified the sweeping genocide of Native North Americans.

Dustan's story was also taken up by Nathaniel Hawthorne and Henry David Thoreau, demonstrating its lasting impact on the U.S. American imagination.[19]

This depiction of Native North Americans by the settler colonizer coalesced in both a clear image of "the" Native North American – as uncivilized and savage – and an immediate reason to either outrightly eliminate or assimilate; a necessary component of expanding the political boundaries of the United States.

Dunbar-Ortiz elaborates on these historical observations, formulating theory and detailing the impact that such claims have in the present. She argues that origin narratives (of any kind) "form the vital core of a people's unifying identity and of the values that guide them" (3). Arguably, discovery facilitates and necessitates the erasure of Native North American history and existence more generally, as well as cementing ideas of white racial superiority. Slotkin further defines the narrative of discovery as a national mythology, as one of the "stories drawn from a society's history that have acquired through persistent usage the power of symbolizing that society's ideology and of dramatizing its moral consciousness" (*Gunfighter Nation* 6). Slotkin introduces several crucial points here. Most importantly, he draws a connection between ideology and moral consciousness, an essential link for understanding how societies chose what to remember and mythologize and how the results construct national identities as well as national narratives. Founding mythologies (or origin narratives) identify specific elements of historical events that imply moral character and assign this to a greater national identity. Slotkin's use of the word "stories" further points to the narrative construction of founding mythologies, emphasizing that these myths are versions of the past (similar to Hutcheon's and Trouillot's narratives of the past) that are not "based on historical fact, but on a set of assumptions about what the past was like" (Vance 9). These

[19] Hawthorne published a short story titled "The Duston Family" in 1836, which tells of Duston's captivity and escape. Hawthorne, contrary to Mather, is critical of Hannah Duston, calling her a "bloody old hag" and an "awful woman" and marking her as someone not to be celebrated but feared (Hawthorne in Salem). Thoreau discussed Dustan in *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* (1849), focusing on the killings perpetrated by Duston and their moral and social repercussions.

translations between event and history are at the center of national origin narratives and crucial to understanding how the United States understand and present themselves. Historical events are thus stripped of their complexities and reduced to a popular, simplified narrative. Through retelling and reuse, these narratives are then raised to a level of abstraction and conventionalization. Ultimately, the historical event believed to be at the core of the narrative is reduced to a "deeply encoded and resonant set of symbols, icons, keywords, or historical clichés" that can be easily processed and repeated (*Gunfighter Nation* 5). Essentially, myths of origin are versions of White's emplotment, historical events pared down to their usefulness and presented as objective points of reference.

Dunbar-Ortiz emphasizes that the United States understands itself as an exceptional nation, this "exceptionalist ideology used to justify appropriation of the continent and the domination of the rest of the world" (47). She writes that while "all modern nation-states claim a kind of rationalized origin story upon which they fashion patriotism" the United States relies on an exceptionalism based in the Christian covenant (47). "According to myth" writes Dunbar Ortiz:

> the faithful citizens come together of their own free will and pledge to each other and to their god to form and support a godly society, and their god in turn vouchsafes them prosperity in a promised land. (47)

American society is thus not only extraordinary, it also has the protection of the Christian god.[20] Clearly, a language that marks Native North Americans as stupid and barbaric – as do the accounts of Mather, Drake, Michaluis, and others – works within this system of exceptional settler-colonizers, strengthening the juxtaposition of whites and Native North Americans.

Sovereignty

These ideas of providence and exceptionality create a nurturing ground for enacting a national sovereignty that puts the settler colonial nation first while denying Native North American political autonomy – despite a history of treaty making and the official recognition necessary to make these treaties.

[20] This covenant and exceptionality are particularly relevant in chapter three when discussing how narratives of war build and support the nation state.

Historically, "Indian tribes were recognized . . . as legitimate entities, capable of dealing with European nations by treaty" (*American Indians, American Justice* 19). The treaty was considered the official "basis for defining legal and political relationships between the Indians and the European colonists" (19). This meant that individual Native North American nations were able to sign treaties with the United States as sovereign bodies. However, in 1832, Native North American nations were reclassified as domestic dependent nations, effectively subject to the jurisdiction of the U.S. government. Finally, in 1871, the United States ceased all recognition of individual Native North American nations or tribes within its geographical and political borders, ending the process of treaty-making as well as the practice of recognizing sovereign Native North American nations.

There has been a concerted effort to reinstate Native North American sovereignties since the mid-twentieth century; these efforts refer back to original treaties as well as to the inherent sovereignty of Native North American nations. The following section delineates the concept of sovereignty, first within a western framework and then as a Native North American politics.

Euroamerican Sovereignty

The euroamerican concept of sovereignty is conditional on the nation, the "independent political state formed from a people who share a common national identity (historically, culturally, or ethnically)" (Oxford Reference). This "common national identity" stems from a "rich legacy of memories [combined with] present consent, the desire to live together, the desire to continue to invest in the heritage . . . jointly received" (Renan 10). Anthony Smith further defines the modern nation state as a "named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and memories, . . . a public culture, a single economy and common rights and duties for all members" (comp. Gellner). Both Renan and Smith insist that the nation depends on a communal commitment to remembering a shared past, as well as on specific geographic boundaries, and the sustained wish to remain within this political and cultural constellation.

This idea of the nation is distinctly European, later transferred to a global context. Established fully in the nineteenth century, the nation (as a political reality) was eased into existence by changes to education, literacy, and the media. Evidently, the rise of the historical novel (and the novel more generally) coincides with the

establishment of the nation as a viable political body. This simultaneous development supports the prevalent argument that historical fiction was used as a vehicle for nationalism, thus both reflecting and creating the politics of the time.[21]

There is however continued debate as to how the nation relates to nationalism and, by extension, to ideas of national sovereignty. While some political theorists argue that nations developed out of preexisting political unions, dependent on new conceptualizations of capitalism and spatial boundaries, political autonomy (or sovereignty) ultimately creating an experience of national belonging, others argue that nationalist movements developed to create sovereignty, the nation state established to meet the demand for an eventual state sovereignty (Gellner).

Despite this argument, the idea of sovereignty is regarded as essential in discussing the nation state and vice versa. Defined as "the *supreme authority* within a *territory*", sovereignty necessitates the nation state as geographic boundary (Philpott, italics added). As follows, sovereignty implies that the "holder of sovereignty derives authority [from a] mutually acknowledged source of legitimacy", which can be natural or hereditary law, divine authority, the process of voting, or something similar (Philpott). This then extends from the ruler of an absolute monarchy to the governing body of a democracy; authority lies within a specific format of administration. Sovereignty is further dependent on supremacy; the governing body must be the highest authority, thus ruling supreme. And, thirdly, sovereignty is bound to a specific territory; as Philpott states, "territoriality is a principle by which members of a community are to be defined"; sovereignty is only considered sovereign within a geographically bounded area – sovereignty must furthermore be recognized not only inside national borders but also outside of them, precluding the necessity of multiple sovereign states. While sovereignty "amounts to one of the most formidable and successful political trends in modern time", the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have seen certain adjustments that make space for cross-border unions, such as the European Union. Ostensibly diluting the sovereignty of each individual member state, the core attributes of sovereignty remain intact (Philpott). State sovereignty remains the global norm and is the "only form of polity ever to cover the entire land surface of the globe" (Philpott).

[21] This connection is further discussed in the section on Lukács's definition of the historical novel.

In *Imagining Sovereignty: Self-Determination in American Indian Law and Literature* (2016), David Carlson suggests that contemporary western ideas of sovereignty must be considered "synonymous with state sovereignty" underlining the link between the state and socio-political autonomy (19). Carlson elaborates that modern sovereignty is thus defined as "the idea that supreme legislative and political authority is located in the nation state" and that "these nation states are legally independent, formally autonomous, and geographically separate and are thus entitled to be free from interference by other states in their internal governance" (19). This definition entails that sovereignty relates to internal authority and includes independence from outside interference. Cobb argues similarly, that while a nation state's sovereignty is inherent, its "power in the world" is based on "the recognition, acknowledgment, and respect" afforded by other nations" (117). Additionally, Jack Forbes (Chickahominy) states that the term sovereignty has "come to be regarded as the equivalent of an autonomous state" that is free from "external control" (14). Like Carlson and Cobb, Forbes also insists on a strong connection between the nation state and sovereignty, this link key to the western understanding of sovereignty.

Native North American Sovereignties

By contrast, the concept of sovereignty is contentious for Native North American activists and academics, as well as within Indigenous Studies more generally. Cobb succinctly states that "the significance of [sovereignty] cannot be underestimated; consequently, it is a contested term, carrying with it multiple meanings and multiple implications for Native nations" (115). As a European idea, Native North American critics such as Taiaiake Alfred and Joanne Barker have argued that sovereignty as such is an unusable concept in any Indigenous context. Alfred in particular asserts that an idea as instrumental to the development of the western world and the spread of colonial violence, should necessarily not be used when discussing and advocating for Native North American claims to political and cultural autonomy (see "Sovereignty"). At the same time, Lyons argues that it is always necessary to use a common language when making political demands; he asks, "how can [Native North American] nations make specific claims to anything at all without using the universal language, terminology, and conceptual apparatus of nations in general?", pointing to the difficulties of establishing autonomy within a

system that demands conformity while also inherently negating the claims that are being made (*X-Marks* 135).[22]

Alfred initially suggests that sovereignty is not only inappropriate in the context of Native North American socio-political concerns, he also states that it is a misconception that Native North Americans are striving for the same political status and recognition that western nation states are looking for ("Sovereignty" 42). At the most extreme, Native North American claims to autonomy imply (and demand) a reversal of settler-colonialism, a vacating of stolen land.[23] Alfred argues concurrently that striving for tribal sovereignty within the parameters of western politics weakens and undermines any actual efforts towards Native North American self-determination: by working within and accepting the dominant system, real political power becomes elusive. He argues further that "a paradigm bounded by the vocabulary, logic, and institutions of sovereignty will be blind to the persistent intent to maintain the colonial oppression of indigenous nations" – this ultimately is his call to entirely "[reject] the term and notion of indigenous sovereignty" ("Sovereignty" 41). He eschews sovereignty as "inappropriate as a political objective for indigenous peoples", as "Western ideas and institutions can do nothing to ease the pain of colonization ("Sovereignty" 38, *Peace, Power and Righteousness* 41).

Audra Simpson (Mohawk) echoes Alfred's arguments, claiming that "refusal is an alternative to recognition"; she indicates that rejecting the construct of sovereignty as applicable to Native North American needs is a political choice rooted in a history of oppression and misuse that is productive in its own right (178). Accordingly, Simpson writes that "Indigenous policies require a deep historical accounting to contextualize the processes that appear anomalous, illiberal, of illogical" to others (178). Sovereignty is here marked as a western politics that while considered universal, is anything but. It privileges a euroamerican framework expressly built to marginalize non-western others and their political systems.

[22] This is a common, yet difficult, argument made in postcolonial, Indigenous, and transnational contexts. Ngugi wa Thiong'o has consistently argued that using the English language to tell Kenyan stories is counterproductive, as writing from within the language of the colonizer strengthens the colonizer. Similarly, Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha have used non-standard English to express new theories, arguing that one cannot assume to change western hegemony by using the same tools.
[23] Coincidentally, this political position runs parallel with the predominant cast in Native North American historical fiction that wishes to create a separate history that while connected to the history of northern America, stands separately. This claim to separation is a political and socio-cultural cornerstone of Native North American activism.

Accordingly, Simpson dismisses the applicability of sovereignty in an Indigenous context.

Barker, while similarly critical of sovereignty, offers a historical approach that highlights the:

> blatant contradictions . . . between the recognition of the sovereignty of Indigenous peoples through the entire apparatus of treaty making, and the unmitigated negation of Indigenous peoples' status and rights by national legislation, military action and judicial decision. ("For Whom Sovereignty Matters" 6)

While the original treaties, defining possession of land, resource ownership, freedom from persecution, etc., are based in the official recognition of Native North American nations as independent and sovereign, the realization of these treaties pushed Native North American nations away from self-determination. Thus, Indian Nations were only considered sovereign states when (and as long as) it suited the United States government, i.e., until the end of the nineteenth century.[24]

Wilkins and K. Tsianina Lomawaima (Creek) add a further dimension to Barker's approach, arguing that as "tribes existed before the United States of America" tribal sovereignty is a "more mature" version of sovereignty that predates the Constitution and should thus exist outside of it (5). A 1988 concession by the United States Senate supports this claim; the statement reads:

> the confederation of the original 13 colonies into one republic was influenced by the political system developed by the Iroquois Confederacy, as were many of the democratic principles which were incorporated into the constitution itself. (Select Committee on Indian Affairs)

The Iroquois political system is here recognized not only as the basis for that of the United States, it is thus also recognized as having existed without and prior to the establishment of the United States; a claim that however has made no political impact on U.S.-Native North American political exchange.

[24] While the United States Supreme Court has consistently argued in favor of Native North American sovereignty (with regards to treaty rights), individual states and governing powers have ignored rulings without repercussions. An example, unpacked further in chapter two, is the 1832 Supreme Court ruling in Cherokee Nation v Georgia, which ruled that the Cherokee (and other Nations) had the legal right to govern themselves as sovereign nations. However, the state of Georgia ignored the ruling and decided in favor of white settlers who wanted to mine gold and own land – ultimately, the Cherokee were removed from their lands, ignoring their sovereign power, without any consequences to the federal or national government.

Louis Hall (Mohawk) observes similarly that Native North American sovereignty predates euroamerican concepts of the same. He states that "for the white race the nation is a recent concept" dependent on gradually eschewing monarchies for democracies and republics (qtd. in Simpson 26). He continues that:

> when the red and white races met, all the countries of Europe were kingdoms. In a kingdom, only the monarch has sovereignty. Everything and everyone belonged to the king. A true nation is where the authority flows upward from the people to the installed leaders, as in the case of the Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy . . . the world's first people's republic and the first to make a national constitution, a state far [ahead] of any then known. (qtd. in Simpson 26)

Arguably, this idea of sovereignty is highly problematic and deeply frightening for a settler-colonizer reality contingent on cultural, political and racial superiority. Not only does Hall show that Native North Americans are proficient in formulating political thought and action, it also casts the Iroquois Confederacy as "equal" to settler colonizer society. Such a declaration unsettles the idea that Native North Americans are "an anachronistic relic of an early moment in the history of man locked in a state of nature without history and without a future", and that they would vanish when "confronted with the pinnacle of human civilization, the new United States – an argument needed to maintain racial separation and superiority (McLoughlin, *After the Trail* 4). The fact of pre-contact Iroquois sovereignty rejects United States dominance and disrupts an identity based on being exceptional.[25]

Wilkins outlines further how relevant sovereignty is in the Native North American day-to-day. Not only does it allow for regulating political realities such as economy, trade or law, it also contributes to identity formation by demarcating who is part of the sovereign state and who is not. Arguably, using the concept of sovereignty retains a plethora of essential political powers that are valuable to all nations. Furthermore, as Cobb argues in "Understanding Tribal Sovereignty", "at base, sovereignty is a nation's power to self-govern, to determine its own way of life, and to live that life . . . free from interference" (118). This is very relevant for Native North American sovereignty, "which by and large shares [similar] attributes" (118).

[25] This connection between sovereignty and time, particularly in the context of establishing superiority through progress, is discussed further in chapter four.

Even Alfred contends that "the positive effect of the sovereignty movement in terms of mental, physical, and emotional health cannot be denied of understated" ("Sovereignty" 39). He alludes here to a host of practical powers that accompany potential sovereignty. Wilkins summarily delineates these powers as:

> the power to adopt [ones] own form of government; to define the conditions of citizenship/membership in the nation; to regulate the domestic relations of the nations' citizens/members . . . to remove or exclude nonmembers of the tribe; to administer justice. (20)

Sovereignty is thus revealed as essential to Native North American autonomy in the twenty-first century.

However, a reluctance to simply translate the western conception of sovereignty to Native North American needs remains. Notably, Carlson claims that sovereignty from its inception has been a changeable idea that can and should be adapted to different – here Native – needs, rather than adapting different needs to a static concept. The need thus is for a Native North American sovereignty that "[emanates] from the unique identity and culture of peoples and [is] therefore an inherent and inalienable right of peoples to the qualities customarily associated with nations" ("For Whom Sovereignty Matters" 3). Barker, while echoing Alfred's premise of removing sovereignty from always implying the nation state, circles back to the question of identity and culture. Native North American sovereignty is seen as having to relate specifically to the people and the community. Similar to Barker, Lyons argues that "it has always been from an understanding of themselves as a people that Indian groups have constructed themselves as a nation" ("Rhetorical Sovereignty" 452). Cobb further demands that the "discourse surrounding" sovereignty must be used productively, as "a critical tool to strengthen tribal culture, political, and economic autonomy", echoing Wilkins's practical powers (122). Contrary to the euroamerican conceptualization of sovereignty, Native North American sovereignty thus needs to be understood as based in the people themselves and not in apparatuses of the government, or the political bodies that guide them. Alfred sees this as a historical reality, arguing that "the indigenous tradition sees government as the collective power of the individual members of the nation; there is no separation between society and state" (*Peace, Power and Righteousness* 25).

Clara Sue Kidwell (Choctaw) and Alan Velie argue similarly to Cobb and Carlson, ultimately removing Native North American sovereignty from the

restrictions of the state, reframing the term as explicitly cultural: "although sovereignty is generally considered a political issue, it is also deeply embedded in culture, that is the association between sovereignty and cultural integrity" (75). This understanding of culture as central to Native North American sovereignty is significant. Wilkins states that "continued cultural integrity" is in effect more important to sovereignty than "political powers", asserting that "to the degree that a nation loses its sense of cultural identity, to that degree it suffers a loss of sovereignty" (21). Culture and sovereignty are thus inherently connected.

Understanding Native North American sovereignty as a continuous development that grows and changes depending on the needs of the people, entails the idea of sovereignty as an ongoing story, of sovereignty both as narrative and process. It corresponds to Robert Warrior's (Osage) understanding of sovereignty as "a process of building", it is thus not static but an active process, making sovereignty "a decision [made] in our minds, in our hearts, and in our bodies" that evolves over time and must never come to a final conclusion (91). This kind of sovereignty is based "on the notion of sovereignty as an open-ended process, a beginning step rather than an ending" growing a tribal and communal sense of self-determination that is both productive and unbounded (Cobb 128).

Accordingly, this dissertation works with the following definition of Native North American, or tribal, sovereignty: it is independent of the nation state; instead, it relates to cultural and communal continuance; it is closely tied to narrative and storytelling; it is collective rather than individual; it maintains Indigenous existence in northern America.[26] Sovereignty is thus essential.

[26] This definition has one conspicuous absence, that of geography. Cook-Lynn argues that the concept of sovereignty always "entails as a central goal the preservation (or reclamation) of an autonomously ruled tribal land base and the tribally specific knowledge embedded in it" (qtd. in Carlson 107). While this is highly relevant it is not necessarily viable in the current circumstance. Not only has land been irrevocably lost (through treaties, to development, nuclear tests, national parks, etc.), there is also a rising number of Urban Indians who live in cities and no longer have access to land. Within a European definition of sovereignty, space is a necessary characteristic that defines where sovereignty is to be had. When first interacting with Native North Americans, settler-colonizers were unable to understand a relationship with land that did not depend on individual ownership. They thus imposed their European ideas. Accordingly, "the rights over territory would thus come to closely resemble the rights of private individuals over property" (Carlson 22). Ultimately Deloria and Lytle argue that "much of the power that the federal government exercises over Indian affairs emanates from the concept of ultimate federal ownership of Indian land its sovereignty over it" (27). This dissertation does not go in to detail about Native North American geographies and relationships to space – this would however be a very relevant topic for further discussion, particularly within the context of historical fiction.

Arguably, the writing of historical fiction is instrumental to creating and continuing culture: writing Native North American pasts affords the possibility of building a shared history that locates and strengthens origins, identity and continuity in northern America, i.e., creating lasting sovereignty. Telling stories thus creates a means of recording pasts for present and future generations. Sovereignty becomes "the guiding story" in the Native North American "pursuit of self-determination, the general strategy by which we aim to best re-cover our losses from the ravages of colonization: our lands, our languages, our cultures, our self-respect" ("Rhetorical Sovereignty" 450). This idea of a "guiding story" again speaks to the importance of Indigenous literature in general, and Native North American historical fiction in particular. Sovereignty, as Lyons imagines it, is storytelling and conversely, storytelling is sovereignty. Cobb summarizes Lyons's argument, stating that essentially, by casting sovereignty in "narrative terms, [it] becomes the ongoing story of [Native] peoples – [their] own continuance" (125). It also connects immediately with Vizenor's idea of survivance, the ongoing story echoed in "the continuance of native stories" that renounce "dominance, tragedy and victimry" (*Manifest Manners* vii). Survivance and sovereignty move together, Native North American storying of the past and present are cornerstones of creating tribal and national sovereignty. In *Peace, Power and Righteousness*, Alfred argues that:

> the only way we can survive is to recover our strength, our wisdom, and our solidarity by honoring and revitalizing the core of our traditional teachings. Only be heeding the voices of our ancestors can we restore our nations and put peace, power, and righteousness back into the hearts and minds of our people. (xii)

While not explicitly stated, the reference to traditional teaching as well as listening to ancestral voices points to a processing of history for cultivating a present that engenders productive Native North American existence. Joseph Bruchac echoes this necessity of returning to traditions, specifically returning through story. He states that Native North American stories are told to "entertain and teach but also to heal" (*Roots of Survival* ix). Episkenew expands on Bruchac's claim, arguing that:

> not only does Indigenous literature respond to and critique the policies of the government . . . it also functions as medicine to help cure the colonial

> contagion by healing the communities that these policies have injured. It accomplishes this by challenging the master narrative. (2)

While both Bruchac and Episkenew stress the healing powers of stories, Episkenew also specifically invokes a political element to storytelling that goes beyond personal and communal healing and suggests a strong political dimension inherent in Native North American storytelling. Silko argues similarly and introduces the idea of stories as sustenance. She writes:

> I will tell you something about stories / They aren't just entertainment / Don't be fooled / They are all we have, you see / All we have to fight off / Illness and death. You don't have anything / if you don't have the stories. (*Ceremony* 2)

Again, the argument here is that stories are not only for pleasure only but that they have an impact and necessity with regards to illness and death. Silko suggests that stories have the power to stop (or to invoke) death – translated to the larger discourse of historical fiction, this suggests that writing a Native North American past allows an escape from death and disappearance, using story constructively to establish presence in the world. Thus, telling and writing stories is an essential means of existing in the world. Heid E. Erdrich is even more explicit, stating that "for Native American creative writers, writing into a specific cultural, tribal, or national tradition is the assertion of literary sovereignty" (Erdrich 14). The act of writing, of telling Native North American stories through a Native North American lens, functions as a means of establishing stories and histories within the popular culture, but also importantly within a Native North American universe.

King relates a specifically historical aspect, elaborating on the power of stories that are told by others about the self. He elaborates that:

> innumerable stories have been told about us that bear little or no resemblance to the true realities of American Indian life – past or present. So much so that even Indians may sometimes be confused about themselves, especially when our own stories and traditions, our family structures, and even our original languages have been denied to us. (*Truth About Stories* 34)

King here not only mentions the misrepresentation suffered at the hands of wrong stories; he also emphasizes the impact that such stories have on Native North Americans themselves. Relegated to the past, described as savage and uncivilized, such stories establish themselves as reality not only in the eyes of the settler

colonizers but also in the imagination of Native North Americans themselves.[27] Continuous repetition of victimhood and genocide erase present existence and these narratives become, to a certain extent, fact.

Finally, Mark Rifkin focuses on the regenerative aspect of storytelling, asserting that "storying can be understood as remaking the potentially rupturing effects of settler-colonial violence" and integrating this rupture, told by Native North American voices, into an "affective repertoire" that demonstrates Native North American persistence "despite the force of non-Native occupation" (46). This idea of persistence seems closely connected to Vizenor's philosophy of survivance, using story – in this case historical narrative – to manifest perseverance and pure continuance of Native North Americans in northern America. Ultimately, "native stories [are seen to] create . . . a singular sense of presence by natural reason, customary words, perceptive tropes, observant irony, and imagic scenes" and thus function far beyond the page (or word more generally) (*Native Liberty* 1).

The Historical Novel

Nowhere is this interconnection between literature and sovereignty as pronounced as in historical fiction. Before however looking at a specifically Native North American historical fiction, it is necessary to return to the canonic, euroamerican version of the genre; not only to contextualize but also to underline the mistake of grouping Native North American historical fiction with the canonic historical novel.

In *The Historical Novel*, Lukács defines historical fiction as the "poetic awakening of the people who figured in historical events"; he writes that historical fiction allows readers to "re-experience the social and human motives which led men to think, feel and act just as they did in historical reality" (44). Emphasizing the interplay between historical realism and event-based character development, Lukács imagines historical fiction as a humanist retelling of history that makes the past more accessible and acutely tangible. Lukács points to Sir Walter Scott's 1814 novel

[27] This problem of self-identification with the "wrong" stories is picked up again in chapter four; Alexie's novel *Flight*, as well as Jones's *Ledfeather*, demonstrate the (almost) detrimental effects caused by settler-colonizer rhetoric, particularly on young Native North American men.

Waverley as the first "real" historical novel, using it as the base for formulating a set of characteristics.[28] Perry Anderson summarizes that:

> the classical form of the historical novel is an epic depicting a transformation of popular life through a set of representative human types whose lives are reshaped by sweeping social forces. Famous historical figures will feature among the dramatis personae, but their roles in the tale will be oblique or marginal. Narratives will center instead on middling characters, of no great distinction, whose function is to offer an individual focus for the dramatic collision of opposing extremes between whom they stand, or more often waver . . . the classic historical novel . . . is an affirmation of human progress, in and through the conflicts that divide societies and the individuals within them.

Essentially, Lukács claims the historical novel as a realist depiction of historical development and continuity, evoking similar characteristics to those of western historiography: historical fiction unfolds like historiography, developing from A to B to C, maintaining the idea of personal and societal change over time. Consequently, Lukács offers a final caveat. The historical novel should strive to connect the past with the present, cementing the idea of linearity and progress as fundamental to telling history (Lukács 57). Establishing a narrative that creates a window to the past while simultaneously anchoring that past in the present maintains a notion of progression that makes the reader realize that the past is necessary for the present. Causality becomes inherent to the structure and purpose of the historical novel.

The historical novel is further understood as a vehicle for nation building and strengthening national identities. In *Remaking History* (2016), de Groot argues that "historical fictions are a potent way to articulate national myths and nationalist events; they have been used for centuries to secure and communicate the idea of self-governing nationhood" (49). Lukács's prototype *Waverley* has been cast as "[creating] an individual Scottish national identity for his country, distinct from the British", a literary feat that resonated for the United States (Bergmann 6).

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the U.S. was just beginning to establish its new independence from Britain, and:

[28] Lukács insists on reading *Waverley* as the first historical novel, arguing that Scott uses the past not as a mere backdrop on which to stage a "contemporary narrative" but as a distinctive social and cultural setting, necessary to the novel's story. Others have argued that Lukács uses *Waverley* as his prototype because his criteria for the historical novel rely on it (see Anderson).

> American intellectuals were striving to establish a distinctive cultural identity for the new nation and felt a strong need for cultural products to complete the work of the previous generation who had first established Americanness though the political work of revolution. (Bergmann 6)

As mentioned above, histories like that by Cotton Mather or fictions such as James Fenimore Cooper's *Leatherstocking* novels played a huge part in dictating this first cohesive written output. Susanne Opfermann argues that historical fiction "as a genre contributed to the symbolic construction of America" (32). Novels such as Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), set in the mid-seventeenth century, tells of Hester Prynne, a young woman who cheats on her husband with the town's minister and becomes pregnant. She ends up raising the child alone, grappling with her feelings of guilt and pride. *The Scarlet Letter* is considered *the* classic U.S. American novel, D. H. Lawrence labeling it the "perfect work of the American imagination" (qtd. in Miller, *Salem is My Dwelling Place* 284). In her 2021 study on the contemporary U.S. American historical novel, Ina Bergmann argues that books like *The Scarlet Letter* "are genuine American cultural products, signifying the uniqueness as well as the unity of the country by presenting its origins in the seventeenth century" (14). Bergmann elaborates further that "the roots of the American nation" lie in an "era of severe religious and racial differences as well as stern gender norms", all of which have long-lasting effects on the literature and, by extension, the nation's identity. Carolyn Karcher argues further, stating that the U.S. American historical novel offered an ideology "based on the premise that all men are created equal and a political structure based on the assumption that people of color and white women do not fall under the rubric 'men'" (Karcher xv). Based on these ideologies the U.S. American historical novel of the nineteenth century created and reflected a national consciousness that relied on racial, class and gender dichotomies while simultaneously promoting tolerance and democracy.

While fundamental to a theoretical discussion of historical fiction, Lukács's approach is anchored in the discourse of early twentieth century literary theory. Writing almost a century later, Jerome de Groot uses *The Historical Novel* as a point of departure, formulating a contemporary theory of historical fiction that specifically addresses the significant developments within the genre since the mid-twentieth century. De Groot considers World War 2 a watershed moment, the historical novel now a means of questioning the "legitimacy of narrative" and "undermining

authority", essentially marking the historical novel as postmodern; twentieth century historical fiction, de Groot argues, becomes a means of questioning the idea of historical fact and the possibility of authentic representation (de Groot, *Historical Novel* 108).[29] Bergmann argues likewise, stating that "the new historical fiction takes a revisionist stance toward established historiography", these texts influenced by "postmodern discourses of feminism, multiculturalism, and postcolonialism" (3). Historical fiction also comes to actively participate in revealing and underlining historiography's inherent narrativity. As de Groot formulates, "all historical novels are, ultimately, pastiche reworking and reimaginings of interpreted and unsubstantiated factual narratives" (116). De Groot here insists on historiography as unsubstantiated interpretation of events, claiming the historical novel as a further iteration of the same, however with a self-awareness that is lacking in historiography. Historical fiction is always immediately mindful of its own narrativity, it's very creation dependent on narrative interpretation, or emplotment. De Groot argues further that post-World War 2 historical fiction consciously works to destabilize the idea of history as an objective ordering narrative thus inadvertently undermining the stability originally created by these narratives. Furthermore, the contemporary historical novel also reflects on its own genre; as Brian McHale argues in *Postmodernist Fiction*, new historical novels aim at actively changing the genre conventions of the traditional form (McHale 90). The contemporary historical novel allows space for alternate portrayals of history that actively work against established power structures, thus becoming a means to rewrite and recast the past. Historical fiction, according to de Groot, playfully engages with history and presents additional, potentially subversive, tellings of the past that compliment and question the grand narrative. These subversive narratives are particularly relevant when dealing with a colonial legacy, that while considered past, remains active in the present.

Alan Velie offers a first comparative analysis of Native North American historical fiction in his essay "The Indian Historical Novel" (1992). His essay locates Native North American historical fiction securely within the canon of contemporary euroamerican historical fiction, another iteration of the complex and varied genre presented by de Groot. Velie reads Vizenor's *Heirs*, and to a certain extent, James

[29] Incidentally, this development in writing historical fiction reflects the changes observed in writing history; both move away from the conviction that objective and factual history is possible, as well as an increasing interest in macro- instead of micro-histories. Both historiography and historical fiction shift to incorporate the changes occurring in the world, reflecting new popular and academic interests.

Welch's (Blackfeet) *Fool's Crow*, as genre-bending and subversive, inherently reflective of a postmodern or poststructuralist effort to trouble the grand narrative of history. While this dissertation does not discuss either novel, Velie's essay is compelling as it is one of the few comparative discussions of historical novels by Native North American writers.

While remaining indebted to White's categories of mode and emplotment, Velie argues that Native North American historical fiction moves away from an ironic or tragic telling of the past. Discussing *Fool's Crow*, Velie reads the novel as a "familiar looking historical novel, more or less similar to Scott's *Waverley* novels", stressing similarities in the depictions of the Scots and the Blackfeet (399). *Fool's Crow* is presented as offering a straightforward coming of age narrative, following the effects of colonization on a small band of Blackfeet, culminating in the 1870 Marias Massacre. Velie states that Welch writes a classic historical novel in the mode of a romance, arguing that "to anyone with a developed sense of literary form, it ought to be apparent from the beginning that [the story] will end with the hero triumphant" (399). While Velie's analysis is comprehensive, he misses the subtle displacement of historicity at the center of Welch's novel. *Fool's Crow* engages with the presupposed narrative trajectory of a traditional Western, inverting the common story of settler-colonizer civilization triumphing over Native North American savagery. Welch critically "constructs the story of white-Indian contact from inside Indian subjectivity and redefines the meanings of religion, culture, and virtue" (Weidman 90). This reconstruction of history via *Fool's Crow* is very specifically Native North American; it reclaims the past while simultaneously upsetting the national U.S. narrative of triumphant settler-colonizer spreading democracy.

Velie then discusses *Heirs*, stating that it is "a very different type of historical novel," which is undoubtedly the case (399). However, he almost immediately backtracks, casting *Heirs* as a postmodern text, and thus as a fairly common iteration of the contemporary historical novel. He argues that *Heirs* immediately "abandons verisimilitude for absurdist fantasy" and tells a story of historical upset (399). Despite this "abandonment", Velie claims that Vizenor remains "just as interested in historical questions as Scott or Welch", he simply uses "a different set of conventions to consider them" (399). Velie continues:

> [in] fact, *Heirs* is only partially a historical novel: the sections on Columbus, Pocahontas, and Louis Riel are based in history, but much of the novel fits

> more closely the conventions of other genres, in particular the murder mystery and utopian science fiction tale. However, Vizenor's ideas of history when contrasted with those of more traditional writers like Welch, serve to up the literary nature of all historical writing. (400)

This is a substantial statement that Velie fails to follow to its conclusion. Not only does he point out that Vizenor's novel does not fit the classic genre of historical fiction, instead blurring conventions and shifting back and forth between (euroamerican) genres, he also alludes to how these choices unsettle the writing of history. While Velie ascribes this to a postmodern practice, it should be read as a characteristic of Native North American historical fiction. What Velie identifies as postmodern is not the monopoly of postmodernism but inherent to Native North American fiction. Conflating euroamerican postmodern literary practice with Native North American writing is consistent within literary discussion and based in the conviction that western literature is exhaustive and consistently innovative. Equating the two or reading Native North American fiction as a variant of postmodern literature, negates the continued original aesthetics of Native North American literature. As Vizenor argues "oral cultures have never been without a postmodern condition that enlivens stories and ceremonies, or without trickster signatures and discourse on narrative chance" (*Narrative Chance* x). Silko argues likewise, stating that postmodernism by definition cannot be applied to Native North American literature. While this literature moves to unsettle the master narrative through irony and self-reflexivity and (perceived) unreliable narration – postmodern characteristics – Native North American historical fiction is inherently concerned with Native politics, community and establishing varying changeable narratives that replace the master narrative.[30] Native North American stories prefigure, even anticipate, postmodernism, and although they share characteristics, should not be subsumed under one literary umbrella.

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[30] Krupat, in analyzing Silko's *Storyteller* collection, makes explicit Silko's dedication both to community and politics. He writes that "what keeps [her stories] from entering the poststructuralist, postmodernist or schizophrenic heteroglossic domain is [their] commitment to the equivalent of a normative voice. For all the polyvocal openness in Silko's work, there is always the unabashed commitment to Pueblo ways as a reference point . . . its authority is always to be reckoned with" ("Diaologic" 65). Krupat underlines the perceived connection between postmodern and Native North American ways of writing, immediately showcasing that this comparison is bogus. The emphasis for Silko, and other Native North American writers, is a return to Native North American concerns. Because Native North American literature is often framed within a larger narrative that reads dissent as primarily coded in whiteness, it is subsumed within this framework and not recognized as its own specific literature.

Both *Heirs* and *Fool's Crow* resist a coherent analysis within the genre conventions of euroamerican historical fiction, and Velie misses an opportunity to expand the realm of historical fiction by Native North American writers.

Even though Native North American historical fiction can thus be read, as Velie does, as part of a contemporary reappropriation of the euroamerican historical novel – pushing to subvert the master narrative, carving out space for marginalized others, and rewriting history – it exists next to and beyond this context as a specifically Native North American storying of the past.

Defining the Native North American Historical Novel

Based in a tradition of storytelling, the Native North American historical novel engages with the past as a story written to supplement and supplant the established historical narrative. It revisits the past by rewriting and filling in both the accidental and deliberate gaps maintained by historiography. These novels participate in what Smith terms "a very powerful need to give testimony to and restore a spirit, to bring back into existence a world fragmented and dying" (30). Native North American historical novels are expressly political and inherently skeptical of written history as objective representation. Naturally, these novels thus question the production and preservation of the historical narrative, asking who is remembering and how this remembering coalesces in the present.

Native North American historical fiction is not only a means of telling the past in new ways, it also frustrates the foundations of euroamerican linear history, questioning the existence of the past, present and future as distinct categories. These fictions insist on Native North American cosmologies of time, blurring the borders between history and the present, offering new ways of reading "ancient natures" (Dillon 6). Native North American historical fiction must thus not necessarily be set in a chronological past, it is considered historical as soon as it addresses historical concerns. Similar to Indigenous Futurism, a term coined by Grace Dillon (Bay Mills-Garden River Ojibwe), Native North American historical fiction explores and continues the "spiritual and cultural path that remains unbroken by genocide and war" disregarding the necessity for locating that which is marked as history in the past (2). Native North American historical fiction thus addresses that which is considered history by different means, including stories of contemporary or future catastrophe as a retrospective means of addressing history.

Native North American historical fiction furthermore resists euroamerican genre-conventions and includes biography, poetry, and prose, reiterating the many facets of Native North American storytelling. They actively renounce "dominance, tragedy and victimry" by writing Native existence as an "active presence" in northern America (*Manifest Manners* vii). It also importantly does not ask for Indigenous pasts to be included within the linear history of North America, instead it demands a space of its own, carving out geographic, political and socio-cultural self-determination and, ultimately, Native North American sovereignty.

Conclusion

The theoretical and methodological framework presented outlines a link between Native North American historical fiction and sovereignty. It depicts historiography and historical fiction as equally engaged and relevant in telling the past, trying to assert "what was" through narrative, as well as demonstrating that "historical facts" are not self-explanatory, and always require a story. Writing the past is categorized as an ideological exercise rooted in established power structures that create "factual" narratives from subjective ordering, always privileging white versions. Writing the past, and particularly being in charge of writing one's own past, not only engenders power, it also strengthens existing ties to the self and to the community that ultimately determine cultural and intellectual survivance and push towards sovereignty. Historical fiction is thus revealed not as a "mere" fiction but as a means of expressing and realizing socio-political efforts.

The following chapters attempt to utilize this framework for a literary analysis that understands Native North American historical fiction as a different kind of history, necessary in reclaiming the past. The novels chosen are hereby crucial for understanding how history is talked and written about. This again highlights the extra-textual relevance of these historical fictions, the lived past particularly relevant in creating a sustainable Native North American present.

While neither the fictionality of history nor the historicity of fiction are new conceptualizations, regarding these in connection with the Native North American historical novel is. Defining a distinct Native North American historical fiction apart from a canonized western iteration is essential for further unpacking and rearranging Native North American literary studies. The novels chosen for the literary analysis

are regarded primarily within the context of historical fiction; there are of course other worthwhile points of inquiry that will be referred to when relevant.

Chapter 2: nunna daul tsuny, the trail where we cried – Writing Indian Removal

Introduction

The Trail of Tears has become virtually synonymous with Native North American dispossession in northern America. "The trail where we cried", or nunna daul tsuny, saw the forced removal and relocation of the Cherokee Nation (including their slaves and whites related by marriage) from their ancestral homelands east of the Mississippi to "Indian Territory" in present-day Oklahoma. Forced Removal began on May 23, 1838, "with Cherokee held in military stockades and then moved in multiple contingents over land and water" (Sturgis xxi). Active Removal lasted 10 months; an estimated 25-35% of those who were made to relocate, mainly old people and children, died. The Trail is considered one of the "first and most dramatic examples of the dispossessing of the American Indians in the nineteenth century, a campaign that eventually . . . affected all Native Americans in the United States" (Sturgis 9).[31]

Removal has been identified variously as continuation and radical turning point in U.S. American domestic policy. While the idea of a radical change is more comfortable, shifting blame from systemic genocide designed to open land for white settlement and the extraction of natural resources, it disregards governmental policies instated by Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, as well as systemic racism and the guiding ideology of manifest destiny that color the modern U.S. American socio-political landscape.[32]

The Trail of Tears is often presented in a cultural and political vacuum, highlighting its supposed singularity in U.S. American history and focusing on the

[31] While this chapter focuses on Cherokee Removal, "it has been estimated that as many as a hundred thousand Native North Americans were relocated west of the Mississippi River from their eastern homelands during the first half of the [nineteenth] century" (Rozema 40). These other emigrations are not as well known or documented as that of the Cherokee but were "just as tragic" (41). Rozema writes that "the Choctaw are said to have lost 15% of their population as a result of their removal. The Creeks and Seminoles are believed to have suffered a mortality rate of about 50%. Many of these deaths occurred in the period immediately following removal" (41).

[32] There is however a case to be made for a subtle shift in how the U.S. government related to and categorized Native North Americans; Lyons and Krupat argue that during the removal years and until the "closing of the frontier" in 1890, the U.S. government no longer necessitated the idea of the western wilderness and its savage inhabitants, thus reducing those who lived there to "non-people". Krupat describes this image of Native North Americans as "the zero of human society" (*Red Matters* xii); Lyons elaborates, explaining that accordingly Native North Americans were "not a changeable sort of person deserving civilization, nor even a savage that might be usefully romanticized, but simply . . . a sign of non-civilization" (*X-Marks* 25). Accordingly, Native North Americans were supposed to disappear.

every-day of Removal. Official Removal history actively advances the trope of the Vanishing Indian, marking the Cherokee as a dying people, displaced from their homelands and unable to reestablish their community after Removal.[33]

Furthermore, the Trail is an event narrated predominantly by whites; Krupat argues that one reason for the dearth of Native North American documentation may have been that it seemed "useless, or . . . impossible to those Cherokees who endured and survived . . . to convey the day-to-day experience of the Trail, at least in writing" ("Representing Cherokee Dispossession" 21). Most research into the realities of the Trail finds its beginning in James Mooney's anthropological discussions of the Cherokee: *The Sacred Formulas of the Cherokees* (1891) and *Myths of the Cherokee* (1900). There are of course other records – a daily journal by Daniel Butrick, a white minister who accompanied a group of Cherokee to Oklahoma, snippets of letters from travelers who came across the Removal Trail – but overall, the Trail has been documented by settler-colonizer voices. This lack of Cherokee documentation combined with a white appropriation of the historical narrative creates a disconnect that is difficult to reconcile.

Accordingly, this chapter focuses on three Cherokee-authored novels, Diane Glancy's *Pushing the Bear* duology – *A Novel of the Trail of Tears* (1996) and *After the Trail of Tears* (2009) – and Blake M. Hausman's 2011 novel *Riding the Trail of Tears*. Glancy and Hausman have produced vastly different novels, the historical realism of *Pushing the Bear* contrasting strongly with Hausman's playful foray into Indigenous Futurism.

Glancy's novels circle around Maritole and her husband Knobowtee, following their relocation from their home in Georgia, along the Trail and into Oklahoma where they attempt to rebuild their family and lives. The duology seems to offer a straightforward historical novel, fitting the predominant theory of canonic historical fiction. While offering a personalized history of the political and social trauma of Removal, Glancy's novels also feature the religious dimensions of a changing Cherokee theology. She offers historical documents, including maps and missionary

[33] The myth of the "Vanishing Indian" proposes that the racial preconditions of Native North Americans would lead to their "natural" disappearance when met with the realities of setter-colonizer civilization. The Vanishing Indian would succumb to western expansion and make space for whites moving towards the Pacific. This myth retains a surprisingly strong hold on contemporary society, fostering and sustaining the belief that Native North Americans no longer exist. Incidentally this myth also contributes to the denial of Native North American sovereignty – a people that "does not exist" arguably does not need political autonomy. This narrative thus proves to be very powerful both politically and culturally.

reports, as well as notes on her research methods, ostensibly framing her novels as historically grounded representations of Cherokee Removal. However, as Krupat mentions, Glancy's research (as well as her use of the Cherokee syllabary) is not verifiable and seems to teeter on the edge of historical fact ("Representing Cherokee Dispossession" 31). The *Trail of Tears* and *After the Trail* upset traditional narrative structures and representation, indicating not the perpetuation of victimhood but a conscious subversion of canonic characteristics.[34]

It is important to note that Glancy's two novels are the only texts discussed in this dissertation that support active reconciliation while promoting the benefits of (at least partial) assimilation. Both *A Novel of the Trail* and *After the Trail* view assimilation as the basis for Cherokee revival, insisting that accepting Christianity is the basis for Native North American survival in northern America. Glancy's own work, poetry as well as essays and interviews, is therefore very relevant for the following analysis. Particularly the recent interview by A.M. Juster provides a vital source of information both on Glancy's religious identity and her relationship to her Cherokee heritage.

Hausman on the other hand writes Cherokee Removal as Indigenous Futurism, arranging his Trail as a virtual amusement park in an unspecified near future. *Riding the Trail* follows Tallulah, a park guide, as she interacts with non-Native tourists who come to experience the virtual trail.

Hausman moves away from straightforward historical representation and rewriting, interested rather in how a Cherokee past is remembered and told in the present, and questioning how memory colors the contemporary. *Riding the Trail* also consistently addresses the possibility of historical fact and authenticity, presenting a past that is mutable instead of stable and in constant discourse with the present. Hausman, in contrast to Glancy, has no interest in reconciliation and creates an iteration of the Trail of Tears that emphasizes Cherokee survivance rooted in a productive interaction with the past and a deliberate turn away from euroamerican versions of history.

As mentioned in the literature review, criticism on *Riding the Trail* is scarce. Miriam Brown Spiers's "Reimagining Resistance: Achieving Sovereignty in

[34] The focus in this chapter lies on Glancy's first novel and only relates to *After the Trail* in passing. It would be interesting to analyze the two novels as complimentary, particularly in relation to Glancy and her developing relationship with historicity and religion; *After the Trail* specifically delineates the changing Cherokee relations with Christianity.

Indigenous Science Fiction", one of the few articles that directly analyzes Hausman's novel, reads *Riding the Trail* as Indigenous Science Fiction. Her central argument is that Hausman's use of virtual reality allows for a rewriting of Removal that does not however attempt to overwrite; accordingly, it offers "a new model of resistance and empowerment in the face of historical trauma" (55). A further analysis of Hausman's novel can be found in Gina Caison's *Red State* (2018). Caison argues that *Riding the Trail* "calls out to those" who use Cherokee stories of the Removal as a sort of "catharsis" and not as a story essential to Cherokee sovereignty and survivance (151). Sovereignty, so Caison, is achieved by insisting on Cherokee existence beyond the nineteenth century, Tallulah's authoring of the virtual reality a reminder of how history is remembered in the present (153).

Despite these differences both Glancy and Hausman write historical novels that unbalance the U.S. American master narrative and reframe the Trail of Tears as a Cherokee experience that, while traumatic, created fertile ground for the political and cultural survivance of the Cherokee Nation.

Aim

The following begins by outlining the Trail's history; it then addresses how Removal is written and remembered in popular and euroamerican academic literature; the focus here lies both on contemporaneous and modern conceptualizations. After thus locating the Trail historically, the chapter then moves to analyze *Trail of Tears*, paying particular attention to Glancy's religious beliefs, and how these beliefs influence the novel's content and form. The chapter also briefly looks at *After the Trail*, expounding continuities (religious and socio-political circumstances, the relationship between Maritole and Knobowtee, etc.) and breaks (narrative style, attention paid to Cherokee politics) with the first novel.

Analysis then moves to Hausman's imagining of the Trail as virtual reality. Hausman's interest in history is removed from its happening in time, coalescing instead in how it is remembered, and how social, cultural and political power shapes this remembering. The analysis focuses on the use of virtual reality, attempting to connect Native North American historical fiction with Indigenous Futurism.

The chapter concludes with a consideration of how Cherokee-authored histories of the Trail of Tears reframe history and attempt to create a basis for Cherokee sovereignty.

The History of Forced Removal

Cherokee Removal rests in the policies and racial prejudices of U.S. American statehood; U.S. attitudes towards land and land-gain are particularly relevant here. Caison argues that Indian Removal must be understood not as a sudden change in policy but as of a "longer temporal range . . . that dates back to at least Thomas Jefferson and entered the public consciousness well before the 1830s" (117). Accordingly, it is necessary to start with the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, the first legal document to mark the lawful territory of the United States. This ordinance also regulated interactions between Native North American nations and the U.S. government. It states that:

> the utmost good faith shall always be observed towards Indians; their land and property shall never be taken from them without their consent; and in their property, rights, and liberty, they shall never be invaded or disturbed. (*Century* 342)

While ironic in retrospect, the Northwest Ordinance again supports the claim presented in both the introduction and first chapter that Native North American nations were originally recognized as sovereign entities and thus as equal partners in making treaties. The ordinance also "provided a method for admitting new states to the Union" and specified a bill of rights that would further protect Native North American interests when dealing with the nascent United States. In 1790 the rights provided via the Northwest Ordinance were appended by the Nonintercourse Act which stated that:

> no purchase, grant, lease, or other conveyance of land, or of any title or claim thereto, from any Indian nation or tribe of Indians, shall be of any validity in law of equity, unless the same be made by treaty or convention entered into pursuant the constitution. (*Century* 137)

The purchase of Native North American land was thus made illegal without approval from the federal government. This act again seems to provide for legal and political recognition of Native North American sovereignty, allowing Native nations to administer to their own interests.

However, Thomas Jefferson was concurrently trying to secure territory for the United States, laying the foundations for gradually expanding the nation's borders across the continent towards the Pacific. Native North American land thus became

an important commodity for the United States. Jefferson was also pushing for assimilation, wanting to subsume the various Native North American tribes and nations into settler-colonizer society. He was adamant in trying to "civilize" Native North Americans into "adopting" an agricultural style of living that was both in keeping with the pastoral vision of westward expansion and would help to free up land while assimilating Native North Americans into the growing state. Furthermore, this forced turn towards agriculture and farming was structured to create an increasing dependency on trade with settler-colonizers while also creating a climate that would, over time, induce Native North American tribes to either relinquish their lands or to accept the concept of privately owned property – again an incentive to reallocate land and eradicate communal lands.[35] Jefferson was also the first, in 1803, to propose the exchange of land west of the Mississippi for Native North American territories in the East; a project that would come to conclusion in the Indian Removal Act, signed into law by Andrew Jackson in May 1830, which allowed:

> the President of the United States to cause so much of any territory belonging to the United States, west of the river Mississippi, not included in any state of organized territory, and to which the Indian title has been extinguished, as he may judge necessary, to be divided into a suitable number of districts, for the reception of such tribes of nations of Indians as may choose to exchange the lands where they now reside, and remove there.

While this act suggests a limit to white settlement, establishing the Mississippi as a border line, and assuring tribes and nations that the U.S. will "forever secure and guaranty them, and their heirs and successors, the country so exchanged with them", it would ultimately culminate in the extreme reduction of Native North American lands and the establishment of reservations.

Removing Native North American nations to clear land for settler-colonizers was essential in strengthening the frontier and allowing the erstwhile border states to

[35] While Jefferson officially used the language of assimilation, he privately spoke and wrote of Native North American extermination and extirpation. Writing in 1776, he stated that "nothing will reduce those wretches so soon as pushing the war into the heart of their country. . . But I would not stop here. I would never cease pursuing them while one of them remained on this side of the Mississippi" (Letter). In a letter to Alexander von Humboldt in 1813, he writes further that Native North Americans have taken up arms against the U.S., "the cruel massacres they have committed on the women and children of our frontiers . . . will oblige us now to pursue them to extermination or drive them to new seats beyond our reach" (Letter). These sources suggest that Jefferson was as interested in freeing up land as fully eradicating Native North Americans who resisted assimilation (or where unwilling to give up their lands).

increase their economic power and military strength, two issues central to the concerns of the U.S. government. Scott R. Lyons argues that while the initial policy was indeed "concerned with actual physical removals . . . the underlying ideology and removal in its own way justified and encouraged the systematic losses of Indian life"; such as loss of life, language, land, and religion (*X-Marks* 8). Consequently, Lyons categorizes the federal policies surrounding Removal (and "Indian policy" generally) as "ethnic cleansing", and as deliberate policy by the U.S. government (8).

Cherokee Removal in particular garnered great popularity in 1829 when gold was discovered on Cherokee land in contemporary Georgia; settler-colonizers repeatedly "[violated] Cherokee borders to search for [it]", and while their actions were denounced by Chief John Ross and brought before the federal legislature in Georgia, as well as before the U.S. government in Washington, nothing was done to intervene (Sturgis xxi). In *Trail of Tears*, Maritole remarks on the discovery of gold "in northern Georgia near Dahlonega", claiming it as one of the reasons for her family's removal, adding that "white men" wanted both the gold and the Cherokee farms; immediately connecting economic interests with claiming land (*Trail of Tears* 4). The tension between settler-colonizers and the Cherokee culminated in the case of Cherokee Nation v. Georgia in 1831. The Supreme Court ultimately ruled that it held no jurisdiction, as the Cherokee were not considered sovereign, instead they were held to be a dependent domestic nation, thus subordinate to the United States legal system. This decision was quickly followed by Worcester v. State of Georgia in 1832 which decided that Georgia, as a federal institution, could not impose laws on Cherokee territory; only the federal government was legally authorized to do so.[36] These two decisions created the legal precedent that considers Native North American nations today as both dependent and independent of the United States. As dependent domestic nations they are considered bound to federal legislation while also being responsible for the judicial and political realities within their borders.

However, Andrew Jackson (and successive presidents) was uninclined to follow this ruling, effectively leaving the Cherokee to suffer from constant settler-

[36] Tim Alan Garrison's *The Legal Ideology of Removal: The Southern Judiciary and the Sovereignty of Native American Nations* (1997) argues that questions of Native North American sovereignty and independence were mostly decided in court. Garrison's argument is important as it draws focus away from individual actors (such as Jefferson or Jackson) and spotlights the system of legal and economic structures before the Civil War.

colonizer aggression. Succinctly put by Caison, Jackson "refused to honor this ruling, essentially giving Georgia the go-ahead to effect Removal on its own terms" (119).

The pressure of government-sanctioned aggression ultimately led a "small number of Cherokees led by the Ridge family" to sign the Treaty of New Echota, "pledging the Cherokees to remove West to of the Mississippi in 1838" ("Representing Cherokee Dispossession" 19). Two years later, in 1837, a large group of wealthy Cherokees emigrated to Indian Territory.[37] Finally, in May 1838, federal troops started rounding up the remaining Cherokee, confining them to what Grant Foreman has called concentration camps.[38] By March 1838, Removal was "completed", those who had survived the Trail had arrived in Oklahoma. It is important to note that some "members of all southeastern tribes [were able to remain] in the U.S. South after Removal, including what became the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians" (Mooney 161). In *Trail of Tears*, Maritole's brother manages to escape during the initial roundup, fleeing into the mountains and staying behind in North Carolina.[39]

Indian Removal has been greatly romanticized and abstracted in the popular imagination; while the reality of genocide has gained prominence over the past decades, the idea of the noble yet compliant Cherokee trudging along remains dominant. This specific imagery finds its origin in Robert Lindneux 1942 painting "The Trail of Tears" which shows a large group of Cherokee, children, men and women, moving through a desolate landscape by foot, horse, and wagon.[40] While some of the imagined Cherokee look almost regal (iterations of the noble savage), there is an air of despair that radiates from the painting, reinforced by the sheer number of those walking and the bent postures of those sitting in the covered wagons. Lindneux's painting is one of the most proliferate visuals of Cherokee Removal, turning up in school textbooks as well as in official government histories;

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[37] Indian Territory was already host to a group of Cherokee who had emigrated between 1808 and 1810; they had established their own government in Oklahoma which would cause disagreements, and a Cherokee civil war in the 1840s when the forcibly removed Cherokee arrived.
[38] As Krupat remarks, Foreman published *Indian Removal* in 1932, before the use of concentration camps (and common use of the term) in the Third Reich, indicating the impact that Indian Removal had on twentieth century genocide ("Representing Cherokee Dispossession" 20). Chapter three further discusses this connection between the genocide of Native North Americans and the Shoah.
[39] This is a possible nod to Tsali, a tribal leader, who escaped Removal and established himself and other Cherokee in the North Carolina mountains.
[40] Lindneux was the son of French immigrants. Enamored with the American West, his paintings include several portraits of Native North American women and men, as well as Western landscapes. He painted "The Trail of Tears" in 1942 to commemorate the ordeal suffered by the Cherokee.

no contemporary visual depictions of the Trail (if they existed) have survived, and Lindneux's painting has been determined as the visual representation of the Trail.

As mentioned above, James Mooney is highly important in documenting the Trail. While Mooney is empathetic, conscientiously recording Cherokee testimony about the Trail, the information remains filtered through his white, nineteenth century scientific lens.[41] He details the hardships of the Trail, presenting a subdued Cherokee people, acceptant of their removal, writing that an old "patriarch" surprised by the roundup preceding the Removal "calmly called his children and grandchildren around him, and kneeling down, bid them pray with him in their own language, while the astonished soldiers looked on in silence" (Mooney 127). He further records the extensive death toll of Removal, writing that "somewhere also along that march of death – for the exiles died by tens and twenties every day of the journey – the devoted wife of John Ross sank down, leaving him to go on with the bitter pain of bereavement added to heartbreak at the ruin of his nation" (Mooney 129). Both passages present the Cherokee as a noble people, again the prevalent stereotype of the noble savage, calm in the face of danger and strong in the face of hardship, but also emphasize a stoic acceptance of relocation, a high mortality rate and the end to the Cherokee Nation. The Cherokee are clearly shown to be overwhelmed by the settler-colonizer machine.

Mooney appears in both *Trail of Tears* and *Riding the Trail*; for Glancy, his records work as a historical source, buttressing the stories of her characters and acting as confirmation for the history that she tells. In *Riding the Trail*, Mooney serves a two-fold purpose. Tallulah, in charge of writing and choreographing the virtual Trail experience, relies on Mooney's writings while simultaneously questioning the veracity of his claims. She also wonders why the history of her people is based primarily on the records of white men. Glancy and Hausman both use Mooney to show how history is recorded and remembered; Hausman further implies that there needs to be a conscious deliberation when working with historical sources as everything is embedded in a discourse that privileges the settler-colonizer.

[41] He states that most of his information on the Trail was gathered from white officers as well as from "old Indians . . . who remembered the Removal and had heard the story from their parents" (*Myths of the Cherokee* 208).

Next to Mooney's retroactive collection of accounts, another oft-repeated observation of the Trail's condition is by a Maine man who was traveling through Kentucky in December 1838. He writes:

> we found [the Cherokee] in the forest by roadside camped for the night under severe fall of rain accompanied by a heavy wind. . . Several were quite ill, and an aging man we were then informed was in the last struggles of death. Even aged females, apparently read to drop into the grave, were traveling with heavy burdens attached to the back on the sometimes-frozen ground and the sometimes-muddy streets with no covering for the feet . . . We learned from the inhabitants on the road where the Indians passed that they buried 14 or 15 at every stopping place. (Vowell)

Again, the focus lies on Cherokee suffering, particularly on the cold weather and high death toll. A final observation comes from John G. Burnett, a messenger along the Trail. He observes that:

> the sufferings of the Cherokee were awful. The trail of exiles was a trail of death. They had to sleep in the wagons and on the ground without fire. And I have known as many as twenty-two of them to die in one night of pneumonia due to ill treatment, cold, and exposure.

Burnett again focuses on the suffering of the Cherokee, emphasizing the inhumane conditions and rampant illnesses.

While Lindneux, Mooney, Burnett and the Maine man present sympathetic renderings of Cherokee Removal, clearly disturbed by the realities of the Removal Trail – a necessary reaction that underlines the inhumanity of the U.S. government and military – this commentary resigns the Cherokee Nation to being in the process of vanishing, disappeared from their ancestral homelands without any remaining claims. Such tellings inadvertently undermine their own purpose; written to record white atrocities and document the inhumane consequences of manifest destiny they become complicit in a means of marginalizing the Cherokee as victims. These portrayals also fail to contextualize Removal and record these atrocities as temporally limited, instead of systemic and constant.

Furthermore, as William McLoughlin remarks, "by the 1850s [the Cherokee Nation] was thriving once again", establishing themselves in Indian Territory, publishing a new bilingual newspaper and restructuring the residential school system in their territory (McLoughlin, *After the Trail* xiii). In *An Indigenous Peoples'*

History of the United States, Dunbar-Ortiz remarks that even those communities who did not leave their ancestral territories and thus lost their "status as Indians" as well as the titles to their lands, "survived as peoples, some fighting successfully in the late twentieth century for federal acknowledgement and official Indigenous status" (114). Justice also remarks that:

> the story of the Trail isn't one just of tragedy, although it's unmistakably that, too. It is also a story of defiance, about enduring the unimaginable and still continuing on, living to rebuild and emerge from the ashes sadder but stronger than ever. (*Our Fire Survives* 58)

Julia Coates (Cherokee) argues further that "in the end, the lesson of the Trail of Tears is not one of division, betrayal, or tragedy, but one of triumph" the Cherokee establishing themselves securely in Oklahoma and reviving their politics and culture to exist into the twenty-first century (Coates xiv).

Clearly, a discourse that favors a Cherokee viewpoint shows a very different, much less fatalistic interpretation of the Trail of Tears. Justice, William McLoughlin and Coates cast the Removal as traumatic but emphasize the survivance of the Cherokee people. Here Removal is not the tragic end to a disappearing people but a settler-colonizer policy that resulted in hardship that was successfully overcome. Indian Removal has been coopted by the grand narrative of U.S. American history to stand as proxy for the end of Native North Americans; and while the violence and injustice of Removal is documented and remarked upon, it is specifically marked as a lapse in an otherwise benevolent United States policy regarding Native North Americans.

Reading Diane Glancy's Trail of Tears as Revisionist History

Glancy's 1996 novel *Trail of Tears* tells Cherokee Removal through various voices, allowing multiple histories of the Trail to run parallel. The central characters are members of one family, the young mother Maritole, her husband Knobowtee, and their immediate relatives. Glancy follows Maritole's trail from her home in what is now North Carolina to Indian Territory, from late September 1838 to February 1839. The narrative continues through Tennessee, Kentucky, Illinois, Missouri and Arkansas to Indian Territory in Oklahoma. Each new state is a new chapter, accompanied by a map that depicts the Trail as a line running across the various states. While this indicates linear movement, Glancy frustrates this progression by

moving between voices and declining to offer a straightforward chronology within the separate chapters. Glancy begins with a historical note:

> From October 1838 through February 1839 some eleven to thirteen thousand Cherokee walked nine hundred miles in bitter cold from the southeast to Indian Territory. One fourth died or disappeared along the way.

This note ostensibly does two things: on a historical level, it immediately introduces the impact of Removal, delineating the duration as well as the distance traveled, while also capturing the immense loss of life and concomitant loss of culture and history that the Trail entailed. On a textual level it suggests that the following story is based in historical detail, the epigraph indicative of historical accuracy. The included map implies the same accuracy and attention paid to historical fact. It also suggests the structure of a typical historical novel, invested in portraying a historically accurate framework.

Glancy herself has categorized *Trail of Tears* as "fictional, historical nonfiction", a "mix of historical documents (how many miles they walked each day, where they stopped for supplies and fodder, the compensation claims, the letters, the facts)", as well as historical personages (James Mooney, who did not walk the Trail, and Reverends Bushyhead and Evans), and the "imaginative parts (dialogue and thought)" or "the spirit, the emotional journey, the heartbeat during the march" (Juster, *After the Trail* 188, 189).

In order to tell her version of Removal, Glancy stresses the necessity of retracing the Trail; she recalls "[beginning] to hear the voices of the people in [her] imagination and [thinking] how they would fit together in a book" while driving from state to state following the Removal trail (*After the Trail* 188).[42] This idea of retracing the geography of the Trail to experience it is also central to other Cherokee experiences; Sarah Vowell, a journalist with Cherokee ancestry, has detailed her relation to the Trail of Tears as necessarily connected to traveling the land that her ancestors were forced to walk (Vowell). There are also yearly walks (and drives) of the Trail conducted by the Cherokee Nation as well as by the U.S. government. The idea of "re-walking" the Removal Trail is also obviously relevant in Hausman's

[42] As Jerry Harp argues, Glancy's insistence on tracing the Trail demonstrates the importance that the land has for her. "Much of her understanding and sense of the world come from her Cherokee ways" (49). Criticism has been leveled at Glancy for overstating and instrumentalizing her Native North American heritage. Yellow Robe (Cherokee) has stated that Glancy utilizes a Cherokee heritage that she does not truly know. Glancy herself has insisted on "racial memory, generational memory, a spirit DNA" that connects her to the Trail and creates a shared Cherokee past (Andrews 651).

Riding the Trail, the novel's entire plot relying on the wish to reexperience the Trail of Tears (although Hausman's Trail experience is geared towards euroamericans who wish to re-access a version of the U.S. American past). This indicates the importance of a historical geography, retracing the Trail allows Glancy, and others, to access Removal through spatial memory. Glancy states that "the land carries memory of those who walked the trail", comparing the physical route of the Removal to "a book that carries the stories of what happened" (Andrews 651).

The Trail is told in what Glancy has termed "communal first person", the narrative moving between different focalizers. The Trail is told by more than 40 characters, both Cherokee and white. While Glancy started writing *The Trail* with only one voice, she realized that it was not enough; she had to "go back and add [Maritole's] husband and everyone who had traveled with them on the Trail of Tears (Andrews 651). Glancy's *Trail of Tears* insists on the idea that it "takes many voices to tell a story", particularly a story that has so far been dominated by one voice, that of the settler-colonizer (651). In the essay "Fragments that Rune up the Shores", Amy Elias argues that the many focalizers also enable the reader to experience the "predominant voice [as] a collective one [that recalls] the Native American oral traditions and the method of historical reconstruction they embody" (190, 199). The different focalizers paint an extensive picture that illuminates aspects of the Removal not all can access while simultaneously stressing that each character alone is unable to grasp the complete experience of the Trail on their own. *Trail of Tears* builds itself on this idea, allowing the story parcels told by each character to create a widened narrative that expands on settler-colonizer history and delineates communal yet individual experiences of Removal.

Glancy does not limit this plethora of voices to the Cherokee characters. In the Author's Note to the 1996 edition, she writes that "this [was not] going to be a good Indian/bad white man story . . . there has to be both sides to each" (*Trail of Tears* 237).[43] She thus also includes the voices of the Baptist missionaries travelling with

[43] The note continues, stating that "when the Osage wanted to come back to Oklahoma from Kansas, where they'd been moved and couldn't live, the Cherokee sold them some dried-up land between Tulsa and Pawhuska (237). Ironically, this stretch of land held huge reserves of oil and many Osage became rich extracting and selling it. Glancy seems to suggest here that the Cherokee had their own problematic approach to land and ownership, claiming that "maybe in the end, our acts cause little energy fields that draw their likeness around them" (237). Krupat argues that this reads like a "restatement . . . of the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them do onto you" ("Representing Cherokee Dispossession" 39); Glancy seems to imply that the Cherokee, in not being

the Cherokee (some of which were Cherokee themselves) and those of the soldiers.[44] While definitely providing range, this wide inclusion also stresses the fact that there is a likeness between these different groups, which points towards a basis for assimilation and reconciliation. Glancy underlines this sameness with the death of Bushyhead's wife (historically documented above by Mooney) and Maritole's affair with one of soldiers. Bushyhead, Christian, part-Cherokee, loses his family members just as Maritole does, his status as minister does nothing to distance him from the trauma of Removal. Simultaneously, Maritole's relationship with William, who provides her with physical safety and mental stability, not only shows the possibility of love between whites and Native North Americans, it also importantly points to the fissures in the relationship between Maritole and Knobowtee, fissures that existed pre-Removal. Glancy here avoids portraying Cherokee life before Removal as idyllic; ideas of pre-contact paradise subconsciously play into a narrative of victimization that promotes and idea of Native North American existence destroyed by the arrival of the whites. It also disallows the history that predates contact, legitimizing the claim that history starts with the settler colonizers.[45]

Language and Storytelling

Glancy includes a plethora of Cherokee stories and mythologies in her novels, intent on retelling and preserving these histories. The stories are often told in both English and Cherokee, using the Cherokee syllabary. This requires a brief examination of Glancy's use of language, particularly of her inclusion of the syllabary.

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kind to their fellow humans, sabotaged themselves and thus squandered opportunities that could have helped them thrive in the future.

[44] She however does not include the voices (or presence) of African Americans, a common oversight in most tellings of the Trail, as well as in other histories of the Cherokee. The Cherokee were slave-owners; the slaves were removed alongside the Cherokee. *After the Trail* briefly mentions the existence of slavery but does not go into detail. Auspiciously, this glossing of slavery demonstrates that history is always selective and that Glancy's retelling of the Trail is also "lacking" – no telling can be complete. In a more sinister interpretation, the omission of African American voices seems deliberate, ignoring the injustices perpetuated by the Cherokee. The exclusion of Black Cherokee from the Cherokee Nation is a problem that persists until today.

[45] In *Riding the Trail*, one of the little little people remarks that while "things were quite different . . . before all of the mess you Americans breathe every day in this 21st century. And I don't mean that in a nostalgic sense, because yes it was already a mess before the invasion happened" (3). Hausman here makes it very clear that there was history before white history and that it has been a concerted effort to alter and delete this past from the grand narrative. It also places the Cherokee at the center of their own histories, allowing a continuous presence that reaches from far in the past into the present and future.

Krupat remarks that although “[Glancy] prints the syllabary among the materials appended to the novel, [he is] . . . unable to figure out some of the words in the text that are in the syllabary” (“Representing Cherokee Dispossession” 32). He further states that Glancy uses the syllabary to convey, “what seems to be speech or thought, oral narrative or song” which is paradoxical, as the syllabary was developed specifically to give space to a written Cherokee expression (32). Glancy, so argues Krupat, seems to ignore the important difference between written and spoken words, arguably a distinction that colors the discussion around oral and written history, as well as the western preference for the written.

As a system of writing, the Cherokee syllabary, drafted by Sequoya in the early 1820s, marks the Cherokee as “civilized”. Sequoya’s insistence on a syllabary was partially motivated by being able to demonstrate that the Cherokee were as capable of writing in their own language as were the settler-colonizers. Glancy’s use of the syllabary to confer Cherokee language strengthens this claim to “civilization”, further marking the Cherokee as contemporaneous and able to establish themselves intellectually within the pre-defined space of progress defined by the settler-colonizer.

Despite Krupat’s criticism, Glancy’s use of the syllabary creates a lingering effect in *Trail of Tears*. It suggests both a preservation of Cherokee identity, and thus of Cherokee presence, and an essential compatibility between the English and Cherokee languages that reflects her interest in reconciliation. Glancy uses the syllabary on its own and in direct translation, either explicitly next to each other, or as code-switching within the text. In Tennessee, Anna Sco-So-Tah briefly talks about Cherokee history, explaining that the Cherokee “where the ᎠᏂᏴᏫᏯ, the principal people. We lived in the hill country in the center of the world”, before offering the story of “one of the animals from the One Above”

ᏈᏫᎠᏄᏏᏂ	(his head is nearly always near the ground)
ᏏᏳᎰᏩᏳᏍᏗ	(he smells something unpleasant [human beings] in his nose)

(*Trail of Tears* 101)

The first use is indicated as code-switching, Anna using the Cherokee word before contextualizing its meaning in English.[46] In a 2015 article Gardener-Chloros and Weston argue that "authors of countries emerging from colonialism" use code-switching to avoid "exclusively using the language of the former oppressor" (187). Although the Cherokee are not emerging from colonialism, this idea of moving back and forth between English and Cherokee disrupts the power structures that see English as the dominant language. Clearly, this is an instance that marks Cherokee as the only viable language to describe what Anna wants to say. It is also an instance of claiming the English language by peppering it with Cherokee words that echoes Ortiz and Episkenew's idea of recasting language and thus laying claim to the language of the settler-colonizer.

The second example of direct translation offers a more conciliatory approach to language, showing that Cherokee and English are complimentary and can (and should) be read together. Both uses of Cherokee establish Cherokee as a written language, and particularly, as a language that is alive and practiced. Like many Native North American languages, Cherokee is used less and less, with fewer people learning and being able to speak it.[47] Glancy however continuously uses Cherokee throughout her novel, establishing it as an important marker of culture and identity.

Glancy also leaves some Cherokee fragments untranslated within the text (some of these sections are translatable when using the syllabary printed in the appendix, although, as Krupat argues, some sections resist deciphering), possibly suggesting their inaccessibility in the English language. One of these sections is "The Song We Sang On ᏭᎯSᎾᎯMT (The Trail of Blood)" (*Trail of Tears* 129). Not translating this particular section also marks the Cherokee experience of Removal as primarily accessible to the Cherokee, or to those who understand the language. It also highlights that some instances of Removal can only be told in Cherokee, and that English is insufficient for these tellings.

Ultimately, combining English and Cherokee creates a "postcolonial mixed-blood" text that undercuts the power relations between colonizer and colonized. Elias argues that "where the spoken and the silent textually merge in fragmented writing

[46] Anna is here telling a story about Cherokee origins which again implies pre-contact Cherokee existence.
[47] There has been a trend in recent years that has seen increased interest in maintaining and revitalizing Native North American languages, and languages of the larger Nations are now also being taught in schools.

to form a trickster postcolonial oral history that is both not oral and not past, [these] fragments remake the world" (Elias 206). Although there are no explicit silences here, Elias's argument extends to include gaps in the English language, suggesting that the combination of English and Cherokee has a fourfold purpose:
(1) it dismantles the monolithic prevalence of the English language in telling Native North American stories and histories; (2) it literally interrupts the flow of the narrative, jostling the (non-Cherokee) reader and necessitating the realization of knowledge beyond a euroamerican experience; (3) the linguistic fragmentation suggests the real fragmentation experienced by the Cherokee, uprooted from their homelands and forced to relocate; and finally (4) using the Cherokee syllabary ensures its preservation and continued use.

Glancy also offers a more self-referential approach to stories and storytelling. The basket maker, a woman who walks the Trail alongside Maritole, insists that the "trail needs stories", echoing Glancy's own efforts in writing Removal (*Trail of Tears* 153). Removal cannot remain unstoried; if there are no stories told about the Trail it falls victim to the official historical narrative, remembered as an isolated, fixed event, narrated by the settler-colonizer society. Unstoried, it also remains separate from Cherokee identity, implying that Removal was something that happened to them, instead of affording the Cherokee a measure of agency in their own past. Maritole remarks that stories are essential, claiming that the stories told "[held], when [she] couldn't", suggesting that stories are stronger than the individual and that they are what hold the Cherokee together as a people (*Trail of Tears* 59). Fitz comments that Maritole here argues that stories are "stronger than humans and live on, while people die", emphasizing both the importance of storytelling and the immense reach that these stories have (82). This statement also echoes the witches' story in *Ceremony*, death and disappearance can be counteracted only by story and the inclusion of trauma into the national history. Louis Owens argues similarly that "to shirk responsibility and blame whites or any external phenomenon, is to buy into the role of helpless victim" (184). Taking command of the Trail by storying it thus immediately acts against victimhood.

The basket maker appears half-way through *Trail of Tears*, her family affiliation and relationships left unclarified. She tells her own sections, impressing on her fellow removees that stories are and will be essential for the survival of the Cherokee. She insists equally on tradition and on an active, changeable catalogue of

stories that can continually expand and adapt to new circumstances. The basket maker argues with others on the Trail who demand that Removal needs to be left "unspoken", insisting instead that the Cherokee need to tell their own stories, asking "how do you think stories got made in the first place?", (*Trail of Tears* 154). Glancy's objective here is twofold; there is of course, again, the question of telling the Trail. The basket maker clearly sees it as essential to address and preserve the past. Stories, she claims, have to be told, particularly the uncomfortable or terrible stories so that these events can be remembered. The basket maker further implies that stories should be told by those who experience the events told; writing stories, and by extension writing history, cannot be surrendered to those who know nothing of the circumstances. By storying the Trail themselves, the Cherokee retain authority over their own pasts and thus their radical survival in the future. By telling stories of Removal, the Trail is kept alive, creating a history that allows and maintains the varieties of Trail realities for generations to come.

In addition, the basket maker also underlines the fact that stories are always creations made and remade by individuals (or groups of individuals) and that, in effect, they are ordering mechanisms subject to those who tell them. As Karsten Fitz argues in his essay on transculturation:

> much like in . . . *Ceremony*, where the medicine man Betonie argues for a change in Laguna Pueblo rituals because the world is constantly changing, the basket maker opts for new stories or a change to the stories. She . . . hints at the dynamic processes inherent in storytelling and weaving as cultural techniques and the dynamic nature of the Cherokee as a cultural group. (82)

Fitz here reiterates the importance of change and a dynamic approach to storytelling that is central to how a Native North American past is told. Without change, Native North Americans cannot survive, and this is also extremely obvious in the changeable nature of stories and histories. Where euroamerican history is static, moving only in one direction, Native North American history regards time as a fluid state that is continuously in motion.[48] Within a Cherokee past this allows for the retroactive integration of Removal as something that was always going to happen; and, as it was always going to happen, it reassigns agency to the Cherokee. Early in the novel, Maritole's father explains that:

[48] Refer to chapter four for an in-depth discussion of time as fluid and mutable.

> the first people the Great Spirit made were wooden sticks . . . but they didn't live. Then he made the clay people next. We could bend our knees and lift our feet . . . [from which he concludes that] the Great Spirit knew we had a trail to walk. He knew we had to speak to survive. (*Trail of Tears* 18)

Removal is presented as implicit to Cherokee mythology, the very creation of the Cherokee rooted in the pre-knowledge of the coming Trail of Tears.

Far from a narrative that promotes mere acceptance, such an approach to story and history demonstrates Cherokee agency. In taking charge of their own past, and changing that past, the Cherokee are able to rebuild a mythology that does not revolve around white Removal but instead integrates this Removal into the story of the Cherokee. It further supposes a purpose to Removal, the knowledge of the Trail making it easier to bear. If already accepted as fact, such a history also implies the survival of the Cherokee and the foresight of the Great Spirit in outfitting them the way that they are. Essentially, the mutability and storying of the Removal makes survivance possible.

Religion

As a Christian fundamentalist, supportive of assimilation, Glancy stands out in this dissertation. She is also not an enrolled member of the Cherokee Nation, her status as a Native North American writer has been questioned. In a 2020 interview with A. M. Juster, she states that she can trace her ancestry to Michael Waters, documented in the 1835 Cherokee census; however, Glancy's great-grandfather moved to Arkansas in the late nineteenth century, failing to be recorded in the "Dawes Rolls, which determine citizenship" (Juster). Glancy's tribal affiliation has thus been questioned, and her fundamentalist beliefs criticized, particularly as they relate to her positive stance towards assimilation.[49]

Glancy has argued repeatedly that Native North American "salvation came through assimilation", her early poem "Homage" establishing that "it was not that we did not know \ the wagons \ in visions \ would cover the land. From ours was \ not

[49] In Elvira Pulitano's 1998 interview with William Yellow Robe, he argues that "Diane is controversial because she has just discovered her Native heritage" (43). He goes on to state that Glancy "never claimed her Native heritage before; she had a book of poetry that did not sell, but when she claimed her Native heritage, she became a Native writer and then her stuff started selling" (43). Yellow Robe makes his position here quite clear: establishing Cherokee heritage fails to make Glancy Cherokee, even if she can trace her ancestry. He also remarks on the commercialized aspect of Native North American heritage, central to Hausman's *Riding the Trail*.

theirs \ but how their lives spread . . . It was them who drove us \ first to paradise" ("Rooms" 86). While acknowledging that settler-colonizers took land that was not theirs, Glancy here insists that the Christian belief of the settler-colonizers led the Cherokee to "paradise", thus "saving" them. Glancy also again notes here that the Cherokee were well aware of the coming of the Europeans; the line "it was not that we did not know \ the wagons \ in visions \ would cover the land" echoing the witch's story in Silko's *Ceremony*, telling of the white men that will blow across the ocean, "thousands of them in giant boats, swarming like lava" (*Ceremony* 136). Boats or wagons, both Silko and Glancy establish the arrival of the Europeans as historical fact, prefigured in Cherokee (Laguna) mythology.

"Homage" also allows for a certain parallel reading with Glancy's Christian beliefs, Christianity itself becomes prefigured in Cherokee history. Although Glancy realizes that "many Natives . . . would not agree with [her] opinion about the main benefits of assimilation", particularly as many Native North Americans see Christianity as an essential part of settler-colonialism, as "an inherent component of the land-grabbing whites' behavior . . . the God of Christianity [countenancing] the expropriation of [Native North American] homelands" (Hale 207).[50] As Chadwick Allen (Chickasaw) details, Glancy's early poetry allows for a distinction between Christianity as a driving force of colonization and her own conviction that Christianity is a force for good (26). Although the *Pushing the Bear* duology shows signs of both, Maritole's slow turn towards Christianity illuminates Glancy's belief in Christianity as the ultimate answer.

Glancy argues for a continuum between Native North American belief systems and Christian epistemology. She offers a specific example to Juster, quoting from Zachariah 1:8; "I saw by night, and behold a man on a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees in the bottom; and behind him were there red horses, speckled and white"; Glancy then turns to *Black Elk Speaks*, a sacred book of the Oglala Lakota; quoting that "as I looked and wept, I saw that there stood on the north side of the starving camp a sacred man who was painted red all over his body, and he held a

[50] While Hale's 1997 article is one of the few to discuss the connections between missionizing and Cherokee Removal, and is thus invaluable to a study of Glancy's fundamentalist literature, he also accepts the predominant narrative of Cherokee victimhood, describing the "overarching tone" of *Trail of Tears* as "one of almost relentless suffering by a downtrodden people who have lost most of their material possessions and whose culture, including their spiritual anchoring, is similarly in jeopardy" (201). Hale fails to see the hope that Glancy promotes through both storytelling and the possibility for a Christianized Cherokee belief system.

spear as he walked into the center of the people" (qtd. in Juster). She determines the red man to be "the visitation of Christ's story to the Indians, which happened during the Ghost Dances" and while she acknowledges that she may not "have the right" to talk about Black Elk as she is not Lakota, she sees him as "a prophet to his people", convinced that "he told them about Christ", his words merely interpreted in a different way (Juster).

Another example can be found in Glancy's essay "Speaking the Corn into Being" (1997). Here, she writes that some Cherokee found "similarities in Yahweh and the Great Spirit because the Judeo-Christian God also spoke the world into being. He had the power to join mind and word. He knew the wholeness of being" (140). Again, the connection seems clear, Cherokee epistemology relies on stories creating reality in a way similar to that of the Judeo-Christian tradition, thus, consequently, Christian and Cherokee belief systems compliment and complete each other.

Nineteenth-century missionaries to the Cherokee participated in a similarly comparative – if more calculated – strategy, connecting Selu, the First Woman, to Christ. As Selu gave life to the Cherokee through blood, Christ gives life through his sacrifice. This approach to merging Cherokee religion with Christianity is prevalent in *Trail of Tears*, Bushyhead repeatedly relates Selu to Christ. He preaches "Christ as the corn god, the giver of life along with Selu", remarking that "[he] would not be one of those ministers who tried to rid the Cherokee of their stories. It would take everything [they] could muster to start again" (*Trail of Tears* 112, 186). He acknowledges that it makes sense, both practical and spiritual, to allow the Cherokee to combine the two belief systems, emphasizing the similarities rather than forcing the Cherokee to accept an ideology removed from their own.[51] Maritole herself extols this mixture of religions, claiming that she had "heard the conjurers [and] the Christians. [She] believed them both", finally stating that "if any [of the Cherokee] made it to the new land, then it must be true. Both Christ and myth. It would take both" (112). Fitz summarizes that:

[51] There is however an instance when Bushyhead's strategy of appeasement collapses. He is unable to finish a sermon, falling to the ground mid-sentence. He despairs of the suffering and death of the Trail, unable to understand "the sense of everything" (*Trail of Tears* 128). The suffering that he sees does not "fit into [his] understanding of the Christian God" (128). However, the Cherokee Holy Men suggest to Bushyhead to "slip between both worlds", the Christian and the Cherokee, and finally he manages to reconcile his loss of faith by comparing the Removal to "the year of Jubilee in Israel when everything returned to its owner", the Cherokee ostensibly returning their ancestral lands to their creator (134).

> in the Cherokee world view depicted in *Pushing the Bear* it is thus not necessary to reject one religion in order to embrace another. Rather, the drawing from – and blending of – different cultural sources represents an essential part of the contact zone of cultural encounters. (85)

Thus, instead of conflicting ideologies, one of which is concerned with subsuming the other, Glancy observes a sustained connection between Christian beliefs and those of Native North Americans; the argument that she is pro-assimilation revealed as simplistic. According to Glancy, Christianity is already inherent in a traditional Native North American belief system; it has simply been misinterpreted and wrongly contextualized.

Arguably, this idea is similar to the restorying of the basket maker (and the restorying that Glancy herself is doing in writing her duology). By including Christian belief into the mythology of Native North Americans, she not only marks Christianity as inherently Native North American, she also affords agency to herself and others who have converted to Christianity since the beginning of colonization. Rather than seeing this as a failure, or a lack of agency, it becomes an expression of Native North American existence.[52]

After the Trail of Tears

Glancy's *Trail of Tears* creates a Cherokee world that impresses with its ability to survive. In *After the Trail*, Maritole and her family struggle to create a life in Oklahoma. Knobowtee's brother O-ga-na-ya becomes central to this second novel, his desire to reverse Removal culminating in the murder Major Ridge, John Ridge and Elias Boudinot – those whom he sees as responsible for signing the Treaty of New Echota. While O-ga-na-ya is consumed with revenge, Knobowtee grows to accept his new life, arguing that he "[does] not have strength for both revenge and plowing", deciding however to support his family and claim Oklahoma for himself

[52] Krupat also mentions that Glancy retells Cherokee stories through a Christian lens. Maritole remarks that she "sometimes thought about Quaty's story of the Trickster Turtle. [She] had heard Luthy telling it to her boys again. [She] told it now to the orphans. There was a turtle at the starting line in the old territory. There was a turtle at the finish line in the new. [The] Cherokee nation had become two to survive" (*Trail of Tears* 233). Originally, so Krupat, the traditional tale of the turtle tells that turtle wins against the faster animals "not by becoming two" but by placing other turtles along the way. Whenever the other animals look ahead, there is always already a turtle in front of them ("Representing Cherokee Dispossession" 35); finally a different turtle steps across the finish line, and wins. Glancy's version follows a Christian idea of "alpha and omega", of the idea that God is both the "first and the last", and that a Cherokee history can be seen as comprehensively bracketed by a beginning and an end that comes together through pre- and post-Removal (Isaiah 44:6).

(*After the Trail* 33). This decision to move on is mirrored in Maritole's turn towards the Christianity preached by Bushyhead. While Glancy argues that *Trail of Tears* was written to fill the historical gap left by settler-colonizer documentation of Removal, *After the Trail* is intended to counter-write the existing archive. The narrative of *After the Trail* is interspersed with excerpts from the letters of Evan Jones, a missionary, originally published in *The Baptist Magazine*. In her review, Erin Murrah-Mandril writes that this inclusion contrasts the very optimistic flavor of Jones's letters with the "characters' internal struggle to reconcile a Christian God with the violent injustice of their removal and the inhospitable land they are now forced to farm" (314). Next to the letters, Glancy also reprints lists of Cherokee reclamation claims (related to homes, possessions, land, and lives) which are never fulfilled by the U.S. government. Glancy's insistence here on supplementing the existing historical narrative demonstrates the inadequacy of the historical archive mentioned in the theoretical section of this dissertation which will be elaborated on further in chapter three.

Riding Blake M. Hausman's Virtual Trail

Hausman's novel confronts some of the same subjects as does Glancy's duology. He questions a history of Removal written solely by white people, while emphasizing the power of stories to maintain and disrupt the past, thus creating new ways of accessing history in productive ways. Contrary to Glancy however, Hausman avoids ideas of assimilation and Christian religion, his interest located in how history is created and remembered in the present and how it has become a commodity to be exploited (and eventually reclaimed). Where Glancy offers a comprehensive history of Removal, Hausman upends expectations and presents a version of the Cherokee past set in a future virtual reality; this narrative choice already an indication that the Cherokee have survived Removal and that they have coopted technology – often coded as white – to suit their own needs. Hausman conceives of the Trail as an unfixed event in time and space, underlining both a continuity of oppression and a malleability of the past itself. While the past has happened, the Trail is historical fact, it is not fixed within this past and thus demands constant reconstruction and re-remembering. Such a writing of the past recalls the theoretical overlap of Native North American historical fiction and Indigenous Futurism. By moving Removal into the future, Hausman is able to explore the continuities of settler-colonizer violence

while also insisting on the unbroken existence of the Cherokee into the twenty-first century.

Creating History

Riding the Trail revisits Removal as a virtual reality experience. Set in the near future, the Trail of Tears has been digitized and turned into a virtual experience called TREPP (short for Tsalagi Removal Exodus Point Park). Visitors, so-called tourists, enter a virtual reality chamber, don a suit and visor, and travel to the 1830s to walk the Trail of Tears. The narrative follows Tallulah Wilson, a Cherokee tour guide who has helped establish TREPP, describing the events of a particular workday. It quickly crystalizes that strange things have been happening inside TREPP: over the past weeks several tourists have passed out (and remained catatonic) while on the virtual trail, raising the specter of a possible terrorist hacker attack.

Tallulah's group of tourists consist of a mother and her pre-teen twin daughters, a group of four anthropology students, and a five member Jewish family. The tour goes awry almost immediately, the tourists and Tallulah cut off from the real world. While they manage their way through the Trail, Tallulah begins to question the TREPP's purpose as well as her own history.

Hausman is clearly interested in how history is created. Like Trouillot, Hutcheon and White, Hausman believes that history – academic and popular – is a product of narrative and the imagination. He argues that "history [only] exists to the degree to which we (consciously and unconsciously) perpetuate it, recreate it and make it live in the present" (Greiner). While he reiterates Slotkin's assumption that stories gain meaning and status through their "persistent usage", he also insists that this process of remembering is both active and passive (*Gunfighter Nation* 5). In *Riding the Trail*, Removal is remembered through participation in an "artificial environment which is experienced through sensory stimuli . . . provided by a computer and in which one's actions partially determine what happens in the environment" (Merriam-Webster). TREPP provides the tourists with the opportunity to participate in Indian Removal, to experience what it was like, but safely. While this requires historical engagement it also relies both on how the virtual reality is storied and on the tourists' willingness to engage.

Originally built by Tallulah's grandfather in a Jeep Cherokee, Tallulah has expanded on TREPP herself, creating the narratives for the current iteration. The seeming irony of the Jeep Cherokee is cracked wide open when realizing that by using the Jeep, he appropriates an appropriation and "modifies the Jeep Cherokee to make it a Cherokee Jeep" (Jackson 120). Tallulah remembers that after her first ride in her grandfather's Jeep, her feet "felt bruised and raw", indicating that the virtual reality has gaps in which the past bleeds through, something that becomes more and more pronounced the more the novel unfolds (Hausman 33).[53] Not only does this indicate that the past cannot be contained spatially, it also shows that the past is never truly past, its effects leaking through to the present. It also suggests that however much the settler-colonizer society tires to command Native North American history, its grasp on it will always be limited – Native imagination succeeding in the end.

Having studied history and anthropology, Tallulah refines her grandfather's Jeep experience, creating not only the historical framework for TREPP but also the extra information given to the tourists while on the Trail. Essentially, this places two Cherokee at the center of TREPP, Tallulah's grandfather as the original creator and Tallulah as the eventual storyer.[54] However, Tallulah is aware that her version of Removal relies on a paucity of "facts". She remarks that "in the early days [of working on TREPP], detailing the original round-up and concentration at the stockades proved to be the most difficult part of writing the program"; echoing Glancy (and others), she continues, "very little clearly documented evidence exists regarding these events and their facts" (Hausman 172). Tallulah acknowledges that most official information regarding the Trail derives from the work of James Mooney. However, she goes further, remarking on the reproduction of Mooney's history, claiming that:

> each document in the university library that discusses the actual roundup reads like a restatement of the Removal chapter in the James Mooney book. Even the official tribal information from the Cherokee Heritage Center in

[53] Interestingly, this discomfort is only true for Tallulah. As mentioned below, the tourists enjoy the virtual reality particularly because they are briefly "released" from their bodies, allowing them to no longer feel pain. It seems however as if Tallulah, being Cherokee, does not get to enjoy this feature.
[54] This also raises the question of Native North Americans commercializing their own histories while simultaneously making them available to a non-Native audience. Although Tallulah clearly questions her own motivations, both as writer and as tour guide, she embodies a means of Native North American survivance: selling a traumatic event to the perpetrators and earning money off of this sale allocates power to her.

> Tahlequah reads like a collection of excerpts from the Mooney book. (Hausman 173)

If, as Tallulah claims, "Cherokee around the world learn about their culture from the Mooney book" there is a possible disconnect in Cherokee identity: the Trail, and to a large extent being Cherokee, is mediated through the writings of a white man (57). While she seems to find this thought upsetting, she remains employed by TREPP, a company that is making a fortune predicated on this discrepancy.

Tallulah concludes that "the Trail was intentionally undocumented and that the quotations [she uses] were anonymously concocted post-Removal by writers who melded shards of memory in the fires of nostalgia" (173). The combination of memory and nostalgia is a powerful one, again pointing to the creation of national myths. Tallulah wonders:

> when early American ethnohistorians . . . asked old Cherokee people for memorable stories about the Trail of Tears, how many people described that dead pregnant woman and her mutilated fetus? And how many of those people only heard about the story, but never actually saw what happened? How did they even know for sure that it happened? Did they find it easier to recycle the mother-fetus killing story than to tell the real stories of their parents, or their children, who actually died in their arms? For all [she] knew, that fetus could have been killed five hundred times, or it could have been killed zero times. The texts didn't say, and the texts never seemed to change. (Hausman 174)

Tallulah's conclusion harks back to Hausman's own about how history only becomes history as it is remembered and passed on. Repetition is a large part of making history; by repeating certain events they become entrenched in the public consciousness, rendering it unnecessary to know if they actually happened in the first place. If the Trail of Tears is primarily documented by white people (or more specifically white males in the nineteenth century) then history will reflect this. "Factuality" and, with it, "authenticity" thus become highly subjective and should be contested – particularly when it is minority history documented by and for members of the majority culture.

History as Commodity

Documenting history for the settler-colonizer society enforces the idea of Cherokee history as a product. The virtual reality of TREPP is central to Hausman's portrayal of a world in which Removal has been reduced to a Disneyworld-esque entertainment, a chose-your-own-adventure style fiction. TREPP is clearly cast as an amusement park.

The entry point to the virtual reality chamber is "totally [reminiscent] of the entrance to Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico", as well as Space Mountain (Hausman 69). While the Carlsbad Caverns are a National Park in the Guadalupe Mountains, they have been modified to contain an elevator and, as part of the parks system, visitors have to pay to enter; nature thus being conserved and commodified simultaneously. This in itself is reminiscent of TREPP, which ostensibly protects and maintains Cherokee history, making it accessible to a contemporary public. At the same time, TREPP, like the caverns, costs money. The protection given to nature and history thus contingent on the complimentary effect of creating revenue for those who claim to be protecting it.

Space Mountain on the other hand connects TREPP firmly with the concept of an amusement park, the idea a Cherokee Disneyland working well as an umbrella comparison for TREPP more generally. The virtual Removal is a ride. It takes no longer than a few hours, the perfect afternoon entertainment. Tallulah continuously reassures her tourists that they will be home in time to watch that evening's football game while still being able to fully savor their Trail experience (Hausman 46). This disconnect between the historical realities of the trail – hunger, illness, dispossession, death – and its virtual representation, seems to bother none of the tourists and corresponds directly to the TREPP's marketing. Ostensibly educational, TREPP is focused on entertaining and creating revenue for its white owners. While there is the intention of creating an authentic experience (one of the reasons Tallulah is sought after as a tour guide, being Cherokee she is seen as an asset both by TREPP's management and the tourists who imagine a better immersion in the Trail's history if accompanied by someone they can identify as Native North American), this seems secondary to enjoyment.[55] A commercialized version of the past has thus supplanted experience, the trauma of Removal turned into an enterprise geared

[55] This idea of an authentic experience is also relevant in Jones's *Ledfeather*; a woman touring Browning, Montana is dismayed that the trinkets she can buy are made in China, disappointed that direct access to Blackfeet culture is being denied to her.

towards white people who can feel comfortable in benefiting from education while clearly enjoying a sophisticated virtual reality experience.

Such a version of history suggests complicity from those who participate, both the tourists and Tallulah. Hausman implies here that history is similar to the virtual reality experience: the master narrative that has been accepted as history (both locally and globally) only exists as long as it is being participated in. While Tallulah is less to "blame" than the tourists or management she is complicit in perpetuating the virtual reality version of Removal. Caison argues similarly, stating that *Riding the Trail* "complicates an affective attachment to the Cherokee history of Removal, and it encompasses . . . Tallulah . . . in its critique" (151). Tallulah is part and parcel of the commercial aspect of TREPP; while she, like the Trail's existence, is essential to TREPP, she is also marketable: with her long dark hair and high cheekbones, she appears in TREPP advertisements, her "Cherokee" appearance vital to marketing the virtual reality experience (Hausman 56). Removal cannot be accessed emotionally through TREPP, thus truly becoming an experience instead of a historical and emotional engagement.[56]

In addition to the overall entertainment of a virtual reality experience, the tourists are also guaranteed maximum happiness on their journey. An "authentic Cherokee experience" is enhanced by changes to the tourists' appearances. Darker skin – but not "too" dark, everyone looks healthily tanned – as well as bigger breasts for the women and larger penises for the men is part of the experience. The anthropology students are enraptured by the changes, claiming to "like this ride", the boys encouraging each other to "check [their] packages" (Hausman 93). Tallulah briefly remarks that TREPP is inclined to do "anything to ensure customer satisfaction, regardless of historical inaccuracy, and body parts are always a welcome distraction for the average customer" (93). This emphasis on genitalia is telling in itself, the white obsession with sexualizing racial others explicit in this small programming decision. In her discussion of Craig Strete's science fiction, Kristina Baudemann draws a comparison between TREPP and the futuristic theme park in Strete's short story "Ten Times" (as well as with Drew Hayden Taylor's *Ojibway World* in his play "Berlin Blues"), stating that TREPP "mocks white mainstream

[56] Arguably, this is also a self-referential comment on *Riding the Trail* itself. Access to the past remains limited and the euroamerican belief of being admitted to the "real past" through historiography, literature, documents, etc. is revealed here as futile – there is only access to versions of the past and those are always colored by intent and memory.

culture's desire to 'play Indian'", which goes hand in hand with the exoticizing aspect of the virtual reality experience (Baudemann 79). While Tallulah quietly criticizes TREPPS insistence on bodily markers, the tourists are painfully oblivious. It is also interesting to note that the concept of a Native North American theme park finds resonance in a more than one story, maybe echoing the extra-textual realities of casinos and reservations, or places like the Taos Pueblo.

The older customers also benefit from the virtual reality, their chronic pains and aches removed, their bodies returned to agility. Ironically, the virtual Trail is also seen as a "welcome escape" for pregnant women, the Removal experience relieving backpains and pregnancy symptoms. Thinking back to *Trail of Tears* this feels particularly out of place, as women, children and old people suffered and died more frequently on the Trail than men. In the unspecified future of TREPP however, it is precisely these visitors that experience the most physically enjoyable Trail. This attention paid suggests that TREPP is structured as a respite for its predominantly white tourist base, a stark contrast to the realities of Removal. Caison argues that *Riding the Trail* "calls out those who use [stories of the Trail] as some sort of catharsis", clearly marking any TREPP engagement with Removal as secondary to revenue-creation (219).

Virtual Reality as Indigenous Futurism

Hausman's use of virtual reality is probably the most blatant departure from historical realism. The sophistication of TREPP as well as the ambiguity of the temporal setting, moves Hausman's novel into the realm of science fiction, or Indigenous Futurism. While science fiction is "rooted in colonialism" – the discovery and civilization of alien worlds – Grace Dillon has argued convincingly that there is no "better terrain" than "the field of science fiction to engage colonial power" (3). Baudemann argues similarly, claiming the "incredible power to science fiction" that can be used productively in Native North American stories (80). Indigenous Futurism is a productive genre for Native North American writers as it always already implies colonialism while allowing for strange narratives, non-linear time structures and new technologies to take over. Baudemann even claims Indigenous Futurisms as "speculative literatures of survivance", implying the freedom and potential self-determination that can be established by conjecture and imagination (85). Further, Hausman's use of science fiction elements is structured to

"[complicate] the temporal constraints of conventional science fiction", while also participating in "a tradition of . . . recovery and revision" that moves science fiction away from its classic format of discovery focused on the settler/colonizer/explorer and towards a science fiction that questions conventions of time, space and narrative (Jackson 116). Carter Meland (Ojibwe) further argues that Native North American science fiction writers are concerned with "decolonialization, [and] undoing colonial and imperial habits of thought . . . [while privileging] Native power [and presenting] Native ways of seeing and being as legitimate" (qtd. in Apex Mag, Justice).

In *Riding the Trail*, the virtual reality allows for accessing Removal without having to travel narratively into the nineteenth century. Intertwining past and present creates a parallel rendering of the contemporary and past which does not diminish the trauma of Removal. Thus, while Hausman writes the Trail he does not attempt to change it, the virtual reality disallowing any actual changes to the past.

The virtual reality of TREPP is constructed to present a linear version of time that realizes Removal as causal; Tallulah even remarks specifically that the virtual reality, "like the actual Removal, exists because of causality" (Hausman 70). Tourists enter the virtual reality and their choices (infinite according to the underlying technology) lead them to their eventual personal conclusions within the logic of TREPP's reality.

Despite the plethora of choices, the virtual reality experience always begins with the ransacking of the "First Cabin" (Hausman 70).[57] This is similar to the narrative set-up of *Trail of Tears*, Glancy's novel starting with Maritole and Knobowtee being expelled from their home. Both *Trail of Tears* and *Riding the Trail* here possibly also refer to the writings of Mooney who records that "families at dinner were startled by the sudden gleam of bayonets in the doorway and rose up to be driven with blows and oaths along the weary miles of the trail" (qtd. in Rozema 21).[58] Like in *Trail of Tears* this beginning immediately demonstrates the individual violence at the heart of Removal while also underlining settler complicity, as white

[57] This is however not entirely correct. Tallulah mentions that there are various ways of experiencing the Trail, different "levels" that change not only the intensity of the violence experienced but also the set-up of Removal. There seems to also be a version of the virtual reality experience that allows tourists to experience the Trail as "rich Cherokee", leaving North Carolina or Georgia before the actual date of removal, and thus experiencing a very different Removal.

[58] This possible referral to Mooney is partially ironic as it underscores Tallulah's skepticism of basing her history on the writings of a settler-colonizer anthropologist.

people are seen to immediately move into the cabin, appropriating Cherokee possessions.

This constant "re-set" of the Trail however immediately undermines the linear development of time that the insistence on causality initially suggests. By beginning the Removal at the same point again and again it creates a reality akin to a time loop or spiral, whose ends are also beginnings and vice versa. Tallulah states that she herself has ridden the Trail a thousand times, experiencing it ad nauseum. Thus, while the experience is limited in a certain way – primarily through the parameters of the virtual reality – it is also marked as endless, the experience continuing forever.

This circling is reinforced by the narrative structure of the novel itself. The events on the virtual Trail are framed by the voice of a little little person who lives in Tallulah's hair.[59] (Tallulah later spins them down the drain while washing her hair, again invoking circular movement.) Caison argues that the narrative here suggests a link between beginnings and endings (the frame-narrative), and an active disavowal of "finality or national Cherokee rupture" (151). By constantly re-entering and experiencing the Trail Tallulah, and the paying tourists, make Removal a constant. While this could connote the encompassing continuation of trauma, it also underlines the continued existence of the Cherokee in the present. The idea of finality is actively counteracted by repetition, the Trail's reality constantly reiterated in the present.

By introducing one of the little people into the frame narrative, Hausman creates continuity between Cherokee mythology and historical narrative, while also again insisting on the non-linearity of time (also outside of the virtual reality). The little little person begins by telling the reader that they "lack the means to tell time", immediately introducing an element of temporal uncertainty that winds its way through the novel (7). Caison argues that "from this point" the reader is made aware that the "narration cannot account for any stable temporality: linear, spiral, or otherwise" (154). This instability is reinforced by the parallel realities of the virtual reality and the outside world. While Tallulah and her tourists experience days and weeks inside the virtual reality, only hours are passing on the outside, emphasizing that time is relative and subordinate to manipulation. When Tallulah loses connection with TREPP's command center she is removed from external time and

[59] The little people, or yunwi tsundi, live in the woods and mountains and play tricks on the Cherokee. The little people accompanied the Cherokee on the Trail of Tears, providing comfort along the way.

dives fully into the time structure presented by the virtual reality. “The readers are left to wonder which temporality is real: the minute-clocked one of Tallulah’s watch or the temporality born of an apocalyptic Removal” (Caison 153). While this is arguably stressful, particularly for the tourists and Tallulah, it also leads her to abandon TREPP and claim her ancestral heritage.

Another important factor in Tallulah’s eventual departure is her encounter with the “Extras” or “Misfits” who have come to populate the virtual reality. The extras have seemingly appeared on their own, unprogrammed, yet established in a secondary loop of the virtual reality – another instance of time escaping linearity. The extras, like the rest of TREPP, begin each virtual day anew, dying at the end of every simulation, to be resurrected for the next round. Their recurring deaths stress the cruelty of the virtual Trail, their only purpose being continual death and resurrection for the pleasure of white people.[60] However, the extras manage to free themselves from their loop, staging an insurrection of TREPP’s primary storyline and thus disrupting the flow of Tallulah’s tour. The ultimately manage to escape their continuous dying, revealed as at least partially responsible for the comatose tourists of the previous weeks.

Crucially, the little little person who lives in Tallulah’s hair and frames the narrative has escaped from TREPP, one of the extras; latching on to Tallulah, they have made their way out of the virtual reality (Hausman 1). The little little person explains that the extras believed that they could not leave the virtual reality “programmed to believe that things digital could never fully enter the consciousness of things organic, that we could never exist outside the digital world of the Trail of Tears” (2). This idea of believing that which is told resonates with the portrayal of Native North Americans by the dominant settler-colonizer culture; Hausman seemingly indicating that there needs to be a concerted shift away from accepting established versions of reality and thus freeing oneself.

Although it is not revealed what or who the extras are exactly, they represent a rupture to the white-imagined Trail of Tears. Possibly born out of the remnants of Tallulah’s grandfather’s programming, the extras demonstrate the intrusion of a Cherokee past on a settler-colonizer present, and by extent, on a settler-colonizer

[60] This further underlines the ways in which Native North Americans are allowed to participate in settler society; as people to be exhibited and looked at, then put away again, their humanity disregarded.

version of history. They disrupt "the narrative of Cherokee existence . . . [ending] in the nineteenth century" (Caison 153). Cherokee existence survives into the future as elements disruptive to established history.

Concurrently, this warping of reality and time also demonstrates the continuity of United States violence, emphasizing the brutality suffered by racial others. In *Mohawk Interruptus*, Audra Simpson writes that after 9/11, Native rights "were constructed, along with those of others, as a threat to national security and [Native North American] forms of self-identification (and formal identification by the state) became subjected to greater scrutiny" (123). Simpson here illustrates the real-world implications of being "othered" by the United States government; in *Riding the Trail*, an Iraqi tech-worker is immediately assumed by Tallulah to be the first under suspicion for causing the TREPP glitches. He is indeed questioned by the CIA at the end of the novel, and it is clear that he is being investigated precisely because he is not white and identified as having a possible Muslim background and is thus automatically – by the settler-colonizer society – associated with terrorism. The CIA involvement, as well as the blatant stereotyping, makes palpable the connection between the treatment of those perceived as "Muslim" and those understood as Native.[61] Hausman takes this comparison further, explaining the similarities between the ransacking of the Cherokee homes and the invasion of Baghdad (Hausman 80). Although Tallulah does not share her thoughts with the tourists, she thinks, "that looters always follow closely on the heels of invading armies and that the Cherokee round-up was absolutely like the invasion of Baghdad back at the turn of the century" (80).

Ultimately, the violence perpetrated on the Cherokee is shown to have not occurred in isolation. The United States continually treats non-whites as dangerous and potentially threatening; this threat then cause for political, social and cultural violence. The presence of the Trail in a U.S. American future afraid of terrorism emphasizes both the continued fear of the government and the constancy of U.S. violence against others.

[61] There is a further connection here drawn between the Holocaust and the Trail of Tears. The character of Irma, a grandmother enjoying the Trail with her family, recalls her grandmother's experiences with Pogroms, comparing these to the violences experienced by the Cherokee. Michael, one of the anthropology students further compares the stockades on the Trail with concentration camps (Hausman 95). This similarity between the Shoah and Removal is discussed further in the following chapter, focusing on David Treuer's novel *Prudence*.

Conclusion

Whereas Glancy and Hausman seem to come from vastly different realities – different belief systems, genres, narrative styles – they have produced surprisingly similar historical novels. Hausman is surely the more "modern", playing with genre conventions and overtly critiquing both the historical processes and ideologies central to the U.S. American belief system, while Glancy is rather more traditional (or surreptitious) in her efforts to upset the grand narrative of history. Both acknowledge the destruction wrought by Removal, stressing the aspects of cultural and physical genocide implemented by the U.S. government, while portraying a Cherokee Nation that has survived apocalypse and thrived in its aftermath.[62] Maritole's continued perseverance in the face of hardships (loss of children, inability to farm the new land, loss of family, etc.) anticipates Tallulah's decisive break with TREPP as well as the success of the extras within the virtual world. Both *Riding the Trail* and the *Pushing the Bear* duology make absolutely clear that Removal has become part of Cherokee existence, anticipated and lived through, another step in the survivance of the nation.

Both *Riding the Trail* and *Trail of Tears* establish a separate Cherokee sovereignty by rewriting the history of trauma. Claiming possession of the Trail of Tears reveals a sustained Cherokee existence that extends from a pre-Columbus past through the nineteenth century and into the future. Hausman's use of science fiction reiterates the continued survivance of the Cherokee in northern America, Tallulah's expertise as well as the location of TREPP in Georgia are constant reminders of Cherokee presence. The insistence by characters in the novels to tell old and new stories emphasizes the necessity of telling the past and present for establishing survivance and sovereignty – particularly in the face of an overwhelming settler-colonizer society. Arguably, Hausman and Glancy use their historical novels to "recover [Cherokee] strength, . . . wisdom, and . . . solidarity" in recovering the core tenets of traditional Cherokee teachings (*Peace, Power and Righteousness* xii).

[62] As Caison notes, the efforts of the U.S. government to eliminate Native North Americans continued after Removal; the Cherokee in particular have moved through the Curtis Act of 1898 (the US incorporated Indian Territory into the new state Oklahoma), the dissolving of tribal government and appointment of Chiefs by the federal government into the early twentieth century, as well as the realities of life on the reservation and the increasing movement of young people to urban centers away from the Nation. They remain one of the most present and largest Native North American nations in the twenty-first century.

These three novels participate in writing Cherokee history and establishing new versions of Removal. Thereby they write against victimization, instead promoting literary survivance. Despite the dismantling of an official Cherokee sovereignty in the nineteenth century, these historical novels reestablish political self-determination. Although removed from their ancestral homelands and plunged into civil war, the Cherokee have continued as a nation, reestablishing their peoplehood in Oklahoma. Both Hausman and Glancy make it irrevocably clear that Cherokee survivance persists and is cemented through the retelling of Cherokee history.

Chapter 3: Native North American Narratives of War

Introduction

In *Behind the Trail of Broken Treaties* (1974), Vine Deloria Jr. argues that the United States' failure in Vietnam was directly connected to the U.S.'s "domestic failure to honor its Indian treaties and to place its relations with American Indians 'in a world historical perspective'" (qtd. in Rosier 2). Deloria here introduces the idea that the United States' treatment of Native North Americans mirrors its treatment of other "others", linking westward expansion across northern America with contemporary US American imperialism. At the same time however, the United States insist on performing as inherently democratic, extolling the ideals of equality and liberty, and being loathe to violence. By denying the connection formulated by Deloria, and presenting violence as isolated incidents, the United States refuses a narrative of continuous aggression, instead maintaining the act of waging wars and exacting violence as necessary for conserving democracy and protecting the innocent.

Inevitably then, Native North Americans have no place in the histories of these wars, except as antagonists tasked with supplying the other. Conversely however, Native North Americans have been serving in North American wars since the "Revolutionary War and beyond, fighting in the War of 1812, the Civil War, and with units of the army in the West" (Rosier 46). Native North Americans further supplied large numbers of soldiers in both World Wars, the codes developed from Native languages central to the US American war effort in World Wars 1 and 2. Native scouts and snipers were also among the most highly decorated veterans of World War 1, while Native soldiers overall saw the most direct combat in Korea, Vietnam and the Gulf Wars ("National Survey" 20).

Aim

Chapter three explores this disconnect between service and representation, following the argument that including Native soldiers in the history of North American wars destabilizes the U.S. American national narrative, exposing its dependence on continuous violence. As the most prolific war narratives of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, war novels offer exhaustive depictions of the physical and psychological strain enacted by these violences. This chapter reads war fiction as a type of historical novel, equally invested in establishing or unsettling national narratives, and "[displaying] essential cultural concepts, expectations, and

self-images more prominently than other kinds of literature" (Hölbling 212). The canonic war novel is concerned primarily with the telling of white, male narratives of combat, as well as stories of the home front that focus on individual and societal traumas. Narratives of marginalized bodies such as women, LGBTQI+ and BIPOC rarely feature in euroamerican war fiction, helping to facilitate their erasure, both from war and national histories themselves.[63]

The following chapter focuses on two Native North American war novels, David Treuer's *Prudence* (2015) and Gerald Vizenor's *Blue Ravens* (2014). Both recount Native war experiences and their individual and communal effects. While *Blue Ravens* presents a sweeping epic of artistic self-actualization and survivance in World War 1 and beyond, *Prudence* reveals the personal and societal losses wrought by World War 2, firmly dismissing the idea of war as heroic enterprise. Both novels manipulate the canonic euroamerican war novel, locating Native North American characters in events essential to national narratives, exposing violence as central to United States identity.

Before analyzing the two novels, this chapter briefly introduces the canonic war novel, focusing on genesis and development, from the epic poetry of Homer to the realist portrayals of twentieth century wars and their debilitating effect on bodies and minds. The chapter then reintroduces the importance of narrative to nation building, elaborating on the ideas of national mythology presented in chapter one. The chapter then considers Native North American participation in twentieth century wars as a basis for delineating a specifically Native North American war novel. This is followed by a comprehensive analysis of *Prudence* and *Blue Ravens* – focusing on narrative form, Native bodies in a euroamerican context, the concept of survivance, and the importance of violence to North American identity – and concludes with questions for more research into Native experiences of modern wars.

This chapter deliberately analyses novels that focus less on popularized "Indian" war narratives – those of snipers, scouts and Code Talkers – as well as looking beyond the canonized novels of Leslie Marmon Silko and Scott Momaday (Kiowa) – *Ceremony* (1977) and *House Made of Dawn* (1968) respectively – to address Native war experiences that have been pushed to the margins or ignored completely. As Vizenor remarks, "narratives of [Native] service as common soldiers

[63] While novels of the home front feature women, these novels are often only recognized as war fiction retrospectively, their focus on life at home considered "women's writing" and thus removed from war.

were seldom included in war histories" (*Blue Ravens* 85); when included, history highlights "outstanding" Native North American soldiers, encouraging a narrative of successful integration through voluntary military service that masks the realities of a racialized and oppressive United States that uses violence to maintain its status.

Violence, War and Nation Building

As established above, the euroamerican war novel is categorized as a sub-genre of the historical novel; documenting the realities of war (pre, peri, or post), war fiction tells of the battle and home fronts. It is considered distinct from the historiography of war in its portrayal of war as a lived experience, rather than an account of events that highlights key dates, military engagements and chronology. Beginning with Homer's *Iliad* (written between 1260 and 1180 BC) and *Beowulf* (written between 700 and 1000 AD), fictions of war are essential to the Western literary canon, building national narratives of "them" and "us", and facilitating identity formation. War fiction proliferates throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queen* (1590) and Shakespeare's *Henry V* (1599) are considered important examples; the poem and play respectively romanticize wars as canvases for heroic deeds, playing with the realities of combat as the basis for nation building. The rise of the Realist and historical novels in the eighteenth century ushered in the first iteration of the modern war novel. Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (1869) marks the zenith of this mode of writing war; he creates a complex personal, social, political and cultural history of the Napoleonic Wars in Russia, moving between romance, combat and societal change, while focusing on five distinct aristocratic families. Based on research into primary source material and established historiography, Tolstoy's novel reveals "essential cultural concepts, expectations, and self-images" that show the self as part of a distinct society (Hölbling 212). Like the early historical novel, the war novel thus creates a sense of national belonging and cohesion that fosters a sense of unity and togetherness.[64]

World War 1 can be considered a major turning point for euroamerican war fiction, the plethora of new novels as well as their very critical tone combining to form a sweeping anti-war rhetoric. There is a noticeable urgency in these new novels,

[64] Lukács sees *War and Peace* as a prime example for his definition of the historical novel, demonstrating the deep connection between the two genres.

many texts appearing immediately after or even during the war.[65] While this suggests a lack of distance and thus of historicity, the realities of global war compelled this change to accommodate both a making sense of the events, a means of "imposing at least verbal control", and an effort to prevent further violence of this magnitude (McLoughlin, "War and Words" 13). These texts attempted to complicate the established understanding of war as something necessary (to protect the home, the nation, etc.), suggesting instead that war is always destructive and traumatizing rather than constructive. Hölbling argues that "conflict becomes the occasion for questioning the validity of those collective and individual values and concepts of self and other in whose name one might die prematurely", countering the common stereotype of, for example, finding heroism in dying for one's country (212). This interrogation of war and violence, particularly when tied to ideas of nationalism, has been explored throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, arguably moving war fiction firmly into the realm of the anti-war narrative. Novels depicting World War 2 and the Vietnam War in particular – Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969) or Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried* (1990), for example – "no longer conceive war as an exceptional historical situation" but view these violences as "geographically situated"; whether we experience war or peace is dependent on location, war is shown to be ever present divorced from temporal confines (Hölbling 219).

Contemporary euroamerican war fiction such as Ian McEwan's *Atonement* (2001) and Sebastian Faulks's *Birdsong* (1993), while still depicting combat, focus almost completely on the individual and societal ramifications of violence and war, insisting on the permeability of battle and home front and the absurdity of their separation. The popularity of these novels emphasizes the role that violence continues to play in western society, reiterating the enormous impact that war has on euroamerican societies as a whole, even when presented as anti-war fiction.

> In "What is a Nation" (1882) Ernest Renan defines the nation as:
> a soul, a spiritual principle. Two things which . . . are really one and the same constitute this soul, this spiritual principle. One is the past, the other is the present. One is the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories; the other is present consent, the desire to live together, the desire to continue to

[65] Henri Barbusse's *Under Fire*, highly critical of the developing nationalism and explicitly concerned with the trauma of World War, was published in 1916.

> invest in the heritage we have jointly received. . . It presupposes a past but is reiterated in the present by a tangible fact: consent, the clearly expressed desire to continue a common life. (10)

As stated in the chapter one, Renan argues that nations are built on both memory and current reality, maintained by an active desire of the individuals involved to continue a collective existence. The past is equally as important as the present, national history feeding into the now. Further, he suggests that forgetting is "an essential factor in the creation of the nation", specifically the forgetting of "the violent acts [that] have taken place at the origin of every political formation" (Renan 3). Thus, not only is it necessary to have history and myth, it is necessary to collectively blur and obscure certain facts of this history to create the consent needed to maintain a common existence. This idea is echoed by Robert Zacharias in what he terms originary crisis. Zacharias argues that for "every state there is a moment of great instability, prior to the establishment of the law, that is paradoxically both created and managed by a singular act of violence" (Zacharias 118). This concept of originary crisis as founding violence "is necessary because its invocation is what grants the nation the authority and cultural force to inspire devotion, to demand loyalty, and . . . to efface acts of violence that have followed its inception" (118). Further, originary crisis seamlessly incites a narrative of inclusion and exclusion that Homi Bhabha deems necessary to nation building; Bhabha states that "the origins of national traditions turn out to be as much acts of affiliation and establishment, as they are moments of disavowal, displacement, exclusion, and cultural contestation" (5).

Like Renan, Zacharias and Bhabha here emphasize the importance of forgetting (both deliberate and unintentional): with time the moment of originary crisis not only glosses over itself, it also obscures previous and ensuant acts of violence; ultimately, violence and forgetting converge to form a national consciousness.

Founding Mythologies

The United States offers a doctrine-based mythology that resonates with an incremental, slowly unfolding idea of orginary crisis.[66] This unfolding is revealed in

[66] If pressed to assign a specific moment of originary crisis, it can be argued that the United States locates its origins twice, both in civil war; "first through rebellion against the British government in 1775, and then [again in the 1860s] through the war between the Union and the Confederate States"

manifest destiny, the belief that the settler-colonizers were chosen by God to establish themselves and spread across the North American continent (and beyond), and the concurrent myth of the frontier.

In *Native America, Discovered and Conquered*, Miller and Furse argue that there are three central tenets to manifest destiny: (1) "the special virtues of the American people and their institutions", (2) "the mission of the United States to redeem and remake the west in the image of agrarian America", and "an irresistible destiny to accomplish this essential duty" (Miller 3, 120). This combination of a "special" people with "special" virtues and a "irresistible" destiny sanctioned by God, permanently shaped a developing U.S. master narrative. Using this ideology as a basis, the United States constructed a "set of historical fables that explain and justify the development of American nationality as the product of this perennial advance into the wilderness, or the virgin land" ("Myth of the Frontier").

Slotkin argues that the perceived wilderness (and the people that inhabit it) goes hand in hand with manifest destiny and is formative for the image cultivated by the United States. He suggests (1) a cycle of separation and regression, and (2) the idea of conflict, recalling Zacharias and Renan. Separation and regression imply the physical removal from Europe (civilization) to North America (the wilderness) and the subsequent repetitive removal from newly founded centers towards the expanding frontier (*Gunfighter Nation* 11).[67]

Conflict arises within the wilderness, particularly in contact with Native North Americans; as Slotkin states "conflict with the Indian defined one boundary of American identity" (11). While U.S. Americans were apart from civilization and thus "of the wilderness" they were not the "savages" that they considered the Native North Americans (11). This of course also relates back to the early literatures and histories

(Strachan 10). Both wars are delineated as necessary violence, promoting freedom and equality. While the War of Independence is cast as a colonial nation successfully liberating itself from an oppressive monarchy, the Civil War is presented as a successful attempt at promoting racial equality and eradicating slavery. Both of these narratives disguise the realities that predate and follow these wars. The United States did not rebel against a monarchy in isolation (the French Revolution would soon follow) and the constitution did not change the conditions for women, Native North Americans and those enslaved. Many of the most destructive policies regarding Native North Americans followed the War of Independence, zest for land and resources dominating the subsequent centuries. The narrative around the Civil War is particularly misleading as slavery, while officially ended, was shifted to the restrictive realities of the Jim Crow era, lasting into the middle of the twentieth century, realized today in the realities of police brutality and a prison system that disproportionally racializes black and brown U.S. Americans.

[67] This mirrors the established development of colonial nation states, moving from a center (Europe and iterations of Europe within the colonial state) to the periphery, creating new centers and then again moving further from this into a new periphery, and so on.

produced in the United States; Cotton Mather's depictions of Puritan villages surrounded by savage Native North Americans and an unforgiving nature perpetuate these mythologies, slowly turning them into fact.

The idea of the periphery/center dichotomy is most emblematically realized in Frederick Turner's frontier myth, which sees the western United States as a sprawling land waiting to be tamed, disregarding the Indigenous tribes and nations already settled there. While the frontier always exists on the very edge of civilization it is unfixed and can move further and further, necessitating a game of catch-up that allows continuous expansion and mirrors the constant shift between inside and outside. The concept of the frontier derives from Frederick Jackson Turner's essay "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" (1893) which defines the frontier as "the meeting point between savagery and civilization" mirroring the ideas central to manifest destiny (Turner 3).[68] This differentiation between "savage" and "civilized", or put more simply, between Native and settler-colonizer, as well as the idea of the savage frontier has been carried from the eighteenth century into the twenty-first, particularly within the realms of violence and war.

Although neither the philosophy of manifest destiny, nor the ideology of the frontier, overtly mention violence, the fact of Native North American existence on the North American continent necessarily entails violence. No expansion is possible without the displacement, removal and murder of those already present. Thus, while the literal frontier and the ideology of manifest destiny have been used to expand the United States from New England across the Mississippi to California, relocating Native North Americans to reserves in the name of civilization and progress, the language of the frontier has taken hold in the justification of twenty-first century wars, most recently in the War on Terror.

The War on Terror has been framed as a necessary means for protecting "the boundaries of free society and good government" from "zones of sheer chaos", an obvious reiteration of nineteenth century philosophy, and a further instance of defining national policy in terms of "savage" and "civilized", or "them" and "us" (Rosier 279). Max Boot extends this line of argument, claiming that "small wars – fought by a smaller number of professional US soldiers" is "typical" in American

[68] Turner argues further that encountering the shifting frontier transforms the Europeanized settler-colonizer into a wholly American individualist who valued freedom. Turner's ideal frontiersman is a farmer, again mirroring manifest destiny and Jefferson's ideal of the agrarian pioneer, moving towards the west and turning the wilderness into farmland.

history, the twenty-first century deployments in Afghanistan and Syria thus have to be thought of "in much the same way [that America] thought [the] Indian Wars, which lasted roughly 300 years". He continues that "U.S. troops are not undertaking a conventional combat assignment. They are policing the frontiers of the Pax Americana" (Boot).[69] Not only does Boot here lay claim to the idea of the Pax Americana, an idea tethered to manifest destiny and American exceptionalism that defines the relative peace in the western hemisphere since the end of World War 2 maintained by the military and economic power of the United States, he also directly compares United States expansionism in the nineteenth century with current military policy.[70]

He reveals both an inherently racial element to U.S. American policy that posits "the other" as worthy only of subjugation, and reiterates the importance of the frontier and manifest destiny to U.S. American identity, and with it the necessity of violence in creating and maintaining this expansion.

Native North American Experiences of War

Despite the popularity of war fiction in Europe and North America, there are few novels that tell war from Native North American perspectives. Like the dearth of Native North American historical novels mentioned in the introduction, this can be attributed to a deliberate focus on the present and centering contemporary native concerns instead of investigating white wars. It is however also surely a reflection of a general lack of representation of Indigenous soldiers within history and literature. While there is both considerable research into Native North American participation in pre-twentieth century wars as well as fictional representation in movies and western novels, everything set post 1900 thins out significantly. This supports both the grand narrative of manifest destiny and that of the Vanishing Indian. Allowing, and even highlighting Native North American participation in eighteenth and nineteenth century wars and violence, affords them presence while simultaneously

[69] Boot is a conservative journalist and military historian. His work on small wars in American history has been widely discredited; however, he exemplifies a dominant voice within military thinking that continues to realize US American foreign policy within the binaries of "savage" and "civilized", which unfortunately adds relevance to his observations – even if based in historical oversimplification (Russel 125).

[70] By extension his statement also implies the continued mistreatment of those considered other by the United States, and places the War on Terror in a wholly different context that however completely escapes his line of argument.

locking them in a past that celebrates white settler-colonizer success and implies the gradual disappearance of Native North Americans all together.

By casting Native actors as essential to the war effort, Native North American war novels actively upset the exclusion of Native North American actors from wars and thus from the mythologies that have created and maintain the United States.

Contrary to the dearth of Native North Americans in war fiction and the erasure of Native participation in euroamerican wars in history, the enlistment percentage of Native North Americans is comparatively high. While there are many Native people who "feel that [northern America was] taken away from them by white men and for that reason they should not now be required to help in case of invasion and attack", even more Native North Americans have volunteered for military service (Bernstein 24). Motivations for enlisting vary; Rosier lists adventure-seeking, a means for attaining citizenship (particularly during World War 1), a way of realizing a "warrior-ethos", financial stability, and a belief in safeguarding democracy (47). Tom Holm (Cherokee-Creek), a veteran of the Vietnam War, underlines further that "reasons for entering the service . . . varied but seemed to differ from those of other minority enlistees" ("National Survey" 19). According to mid-twentieth century studies, "most members of minority groups in the U.S. enter military service for financial reasons", or because they think that military service will afford them recognition from within the dominant US American society (19). A large percentage of Native North Americans veterans however indicated that "respect gained from the non-Indian majority of the rest of society was not important to them" (19). Rather, they emphasized values such as duty, honor, and "family and tribal traditions", as well as establishing respect within their own communities, as motivators for joining the military forces (19).[71]

Many Native North Americans make a distinction between the colonial powers occupying their lands and the actual lands they live on. For many, they are fighting to protect their ancestral homelands, a geography divorced from the nation states that claim ownership (Allen 79). This dichotomy is made obvious in William A.

[71] Again, it is important to note that many Native North Americans refused to go to war for the United States. Some argued that, not being citizens, they would not fight for a state they did not belong to. While this was highly relevant in World War 1, where many Natives indeed did not have citizenship, it became doubly interesting during World War 2 and beyond, when citizenship had been extended but also refused. The Iroquois, for example, refused the draft in World War 2, arguing that they were not U.S. American, but Iroquois (Rosier 87).

Riegert's (Chippewa) poem "What Are We, 'The American Indian' Fighting For?". He writes:

> Did not you land on our shores – seeking freedom and peace, / Did we not succor you from famine and disease, / Did you not live and repay us with greed, / . . . / AMERICA, WE CHERISH AND LOVE YOU, OUR NATIVE LAND / Where honorably we surrendered, each Tribe and Band . . . What are we fighting for around the world, / It is the Stars and Stripes forever unfurled. / . . . / We are now a Smith, a Jones, or Takes Him Standing, / We bind each other's wounds and eat the same ration. / We dream of our loved ones in the same nation. / Cannot our rights be equal, in peace as in war / . . . / The right to live, the same freedom for all / The RIGHT of our BIRTHPLACE, When-Will-You-Call? (qtd. in Blood Narrative 78)

Published in the *South Dakota Historical Collections* in 1946, Riegert's poem clearly marks the duality of Native North American service in World War 2, as well as "exposing the dominant culture's history of violent discrimination against Indians before the war and the continued indifference of the United States, even after Indian sacrifice" (Allen 77). Riegert explores the history of contact between settlers and Native North Americans from the beginning of colonization through the nineteenth century, before giving space to the socio-economic situation of the 1940s, emphasizing white greed alongside Native North American generosity; he insists on the hypocrisy of the settler-colonizers, asking if they did not seek "freedom and peace" (arguably also central to the mythology of fleeing England from religious persecution), and then taking both from Native North Americans. Riegert also stresses the physical realities of war, revealing the similarities between Native North American and white soldiers; they eat the same rations, bleed the same blood, think of their families back home, and crucially, care for each other as human beings.[72] And yet, they are not treated equally by the United States government. This inequality is further complicated by the relationship Riegert has to his home; the line "America, we cherish and love you, our Native land" divides the poem into two halves. Riegert conceives of the United States as his home, and yet his freedoms and rights are denied by the same government that demands and purports to value his

[72] Riegert suggests here that the problems he, and other Natives, encounter is systemic rather than individual; among soldiers he is respected and valued, it is the US government and national policies that create the problems.

contributions as a soldier during war time. Riegert clearly refuses assimilation, asking instead for a comprehensive North American indigeneity (Allen 79). This echoes Holm's observation that Native North Americans were concerned not with what the dominant culture thought and wanted but what those in their communities valued.[73]

World War 2 was doubly relevant for Native North American soldiers, both abroad and at home. While enlistment and treatment of Native North American soldiers was similar to that in World War 1, World War 2 "created a centrifugal effect on Native American space, drawing tens of thousands of Native Americans away from reservations to serve in industry and the armed forces" (Rosier 73). At the same time, the social and political realities of World War 2 saw a renewed interest by the U.S. government to acquire Native North American lands in the western United States. Land was needed for military purposes, as bases and training grounds, but also for weapons testing, industry and agriculture. It is estimated that Native North Americans lost 1 million acres of land from 1941 to 1945 (Rosier 97).

World War 2 also saw renewed contact between Native North Americans, Europeans and other "others". This not only strengthened the intellectual exchange begun in World War 1 – narrativized by Gerald Vizenor in *Blue Ravens* – it also created bonds of kinship between Native North American soldiers and other non-whites. Sergeant Julian Smith (Sioux) remarked that "the people in [the Kurdish villages] were like [his] own people back on the Fort Peck Reservation. They had the same ailments, suspicions, simplicity and poverty" (qtd. in Rosier 72). Smith's observation has been echoed by a variety of other Native North American soldiers, such as a veteran who realized the "striking similarities in the condition of Vietnamese peasants and his own people" during the Vietnam War ("National Survey" 24). He writes:

> We went into their country and killed them and took land that wasn't ours. Just like the whites did to us. I helped load up ville after ville and pack it off to the resettlement area. Just like when they moved us to the rez' . . . We

[73] Allen adds that Riegert's poem was read aloud by Luke Two-Tails Gilbert (Cheyenne River Sioux) in October 1945 at the South Dakota Kiwanis Club. Two-Tails was "a serving member of the first executive council of the National Congress of American Indians" and his reading suggests that Riegert's work was both known and valued among Indigenous leaders, implying that his view of Native military service resonated.

> shouldn't have done that. Browns against browns. That screwed me up, you know. ("National Survey" 24)

Guy Dull Knife Jr. (Lakota Sioux) made a similar observation, "[wondering] if what [they] were doing to the Vietnamese wasn't the same as what the army had done to [them]" (qtd. in Rosier 248).

These observations reflect those made by Boot, contextualizing the violent colonization of the Americas with the imperialist wars of the mid-twentieth century. There is a marked continuity of U.S. American violence against others, this violence clearly manifested as a central characteristic of United States identity.

Vietnam further marked the revival of the term "Indian Country"; referring here to the impassable Vietnamese landscape beyond the US military bases, echoing Boot's statement that the Indian wars extending around the globe in zones of "sheer chaos" (Rosier 248, 279). This comparison "[situates] Vietnam in a timeless American frontier narrative" that not only gives precedent and context to the war but also justifies it as expanding the frontier and protecting "the boundaries of free society and good government" (Rosier 279). While Vietnam is commonly categorized as an unjust war that had little support among U.S. Americans, it nevertheless lasted for almost 20 years and was backed by Democratic and Republican presidents. Public support for military on the ground only seriously decreasing in 1967, more than 10 years after beginning military action, and another 10 years before its end.

Reading David Treuer's *Prudence* as Native North American War Novel

Superficially, David Treuer's 2016 novel *Prudence* seems a typical iteration of the canonic euroamerican war novel; detailing both combat in Europe and the complexities of personal relationships in Minnesota during the 1940s and '50s, Treuer tells of the battle- and home-fronts, emphasizing the shifting boundaries of violence. He insists that:

> people think of Minnesota as a quiet place full of nice people and . . . of World War 2 as a noble effort that happened far away. [*Prudence* turns] that all around: Minnesota is not as quiet . . . and World War 2 [did not] happen far away, it happened right here. (Mumford)

Like Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, or Ian McEwan's *Atonement*, both genre-defining war novels, *Prudence* collapses the distinctions between past and present,

between here and over there.[74] This collapse allows for a profound exploration of violence, demonstrating its pervasive reach. Contrary to the portrayal of wars (and other violence) as deviations from the norm, *Prudence* showcases continuous U.S. American aggression, refusing the narrative of the United States as inherently pacific, extolling the ideals of liberty and equality. Told in alternating chapters, moving from Frankie's parents, to Frankie, to Billy, through other characters and finally to Prudence herself, Treuer develops this interrogation further, centering the role that Native bodies play in these games of violence. *Prudence* questions the established structures that enable and necessitate war, thereby investigating and challenging the legitimacy of the U.S. American nation state.

Prudence hinges on the events of an afternoon in 1942, exploring their immediate and long-term effects. Treuer tells the stories of Billy and Frankie, reunited for "one last glorious August, one last innocent holiday before Frankie [joins] the world and the war" (*Prudence* 9). While Frankie, white, middleclass, has just graduated from Yale University, Billy, who is Ojibwe, has been "peeling spruce for five cents a stick" and "gutting and filleting fish" for the past years (41). Despite their different life situations and recurring geographic separation, Billy and Frankie have spent their teenage summers falling in love with each other, developing an emotional and physical relationship that has stretched into early adulthood. However, while Billy seems secure in both his love for Frankie and his own queerness, Frankie tries to hide his same-sex desires, locked in the expectations of mid-twentieth century white masculinity.

On the afternoon of Frankie's arrival in Minnesota, his friends inform him that a pair of German prisoners of war has escaped from a nearby prison camp, and Frankie suggests a search party to capture the escapees. Overzealous and intent on proving his manhood, Frankie mistakes Grace, a young Ojibwe girl hiding from the authorities, for the POWs and fatally shoots her. Grace dies in her sister's arms, the titular Prudence, leaving her traumatized. Billy, realizing Frankie's impotence in the face of responsibility, claims Grace's murder. Frankie deploys soon afterwards, having resolved neither his relationship with Billy nor admitted the truth to Prudence, taking up a post as bombardier in Europe.

[74] Treuer was directly inspired by *Atonement*, "impressed by how Ian McEwan picked apart time and place and wrote a character-driven novel about people caught up in events above themselves" (Grossmann).

Based on documented events (the presence of German prisoners of war in Minnesota, the sequence and geography of World War 2, the details of training and aerial combat) and historical figures (the teenage, Ojibwe Prudence Bolton), Treuer seems to follow a desire to control the past, "imposing . . . verbal order on chaos [and thus making] it seem more comprehensible and therefore safer" (McLoughlin 13). A self-proclaimed World War 2 expert, he states that he undertook diligent research, reading histories, perusing soldiers' autobiographies, and "imagining himself into [Frankie's] plane" to capture the true feeling of experiencing war (Grossmann).

And yet, while *Prudence* allows the "re-experience [of] the social and human motives which led men to think, feel, and act just as they did in historical reality", typical of the historical novel, Treuer surpasses this objective, bending history and exposing its biased narratives (Lukács 44).

The novel's catalyst is Prudence herself. "Based on a historical person thrust into a rural Minnesota community", Treuer envisions his main character as an incarnation of Prudence Bolton, a young Native woman, immortalized as the first woman that Ernest Hemingway claims to have had sex with (Grossmann).[75] Bolton is further recorded as having committed suicide with her partner at age 19. This is, as Treuer emphasizes, all that is known about her. While there are "thousands and thousands of pages devoted to the life of Hemingway . . . all we know about this Native woman is two sentences"; information that reduces her to her gender and death, robbing her of an extended existence in the world (Grossmann). Bolton's historical near-invisibility highlights how history treats Native North Americans (and Native women in particular), "never really [allowing them their own] complicated, flawed, and tumultuous human experience", leaving them as anecdotes to white lives instead (Grossmann).[76] Treuer declares further that Bolton "stayed with [him] because [her treatment] betrayed a kind of systemic unfairness", and that he thus

[75] Hemingway was quoted as saying that "the first woman [he] ever pleasured was a half-breed Ojibwe woman named Prudence Bolton" (Grossmann).

[76] Hemingway's 1933 short story "Fathers and Sons" also tells of "Trudy" (short for Prudence), the narrator naming the Native North American girl as the beginning of his sexual exploits. The story also features a Native North American character named Billy who while not explicitly part of Nick and Trudy's intimacies is privy to them. Clearly autobiographical, the short story also relates to violence and war, the father (Nick Adams) driving his son through his hometown after a hunting excursion; Nick Adams is loosely based on Hemingway himself, and a number of short stories follow his life from boy to young man, detailing his work as an ambulance driver during World War 1, as well as his return to the United States after the war. Treuer also includes a character named Ernie who almost catches Billy and Frankie mid-kiss, his name surely a nod to Hemingway, strengthening the connection further. Ernie can be read as an inversion of the Native anecdote character, here Hemingway himself becomes the anecdote to Prudence's story.

envisioned his novel as her story, allowing her "an attempt at self-possession and recovery" (Davies). In an effort to amend history, Treuer thus tries to give her story space, her chapter the only chapter told in first person.

It should however be noted that Treuer here follows both in the complicated footsteps of male authors appropriating female voices and of authors more generally trying to excavate narratives that have been violently suppressed. Despite the already monumental task of locating Native histories and voices in a master narrative that denies, curtails and limits their existence, Treuer here insists that he can reclaim Prudence's story, a story that has been utterly lost to and by history. There is a certain "impossibility of recovery" when engaging with records "whose very assembly and organization occlude certain historical subjects"; Prudence is a footnote to Hemingway because the grand narrative necessitates both his sustained existence and her absence: the historical narrative is dependent on this duality (Helton et al 1).

Saidiya Hartman argues similarly, stating that recovery of lost histories is indeed impossible as the dead cannot speak (12). In her essay "Venus in Two Acts" (2008), she discusses the barely remarked upon death of two girls at the hands of a slave trader. Hartman states that "the loss of [such] stories sharpens the hunger for them. So it is tempting to fill in the gaps and provide closure where there is none" (8). Like Prudence's story that lacks all details about her life, the two girls seem to demand more information, more history. And yet, Hartman cautions against this, the potential new story also violent in obscuring the structures of power that have silenced it. These stories thus become complicit – to an extent – in further disguising how history manufactures reality. Hartman asks instead to "[strain] against the limits of the archive" and step back from trying to "[recover] the lives" or "[redeem] the dead", thus moving to "paint as full a picture of the lives of the enslaved as possible" (11). While this is undoubtably Treuer's objective, it bears remembering that "rescuing" Prudence from obscurity and affording her "self-possession" is complex, particularly via a male voice. This further echoes the discussion mentioned in the introduction: while the archive is insufficient and recovery is difficult, particularly in trying to limit further violence, the very process of telling histories requires further examination, arguably the purpose of Native North American historical fiction. While Treuer's iteration of Prudence's history is thus an important step it also necessitates further scrutiny, asking how history contextualizes women

(and Native North American women) more generally and how this relates to the archive.

Prudence begins her teenage years as a victim of repeated rape, immediately manifesting the dispensability of female Native bodies in US American settler society and mirroring the experiences of Native women from the beginning of colonization into the twenty-fist century. Treuer however does not give in to victimry completely, so avoiding a dangerous stereotype. Instead, he places the violence against Prudence into a larger context of U.S. aggressions. Prudence almost nonchalantly explains that her rapist "was one of them who had been away to the Great War", linking warfare with rape and destructive masculinity (*Prudence* 237). This further connects the historical and contemporary mistreatment of Native women with the violence of World War 1. Prudence's rapist, a veteran, is presented as a violent man who exerts power over the vulnerable, crucially unsettling the idea of heroism linked to war, instead revealing a system of sustained violence that connects the home- and the battle-front.

Violent men, and their brutality against Native women, were central to westward expansion across the United States; the eventual removal of Native peoples and the establishment of secure white settlements almost conditional on the amount of violence tolled out by the settler-colonizers: more violence ensures more territory, faster. Treuer stresses this connection.

Prudence remains casually linked with sex (both consensual and non) throughout the novel, before having sex with Billy after his return from fighting in World War 2. While their encounter is not physically violent, it is emotionally fraught, Billy's motivations layered in a yearning for Frankie, as well as his knowledge of Frankie's death. It seems that the only way Billy can explore his feelings for Frankie is through Prudence – a possible comment on the persistent use of Native North American culture and history to excise U.S. American feelings of historical guilt. The section culminates in Billy's brutal declaration that Frankie never loved Prudence, and that his care of her following Grace's murder was entirely motivated by shame – his shame at having been the shooter and his inability to shoulder the blame (*Prudence* 213). Sex, while consensual, is again coupled with war-colored masculinity, Billy's unnecessary revelation nourished by his trauma-induced drinking, as well as his need to claim Frankie for himself.

Although Prudence and her sister manage to escape their abusive childhoods (and later boarding school), Prudence is permanently traumatized by her sister's murder. Grace's death, also arguably an indirect consequence of war (and confused masculinity), is never fully resolved. Neither Frankie nor Billy are directly punished for the murder; the implication here being that the lives of Native North American women are aggressively dismissed and consistently exposed to a white violence inherent in the colonization of the Americas.[77] As Sarah Hunt argues:

> colonialism relies on the widespread dehumanization of all Indigenous people – . . . children, two-spirits, men and women – so colonial violence could be understood to impact all of us at the level of our denied humanity. Yet this dehumanization is felt most acutely in the bodies of Indigenous girls, women, two-spirit and transgender people, as physical and sexual violence against [these groups] continues to be accepted as normal. (qtd. in *Reclaiming Power and Place* 230)

Prudence seems to function here as representative of contemporary Native concerns, spotlighting the continued effects of colonialism in northern America. While this is surely relevant, it again raises the specter of Treuer's appropriation of Prudence's story. Utilizing her to depict the struggles of an entire group of people arguably robs her of a unique fate, devaluing her yet again – apparently the opposite of Treuer's goal.

Alongside Prudence, Treuer uses the imprisonment of German soldiers in Minnesota camps as the novel's catalyst. As detailed by Tracy Mumford, World War 2 created a demand for soldiers, and subsequently, a lack of able-bodied men on the home-front, and thus a labor shortage; in Minnesota (and other states) this shortage was met by the importation of German POWs:

> They harvested beets outside of Hollandale, Minn. and worked the lumber camps of Itasca and Cass counties. More than 15 camps were established in Minnesota, housing some of the 400,000 POWs brought to the United States. (Mumford)

While introducing "the enemy" into Middle America fueled wide-spread anxiety over escaping and marauding prisoners, only very few managed to actually flee the camps. As Gunnar Norgaard, the assistant executive officer at Algona (Iowa) argued, "the

[77] It can be argued that Frankie and Billy are punished for their transgression – Frankie dying months before the war's end and Billy living a life devoid of happiness.

American guards discouraged any notions the Germans may have had about escaping, with stories about a surrounding wilderness inhabited by timber wolves, bears, and dangerous Indians" (qtd. In Lobdell).[78] However, on October 28, 1944, two German prisoners managed to escape. Trying to return to Germany via the Mississippi and New Orleans, they surrendered three days into their escape. Treuer coopts this incident and, dismissing notions of historical accuracy, molds it to his own narrative: in *Prudence*, the prisoners escape two years prior in 1942 (before the widespread establishment of German prison camps in the United States), deliberately challenging the established historical timeline.

Treuer seems to be doing two things here; while gesturing towards historical authenticity – the escaped prisoners – and thus manifesting the legitimacy of his narrative, he also consciously upsets it – by setting the escape in the wrong year and state – thus "[demonstrating] the gap between written text and truth" (de Groot, *Historical Novel* 11). Superficially this again seems characteristic of historical fiction, historical fact expelled by playful narrative manipulation; here however it also exposes a Native North American tendency to disregard the established progression of time. Where euroamerican epistemologies view time as linear, developing from a to b to c, Native time is variously understood as "a rubber band, stretchable, or as little loops", as time running parallel, neither past nor future but "always [as] all the times, [differing] slightly" (qtd. in Dillon 26). And precisely because the prisoners' escape sets the story in motion, explicitly challenging the set course of history, it suggests a skepticism of time as fixed, preferring a Native concept of mutable time. The incident of the escaped prisoners is a means of illustrating that essentially it does not matter when (or if) the prisoners escape, as the events that led up to their escape as well as those that follow will happen regardless: Frankie will die, the relationship between Billy and Frankie will crumble, and Prudence will commit suicide. The violence at the heart of the United States ensures this.

While such a coupling of inevitability and timelessness also prevails in English Modernism, (notably in works by Virginia Woolf and James Joyce), it here stipulates an even more comprehensive critique of violence and war. Read as such, *Prudence* implies that the strict ordering of time that underlies history suggests a portrayal of violence as contained, as a bounded segment on the progressing thread of history;

[78] The correlation of wolves, bears, and "Indians" is telling for the 1940s attitude towards Native people; an attitude that Treuer marks in *Prudence*.

war and violence thus come to be seen as deviations from the norm, as lapses and not as the continuous force that they actually are. This recalls the bracketing of violence such as slavery or the Vietnam war, instances presented as aberrations that do not represent the "real" American national character. North American history, told from a settler-colonizer point of view, absolves itself from violence, instances of the same reduced to exceptions, reactions necessary to protect and promote freedom and democracy.

By insisting on the irrelevance of linear time and historical accuracy, Treuer proposes that violence spreads into every corner of northern American existence, just as the German POWs insist on encroaching on rural Minnesota. Even though the prisoners never directly interact with any of the main characters, their mere presence shatters the illusion of separation from war and violence, manifesting war in the American heartland.

This manifestation is further cemented through the character of Emma, Frankie's mother, who is confronted daily with the reality of war, wondering "why they [had] to put the camp right there, where you could see it out of the front windows?" (*Prudence* 4). Emma's observation immediately adds yet another layer: the home, conceptualized as the sphere of women, comes into direct (visual) contact with the realities of war, destabilizing both the idea of safety in the home, and the distance of women from war more generally.[79] The proximity of the POWs unsettles the idea of the civilian (here in the form of Emma) and forces her, as proxy for American women and children, directly into the periphery of war.

Such a portrayal of the home-front is again reminiscent of Modernist writings of war. With the advent of global warfare in the early twentieth century, war was no longer physically removed from the home. In the United Kingdom this first became apparent during World War 1; accustomed to wars in the colonies, the fighting in France was suddenly very close. Paul Fussell even argues that "what [made] experience in the Great War unique and [gave] it a special freight of irony [was] the ridiculous proximity of the trenches to home"; those living in Kent could hear the shells and bombs exploding across the Channel (69).[80] In her novels *Mrs. Dalloway*

[79] By extension it thus also destabilizes the gendered spheres of war as masculine and the home as feminine, indicating that there is, again, no separation possible here and that the assumed difference is falsely maintained by such dichotomies.
[80] Arguably, for the United States, this closeness is echoed in the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941. As the first true attack by a foreign nation on U.S. American soil, Pearl Harbor made it very clear that the U.S. were implicated in global warfare.

(1925) and *To the Lighthouse* (1927), Virginia Woolf focusses on the war's closeness and interruption by manifesting violence in the every-day of 1920s London, stressing both the continued presence of the war and its ability to spill over supposedly fixed spatial and temporal boundaries. A contemporary of Woolf's, Sigmund Freud stresses that World War 1 was the first (western) war to ignore "the distinction between civil and military sections of the population" – which is precisely what Emma experiences in Minnesota (Freud 279). While she is far removed from the battle-front, the war teases her from her front porch and from inside her home, exacerbated by the fact that Frankie is also about to actively join the war. The war is thus very much present in the every- day and not removed across the ocean.

In the context of the United States, it is important to mention that the line drawn between civilians and combatants has always been fluid; particularly during westward expansion, where the colonizing governments made use of settlers to further their military agendas (notably in westward expansion and the removal of Native nations). Contrary to the idea of safe civilians, Native women and children have always been under threat by the United States government and settlers have always part of violent colonization, both thus directly exposed to violence.

Moreover, Emma, as a white, property-owning employer, suggests the substantial role that white women played in the process of colonization, reminding the reader that even if Emma sees herself (and has been taught to do so) as removed from violence, she has always been at the center of it. Arguably, protecting the home from outside threat can be realized as a prime motivator for westward expansion as well as continued aggression by settler-colonizers against Natives – the very invention of the savage and untamed land beyond the home of the settler-colonizer implies the necessity of (violent) protection, placing the home, and with it the woman, at the epicenter of violence. This again recalls Hannah Dustan, her abduction and subsequent escape used both to justify violence against Native North Americans and as a means of idealizing women and children as innocents worthy of protection. Emma thus comes to personify white settlers encroaching on Native land, her very existence underlining the absurdity of a safe home within northern America. White violence against Native North Americans is always already implied in the Americas, completely invalidating the idea of separate zones of safety and danger. Ultimately, the insertion of settler-colonizers creates a geography of violence; the United States cannot offer a safe home to anyone.

Treuer returns to the idea of Europe spilling across the Atlantic at the novel's conclusion, introducing a Jewish man into rural Minnesota and further blurring the perceived differences between "here" and "over there". Cast as a survivor of the Holocaust, the Jewish man intrudes on the lives of Mary, a Native woman and local bar co-owner, and her husband Gephardt, a German. Again, the sanctity of the home is upset, this time more literally than it is for Emma; the Jewish man importing violence from Europe into the heartland, shooting at both Mary and Gephardt, actively reminding them of the horrors of World War 2. The violence of his appearance also adds a succinct parallel between the Shoah and the genocide of Native North Americans.[81]

The ethnic cleansing perpetrated by the Third Reich during the 1930s and 40s is a reiteration of the same "racial hierarchy built around [the] shared project of territorial expansion" of colonialism: the same ideas of racism, exploitation and geographical expansion (manifest destiny as an American version of the Nazi ideology of Lebensraum) that fed the very idea of colonialism are at work in continuing Native extermination and the Jewish holocaust of the twentieth century (Mishra). While there is an obvious continuity in the oppression of others here, Treuer also upsets this parallel of suffering by implicating a Jewish man in making a Native woman unsafe. Whether this indicates that experiencing trauma does not entail immunity from perpetrating abuse (also mirrored in Frankie, a gay man, killing Grace, a Native girl), or the more general observation that violence will find a way to persist, *Prudence* vehemently insists on the repetitive brutality of violence.

The Jewish man's appearance also gestures towards the existence of concentration camps in Europe, which in turn, hints at reservations, POW camps, and the Japanese American internment camps of World War 2 which saw citizens removed from their homes, dispossessed and incarcerated in camps in the Midwest. Treuer's Jewish man links these experiences, drawing the Nazi concentration camps into the United States, while also casting a wider net that includes other colonial enterprises, such as the British camps for Boers during the Boer Wars at the beginning of the twentieth century. As Toland states:

[81] This parallel is not new – it has been gaining traction since the late 1990s, and while it remains controversial – many oppose the comparison, claiming it lessens Nazi atrocities – it appears in numerous essays, short stories, poetry and novels. See: Sherman Alexie ("The Game Between the Jews and the Indians is Tied Going into the Bottom of the Ninth Inning" (1993), "Fire as Verb and Noun" (1996)), Eric Gansworth (Haudenosaunee) ("American Heritage" (2006)), Ward Churchill (A Little Matter of Genocide (1997), etc.).

> Hitlers concept of concentration camps, as well as the practicality of genocide owed much, so he claimed, to his studies of English and United States history . . . he admired the camps for Boer prisoners in South Africa and for the Indians in the wild west; and often praised to his inner circle the efficiency of America's extermination – by starvation and uneven combat – of the red savages who could not be tamed by captivity. (202)

This not only emphasizes the predominance of violence against others globally, it also calls into question the very character of the United States more generally, its presentation of freedom and democracy revealed as a hoax. The U.S. emerges as built on oppression, dispossession and brutality perpetrated by whites. It also undercuts the efforts of the Americans in World War 2, the shock at German racism revealed as hypocritical. Ultimately, Treuer seems to say that violence does not have to be brought onto American soil in the twentieth century as it already exists, lurking at the heart of United States identity.

In conjunction with the POWs, Treuer also illustrates how war is brought literally into the home by returning US American soldiers. Both Felix, the Ojibwe caretaker of Frankie's parents' property, and Billy return from Europe marked by their respective war experiences, physically carrying their trauma from over-seas into Minnesota, further unsettling the idea of bounded spheres and emphasizing the absurdity of the notion of non-violent spaces. By allowing both of these returning soldiers to be Native – Frankie does not return, dying in Europe – Treuer again inverts the narrative, presenting home-coming not as triumph but as extended catastrophe, the treatment of Native North American veterans – ostensible heroes – a continuation of settler-colonizer abuses.

While mid-twentieth century Native American literature (Silko, Momaday) detailed the traumatic effects of combat on Native soldiers, recent novels and scholarship have moved to highlight Native heroism, focusing on such figures as Francis Pegahmagabow, Tommy Price, and Ira Hayes, as well as immortalizing war experiences in novels and biographies such as Joseph Bruchac's (Abenaki) *Code Talker* (2005) or Bradley James's *Flags of Our Fathers*. Ira Hayes is a particularly interesting case, as he was highly decorated and participated in the much publicized and heavily commemorated raising of the flag at Iwo Jima. Ironically, Hayes was not allowed to vote when he returned to New Mexico after the war; he later died of alcoholism at the age of 32 (Rosier 116). However, the photograph of Hayes and his

fellow soldiers is still reproduced today and used liberally to "symbolize the success of ethnic integration" in the United States (116).

In *Prudence*, Treuer interrogates this idea of war heroism by returning Felix and Billy (from World War 1 and World War 2 respectively) to Minnesota. For both the war is a continuation of deprivation and loss, culminating in a staid normalcy, exposing a continuous, normalized violence against Native North Americans of which war is only a heightened form.

Introduced by Emma as the quintessential "stoic Indian", Felix slowly emerges as deeply affected by his involvement in World War 1 and its aftermath. He demonstrates both the perpetuity and impossibility of containing violence spatially and temporally, again linking violence perpetuated against Native North Americans with the world wars of the twentieth century. Felix goes to war because his options are limited, both in his community and in a wider U.S. American context, exemplifying the dearth of opportunities for Native men at the beginning of the twentieth century and the interconnections between disenfranchisement and joining the military in the U.S. He first hears of the war at a drum dance, where an older man:

> [is speaking] about the war overseas. [The man] walked back and forth and spoke loudly about how he was going on the war path as their grandfathers had done. Felix sat along the edge in the shadows with his wife. He listened and watched. He had no position on the drum. All doors were closed to him. So, after the dance he approached the singer and said he'd go with him. (*Prudence* 34)

This recalls research by Rosier and Holm that suggests that Native men went to war "as their grandfathers had done", thus following a warrior tradition, as well as underlining the dearth of other opportunities. Treuer recounts almost none of Felix's combat experiences, stating only that he had "clubbed three men to death with his rifle, had shot nine and had stabbed five with his bayonet" instead returning him to the United States to find both his wife and child dead by Influenza (*Prudence* 158). The Spanish Flu of 1918 was a deadly pandemic that spread quickly across war-ravaged Europe and further to northern America and across the globe. Researchers have identified Étaples, a hospital and military base, as being as the center of the disease. While there are other theories that see the virus originating in Kansas or China (and then brought to Europe by American soldiers or Chinese war laborers), it

is linked inescapably both to war and Europe, which allows for a comparison with European diseases brought to the Americas during colonization. Diseases such as smallpox, cholera and measles killed an estimated 90% of Native North Americans, effectively working as form of viral genocide. By introducing disease into the story, Treuer connects the theater of European war with the spread of illness: both European warfare and European disease invade and destroy Native lives and communities, thus identifying Felix and his family as victims of euroamerican violence. It also returns to the ultimate unsafety of the home: Felix cannot protect his family (even by potentially finding financial security or improving their social status through serving in the military) as the threat is already always inherent to Native North American existence in North America.[82]

Bereft, Felix returns to the drum dance, receiving "heaped blankets . . . and pressed tobacco plugs" as acknowledgement for his service (*Prudence* 159). This is further significant because Felix only receives thanks from within his own community, reflecting Holm's findings that Native soldiers went to war not to attain respect from whites but from their own community and underlining that as a Native man it does not matter what he does, the settler- colonizer community will never honor him. While he now sits alongside the "old men who remembered 1862 and 1876 and 1891", accepted into the ranks of nineteenth century soldiers, he is adrift, taking what is awarded to him without comment or joy (159). By explicitly including the years 1862, 1876, and 1891, Treuer emphasizes the perpetual nature of violence, particularly that of US American violence against Native North Americans. Felix's experience in World War 1 is cued as smoothly following nineteenth century wars, stressing the similarities between colonial violence and global warfare.

As Pankaj Mishra argues, euroamerican history aims to explain "the world wars, together with fascism and communism, simply [as] monstrous aberrations in the universal advance of liberal democracy and freedom" rather than as more pronounced manifestations of a continual violence against others. The dates given correspond to wars between Native tribes (primarily the Lakota Sioux), defending their lands and treaty rights, and the U.S. government, striving for more land and

[82] For Native North Americans, the Spanish flu was even more devastating than for whites, the "mortality rate was four times greater than that of white Americans living in large cities" (qtd. in *X-Marks* 31).

resources, motivated by greed and racism.[83] The link drawn between the elders' and Felix's modern experiences carries this first global war into the circle of violence perpetrated by the U.S., stressing both the constancy of war and alluding to the necessity of violence in maintaining the U.S. nation state.

Billy, like Felix, manages to survive his war, returning to Minnesota in 1945. With Billy, Treuer insists on presenting a Native war veteran ignored by the dominant society and left alone with PTSD, further upsetting the narrative of heroism rooted in war – as well as mirroring Ira Hayes's post-war experiences. Before returning Billy to Minnesota, Treuer falls into an almost canonic representation of warfare, detailing Billy's deployment as a member of the 2nd Division. Billy "had advanced, one in a division of ants, from Normandy on D+1 across the Aure and into Trévières, up Hill 192 and down into Saint-Lo and from there to Brest" (*Prudence* 195). This description coincides with the division's documented movements. By describing Billy's progress through France in accordance with military records, *Prudence* affords an authenticity to Billy that places him, and other Native soldiers, within history, as solidly located in a global violence. Simultaneously, Treuer however also again destabilizes the historical narrative. By telling Billy's story so close to the recorded facts, he is "consciously [deploying] fictional tropes to attain [a] quality" that is usually the property of historical documentation, thus demonstrating the narrativity of the same (de Groot, *Historical Novel* 111). *Prudence* thus does both: unsettle the authenticity of historical fact and anchor Native soldiers in the history of global warfare.

On his return to Minnesota, Billy's injuries make him unsuitable for manual labor, and he starts working as "a spotter in [a] fire tower" (*Prudence* 185).[84] Billy

[83] 1862 refers to the Dakota War of 1862, an armed conflict between the United States and several bands of the Dakota. After numerous treaty violations and failure to correctly distribute annuity payments by the U.S. government, causing increasing hardship and hunger among the Dakota, the Dakota attacked euroamerican settlers. In the aftermath, 38 Dakota were hung, the largest mass execution in US history. 1876 refers to the Great Sioux War (or Black Hills War), a series of battles between the US and the Lakota Sioux/Northern Cheyenne. Wanting to secure gold, the US wanted to buy the Black Hills. The Cheyenne and Lakota refused. The final Agreement of 1877 officially annexed Sioux land and permanently established reservations. Finally, 1891 refers to the Ghost Dance War, an armed conflict between the Lakota Sioux and the United States which lasted a year, culminating in the massacre at Wounded Knee where the 7th Cavalry murdered approximately 300 unarmed Lakota Sioux, primarily women, children and elders.

[84] In his survey on Vietnam veterans, Holm mentions that almost 50% of Native North American veterans faced unemployment after their service, "despite the fact that many of them achieved relatively high education levels after their military service" ("National Survey" 21). This marginalization of Native American vets is visible from World War 1 onwards, their systemic discrimination central to Silko's *Ceremony* and Wagamese's *Medicine Walk*. The combination of

physically carries the war into the United States through the damages wrought on his body, the body deemed necessary to protect the United States now incapable of returning to its former abilities, ultimately leaving him financially challenged and struggling to provide for his wife and two children.

In addition, Billy constantly "[feels] greasy and low and dragged out, as though at the end of another march through the bocage" (181). A mixed terrain of woodland and pasture, bocage is characteristic of the Normandy landscape where Billy spent most of his war. Bocage played a significant role in World War 2, as it complicated progress against German troops; Billy's memory and comparison of trudging through bocage again manifests France in Minnesota, confusing geographical boundaries, bringing fear into and environment that should suggest safety. Billy reflects on his trauma, realizing that "being around . . . uniforms, even being around . . . other servicemen" puts him "out of sorts"; he thus avoids visiting Veteran Affairs (*Prudence* 189). The war has also turned Billy into an avid day-drinker, if not into an outright alcoholic; driving home from town he routinely stops "at a bar in Royalton" as well as at various veterans' bars, drinking vodka while he drives (189; 199).[85] While this reads as a familiar narrative of trauma – alcoholism, flashbacks, injury – Treuer here casts it in a specifically Native context, demonstrating the continuity of Billy's treatment by the whites around him that does not change by his contribution to the "war effort". While he is originally accepted as a playmate for Frankie while they are growing up, both Emma and Jonathan (Frankie's father) remark on the fact that Billy is socially and racially inferior to them and that Frankie needs to realize this reality. Billy is valued in his youth as a hard worker around town, as well as a helper to Felix, but only within limits that do not extend beyond manual labor at a clear remove from the whites. Treuer here seems to suggest that Billy's participation in World War 2 is simply another step in his "being worked" by the settler colonizer while he remains solidly marginalized when deemed not useful.

Thus, Billy, even though he survives, functions as anathema to the stereotype of the returning hero, offering a counternarrative to the newly inscribed heroism of

PTSD and limited work opportunities forced many Native veterans into poverty and substance abuse, their "service" to their country forgotten.

[85] The alcohol that Billy consumes is given to him exclusively by white men; possibly a passing remark on the role that the settler-colonizers played in exposing Native North Americans to alcohol and addiction, and a further nod to the dichotomy of abuse and dependence experienced by settler colonizers and Native populations.

Native soldiers who have, through their service, been elevated and established as successful and valuable parts of US American society – so long as they remain usable within the grand narrative. As Holm states, "for a significant number of Indian veterans the return to the United States was not what they had expected" ("National Survey" 24). The opportunities claimed as rewards for military service almost never materialized, and most veterans "discovered that [service] had only lowered their status within the American mainstream" (24). This contextualization is powerful as it subverts the corollary of heroism and war that continues to dominate much of the literary and historical discourse on Native participation in war and instead opens up a space to acknowledge that the very idea of "noble service" (regardless of who goes to war) serves primarily to reinforce national narratives and ensure the continued existence of the nation state.[86]

Writing war through Native bodies prompts a realization that North America is mired in violence. Emphasizing the continuity of violence against Native others allows Treuer to connect the beginnings of colonial oppression with westward expansion, to twentieth century global warfare and the treatment of Native people today. It also allows for a broader view of the violence inherent in colonialism and white expansion throughout history and across the globe: the same ideologies of violence that govern the abuse of Native people are at play in international wars and global genocides, the concept of racial superiority and the push for land that motivated colonial rule in the Americas, Asia and Africa is at work in the Jewish holocaust, the exploitation of raw materials in the Congo during the nineteenth century, the annexation of Poland in 1939, and the westward push ordained within manifest destiny. By repeatedly centering the connections and continuities of violence, *Prudence* unsettles the master narrative of the United States as a democratic nation based on the ideas of freedom, equality and opportunity for all,

[86] While this dissertation does not further discuss Billy's sexuality, it is relevant: by depicting Billy as traumatized by both war and Frankie's continued refusal to acknowledge their love, Treuer suggests a link between the two rejections. Frankie's inability to acknowledge their relationship marks the power of a heterosexual ideology that forms the basis for the values of bravery and heroism that define the masculinity deemed necessary for warfare. Frankie's understanding of his own masculinity as flawed due to his feelings for Billy must be rectified by joining the war effort and establishing a normative masculinity. This version of masculinity is celebrated in war, and Frankie, once he realizes the errors of his behavior, dies, implying that war allows no space for other forms of masculinity. Frankie ultimately cannot survive because there is no space for his version of masculinity in the United States; Billy, however, does survive but settles into a heterosexual relationship that fails to satisfy him.

revealing it instead as a perpetrator of racial injustices, oppression and sustained violence against those considered other.

At the same time however, Treuer also creates space for new ways of telling a North American past that while exposing these contradictions also affirms the continuous existence of Native peoples. Prudence, Felix, Billy and Mary all demonstrate an ability to survive, and while they do not necessarily thrive, they very much exist within the present of Treuer's story, locating themselves as contemporaneous.

With *Prudence*, Treuer creates a historical novel that moves Native soldiers and lives into focus, while also revealing history as a narrative constructed to tell a particular story. Treuer not only joins Native history with U.S. American history, he also inserts himself – and the stories of Prudence, Billy, Frankie and Felix – into the canon of war fiction: by imagining the life of Prudence Bolton, alluding to McEwan's *Atonement*, and pointing to Hemingway, Treuer situates himself and Native stories at the center of a global literary tradition.

Totemic Visions of Survivance: Gerald Vizenor's Blue Ravens

Like Treuer's *Prudence*, *Blue Ravens* also opens in Minnesota. The perspective however is shifted from a specific, contained portrayal of the home front to a generational epic that draws an expansive portrait of Ojibwe life at the beginning of the twentieth century. Starting in the early 1890s, Vizenor narrates the lives of two brothers, Basile and Aloysius Beaulieu, who move freely between their home on White Earth Reservation and France. Recounting the brothers' artistic growth (as writer and painter respectively), *Blue Ravens* circles around World War 1 and the cultural and political changes that accompany it. Where *Prudence* challenges the systems that facilitate war and violence, Vizenor conceives a historical novel that offers a dynamic, interrelated world marked, but not destroyed, by conflict.

Based in familial and archival research, *Blue Ravens* builds a reality that tells the brothers' war experiences not as pivotal to their lives but as a moment in their personal, artistic, and global existences. Thus, while *Blue Ravens* works from within the conventions of war fiction, it moves far beyond established genre conventions to exemplify a Native North American rendition of the war novel that centers Native concerns of survivance. Vizenor offers what Episkenew frames as "healing through cultural affirmation", recovering and anchoring Anishinaabe presence in northern

America and beyond (11). By recounting Native North American participation in World War 1 as historical fact and emphasizing the physical and cultural mobility of Native North Americans between the Americas and Europe, Vizenor pushes against the fabricated absence of Indigenous peoples, offering instead a sense of global Indigenous presence and survivance.

Similar to Treuer's method for *Prudence*, which originates in his father's stories, *Blue Ravens* is based on family history, "primarily on [that of Vizenor's] great-uncles and other relatives who were drafted" into World War 1; Vizenor also traveled repeatedly to Paris and the "former war zones of northern France . . . to conduct research for the novel" (Eils 221, 220). His research was impeded by the lack of information regarding the participation of White Earth citizens in World War 1; Vizenor struggled to find documentation before eventually coming across military records for Becker County (large parts of White Earth are located in Becker). Vizenor subsequently considers *Blue Ravens* "the first original narrative about native Americans who served in the American Expeditionary Forces in France" ("Empire Treason" 19). *Blue Ravens* recounts:

> literary scenes of the war that are emotive and evocative, ironic and barbaric, and unforgiving. The descriptive experiences of soldiers in combat, and on military leave in Paris, are humane, and the contact stories engender a heartfelt sense of chance. ("Empire Treason" 19)

Such a telling moves *Blue Ravens* squarely into the realm of Native North American historical fiction, turning the attention fully to Native soldiers and their historical experiences. It also explicitly challenges the conventions of writing history and fiction, blurring the lines between pronounced fact and imagination.

Vizenor returns to the dichotomy of history and fiction, echoing Hutcheon's argument that "both history and fiction are discourses . . . both constitute systems of signification by which . . . sense [is made] of the past" (89). He however expands this observation to state that "the [very] name of historical fiction is complicated, isn't it? Because a lot of things that pass as historical fiction don't have much history in them. The emphasis is history, but it's quite invented" (Eils 221). He brings Hutcheon's argument full circle here; while acknowledging that official history does not (and cannot) offer facts, neither does (or can) the historical novel; both history and fiction depend on the narrativization of possible pasts. The question, rather than which

narrative strategy presents the more accurate history, should be a question of genre, how history is told, and how it is received and realized in the world.

In *Blue Ravens*, Vizenor immediately flouts genre conventions and presents the story of Basile and Aloysius as fictionalized historiography. This is particularly clear in Vizenor's linguistic choices. Much of his storytelling reads like history – albeit an Indigenous history – summarizing the experiences of Native peoples prior to (as well as during and after) World War 1, while retaining an element of colloquiality and irony that is both inherently Vizenorian but also works to counter the affection of fact used in official, white historiographies.

Describing the removal of Native peoples from their ancestral lands, Vizenor writes:

> Natives had been persecuted in the name of civilization, as everyone knows, and distinct cultures were either terminated or removed to treaty reservations. The prairie, lakes, [and so on], were considered vacant and available, and the original native place names were changed to accommodate the eager migrants of a new nation. The primary objective of civilization was to rename the land and cultivate a surplus of handsome corn and wheat. (*Blue Ravens* 214)

This, and other observations spread throughout *Blue Ravens*, reads similarly to sections in Dunbar Ortiz's *An Indigenous People's History of the United States* (2014), and Treuer's *The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee* (2019), two Native-centric tellings of North American history. Using asides such as "as everyone knows", and descriptors like "eager" (to describe the migrants) and "handsome" (to describe the surplus of corn), Vizenor not only disrupts the flow of his own telling, he also tells history in a stylized, heavily ironic manner, formulating an implicit critique of history as objective representation. His tone is light, factual in a distanced sort of way, the choice of positive qualifiers in keeping with the tone; he seems to mock the euroamerican way of telling history here, the jocularity hinting at a much darker undertone. The irony particularly of stating that the primary objective of civilization was to "rename the land" and creating a surplus of corn and wheat, immediately adds a level of critique to the ostensibly factual observation that not only reminds of traditional euroamerican histories detailing pre-Columbian societies as not "properly" cultivating their lands, it also mocks the settler-colonizer idea of

civilization, i.e., creating unnecessary amounts of food and renaming places already named.

His short interjection of "as everyone knows" is doubly intriguing: it draws immediate attention to the fact that not everyone knows that Native peoples in the United States were persecuted, terminated and removed, and it also argues that they are unaware precisely because of an official history that continues to gloss over the extent of genocidal expansionism that made possible the founding of the North American nation states.

The section reads similar to a passage from *The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee* in which Treuer states that "[some] Dakota women, armed with the jawbones of the buffalo, were given the honor of dispatching the soldiers with a sharp blow behind the ear. After that rout, the U.S. government switched tactics" (*Heartbeat* 3). Using language such as "a sharp blow behind the ear" and "given the honor", Treuer also uses irony to describe history from a Native North American perspective, breaking with a traditional, ostensibly objective representation of history, opting instead for a telling that reads more like a conversational (or oral) narrative while also adding a certain lightness to the situation (3).

Likewise, Dunbar-Ortiz writes that "European explorers and invaders discovered an inhabited land . . . Incapable of conquering a true wilderness, the Europeans were highly competent in the skill of conquering other people, and that was what they did" (47). This resembles Vizenor's ridicule of civilization's objective to rename land as paramount, deriding settler-colonizers as incompetent (while also debunking the myth that settlers encountered "virgin land") and casting them as aggressive colonizers instead of as daring pioneers. Dunbar-Ortiz raises an ironic narrative assault on the euroamerican history of the colonization of the United States that is deliberately and specifically Native North American. Like *Indigenous History* and *Heartbeat*, *Blue Ravens*' telling of history counters the content and language of an otherwise primarily white history of the Americas, unsettling the past that contemporary northern America is based on. However, while Dunbar-Ortiz and Treuer remain within the confines of historiography, Vizenor further disrupts the writing of history; by confusing genres, and writing history as fiction and fiction as history, *Blue Ravens* suggests a new way of producing history all together.

Vizenor explores these new processes of writing history through relating the death of his uncle Ignatius. Vizenor elaborates that he creates:

> scenes that are historically based and then place[s his] uncle in it and [has] him killed. [He] didn't know exactly how he was killed, so [he] read about other soldiers who were killed in his unit. One soldier, a sergeant who was decorated – so there was more written about him – was killed on the very same morning in the same unit that [Vizenor's] great-uncle was. So, [he] imagined that scene as [he] read more about the death of this sergeant (and again, it was more fully discussed in history because he had been decorated for bravery): heavy German machine gun placements and this kind of stupid warfare where you just keep charging against it, row after row, just madness. And that's the way, of course, [Vizenor's] great-uncle died – . . . it would be very plausible, he might have been in the same group of people who were killed in that hour, in that scene that was described about the sergeant. (Eils 224)

Vizenor remarks on several things here; first, he establishes that Ignatius, being "only" an enlisted soldier, is lost to official records; while there is documentation of his death, there is no data that records how and when he died. Although not exclusive to Native North American soldiers, this dearth of information does allow the immediate realization that military history, and the records that it is based on, deals primarily with a certain type of personnel while ignoring others. A lieutenant or captain are more likely to find their way into the historical canon than an enlisted soldier, particularly if the officer is white and the enlisted soldier is brown or black. Although, again, this is equally relevant for most non-officers, such erasure is even more critical for Native North American soldiers who were unlikely to rise into the ranks of officers in the first place. As Castelnot states "because of their limited education, few Native Americans can aspire to the rank of officer", and most battalions had, at the very most, one Native North American officer (from among a hundred) (Deer). The very fact of this exclusion, and thus not being officers, makes it even less likely that Native North American soldiers make their mark on military history.

Vizenor elaborates further, stating that the lack of information regarding Native North American enlistees allows him to put Ignatius into a situation that was recorded, and building a corresponding narrative around it. While this implies a measure of fictionality, it also hints at the realities of writing history to begin with, i.e., a narrative necessity to elaborate and reconstruct. The juxtaposition of Vizenor's

"of course" and "it would be very plausible" in the quote above, acknowledges that writing history always oscillates between (perceived) certainty and ambiguity, and that it is ultimately the teller's choice and responsibility to balance the two (Eils 224).

Vizenor proceeds similarly with the construction of Basile and Aloysius, as well as with their places both in the novel and the extra-textual world. While both are not historical characters per se, they manifest White Earth soldiers in World War 1 ("Empire Treasons" 23). Contrary to Aloysius and Basile, Ignatius and Lawrence, who appear and reappear throughout *Blue Ravens*, are historically documented persons related to Vizenor; in their own way they are central to the novel's historical narrative. While *Blue Ravens* could have focused entirely on Lawrence and Ignatius, the decision to write instead about two fictional brothers emphasizes Vizenor's commitment to deconstructing the separation of fiction and history, creating, in his mind, a truer history.

Jenn Johnson writes that Lawrence Alexious Vizenor was born "on the White Earth Reservation on July 15, 1895 . . . He married Elizabeth Trotterchaud on February 11, 1918, and entered military service two weeks later, on February 25". Johnson details Lawrence's army experiences further: he left the United States for France on the USS Mount Vernon on May 16, 1918, arriving in Brest on May 24. On October 8:

> in fighting at Bois du Fays in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, Vizenor's actions earned him both the Silver Star and the Distinguished Service Cross . . . When heavy machine gun fire forced Vizenor's reconnaissance patrol backward, he continued forward with another soldier and an officer. Enemy fire wounded the officer . . . On the same day, Vizenor's bother, Ignatius, died in action at Montbréhain, France, less than 150 miles away.

The description echoes those in *Blue Ravens*:

> Corporal Lawrence Vizenor was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross on October 8, 1918, for extraordinary courage and heroism at Bois-de-Fays in Foret d'Argonne, the Forest of Argonne. (42)

And:

> Ignatius was killed in action on October 8, 1918, at Montbréhain, France, on the very same day that his brother Lawrence Vizenor received the Distinguished Service Cross for bravery in combat. (*Blue Ravens* 24)

Vizenor's straightforward retelling of Ignatius's death and Lawrence's war experience are made the more intriguing by their repetition throughout the novel. Vizenor mentions both Ignatius's death and Lawrence's award several times, each time changing the wording and placement of their names. While it seems arbitrary, this repetition firmly establishes their existence in history, insisting on their reality in the pantheon of World War 1. It also, importantly, reinforces historical malleability, the changing descriptions and differing emphasis placed on the brothers demonstrating the constant decisions made by historians in privileging certain narratives above others. It also recalls certain Native North American storytelling techniques that rely on repetition in making events and characters stick in the imagination of the listeners.

The repetitive, yet changing, historical account unsettles the narrative; it points not only to a core realism of changing narratives, it also seamlessly integrates historical record into an otherwise fictional account of World War 1. The realism here allows for a particular:

> [reimagining of] major and minor moments from the past and in particular those moments that have contributed to the narratives of tragic victimhood that often characterize discussions of Native Americans/First Nations people. (Donahue 4)

By only presenting Lawrence and Ignatius together, Vizenor counters the idea of a pervasive loss of Native lives, in war and otherwise. Contrary to Treuer's fatalistic account, *Blue Ravens* writes death and survival side by side demonstrating that there is the potential for survival, even in the face of the total destruction of war.[87] Where *Prudence* underlines the trauma of war, insisting on the devastating human cost of warfare, *Blue Ravens*, while acknowledging this cost by repeatedly returning to Ignatius's death, immediately offsets this with Lawrence's survival, as well as with Basile's and Aloysius's continued existence and sustained artistic renewal. The emphasis placed on survivance, not in the face of, but alongside death and destruction, seems vital to an understanding of Native survivance more generally: the tragedy and trauma of settlement in the Americas is factual, so is however also

[87] This total destruction also works as a further metaphor for the attempted erasure of Native North Americans more generally. While a settler-colonizer history has attempted to construct the utter devastation of Native North America, Vizenor suggests that there is, after all, survivance, that Native North Americans have been able to and continue to exist into the future, despite the efforts of the settler-colonizers.

the continued survivance of the Native people, not despite of it but apart from it. Vizenor creates a further layer of historicity by detailing Basile and Aloysius's training at "Fort Wadsworth near Spartanburg, South Carolina" and their eventual journey on the "Mount Vernon for the military port at Brest, France" (*Blue Ravens* 23). Both Fort Wadsworth and the USS Mount Vernon are documented actors in World War 1, the Mount Vernon further recalling Ignatius and Lawrence, who, as documented above, left the United States via the same ship. Camp Wadsworth was set up in the summer of 1917 and included "two thousand acres on the western edge of Spartanburg" (Hamer).[88] This attention to historical detail links the fictional brothers, again creating a heightened sense of historicity that feeds the historical ambitions of Vizenor's novel.

In "Empire Treasons", Vizenor's theoretical companion piece to *Blue Ravens*, he recounts that:

> Hudon Beaulieu is a historical surname on the White Earth Reservation, and the two characters, Basile, a writer, and Aloysius, a painter, are composed from perceptions of my relatives and other reservation soldiers at the time. Ignatius Vizenor and Lawrence Vizenor are historical names, and other reservation soldiers named in the novel are actual and historical. The citations of individual soldiers and military service are authentic and documented. (23)

The side by side of historical record and fiction again lends a more immediate reality to Basile and Aloysius's story and their experiences, integrating them into a historical narrative of White Earth citizens in World War 1 and Europe. Vizenor perpetuates the historicity and authenticity of his main characters by writing them in the same way that he writes Lawrence and Ignatius. By allowing them to exist side by side, Basile and Aloysius fit into the novel in the same way as Vizenor's relatives.

While the combination of fact and fiction creates a new sense of both historical reality and historiography, *Blue Ravens* uses this blending to create an exchange between Europe and northern America that indigenizes history, art, and

[88] The USS Mount Vernon adds a twist of its own to the narrative. Originally the SS Kronprinzessin Cecilie, she was held in the United States from 1914 onwards and, in April 1917, "seized and turned over to the United States Navy" (*Naval History*). The Mount Vernon was then "fitted out at Boston to carry troops and material to Europe . . . She departed New York for Brest on October 31, 1917 for her first US Navy crossing, and during the war made nine successful voyages carrying American troops to fight in Europe" (*Naval History*). By extension the Mount Vernon brings the war immediately onto U.S. American land, again emphasizing the lack of separation between home and battle front. It also demonstrates how easily the U.S. government expropriates what is not theirs, molding it to their further needs.

Europe itself. Vizenor builds a Native world that is systematically superimposed on the Western, European world, creating a link that does not necessitate the United States to be productive.[89] In "Gerald Vizenor's Transnational Aesthetics", Danne Jobin casts this as "imprinting Native presence" onto Paris, particularly through the artistic endeavors of the brothers (33). *Blue Ravens* also meticulously uses Native concepts and language to create a European landscape infused with Native North America.

Before the brothers leave for Europe and war, Basile recounts conversations with the traders who come to White Earth and the stories that they tell each other. He retells the story of the ice monster and its hold on the reservation (*Blue Ravens* 115). Later, when telling of the end of the war, Basile recounts that "the Kaiser, the ice monster of war, was defeated" (115/6). By bringing Anishinaabe beliefs into a European landscape, Basile makes sense of the war for himself while also labeling the German Kaiser, an emblematic symbol of European power, a Native creature, integrating Europe into Native North America.

Blue Ravens is further structured similarly to Homer's *Odyssey*, a choice that suggests intellectual continuity on the one hand, and the use of established war narratives on the other. *Blue Ravens*, like the *Odyssey*, is divided into twenty-four sections; Basile furthermore reads a translation of the Odyssey while languishing in the trenches, "transposing another imagination onto the landscape" (*Blue Ravens* 103, Jobin 46). France, and by extension Europe, is presented as a canvas for foreign imagery (Greek and Native North American) – a reversal of the typical settler-colonizer attitude to northern America. By superimposing beings like the ice monster as well as Greek mythology onto the battlefields of World War 1, Basile, and by extension Vizenor, takes control of a space traditionally cast as white.

Concurrently, Vizenor also allows the specifically European war to influence Ojibwe culture. Basile remarks that "wars change familiar Native stories", an observation very similar to Silko's witch ceremony, or the reintegration of the Trail of Tears into Cherokee mythology (*Blue Ravens* 116). By altering history and including changes into the pantheon of the past, Native storytellers make sense of the present.

[89] *Blue Ravens* also suggests a superposition of White Earth presence on the United States, detailing that White Earth pines were used as timber to build the houses in Chicago (113,). While this can be read several ways, including the destruction of Native spaces for the gain of the settler-colonizers, it points to a dependency of whites on Natives as well as the infiltration of white spaces by Native existence.

The specific exchange here of French and Native stories creates both a current link between Paris and White Earth and a retroactive connection that brings in line an exchange between the two. Far from "breaking ties to White Earth" this "transposes Anishinaabe aesthetics onto Parisian ideals" (Jobin 33). Basile also encounters Marie, a young Parisian, and is forever changed by Marie's reading of Apollinaire's poetry, the "sound of her poetic voice and the words [of his] favorite poet changed [him] that night. The images of poetry created visual scenes that lasted forever in [his] memory" (*Blue Ravens* 163). Already Basile's favorite poet, Apollinaire comes alive with the help of Marie's poetic vision, and then grows to influence Basile's writing even more.[90] Native stories are thus shown to be mutable, like Vizenor's telling of history in *Blue Ravens*, able to adapt and adjust, while also bringing themselves into established, canonic stories (and histories) and changing these.

While in Paris, Basile and Aloysius engage with several prominent writers and artists; this inclusion of historical persons suggests conformity with Lukács's notion that while the "focus of the historical novel does not lie on famous historical persons", they appear in order to lend narrative authenticity to the story told (40). Outwardly this appears to be Vizenor's mode as well. Like the addition of Lawrence and Ignatius – not famous, but historical – the writers and artists add another layer of reality to Vizenor's narrative. By however adding historical figures who are non-Native, Vizenor continues to superimpose Ojibwe existence onto a European culture and politics. Basile begins *Blue Ravens* by recounting that "Marc Chagall and [his] brother would be celebrated for their blue scenes and visionary portrayals" (*Blue Ravens* 2). Vizenor does two things here: next to immediately combining his traditional war narrative with a tale about art and artists, he also locates the brothers' artistry, and thus their existence as artists and citizens of White Earth, in the middle of the blooming modernist art scene in Europe. Vizenor thus removes both Basile and Aloysius from a circumscribed Native realm and extends their lives far beyond the war, past the geographic borders of both the reservation and northern America, instead allowing them to be free and important players in a global cultural explosion.[91] He also reinforces the simultaneity of indigeneity and euroamerican

[90] Similar to Chagall, Apollinaire was at the forefront of the artistic renaissance inf France, who wanted painting to be like music, seeing a correlation between colors and sound.
[91] In an interview with Eils et al, Vizenor remarks on his connection to Chagall; "I was reading *Chagall*, a recent biography by Jackie Wullschlager, and studied a photograph of the artist in his studio apartment at avenue d'Orléans in Paris" (220). Inspired by the photo in particular, Vizenor wished to include a scene based on this photograph in one of his texts, ultimately deciding to write it

existence, matching Native North American and Western output and creativity. Although Aloysius's art is inherently Ojibwe, it translates to a global context.

The similarities between Native North American and French existence expand to a direct comparison of White Earth and Paris that reflects on shared poverty, exploitation, artistry and humanity as equally influential to both. There is a connection to be made here between Native North American soldiers' realizing their kinship with other non-whites, and Basile realizing the resemblance between reserve and cosmopolitan center. Paris thus becomes an extension of White Earth, a complicated yet nurturing space that allows the brothers to continue their personal and artistic development. By writing Paris, ostensibly the center of European art and culture, as similar to White Earth, written off by the master narrative as poverty-stricken and devoid of culture, Vizenor creates a parallel existence that underlines Native North American survivance as a global reality.

Thus, the brothers' decision to again leave White Earth and return to Paris does not read as a distancing from their "native roots" but instead as a return to their indigeneity in France. The trauma of World War 1 cannot be mastered in White Earth and demands a return to the landscape of its creation. As Whitaker formulates in his review, France becomes "the place for [the brothers] to explore and create their identities because the French soil and the French people remember the specific local traumas of World War 1 battles" (229). The United States and White Earth are too disconnected from the realities of World War 1, and "France becomes the place where [Basile and Aloysius] can best cultivate their Native cultural productions and, in doing so, continue to form their Anishinaabe identities even apart from their homeland" (229). A recurring trope in modernist literature, violence and war create significant distance between those who have actively experienced the violence of war and those who have not. The geography of France thus becomes the only place where Aloysius and Basile can recover. Furthermore, Basile describes the war as continuing on the reservation, through both the policies of the United States and "in the stories of veterans and survivors of combat" (*Blue Ravens* 140). While Vizenor does not state this outright, one possible reading suggests that U.S. policies create similar

into *Blue Ravens*. Again, the historical accuracy of the scene and of Chagall's presence in Paris at this time bleeds together with the fictional presence of Basile and Aloysius and creates the blended reality that marks Vizenor's idea of historiography.

circumstances on the reservation to those experienced by the brothers in France during the war.

Native North American Transmotion

This exchange between Paris and White Earth encapsulates what Vizenor has termed transmotion, the "inspired sense of natural motion and singular, visionary sovereignty" across space (*Native Liberty* 108). Vizenor defines transmotion further as "creation stories, totemic visions, reincarnation, and sovenance; . . . that sense of native motion and an active presence . . . sui generis sovereignty" (*Fugitive Poses* 15). Transmotion sits at the heart of Basile's and Aloysius's existence, marking the brothers as personifications of Native North American survivance.

The brothers' free movement between northern America and Europe breaks apart not only the accepted placement of Native North Americans in northern America, it also actively challenges the restrictive directive of U.S. American reservation policy. Directly countering the imposed limitations on Native movement throughout the world, Basile and Aloysius dismantle the boundaries superimposed onto their lives, engaging directly with a world that has been marked as off-limits to Native actors. The connection with Europe underlines a kinship, "[suggesting] long time connections between Europe and Native America" (Jobin 45). The brothers' movement also, importantly, collapses the idea of static Indigeneity, showcasing that Native North Americans have existed and continue to exist globally, thus becoming unstuck from both a geographic and temporal stasis that very places them firmly within the contemporary. This further resonates with ideas formulated by Jace Weaver in *The Red Atlantic* that see Native travelers as playing a vital role in the transatlantic experience, who actively engaged with other societies and peoples, trading ideas and realities that impacted both sides. Native North American existence is thus immediately understood as global from its very inception, countering restrictive North American constructions of locally based limitations. Again, this recalls the realities of world wars; as Rosier states, the interaction between Native North Americans with Europeans and other others across borders was not new and it strengthened intellectual exchange that reverberated in North America, Europe and across the globe.

Both the physical and imaginative artistic movement of Aloysius and Basile locates them as international actors capable of inscribing and participating in a

global world. For Vizenor, their movement is essentially what defines them as Native peoples: their crossings between White Earth and Paris, as well as their art, "illustrate crossings of temporal, species, ethereal, and mental boundaries" collapsing the US American narrative of Native non-existence ("Empire Treasons" 36).

Conclusion

The year 1985 saw the publication of a slim volume dedicated to "Canada's Native Peoples who served in both World Wars" (Gaffen, dedication). Titled *Forgotten Soldiers*, Fred Gaffen's publication provides a chronological overview of battles and the interwar period, as well as a short study of controversies on the home front – such as conscription, race relations, problematic veteran land grants and soldiers' benefits. He augments this rather analytical description with soldiers' biographies, personal war diaries and lists of soldiers, including names, rank and honors. By offering this first, basic sketch of Native participation in the two world wars Gaffen wished to "rescue . . . the native veteran from oblivion in the public consciousness" (1).

Shortly after this publication, Yann Castelnot began independently researching and compiling a database of Native North American soldiers, identifying "more than 150.000 Indigenous soldiers who fought for Canada and the United States", their names, ranks, and other additional information now compiled on the website *nativeverterans* (Deer). Often the information discovered includes "facts unknown to soldiers' descendants and communities" demonstrating both the extent of non-information and a governmental inattention to Native North American soldiers (Deer). Castelnot's research provides names and rank, illuminating the large numbers of Native North American men (and women) who enlisted and contributed to twentieth century wars. The research also demonstrates the large number of commendations, medals and honors won by those who participated. While this returns to the idea of the heroic soldier it also, importantly, underlines how honors for Native soldiers are written out of the public consciousness as long as they do not serve a broader narrative.

Interest and research into Native North Americans have led to a growing literature that investigates and illuminates Native North American soldiers' contribution to warfare. Much of this literature focuses on genre-typical

classifications, surveys and lists, and while telling the histories of the soldiers, disregards, to an extent, the human, narrative component of these lives that goes far beyond an existence as soldier (or nurse, etc.). This literature, while necessary and continuously groundbreaking, matches the national narratives of the United States, integrating Native North American soldiers into a military history and showing them as part of the grander narrative; while providing visibility this research continues to work inside the overreaching mythology of the United States.

Novels such as *Blue Ravens* and *Prudence* on the other hand thoroughly counteract these grand narratives, offering alternative portrayals of Native North American soldiers and Native involvement in war more generally, while also offering intricately aesthetic narratives that contribute to Native North American, national and international war literature. While *Blue Ravens* celebrates a strong Native American intellectual and cultural tradition that works as the basis for Native survivance and self-determination, *Prudence* expands the borders of war fiction to disrupt national narratives, thus implicitly also beckoning for a Native North American sovereignty apart from the United States. *Blue Ravens* presents a personal and communal history of White Earth that rests on Native North American movement, counter-writing the idea of a spatially or temporally contained, static Indigeneity. Conversely, *Prudence* upsets its own genre expectations and thus the conventions it purports to portray. Treuer's novel deconstructs how stories of war are used to perpetuate national mythologies, consequently opening space to create new stories. Although Treuer and Vizenor write from very different theoretical and narrative directions both use their novels to disrupt traditional euroamerican stories and histories of war. Both *Blue Ravens* and *Prudence* participate in Native North American survivance, producing and maintaining Native stories to counter victimization and erasure.

Chapter 4: "Indian Time" – Discarding History as Linear Progression

Introduction

This final chapter examines how understandings of time affect the design and representation of history. It offers both a summary and extension of the dissertation's central argument of history as subjective, a narrative construction enabling and maintaining dominant power structures.

As argued in the preceding chapters, euroamerican historiography has attempted to systematically erase Native North Americans from the master narrative, marking their pasts as insignificant while simultaneously relegating them collectively to a "time before", disallowing Native existence in both the past and the present. And, although there has been a shift that addresses this erasure, Native North Americans remain "colorful" extras in the history of the Americas, their inclusion never truly upsetting official history. While establishing historical figures such as Ira Hayes as vital to the United States efforts in World War 2, this inclusion into the canon of war history also works to conceal the continued, systematic oppression of Native North Americans: it becomes easy to point to Hayes and claim Native representation in national history, his "heroism" commemorated as an essentially U.S. American characteristic. However, his superficial inclusion masks the realities of a pervasive U.S. racism while also helping to confirm the national narrative of the United States as protector of democracy and freedom globally.

Maintaining the status quo of history is however not only facilitated by erasure and omission; it is also dependent on how history is seen and understood in the Western imagination: as linear progression from point A, to point B, to point C (and so on). This gradual unfolding of time is central to the euroamerican belief system. Delineated by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel as "an intelligible process moving towards . . . the realization of human freedom", history is here clearly marked as developing towards a final goal" (Little). Hegel further contextualizes progress as moving through "stages of human freedom, from the public freedom of the polis and the citizenship of the Roman Republic, to the individual freedom of the Protestant Reformation, to the civic freedom of the modern state" (Little). Clearly,

for Hegel, history is a western prerogative.[92] Dirlik further categorizes Hegel's philosophy of history as dependent on the concept of developmentalism, "the notion that development is as natural to humanity as air and water", as opposed to realizing development as "an idea [that is] relatively recent . . . in human history" (85). Arguably, the concept of development as natural, as well as understanding history as moving towards an ultimate goal, is a discourse central to western enlightenment ideology, as well as directional for the systemic framework of settler-colonialism. While Hegel's philosophy is contested, its core claim of progressive movement towards something "better" (steps on a scale devised by western values and ideas) is recognizably foundational to western thought processes and thus highly relevant to the following dissertation.

Aim

As Deloria observes in *God is Red*, such an understanding of history inevitably locates "the people of Western Europe" as "the guardians of the world" (63). A linear progression of history allows euroamericans to consistently be the most developed, closest to the "realization of human freedom", while others lag behind, marked as regressive. Deloria's assessment is mirrored in Nabokov's assertion that a euroamerican:

> progressionist vision saw all human societies climbing the same evolutionary ladder towards civilization, with Indians pulling themselves up the lower rungs as they ascended out of savagery and through barbarism towards civilization. (12)

Nabokov directly remarks on the disparities that linear history creates between euroamericans and racial others; while euroamericans locate themselves securely at the peak of historical development, Native people are seen as stragglers, attempting (and failing) to reach the same level of historicity as whites. Linear progression of history necessitates and dictates this dichotomy, the perceived superiority of euroamericans dependent on the stagnation and regressive position of others.

Contrary to this understanding of time as moving linearly, Native North American conceptualizations of time and history insist on unfixed movement that

[92] It is important to note here that Hegel's understanding and presentation of history, while centered on the idea of progress, "structural totalities" that follows one another temporally, is not necessarily set up as "unilinear or evolutionary" (*Postmodernity's Histories* 11). Progress is essential but this does not mean it is a consistent one-way process.

allows past, present and future to exist simultaneously. Instead of stable, time is realized as mutable, as a rubber band that can be stretched and compressed, knotted, overlapped, looped. Glancy elaborates that time is "certainly not linear. There are lapses and times within times, and coils, and other geometrical patterns that time can follow. It can undulate, and be wavelike, going back and forth" (Glancy "Conversation" 657). Similarly, Silko states that "there are no future times or past times; there are always all the times, which differ slightly" (qtd. in Mogen 161); both Glancy and Silko insist on simultaneity and continuity rather than linearity, establishing time as something organic that moves back and forth and around.

The following chapter thus explores how these ontologies of time influence a Native North American telling of history. Extending past a correction of what is told by history, the following demonstrates new ways of telling history itself. The chapter looks at Sherman Alexie's *Flight* and Stephen Graham Jones's novel *Ledfeather*. While the novels differ in scope and narration – *Flight* spans a history of disaster from the nineteenth century to the early 2000s, while Jones concentrates on a family drama deeply entwined with Blackfoot history – both can be read as coming of age stories, moving from trauma (murder and attempted suicide) to an understanding of the self in the world; both upset linear time and the resultant expectations of euroamerican history, offering an alternative to the established.

Note

The following chapter relies on recent journal articles; Jones's work in particular is not yet widely discussed. As of the writing of this dissertation there is one published collection of essays focused on his work, *The Fictions of Stephen Graham Jones* (2016), and scholarly discussions of *Ledfeather* in particular are few. While Alexie generally generates an abundance of criticism, *Flight* is discussed either as Bildungsroman or as post-9/11 literature, not however as historical fiction. There is one article, "Undone and Renewed in Time: History as Burden and/or Opportunity in Sherman Alexie's *Flight*" (2013) by Aitor Ibarrola-Armendariz and Estibaliz Vivanco, that explores the depiction of history in *Flight*, and which will thus be a point of reference in the following.

Contextualizing Euroamerican Time and History

In *Rescuing History from the Nation* (1995), Prasenjit Duara states that "the last two centuries have established history as we know it – a linear, progressive history – not only as the dominant mode of experiencing time, but as the dominant mode of being" (17). Duara here presents the essential character of linear time in the twenty-first century; like Deloria and Nabokov, he realizes linear history as connected to global power structures that center western modes of being. Duara also however suggests that linear history is something that was created instead of being an objective organic reality. Further, he indicates that this linearity has become a global fixture, leaving limited space for alternative conceptions of time and history.

This idea of construction and dominance is echoed in Deloria's observation that "from the very beginning . . ., it has been Christian contention that the experiences of humankind could be recorded in linear fashion" (*God is Red* 103).[93] And while Christianity alone cannot be seen as solely responsible for establishing linearity as the basis of both time and history, it does lead by example – and by the global reach of Christianity. Arguably, the Old Testament insists on a unidirectional, sequential idea of time, presenting history as a chronology that evolves from the creation of the universe through the death and resurrection of Christ to culminate in Judgment Day.[94] Understood as actual historical events, the stories told in the Bible present the unfolding of God's plan (Martínez 218). Essential to this unfolding are both the downfall of Adam and Eve, as well as their subsequent expulsion from the Garden of Eden. Martínez states that "man's destiny . . . upon being cast out of Eden, was to toil, establishing dominion over the earth (including womankind), and atoning for his sins" (218). Banishment is thus necessary to engender the next step in God's plan, it is the foundation so to speak of history progressing. Then, with Jesus's eventual birth and sacrifice, Christians were released from the "post-Edenic burden"

[93] While *God is Red* primarily investigates religion – which is extraneous to this dissertation – Deloria's observations on history and linear time are extremely relevant for the ideas formulated in this chapter, as well as on the framework of this dissertation more generally. Thus, while there will be no discussion of Deloria's theology, this chapter will work with his exploration of linear history. For an overview of Deloria's theory, see: David Martinez, *Life of the Indigenous Mind. Vine Deloria Jr. and the Birth of the Red Power Movement*, University of Nebraska Press, 2019.

[94] Arguably, unilateral/progressionist views of time have existed prior to Christianity; the Greeks and Romans, as well as the Chinese and Egyptians, all adhered to a version of linear time that allowed for chronological development. However, and this is implied in Deloria's argument, the establishment and dissemination of Christianity relied heavily on the idea of time moving from something less developed to something more so, insisting on the necessity of progressing towards something.

of toil and bondage; now, in turn, responsible for advancing Christianity throughout the world – a "responsibility" realized through colonization and settlement.

In his monograph *The Colonization of Time. Ritual, Routine and Resistance in the British Empire* (2012), Giordano Nanni argues further that "time is a dimension through which the fundamental tenets of a culture are learnt, disseminated and held to be true" (13). Accordingly, a Christian society then relies on linear progression to make sense of the world. Such a world view entails an understanding of western society as more advanced than "others" encountered around the world. Native North Americans, who traditionally have a different understanding of time and what constitutes history, are thus considered outside of this world and marked as other and subsequently as primitive. They are categorized as lagging behind the stages of the predetermined historical evolution that "all societies [are understood to] progress through", languishing at the very bottom of the set of "determined stages of economic and social development, each with greater divisions of labor and more complex social organization" (Nanni 11). Perceived societal structures that did not distinguish between forms of labor or demonstrated an absence of traditional agriculture were seen as undeveloped and lacking. Nanni here recalls Nabokov's argument of all peoples climbing the same "evolutionary ladder" with Native communities ostensibly "lagging behind"; he also however draws an important connection between so-called development and the change in labor and social relations which were very different in Indigenous cultures; different gender roles, as well as working with nature (limited agriculture, hunting, etc.) instead of against it, were considered as less sophisticated by the dominant settler-colonizer culture.

Alongside the link between Christianity and linear time, there is also an inherent connection between linearity and the development of the European nation state, and consequently, western concepts of sovereignty. As Duara argues, there is an "intimate relationship between the nation state and nationalism . . . and linear, evolutionary history" (3). He elaborates further that "nations emerge as subjects of history just as history emerges as the ground, the mode of being, of the nation" (27). Referring back to the theoretical section of this dissertation, the nation state is considered a necessary, next step in the evolution from absolute monarchy towards functioning democracy, always moving towards Hegel's idea of absolute freedom.

Hegel further categorizes specific historical moments as "world-historical", bringing about the "final, full stage of history and human freedom" (Little). Referring explicitly to the nation state, Little argues that Napoleon's conquest of Europe fits Hegel's idea of world-historical event, "establishing the terms of the rational bureaucratic state" (Little). (European) statehood is realized as part and parcel of history's trajectory, the concurrent establishment of over-seas colonies and the erasure of Indigenous cultures inherently connected to this strengthening of the nation state.

Conceptualizing Native North American Time and History

A Native North American cosmology imagines time and history in an entirely different category; "the western preoccupation with history and a chronological description of reality [is] not a dominant factor in any tribal conception of either time or history", Native North Americans neither "possessed nor required units of precise measurement comparable to seconds, minutes, or hours, let alone [the 356-day] year (*God is Red* 98, *McCoy* 70). Instead, Native North American ontologies rely on a sense of place and an understanding of time as undulating, simultaneous and changeable.

Subsequently, Martínez claims that "because [Native peoples are] oriented toward a given place, as opposed to an abstract concept of linear time, tribes [maintain] beliefs about humans, animals, spirits, and places that [are] in opposition with the Christian tradition" (219). Contrary to the general euroamerican belief in the human self as superior, the "nonlinear tribal way of thinking about place, as the fundamental concept of one's relationship to Creation, was that one's relationship with that place became integral to understanding one's role in the scheme of creation" (Martínez 219). Here again, is a belief diametrically opposed to seeing humans as superior, needing to dominate flora and fauna. And thus, lacking adherence to linear time limits the need to place the self above others and establish hierarchies.

While settler-colonizers observed this lack of hierarchy and linearity as paucity and proof of lower development, thus locking Native North Americans as primitive and unable of recording time and history for themselves, Native North Americans communities did keep track of the important experiences of a community. As Ron McCoy documents, the Lakota, for example, were acutely aware of the

importance of remembering the past, stating that "a people without history is like wind on the buffalo grass" (qtd. in McCoy 66). The northeastern nations (such as the Iroquois) kept track of their histories with the help of wampum belts – beaded, woven belts – recording cultural and political events using pictograms; the Pima of Arizona "maintained . . . carved calendar sticks" that again recorded events as pictograms (Greene 69). The Plains cultures documented their past on "tanned buffalo hide" in so-called winter counts (Däwes 115).

These winter counts consist of pictographs detailing one event per year, the event functioning as a proxy for the whole year; a year usually delineated as the time between two first snowfalls. "Arranged sequentially in spirals or rows" the winter counts were customarily drawn on buffalo skin or deer hide (Greene 1). Members of the community would gather at the first snowfall and discuss the years events, deciding which experience would represent the year; commonly the events that were commemorated were "unusual or unexpected events . . . including natural phenomena, and cultural events" (Greene 2). A keeper would then draw the pictograph on the hide and thus commemorate the year. This keeper would also be responsible for remembering the stories surrounding the pictograph, effectively maintaining the past for the community by storying around the decided-upon pictograph. The winter counts of neighboring communities were often similar, "bands that were closely allied" presenting "closely related versions" of the past (Greene 2). However, as Däwes argues, no one account held "primacy over the account of another tribe" and discrepancies between different nations, tribes or communities were not uncommon (115).[95] Such a way of remembering the past relies both on a communal effort and the storying of experience – not on a "precise chronological location" as is the case in euroamerican historiography (*God is Red* 98).[96] Deloria stresses that "what appears to have survived as a tribal conception of

[95] Later, when nations and bands were forced onto reservations, the winter counts would continue (not in all circumstances), changing circumstances leading to differing accounts. "Individual families [would keep] their own versions of the community's winter count" further diversifying documentation of the past, emphasizing the personal and mutable nature of history as recorded in these counts (Greene 2).

[96] A specific example here would be the Lone Dog Winter Count of the Yanktonai Nakota. Kept by Lone Dog, the count spans the years between 1800 and 1871, the pictographs beginning in the center and spiraling outwards in counterclockwise. The arrangement of the pictographs indicates a loose ordering of time, allowing years to lie next to, over and between each other. There is no linear connection that follows through from 1800 to 1871, instead the years spiral away, connecting 1800 to 1801, as well as to 1816. Another example is the Anko Seasonal and Monthly counts which span the period between 1864 and 1892, and between August 1889 and August 1892, respectively. Both are

history almost everywhere [is] the description of conditions under which the people lived and the location in which they lived" rather than the precise knowledge of when (*God is Red* 102). Essentially, it is the story of the past that is important and "not its precise chronological location" (Däwes 115). For example, when asked about his personal history in 1930, Black Elk (Oglala Lakota) recalled his birth as having happened in "the winter when the four Crows were killed on the Tongue River", clearly demonstrating that records were kept, but in a manner divorced from dates and times that would resonate with settler-colonizer calendars (Greene 3).

A further example here is the documentation of the Battle of Little Bighorn in 1876. McCoy writes that "rarely does a direct reference to the 1876 fight find a place in Lakota winter counts" (75). However, the battle is not forgotten; instead "winter-count keepers record it obliquely, referring to events associated with it", some chronicles commemorating "the beginning of the Canadian exile of Sitting Bull and his followers" a direct result of Little Bighorn (McCoy 75). While a euroamerican history would aim to "pinpoint as exactly as possible the temporal placement of the events" the specific date being decisive, for the Lakota it was knowledge of the event and its inclusion into the larger pantheon of history that mattered (McCoy 76). Ultimately, "the act of remembering itself breathed the life of reality into that which was remembered" not its temporal location (76). Not only does such a way of remembering emphasize the importance of storytelling around the event, relating back to writing historical fiction, it also recalls Hausman and his insistence on acknowledging how the past is remembered and how this remembrance is utilized in the present. Remembering through story creates a different connection to the past than remembering chronology; the pictograms and their stories producing a communal history of experience.

Furthermore, argues McCoy, "the winter counts were by no means static", the way they were recorded and what was recorded changing over time (72). Partially due to the influence of settler colonizers the counts moved from animal hides to paper, and finally from pictograms to written records – remaining however, impulses for oral storytelling. Even the written documents were short, offering the possibility (and necessity) of storying around them.

written (reproduced) on paper with pencil, the monthly count depicting more events, in a spiral moving inward to the center.

This understanding and representation of time as non-linear can further be found in how Native North Americans conceptualize their relationship towards time and the past. When Chief Seattle signed the Medicine Creek Treaty in the Washington Territory in 1854, he stated that "it matters little where we pass the remnant of our days. They will not be many. A few more moons; a few more winters – . . . tribe follows tribe, nation follows nation, like the waves of the sea" (qtd. in *God is Red 101*).[97] Chief Seattle here presents the movement of time as endlessly repetitive, a cyclical movement that returns again and again to the same (if varied) beginnings and endings. The self and the community are marked as transient, with no importance placed on progress or development. Instead, the focus lies on continual movement, a shifting between destruction and renewal.

Leslie Marmon Silko echoes Chief Seattle, again perceiving time as fluctuating and unfixed. She writes that:

> history was not distant, but all around. And so the sense of time that I learned from those old folks and the way they moved, is time is an ocean. Something that happened five hundred years ago isn't way off over there. Time is an ocean. The fact that we're all sitting here now is very dependent on what happened five hundred years ago. You can't just say, 'Oh, five hundred years ago, that's way far in the past.' No. That linearity, that emphasis on making time all strung out on a string, that's political. That's what colonialists do. (qtd. in Portillo 12)

Again, Silko draws a comparison between time and water, Chief Seattle's "waves of the sea" mirrored in Silko's "ocean". Silko also clearly differentiates between a Native North American history of experiences that resonates in the past, present and future, and a euroamerican perception of linear time that fixes events into a chronology, anchoring them in place and creating a very specific distance that leaves these events as finalized parcels in history.

In *The Man Made of Words*, N. Scott Momaday writes that "time is a wonderful abstraction", remarking further that "the only way in which we can account for apparent change in our world is by the means of a concept of time" (52). He elaborates, claiming that a western understanding of time involves "the correlative of distance", where the past extends backwards, and the future stretches

[97] This treaty saw the Suquamish cede large parts of their land in exchange for $32.500, designated land and the permanent right of access to traditional hunting and fishing grounds.

out in front" (52). And yet, he argues, he feels that time is "composed of moments, ad infinitum, in perpetual motion", essentially "an illusion" (52). While Momaday does not use the metaphor of waves or the ocean, he too insists on non-linearity, on moments in perpetual motion, demarcating a Native North American perception of time as inherently different from its euroamerican counterpart.

Entertaining Native North American time, Rifkin also returns to this idea of recurrence, arguing that Native models of time "[operate] less as chronological sequence" and more as "overlapping networks of affective connections" that ultimately rely on story as a "crucial part of that process" (46). While Rifkin, like Momaday, eschews a comparison with water, his understanding of Native North American time again emphasizes connections and cyclicality. He also affirms the importance of story, recounting what happened as much more important than its location in time.

Naturally, such a realization of time goes hand in hand with history as equally mutable. Nabokov explains that "new events [are absorbed] within the cosmological timeframe of the mythical narrative", suggesting that while there is a larger frame that houses the past, events and experiences may be added at different points in time, immaterial of their previous existence or linear development of time (98). This addition of events was already considered in chapter two; both Glancy's *Pushing the Bear* duology and Hausman's *Riding the Trail* illustrate how the Cherokee have retroactively integrated the Trail of Tears into their historical narrative; by establishing a precedent of a foretold uprooting, Removal is integrated into the Cherokee past, established as communal knowledge that will (and has) come to pass. As also mentioned, Silko's novel *Ceremony* similarly prefigures the existence of white people. Spoken into existence and thus foretold by witches, whites are considered "only tools that the witchery manipulates; and I tell you, we can deal with white people, with their machines and their beliefs. We can because we invented white people; it was Indian witchery that made white people in the first place" (*Ceremony* 132). The story continues, detailing that "there was nothing European" in the world but the witches changed this by storying them alive. Thus, while destructive, white people as such were "set in motion, to destroy, to kill" by the witches at the center of the Laguna/Pueblo universe (*Ceremony* 137). White colonization thus becomes a part of Laguna/Pueblo past and, by extension, establishes itself as manageable.

Nabokov remarks almost directly on such an inclusion, arguing that most Native North American histories place "high value" on the "maintenance of Indian conceptual autonomy over time, in an outwardly consistent and inwardly reassuring a fashion as possible" (234). This includes the "adjusting [of] facts and calls for retroactive enhancement in order for history to make sense in Indian terms, to integrate older claims into new sociopolitical climates and to pass on essential meanings distilled from collective experience" (Nabokov 234). This not only connects seamlessly to Silko's *Ceremony* and its presentation of Laguna/Pueblo history, it also returns to Glancy and Hausman, including Removal into the long past of Cherokee existence. It further emphasizes the importance of Native North American history telling for the preservation (and reestablishment) of Native North American sovereignty and links to what Bruyneel mentions in his monograph *The Third Space*. Taking the Trail of Tears as an example, it allows the Cherokee not only to take command of their own history (and history telling) it also removes the element of white interference, or rather white superimposition and instead instates the Cherokee as owners not only of their original homelands in the contemporary southeastern United States but also lays claim to their current nations in Oklahoma and technically ousts the United States from any rights related to both the current and original homelands.

This differentiation between Native North American and settler-colonizer understanding of time and space is central to Mark Rifkin's 2017 monograph *Beyond Settler Time*. He argues that Native North Americans are seen as apart from euroamerican time, a perception that runs parallel to those made by Nanni, Nabokov and Bruyneel. The nature of Native North American's own perception of time, coupled with the intense efforts of euroamerican philosophies to force Native North Americans into temporal stasis, finds them forced permanently onto a different temporal plane. Where Nanni and Nabokov problematize this difference, Rifkin argues that rather than strive for inclusion into a euroamerican cosmos, Native North Americans should become dedicated to a sustained apartness. He argues that including Native people into the euroamerican present is ultimately damaging rather than beneficial. Instead of removing Native North America from stagnant primitivity, inclusion, he argues, would rather work to destroy Native North American ontologies. Rifkin claims that:

> asserting the shared modernity or presentness of Natives and non-Natives implicitly casts Indigenous peoples as inhabiting the current moment and moving towards the future in ways that treat dominant non-Native geographies, intellectual and political categories, periodization, and conceptions of causality as given – as the background against which to register and assess Native being-in-time. (viii)

Rifkin here addresses the conundrum of understanding Native North Americans within a euroamerican epistemology that from the outset disavows their movement in time and history. By including Native North Americans within a euroamerican context, Rifkin argues, it automatically favors euroamerican ways of realizing reality and creates a foundation that disregards Native epistemologies. Rifkin emphasizes his argument by stating that "for things to be simultaneous they must be situated within a single frame of reference" and condemns this as impossible as there is "no absolute time against which all events can be measured" even though euroamericans assume that their ideology is the necessary baseline (1). Rifkin defines this baseline as "settler time", a colonial, euroamerican system of time that sees Native North Americans as both of the past and apart from the present. Settler time ultimately disavows Native historical, spatial and cultural realities, seriously undermining possibilities for Native North American claims to sovereignty. This, Rifkin claims, stunts claims to nationhood, and entails being stuck in the euroamerican linear metanarrative. While this argument is not necessarily exhaustive, there is a fundamental truth to it: cooperating with the settler-colonizer's mode of reality does entail at least a minimum of losing control of alternative narratives. Still, it is almost impossible to disregard euroamerican ideas of time, and subsequently of history, when discussing Native North American concerns, because, as Duara so clearly states, linear time is "the [globally accepted] dominant mode of being" (17).

Native Slipstream

By nature of their interest in their past, Native North American historical novels are naturally concerned with depictions and experiences of time and history – engaging by definition with the points of contact between euroamerican and Native North American imaginings of time and the past. The novels discussed so far investigate history, and by extent conceptions of time, by telling Native North American histories. Novels such as *Flight* and *Ledfeather* however are specifically

concerned with time and linearity, offering versions of Native North American time that work to upset settler-colonial time and thus formulate paths to Native self-determination. While the following frames both novels as historical fiction, they are multi-faceted, containing elements of native slipstream, which as Grace Dillon posits:

> infuses stories with time travel, alternative realities and multiverses, and alternate histories. As its name implies, Native slipstream views time as pasts, presents, and futures that flow together like currents in a navigable stream. (Dillon 3)

As stated in the introduction, Native slipstream and Native North American historical fiction can be read as congruent, building on and contained within each other. The idea of slipstream as flowing currents in a stream closely mirrors Silko's and Chief Seattle's descriptions of time as water-like, the simultaneity of pasts, presents and futures a given within the rush of a river. Native slipstream, like Native North American historical fiction, comes to realize Native North American teleologies of time through storytelling, directly engaging and implementing them into a Native North American literature.

Sherman Alexie's *Flight* as Historical Reevaluation

Alexie's novel *Flight* is often read as a Native North American Bildungsroman, an off-reservation companion piece to Alexie's *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (2007), and a close look at post-9/11 U.S. American consciousness. Criticism circles around the aspects of terrorism and identity, the novel understood as exploring "the origins, contexts, and consequences" of violence both public and personal (Coulombe 130). It is also read as "[fitting] squarely into the genre of historiographic metafiction", Alexie building his story "from traces and earlier representations of the past that he uses in different . . . ways to generate alternative interpretations of and explanations for well-known events" (Ibarrola-Amendariz 32). *Flight* thus evokes a coming of age in violent times, a universal narrative of teenage angst exacerbated by the socio-political realities of living in contemporary northern America.

Flight follows Michael (who refers to himself as Zits), a foster teenager who, after being brainwashed in prison, attempts to rob a bank.[98] After being shot during the robbery, Zits falls out of the present and careens through time, entering the bodies of various others to experience crucial moments in U.S. American and Native North American history. Zits shifts through time a total of six times, "a number that correlates to [the] age he was when he was first abused and abandoned" indicating that his time travel is a means of addressing past trauma – both his personal trauma and that of the generations before him – which also informs his current struggle as a Native North American youth (Perez 294). He first materializes in 1975 as Hank Storm, a white FBI agent contending with AIM. He then shifts to become a mute Lakota boy in 1876 at the Battle of Little Bighorn. His third jump places him in the body of Gus, an old white Army tracker who leads a group of soldiers to massacre a community of Native North Americans, similar to the Sand Creek massacre of 1864; his fourth leap sees Zits as Jimmy, a flight instructor and pilot, tormented by regret for having trained a 9/11 style plane hijacker; finally Zits slips into his own father, homeless and alcoholic, before returning to his own body in the bank, moments before he originally shifted out of his body, right before he pulls the trigger and is shot in turn. During all of these shifts, Zits remains himself, aware that he is out of time and outside of his own body, suggesting Alexie's awareness that while the past can be retraced and reaccessed, there is no true way of changing that which has happened.[99]

While Alexie's work is widely popular among euroamerican audiences, Native North American scholars and activists have levelled significant criticism against his use of Native characters and life situations in stereotypical situations. David Treuer argues that Alexie "mobilizes stock images that have come to inform Native American literature from European writers like Rousseau, Voltaire, Chateaubriand, and Walter Scott", thus perpetrating dangerous stereotypes (*Native American Fiction* 173). Gloria Bird (Spokane) takes Treuer's criticism to its conclusion and argues that Alexie has, through his stereotyping of both characters and narratives,

[98] Kerry Boland remarks that Zits' insistence on this nickname again serves to universalize his teenage self – however, it also possibly points to his face being "red", "signaling the derogatory name for Indigenous Americans" (70). Zits is thus both generic teenager and specifically racialized.
[99] Although this seems to counter the idea of simultaneous, wave-like times, it effectually does not: like the Trail of Tears and the arrival of white people, Zits' role as an observing time-traveler fits with a Native North American ideology of retroactively adapting the past. Times exist as fluid even if they remain unchangeable.

become complicit in the realities of settler-colonialism (see "Breaking the Silence", "Exaggeration).[100] Bird criticizes Alexie's novel *Reservation Blues* (1995), writing that there is a "nameless character who is described as having 'high cheekbones so big that he knocked people over when he moved his head from side to side'", a signal Alexie uses to denote the character's Sioux ancestry ("Exaggeration" 48). Bird argues that having high cheekbones and being Sioux combines two of the most easily stereotyped Native North American characteristics. Like Tallulah in *Riding the Trail*, who is used in advertisement because of her facial structure and darker skin, Alexie seems to signify "being Indian" as being both highly cheek-boned and having Plains Indian ancestry, as Bird writes, "the most prominent Indian" (48). While these criticisms are relevant and consistent, Alexie's novels require further analysis, particularly because of his stereotypes. Furthermore, *Flight* stands out in Alexie's oeuvre, actively contradicting an essentializing Native North American experience, offering instead a reevaluation of historical events that not only centers Native North Americans but also openly questions euroamerican expectations of linear time. Shifting through time Zits is never at the center of events, hovering instead on the sidelines, remaining in the role of the observer. While this recalls Lukács criterion of ordinary people doing ordinary things, Zits peripherality seems to have an added layer of significance. He is clearly cast as the observer, not an actor in the past, but a witness. Tellingly, his first shift materializes him, not as Native North American, but as white. His second shift, while now "allowing" him to be Native North American, thrusts him into the body of a mute boy, "a huge fleshy knot" on his "voice box", his "voice . . . taken away" (Alexie 64).[101] Like Tallulah in *Riding the Trail*, Zits can participate in the action, but is unable to change it; he seems to be charged solely with understanding the past and internalizing that knowledge without exercising any agency. Generally, the virtual reality of TREPP is similar to that of Zits' experiences in the past, he moves through it (easily and uneasily), knowledgeable to an extent (he

[100] Furthermore, the past years have seen Alexie accused of sexual harassment by at least ten women, highlighting his insistence on writing solely from a cis-gendered, male perspective and perpetuating an unobtrusive disavowal of female Native North American voices. This is obviously also a criticism that can be leveled at *Flight* – the novel is male dominated, Zits history and that of the United States presented as defined by male actions, women marked as irrelevant.

[101] Zits further immediately realizes his near nakedness, wearing only "a loincloth". He "gets shy for a second" starkly contrasting the reactions of the white tourists in Hausman's *Riding the Trail* (Alexie 63). While his awkwardness surely also results from being a teenager, there is also a point to be made here about white people appropriating and sexualizing Indigenous bodies – as opposed to merely realizing these bodies as bodies.

knows that "all these old-time Indians are doomed"), exposed to the violences of the past, but essentially at a remove (Alexie 66). There is the potential for psychological damage (like the "holed up" tourists on TREPP) but tangible personal tragedy passes him by. His role as witness underlines that the past is past, but that it needs to be substantiated and brought into the present (where it already resides but is not acknowledged). Arguably, the past has already happened and cannot be changed – it can however be witness and realized as significant in the present. Alexie seems confident that observation is productive in itself, that rendering the past as knowable offers potential.[102]

In his position as witness, Zits comes to realize that the events he observes "have been heavily colored by interests and myths that provided them with a certain teleology" (Ibarrola-Armendariz 33). He realizes that both personal history (how he has been taught to think of and relate to himself and his father), as well as communal and popular history (how he relates to Native North American culture and history) reflect how they are told and retold rather than how the events themselves unfolded. In his first shift as FBI Agent Hank Storm, he realizes that Hank's wife thinks that "Hank makes the world safe. [She thinks that] he is a good and loving husband and father, [while Hank considers himself] . . . one hundred different versions of himself, and only one is a killer" (Alexie 58). His place in the world clearly depends on perspective and narrative; here as an FBI agent, he is a protector, a "supercop" shielding the world from terrorism (41). That Zits has just experienced a completely opposite reality of willful federally sanctioned racism and unprovoked murder only emphasizes the shifting perspectives necessary to create reality. By extension, "Zit's trek through history . . . challenges his ideas of whites and Indians and about victims and victimizers", demanding that he reevaluate his own position as both "victim" (of the foster care system, puberty, colonial violence) and "victimizer" (a trigger-happy robber) and how this extends past the personal level to society as a whole (Perez 290). While Alexie never suggests that Native North Americans are perpetrators on the same level as the settler-colonizers, he challenges the idea of Native North Americans succumbing under an onslaught of superior power, thus unsettling a dominant euroamerican history that casts Native North Americans as conquered and

[102] Arguably, for Zits, there is a further reason; removed from his own past by reason of being an orphan, he specifically needs this falling through time to experience and anchor himself in a Native North American past that then facilitates a more self-assured personal present.

disappeared. Such a portrayal of settler-colonial relations also contradicts Treuer's criticism of essentialization: there are neither "good" nor "bad Indians" in *Flight*, no reductive characterizations or simplified unfolding narratives.

Zits' father, whom he shifts into during his last time skip, embodies this complex reality. Zits wakes to this version of himself in an ally, vomiting. He is almost immediately addressed by a "pretty white couple . . . genuine concern in their eyes" (Alexie 133). Disoriented and unaware of where he has materialized, Zits asks the couple how he looks, prompting the answer "you look about fifty . . . you're Indian" (Alexie 133). This observation is quickly backed up with relating to his braids and t-shirt which reads "Fighting Terrorism Since 1492" (133). The situation quickly escalates, Zits insulting the couple for their whiteness, their existence the reason for his current state while the couple insists that they are "just trying to help" (136). While this scene is extremely uncomfortable, it suggests the extra-textual realities of current Native North American-white relations. While the couple tries to help – ineffectively calling an ambulance that will never come because they use the signifiers homeless and Indigenous to describe Zits – Zit's father becomes more and more enraged at their casual ability to try and help him, culminating in a sexually charged violent altercation that sends the couple and him on their ways. This relationship of misplaced and unsolicited assistance in the face of centuries of mistreatment reflects Zits' experiences in his own reality: a victim of his father's alcoholism (at root caused by centuries of colonialism) he is moved ceaselessly from foster home to foster home, the "help" offered by the United States government entirely insufficient to rectify past injustices.

This intricate connection between past and present is explored further in the relationship between Zits' father and grandfather who consistently calls him worthless, asking him "what good are you? What kind of man are you?", the induced feelings of inadequacy causing him to abandon his young family (Alexie 155). While there is no direct connection here between the system of boarding schools and Zits's grandfather's treatment of his son, there is a suggested link. Like the disconnect created by governmental schools designed to remove Native North Americans from the socio-cultural environment, centuries of white abuse towards Native North Americans, as well as changing gender roles and a loss of traditions, have created a system in which Native North American men in particular have no place. This coordinated effort by the settler-colonizers to disrupt generational unity is reflected

here, showing how violence manifests from parent to child and into perpetuity. Zits's grandfather's treatment of his son is ultimately responsible for Zits being abandoned and thus finding his way into foster care. The system of abuse easily moves from father to son.

Existing, if briefly, in his father's body allows Zits to understand this connection and, while not absolving his father of responsibility, being able to contextualize his decision. This opportunity of understanding allows Zits to place himself into a larger framework; returning to the generational disconnect created by residential schools, Alexie here seems to suggest (similar to the approaches of residential school literature) that both recognition of trauma and an understanding of the circumstances is necessary to heal. Arguably, so *Flight*, realizing history allows for productive change in the present.

Furthermore, *Flight*, like both *Riding the Trail* and *Prudence*, establishes an explicit history of settler-colonial violence that stretches from first encounters to the present day. The five moments that Zits falls through are contingent on U.S. American violence, stressing its permanence and significance within North American history. Zits' existence as a Native North American foster teenager is contingent on the massacres of Native North Americans, the racism he experiences an extension of centuries of federal and international U.S. politics.

Even before his first shift, Zits exists in a world structured by violence: the foster care system, as well as the prison system, have led a teenager to consider violent crime as a reasonable way of life. His first shift introduces Zits to government and activist violence on the reservation, his second plunges him headfirst into battle, the third introduces him to the physical realities of genocidal massacre. Clearly, the narrative seems to indicate, violence is a constant in northern America. Instigated by settler colonialism, violence develops equally into revenge and perpetual repetition.

When Zits shifts into Gus, a tracker leading a group of settler-colonizers to lay waste to a Native North American settlement, he experiences Gus's need for revenge, "[leading] one hundred soldiers down the hills into the Indian camp" (Alexie 88). Zits feels both his and Gus's motivations, Gus's "rage and grief" and his own fear (88). Gus's need for revenge seems to be based in personal experience, on seeing "dead white bodies stripped naked and mutilated" (86). In the final descent on the Native North Americans encampment, Gus feels that "[he] had wanted to kill, but now [he] just [wanted] to stop" (88). It is not entirely clear if this last realization is

Zits or Gus or a mixture of both, confusing the motivations for the attack. While the massacre is happening, a soldier flees, taking a young Native American boy with him, effectively rescuing him from being killed, again complicating the relationships between settler-colonizer and Native North American (100).

At the end of this time shift, Gus, originally so motivated to kill and avenge, volunteers to stay back and allows the soldier and boy to escape. While Gus is now mostly Zits, his motivations shining through, the mere fact that the soldier risks his own life to protect the boy upsets dichotomies of good and bad, of settler-colonizer and Native North American. It allows for humanity, both in the soldier and the boy, liberating them from potentially harmful stereotypes: the soldier is not a ruthless killing machine, the boy not one of countless victims. Like Glancy's insistence on portraying both good and bad soldiers, as well as good and bad Native North Americans, this portrayal allows for experiencing the characters as rounded, capable of a variety of human thought and emotion.

While Alexie predominantly explores violence through the interaction between Native North Americans and settler-colonizers, the most jarring and complex example of violence enduring diverts from the preceding exploration of Native North American/settler-colonizer relationships, consequently making it more powerful in both its difference and similarity.

In his fourth shift, Zits finds himself in the body of Jimmy, a pilot and flight instructor, "responsible" for training and befriending Abbad, a young Somali, guilty of hijacking a plane in a terrorist attack that is meant to evoke 9/11. In an interview with Rebecca Roberts, Alexie explains that *Flight* was based on "one idea"; watching a documentary on 9/11 that featured interviews with one of the "instructors who taught the terrorists how to fly", Alexie was struck by the flight instructors' personal sense of betrayal (Roberts).[103]

Alexie then "started thinking about other moments of incredible violence in United States history and what [had not] been told about that particular act of violence" (Roberts). *Flight* thus pivots around its version of 9/11, but instead of viewing it in isolation, explores how terrorism is connected to centuries of violence

[103] Arguably the title also points to this shift as elemental, the idea of flying a joyful experience for Zits when he first experiences it. He feels connected, thinking that "I am the pilot and the clouds and the ocean and the plane" (Alexie 107).

on the North American continent. Terrorism is identified as quintessentially U.S. American, its framing dependent on the history that is being told.[104]

Flight introduces the possibility of 9/11 almost immediately, describing Zits' life as "a series of cruel bastards and airplane crashes . . . [he is] a flaming jet, crashing into each new foster family" (Alexie 11). Zits is referring here to Edgar, a specific foster father, who on the surface seems to be as he should be, caring, engaged, and encouraging; and yet, as soon as Zits outperforms him while flying a remote-control airplane, Edgar snaps and crashes both his and Zits planes. While Zits sees himself as the problem, the "flaming jet", it is very clearly Edgar who is at fault here, his inability to accept a child winning a game at the center of this encounter.

Within the cultural landscape of the early 2000s, the signifier of the "flaming jet" crashing immediately evokes the images of the two passenger planes flying into the World Trade Center, moving Zits into this context. As Coulombe argues, Zits' "acts of aggression – both physical and verbal" are also seen as connected to 9/11 – his anger mirroring the violence that surrounds him (131). However, the fact that it is not Zits who is offending but Edgar, adds a layer of nuance to Alexie's analogy: again, Alexie seems to say, the lines between victim and aggressor are not as clear-cut as the narrative created around 9/11 suggests.[105] The transitions between victim and victimizer are revealed as fluid, 9/11 as far from black and white, and, by having Zits inhabit both this very recent situation of contemporary terrorism, and that of past atrocities against Native North Americans – or, as *Flight* implies through Zits's father's t-shirt, acts of terrorism by settler-colonialists – these violences become linked.

At the Battle of Little Bighorn (the first shift), Zits experiences violent Native North American protection against "an outside aggressor that purported to act with manifest destiny"; similarly, the 9/11 aggressors acted in accordance with their ideology of protecting themselves against encroaching U.S. cultural imperialism

[104] While contextualizing 9/11, Alexie still problematically perpetuates a US-centric view that casts those of Muslim faith as perpetually connected to terrorism. *Flight* is also not Alexie's only text that equates terrorism with Islam, this connection is prefigured in his "Ten Little Indians". See Steven Salaita's evocative paper "Concocting Terrorism off the Reservation" in SAIL, vol. 22, no. 2, 2010, pp. 22-41.

[105] Tangentially this also reminds the reader that there is a narrative that has been created around 9/11 that not only legitimizes wide-sweeping US aggression against the Arab world as a whole (including those of Muslim faith globally), it also presents the United States as both victim and survivor, as a morally superior nation that triumphs over adversity.

(Coulombe 132). *Flight* thus suggests that ultimately, the United States are (and have been) equally motivated by ideology as has Al Qaeda. Both justify their violence by reason of religion and claim God's sanction. Where manifest destiny serves as a secularized Puritan notion of the "city upon the hill" and allows for divine providence, 9/11 is actualized as part of a fatwa that claims the individual duty of every Muslim to kill "the Americans and their allies, civilians and military", to "fight them until there is no more tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in Allah" (Cornell 240).[106] Arguably, the differences between fundamentalist reasoning are negligible, and Alexie underscores this with Zits' father's T-shirt in their encounter (Alexie 133). Classifying euroamerican settler expansion and aggression as terrorism casts the United States past as wholly negative, both implying that violence is at the core of U.S. American identity and designating Native North Americans as de facto survivors of sustained terrorism. By implicating the United States in a brutal, terrorist history, *Flight* pushes towards reevaluating the past.

In addition, this connection between past violence and 9/11 further points to the problematic idea of 9/11 as incommensurable, exceptional and outside of history. Coulombe states that "Alexie positions readers to recognize that 9/11 is not a singular event; on the contrary, comparable attacks by the United States resulted in trauma for other cultures similar to that caused by 9/11" (133).[107] 9/11 is often viewed as an unprovoked attack, the only one of its kind, foreign violence visited on U.S. American soil (next to the attack on Pearl Harbor). Both the "unprovokedness" and the uniqueness of the attack is cited as basis for the sweeping retaliation – both overseas in the bombing of Afghanistan and Iraq and at home in policies such as the Patriot Act. *Flight* however implies that 9/11, as an iteration of foreign terrorism, is indeed comparable, that it is similar in both death toll and, as mentioned above, motivation,

[106] The city upon the hill is derived from "the parable of Salt and Light in the Sermon on the Mount, and was used by John Winthrop in 1630 to forewarn his fellow Puritans" that their new community in Massachusetts would be watched by the world, their Puritan ideals under scrutiny, and if they "failed to uphold their covenant with God, then their sins and errors would be exposed" for all to see. The concept of the city upon the hill has been reused throughout U.S. American history, most notably during the 1960s and the 1980s to not only rally U.S. American citizens against a common enemy but also to justify neo-imperialism and questionable national politics such as the Vietnam War.

[107] There is the possibility here to read *Flight* as hinting at the base inadequacy of linear history. While Native North Americans have "the luxury" of recasting their past, adding essential events to the pantheon of the histories, U.S. America is imprisoned in the linearity of euroamerican history – 9/11 thus always remaining a shocking, devasting and unforetold moment, that resolutely stands out and apart from the typical understanding of the United States within the world. Arguably, 9/11 becomes almost insurmountable, a watershed moment that will come to define everything that comes after it.

to acts of terror and violence that have been perpetrated across northern America since the beginning of settler colonialism (and probably also before, if on a different scale).[108]

Finally, and this sits at the heart of *Flight*, Zits insist on remaining alive against the odds, or as Perez states, Zits is "[unwilling] to vanish permanently" (287). Clearly alluding to the trope of the Vanishing Indian, Perez identifies the purpose of Zits time-travel: Zits exists in 2007, he has not fallen victim to history and disappeared. He maintains presence as a Native North American teenager. While his movement through time "serves as a fantastical means of confronting the very real legacy of historical and enduring violence against Native people" it also underlines the continuing presence of Native North Americans in northern America (Perez 295). By falling through different times and events it becomes obvious that Zits is the localized culmination of centuries of violence against Native North American people in northern America. The acts perpetrated against Native North Americans by U.S. American soldiers, as well as by the FBI and individuals, the retaliatory actions by Native North Americans against the settler-colonizers, even the actions of 9/11, build on each other to create a teenager like Zits. And while he is disillusioned and ready to commit murder, even at the beginning of the novel, he exists, actively countering decades of dedicated settler-colonizer action to expunge Native North Americans from the North American present.

Flight here upsets the core necessity of manifest destiny (as well as of contemporary settler-colonizer society more generally), the disappearance of Native North Americans to make way for settler-colonizers. By shifting Zits through time, it becomes very obvious that the linearity predicated by North American history has holes and gaps and does not follow through: returning briefly to Hegel and his idea of history as succession of events that demonstrates development, *Flight* shows that this linear development is not at all progressive, instead it is fractured and repetitive, and ultimately there is no "progression", just a spiraling repetition. There is no clear trajectory that sees Native North Americans, as "the savage race" disappearing from, or being assimilated into, northern America; instead, Native North Americans continue to exist, their presence anchored in past, present and future.

[108] See chapter two for Audra Simpson's argument on how Native North Americans and those perceived as Muslim were treated after 9/11.

Importantly, Native North Americans continue to exist and exert influence which directly counteracts their supposed ahistoricity as well as their "being outside" of history, as Hegel's theory claims them to be. Zits, already a "problem" in linear history, finally chooses not to participate in the robbery, turning himself in to police instead and ultimately finding a foster family that cares for him, effectively rewriting his own history and future. While he cannot change the past, his experiences and understanding of the same allow him to realize that he can however influence what happens to him; Zits comes to experience how "pasts, presents, and futures . . . flow together like currents in a navigable stream" – the qualifier of "navigable" extremely important here. He is not set adrift in time but instead experiences possible pasts himself, witnessing history before returning to himself and using his knowledge to form a workable present (Dillon 4). He counters the proscribed linear history laid out for him by euroamerican design, resisting a history that sees him disappear, commit robbery and murder, spend time in prison – instead maturing and finding security and comfort within a chosen family.

Essentially, the use of time shifting creates an impression of perpetual violence that can only be ended (or at least interrupted) by an extensive reevaluation of the past; including the realization that while the past is past, it echoes into the present and requires reevaluation and rewriting. Zits fairly sequential movement from earlier to later, from distant to personal history, recalls the parallel yet spiral set-up of the Lakota winter counts; his time shifts while mostly linear, Hank Storm is the temporal exception the 1970s here prefiguring the nineteenth century, suggest an experience of the past that disregards linearity, suggesting instead the irrelevance of such a keeping of the past. Further reminiscent of the winter counts, Alexie's succinct switching between personal history (Zits father), removed history (Hank Storm), historicized history (Battle of Little Bighorn), and contemporary history (9/11), indicates that the importance of what is chosen to be remembered and commemorated relies on those keeping the history and not on an objective primacy of some events above others. The final shift is arguably as important (if not more so) as Zits experience of Gus's failed revenge.

Another important aspect of the time shifting is the insistence in spiral or circular time that makes it possible for Zits to experience a productive present. Similar again to *Riding the Trail*, where Tallulah reexperiences Removal again and again, resetting the past and thus her own present on a daily basis, Zits return to

before a critical moment in his life, allows Alexie to demonstrate that while the past is past, the present and future are malleable and can be shaped if, and this seems key, the past is respected. By creating a personal and communal past, Zits can create his own useable present.

Reading Stephen Graham Jones's *Ledfeather* as Parallel History

The third part of what Billy J. Stratton has termed Jones's "Indian Country Trilogy" – which also includes *The Fast Red Road: a Plainsong* (2000) and *The Bird is Gone: A ~~Monograph~~ Manifesto* (2003) – *Ledfeather* engages directly with the preoccupations of linear history. Within Jones's extensive and varied oeuvre these three novels stand apart as engaging directly with Native North American characters and scenes; the main characters are identified as Blackfeet, the novels are set in (or close by) the Blackfeet Nation, and deal with the lasting effects of settler-colonialism and continuing U.S. American neo-imperialism. However, Jones bends genre conventions (and expectations) even here, offering noir crime (*The Bird is Gone*), science fiction and pop culture (*The Fast Red Road*), and Native slipstream (*Ledfeather*), consciously engaging "the branches that come off literature with a capital L" and insisting on Native North American storytelling outside of the eponymous "Indigenous fiction" ("Letter" xii). Even as literary premise, *Ledfeather* escapes convention and bends assumptions.

Like *Flight*, *Ledfeather* works with non-linear renderings of time to recast history and heal past injustices. While *Flight* however plays with time as a more or less contained concept, the past available to dip in and out of, *Ledfeather* offers an unstable, mutable notion of time, erasing the boundaries between past and present almost entirely. *Ledfeather* is told in something resembling concentric circles, the narrative spiraling around and folding in on itself. A Bildungsroman on the surface, Jones's novel constantly plays with the concept of linear time, upsetting the idea of a successive, progressing history and advocating instead for an eternal continuum that emphasizes the parallelism of violence and oppression in the past and present, while also however offering a means of troubling this state and disturbing the perceived fatalism of Native North American existence in the United States. Jones's novel follows in a Native North American tradition of telling history not as a euroamerican exercise in chronology but as an experience in synchronicity that does not privilege the present over the past or vice versa. Thus, while offering very different narratives,

Flight and *Ledfeather* ultimately have similar aims of disrupting expected literary tropes and unsettling the supremacy of euroamerican linear time conceptions.

Ledfeather tells two stories simultaneously (or in parallel), that of Doby Saxon, a teenaged boy living in Browning, Montana, on the Blackfeet Reservation in the 2000s, and of Francis Dalimpere, an Indian Agent, living on the same land, pre-reservation, during the mid-nineteenth century. Both Doby and Francis experience trauma (Doby loses his father and tries to commit suicide; Francis makes several detrimental choices and is instrumental in deaths of hundreds of Piegan), and, while trying to process these traumas, their lives become more and more obviously intertwined, their lives collapsing into each other on the novel's final pages.

Doby's life unfolds as fractured sequences told by different narrators; Francis's experiences are told in epistolary format, letters he sends to his wife Claire who ostensibly remained in the eastern United States while her husband moved West. (These letters survive until the present day, making their way into Doby's hands.) While the reader has direct access to Francis's interior (although he is a thoroughly unreliably narrator), Doby remains remote, his experiences told predominantly through the eyes of others. While it has been argued that such a telling fixes *Ledfeather* as postmodern in essence – the conflation of different narrative styles, the fractured narrative, complicating the idea of the real, Jones's novel inhabits a space between historical reappraisal, native slipstream, and survivance manual that not only fits into the framework of Native North American historical fiction but is also wholly Native North American in conception, going far beyond euroamerican iterations of postmodern writing (Washburn 74).

Ledfeather begins with a short note stating that:

> [between] 1856 and 1907, when the tribal rolls were settled, the Blackfeet endured some twenty-four federally appointed Indian Agents. Of them, Francis Dalimpere had the shortest term: fourteen months. He arrived in September of 1883. It was his first 'Western' posting. He was thirty-two.

Separated from the rest of the novel, this passage reads like a typical historical aside, preempting the main narrative of many historical novels. Its apartness signals a factuality and historical authenticity that is emphasized by both the bracketed time period (1856-1907), and Francis's full name, age, and the time of his posting on the

contemporary Blackfeet Reservation.[109] However, the name Francis Dalimpere is not listed in any BIA records and there were several Indian Agents who lasted just over a year.[110] Thus, from the very start, even before the narrative proper begins, *Ledfeather* unsettles both the genre conventions of historical fiction, and the reader's expectations, challeging the conviction that an objective history can be known.

The parallel narratives of Doby and Francis are central to Jones's unsettling of past and present. Contrary to many Native North American historical novels, *Ledfeather* tells the past through the eyes of Francis, a white, euroamerican Indian Agent. As Leah Pennywark argues, Francis's perspective, rather than offering access to a Native North American past, complicates and obscures it. By "depicting Piegan culture through white eyes", Jones "reiterates historical appropriation of Blackfeet culture, and . . . denies contemporary readers the opportunity to do the same by avoiding the kind of cultural tourism that a more direct representation might enable" (93). While the idea of cultural tourism includes the assumption that Native North American historical fiction (and Native North American fiction more generally) tends to be geared towards a white, euroamerican audience, Pennywark's argument centers the difficulties of accessing a past that has been recorded and regurgitated by those in power. Thus, while the reader can access a "Native present" through Doby, a Native past remains at a remove.

This distance between euroamerican and Native North American renderings of the past is reinforced throughout the novel, most notably through the efforts of a white tourist trying to buy commemorative merchandise at the Glacier Peaks Casino – after being unable to visit the Museum of the Plains Indians located next door, which is closed.[111] Most of the memorabilia available is made in China, thus stopping

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[109] The time given loosely covers the period between the Lame Bull Treaty (1855) and the beginning of Allotment. Prior to the treaty, the U.S. government had succeeded in killing a large percentage of buffalo, as well as expanding their settlements further and further into Blackfeet territory. Without the buffalo, the Blackfeet developed a growing dependency on food supplies via the U.S. American government. In 1855, Chief Lame Bull signed a peace treaty with the U.S. government that would ensure an annual $20.000 "in goods and services" in exchange for the Blackfeet officially moving onto a reservation and thus reducing their land. The federal policy of Allotment saw the parceling of land, a move away from communal living and working, and towards private land ownership. Allotment led to the breaking of traditions and families, to eventual detribalization, and to the loss of nearly 100 million acres of Native land; a policy that ultimately served the U.S. government and disenfranchised Native North Americans.

[110] Henry Reed, April 1861 to April 1862; William B. Pease, August 1868 to June 1869 (see: Edward Hill. *The Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-1889: Historical Sketches*. Clearwater Publishing Co., 1974).

[111] This juxtaposition is in itself a comment on Blackfoot (and by extension Native North American) presence in the United States. Again, access to the past (i.e., the museum) is blocked to (white) tourists, while access to the present (the casino) is available – but not wanted. The casino also drags the Blackfeet into the present, underlining both the commercial aspect of being Native North

the woman from owning anything that is made within the Blackfeet Nation; "no matter how the woman proceeds, the Blackfeet do not give her the opportunity to participate in the commodification of their culture and past"; she leaves with a handful of postcards only (Pennywark 96). She then catches Doby (possibly/probably) breaking into her camper van, and as he exists and surprises her, she drops the postcards in shock. Doby in turn thrusts a sheaf of letters at her (Francis Dalimpere's letters to his wife which Doby has stolen from the closed museum), asking her if she wants to buy these authentic items for forty dollars. Realizing that the letters "hadn't been made in China", she rejects them, struggling instead to pick up the fallen postcards (Jones 31). Doby seemingly respects her reaction "[nodding] to himself and [handing her] the cards back, just stopping at the last instant to look at the top one, laugh a little" (Jones 32). Doby withdraws, and the woman and her lumbering husband leave Browning.

Not only does this interaction underline the euroamerican desire to access an "authentic" Native American past, it also stresses a parallel disregard for and discomfort in facing a Native American present (Doby's break-in and subsequent proposition of the letters). While the tourist insists on her genuine concern for and interest in Native North Americans, her interactions with Blackfeet (including the memorabilia salesgirl, whom the woman insists is beautiful because of her crooked teeth) are awkward and defined by her status as a visitor on Native land.

The section concludes with Doby's laugh at discovering that the topmost postcard is a picture of Yellow Tail, Francis's Piegan companion during his posting. While this is definitely a further example of paralleling past and present, it also suggests the pervasiveness of Native North American history in the United States. Although the woman refuses Francis's letters she is already inundated with actual history, adding Yellow Tail to her memories. This implies that even if white euroamericans chose to be unaware of the past, the past persists and exists in the present, impacting the contemporary. There is also the suggestion that Doby knows who Yellow Tail is, implying early on that Francis's memories are seeping into Doby's conscience.

American in the twenty-first century and the very real continuing Native presence in the United States. Furthermore, the insistence of placing casino and museum next to each other (a placement that importantly also exists in the real world), underlines a seamless connection between the past and the present, anchoring Blackfeet presence in Montana.

Ultimately, the existence of the Yellow Tail postcard, Francis's letters, the closed museum, and the open casino, actively counteract what Kimberly Blaeser has termed the "museumization of Indian people"; the inaccessibility of Blackfeet culture, the casino's claim to space, as well as Doby's possession of Francis's attempt to record history disrupt the "romantic linear history" that ends with the vanishing of Native North Americans as established by settler colonizers; instead these circumstances maintain Native North American existence in Montana and throughout the United States (Blaeser 49). Jones here participates in writing Native North American existence as presence and not as absence, establishing a narrative of survivance that:

> [documents] the perseverance of certain raw materials of cultures against the relentless undertones of genocide; they reinvigorate what survived, recreate what didn't and reimagine the place of the creative Indigenous individual in relation to his or her community. (McKegney, *Magic Weapons* 8)

The raw materials of cultures persist despite and within the casino, as well as the museum, and Doby's movement through Browning.

Returning now to the narrative frame of the novel, it is imperative to contextualize the importance and impact of the spiraling, parallel, collapsing storylines mentioned above. *Ledfeather* maintains a resistance to linear narrative and "cohesive temporality", presenting instead a series of lingering snapshots from "present time, near-past time, and far-past time" that run together more and more the further the novel progresses" (Wolf-Meyer 74). Wolf-Meyer terms this as the "slipstream of time, a conception of temporality and history that sees time as occurring simultaneously. Moments, persons, events, all exist in parallel" (92). This idea of "the slipstream" matches Grace Dillon's concept of native slipstream as "[providing] a non-linear way of thinking through complex cultural tensions . . . it conveys the very real psychological experience of slipping into various levels of awareness and consciousness" (Dillon 17). Both Dillon and Wolf-Meyer emphasize the concurrent existence of times and the productive nature of slipstream. While Doby's and Francis's storylines begin as distinctly separate accounts, mirroring the perceived separateness of present and past, the distinctions (in narrative, tone and content) begin to crumble; the two worlds collapsing into each other.

Jones emphasizes this collapse through the use of narrative glitches, Francis's letters passing seamlessly into Doby's storyline and vice versa. These upsets are

marked both visually as line breaks or obvious gaps, as well as through shifts in perspective between Doby and Francis. The first obvious narrative merge happens after Doby steals Francis's letters from the museum. He ends up sitting and "reading in his stupid way, where his lips followed what was on the page. But he was stuck right at the first of it, sounding it out, just saying --- Claire – Last Night" (Jones 47). The break here is not simply Doby reading Francis's letter and shifting into his voice, there is a clear change here from Doby's contemporary world to that of the nineteenth century, escaping Doby's letter reading and shifting into Francis's letter writing.

These breaks become more and more blatant and unsettling as the novel progresses. Francis is relating walking through snow, writing that "I will be walking behind him . . . so that all I can see is" – the narrative then switches to Doby and continues – "his back. For steps at a time . . . As for the horses, they're gone, something bad. But – not horses. Why would he think horses? It's snowmobiles" (Jones 81).[112] The section begins with following Yellow Tail, pressing on through a snowstorm, and ends with Doby following his father in a similar snowstorm more than a century later. The horses of Francis's reality seep into Doby's world of cars and snowmobiles, the connection so real that he needs several moments to locate himself in the twenty-first century. Doby's disassociation deepens when he starts losing English words and "all [he] can think of for some reason are random words from the two weeks of French [he] sat through in tenth grade" (Jones 90). While not breaking the narrative visually here, Doby's sudden ability to think in and understand basic French corresponds to Francis's native language and background, marking the intensifying merge of their consciousness and timeframes.

The following is a close reading of the passage that leads up to Francis's realization of his guilt and possible redemption; this time collapse is probably the most violent (in narrative form and content), it moves back and forth over the crux of the novel.

Francis, his horse dead in the middle of a snowstorm, starts thinking "Browning" over and over again, associating the name geographically with his current position on Blackfeet land but unable to place it otherwise. Browning, where Doby lives in the twenty-first century, does not yet exist in the nineteenth century,

[112] Interesting here is also Francis's idea of "I *will* be walking" (author's emphasis), implying a further level of time here, that already casts his walk into the future towards Doby.

instead the area that Browning occupies in the present is roughly in the same area as the Sandhills, the hills where the Piegan interred their dead.[113] While Francis walks through the snow he starts feeling the firmness of a paved road beneath his feet. There are no paved roads here in Francis's time, and he struggles to reconcile the "unforgiving impact his knees had registered" (Jones 104). He comes to realize the road not as a road per se but as "just the memory of one, his memory of one, . . . leading him to the lights he could not see" (104). Although this could be a mere reference to Francis remembering paved streets in the eastern United States and further, he seems rather to be remembering into the future, possibly tapping into a knowledge of the area that Doby would have, linking the two together. Following the road further, Francis comes across "irregular blocks of shadow" that seem to be "buildings, not lodges" (Jones 105). Like the paved streets, there are also no stone buildings near Francis's posting. He realizes that both the road and the buildings are "insubstantial, formed not by brick and mortar and wood and sweat, but of familiarity, of knowledge, of suspicion, of – and not even knowledge maybe, but foreknowledge" (105). The link here to Doby is revealed to be strong, bound to Doby (and Doby to him), Francis can remember how the land will look in the future; his "foreknowledge", or memory of the future, creating a double bind between past and present and present and past.

This idea of remembering the future emphasizes the parallelism of time while also again echoing the witch's story in Silko's *Ceremony*, as well as the foreknowledge of the coming Removal of the Cherokee Nation in Cherokee belief systems. While the future memory here is much more personal, it reflects a similar effort to understand and contextualize the (past) present by remembering the future.

This bind of present and past becomes even more pronounced when Francis realizes that the "blunt shapes" he sees through the snow are buildings that he knew "well enough to avoid, to respect, it was a though they were as yet unborn, save in the Agent's backwards memory" (Jones 105). The backwards memory is Doby's present reality, and while past and present continue to become more indistinguishable, so do

[113] This surely also indicates the possibility of a spatial haunting that affects the Blackfeet residing in Browning today; the center of the Blackfeet Nation now built on the resting place of their dead ancestors. Considering Jones's affinity to horror, this seems like a very deliberate choice (and again a geographic reality), possibly offering another explanation for Doby and Francis's merging – haunted ground collapsing time and space to create a slipstream that allows ghosts to travel back and forth easily.

the boundaries between Doby and Francis. Francis realizes that the temporal merging goes hand in hand with himself merging with Doby:

> it was his punishment, to become Blackfeet, to be Piegan. To live on the reservation he'd created, the situation he was already leaving behind. To replace his own life with an Indian one, and thus know firsthand the end result of his policies. An end result, generations away from last Winter, just so he could see the scope of what he'd done, that it still had traceable effect. So that, in a sense, he could be inflicting it upon himself. (Jones 117)

Francis recognizes his historical fault and the accompanying need to relive his actions and their consequences in the present and future – and by extension also in the past, as Doby's future actions also refract back towards Francis's present, closing the spiral.

Before focusing on Francis's "policies" and their "end results" – arguably the novel's crucial moments – it bears concluding the temporal and personal merging of Francis and Doby, as well as the coming together of the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries. The novel's conclusion sees the total collapse of distinctions. Doby and Francis come together as reiterations of the same person in the final paragraphs of Jones's novel; the snowstorm and Doby's final suicide attempt allow the two to moves through time and finally meet in Doby's present, in Doby's body (ostensibly Francis's punishment). Francis, who has struggled and failed to connect with his wife Claire, is finally reunited with her in the back of the car that rescued Doby from the side of the road. Doby and Claire recognize each other almost immediately, "the way the girl was looking at [Doby] was like she was remembering him from some wayback powwow or something, when they were both on their moms' hips"; Doby then hands her the bundle of Francis's letters (Jones 211). She asks if this is a "special delivery" and he replies that it is "Indian mail", implying that while the letters are late, they have finally reached their intended recipient (211).

Throughout *Ledfeather* it remains entirely unclear if Francis's letters ever leave the reservation and make it East to Claire (and if they do, if they do so in their original form); it seems unlikely that they did, and thus this retrieval of the letters in the twenty-first century finally connects Francis and Claire. After taking the letters, he looks at her:

> like he'd been waiting a hundred years to see her, and this crazy ass Ledfeather girl all the way from Standing Rock, she looked after the elk and

> then back at Doby through her hair, like she'd maybe been waiting for him too, but was scared a little, and wanted to be sure. (212)

Doby then calls her Claire and they touch hands; the novel ends. Not only does this final meeting between Claire, Doby and Francis merge time and self – effortlessly bridging the 100 plus years between Francis and Doby (implying that time is malleable) – it also, as Jones states, underlines the larger argument that the violence inherent in the U.S. American social, political and historical reality can only be broken by the settler-colonizer realizing the oppressive and racist systems put in place and repenting (or changing) them. Although Francis claims that rebirth in a Native body is punishment, this is not a racialized statement, it is rather an admission and acceptance of guilt and necessary retribution: he must return as Doby to understand the repercussions of his actions and to live the life that he has thrust upon them (himself). Jones writes that it is unproductive to:

> make [the] claim, that people, just because of their identity, are going to be one way or another. [Jones tries] to complicate the narrative by making Doby Saxon really the same person as Francis Dalimpere, the Indian Agent. They just happen to be a century apart. ("Observations on the Shadow Self" 34)

Similar to Alexie and Glancy, Jones suggests that to heal there must be the realization that there is no clear-cut "good" and "evil", just people who are able to do both.[114] He also demonstrates that this coming together is neither easy nor simplistic; it retains the historical realities of euroamerican aggression and violence against Native North Americans, demanding context and responsibility instead of forgetting and moving on.

The novel's pivotal moment, central to Francis's and Doby's lives, is Francis's complicity in the death of large number of Piegan in the first (and last) winter of his posting as Indian Agent. Documented historically as the "Starvation Winter" (1883-1884), Jones rewrites this crucial Blackfeet past to underline the wholly detrimental impact of euroamerican settlers on Native American existence, demonstrating the lasting effects of this starvation, but also laying the foundations for escaping these effects by underlining the continued survivance of the Blackfeet as a people and a

[114] Arguably this does not extend to the systems that enable the people who do evil; neither Alexie nor Jones are suggesting that there is equality in the terror and destruction visited by settler-colonizers and Native North Americans. Clearly, the political and social entity that is the settler state is the enabler thriving on racist ideology and will thus always be responsible for most of the destruction wrought.

nation, countering the narrative of the "vanishing Indian" central to linear settler-colonizer history.

As Helen B. West writes in a government document on the Starvation Winter, "one of the most unfortunate chapters in the history of the Piegan Indians . . . occurred during the winter of 1883-84". She elaborates that "during these winter months there was acute suffering among the Piegans, as the result of which nearly 600 of them – a quarter of the tribe – died" (West). The Piegans were reliant on buffalo as a major food source. Until the 1870s the buffalo remained largely immune to ever-increasing culling but an increase in "demand" for buffalo hides led to their virtual extinction by 1880. West writes further that:

> each year, after 1880, Agent John W. Young, from his Agency then on Badger Creek, a few miles south of the present Browning, drew attention to the situation . . . He pointed out that because of the scarcity of game, fewer Indians were going off on the hunt and more and more were becoming dependent on the Agency for their weekly issue of rations.

Alongside providing the Piegan with cattle (essentially unproductive as cattle did not fit the Piegan food model), the Bureau of Indian Affairs also emphasized the importance of teaching "crop-raising . . . to prepare for a new food supply" (West). As West argues, "the cow herd was too small, crop conditions discouraging and the time too short to change so drastically the Indians' centuries-old mode of existence" (West). However, the U.S. government maintained their course of action, concurrent with Thomas Jefferson's policy to completely change Native North American relationships with the land, as discussed in chapter two.

In *Ledfeather*, Francis takes the part of Agent Young. He is woefully inept in dealing with the Blackfeet, the U.S. military and his predecessors, the situation unravelling towards and culminating in the soon-to-be-known-as Starvation Winter. This section of Francis's experiences shifts perspective moving from the epistolary to a more "objective" telling of the past (reminiscent maybe of official documentation of agency activity), that continues over three pages before the perspective and narration again switches to Francis's letter-writing. On the one hand his shifts suggest a clear break between the more historically "objective" telling of an event and Francis's recollections of the same; on the other hand, it moves to confuse the idea of historical authenticity by shifting back and forth as well as by demonstrating that even the "factual" retelling is located within Francis's version of the past. This is further

reinforced by Francis himself writing different versions to Claire before finally (presumably) recounting the truth. He writes that he "[has] been lying" and finally resolves to tell "what really happened" a page later (Jones 176). The shift also alerts to the fact that the past is accepted as "history" when it is told in a specific way. Both letters and "objective" narrative are euroamerican ways of telling the past that imply historical accuracy and thus exclude other approaches to the past. Francis's letters echo West in telling that rations for the winter were to arrive later than during previous years so that "by being forced to wait [a] few weeks, the Piegan might see the need for agricultural industry and remember that need when the next growing season presented itself" (Jones 162). Despite the exceedingly paternalistic, even violent, decision of the U.S. government to "nudge" the Piegans into accepting agriculture into their culture, this also again emphasizes the Piegan dependence on the settler-colonizer society (such as timely distribution of rations, and adequately sized rations). However, this dependence is continuously complicated by the relationship between Native North Americans and settler-colonizers: willful destruction of homelands, decimation of the buffalo, insistence on alternative, non-native food sourcing (agriculture), immediately challenges any productive relationship. It also cements the fact that while the U.S. government is treaty-bound to extend rations, they disregard both Piegan traditions and, in effect, the foundations of the treaty arrangements. Instead of delivering beef "on the hoof", it is delivered already slaughtered, "in pallets" which requires storage facilities that are described as inadequate and dirty – because technically they should not be necessary (Jones 161). Francis is "made to understand that [the pallets] had to do with the cost of rail transport", and that ultimately, it was cheaper to deliver the rations already slaughtered, revealing both "economic concerns" and disregard for treaty rights on the part of the U.S. government (161).

Expanding on the historical Starvation Winter, and the complicit U.S. government (first in actively colonizing the land, then in destroying resources and creating dependency, and finally in violating treaty agreements), *Ledfeather* goes further, and directly implicates Francis – as the responsible Indian Agent – and the U.S. government and military (as the former Indian Agent Collins), in the deaths of 600 Piegans and consequently in the continuing deaths of Blackfeet into the twenty-first century. While distributing the winter's rations, blankets start to disappear. As a "disciplinary measure" Collins suggests withholding the meat rations until someone

comes forward admitting to the theft of the blankets (arguably taking the blankets should not even be considered theft as they are part of the government rations and thus, by treaty, belong to the Piegan).[115] The withholding lasts until the meat rations have spoiled, thus leaving no food for the winter. The section ends with Francis realizing that none of the Piegans stole the blankets, that instead Collins, in a perverse show of dominance and revenge, has taken the blankets himself. Francis tells that:

> as the cold had settled in again, the soldiers and Sheffield were of course bundled against it. Collins was no different. Except that, instead of Hudson blankets or military greatcoats or store-bought buffalo robes, what he was wrapped in from the point of his chin to the tail of his horse was one of the ration blankets. (Jones 180)

Ultimately the "punishment" doled out by Francis instigates the death of the 600 Piegan. His unreflected and unchecked subservience to Collins making him a de facto murderer. Arguably this again is an indictment of systemic abuse, Collins a stand-in for the U.S. government, and Francis an exemplary executor.

Jones insists that it is this event that necessitates Francis's eventual travel through time and his reemergence as Doby. His complicity and guilt necessitate reevaluation, he needs to experience the impact of his decisions to fully close the circle.

Taking command of the starvation winter in this manner not only recasts it, it also allows it to continue to exist as part of Blackfeet survivance, a situation reclaimed by Jones and integrated into the history of Native North America. The lasting importance of the Starvation Winter also again stresses the simultaneity of time that Jones reiterates throughout his novel. Francis and Doby exist simultaneously because they are the same body, both the nineteenth century Indian

[115] While Collins and his accompaniment of soldiers wait for the distribution of the rations, they feast (clearly from the rations). Afterwards, Francis asks where the meat is from; a soldier, by the name of Sheffield, makes it obvious that they are pilfering from the rations. He then addresses Francis, stating that "was it not the Indians who gave their own food so that the Pilgrims might live and eventually proliferate" (Jones 172). This depiction of the (already falsified) first contacts between Native North Americans and the European colonizers adds a peculiar spin to both popular U.S. history and the idea that there is a give and take between the settlers and Native peoples based on need (which disregards that the "need" of the Piegans is wholly white-made). The soldiers seem to be aware of the fact that what they are doing is wrong, both morally and legally, and yet they do it anyways. And Francis, who is seemingly even more aware of the wrongdoing, goes along with it. *Ledfeather* here strongly emphasizes that the US government is both instigator and complicit in the destruction of Native North Americans.

Agent and the twenty-first century teenager live Blackfeet history, both able to shape it in certain ways, their actions refracting forwards and back and implicating them both – together – in the presence of the Blackfeet today.

In discussing Jones's *The Bird is Gone*, Däwes argues that it "defeats Western historiography, poses creative alternatives to linear time, and thus effectively engages Indigenous systems of knowledge" (113). *Ledfeather* arguably continues in this vein while also further implicating euroamerican history writing as a key element in sustaining the primacy of linear time as well as telling the past in a specific way. In contrast, a non-linear, spiraling history that acknowledges the interconnections of past, present and future is seen as productive and necessary, an aid for resolving the present. Jones suggests that the way to break the cycle of linear history is to realize the past and the present as interdependent. This interdependence then becomes the framework for moving beyond the past and further realizing the interconnections between all actors. While not absolving Francis from either his wrongdoing or his resulting trauma, *Ledfeather* insists on the capacity of people to engender their own retribution while also realizing that retribution is instrumental in moving forward. Like Hausman's *Riding the Trail*, and Alexie's *Flight*, *Ledfeather* illustrates how violence done in the past impacts and forms the present, and while Hausman advocates for a kind of active withdrawal from this violence, *Ledfeather* (and *Flight*) instead proposes a recasting of the system that necessitates and promotes this violence, offering an alternative experience of time and history that moves past violences towards something essentially productive, and accepting the violence of the self within an ahistoric (read=non-linear) universe.

Conclusion

While contemporary historical novels, both euroamerican and Native North American, often engage the past in playful ways, challenging and twisting authorized history, *Flight* and *Ledfeather* push this play to engage the very understanding of what history is and does and how even this can be challenged within literature.

Both novels depict worlds in which time is seen unstable yet continuous, creating links between the past and the present that strengthen rather than weaken the importance of the past for the present. Consequently, history is also presented as non-linear, as something that does not progress successively but refracts back on itself, moving fluidly from past to present to future. Particularly in *Flight*, Alexie

underlines the flexibility of time, Zits jumping back and forth from event to event, not following a linear trajectory but dipping in and out of centuries and decades. *Flight* presents a more generalized approach to history and time, demonstrating the systemic nature of privileging one world view (linear history) over another (non-linear history). Despite the very personal view on Zit's reality, the times that he shifts to are significant moments in north American history (except for shifting into his father – which is however both generalized, the stereotypical "drunk Indian" and personal, as he is Zit's dad) demonstrating the larger impact of systemic violence within a linear system of time. *Ledfeather*, conversely, focuses on the very specific (both tribally specific and specific to Doby and Francis) effects of inter-generational violence that impact singular people. Here of course there is also the wider implication of Doby's mother and father, who are for different reasons incapable of caring for him, as well the specter of suicide across the Reservation, that ties Doby and Francis to a larger, more generalized, historical framework of trauma.

Within these fluid temporalities, Native North Americans are shown to be very much alive. The "static Indian" is revealed as a euroamerican construction based on adhering to linear time; the decline, erasure and ostensible disappearance of Native North Americans both from a nuanced telling of the past and the reality of the present is revealed as a calculated effort of linear time. Maureen Konkle argues that the conceptualization of linear time keeps Native North Americans apart from the white setter-colonizers, that:

> native peoples were held to be so different, an anachronistic relic of an early moment in the history of man locked in a state of nature without history and without a future, that they would rapidly disappear when confronted with the pinnacle of human civilization, the new United States. (4)

This observation closely mirrors those of Nanni, Nabokov, and Deloria Jr. explicated above; conceiving time as linear facilitates erasure. Jones and Alexie create temporal malleability thus not only disrupting linear time but also creating space for Native North American presence in the present.

Linear time also aids in creating a historical narrative that locks violence in the distant past. Consistently promoting a history that connects Native North Americans with violence suggests that with the "disappearance" of Native North Americans, U.S. governmental violence, particularly against Native North Americans and other "others", also vanishes. Both *Flight* and *Ledfeather* vehemently counter

this story. *Flight* in particular shows the pervasive and continuous nature of settler-colonial violence, motivated by individual racism (Hank Storm), by systemic marginalization (Zit's father), personal revenge fantasies (the old man), religious zealotry (Abbad specifically) violence against others is a constant in northern America. It cannot be contained to pre-twentieth century times where it is argued to be "necessary" to expand democracy and promote civilization, instead it saturates every aspect of U.S. American existence. *Ledfeather* shows a similar barrage of uncontained violence, located however within the body of Doby. Thus focalized in his teenage body, it is clear that violence once enacted survives throughout generations and is very much present in the twenty-first century. Doby is literally living out the repercussions of a past violence, showing substantial links between the past and the present and once again shattering the illusion of linear time.

As Native North American historical novels, *Ledfeather* and *Flight* round off the complexities of the proposed genre, insisting on a plurality of narrative engagements that however collectively move to reevaluate the telling and construction of history within a settler-colonizer context. Both novels insist on a spiraling and circular time that allows for a fluid back and forth, the present refracting into the past and the past echoing into the present. They establish Native North Americans as contemporary, claiming "modern time". By asserting modernity these novels:

> claim the history of European depredation on Native peoples and to refute Euroamericans' insistence that racial difference is the explanation for everything that happened to Native peoples as well as for their eventual doom. To claim to progress through time, to argue that native peoples can and will persist into the future, is to claim political standing and to insist on recognition. (McLoughlin, *After the Trail* 37)

Arguably, then, Alexie and Jones offer modes of survivance through their novels, establishing Native North Americans as present and central to the twenty-first century, thus pushing for Native recognition and possible self-determination.

Coda: Tanya Tagaq's *Split Tooth* and the Death of Alberta Williams

Introduction

Joseph Bruchac writes that "stories are like food. We eat food because we like its taste and texture, but we also eat to stay alive" (85). Native North American historical fiction provides precisely this double function. While it is a literature that entertains, it also contributes to the considerable project of rewriting and reestablishing a global Native North American history. Revising established histories, such as Cherokee Removal, rescuing erased histories, like those of Native North American military personnel, and writing new histories, like those of Native North Americans teens, is critical in highlighting a Native North American presence in Canada, the United States and around the world. These fictions are separate from western genre conventions, existing at the intersection of fact and fiction, crossing between realities, and engendering possibility and survivance.

This conclusion offers a brief summary of the preceding argument and chapters, as well as introducing more ways of telling Native North American pasts. This dissertation has worked primarily with novels written by men, as well as with histories that center male characters, exceptions being Glancy's *Pushing the Bear* duology, and Hausman's *Riding the Trail*.[116] The texts considered have also been consistent in genre, telling the past as prose fiction. Consequently, this final section opens the discussion to include more diverse texts – including audio and mixed formats – written by non-men. It also shifts completely from the geography currently occupied by the United States towards that of Canada thus allowing a condensed look at the residential school system, as well shifting the gaze towards different geographic spaces.

Summary of Work

The research presented offers a comprehensive introduction to the Native North American historical novel. Locating these texts in a cultural as well as a political arena, the previous chapters argue that rewriting history as literary text sustains Native North American presence in the contemporary United States, ultimately facilitating Native North American survivance and sovereignty.

[116] Treuer's *Prudence* is not included here; while he writes around her, the focus of his novel lies with Frankie and, to an extent, Billy. As argued in chapter three, Treuer's voice keeps Prudence at a remove, despite giving the novel its title.

Maintaining further that history is always a narrative produced and curated to create and habituate existing structures of authority – including white dominance and Indigenous victimry – the Native North American historical novel works to refuse and unsettle these structures.

Native North American historical fiction creates a counterstory that resists the narrative of Native disappearance devised by the settler colonizer, instead allowing for an active Native presence in northern America. The historical novel plays an important part in the "centuries of resistance and storytelling passed through the generations" that has made possible "Indigenous survival" in North America and around the globe (Dunbar-Ortiz 55). These fictions should however not be categorized merely as a "writing back" to the dominant history but as a dialogue structured and lead by Native North Americans.[117] Although revision and rewriting imply (and include) a reaction to the dominant historical narrative (as demonstrated in this dissertation), Native North American historical fiction also insists on its position as an original literature of northern America that writes its own stories. Conceived as a dialogue, Native North American literature, and historical fiction in particular, produces new history that then functions as the basis for reevaluation by the dominant white society. It thus restructures the ways and means in which a North American history is understood and presented.

The novels discussed tell different versions of historical events, tracing Native North American history from the nineteenth to the twenty-first century, encompassing Blackfeet, Cherokee and Ojibwe imaginings of the past. None of the novels considered attempts to draw a complete history, emphasizing the continued need for new and different histories of the past. By not limiting history to a single story, the past is revealed as multilayered, ripe to be adjusted and recomposed. The reluctance to work with absolutes is further reflected in the genre-bending characteristics of Native North American historical fiction. Despite the effort to define the genre, the novels discussed include speculative fiction, realism, war fiction, science fiction, and versions of autobiography, allowing individual (and communal) realities to shape history. Beginning in the introduction, this dissertation

[117] Ashcroft et al. conceive their theory of writing back in relation to postcolonial literatures. Despite its interest in language and displacement, postcolonial literatures seldom see Native North American literatures as part of its corpus. Concurrently, many Native North American writers also do not see their texts as part of a postcolonial literature (see for example Cook-Lynn, "Who Stole Native American Studies.").

investigates the limitations implicit in western historiography; the insistence on a document-based representation, linear time, and racialized ideologies insufficient in telling Native North American history.

Chapter four consolidates this discussion through analysis of how history is told and remembered in a western context and how this framework structures the past's existence. Accepting a linear progression of time precludes western history's insistence on development and creates the hierarchies that "naturally" cast western societies as more advanced than others. Jones's *Ledfeather* and Alexie's *Flight* write non-linear, Native histories that highlight the interplay between past, present and future. Time is revealed as unfixed, spilling between centuries, months, and hours, suggesting that the past influences the present while the present also works backwards to determine the past. Existing within this epistemology, Native North American writers are claiming both modernity and history, establishing Native survivance in northern America.

By storying themselves (individually, communally and nationally) into the past and present, Native North American writers not only create continuity of existence but also, importantly, establish a foundation for sovereignty. This dissertation realizes Native North American sovereignty as cultural and communal survivance, tied closely to the act of telling stories; the "ongoing expression of a tribal voice is interdependent with the political status of Native nations", stories creating worlds (Womack 77). Being able to control stories, particularly those that narrate (and narrativize) the past, and thus elaborate on identity, mythology, and socio-political frameworks, allows for a sustained Native North American self-determination. While historical fiction alone cannot be responsible for creating more political space for Native North Americans, it allows for formulating a usable past for Native (and other) readers that engenders the possibility of reassessing not only Native North American pasts but also the mythologies at the heart of the national identities and narratives that make the United States and Canada. By building on the one hand and dismantling on the other, historical fiction is able to shape and explain the universe.

Melissa Lucashenko (Bundlajung) returns this argument to a more localized space, writing that Indigenous people can:

> exert power not only over the national story or the regional story, but also over the stories we tell each other around the kitchen table. The stories we tell

> ourselves about who we are as Aboriginal people, and what we are doing here, about who we can be, who we once were, about the great gifts of Aboriginal science and psychology and sociology that the world needs. (*Writing as Sovereign Act*)

Lucashenko here affirms the power of Indigenous stories told by Indigenous tellers to Indigenous listeners, insisting on the very personal implications of these constellations; she also emphasizes the potential offered by Indigenous knowledge, knowledge that has often been denied as rooted in non-western epistemologies.[118] Heid E. Erdrich concludes that Native North American writers "do not write alone. [They] write into and out of a great telling that brings us stories and songs, that teaches us to look and listen" (27). Both Lucashenko and Erdrich underline that writing stories does not happen in isolation but that writing rises from a shared ancestry and is returned to the general public (as well as the specific communities), strengthening ties and communities, ultimately creating a literary and cultural basis for survival.

As stated above, this dissertation has, while focusing on individual nations within different thematic clusters, universalized a theory of the Native North American historical novel. However, within this generalization, it is essential to give space to specific cultural and national characteristics. As Erdrich, Womack and Lucashenko suggest, different nations, tribes and communities write from different backgrounds and to different peoples. Erdrich writes further that to assert literary sovereignty, it is necessary to write "into a specific cultural, tribal, or national tradition" (14). Similarly, Julie Pelletier argues that "stories can promote a sense of identity and of belonging to a particular group or community" (153). The insistence here is clearly on the specific and particular, a pronounced connection between individual sovereignties and individual histories. While there is much to be said for a pan-North American – or trans-Indigenous – alliance of Indigenous writers, activists and scholars, collectively establishing rights, constitutions and self-determination, there is an equally important need to localize and voice specific national, tribal and cultural demands.[119] These differences should be reflected in a more nuanced and

[118] Lucashenko's argument turns towards climate change, arguing that Indigenous science and expertise will be needed in order to reestablish global safety from extreme weather.
[119] In *We Are All Here to Stay*, Dominic O'Sullivan argues that while "five hundred and sixty-six American Indian and Alaskan Native tribes enjoy nation-to-nation relationships with the US", other groups, among them Native Hawaiians "do not received equivalent recognition" (174). (The nation-to-nation relationship of course functions under the umbrella of the "dependent domestic nation" model

further developed theory of the Native North American historical novel. However, for the moment, the comparative approach of the preceding chapters manages to include a wide variety of historical fictions by Native North American writers; a necessary step before unravelling this unifying categorization and delving in particulars.

It would be crucial to look at the historical novels of a particular nation, as opposed to reading fictions only related to a specific historical event; for example, analyzing Anishinaabe historical novels as a self-contained genre of historical fiction. Analyzing the historical texts of Gerald Vizenor (*Heirs of Columbus, Native Tributes*), Richard Wagamese (*Medicine Walk*), Louise Erdrich (*Tracks, The Birchbark House*), Basil Johnston (*Indian School Days*) or Ruby Slipperjack (*Weesquachak and the Lost Ones*) as Anishinaabe historical rewrites, focusing on a shared culture of stories, mythology and belief would result in a more nuanced reestablishing of Anishinaabe pasts. Likewise, it would be interesting to look at historical text authored specifically by women (Deborah Miranda's (Esselen/Chumash) *Bad Indians* or Lee Maracle's (Sto:lo) *Ravensong*), or those of the LGBTQI+ or Two Spirit community, such as Billy-Ray Court's (Cree) *A History of My Brief Body*, of Joshua Whitehead's (Oji-Cree) *Johnny Appleseed*.

Looking Beyond: Arctic Worlds

Tagaq's 2018 novel *Split Tooth* is described as "[moving] effortlessly between fiction and memoir, myth and reality, poetry and prose", the narrative interspersed with drawings by Jaime Hernandez (Penguin edition book jacket). This collage of poetry, prose, textual fragments and visuals invites the reader to engage with Tagaq's imagination – both following her lead and abandoning it altogether for a more personal experience. In her review, Laura Beard argues that Tagaq "demands an intense engagement" with her storied world, "decoding poems, connecting the drawings to the narrative chapters" and following the teenage narrator navigate friendships, school and bullying in the artic landscape (315).

established in the nineteenth century. While nations within the United States are largely authorized to govern themselves, they remain under the tutelage of the federal government.) O'Sullivan quotes Haunani-Kay Trask; she argues that "because of the overthrow and annexation, Hawaiian control and Hawaiian citizenship were replaced with American control and American citizenship. [Hawaiians] suffered a unilateral redefinition of [their] homeland and . . . people, a displacement and a dispossession in [their own] country" (174). Consequently, O'Sullivan argues, Hawaiian struggles for independence and sovereignty are different to those of the Cherokee or White Earth Nations, and these differences are reflected in their different literature and historical fictions.

Split Tooth tells the world through the eyes of an unnamed female narrator (or narrators), growing up in Cambridge Bay, Nunavut, Canada, in the 1970s and 80s. Based on Tagaq's teenage journals and Inuk mythology, the text is both realist and speculative. Often categorized as autofiction, or fictionalized autobiography, *Split Tooth* can also be read as Native North American historical fiction. Tagaq engages in a project similar to that of Jones and Alexie, offering a personal Bildungsroman that details the trials of growing up during the second half of the twentieth century. *Split Tooth* uses this framework to rewrite and illustrate typical teenage concerns, as well as the continuous violence faced by Native North American women and girls, all within the scope and immediacy of nature.[120]

The Canadian Indian Residential School System

Split Tooth is dedicated to the "Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and survivors of residential schools", suggesting an immediate framework that contextualizes both present crises and untangles the traumas of Canada's past.

Beginning in the 1870s, Canada required all Native children to attend boarding schools. Funded by the Canadian government and administered by the Christian church, these schools remained active into the 1990s. Ostensibly, these schools were aimed at integrating and assimilating Native North American children into the greater Canadian melting pot; Hector Langevin, Public Works Minister of Canada in 1883, argued that "to educate the children properly, we must separate them from their families. Some people may say that this is hard but if we want to civilize them, we must do that" (qtd. in *They Came for the Children* 6). At the same time then Canadian Prime Minster John A. Macdonald, speaking to the House of Commons in 1883, argued that:

> when the school is on the reserve, the child lives with his parents who are savages; he is surrounded by savages, and though he may learn to read and write, his habits and training and mode of thought are Indian. He is simply a savage who can read and write. (6)

The impetus to separate children from their parents, to "civilize" the children and alienate them from their parents in order to create passable Canadian subjects has been retrospectively categorized as a system of abuse and cultural genocide that

[120] The themes of sexuality and nature echo those of Maracle's *Ravensong*, again emphasizing the necessity of analyzing non-male Native North American historical novels on their own.

isolated children, forbade and punished them for speaking their own languages, and habitualized physical, sexual and mental abuse. According to the *National Center for Truth and Reconciliation*, the committee created to collect and archive the history of residential schooling in Canada, approximately 150.000 children were placed in residential schools across Canada. The legacy of these schools is linked to post-traumatic stress, alcoholism and substance abuse, as well as suicide – issues that disproportionately affect First Nations and Alaskan Inuit communities today.[121]

Split Tooth frequently references the realities and effects of residential school, the loss of language being particularly prominent. The narrator recalls that her mother "never speaks to [her] in Inuktitut anymore. Residential schools have beaten the Inuktitut out of this town in the name of progress" (Tagaq 50). This mention of progress points both to the western understanding of progress as moving away from Native North American practices and recalls the ironic tone of Treuer's *Heartbeat at Wounded Knee*, thus suggesting that the narrator is aware of the problematic and laughable tradition of suppressing Native North American culture in the spirit of progress. Interestingly, the narrator is also being taught Innuinaktun at school. This, however, is far from a good experience. She writes that she hates both the language class and her teacher and finds learning the language a chore. She states that she and the other children "cut and paste words from [their] ancestry onto . . . paper-doll versions of [themselves] and everyone feels a bit empty" (50). The disconnect here is pronounced, being taught their native language in school – a fraught and traumatizing environment – instead of at home emphasizes the remove from Inuk culture and practice, instigated by the Canadian government.

However, this section is framed by the Innuinaktun alphabet and an Innuinaktun poem (48,50). While the narrator dislikes her lessons and feels disenfranchised by her teacher, the placement of these two instances of live language emphasize the continuing presence of Innuinaktun in the narrator's (and Tagaq's) world. Despite the efforts of the Canadian government, the Inuk and their language still exist. Like the Cherokee syllabary and language in Glancy's *Pushing the Bear*

[121] The investigation of the residential school system received further impetus in 2021, when more than 1.000 unmarked graves were discovered on the grounds of five former residential schools. One of these schools – Marieval Indian Residential School – was active until as late as 1997. The remains found in these graves are mostly those of Native North American children; communities have retrieved some of the bodies and buried them closer to home. Denial among white and settler-colonizer Canadians however persists, claiming the abuses to be part of history, detached from current realities.

duology, Native North American languages persist, transmitting culture and history to another generation.

The novel culminates with the narrator's suicide attempt, as well as the insistence that her suicide is inherently connected to the legacy of the residential school system, as well as the racist treatment of Native North Americans by the settler-colonial government. The narrator relates:

> I realize only once my spirit is leaving that all those nights my bedroom door got opened taught me how to be numb, to shut off, to go to the Lonely Place. I was forced out of my body. I was forced to pretend I was a shadow. Those nights gave me the pain that has guided me to death. (Tagaq 185)

Coursing through the novel, the narrator recounts countless instances of violence and rape directed towards young women by those engaged in the school system. She recounts that "for years [a teacher] would touch [her] during class", "under tables, sneaking his hand in my pants" (99, 84). While she never directly connects other sexual violence to the school system the trigger seems to always lie within the existence of the settler-colonizer state. Despite the suicide attempt and the trauma of residential school, *Split Tooth* ends on a positive note:

> Shelter me. Shelter me from myself. I am armed and dangerous. Bleeding. …
> Kill me. End this. …
> Love me. There is still a child inside. The shaking rabbit.
> Cleanse me. … I am still working. I survive still. I am stronger now. Worship me. I am boundless. I stood up. I am worthy.
> Start again." (189)

It remains unclear if the narrator dies or if this final paragraph reflects her community's (and that of Native North Americans more generally) survival and impetus to remain in the world. The realization of worthiness as well as the call for help place her in a tradition of survivance that emphasizes collective survival as well as a circular imagining of time through the possibility of starting again.

While there is the suggestion of linear progression – the novel moves from 1975 to 1982 – it is vague. The different styles of narration further unsettle linearity, the drawings referring to earlier or later passages, the poems similarly untethered from a cohesive narrative, repetitive sections referring backwards and forwards. This timeless quality is most pronounced in the reality of arctic summers and winters, seemingly endless months that are either entirely dark or entirely light. The 24-hour

day seems a mere official guideline that does not translate to the realities of the narrator's life. She writes that "everyone's clocks tick sideways. [They] stay up until noon and sleep until 8 pm because it doesn't matter" (Tagaq 129). These long stretches of unending daylight render western concepts of time irrelevant.[122] She states further:

> time has a way of eternally looping us in the same configurations. Like fruit flies, we are unable to register the patterns. Just because we are the crest of the wave does not mean that the ocean does not exist. What has been before will be again. (Tagaq 121)

Reminiscent of Silko's definition of time as "an ocean", as well as Chief Seattle's "waves of the sea", Tagaq here describes the current moment in time as being "the crest of the wave" (*Portillo* 12, *God is Red* 101). She also considers the realities of waves as being part of an ocean, the present moment thus being one among many, and, necessarily dependent on the rest of the ocean. Tagaq also compares humans to fruit flies, suggesting the limited life span of humanity within the eternal continuation of time and history. Growing up in Cambridge Bay, the narrator – both as teenager and as an adult – is very much aware of how nature is changing around her due to human influence. At the beginning of the novel, she states that:

> global warming will release the deeper smells and coax stories out of the permafrost. Who knows what memories lie deep in the ice? Who knows what curses? Earth's whispers released back into the atmosphere can only wreak havoc. (6)

Her realization here is not immediately bound up with existential dread, despite the debilitating effects climate change is having on Native North American communities, rather with wonder and anticipation at the possibilities resting deep within the earth. The suggestion that climate change will bring harm to humanity is further connected with the potential of hidden stories and memories, underlining the importance that the narrator places in stories. Her anticipation is picked up again when she relates Inuit existence on the land. She claims:

[122] Contrary to euroamerican renderings of polar night or midnight sun, the characters in Tagaq's novel are not unsettled by the long stretches of darkness and light; rather the trappings of western time are revealed as odd: the long school days, the adherence to weeks and months presented as unnatural. While the long darkness is described as more potentially violent – people stuck indoors, the cold enticing them to drink more, etc. – it is also a time of renewal and wonder, the narrator becoming pregnant by the northern lights during the polar night. *Split Tooth* unsettles western experiences of day and night, clearly presenting an Inuk relationship to the changing seasons.

> we could be alive now, we could be a thousand years ago, but we cannot be thousand years from now because this land will have changed, drowned, unearthed, burned, and hopefully begun reassembling after we humans are gone. (Tagaq 134)

Again, there is no fear here – also similar to Chief Seattle's observation that "tribe follows tribe, nation follows nation" – but an unerring acceptance of time's passing and rather than the importance of remaining alive as humans, an insistence on the survival of the earth as a whole (qtd. in *God is Red* 101). Time and history exist without humanity, which also suggests that human impositions on nature, such as the division into years, months, hours, and so on, as well as the proclaimed linearity of time, is arbitrary, a system devised and practiced that does not necessarily reflect nature's movement.

Arctic Nature

Nature (or the natural world more generally) has a very large presence in *Split Tooth*. A growing number of Indigenous writers – primarily women and LGBTQI+ - have been turning towards writing nature and eco-eroticism, and so does Tagaq. Nature and the earth itself are immediately necessary to the narrator, her life entwined with the beauty and brutality of nature. Immersed within her surroundings as a child, she tells of other kids dying while playing outside, the weather conditions surprising them. However, the narrator also seeks out nature specifically, immersing herself fully in the other-than-human. At the beginning of the novel, she tells of collecting small amphibians and placing them in her mouth, beneath her tongue, while she cleans the house. She also takes lemmings home in her pockets to then lie on the porch and allow them to nestle in her hair (Tagaq 20). Growing older she has sexual encounters with a fox – both in her dreams and in real life. She meets the fox frequently, performing oral sex on them and absorbing their life force (70). Afterwards she is stronger, more confident, a boy that she has a crush on reciprocating her feelings.

This connection to nature culminates in the narrator's pregnancy; lying on the ice during the winter she watches the northern lights feeling them "descend upon [her] during [her] spirit journey" (Tagaq 113). The lights sear into her body and she:

> melt[s] from agony to ecstasy . . . the slitting continues down my belly, lighting up my liver and excavating my bladder. An impossible column of

> green light simultaneously impales my vagina and anus. My clit explodes and I am split in two from head to toe as the light from my throat joins the light in my womb and begins to make a giant figure eight in my body. (Tagaq 113/14)

While she tells no one of the encounter, it marks her life. The two lives growing inside her as well as the experience herself teaching her "lessons about responsibility, kinship [and] the land" (Beard 317). While the twins both ultimately die (she drowns the boy and the girl dies to absorb his pain), this encounter shows her deep connection to her surroundings and the power inherent in nature.

In her essay "Getting Dirty", Melissa Nelson writes that these erotic confrontations between other-than-human and human allow the human to "step outside of the sense of [oneself] as a contained human being. [One is] no longer a solid center but part of an unending field of entwined energies" (230). For the narrator in *Split Tooth* this is the obvious result, her engagement with the lemmings (detailed in the next paragraph) as well as the fox and the northern lights places her within the larger context of the universe itself, she encompasses and is encompassed by everything around her. Nelson argues further that there is a tradition of Native North American stories exploring the relationships between humans (mostly women) and other-than- humans, that is being brought to the forefront through literature. She writes that while "it is true that these traditional stories often do not end well for the women . . . often they create relationship agreements and covenants for a nation to follow" (238).

Split Tooth relates one of these stories, the history of Sedna, Goddess of the sea, who "came before Christianity" (85). Sedna, like the narrator, becomes pregnant by an other-than-human, her "loneliness and longing" calling forth "the shapeshifter in her lead dog" (86). The two spend "weeks at a time hunting and fornicating together as he transforms into a human. He would return to dog form when they got home. She confessed to consummating with him even when I was in canine form" (86). Sedna's story is an Inuit creation myth that exists in many versions. In Tagaq's iteration, Sedna's father punishes her by drowning her in the sea; her fingers (cut off by her father on her attempt to climb back into the boat) become seals and whales. Sinking to the bottom of the ocean her hair grows and grows, becoming home to many sea animals. When in malicious moods she confuses the animals, keeping them in her hair, only allowing them towards the surface to be hunted if a shaman comes to her and brushes her hair. The connection to the narrator is obvious: the pregnancy

as well as her child-hood game of spreading her hair for the lemmings, trace a clear bond between Sedna and the narrator.

Including this myth, as well as allowing the narrator to reflect the myth, pulls this history into the present while also establishing it (and other stories like it) as reality. If the narrator becomes pregnant by encountering the northern lights, then Sedna's pregnancy through shapeshifter gains another level of realism.[123] Centering Sedna in *Split Tooth* further documents this history for the future, safe keeping it in written form.

Tagaq's novel unsettles settler-colonizer ideas of historical fiction, of fiction in general, the mixing of different genres and voices an effective means of unbalancing the rules of canonic genre expectations. Her further insistence on telling an Inuk story of teenage life in the arctic, focusing on particular Inuk instances of time and space as well as mythology and history, allows *Split Tooth* to reflect and recreate Inuk history in the present. She centers ecological as well as humanist and individual concerns, creating a micro-history (so-to-speak) that recasts relationships between individuals and the community, as well as to the tribe and nation state.

Missing and Murdered: Historical Podcasts

In her dedication Tagaq mentions the "Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls" referencing the large number of Native North American women and girls who go missing every year. In Canada, First Nations and Alaska Inuit women are 3 to 3½ times more likely to be victims of violent crimes than other women, the violence they face often times more severe (Heidinger). *Statistics Canada* estimates that between 1997 and 2000, the rate of homicides for Native North American women was seven times higher than that of other females. After repeated demands by Native activists and others, the Canadian government established the *National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls* in September 2016. Emphasizing the legacies of colonial violence, this inquiry has drawn a direct link between past policies (such as residential schooling) and the present conditions of violence against Native women.

[123] The changeability of Sedna's myth further emphasizes the mutability of history and recording history, every teller presenting a different set of details. Sedna also recalls the stories told by Tallulah in *Riding the Trail*, the potential of different versions of stories strengthening rather than weakening their historical and cultural importance.

The Highway of Tears

While Native North American women face abuse inside their communities, they are also much more likely (due to the colonial dregs of poverty, substance abuse, and generational trauma) to experience violence from whites and other settler-colonizers. The Highway of Tears, a 725-kilometer expanse of road along Highway 16 that stretches from Prince George to Prince Rupert, has been central to the disappearances of First Nations, Inuit and Métis women since the mid-twentieth century. Since 1969 more than 40 women have gone missing while working, staying near, or hitchhiking along this stretch of highway. Most of these cases remain unsolved. Activists argue that the reason for this disregard is rooted in systemic racism as well as continued disregard for sex workers and poor women. Media coverage, as well as police interest, of these cases is limited, the automatic assumption that women who go missing here are living "precarious lifestyles", their lives undervalued due their backgrounds. Formal investigation into the potential patterns of these murders only started in 2005, more than 30 years after the first disappearance. Further feeding the argument of racial disenfranchisement is the fact that the highest profile case is that of Nicole Hoar, a white woman from Red Deer, Alberta who went missing at age 25 while hitchhiking in 2002. Contrary to most other cases, her disappearance received "tremendous national coverage", and the RCMP is still "very much engaged" in solving her case (BC Local News).

Underdiscussed in traditional media, the Highway of Tears has been picked apart by several True Crime podcasts;[124] while attention is paid to counteract appropriating Native North American stories, the podcasters tell of these disappearances and murders at a certain remove. Podcasting itself has become hugely popular since the 2014 success of *This American Life's* "Serial", now one of the most prolific formats of audio broadcasting. Whereas numerous traditional media outlets have seized the podcast as a new way of approaching and selling investigative journalism, podcasting has become particularly relevant for those whose voices are commonly ignored in mainstream media and beyond. The lack of traditional media gatekeepers, and the accessible production and distribution, makes

[124] True Crime podcasts are notoriously white; the Highway of Tears has been discussed on "My Favorite Murder" as well as "The Murder Squad: Jensen and Holes". While both offer insight and accessibility to the crimes committed, they are told through a white lens that necessarily glosses specific racial circumstances.

podcasting an ideal medium for Native North American creators to have their voices heard.

The audio format which relies on storytelling, further seems to work as an extension of traditional storytelling and as a means of reclaiming an official narrative that either ignores or overlooks Native North American stories. Native North American podcasting becomes an instrument not only for telling personal and communal stories but also a way of actively challenging existing narratives – a similar action to that of Native North American historical fiction.

In 2018, Connie Walker (Cree) started a podcast investigating one of the murders associated with the Highway of Tears. Alberta Williams, (Gitanyow Band), a 24-year-old woman, was found murdered near Prince Rupert, in 1989. After receiving an email from former RCMP detective Garry Kerr, Walker began by talking to Alberta's sister and other family members, piecing together Alberta's past, as well as that of Native North Americans along the Highway of Tears more generally. While Walker does not conclusively solve Alberta's murder, she delves deep into the history surrounding the murder, offering 8 episodes that "shed light on the root causes and broader issues surrounding the staggering number of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada" as well as the social and political legacies that have created this crisis (CBC). While journalistic podcasting does not traditionally fill the genre specificities of historical fiction, these kinds of historical podcasts by Native North Americans engage in a very similar recasting of the past: filling the gaps left by the official narrative while also writing new histories that offer the potential for changing the systems that relegate Native North Americans to the sidelines.

Conclusion

This dissertation has provided a first overview of Native North American historical fiction. By defining genre-specific characteristics and elaborating on the limitations inherent in these specificities, the work presented offers a solid foundation for further research. Reading Native North American historical fiction as self-representation makes clear the enormous importance and potential reach of these texts. If writing the past creates productive presents and futures, analyzing, contextualizing and understanding Native North American historical fiction should be central to any debate around Native North American history, particularly as

relating to the national histories of individual tribes, nations or communities, as well as to the national histories of the United States. Insisting on the possibility of literary sovereignty and thus the immense political and cultural potential that these fictions provide, necessitates a closer and even more nuanced appraisal.

This conclusion has offered readings of other texts within the framework presented in the theoretical/methodological section, demonstrating that the theory works to include different formats. While Tagaq's novel fits with the format of textual historical narrative, it too, is obviously different to the texts discussed in the preceding chapters. While focusing on violence and historical rewriting it centers the voices of women and girls, as well as queer women and nature, allowing their stories to speak through prose, poetry and drawing.

Walker's podcast seems to potentially break the framework, moving away from written text and "fictional" approach; however, her effort to story the past into existence while simultaneously carving out space for a Native North American history that has been erased and marginalized works within the definition provided and should thus also be considered at least a Native North American historical text. Particularly as the definitions of what is counted as fact and what is counted as fiction remain fluid. Walker's podcast presents factual information and yet is criticized as fictionalizing, her journalism critiqued by some as overly dramatic and unnecessary, as it considers times past and persons far removed and irrelevant within the larger contemporary narrative.

Native North American historical fiction remaisn a genre onto itself, constantly questioning the established historical narrative as well as how it was established. By renegotiating existing histories, it overcomes the story of Native disappearance – revealing it precisely for what it is: a powerful, settler-colonizer story. By writing new Native pasts, Native North American writers enact survivance and literary sovereignty, building presence within northern America.

Ultimately, the invitation remains to use and refine the definitions and frameworks provided here and work within them to analyze more Native North American historical fictions and read these side by side with existing histories, as histories of their own, as reclaimings of a fractured past, as additions, as factual, as fictional, as explorations of Native North American survivance and sovereignty. Hopefully, the analyses provided here create an impetus for further research and

refinement, to write Native North American history that draws on all manners of texts and approaches an even more comprehensive framework.

Appendix: Native North American Historical Novels (A Possible Selection)

Alexie, Robert Arthur. *Porcupines and China Dolls*. Theytus, 2003.

Alexie, Sherman. *Flight*. New York: Grove Press, 2007.

Armstrong, Jeannette. *Slash*. Theytus, 1985.

Bartleman, James. *As Long as the Rivers Flow*. Vintage, 2011.

Broker, Ignatia. *Night Flying Woman: An Ojibway Narrative*. Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1983.

Bruchac, Joseph. *Code Talker*. Speak, 2006.

Court, Billy-Ray. *A History of My Brief Body*. Two Dollar Radio, 2020.

Earling, Debra Magpie. *Perma Red*. Blue Hen Trade, 2003.

Erdrich, Louise. *The Birchbark House*. Hyperion, 2002.

---. *Future Home of the Living God*. HarperCollins, 2017.

---. *The Game of Silence*. HarperCollins, 2006.

---. *The Plague of Doves*. Harper Perennial, 2009.

---. *The Porcupine Year*. HarperCollins, 2010.

---. *Tracks*. Harper Perennial, 2010.

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Glancy, Diane. *Pushing the Bear: A Novel of the Trail of Tears*. Harvest Books, 1996.

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Hausman, Blake M. *Riding the Trail of Tears*. University of Nebraska, 2011.

Highway, Tomson. *Kiss of the Fur Queen*. Anchor Canada, 1999.

Jones, Stephen Graham. *Growing Up Dead in Texas*. MP Publishing, 2012.

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King, Thomas. *Green Grass, Running Water*. Houghton Mifflin, 1993.

Maracle, Lee. *Ravensong*. Press Gang Publishers, 1993.

Miranda, Deborah A. *Bad Indians. A Tribal Memoir*. Heyday, 2013.

Morin, Tara Lee. *As I Remember it*. Theytus, 2013.

Qitsualik-Tinsley, Sean. *Skraelings. Clashes in the Old Arctic*. Inhabit Media, 2015.

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Silko, Leslie Marmon. *Almanac of the Dead*. Penguin Books, 1992.

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Slipperjack, Ruby. *Weesquachak and the Lost Ones*. Theytus, 2005.

Taylor, Drew Hayden. *The Night Wanderer: A Native Gothic Novel*. Annick Press, 2007.

Tingle, Tim. *House of Purple Cedar*. Cinco Puntos Press, 2016.

Treuer, David. *The Translation of Dr. Apelles*. Vintage, 2008.

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Vizenor, Gerald. *Blue Ravens. Historical Novel*. Wesleyan University Press, 2014

---. *The Heirs of Columbus*. Wesleyan, 1991.

---. *Native Tributes. Historical Novel*, Wesleyan, 2019.

Wagamese, Richard. *Medicine Walk*. McClelland & Stewart, 2014.

Whitehead, Joshua. *Johnny Appleseed*. Arsenal Pulp Press, 2018.

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