Mapping out Native American Space in Contemporary Anishinaabe Literature

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Abstract

The literary production of contemporary Anishinaabe writers Louise Erdrich, David Treuer and Gerald Vizenor outline imaginary geographies based in Northern Dakota and Minnesota that also branch out towards transnational spaces. By reading contemporary Anishinaabe fiction as literary cartography, this thesis reveals the complex maps of interaction that connect reservation spaces with a much wider range of environments by both integrating and expanding upon Indigenous histories of mobility to include border-crossings and international exchanges. The networks that emerge suggest the possibility of a more expansive Native space that nevertheless asserts Anishinaabe self-determination and sovereignty. This project aims to answer Lisa Brooks's question "What kind of map emerges [...] when the texts of Anglo-American history and literature are participants in Native space rather than the center of the story?" (*The Common Pot*) by using literary cartography from a tribally-centred perspective and relying on Indigenous methodologies to let meaning emerge from the texts themselves.

The thesis is structured geographically and temporally starting, in the introduction, with the tribe's western migration in the mid-nineteenth century to outline the mobile practices of the Anishinaabe. Chapter one focuses on the reservation to map out space dynamically by revealing the many pathways that cross its boundaries and the mobile relationship of characters with the land. In chapter two, urban spaces are reclaimed as part of an Indigenous tradition of movement; the novels use artwork or translation as metaphors for the ties between urban characters and the reservation to establish Indigenous networks that reach into the cities. Chapter three offers a hemispheric reading of the primary texts, explores transatlantic connections, and looks at global networks in order to show how transnational encounters can simultaneously acknowledge the complexity of settler histories and intercultural exchanges while maintaining an Indigenous lens through which wide-ranging spaces are apprehended. Chapter four looks at speculative

fiction that explores different possibilities for citizenship and land-based sovereignty to envision territorial futurities for Anishinaabe people. Finally, the Coda discusses digitised environments that repeat traumas inherited from the past even as they attempt to create different outcomes for the future. Together, these readings constitute a dynamic map of networks that reclaim a wide variety of spaces as Native through a sovereign aesthetic that is fundamentally Anishinaabe.

Table of contents

Acknowledgments....6
INTRODUCTION: TRIBAL JOURNEYS....7
Theoretical framework....10
Methodology....18
Dynamics of space in Louise Erdrich's Young Adult fiction....20
Chapter overview....37
CHAPTER ONE: THE RESERVATION....41
Theoretical Framework....45
Tracks....54
Little....63
The Trickster of Liberty and Hotline Healers....82
Conclusion....93
CHAPTER TWO: URBAN NETWORKS....94
Theoretical Framework....94
The Antelope Wife....114
The Translation of Dr Apelles....128
Shrouds of White Earth....136
Conclusion....150
CHAPTER THREE: TRANSNATIONAL INDIGENEITY....151
Hemispheric Americas....156
Books and Islands....156
Prudence....163
Transatlantic Connections....170
Blue Ravens....170
The Crown of Columbus....188
Global Networks....197
Griever....197
Conclusion....206
CHAPTER FOUR: BEYOND BOUNDARIES....207
Theoretical framework....208

Future Home of the Living God....215
Reproductive Futures....217
Political Futures....227
The Heirs of Columbus....234
Reverse trajectories....235
Stories in the blood and survival genes....238
Non-territorial sovereignty and post-citizenship....241
Conclusion....247
CODA: DIGITAL WORLDS....249
Memory....251
Broken temporalities....253
Riding the Trail of Tears....255
Appendix: Maps....260
Works Cited....263

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INTRODUCTION: TRIBAL JOURNEYS

Place and space have been central elements in Native American writing and criticism since the beginning of the so-called renaissance in Native writing, prompted by the publication of N. Scott Momaday's novel *House Made of Dawn* in 1969. Alienation and belonging, reservation life and urban spaces, community and natural environments are typically compared and contrasted in the attempt to define the forms taken by Native space and their significance. In a settler-colonial context that has imposed a legacy of boundaries drawn between territories and nations, individual ownership of the land, and displacement of Native populations, definitions of space play a crucial role in the dispossession of Native space as well as its reclamation by Native nations. Indigenous ontologies which present alternatives to colonial views of space allow a specific set of relationships between people and place to be articulated (Brooks 2008, Basso 1996, L. Simpson 2011) and explored in literature, poetry, and non-fiction. This is what motivates Paula Gunn Allen to argue that border-crossing is inherent to Indigenous traditions:

> [A]s our traditions have always been about liminality, about voyages between this world and many other realms of being, perhaps crossing boundaries is the first and foremost basis of our tradition and the key to human freedom and its necessary governmental accomplice, democracy. Certainly, as both our literature and lives attest, that's how it seems to be. (*Off the Reservation* 12)

The fiction of Louise Erdrich, Gerald Vizenor and David Treuer takes part in this contemporary literary tradition by crossing boundaries and reclaiming the spaces beyond them. This introduction shows that mobility is an intrinsic part of the Anishinaabe tradition and that space is a dynamic entity mapped out in its interaction with the people moving through it.

Vizenor, Erdrich and Treuer represent three generations of Anishinaabe writers who have achieved both commercial and critical success. At the time of writing, Vizenor is eighty-five years old; Erdrich is sixty-five, and Treuer fourty-nine. Gerald Vizenor's first long poem, *The Old Park Sleepers*, was published in 1961 and his first novel, *Darkness in Saint Louis Bearheart,* in 1978, while Louise Erdrich's *Love Medicine* and *Jacklight* both came out in 1984. David Treuer's first novel *Little* was published in 1995. While they share a vision of expansion for Anishinaabe literature, having maintained ties to specific reservation communities in both their lives and work, each of them stretches possibilities in a particular way in their fiction, and each differs in the strategies employed to fulfil this project. Although all three of them base much of their work in Northern Minnesota and North Dakota, the landscapes their fiction inhabits depict different topographies–each is based on a specific reservation–albeit within a unified territory.

Gerald Vizenor's academic and creative work challenge both critical and geographical boundaries. He has written extensively as a journalist, critic, poet and novelist, authoring over twenty books. Born in Minnesota, Vizenor grew up in Minneapolis and is a member of the White Earth Band of Ojibwe, the largest of the six bands that make up the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe (MCT). Most of his fictional characters come from the White Earth Reservation and maintain firm ties to the place even as they wander across not only the North American continent but Europe and Asia. Kimberley Bleaser emphasises the "sense of sovereignty in the transmotion of story" that "permeates" Vizenor's work (*Centering Anishinaabeg Stories* 244-245). Indeed, despite the wild imagination that has led him to push up against the categories often used to define Native American fiction, Vizenor keeps placing self-determination and sovereignty at the centre of his work.

A celebrated and prolific writer, Louise Erdrich has successfully published in a wide array of genres such as short stories, novels, poetry, personal essays and non-fiction. Born in Minnesota, she is enrolled in the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa

Indians in northern North Dakota. The considerable body of work she has produced takes places in a variety of settings, most notably a fictional reservation in North Dakota and the cities of the area, but also the southern Great Lakes region and New Hampshire. Spanning across the genres of poetry, fiction and memoir, as well as across North America, she describes Anishinaabe communities and the places where they live while also reaffirming that tradition is capable of change. Erdrich's Native space draws from an ancestral tradition of mobility in order to define reservation space before breaking out of the boundaries encircling it in order to spread out towards urban communities and other places not typically associated with Indigeneity.

David Treuer has aimed to rewrite Native experience on the reservation and in urban environments by looking at particular moments in Native American history such as reservation politics, relocation, and history, as well as encouraging a shift in critical readings of Native texts. His fiction has tackled life on the reservation with his first novel *Little* (1995), told the story of urban Natives in *The Hiawatha* (1999) and *The Translation of Dr Apelles* (2006), and explored transnational themes in *Prudence* (2015). His critical work *Native American Fiction: A User's Manual*, came out in 2006 and argued in favour of a shift from cultural readings of Native texts as artefacts to a more literary and aesthetic approach. Rejecting the notions that Native American literature derives from "culturally-generated forms of storytelling" (195); that it represents the actual experience of Native Americans (196); and that its cultural elements constitute "a tribally inflected, ancient form of 'postmodern' discourse" (196), he questions whether there is such a thing as Native American literature (198). David Treuer has also authored two nonfiction books: *Rez Life* (2012) and *The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee* (2019), which expand his work on the reservation and historical perspectives. He is a member of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe in Northern Minnesota (also MCT), approximately ninety miles east of White Earth.

In the scope of this work, Anishinaabe space is, in the strictest sense, a

literal geographical and political territory comprised of many reservations in Minnesota and North Dakota. These two states are the ones from which the three writers under study originally come, although the Anishinaabeg as a whole inhabit a much wider region which crosses over the international border to Canada. This land base is the centre of political sovereignty as it is most widely understood, but is not self-contained. Leanne Simpson argues that although "Nishnaabeg sovereignty […] was also territorial […] the boundaries around that land were much more fluid than that of modern states" (*Dancing on Our Turtle's Back* 89) and also that culture and lifeways are important factors in the definition of Nishnaabeg territory. Therefore, a single-minded focus on land-based rights at the expense of wider political sovereignty represents a risk for Indigenous nations, which define themselves very differently from contemporary settler concepts of governmental structures. In contemporary literature, the creative endeavour to extend Native space beyond the prescribed boundaries of individual tribal nations constitutes an extension of Anishinaabe space; a reclaiming act which appropriates a much wider space by acknowledging Indigenous ties to the land, which are mobile themselves.

Theoretical framework

Mobility is an integral part of Anishinaabe history and, as Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair claims, "The idea that Anishinaabeg people have always been on the move, on their own imaginative and narrative terms, is a sovereign concept" (*Stories Through Theories* 148). Indeed, movement has defined both spatial relations and the records of Anishinaabe history. The copy of an old birchbark scroll, which represents a map of the journey leading the tribe from the St. Lawrence region to the Great Lakes, where the Anishinaabeg received the Mide religion–described by Sinclair as the "path of life" or "map of life" (147), depicts the journey as evolving from a cosmographical representation of their place of departure to a roughly topographical depiction of the terrain surrounding the place

of their arrival, thus showing how migration has been integrated into their cosmology (Woodward and Lewis 83). Indeed, transmitted from generation to generation by the oral tradition, the prophecies of "The Seven Fires of the Anishinaabeg" recommended that the tribe should move west and follow the migis shell progressively until reaching the land where food grows on water (Benton-Banai *The Mishomis Book* 100), now interpreted as standing for the lakes where wild rice is harvested. Before this, the tribe lived on the Atlantic coast, until migration started around fifteen hundred years ago, spreading over several centuries. The Anishinaabeg traveled slowly, in small bands, along waterways. The final "stopping place" of this westward movement is called Madeline Island (102). Until the creation of reservations, the Anishinaabe also followed a seasonal cycle with different camps throughout the year (sugar camp, summer camp, berry camp, and winter camp). The tribe's use of territory was thus very different from the one imposed by the reservation era. By the seventeenth century, they were well established in the Great Lakes region (Anton Treuer 10-11). The Anishinaabeg also have a long history of mobility and exchange as major actors in the fur trade where they worked closely with French traders and as intermediaries with the Dakota. Later, they became allies of the French in the wars against the British. In addition to disrupting traditional lifeways, the land cession treaties of the nineteenth century effectively removed the tribe's access to most economic resources. The Dawes Act of 1887, which allotted parcels to Native families and opened up reservation land for white farmers, promoted a paternalistic strategy to impose settler models of agriculture that simultaneously enforced the notion of private property. However, by the time the Allotment Act came into effect, the political context had changed. Instead of considering tribal land as private property, officials were starting to view it as public domain, and not only reassigned unallotted land to white farmers without purchasing it from the tribe but also introduced new rules for leasing land to Natives, contradicting the original Dawes Act in order to facilitate the process of passing allotment land on to white

workers. Due to a high demand for farmland and increasing pressure to expand settlements, Native land was becoming increasingly profitable (Hoxie 158). Thus, when the policy ended in 1934, Anishinaabe reservations in Minnesota had lost over 90 percent of their land (Anton Treuer 37). The change brought about by this drastic reduction of Anishinaabe land contrasted sharply with the tribe's history of mobility and freedom to roam large territories. In spite of John Collier's Reorganization Act, which enabled the constitution of tribal governments in 1934, questions related to tribal self-determination and sovereignty remain among the most pressing issues in contemporary Native American politics. When it comes to the negotiation of spatial boundaries, the long history of American colonial settler imposition still affects contemporary realities, as Kevin Bruyneel points out:

> [T]he imposition of American colonial rule and the indigenous struggle against it constitute a conflict over boundaries, a conflict that has defined U.S.-indigenous relations since the time of the American Civil War. The imposition of colonial rule denotes the effort of the United States to narrowly bound indigenous political status in space and time, seeking to limit the ability of indigenous people to define their own identity and develop economically and politically on their own terms. (*The Third Space* xvii)

This bounding of Indigenous politics in space and time tends to inscribe Native people within an idealized pre-colonial past that excludes the possibility of evolving and keeps them in the pre-determined space of the reservation, thus denying the extensive tradition of mobility and adaptation which many tribes have long practiced. While mobility is integral to many Indigenous traditions, the idea that tribes are rooted in a specific place at the expense of exchange with external agents is a colonial misconception. The articulation of mobile Indigenous spatial practices, then, challenges Western notions of boundary enforcement and participates in tribal sovereignty. To clarify, this call for the recognition of mobility does not regard tribal nations as merely nomadic in order to justify dispossession

of their landbase, either. Citing Ashcroft's *Postcolonial Transformation*, Bruyneel writes that Western conceptions of binaries "feed the habit of 'enclosure' in order to make sense of a contingent world," that boundaries are thus "crucial because they explicitly defer to the 'will to truth' which dominates Western discourse," and explains that "[t]his is accomplished by dividing the world into bounded entities that can be easily known and measured against one another" (7). Such would be the case, for instance, with the distinction between "on reservation" or "off reservation" spaces, a binary imposed by colonial rule that produces "bounded entities." In *Routes*, James Clifford complicates the notion of rootedness by outlining a dynamic of "traveling-in-dwelling, dwelling-in-traveling" (36). In a later article on the Kanaks of New Caledonia who commute between rural Indigenous villages and a work life situated in or around the capital city, he asks how indigeneity is "both rooted in and routed through particular places" ("Indigenous Articulations" 469), thereby blurring the line between movement and stability. Further, what Gerald Vizenor calls "transmotion" defies not only the notion of fixity but also the assumption that the rights of Native people are restricted to reservation land:

> Clearly, the notion of sovereignty must embrace more than mere reservation territory. Sovereignty as transmotion is tacit and visionary; these notions and other theories of sovereignty are critical in the consideration of native rights, and the conservation of those rights outside of reservations, and in urban areas. (*Fugitive Poses* 190)

Vizenor claims that "[s]overeignty as transmotion is visionary" (189), thus prompting readers to push the boundaries of what sovereignty can signify beyond the prescriptions of constitutional policies, as he does in his own work. Transmotion goes further than sovereignty because it is personal, not concerned with spatial limitations, nor fixed in time. Vizenor states that "[t]he presence of natives on this continent is obvious, a natural right of motion, or transmotion, and continuous sovereignty" (181), but also indicates that

transmotion is "not territorial" (182). His view of sovereignty, therefore, is not static and cannot be restricted to reservation land or to a specific community but, rather, is an inherent quality of Native Americans by right of their continued presence. By not limiting sovereignty to pre-defined territories, transmotion allows mobility to remain an integral part of self-determination and liberates the concept of sovereignty from territorial limitations.

However, the wider discussion on sovereignty and self-determination tends to focus on the right of access to resources on reservation land, rather than attempt to envision alternatives that would take mobility into consideration. Indeed, Native nations are often deprived of the right to control their own resources on tribal territories, be it in the purpose of preventing the depredation of their environment or to attain economic stability. As Anton Treuer points out, "the U.S. government has often been reluctant to allow the tribe to share management of the natural resources on the reservation or any of the financial advantages" (35). The financial dependency thus created makes sovereignty a high priority for tribes that are still denied access to basic resources. This situation is evolving and, while the general socioeconomic status of Native Americans remains low, Bruyneel shows that the progressive return to self-governance since the 1970s has successfully increased per capita income, created employment, and reduced poverty on many reservations, including for non-gaming tribes. Paradoxically however, this achievement does not necessarily help promote tribal political sovereignty in U.S. politics:

> [T]he quantifiable success of the self-determination policy has not defused America's colonial ambivalence about U.S. Indian policy. Rather, such success seems to provoke this ambivalence in ways that could lead toward policies that favor the express imposition of colonial rule on indigenous political life if American political actors deem tribal sovereignty to have gone too far in some way. (176)

Thus, successful self-governance brings its own dangers since Native political agency can

be perceived as threatening and therefore undesirable. In spite of this, "indigenous tribes claim that their sovereignty is an inherent, aboriginal right, and thus not 'given' to them by the federal government" (174), and will not be deterred by the "colonial ambivalence" manifested by the U.S. government but will maintain the premise that they are sovereign and have a right to self-determination until these rights are acknowledged.

The notion of tribal sovereignty is also employed to reclaim cultural and intellectual Indigenous traditions, and as such it has strongly influenced Native American literary criticism. In his 1999 landmark book, *Red on Red*, Craig S. Womack expressed "the conviction that Native literature, and the criticism that surrounds it, needs to see more attention devoted to tribally specific concerns" (1). He thus situates the long history of Native literature that preceded the time of contact at the core of American literature. In his analysis, Womack vows to "concentrate on the idea that Native literary aesthetics must be politicized and that autonomy, self-determination, and sovereignty serve as useful literary concepts," and explains that "literature has something to add to the arena of Native political struggle (11). Published in 2006, *American Indian Literary Nationalism* also has the purpose of encouraging scholars to ground criticism in tribal intellectual traditions rather than systematically draw from western theory. One of the premises of literary nationalism is that Indigenous writing evolved according to its own cultural codes, so that the language tools of the coloniser, instead of disrupting tradition, were incorporated into a long-established culture of writing. Louise Erdrich explains that in Ojibwe, the words for book and rock painting are almost identical (*Books and Islands* 5), thus establishing a continuity between traditional pictorial art and contemporary literary works. In *The Common Pot: The Recovery of Native Space in the Northeast*, Lisa Brooks adds that in the Abenaki language, which is close to Anishinaabemowin, the root word *awigha-* signifies draw, write, and map, so that *awikhigan*, which "originally described birchbark messages, maps, and scrolls, came to encompass books and letters" (xxi). From the pictographic traditions of birchbark scrolls

and wampum belts to textual literacy, the purpose of Indigenous writing is to express the relationship of cooperation and interdependence that unites all the beings who share Native space, or what the author calls "the common pot" (3), with the implication that writing is inherently spatial:

> *Awikhiganak* [birchbark scrolls] and wampum were facets of an indigenous writing system that was based on 'cartographic principles'. The graphic symbols used in both forms represented the relationships between people, between places, between humans and non-humans, between the waterways that joined them […] the writing that came from Europe was incorporated into this spatialized system. (12-13, italics in the original)

Spatial by nature, writing emerges out of interaction with the land. Before contact, the forests inhabited by hunters were "full of marks and signs" left by animals, in which the hunters themselves took part: "hunters left family blaze marks on trees to avoid competition within a watershed and left *awikhiganak* to inform other family members where the good hunting was or what space they might cover in their journey" (49, italics in the original). Thus, an Indigenous writing tradition involves the negotiation of complex relationships between beings sharing the same space. James Cox argues that Brooks's work "establishes a literary genealogy that begins with the codices" (*The Red Land to the South* 194), and that this new "literary history [...] challenge[s] the dominance of the Native American renaissance in American Indian literary studies" (195) by emphasising a much longer, continuous tradition of textual production. Further, the land itself constitutes a form of text. In her travel memoir *Books and Islands in Ojibwe Country* (2003), Louise Erdrich constantly makes links between the islands featuring rock paintings drawn by her ancestors and the books which are so central to her own life: "these islands, which I long to read, are books in themselves" (3). If islands are texts, then they are deciphered by subjects moving through the land, which is what Brooks suggests in one of her chapter subtitles: "The

Writing, the Walking, and the Reading Are the Same Thing" (xliv). Writing thus becomes a spatialized system of marking, like a trail which can later be read by another subject following the tracks. This movement, or walking, becomes inherent to the act of reading, thus likening texts to maps as well as to the land itself. Furthermore, Erdrich argues that ojibwemowin itself emerges from the land:

> [T]he language […] is adapted to the land as no other language can possibly be. Its philosophy is bound up with the northern earth, lakes, rivers, forests, and plains. Its origins pertain to the animals and their particular habits, to the shades of meaning in the very placement of stones […] it is a language that most directly reflects a human involvement with the spirit of the land itself. (85)

Like Brooks, she perceives writing as an ongoing expression of "human involvement", an interaction which expresses relationship. Not only writing, but language itself becomes spatialized. In this framework, books constitute a form of mapping, a lens through which places come to be read (214) or, as Lisa Brooks puts it, "The Map and the Book Are the Same Thing" (*The Common Pot* xx). Thus, a work of fiction can be perceived as a map which uses language in order to express the relationship between people and the land in which they live. According to Joni Adamson, Native American writers are engaged in the process of transforming English into "a land-based language that would break up the hard, dichotomous foundation of English and infuse it with the moral force of tribal perspectives [...]" (*American Indian Literature, Environmental Justice, and Ecocriticism* 117). If writing evolves from mapping, thus aligning itself with a time-honoured tradition and asserting a Native ontology, contemporary fiction writers such as Louise Erdrich can be reframed as mappers of Native space. Indeed, by centering on Indigenous space, fiction provides a tentative answer to the questions asked by Lisa Brooks:

> What does the historical landscape look like when viewed through the networks of waterways and kinship in the northeast, with Europe and its colonies on the periphery? What happens when the

> texts of Anglo-American history and literature are participants in Native space rather than the center of the story? What kind of map emerges? (xxxv)

The mapping that occurs in the work of contemporary Anishinaabeg writers decentralizes Western conceptions of space in order to express an Indigenous ontology by describing characters moving freely through Native space. It also transforms the cultural practice of map-making into a literary form that allows the territory to be re-appropriated through Indigenous ways of knowing.

Methodology

As Linda Tuhiwai Smith argues in *Decolonizing Methodologies*, research "is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism" (1) and needs to be reclaimed by Indigenous peoples to develop new methodologies (185). Focusing on Maori concerns, her work calls for community-centred approaches to research in which Indigenous people engage in "*re*writing and *re*righting" their "position in history" (29, italics in the original). Such a view echoes that of Womack in *Red on Red* as well as Weaver, Womack and Warrior in *American Indian Literary Nationalism*, already mentioned above, in their call for tribal-specific studies. Zoe Todd's "An Indigenous Feminist's Take on the Ontological Turn: 'Ontology' Is Just Another Word for Colonialism" likewise signals the need to reference Indigenous scholars as "thinkers in their own right, not just disembodied representatives of an amorphous Indigeneity that serves European intellectual or political purposes" (7). Her experience at conferences has shown her that too often, "to be seen as credible in the European academy, Indigenous thought must be filtered through white intermediaries" (11), thus revealing the risk of using western philosophy to validate Indigenous scholarship. The danger is that by "cherry-picking parts of Indigenous thought […] *without engaging directly in (or unambiguously acknowledging) the political situation, agency, legal orders and relationality of*

both Indigenous people and scholars, we immediately become complicit in colonial violence" (18, italics in the original). Especially as a white western scholar, decentering the ubiquity of western criticism in order to open up space for a more Indigenous-informed approach has been a crucial part of my research process.

Stories Through Theories, Theories through Stories engages with stories as ways to engage with theories beyond mere critique (6), as a way of engaging with the sovereign concerns of tribal Nations. Reflecting on Womack's contribution, co-editor Gordon Henry Jr. remarks that "Given the existence of a Native literary school and sovereignty defined from within, there is no compelling reason for external readings of Native texts through Euro-American theory" (14). However, "readings by Native critics should not abandon theory, even if tribal story or performance becomes the privileged mode or method for undermining, or recasting, theoretical perspectives and methods" (15). Offering stories themselves as containing their own methodology, Henry points out that "stories often resist cultural isolation and fixed fields of context" (18), thus opening themselves up to a range of approaches. A dialectic between stories and experience, and between theory and lifeways, lays down new terrain for interpretation: "Perhaps stories authenticate theory in traces of narrative, as well; just as abstract discourse fails, or falls into gaps, with an undisclosed purpose. Or perhaps theory authenticates experience, as a kind of abstract meta-speak [...]" (19). This thesis therefore looks to works of fiction for cues leading to interpretations that centre on sovereignty and Native American agency, only opening up to Indigenous-oriented Western theory to expand on areas where Indigenous theory is less available at the time of writing. Edited by Jill Doerfler, Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair, and Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiik Stark, *Centering Anishinaabeg Studies* proposes that stories themselves provide a methodology. Contributor John Borrows describes Anishinaabeg stories as "roots" that embody "ideas and systems," stating that "stories can serve as a foundation and framework for the field of Anishinaabeg Studies, providing both a

methodological and theoretical approach" (xii). The editors further write that "stories were operating as different entryways, foundations, beginning points–as centers–to Anishinaabeg Studies" (xvi). *Centering Anishinaabeg Studies* thus warn against the imposition of an authoritative interpretive framework external to the stories (Garroutte and Westcott 62). As Leanne Betasamosake Simpson and Edna Manitowabi also remind us, "Indigenous theory seeks to dismantle colonialism" while validating Anishinaabeg resurgence (279-280). The fact that stories themselves lead the discussion in this thesis also motivates the decision to offer literary readings in every section, from the introduction to the coda, and to spread the theoretical framework across chapters, in dialogue with literary works.

Dynamics of space in Louise Erdrich's Young Adult fiction

Erdrich's five book young adult fiction saga, which began with *The Birchbark House* (1999), contrasts mobility and stasis as a band of Anishinaabe leaves the land where they had lived for generations in order to move west in the mid-nineteenth century. In the first three novels of her saga, Erdrich explores the migration of her ancestors from the south shores of Lake Superior to Lake of the Woods in northern Minnesota. When the band of Anishinaabe is displaced and learns to inhabit previously foreign territories, the forms taken by mobility are revisited and the relationship to place is layered with meaning through stories, dreams, and visions. The land is also represented dynamically, as a lived space, in the mapping of the journey. Erdrich's fictional exploration of her tribe's past thus gives shape to a profound interaction between the people and the land that is not dependent upon staying in one place over generations but instead requires the capacity to evolve, imagine, and re-create belonging. This analysis presents the movements of the Anishinaabe tribe based on Erdrich's young adult fiction in order to show that mobility has historically been part of the tribe's relationship to the land. It also lays the ground for a closer examination of the fictional mapping of place. The remainder of this introduction

thus sets up the historical context of spatial practices for the Anishinaabeg before the establishment of reservations by delineating the mobility that used to characterise the people's relationship to place. Using Louise Erdrich's young adult fiction, it shows the western migration of the Anishinaabeg which, from its prophetic origin, also became the product of settler expansionism by putting pressure on tribal territories from the eastern coast westward. The novels emphasise the cyclical seasonal migration that is disrupted and finds new iterations further west. A map drawn by the author, which outlines territories by linking them to the storyline, accompanies the story of Omakayas and relates both itineraries and marks referring to specific events in the narrative, but also the layering of space, or depth, which occurs through the dreams and visions that guide the families and refer back to the wider cosmological dimension of the migration, the Prophecy of the Seven Fires. Thus, this analysis sets up the stage theoretically by first showing that mobility is a traditional spatial practice that is very much antithetical to the establishment of reservations, and then that relationship to the land and the mapping of it are deeply enmeshed in story-making, dreams and vision, in addition to survival and the practicalities of life. It also serves to counter the colonial settler narrative of ownership over a land that was seen as unoccuppied and a waste of resources, as well as introducing mapping practices, which will be developed in chapter one.

In *The Birchbark House* (1999) and its sequels, *The Game of Silence* (2006) and *The Porcupine Year* (2008), community is the geographical focal point of the narrative (the series was expanded by *Chickadee* in 2012 and *Makoons* in 2016). *The Birchbark House* opens up with Omakayas, the only survivor of a band of Ojibwe decimated by smallpox, as she is rescued from an island as a baby and adopted by a new tribal family. Seven years later, a harsh winter forces her family to face sickness again, followed by a famine which leads to the death of many in the village. The threats engendered by settler colonialism intensify in *The Game of Silence,* the second book of the series. In this novel, a group of Anishinaabeg

arrive in Omakayas's village in dire condition, having been displaced by white settlers, and the community resolves to leave their land and travel westward. The third novel in the series, *The Porcupine Year*, describes the band's journey to northern Minnesota, where they hope to reunite with their relatives. These three texts thus provide a reflection on space and the ways in which it was traditionally used by the tribe, as well as the anticipated effects of displacement. Establishing the geography of a community at the time of contact within an Indigenous framework is an act of resistance that reclaims agency. But far from perpetuating the conservative notion of an undefiled, self-contained community, the author takes into consideration constant contact and exchange with other clans and tribes. Her narrative aims to reestablish a continuity that heals the disruptive effects of displacement undergone by her mid-nineteenth century ancestors. Erdrich's refusal to engage overtly with settlers' concerns, then, underlines Anishinaabe agency over their destinies, thus sustaining the notion of sovereignty in a covert yet powerful way. According to Catherine Rainwater, who addresses the relationship between human and non-human environments in "Louise Erdrich's Storied Universe," the writer "underscores the Eurocentric propensity for atomization, for making and defending artificial boundaries. This habit of mind alienates Indians, with their holistic worldview distinguished by complex conceptions of relationship, and by malleable ontological demarcations" (153). By transcending geographical and conceptual boundaries in these three novels, Erdrich's narrative depiction of space participates in the construction of an ontological framework that refuses to yield to Eurocentric definitions of place. Questions related to the occupation of space, of course, are central to colonialism, especially in regards to mobility and stasis. For instance, in the opening scene of *The Birchbark House*, fur traders arrive by canoe on an island where virtually all the native occupants are dead, and the traders' access to mobility is brought into sharp contrast with the inert bodies of the Native population. There is a symmetry between this scene and the story of displacement addressed by the three novels in that like the main

protagonist, a girl called Omakayas, the clan is found to occupy a territory that is annexed by settlers, becomes increasingly weak, and is finally forced to leave familiar space for foreign lands. Displacement and containment tend to be the spatial consequences of colonialism, given that they correspond to a view of history which situates Native peoples in space and time by inscribing them within an idealised past while their present is perceived to be spatially contained in the federal reservation. To acknowledge historical movement and an Indigenous tradition of travel challenges this view. In reference to Clifford's definition of indigeneity as "both rooted in and routed through particular places" ("Indigenous Articulations" 469), in my reading of Erdrich's young adult fiction, I show that these two dimensions, "rooted in" and "routed through" place, can be said to blend as the Anishinaabeg move from camp to camp according to their seasonal activities. However, while Clifford's analysis remains largely horizontal by examining movements that occur at the surface, or on the land, this analysis also explores depth to show that space is layered with meaning. By representing the journey of a band of Anishinaabeg who are forced to abandon their land and migrate westward, this saga also presents a historically-informed map of the territory that had long been inhabited by the tribe, as well as the land through which its members later traveled by following waterways. Since the story is told through an Anishinaabe lens, it echoes the question asked by Lisa Brooks in *The Common Pot*: "What kind of map emerges?" when the "networks of waterways and kinship" are placed at the centre "with Europe and its colonies on the periphery" (xxxv). As Brooks reminds us, writing is "instrumental" and plays a crucial role "in the rememberment of a fragmented world" (xxii). The text thus becomes a map, just as the map is intrinsically textual. In her young adult fiction, Erdrich's narrative takes place at a time when the Anishinaabeg had only recently come into direct contact with colonial influences, which enables her to sustain an Indigenous point of view that subtly draws attention to pre-colonial sovereignty. In her saga, several spatial dimensions are often located in the same

place, thus rendering space a dynamic and shifting entity. By blending time with space, by conveying the many dimensions of place through vision and storytelling, and by refusing to conform to the fixed bounds of geography, the author outlines a dynamic view of space. In Erdrich's work, places can be dreamed or told in stories and they are shared with other living beings as well as spirits, all of which invalidates overtly anthropocentric or materialistic stances. Unlike "land," which can be defined as inclusive of depth as well as horizontality, the term "territory" has more legal weight in that it is often reduced to the notion of occupancy. Another crucial concept for this reading is that of "Native survivance", a term coined by Gerald Vizenor in opposition to victimry, and which he defines as "an active sense of presence over absence, deracination, and oblivion; survivance is the continuance of stories" (*Survivance* 1). Thus, survivance goes far beyond mere survival or endurance; it is not only the perpetuation but the renewal of Native presence and worldviews that can be found in "narrative resistance and personal attribute, such as the native humanistic tease, vital irony, spirit, cast of mind, and moral courage" (1). Louise Erdrich tends to stage victimry in the form of loss by sickness or death almost to the end, only to offer hope at the last possible moment.

The first dimension that is blended with space in these novels is time. Erdrich's young adult novels describe the lifeways of an Anishinaabe band living on Lake Superior in the mid-nineteenth century as they move from camp to camp according to the four seasons: from a cedar log cabin at the edge of La Pointe in the winter to a birchbark house come spring, while ricing camps allow extended families to gather every autumn. Molly McGlennen defines such spacial practices as nametwaawaa: "relationship with a place, not random wandering, but enlightened stewardship that allowed people to circle a vast homeland, learning when to be where" ("By My Heart" 6), indicating that this seasonal movement emerges from an intimate and caring relationship to place. Each of the first two novels recounts a whole year by separating the narrative into four main sections that

correspond to the four seasons, but the third novel, which describes the onset of exile, abandons that seasonal structure. In this way, specific places correspond to particular times so that the distinction between time and space is blurred. Consequently, when spatial movements are disrupted, temporal structures break down as well. Displacement is the central element of the plot, and it signals a departure from both spatially-based traditions and the familiar seasonal rhythms that used to define communal temporalities. Before the journey westward, the people's relationship to space is both localised and mobile. In addition to the tribe's seasonal movement across the land, the maintenance of summer gardens and visits to fishing grounds and berry-picking camps emphasise the coexistence of traveling and dwelling, so that the tribe's sense of time derives from seasonal travels and the encampments established in different places. As Vine Deloria Jr. points out in *God Is Red*, "Space […] is determinative of the way that we experience things. Time is subservient to it because to have time, there must be a measurable distance to travel during which time can pass" (xvii). This is certainly the case for the tribe depicted by Erdrich since the band lives by the rhythms of the land. Camps are both temporary dwellings and familiar places that have been visited every year for a very long time, thus establishing strong ties between the people and the land. For instance, Anishinaabe territory is inhabited by spirits that the tribe has learned to know: grandfather stones on the lakeshore, animal helpers such as the bears known to Omakayas or the bones of loved ones inhabit liminal space around the village and operate as reminders that all beings are interconnected.

Places are thus shared by the living with other beings. The meaning of space, therefore, is to be found in its depth. The land is where ancestors are buried and their spirits dwell. Omakayas's sadness over the loss of her little brother Neewo, who dies of smallpox during an especially harsh winter, is reinforced by the dispossession of tribal territory when they are forced to move "away from their ancestors' graves" (*GS* 235), thus severing ties a second time. Other familiar spirits inhabit the land and religion is based on

immediate surroundings, in stark contrast with the Christianity represented by Father Baraga, a reference to the historical figure who founded the first Catholic missions in the Upper Great Lakes region. Called "The Snowshoe Priest," Frederic Baraga traveled extensively and wrote the first dictionary and grammar book of the Anishinaabe language (*Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia*. 6th Edition. 2019, p1-1.) In the novel, when Omakayas's father, Deydey, is stranded on a small ice island with the priest, he states "My spirits live around here" (*GS* 220) and he is able to obtain help from the wind which pushes them back to shore. Whereas his spirits' direct presence allows them to take the shape of the land he lives in and influence the elements, the Catholic God is immaterial. Likewise, thunder is perceived as drums or footsteps, bears are said to resemble humans, and ancestors dwell in the landscape. Given that spirits are topographically situated and connectedness is spatially anchored, once on its way the tribe will have to count on the existence of new helpers in an unknown land and thus hope that the spirits they have come to know, too, have kin in the west. Relationship to space thus operates through practices that privilege reciprocal interaction with the land in order to create meaning and connectedness. Land without spirit is what Deydey fears the most and what leads him to reject the everlasting life offered by the priest when the latter insists that his unbaptised ancestors will be absent from heaven (*GS* 189). Land, therefore, cannot be separated from spirit, and these two entities are reaffirmed through language as well as traditions.

Space is also layered with meaning through tribal memory, which is conveyed by stories, dreams, and visions. Within a Native worldview, the performative aspect of language has the capacity to bring meaning into being, which is why the endurance of storytelling, which perpetuates tribal reality and knowledge, is so crucial: it has the capacity to renew what it also keeps alive. By asserting tribal ontology and perpetuating Native epistemologies, storytelling therefore promotes survivance. The notion that spatiality allows characters to situate themselves within their clan's tradition and history

is reflected by the characters' concern that removal from the land they inhabit will inevitably disrupt traditions based on seasonal migration as well as stories tied to familiar features of the land. Indeed, according to Deloria, stories are constitutive of a tribal community:

> Indian tribes combine history and geography so that they have a "sacred geography," that is to say, every location within its original homeland has a multitude of stories that recount the migrations, revelations, and particular historical incidents that cumulatively produced the tribe in its current condition. (*God Is Red* 121)

The sacredness of a place is maintained by that layering of a particular space with stories. Leslie Marmon Silko has noted that "[t]he stories cannot be separated from geographical locations;" familiar land becomes populated with stories ("Language and Literature from a Pueblo Indian Perspective" 69). Traditional lifeways are attached to certain places which, in accordance with yearly rhythms, facilitate the telling of certain stories. To be able to situate oneself is a vital skill and, in *The Game of Silence*, Omakayas's grandmother Nokomis tells stories that help to assert relatedness with the land and its other inhabitants. There are two types of stories: personal accounts of one's adventures, which can be told year-round, and winter stories, called *adisokaanag* (*BH* 61), which are sacred and should only be told when nature is at rest so as not to offend their non-human protagonists. As a mixedblood, Omakayas's father operates according to different rules, and Omakayas is very aware of that contrast:

> Omakayas wanted to ask her for a story, but she knew that Nokomis always refused, no matter how hard they begged, until the last frog was safely sleeping in the ground. Deydey, with his half-white blood, could often be persuaded because the stories he told were different from Nokomis's. (*BH* 61)

Deydey is more eager to tell stories than Nokomis because his stories are of limited importance and do not hold the same weight as *adisokaanag*. This mixedblood character's

stories operate within a different spatial and temporal framework, in that sense, from other characters' in the three novels, and are less dependent on space and time than more traditional tales. Indeed, stories that do not take the teller's spatial location into account tend to produce a more linear view of events while presenting a more fragmented understanding of the world. Thus, while Deydey's tales of encounters with animals, weather, other Anishinaabeg, and ghosts can be recounted at any time, Nokomis's stories tie time and space to the living beings that share them. Indeed, even when Nokomis tells personal stories, the telling is performed in certain places or in response to particular situations that allow these stories to be reenacted as the words are spoken and reassert the listener's relatedness with different elements of the tale. This is related to the practice of *nametwaawaa,* which Margaret Noodin opposes to mere nomadism: "a verb that can describe a relationship with a place, not random wandering, but enlightened stewardship that allowed people to circle a vast homeland, learning when to be where" (*Bawaajimo* 37). This view is not restricted to a bound territory:

> This could also be applied to ideas of places beyond where we are. Many stories speak of places visited in dreams or visions, places like the sky or a cave at the bottom of the lake, or the kitchen table of *nokomisba*, who is no longer living. This ability to visit elsewhere, perhaps stepping out of time, is part of many Anishinaabe stories and can be found in the writing of contemporary Anishinaabe authors as frequently as the lakes and forests. (37)

Noodin further encourages readers to consider not so much the origins of the writer but "the provenance of the story," the places that have given rise to its imagery and worldview (36): "the people and the place have a symbiotic relationship that is part of the way life is lived," and one cannot understand "Anishinaabe literary identity" without learning about "the way the sky looks from their perspective […] the way the land and water are part of time and the way presence includes all of life" (36). Stories are embedded in places,

merging time and space together and weaving kinship between people and the land.

Nokomis's story of "The Little Person" (*BH* 103), for instance, stresses the similar lifestyles of the Anishinaabe and the "little people." The narrative is told when Omakayas and her grandmother are away from the village to gather mushrooms. In the woods, a liminal space that contrasts with the remoteness of winter stories traditionally told around a fire, Nokomis's words could easily be overheard by the little people, and this facilitates the blending of the story world with the teller's and her listener's geographical location. In fact, that possibility is made more overt by Nokomis's acknowledgement that just as the two women are gathering food and medicines for the winter, the little people will be making similar preparations. In addition to establishing this parallel between the peoples, the purpose of the story is to inform Omakayas that it is time for her "to go and seek instruction and protection from the spirits" (*BH* 110), an event which will also lead Omakayas away from the village. "The Little Person" tells how the location in which a story takes place and the location where it is told communicate with one another and can influence present and future events. Similarly, as listeners engage with the story they become situated in both physical and fictional environments. This is particularly true for Nokomis, who is at once the teller and the main protagonist of the story but, as a listener, Omakayas is also transported into a mythical context. Thus, the equivalence of physical location and fictional geographies allows characters to travel through time while anchored in place thanks to the power of storytelling. Places become more meaningful, layered with significance, and thus facilitate interaction with the beings who share them.

The scenes that stage sickness and death employ many horizontal movements. All three novels start with scenes that emphasize the dynamics between stasis and mobility–or, more precisely, between canoes traveling on water and people or creatures dwelling on land–and convey a strong sense of loss. While at the beginning of *The Birchbark House* the baby Omakayas is found on an island by traders, among the dead members of

her family, the opening lines of *The Game of Silence* focus on Omakayas as she observes a related clan in dire condition approaching the village from the lake. A symmetry is established between these opening scenes: despite the change in focus–on the traders in the first instance and on the main protagonist in the second–both describe moving canoes and Omakayas's immobility; and both describe dead or dying Anishinaabeg. In the latest sequel, *The Porcupine Year*, Omakayas and her brother Pinch try, and fail, to remain immobile in their canoe while they aim at a deer. They are soon carried away by rapids and barely escape death, but they land on a safe island which will later provide good fishing grounds for their family. Thus, the reader's first approach to the narrative environment of these three novels is established through a contrast between movement and stasis as well as the themes of life versus death or sickness. The beginning of *The Birchbark House* especially is worth looking at in more detail. The novel starts with the lines: "The only person left alive on the island was a baby girl. The tired men who had come there to pick up furs from the Anishinabe people stood uneasily on the rocky shore" (*BH* 1). There is no motion in this first scene. It describes a moment frozen in time: the portrait of a doomed family with the girl as the only survivor. Movement is merely established through the contrast between the bodies lying on the ground and the dead who have gone away: "It was also clear that the family who had loved her was gone. All of the fires in the village were cold. The dead lay sadly in blankets [...]" (*BH* 1). There is a paradox between the isolation of the child - the only person left alive - and the fact that her family are lying around her. Their presence is a striking absence, which makes it apparent that space is shared differently by the living and the dead, the latter being in the same geographical location but not in the same dimension. Just as the spirits mentioned by Deydey to the priest are geographically located, thus sharing space with humans, the spirits of the dead linger in the place where they died, although the world of the living and the realm of the dead merge more than they coincide. After observing the scene, the traders resume their travel from island to island while the

child remains behind, thereby reestablishing the antagonism between the traders' dynamic occupation of space and the immobility and containment of the death scene. The traders' fear of connection with sickness and death operates through a sharing of space that is thought to bring contamination. As the men leave we learn that Old Tallow, the Native wife of one of the traders, will come back to save the child. Another journey–the last one–is thus established. This, along with the presence of singing birds on the island, is the only trace of hope in that scene.

Although complete extinction remains a threat throughout these novels, it is ultimately countered by the prospect not only of survival, but of perpetuation and renewal. Survivance is tied to the land and requires spatial practices that create depth, which can be conveyed by stories and dreams. Omakayas's vision in *The Game of Silence*, for instance, stresses a juxtaposition of movement and stasis, but in a scene that reflects endurance rather than disappearance. Where dispossession endangers the stories attached to the land and colonialism threatens to rob space of its mythical qualities, Omakayas's vision promises a future for her community, which appears in the form of islands in the west. As her mind travels across lakes and rivers to envision her tribe's future, the girl is sitting under a tree. The world of dreams–like death–constitutes a different dimension, one that promotes an extreme freedom of mobility, although the body of the dreamer itself does not move, thus allowing depth to come into play. As Omakayas "felt herself drifting along between sleeping and waking" there is a back and forth movement between different dimensions before she "let herself go" (*GS* 231). Later, when she regains consciousness of her physical surroundings, much of what she was shown in dream cannot be retrieved by memory in her physical location. Significantly, words related to spatiality are used to describe her dreaming state: "Omakayas floated *deeper*, into *a lightless place* [...] the vision she received [...] was the story of her life. She had been shown *the shape* of it" (*GS* 232, my emphasis). In her vision, Omakayas is shown the lands that her family will come to inhabit:

"They came to a beautiful lake filled with hundreds of islands, only Omakayas saw them as spirits [...] The family lived in this lake full of spirits" (*GS* 231). As she traverses geographical locations in dream, she visits a place that is traditionally a source of anxiety for the Anishinaabeg, given that their dead are said to travel westward. By welcoming the tribe to the new land, the spirits of the islands thus promise to re-establish connectedness and a sense of continuity. Another reason for their concern is that as they move to the west, the clan will infringe upon Dakota territory once they reach the prairies. In her dream, Omakayas describes this vast expanse of grass in terms that give hope for the future: "The world around them was vast [...] she could see from one end to the other, in every direction. The grass flowed like water from where she stood and she felt herself continuing on" (*GS* 231). This parallel between water-like grass and the statement that "she felt *herself* continuing on" indicates a merging of Omakayas with the prairie so that its expansiveness becomes an indicator that she and her tribe will survive. When she sees herself telling stories to the younger generation, it becomes clear that the tribe's legacy will be passed on. Later, as Omakayas tells her grandmother what has been revealed, the vision itself becomes a sacred story that speaks the tribe into existence in a new place, not merely asserting its viability in the west but even dreaming up an itinerary. Assuming that Louise Erdrich bases her story on the migration of the Turtle Mountain band of Anishinabeg, the destination envisioned by Omakayas is the area of Devils Lake in the north-eastern part of North Dakota, south of the reservation that was offically established in 1882.

According to Jim Ruppert, one function of contemporary Native American literature is to reaffirm "the fusion of person, spirit, and land which creates mythic space" and to show that "the mythic and mundane space will be inevitably reunited at some point in the future. Mythic space has always been here and always will be. It is what gives meaning to life [...] It is all we have" ("Paula Gunn Allen And Joy Harjo" 34). In *The Birchbark House*, *The Game of Silence*, and *The Porcupine Year*, narration itself helps create

mythic space. The novels are told by a third-person narrator with an internal focalization through Omakayas's point of view. Time and space are non-specific and, although the reader can easily infer that the narrative takes place in the mid-nineteenth century in the area of La Pointe, a sense of the mythical is produced by the texts' overall timeless and spaceless qualities. By keeping these paradigms open, then, the author refuses to rely on a precise geographical description, thus rendering space more dynamic. Erdrich also creates a spatial environment which makes it possible for person, spirit, and land to be interconnected.

In addition, the latest sequel of the Omakayas saga includes a map drawn by the author that traces the itinerary of the family from the west of Lake Superior to the shores of Lake of the Woods in the north-west (Appendix Map 1). The map is not designed to represent space as an absolute, quantifiable dimension, nor to delineate precisely the area through which the family travels. Rather, it is meant to serve the needs of the narrative and outlines a dynamic space that shifts and adapts according to the events that take place within it. Thus, the relationship between two points on this map matters more than the distance or the angle that separates them, which renders the map topological. Given that Anishinaabe maps were traditionally topological rather than topographical, Erdrich's map visibly relies on Indigenous methodologies–a subject that will be further explored in chapter one. As an itinerary, the hand-drawn map only presents what information is relevant to the characters' journey while ignoring features of the land left untraveled. It also constitutes a record of the most salient events that took place during the so-called "Porcupine Year." By doing so the map provides a timeline that recounts the family's adventures through the lens of the spatial surroundings where these events take place, thereby allowing time and space to merge. Erdrich's map incorporates time into its spatial dimension, thus subordinating time to the subjective practice of space. Like the narrative, the map is focalized through Omakayas's point of view, which further removes it

from objectivity. Thus, Erdrich's hand-drawn map pays more respect to a dynamic vision of space than to a fixed delineation of a particular region. Time becomes part of the fabric of a space that stretches or shrinks in accordance with the needs of the story, thus becoming a lived space–a representation of the family's relationship to the land through which they move. What is more, pictographic elements, place names, and notes that refer to elements of the plot are added to represent storylines and help readers situate them along the route, thus enlivening both map and narrative. At the bottom left for instance, an arrow points to Bwaan-akiing–literally, the land of the Lakota and Dakota–but a note within brackets reads "LAND OF SURPRISE RELATIVES" in reference to an unexpected twist in the plotline. Through her elusive use of scale and proportion, and by adding text and pictographic symbols, Erdrich's map defines a view of the land that escapes fixity.

By mapping out her novel, Erdrich also draws from the long-standing Anishinaabe tradition of birchbark scrolls. Indeed, as David Woodward explains in *The History of Cartography*, "birchbark has been used as a pictographic medium by native peoples in various parts of the Northern hemisphere for thousands of years" (83). Such maps tend to be rectilinear since the mapper has to either carefully avoid the lenticels on the bark by letting lines run in parallel or draw around them so that lines pass between the lenticels (85). Like Erdrich's, these traditional maps rely on waterways in order to codify the landscape, marking "exactly all the rivers and streams of a country of which they wish to make a representation" (79). In Woodward's and Lewis's work, the section on birchbark reproduces several maps which contain features similar with the one created for *The Porcupine Year*. First, Fig. 4.53: "Pictographic message representing a voyage of Howling Wolf" (119), which dates from 1877, represents a boat's trajectory along a coast with drawings of salient settlements which are highlighted, just as Erdrich's map indicates important places (Appendix Map 2). However, visually, Erdrich's map may be more closely

related to Fig. 4.24: "Possibly the oldest extant map on birchbark" (85), dating from 1841. The lake and river take the form of round shapes, which run around the bark's lenticels, to reveal a water route that can be traveled by canoes (Appendix Map 3). The drawing in *The Porcupine Year* represents a similar journey along waterways, with round lakes and curvy rivers drawn on a map which nevertheless remains fairly linear. In addition to its geographical features, Erdrich's map is also historical in that it represents not only the trajectory followed by characters as well as the events that took place along the trail. It thus has strong commonalities with Fig. 4.65: "Another detail from Gero-schunu-wy-ha's map, showing events on the Missouri river" from 1825, which is not a birchbark map but associates "the characteristics of utilitarian line maps and the artistically richer pictorial tradition" (134). Here the river is depicted as a line around which events are represented by pictographic sketches at the location where they occurred. A few notes are jotted down around these points, although not as tidily as they are on Erdrich's map (Appendix Map 4). Last, Fig. 4.23: "Geographical interpretation of Red Sky's birchbark migration scroll", collected in 1966 (83), is the reproduction of an important document which represents, as Woodward and Lewis describe it,

> [T]he route through the St. Lawrence - Great Lakes whereby they received the Mide religion. A drawing of the scroll […] shows that it is crudely topographical to the left, becoming topological toward the center, and almost cosmographical toward the right. (83)

Thus, the further back in time the scroll goes, the more abstract its pictographic symbols become (Appendix Map 5). The most interesting segment is the one that leaves the western shore of Lake Superior and leads to Leech Lake, the end point of the Southern Ojibwa's historical journey (situated on the left end of the scroll). Although the copy of the original scroll makes use of pictographic conventions that are difficult to decipher for the untrained eye, the explanatory map below the drawing shows that the last segment of the migration follows the same route as the first segment of the journey on Erdrich's hand-drawn map.

Omakayas's destination, however, is not Leech Lake but Lake Winnibigoshish, a little farther to the north, after which her family continues to Red Lake and, finally, Lake of the Woods–areas that are not represented on the migration scroll. That Erdrich is familiar with birchbark scrolls is not to be doubted; in fact she mentions them in her two memoirs, once in *The Blue Jay's Dance* (27) and repeatedly in *Books and Islands In Ojibway Country*. The map published in *The Porcupine Year* clearly draws from these ancient influences without attempting to conform to them. Thus Erdrich, as she documents Omakayas's journey, draws from an old tradition which she also renews and renders entirely accessible to her young readership.

To sum up, in Erdrich's young adult fiction, space is a dynamic element that is shaped by travel, the establishment of seasonal camps and their related lifeways, the burial of loved ones, and stories or visions that produce mythic space. In such a context, to be located is to be related. The Anishinaabe clan's sense of place is established through an extended spatial practice, an assertion of sovereignty that goes beyond the dichotomy of dwelling versus traveling. Indeed, as James Clifford argues, "a view of human location [is] constituted by displacement as much as by stasis" (*Routes* 2). This dynamic view of place requires that we reexamine the way in which we conceptualize the ties created over time between people and the land they live in, and it challenges legal definitions of ownership. It also demands that depth, in the form of the many dimensions that merge within a place, be examined more closely. By outlining a spatial dynamics that enables space to shift and become layered with meaning, Erdrich also promotes a Native worldview, as in Omakayas's vision or the author's topological map. The author thus establishes an often precarious equilibrium between a romanticisation of loss and the reassertion of a Native agency that can prevail if storytelling supports and renews Indigenous epistemologies to ensure survivance. Erdrich's young adult fiction saga is the only corpus of texts in my selection of authors that features the pre-reservation era and represents Anishinaabe

mobility as it was practised before the nineteenth century. The analysis that precedes is thus fundamental to a reading of Treuer and Vizenor as well because their fiction builds up on the tradition of dynamic spatial practices described by Erdrich.

Chapter overview

The fiction analysed in this introduction leads into chapter one; together they define mobile practices and the dynamic mapping of the land in contemporary Anishinaabe fiction. While this section focused solely on Louise Erdrich, the next chapters will include David Treuer and Gerald Vizenor as well. Chapter one moves from the tribe's migration to the reservation era, while chapter two and three connect these aspects of Native space to networks forming beyond the reservation. Finally, chapter four and the coda explore futuristic representations of Indigenous space. The introduction and chapter one work together to prepare the ground for a definition of Native space by showing how characters conceive of space and how the novels map it out, first in the pre-reservation era and then at its height. In terms of chronology, the fiction discussed in the introduction precedes the contemporary framework of tribal sovereignty but lays down the foundations for a definition of Anishinaabe space. Chapter one explores how characters move through reservation space, with place being described through movement and interaction rather than on its own as a separate, systematic entity. Through literary cartography, the chapter describes dynamic mapping of the land through pathways and outlines how space is shared. Lisa Brooks's "dish with one spoon" becomes a guiding principle. In Erdrich's first novel *Tracks*, this is contrasted to a western viewpoint represented by the US. Government's allotment map, as well as mixedblood characters who provide a counterpoint to more traditional characters' descriptions of paths. Treuer's *Little* (1995) is likewise used to demonstrate the ancient pathways that lie beneath the current landscape of the reservation, and which characters learn to remember through their bodies as they walk them, even

when roads or changes on the landscape cover them up, which comes back to the layering of spaces that transcends linear conceptions of time. Gerald Vizenor's *The Trickster of Liberty* (1988) and *Hotline Healers* (1997) further question the relevance of geographical constraints by crossing and bypassing boundaries. The chapter also shows that narratives' superimposition of imaginary places onto real geographical spaces reveal an approach to space that is not fixed. The fact that reservation boundaries are porous means that characters are constantly crossing them via pathways that extend far beyond these lines, establishing and maintaining connections with wider spaces. The following two chapters focus on this aspect by looking at relational networks that extend beyond the reservation.

The second chapter crosses reservation boundaries to explore how ties with the reservation are maintained from urban centres. In that sense, the reservation still represents a central point of reference. The maps that were the main material trope in the previous chapter turn to art instead: beading in Erdrich (*The Antelope Wife*), sculpture and painting in Vizenor (*Shrouds of White Earth)* and translation in Treuer (*Dr Apelles*). These creative forms allow characters to live in various urban centres while referring back to a tribal centre by establishing networks that maintain Indigenous epistemologies. Historically, all three of these narratives are contemporary (post-Relocation), and my theoretical framework draws in urban scholarship (McGlennen) but still relies on Lisa Brooks and Tol Foster to define how Native space can overlap with settler space in ways that upset that territorial dichotomy. I look at different types of sovereignty that open up a third space (Kevin Bruyneel) or delineate legal/political spaces that might extend tribal sovereignty beyond reservations (Thomas Biolsi). Therefore, chapter two really brings in the debate about what might happen to sovereignty beyond such restrictive boundaries and starts to envision possible futures through the suggestions offered by artistic creations in the novels. At the same time, the discussion prepares the ground for the following chapters, where new centres emerge that redefine wider spaces as Indigenous, regardless of political

histories.

Chapter three makes a sizeable leap: not only does it move further away from the reservation, it also proposes an expansion of Indigenous American land as Europe and China are included within the geographical scope of the narratives. As such, it discusses the question of Indigenous citizenship when belonging no longer relies on the boundaries imposed by the settler state. Treuer's *Prudence* provides an entry point into the chapter as its war setting includes German prisoners and a Native character (as well as the main white protagonist) posted in Europe during the war. Along with Erdrich's *Books & Islands in Ojibwe Country*, it constitutes the first part of the chapter, which discusses hemispheric studies by examining national and international borders. The second part tackles transatlantic crossings with Vizenor's *Blue Ravens* and Michael Dorris & Louise Erdrich's *The Crown of Columbus*. The last part focuses on Vizenor's *Griever* in order to look at global connections. Critically, chapter three bridges the gap between the previous discussion of negotiation of Native space within settler territories and the more abstract, fluid view of the land that follows in chapter four. In order to do that, a reading of Hemispheric Studies reveals the problematic oversight of the centrality of Native concerns and attempts to redress this issue by using Dylan Miner's "lowriding" to once again appropriate movement through the land as an Indigenous methodology that redefines the continent through movement and exchange. Transatlantic connections bring in Weaver's *Red Atlantic* and Coll Thrush's *Indigenous London*, using Vizenor's *Blue Ravens* to define Indigenous transpositions onto non-Indigenous locales and Dorris & Erdrich's *The Crown of Columbus* to question dichotomies of Native versus settler land by challenging the narrative of discovery. To conclude the chapter, *Griever* presents a global presence for Indigeneity that reasserts Native epistemologies while finding parallels in local traditions that forge new alliances.

Finally, the fourth chapter and coda attempt to rethink the land in

abstraction from territory or in the absence of it. It looks to speculative narratives for imaginative possibilities. The primary texts are Vizenor's *The Heirs of Columbus* and Erdrich's *Future Home of the Living God.* In Vizenor's novel, the heirs found a new pan-tribal reservation on international waters before creating a new nation on a landbase at Point Assinika. Erdrich's dystopian novel discusses the dispossession and exploitation of the female body in an unstable world where the reservation provides a temporary refuge from the incursions of the U.S. Government. In both instances, land is reclaimed by tribal nations to create a different social order. Indigenous speculative fiction provides the main critical framework for this discussion, offering a range of scenarios for Anishinaabe futuries. Another section explores the relationship between memory and place (Chadwick Allen/Momaday). In the coda, Erdrich's short story "Domain" offers no utopian hope. The afterlife is entirely digitalised, uploaded onto corporate-owned platforms textured by their participants' memory, raising the question of risk when it comes to de-terriorialised futures.

To sum up, this thesis progresses geographically and temporally from post-contact migration (introduction) to the the reservation era (chapter one); the post-Relocation increase in urban Indigenous population (chapter two); contemporary explorations of hemispheric, trans-Atlantic and global spaces (chapter three) and, finally, more abstract territorial futurities (chapter four and coda). These histories all inform my readings of contemporary Anishinaabe fiction and form the background against which a fictionalised Anishinaabe geography emerges. The literary readings sketch out a dynamic map of Indigenous networks that reframe a wide variety of spaces as Native by showing how Anishinaabe characters interpret and influence the places they live in.

CHAPTER ONE: THE RESERVATION

Viewed as a form of fictional map-making, the work of Gerald Vizenor, Louise Erdrich and David Treuer constitutes an attempt to reclaim Anishinaabe space, starting with reservations situated in Minnesota and North Dakota and then extending towards surrounding areas, urban centres, and other sites not typically thought of as Indigenous spaces. Although these authors' early fictional works tend to be reservation-based novels, they expand their fictional environments beyond reservation boundaries in subsequent publications. For example, Erdrich's *Love Medicine* (1984) and *Tracks* (1988) largely take place on a fictional reservation and, although *The Beet Queen* (1986) and *The Bingo Palace* (1994) include urban environments, their epistemological centre is nevertheless situated on tribal land. Later novels use a variety of reservation-based and urban settings while maintaining ties to the reservation. Similarly, whereas Treuer's first novel *Little* (1995) takes place on a reservation, his second and third novels *The Hiawatha* (1999) and *The Translation of Dr. Apelles* (2006) have Minneapolis as their primary setting. In contrast, Vizenor is involved in a back-and-forth movement between fiction situated on or around White Earth–such as the Almost Browne saga–and other works set as far as China (*Griever*, 1986). This wide range of local, continental and global explorations does not establish clear boundaries of "inside" and "outside" but rather seeks to constitute networks of belonging in a creative enactment of Indigenous relationship to the land. Instead of being circumscribed by the colonial borders of the reservation, Native space becomes a network of relationships that enables other spatial centres to emerge away from reservations in order to establish alternative definitions of Indigenous space. These three authors are thus performing a form of fictional cartography that represents Native space through the interaction of characters with their environments. Through different manifestations of

Anishinaabe space that create complex fictional maps of interaction, they also engage with questions of sovereignty and self-determination in a variety of ways.

By exploring the interaction between characters and narrative space, this chapter aims to show that characters' relationship to space is not static but rather constituted by movement and interaction with places and their human and non-human inhabitants, thus producing a dynamic view of space. This space-in-motion counters the fixity of spatial boundaries established as critical categories in Native studies and the binaries derived from boundary-based models. For instance, strict distinctions between the Indigenous reservation and urban spaces considered non-Indigenous, or legal identity politics regulating the status of Native and non-Native individuals, have their origins in colonial impositions rather than Native perspectives. Craig Womack's landmark *Red on Red* (1999) argues that "literature rises out of land and language and stories, and […] tribal nations have different landscapes, different languages, and different stories from the United States […]" (76). This departure point from the western tradition of literary criticism, and the effort to search for tribally-centred perspectives primarily, together with the question of what constitutes Anishinaabe space in Anishinaabe literature, and the ways in which it is mapped out in relation to tribal tradition, are crucial to this thesis. The spatial turn in Native Studies has increasingly engaged scholars in a double movement which consists of, on the one hand, grounding analysis of Native space in tribal knowledge (Sean Kicummah Teuton, Lisa Brooks) and on the other hand, breaking out of territorial bounds and national borders in order to widen spatial perspectives towards more transnational frameworks (Mishuana Goeman, Shari Huhndorf). The present chapter starts to articulate a spatially-based alternative to both the nationalist and cosmopolitan models which have so far dominated the field of Native studies. Once reservation boundaries begin to be seen as porous and dynamic movement is affirmed in people's relationship to the land, such clear distinctions become less relevant.

Thus, this chapter examines how the space of the reservation is defined and mapped out in contemporary Anishinaabe fiction. It starts with Louise Erdrich's reservation novel *Tracks* in order to investigate how Anishinaabe writers create maps in their fiction. In the second section, David Treuer's *Little* sketches a map of a wider, more connected region, while in the third section Gerald Vizenor's *The Trickster of Liberty* (1988) and *Hotline Healers* (1997) map out a fictional reservation baronage that gains forms of recognition all the way to China. All three writers indicate that while the reservation is central to these novels, mobility is absolutely crucial to Anishinaabe spatial practices. As Mishuana Goeman shows in her discussion of Laguna Pueblo writer Leslie Marmon Silko's *Almanac of the Dead*, the joint histories of "colonial spatial restructuring" enforced through reservation policies, relocation and other legislative measures, and the tribe's "story of migration […] are mutually constitutive and should not be understood as exclusive" since both aspects are involved in "mapping lands and bodies" ("The Tools of a Cartographic Poet" 92). Similarly, in Anishinaabe history, the fixity of borders and reservation boundaries which are so central to *Tracks* cannot be understood without taking into account tribal traditions of mobility such as the ones described in Erdrich's young adult novel *The Porcupine Year*. Goeman argues that, by regulating space, colonial order instigates "borders and other geographical signifiers" as a way of imposing relational patterns which separate humans from the land, from plants and animals, as well as creating racial separation between human groups (*Mark My Words* 201). The fixity of colonial space and the binary categories derived from its delineation of space therefore disrupt the very relationships on which Indigenous understanding of the land are based. John Borrows describes this way of relating to one's environment as "citizenship with the land," where all of the beings in the land (the elements, the sun, minerals, plants, animals etc.) are seen as belonging to the same "federation." Because such notions have been "disinterred, disregarded, and repressed" by the settler logic of expansion and ownership, Borrows

suggests that "Anishinabek jurisprudence might be reinscribed on the earth" in what he calls a "landed citizenship" (*Recovering Canada* 138). The way in which characters move through the land in Anishinaabeg fiction is significant in that it often represents Indigenous ways of relating to the land, which is visible in the narrative construction of space. Literary cartography offers useful tools to show that the spatial environment of these reservation novels is constituted by movement rather than reliance on a static colonial model. Narratives also tend to outline a lived space rather than an abstract space through the interaction between characters and their fictional landscape. The literary analysis in this section will first consider how an Anishinaabe mapping tradition evolves from traditional forms of mapmaking to contemporary fiction and the ways in which it differs from western cartography. An overview of the critical discourse on maps and representations of space in Native studies will help situate the argument in the field. Using tools from literary cartography, the analysis of Louise Erdrich's *Tracks* shows that space in the novel is constituted by the dynamic movement between characters and their environments, thereby questioning views of space as a static entity rather than one mediated by relationship. While the spatial environment of the novel is informed by the relationship between characters and the land, fictional mapping emerges out of the relationship between characters and their environment as they move through space. Treuer's *Little* will then expand this understanding as Indigenous characters remember the old paths that enable travel through the land outside the reservation and link together a range of locales through a wider region. Finally, Vizenor's *The Trickster of Liberty* and *Hotline Healers* will show how the reservation baronage of Patronia offers a creative site for experimentation and reinvention of Anishinaabe identity and practices that are then exchanged with the rest of the world as a form of self-determination. Paths take very different forms in each of these novels, but movement through the land always constitutes a fundamental element when the narrative is mapped out.

Theoretical Framework

Literary cartography emerged, in part, from Bertrand Westphal's geocritical theory, defined by Paul Smethurst as "a place-bound form of criticism, whose main goal is to construct histories of particular places in which literary representation plays a major role," thus creating an "imaginary cartography" ("The Geocritical Imagination" 176). It was simultaneously developed by Robert T. Tally Jr., who initially focused on literary geography–a term that still lacks an authoritative definition in spite of being used widely–and distinguishes literary cartography in terms of the writer as a mapmaker from the narrative as a form of mapping to be read by the geocritic (*Spatiality* 79/*Geocritical Explorations* 1). In a more recent article, Tally explains this in simpler terms and adds that the map-reader (or geocritic) likewise engages in a map-making process: "[i]f the writer is a mapmaker, the critic is a map-reader, who (like all map-readers) also creates new maps in the process"("On Literary Cartography" np). Framing the "narrative as a spatially symbolic act," he defines literary cartography as the "cartographic function" that literary works perform "by creating a figurative or allegorical representation of a social space, broadly understood. This is refered to as literary cartography ("On Literary Cartography" np). The same terms, however, are used in contrasting ways by different authors. Piatti *et. al* define literary geography as "the overall *topic*" of inquiry while "literary cartography provides one possible *method*, more precisely *tools* […]" ("Literary Geography" 3). While their method of mapping out quantitative literary data onto digital maps points to a very specific interpretation of the term, I tend to favour a wider interpretation, in the line of Tally's view of the narrative as "spatially symbolic." I find it useful to conceive of literary cartography as writers' construction of an imagined map through the use of various devices in the narrative, as well as the analysis of the particular territory that emerges from their fictional work. The wider field of literary geography (spatiality in literature), then, informs the method of literary cartography (the outline, be it in writing or in reading, of a fictional

terrain). However, as a whole, literary geography is involved in the mapping of modernity in a manner that conforms to western spatial conceptions, including much of the theory on which literary cartography is based–Mikhail Bakhtin's work on the chronotope, Michel Foucault's heterotopia and Seymour Chatman's intervention on story and discourse are particularly influential. Therefore, looking at alternative types of literary mapping based on Indigenous cartographic traditions which do not employ the same colonial codes used to justify expansion and maintenance of empire can bring new elements to that field of enquiry.

Western and Native American maps differ in their orientation and express different epistemologies depending on the signs they adopt. Clearly, maps are not objective documents, and their perceived neutrality relies upon a consensus sustained by power relations rather than any sense of scientific objectivity. According to David Turnbull, "this notion of maps as non-perspectival representations will not do. It is not just that maps do have a perspective, or that the perspective is taken for granted, it is rather that the disengagement hides the privileging of a particular conceptual scheme" (*Maps Are Territories* 15). Conventional western maps tend to presuppose that it is possible to adopt an outer point of view, to flatten out the surface of the earth and establish a systematic relation between any two points represented by it. This is, of course, a lure: by creating an abstraction, maps always deform reality; they only give the false impression that cartographers' formation of a scientific gaze actually erases their participation in the land which they represent. The notion that maps propose an objective representation of the territory is a premise of the colonial project of land appropriation, which is criticised by Native thinkers. In *Fugitive Poses*, Vizenor contrasts Native maps with colonial maps, asserting that "Native virtual cartography is much more than the base lines and cardinal directions of territory" (173) and links Indigenous mapping with movement when he adds that "[t]he criteria of transmotion are in the stories of trickster creation, the birch bark

documents of the midewiwin, song pictures, beaded patterns, winter counts, painted hides, ledger art, and other creases of motion in virtual cartography" (178). His argument that such documents and objects constitute traditional native maps supports a more mobile and creative model of relationship with the land–one that sustains tribal self-determination through what he calls an "active presence" and which "is *sui generis* sovereignty" (*Fugitive Poses* 15). According to Vizenor, these "visual stories, totemic creations, and other pictures" are "mappery, the virtual cartography of native survivance and sovereignty" (178). Supporting a similar view, Douglas Dix *et al.* argue in their analysis of Vizenor's *Dead Voices* that the author's maps are "illegible in a conventional sense," which "works against an appropriative delineation of difference within cartographic discourse." They argue that Vizenor denounces the failure of maps to truthfully represent the reality of a lived place or, as they conclude, "[t]he maps are therefore, as much as published texts, dead voices" (*Textual Interstices*; 184). Vizenor calls these inert cartographic documents "simulations and not a trace of the actual territory" (*Fugitive Poses*; 170) to emphasise this distinction.

In his discussion of western and Indigenous maps, David Turnbull points out that cartography never eschews indexicality although its conventions "are kept as transparent, as inconspicuous, as possible" (*Maps Are Territories*, 9). This pretence at objectivity hides the fact that "conventions often follow cultural, political and even ideological interests […] if conventions are to function properly they must be so well accepted as to be almost invisible. The map, if it is to have authority […] must appear simply to exhibit the landscape" (8). This is due to the fact that "[i]n the Western tradition the way to imbue a claim with authority is to attempt to eradicate all signs of its local, contingent, social and individual production" (42). Tim Ingold confirms this view when he states that "in the work of the modern cartographer, knowledge generated through movement from place to place within a region is presented *as if* it issued from a totalising vision above and beyond the world" (230, italics in the original). What follows is that in any

culture, maps are neither objective (as western maps have often claimed to be) nor subjective (as Indigenous maps have often been deemed to be), but rather "intersubjective" (15), following codes that have been agreed upon by a particular community. Comparing western cartographic conventions with Native American maps, Turnbull concludes that "European maps have a projective geometry based on a co-ordinate system. Indian maps are topologically structured, 'conserving connectivity between the parts but distorting distance, angles and, hence, shape'" (19, citing M. Lewis 1987). Although Indigenous maps focus on the connection between elements rather than geometrical accuracy, he states that:

> [T]he claim by Westerners that aboriginal maps are more indexical and hence less scientific than theirs springs largely from the transparency of the forms of life in which their maps are embedded. This reflects a difference in the ways the differing cultures achieve a transcendence of indexicality, rather than a difference in their correspondence to reality. (41-42)

Thus Indigenous maps do not erase participants from their mode of representations but rather include subjective elements instead of attempting to extract themselves from the land. This does not render them non-indexical although it points at a different set of codes in which the representation of human movement through the land is part of the mapping process as well as the map itself. In *Maps of the Imagination*, Peter Turchi expands on the metaphor of fiction writing as map-making. Like Turnbull, he criticises the objectivity of maps when he writes that: "The first lie of a map – also the first lie of fiction – is that it is the truth" (73). Again, maps are not truthful representations of the territory but "[a] story or novel is a kind of map because, like a map, it is not a world, but it evokes one […]" (166). When it comes to literary cartography, the difference between western (topographical) and Indigenous (topological) cartographic conventions become crucial. Turchi argues that "[m]aps are defined by what they include but are often more revealing in what they exclude" (29), which in most western maps involves human experience of the

land. Movement through territory is notably missing from topographical maps yet is central to Indigenous cartography. Fiction therefore offers an ideal terrain in which to test Turnbull's statement that "[maps] provide an opportunity to explore the claim that in the deepest possible way knowledge is inherently spatial, and embedded in practical action" (48).

Because Native cultures have borrowed certain tools brought over by Europeans and adapted them to their own uses, their mapping practices were influenced by contact. This, according to G. Malcolm Lewis, can make it difficult to claim a long-standing Indigenous cartographic tradition. In a chapter on Native American maps in *The History of Cartography* (Woodward et al.), he argues that "evidence for the existence of maps in the native Indian, Inuit, and Aleut cultures of North America is scattered, uneven, and plagued with problems of interpretation. In addition, since all cultures are in a constant state of change, it is not always possible to draw hard and fast boundaries between 'Indian' and 'European' cartographies or to ascertain what is truly 'traditional,' 'indigenous,' or 'original'" (51). It is worth noting that his concern for authenticity runs the risk of becoming a red herring. All cultures have benefited from exchanges, borrowings, and incorporations of practices originally elaborated by other groups. However, Lewis proceeds to classify Native maps into "precontact," "contact," and "postcontact": "The first stage, precontact, predates even indirect European influence and is rooted in antiquity. Evidence of maps that were made largely independent of European influence, however slender, consists of rock art and man-made structures such as mounds, representing mainly celestial and cosmographical subjects" (51). Birchbark, skin, bone and wampum maps are then placed in the second category, spanning from the mid-sixteenth to the end of the nineteenth century. The author states that these documents tended to be of limited durability and that few have been preserved (51). Later maps were created as means of communication and cooperation with settlers and are much more numerous. Indigenous words for maps, it seems, only

appeared after contact (52). Lewis's search for "purely" Indigenous cartographic artefacts leads him to consider that "North American rock art contains images that have been interpreted as maps. Verifying these is important to anthropologists because, if authentic, they constitute almost the only cases of purely indigenous cartographic representation. Other media, such as bark, wood, or skin, have simply been too fragile to preserve precontact images (57). Lewis insists that the notion that these rock paintings are both Native American in origin and actual cartographic documents remains conjectural, both because dating the artwork proves difficult and because the question of whether they represent features of the land remains open (57). However, looking specifically at Anishinaabe pictographs, other sources point out the convergence between some rock painting designs and the constellations used in star maps (Annette S. Lee *et al.*, *Ojibwe Sky Star Map*; Ron Morton and Carl Gawboy, *Talking Rocks*), and makes a convincing case for rock art being central to the tribe's conceptualisation of space (cosmology) and time (the pacing of seasons). This chapter is more concerned with establishing a continuity in Native mapping practices – from rock paintings to birchbark maps – which extends to fiction, than in categorising different types of maps according to the extent of Western influence on the evolution of Anishinaabe cartography.

The introduction of this thesis showed that a work of fiction can be perceived as a map which uses language in order to express the relationship between people and the land in which they live. If writing evolves from mapping, thus aligning itself with a tradition that asserts a Native worldview, contemporary Anishinaabe writers can be reframed as mappers of Native space. Indeed, by centring on Indigenous space, Anishinaabe fiction provides crucial elements to answer the questions asked by Lisa Brooks in the introduction: if we centre Native space instead of Anglo-American perspectives, "What kind of map emerges?" (*The Common Pot*, xxxv). The narrative maps which appear in Native American fiction decentralise western conceptions of space in favour of an

Indigenous cartography which describes characters moving through Native space. They also transform the cultural practice of map-making into a contemporary form which allows the territory to be re-appropriated through Indigenous ways of knowing. Within the framework of literary cartography, books constitute a form of mapping, a lens through which an epistemology of space can be read. Like maps, these texts encode the cartographer's perception of a fictionalised space. The map outlined by Brooks has two salient characteristics. Geographically, its focus on waterways rather than land establishes a fluid network of relationships and exchange along rivers and shifts the focus from a fixed view of the territory to a dynamic space that reframes territorial boundaries as what Leanne Simpson defines as "a zone of decreasing [Native] presence as you move out from the centre of the territory," a region "much wider than a line" (*Dancing on Our Turtle's Back* 89). And politically, western culture becomes a participant rather than an overruling colonial force in a shared space where "[e]very part affected the whole" (*The Common Pot* 5) and which is therefore the product of the concerted efforts of all the beings who live within it. Literary texts draw a similar map by exploring characters' relationships to a landscape in literary space, thus reinforcing the claim that contemporary Native American literature constitutes a form of cartography. If the Anishinaabe writing tradition can be traced back to reading the land, the mapping that emerges from contemporary fiction will employ Indigenous cartographic principles in order to outline Native space.

Moving through space in itself constitutes a form of storytelling and movement in the land itself constitutes a story through which knowledge is elaborated. Leslie Marmon Silko shows this relationship between walking through the land and storytelling when she explains that:

> [T]he ancient Pueblo people could not conceive of themselves within a specific landscape, but location, or place, nearly always played a central role in the Pueblo oral narratives. Indeed, stories

> are most frequently recalled as people are passing by a specific geographical feature or the exact location where a story took place. (*Yellow Woman* 4)

In this instance, maps are constituted by stories that depend on the presence of the land in order to be told. In a similar line, Eric Gary Anderson claims that "[t]o be literate in petroglyphs–literate in the land as in the stories–is to be comfortable with travel or migration […]" (*American Indian Literature and the Southwest* 20). Reading the storied land thus becomes a form of mobility: "[s]tories, themselves in motion, describe grounded landmarks; hunters remember the stories, understanding them as maps that move in a variety of directions, transecting time and space" (20). Such a reading is necessarily performed through the interaction of people and places. According to Tim Ingold, the notion of pre-existing "cognitive maps" is a misconception caused "by the mistaken attribution to native people of a sense of what it means to know one's whereabouts that effectively treats them as strangers in their own country" (*The Perception of the Environment* 219). Traditional Native people would know where they are even in the absence of "an independent system of coordinates" because "places do not have locations but histories" (219). In short, places are known by moving through them and connecting them to one another, a process that does not necessarily call for systematic spatial representation: "Bound together by the itineraries of their inhabitants, places exist not in space but as nodes in a matrix of movement" (219). Theorising space as movement instead of a web of coordinates re-inscribes human perception at the centre of spatial constructs. It also reframes wayfinding as a performance, while the documents that have commonly been called "'native maps' and 'sketch maps' […] are not so much representations of space as condensed histories" (220). Here, another link between mapping and storytelling is established, especially in the context of Indigenous maps: knowledge is (trans)formed while moving from the land and thus does not precede one's interaction with space (230). In an

environment made participatory by perception, there can be no external observer since the world "*has no surface*" and "can only be perceived to have an exterior surface by a mind that is situated above and beyond it. In ordinary wayfinding, however, whether on land or at sea, the world is apprehended from within. One makes one's way through it, not over or across it" (241; italics in the original). The land is not an entity that can be apprehended as an abstraction since it only exists in relation to one's presence within it. Ingold states that maps endeavour to represent "the *surface of the earth*" (241, italics in the original). By extracting its point of view from the land, cartography therefore negates its reality. In this sense, much like the written tradition, the map is not a "transcription," but an "inscription" which requires the erasure of the practices that enabled its elaboration (230-231). On the other hand, moving through the land requires one's engagement with place to the point where movement becomes an interactive process. Ingold concludes that "the world of our experience is a world suspended in movement, that is continually coming into being as we – through our own movement – contribute to its formation. In the cartographic world, by contrast, all is still and silent" (242). One troubling oversight in Ingold's essay is the individualistic premise of this model. There is little room for communal construction of space through stories or engagement with forms of other-than-human kinship. The next section shows that in *Tracks*, Louise Erdrich plays with the contrasting views of two characters, where the more traditional Nanapush (who serves the community) describes the reservation through a series of pathways while Pauline, a Catholic mixedblood who attempts to sever her ties to her Indigeneity, tends to map out place from a more abstract point of view.

Tracks

Even when her novels are set in a region that can be identified–such as the town of Fargo in North Dakota present in much of her work–Erdrich's fictional landscape makes no distinction between real and imagined places. Locations sometimes even shift from novel to novel, which indicates that geography is not a rigid entity in her work. Most notably, Argus is expressly situated close to the reservation in both *Tracks* and *The Beet Queen,* but in the latter Argus is also mentioned as located close to Fargo, much farther to the southeast from the reservation than would be consistent with previous descriptions or the actual physical location of the Turtle Mountain reservation. The area which most of her fiction nominally explores is situated in North Dakota but extends southward to Minneapolis in Minnesota, and is inhabited by families whose stories she traces across generations. Exact locations are often difficult to pin down, although their names are usually spelled out, because they do not always make logical sense from a topographical perspective. Before turning to an analysis of *Tracks*, I would like to establish that Erdrich consciously draws from an Anishinaabe mapping tradition.

Tracks takes place in the early twentieth century and describes the effects of the Allotment Act on a community. This third novel in the author's so-called "reservation tetralogy" narrates complex family histories on a fictional reservation as well as in the cities nearby. Spanning from the beginning of the twentieth century to contemporary times, Erdrich's early work explores notions of belonging and home as well as leaving, and later coming back to, the reservation. A sense of mobility is thus supported by the narratives insofar as it creates and maintains connection, although the reservation remains the spatial and epistemological centre of all four novels. In *Tracks*, this web of connectedness is also sustained by complex trails mapped out throughout the story, which take into consideration the movement of characters through space rather than abstracting them from the landscape in order to describe it. The spatial environment of the narrative is not

laid out through the description of landscapes or places as fixed, objective entities but is instead delineated by trail maps which show the relationship between points of human activity as the character moves through space. Erdrich's trail maps participate in what Mishuana Goeman calls "imaginative geographies"–narratives which "open up new possibilities and inaugurate new and vital meanings" (*Mark My Words* 39) by engaging in more mobile cartographies than the one proposed by the topographical map. When envisioning the novel as a whole, it becomes apparent that some spaces are described in detail while others are sketched out with deliberate imprecision. The difficulty of mapping out Erdrich's reservation novels has been addressed before. While Beidler and Barton argue that the author "purposefully worked in some inconsistencies" to prevent readers from conflating her fictional reservation with Turtle Mountain (13), I would also suggest that Erdrich's narratives resist the fixity and sense of permanence established by the topographical map. Indeed, in spite of devoting part of their first chapter to her fictional geography, Beidler and Barton only propose a rough map of Erdrich's North Dakota, "along with an account of [their] decisions about where to locate some of its fictional places" (9). Their endeavour to create a conventional topographic map of Erdrich's fictional landscape is based on precisely the type of cartography which her narratives wilfully resist, and is therefore problematic. The issue encountered by her reader is effectively that while some information seems to indicate that a map can be drawn, other data are inevitably missing so that the cognitive map will remain somewhat arbitrary and subjective. What is more, some of the fictional places shift from one novel to the next, as is the case for Argus: "The most problematical town of all is Argus. It is always depicted as being fairly close to the reservation, but like the site of the reservation itself, its location shifts" (Beidler 11). In *Tracks*, Argus is situated "a few miles south" of the reservation (*Tracks* 12), and the fictional towns of Hoopdance and Theobold occupy an unspecified location. As a result, the map provided by *The Reader's Guide* is both rigid and nevertheless

sketchy. Their doubtful attempt at mapping the landscape of the novels reinforces the notion that Erdrich's fictional locations are not defined by fixed coordinates but are rather relational. Indeed, like the reservation itself, Matchimanito Lake, and Kozka's butcher shop, *Tracks* describes the town of Argus in some detail without providing sufficient directions to be mapped out coherently. Pauline, one of two narrators, describes the town in simple terms:

> [It] was just a grid of six streets on either side of the railroad depot. There were two elevators, one central, the other a few miles west. Two stores competed for the trade of the three hundred citizens, and three churches quarelled with one another for their souls. (12-13)

With its high steeple, the Catholic church provides the only salient landmark for miles around. In her description of the town, Pauline relies on numbers (six streets, two elevators, two stores, three churches, three hundred citizens), which provide her indications with a certain precision. The image of the grid, juxtaposed with these figures, makes the town appear like a geometrical figure, yet it cannot be mapped without requiring the reader to make arbitrary decisions: for instance, where exactly are the churches situated? What is the geographical relation between the buildings mentioned? As an urban space, Argus, unlike the largely natural terrain of reservation land, obeys numbers and measurements. However, like the butcher shop, the town is described in parts rather than as a whole, with details rendering the picture lively yet failing to establish the relation between them. Pauline says that Kozka's Meats "served farmers for a fifty-mile radius, both to slaughter, for it had a stockpen and chute, and to cure the meat by smoking it or spicing it in sausage. The storage locker was a marvel" (16), thereby outlining the architecture of the place while also explaining its function. She goes on to describe the main building: "A ramshackle board building, part killing shed, part store, was fixed to the low square of the lockers" (16). Again, the reader can envision Kozka's Meats in a fairly detailed manner without knowing

where the smokehouse is in relation to the lockers or whether the stockpen is right next to the slaughter house. Places are described, particular features of the landscape, but not their topological relation. What is more, these urban spaces are described far more vividly than the reservation town, which is never depicted in its entirety. In fact, mere clues are given here and there: there are four streets (119), a trading store (123), and the Agent's house (207) along with the cabins of other inhabitants. Pauline only describes the Morrissey farm, again by providing numbers: The farm was big for those days, six hundred and forty acres" (63). She also mentions "a two-story house," "chickens, a barn with six cows for milking, two pigs, a kitchen garden, and even some geese" (64), but never describes the reservation town, Matchimanito lake, or the convent in similar terms. Her descriptions of places come to an end soon after her arrival on the reservation and are not used again after that, except to relate her visions. Nanapush, the second narrator, never sketches out the environment of the reservation town, either. There is one situation in his narrative, however, in which all the crucial geographical information about the reservation is gathered in one document, the map of allotment parcels which Father Damien shows to Nanapush. There, too, information is partial, conveyed by colours carrying a range of meanings concerning the allotments:

> [W]e examined the lines and circles of the homesteads paid up […] They were colored green. The lands that were gone out of the tribe […] were painted a pale and rotten pink. Those in question, a sharp yellow. At the center of a bright square was Matchimanito, a small blue triangle I could cover with my hand. (173)

Again, the reader is left with limited knowledge concerning the town itself. Since the data represented by the map is based on annual fee lists and foreclosure notices, little else is to be learned from it. Importantly, such a map reduces the mythical Matchimanito lake to what Nanapush describes as "a small blue triangle" which he could cover with his hand; it appears insignificant, drowned in the bright yellow which surrounds it and threatens to

withdraw the area from tribally-owned land. Like Pauline's description of Argus, which is heavily reliant on numbers, the map of allotments reduces the space which it describes to a few colour-coded facts, a topographical abstraction which ignores the relationship between the people and the places it depicts. By imposing the concept of private ownership under the terms of the coloniser, the allotment parcel map breaks down the ties between people even as it trivialises their relationship to the land, thus revealing that communal ties are interdependent with the land-base. What is more, the Allotment Act can be understood as a temporal intervention in its reorganisation of space. Mark Rifkin writes in *Beyond Settler Time* that "Allotment policy projects a futurity oriented around settler modes of being" (95) and therefore represents "a field of force working to reshape Native experience of space and time" (96). In this sense too, the resistance to map out fictional environments extensively signals resistance towards settler frameworks. When it comes to the reservation town itself, the text is remarkably silent, which probably indicates the reluctance of the author to make it recognisable. However, with the exception of Pauline's explanation concerning the geography of Argus, which can be attributed to her efforts at assimilation into white society, trails rather than specific sites are described in more detail, thus allowing space to be viewed in relation to characters' movement in the narrative.

Trail maps outline a dynamic view of space by rendering it more subjective. Indeed, places in *Tracks* are not separate from characters or susceptible to being described objectively, but elements of them are provided when they become relevant to a character. Trails are therefore described more vividly: they represent the interaction of a character with space. The narratological construction of Matchimanito, for instance, relies on very few indications disseminated throughout the text, although parts of the area are also described rather precisely in trail maps. While more details are provided concerning the geography of Matchimanito than the reservation town, the picture remains sketchy. The area is defined by the sum of fragmented explanations. For instance, it appears that there

are two ways of going from the reservation town to Pillager woods; the long way around, also called "the dark road to Matchimanito" by Nanapush (5), or the short way across. The "old way" to Matchimanito is also mentioned (194), although it is unclear whether there are two separate paths. In order to go to the Pillager place by taking "the short way, across the lake," Nanapush uses the boat he "dragged up in a brush shelter on the quieter inlet, the south end of the lake" (49). Misshepeshu, Matchimanito lake's mythical monster, lives fairly close to the shore near Fleur's cabin since Nanapush describes the Pillager woods as "too close to where the lake man lives" (42); he is once glimpsed "toward the far side" (212), where he stays in "the deepest rocks" (35). Moses lives on "the island at the far side of Matchimanito" (36), thus probably even closer to Misshepeshu's abode than the Pillager place. Their proximity to Misshepeshu indicates that the Pillagers are spiritually powerful but it remains a danger, especially when taking the short way across the lake since the Anishinaabe traditionally avoided crossing open water. However, during the winter the water freezes and Moses walks "across the ice" from his island to Fleur's cabin (188), while the villagers fish on the lake (130). On the parcel map which Father Damien brings to Nanapush, the lake is"a small blue triangle" (173). On the other hand, the lake must be large enough for Eli to set his trapline around it and be away for several weeks while he checks it (52), and the long way to Matchimanito must be a few miles long but short enough to be traveled by Pauline twice the same evening (91). Thus, information concerning the geography of the mythical lake is decentralised and remains partial, never described as a topographical feature but only in relation to human activity. While the relationship between people and places is outlined, the narrative resists topographical mapping. There seems to be a deliberate refusal to resort to totalising maps while the narrative pays particular attention to trails. However, a shift to the topological can be observed when the narrative maps out trails rather than places. Just as the lake is never fully sketched out, key places such as the area around the Pillager cabin are only described in

relation to the characters who interact with them. There are no systematic descriptions, although indications are provided when characters move across or within these places. For example, Nanapush tells the story of Eli when he followed Fleur one night along the path that leads from the cabin to the lake:

> [A] movement of branches in the lower corner of the clearing told him Fleur had taken the path that led down the lake. He went that way and shrugged through the brush on shore just in time to see Fleur […] walk […] through a swath of light into the waters of Matchimanito. (106)

Here, a path appears in the narrative to inform the reader of the geography of Fleur's immediate surroundings, outlining a clearing around the cabin and a path in "the lower corner" leading to the lakeshore. Another instance is provided when Nanapush describes the area around Fleur's cabin; after the intervention of the lumberjacks he delineates the location by narrating his walk through the woods:

> I walked […] There was thunder in the distance, the smell of a storm drove me among the twisted stumps of trees and scrub, the small, new, thriving grasses which had previously been shaded. I passed through the ugliness, the scraped and raw places, the scattered bits of wood and dust and then the square mile of towering oaks, a circle around Fleur's cabin. (219-220)

Another path appears in the narrative, this time linking the reservation town to the woods, delineating the high oaks around Fleur's cabin while the rest of the forest has already been felled. The place is mapped not on its own but via the description of Nanapush's movement through it. Nanapush's trail map also incorporates the weather as well as the flora and fauna, thus making it subject to change. In Tracks, the perception of space as a fixed, objective variable which can be mapped out belongs to the bureaucrats who made the allotment map as well as entities whose main intent is to make profit from reservation land, such as the lumber company but also mixedblood farmers like the Morrisseys.

In addition to describing places more aptly than area maps in the narrative, trails also take characters into account instead of abstracting space as a fixed entity that can be separated from the people who view it. For Nanapush, space is not a rigid variable, it is a dimension through which one moves and thus is inseparable from subjectivity. Trails are more representative of space than area maps because they outline this dynamic. When his trance enables him to visualise Eli's progression on his hunt, precise directions are provided concerning the path he follows:

> He had seen the tracks before, down near a frozen shallow slough. So he went there […] He walked carefully around the rim of the depression […] he saw the trail leading over the ice and back into the brush and overgrowth. Immediately, he stepped downwind and branched away, walked parallel and then looped back to find the animal's trail. He tracked like that, never right behind it, always careful of the wind, cautious on the harsh ground, gaining on his webbed shoes as the moose floundered and broke through the crust with every step until finally it came to a stand of young saplings and fed. (101-102)

Spatial markers abound in this description, indicating directions ("down", "near" "around", "over", "back", "downwind", "away", "parallel", "behind", "through") as well as elements delineating features of the landscape ("slough", "depression", "ice", "brush and overgrowth", "animal's trail", "harsh ground", "crust", "stand of young saplings"). The trail obeys a certain logic, although it remains self-referential: while the trail is described in detail, it is never located; therefore, the trail stands as a coherent whole which follows a clear set of indications from the slough where the hunt begins to the stands of saplings where the moose stops to feed, but it remains somewhat out of place. Its location does not matter as much as the relation from one object to the other, which is consolidated by Eli's movements. What we see therefore is a series of points related to one another by movement through space.

Like Nanapush, Pauline describes trails in detail, but they are paths she is forced to follow in visions and thereby become manifestations of her increasing tendency to rely on mental schemes to relate to her environment. Whereas Pauline's "urban spaces" are fixed, or appear to be so, the trails which she delineates are not descriptions of isolated entities; rather, points are linked together in a logical sequence. Pauline fails to achieve objectivity since her description of Argus, the butcher shop, and the Morrissey farm remains partial. What is more, her detachment can be ascribed to her attempt to extract herself from the land and assume an outsider's perspective in her descriptions as she tries to detach herself from her origins. In contrast, her vision of the way to Matchimanito is depicted more vividly. Pauline's failure to map out space objectively is paralleled by her reluctance to describe the trails she actually follows in favour of the ones she sees in visions. When she feels called to destroy the monster, Pauline is "forced to follow […] the turn-off that led into the woods" (194) and describes the trail which leads there:

> I walked, unwilling, the old way to Matchimanito Lake, passed the round slough and tall yellow reeds, over the tamped snow and grass through the massive oak trees, came to the clearing and continued away beyond Fleur's cabin until I broke through the undergrowth and stood on shore. (194)

The path of her vision exists in the material world and is familiar to her; she will take it later in order to enact her vision. The itinerary is detailed enough to constitute a trail map. This scene provides the reader with clear indications concerning the path to Matchimanito, including the wooded area cherished by Nanapush, who remains largely silent on its exact location.

As noted above, the reservation is the epistemological centre of Louise Erdrich's fiction. In spite of moving towards urban centres and inhabiting many different spaces, her characters maintain vital ties to tribal land. The fact that the reservation itself is not actually mapped out in coherent detail, therefore, can appear surprising. However, the

notion that the centre is effectively an absence, a void in the official map with shifting coordinates and elusive locations, shows that Louise Erdrich is engaged in a project other than geographical mapping of a fictional world. Her narratives focus on trails and develop intricate networks of relationship between characters and places in the form of trail maps. Her dynamic view of space is indicative of an Indigenous understanding of spatiality which does not attempt to remove people from the land in order to delineate it, but rather establishes a participatory relationship between people and the land which they inhabit. Her refusal to fix coordinates can be read as a sovereign aesthetic which attempts to redefine the meaning of Native space.

Little

David Treuer's first novel *Little* (1995) is the one which most qualifies as a reservation novel, while *The Hiawatha* (1999) and *The Translation of Dr Apelles* (2006) are based in more urban settings. His latest novel *Prudence* (2015) is more rural than the previous two but is not situated on reservation land; it also incorporates several white protagonists (*The Translation of Dr Apelles* and *Prudence* will be addressed in chapters two and three respectively). Situated on an unnamed reservation that has correspondences with Leech Lake in North Minnesota, *Little* explores the lives of several generations of the characters who live on the housing tract called Poverty and outlines a complex social and geographical map not only of the reservation but of a larger area, with forays into other states and abroad. Treuer's thorough examination of the expansion of tribal experience beyond reservation boundaries in a network of exchange speaks to Tol Foster's "relational regionalism," in the sense that "[…] a neglect of any of the national, regional, or tribal frames would create an insufficient narrative arc. […] I actually see a regional framework as one that is not actually coherent without more specific tribal studies that serve to buttress and challenge it" ("Of One Blood" 269). Far from limiting characters' experience to the

reservation, Treuer delineates the ways in which they participate in wider economies and allegiances throughout the state of Minnesota and beyond. As a reservation novel, however, *Little* occupies an ambiguous space between hope and despair, or between loss and the possibility of renewal. It also reveals the ancient pathways that have always connected reservation land to wider territories and are waiting for characters to remember them.

In February 2019, David Treuer appeared on Democracy Now! to discuss his latest book in a talk titled "Indian Life Rather than Indian Death." Treuer's *The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee* offers a counternarrative to Dee Brown's 1970 bestseller *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, which framed the massacre as the end point of Native American history. Starting in the wake of Wounded Knee, Treuer shifts the discourse that views Native peoples as the tragic "victims of history" to recast them more accurately as "historical actors" who have "shaped this country" so that "America has come to understand itself in relation to us." This move away from the reservation as a place of desolation, poverty, squalor and despair towards a site of renewal where a sense of cultural agency and self-determination can be regained mirrors an arc in the literature as well as the critical discourse (from Arnold Krupat to Kevin Bruyneel). Recently, the reservation is increasingly seen as a sovereign space, or even a centre of national space, as is the case for White Earth since the ratification of its Constitution in 2009. Thus, the conversations regarding tribal sovereignty, while not necessarily limited to reservation land, tend to refer back to that base. In contrast, many of the novels produced in the 80s and 90s, convey a sense of the reservation as a place that signals loss–such as James Welch's *Fools Crow* (1986), Louise Erdrich's *Love Medicine* (1984), or Sherman Alexie's *Reservation Blues* (1995). Treuer's *Little*, staging a tragic story set on a housing tract suggestively named Poverty, could easily join this list. The narrative focuses on two houses in Poverty: the inhabitants of the first house, Jeanette and the twins Duke and Ellis (who live in a car parked in front of

the house), were the first to make a home in Poverty. Adopted by Jeannette, Donovan cares for her daughter Celia's son Little, a boy whose fingers are fused together and who stays mute except for the single word "you." Stan is Celia's lover and a veteran of the Vietnam war where he lost his friend, Pick; they live with his sister Violet along with the latter's daughter, Jackie. From that specific centre, characters leave, and often come back, at various points in their lives. This section will show how connections between locales are established by the narrative in *Little*. After examining how the reservation is mapped out by the narrative, I will contrast settler and Indigenous perceptions of space in order to demonstrate how essential people's relationship to place is to maintaining a sense of belonging. Characters' identification with trees and the importance of water as a signifier of movement allow further exploration of the manner in which these bonds are created and sometimes challenged. Finally, the "old paths" described in *Little* demonstrate an ongoing ancestral Indigenous relationship to the land capable of reinstating a Native space that radiates out of the reservation across geo-political boundaries.

In *Little*, the reservation on which the narrative takes place remains unnamed, as does the nearby town toward which the main characters converge. Only the housing tract called Poverty, situated a short way from the town, is named. This makes it difficult to situate the narrative on a map with any exactitude. However, there are similarities between the town of Bena, Treuer's childhood home, and the one described in the narrative. Situated in a wooded area with lakes, Bena is crossed by a highway. Although the Mississipi River is a few miles away, the lake through which the river passes, lake Winnibigoshish, borders Bena. However, Bena is larger than the fictional location. Similarly, Cass Lake might have provided a model for the town in Little but seems larger than the fictional locale. Thus, it appears that in similar fashion as Louise Erdrich, whose novels resist revealing actual place names for her fictional reservation, Treuer does not wish to assign a straightforward geographical equivalent to the fictional town. Looking at

the novel for indications, it is nevertheless possible to compose a map of the literary environment. The narrative centres on the house situated at the end of Poverty–Jeanette's house (45). Poverty is described as a housing tract surrounded by forests, with a few hay fields across the road (8) situated in relative seclusion (3) out of radio distance (141). When the main characters leave (Stan overseas, Lyle away in the Cities or Winnipeg) the place becomes empty and desolate (172), which shows the centrality of community to give meaning to the place. Poverty is situated on a reservation (9, 114) within walking distance of the reservation town and a nearby lake into which the river flows (25). There is a sign announcing the reservation on the highway (20), which runs through the town in the middle of the reservation (19). The town has a bingo hall (33), a schoolhouse (44), and an old logging camp (48) situated some way beyond the lake from town (25). The town itself is composed of five buildings: a gas station, a hardware store, a community centre, a nursing home, and a church lining a dirt road (143). The houses are described as "rotting log cabins" and "tar-paper shacks" (143). The reservation also includes powwow grounds with its attendant parking field, and a bingo tent (193). There is another town right beyond the reservation border (137), starting with the Red Owl shop situated "just on the edge of the reservation" (198). Mostly "owned by whites" (192), the reservation is a four-and-a-half-hour drive from St Paul (144), the twin cities being the closest major urban centre; Duluth is a few hours away (198) at the western tip of Lake Superior, with only a few towns in between (199). Across the Canadian border, Winnipeg is another important urban centre. Providing some context for his choice of setting, Treuer explains in *Rez Life* that "on the outskirts of Cass Lake" stands "what some say is the worst housing tract in all Indian country" (166), a remain of HUD housing projects established in the 1960s in the context of the War on Poverty–in *Little*, the houses have likewise gone decrepit (24). He goes on to write that Cass Lake used to have important timber resources and is strategically situated on an axis between Duluth and Grand Forks, Winnipeg and Minneapolis (*Rez Life*

178)–all train lines used to go through the town of Bemidji, situated between White Earth, Red Lake, and Leech Lake reservations (*Rez Life* 138). This shows the connections the area maintains to a wider geography. In the novel, the way to Duluth and the geographical area around it are carefully described (199), and Lake Superior is described as a salty ocean that goes around the world (200), indicating that, although situated at the centre of the narrative, the fictional reservation is not closed upon itself but also reaches outward to other places, a place of connection as much as isolation.

In addition to the map of Poverty and its surroundings, Treuer employs detailed descriptions of places to create an extensive geography of human activity in North America that shows the involvement of Anishinaabe actors on the continent. By constituting human geographies of labour, commerce, and migration, he connects many locales through human mobility. His maps thus serve a different purpose to Erdrich's above, as they convey historical and more markedly communal perspectives. The way in which Treuer maps out social space and human activity can be related to a topological view of space as a map of human interaction with the land in which the notion of place is constituted through a relationship to the land rather than considering it as a separate entity. Treuer's migrational maps also remind readers that the reservation does not function as a closed system but has always maintained a range of contacts with places through movement reaching out of, and returning to, the reservation. Eric Gary Anderson observes that contested borders are neither "stable (physically and socially" nor "translucent (ideologically)" and points out the "elusive, migratory textual and cultural moments" that occur across borders (*American Indian Literature and the Southwest* 10). Although situated in the northern border region that separates Canada from the U.S. rather than the southern one, Treuer's novel also participates in the "construction of a crucial, alternative literary and cultural history of an ever-shifting, Indian-American" region (Anderson 16). Treuer's fictional reservation boundaries thus appear much more porous than Erdrich's in *Tracks*,

where only the nearby towns provide alternative locales and the geographical reach of the narrative remains very limited. In *Little*, Minneapolis is an important urban centre with which characters are associated in a various ways: while the older generations used to collect poplar from the reservation logging camp to be "railed to Minneapolis for the paper mills" (57), their children now play (and lose) hockey matches against privileged teams from the suburbs of Minneapolis (12). The narrative focalisation on one of the white characters' stay in Minneapolis also traces a geography of commerce through a century of history. By the time Paul visits the city, "the wheat had ceased to be sent by train from Iowa, Nebraska, and Kansas," and "[t]he tracks were rusted and the only line that still ran was the Northern Pacific from Duluth," carrying "taconite and ore from the Mesabi range, "the mountains having been "sucked dry to build Chicago and Milwaukee" (77). This timeline in turn engenders a complex geography of migration as mining families from the Mesabi range move to the South Side of Minneapolis "along with the blacks and Indians" (77) to get "jobs as mechanics and carpenters" (78). As a result, bankers and businessmen who used to live in the area south of the river move to the suburbs when property values plummet. Eventually, lawyers and doctors come to live in the more affluent neighbourhoods of St. Paul. Treuer's extensive descriptions outline economic and social geographies of urban exile and its aftermath in painstaking detail (79-80), linking locales together in an intricate map of human movement. Showing the importance of place as a protagonist, weather and seasons likewise influence economies and leave their mark on social histories, constantly shifting the position of individuals, families and communities on the map (84). These changes are often tied to the ongoing impact of colonialism. Thus, while Treuer reminds readers that mobility is an intrinsic component of Indigenous practices, he also demonstrates the noxious effects that displacement can have on Indigenous peoples by breaking down kinship ties and threatening the sense of belonging that keeps communities strong. For instance, Jeannette relates the dislocation of her family

when, as part of the Relocation programme, the Indian agent tries to persuade Anishinaabe people to move south where the prairies have been "opened up" for land use, and puts the community under pressure through annuity payments (50) until people are "peeled back from the land" (51). Forcibly removed from their land by economic pressures, Jeanette's family, along with many others, moves southward, progressively, to finally reach Minneapolis (51-56). One generation later, Violet's mother makes a parallel move to Mille Lacs, then Sawyer, and finally Minneapolis (184). Adopting a freer pattern of movement, Lyle likes to travel "to the Cities or off to Winnipeg" (172). Characters, therefore, leave the reservation for two main reasons: relationship breakdowns in the community (as is the case for Lyle) or the need for employment (Jeannette's family).

Western and Indigenous views of the land are largely defined through the perspective of Father Paul on the one hand, who is sent north to replace the priest murdered on the reservation, and the descriptions of Anishinaabe characters who live there on the other. Treuer outlines a sharp contrast between settlers' utilitarian view of the land as a separate, somewhat remote, and passive entity when they "smooth[...] over the spaces that to them appeared as silences" (13), compared to an Indigenous sense of belonging based on ancestral knowledge of the land described as "memories longer and deeper than these" (14). The first perspective is represented by Paul's point of view. When he arrives on the reservation, it is winter and the land is frozen (137). Paul sees "no reason for the placement" of the reservation town and cannot understand why people choose to stay there (139), thus revealing his obliviousness to the ties of people to their homeland. Paul believes that:

> the reason he was never allowed to be owned by the land or its people was that he was too aware of the broken-downness of things, that he had an eye for it; for wells that had gone dry or the water too hard with rusty minerals, for rains that didn't come or that came too early […] (138)

Raised on a farm, he pays particular attention to aspects of the land and weather that facilitate agricultural production, as though place were to function as a backdrop for material and monetary gain. Thus, water should be drinkable, rains should coincide with farmers' almanacs, and nature's failure to serve human needs is perceived as an inconvenience and counter to the order of things. Cast as uniform, the land is to be exploited. Paul longs for routine, structure and regular patterns and, therefore, expects his environment to comply with his wishes. When it fails to do so, as is so often the case in the harsh and unpredictable landscape of the reservation, Paul's sense of belonging is threatened. His constant misreading of the land engenders misunderstandings, as when he misinterprets the fields as decrepit without realising that they are "empty spaces on which ancient forests used to stand" (138) and that the land is moving back towards its original state, slowly eroding the effects of colonisation. To Paul, this process is a signifier of human weakness and incapacity to put the land to productive use. What eludes human control appears threatening to him, such as the mysterious old logging road north of town, which does not have a precise destination but, as he is told, "turned and looped back in the woods, skirted a couple of lakes, and then turned back on itself" (150). When he attempts to walk along that path, Paul is intimidated by the thick forest that seems to stretch indefinitely and makes him "feel lost in a place in which even the trees seemed to know where they were going" (150). His relationship to his natural surroundings comes from his childhood on the family farmstead in Iowa, which is described as "squatt[ing] belligerently on the soil" (70) in a defensive posture of resistance. The house itself, while "being eaten by the land," attempts to "guard[…] itself against the uncertainty of farm life, against the fields […]" (71) and knows that it has no history, that its materials have all been imported from elsewhere, and as a result that "it didn't belong" (72). The personification of the house matches Paul's subjective experience, such as his description of "the fields that began by the barn and ran for miles in every direction" (82). From his childhood room, he is

grateful when the sound of the wind "create[s] a distance between him and the earth" as well as "the illusion of movement" (82), thus letting him fantasise that he could evade the static, forced emplacement he cannot tolerate. Even when he leaves his family's home, Paul struggles to shake off his feeling of confinement: "Seeing the textured crops swing by below made him think of the rug and carpet and he saw that there was truly nowhere to go" (75), as though the house, the fields and the country at large were conflated into a claustrophobic, desolate space. On the train to the Cities, Paul observes as "the fields trickled by, floating diligently but with dragging feet […] in uncomfortable detail" (83). Agricultural land thus seems inescapable in its uniformity, much like the thick forests north of the Minnesota reservation, both of which convey simultaneous experiences of disorientation and entrapment and are ultimately "caught and snared by a real sea" in every direction (84). When Paul is sent from Minneapolis "five hours to the north […] out of reach of the sidewalk imagination of the city people" (89), he has an urge to order things around him in order to "stay the balance" (148) and is out of tune with the land and its rhythms, feeling "lonely and battered by what was happening around him, all of which he was forced to guess at because no one told him anything" (149).

Weather is given a lot of attention in the narrative, as is the turn from season to season, a constant presence on the reservation and in the Cities as well as in other States. The climate provides another indication of Paul's craving for order and control, both indicative of his lack of connection with place. Whereas in Minneapolis Paul "knew the signs" of winter before "the winds came from the north" (89), on the reservation he "missed [the] most obvious sign[s] of the impending fall" (209). The logic of the land and its seasons seem impenetrable to him. In contrast, Violet is attuned to the rhythms of the land and the seasonal activities associated with different times of the year: "it was early June. The spearing was done, ricing wouldn't come until late August, and even berry-picking was a month and a half away" (185). Indeed, these seasonal activities are

reestablished at the end of the novel, following Little's death (245-246), as a sign of the new equilibrium reached by the community of Poverty. Paul, however, does not seek order and predictability in the natural world. Instead, he revels in an architectural coffee table book that counters the threadbare simplicity of the town where he lives and yearns for complex, aestheticised human-made structures that cannot be duplicated (216), unlike the pine trees that he is unable to distinguish from one another (214). He sees the trees as defiant and believes that, similarly to the people on the reservation who keep their distance from him, the trees are "proud in self-competence" (214). Just as Paul does not understand why the town is maintained in this isolated place, nor why people would choose to live there, he expresses disgust towards the trees in his statement that "even in their pathetic state as amputees they refused to die" (215), thereby establishing a parallel between the wounded trees that remain standing and Indigenous inhabitants who struggle to maintain their community in spite of past and present injuries. His gaze on the reservation and its inhabitants is largely complicit with settler views of Indigenous peoples as the doomed inhabitants of a desolate place. For Indigenous characters however, there are ways through the forest and along the river that connect people and places not only in their immediate surroundings but throughout a far wider region. Their sense of direction and orientation allow them to conceive of the reservation as connected rather than seeing it as empty and isolated, as is the case for Paul. Indeed, Paul's static, exploitative view of settler land (especially fields and cities), which conveys a pervasive sense of dispossession, is somewhat comparable to Pauline's description of the town of Fargo and the Morrisseys' farmland in *Tracks*. Both of them apply a lens of disrupted histories onto the territory itself, so that place is read as convergent with the colonial logic of expansion.

In contrast, the Indigenous characters in *Little*, and in particular the ones who live under Jeannette's influence in Poverty, have more in common with Erdrich's Nanapush, whose emphasis is on movement through the land and who is, like Fleur,

strongly associated with trees. Trees are a central motif in *Little* and represent the necessity for characters to stay firmly on the ground, connected to the worlds above and below, thus standing for a sense of belonging. Jeanette points out that "some say history ended up here where the real woods used to stand," (45) thereby conveying the notion that logging "the last big trees" marked the end of the people, too: "The last three-hundred-year-old pine was cut from the center of Manitou Island in the middle of our lake. All we had left was second growth and when we stood naked, the truth about us was revealed in stands of slashed poplar and scarred jack pine" (46). People and trees are thus closely identified and the loss of the forest leaves the community without protection. The fish, bear, and buffalo soon left the area, too. By the time of Jeanette's narrative, however, fish and deer have returned, the forest has partly grown back, and a new generation of Anishinaabeg offers hope for the future, as Jeannette articulates when she looks at the children playing and remarks "Who would have guessed that the seeds cast and broken open by fire would have opened this way, these ways" (46), using a plant metaphor to suggest the possibility of renewal for Poverty. When Donovan describes tree stumps as "piled scars and amputations," (166), he likewise suggests a link between trees and people, and more specifically between Stan and Little, one of whom lost his arm in combat while the other was born with fingers fused together. Trees also come to represent settler colonialism when Jeannette describes urban trees in Davenport as tightly controlled: "these were city trees, planted by city people, trapped between the lanes and avenues, the sidewalks and the houses […] they crossed and bordered, were planted there on purpose, and had no life of their own" (59), a description that corresponds to the expectations imposed on her own life when she works there as a servant to two rich women, subjected to their whims and punishments. In places on the reservation where trees have been heavily logged, characters progressively reclaim these spaces and reintegrate them. However, this is not achieved in seamless continuity with traditional lifeways; indeed disruptions have been occurring for a

long time and people, therefore, have long learnt to adapt their activities accordingly. For instance, by hunting deer in the place where the forest has been downed, it may look like Stan and Donovan are reclaiming the desolation as a place from which to restore traditional practices, thus reinstating continuity as they "navigated the path" in what Ellis calls "Indian walking" to the place that belongs to them (160):

> The light came stronger, freeing up the morning cold, coming over the lake to our right, behind the trees. The cut was visible ahead, abrupt and final where the clear-cutting had left only a few scarred jack pines and poplars sticking through the tangle of brush, branches and rust-colored needles, the color of slow death. This was our spot. (160)

Donovan, by hunting deer in the forest, is simply reclaiming traditional lifeways. However, before being logged at all, these parts of the forest had been inhospitable to deer, which means that the animals only spread into the area in the aftermath of land exploitation:

> It used to have trees, it was supposed to, had been created for them. Ellis said it all used to be trees, no slashings, not even any fields. He said the trees had been so big around and had grown so tall that the only place to get sun, where you were forced to squint, had been on the lake. There hadn't even been any brush because of the deep deep dark. Secret places, with no food for animals like deer. (166)

This can therefore be read as an example of evolving practices of renewal, which do not occur within a rigid interpretation of tradition as frozen and prescriptive but, rather, through an ongoing engagement with the land. At the end of the novel, Donovan expresses the community's new-found sense of balance as finding their place in even relationships within a natural order: "We knew we were finally equal among the pines, along the lakeshore, and with the river" (246). In spite of the desolation, there is the potential for characters to envision new ways of relating to their environment in a manner that enables renewal. Compared to Erdrich's narrative in *Tracks*, where Fleur sabotages the

last oaks to take revenge on the lumberjacks, but the forest is nevertheless lost, *Little* articulates a more nuanced stance by allowing trees and people to stand together despite ongoing hardships.

Much like trees, water is a central motif in the novel, one that has been addressed by both David Stirrup and Padraig Kirwan. What deserves further attention here is the way in which it signifies movement, a flow from rivers to lakes and finally oceans, and thereby functions as a symbol of mobility. In particular, Little's death at the water tower, which Stirrup sees as deliberate through Little's "choice to make himself one with the water" ("Life After Death" 662), allows Little to merge symbolically with people, river, trees, and fish through water distribution: as Donovan concludes "The water supply was the best way for him to be in everything" (231). Likewise, the hatched pike released into the moving water at the end of the novel signals hope for the community; the eggs convey a message of continuation (248). The event of Jeannette's leading Donovan, Little and Jackie "up river to the dam for the first time" (93) is a significant moment in the narrative; although human-made, the place shelters a lot of wild life (105), the moving water of the dam thus constituting a productive space where characters feel they belong. Water thus means continuation and renewal as well as the possibility of movement. Kirwan argues that "the water acts as a space in which there are no borders" and views the Mississippi as "a boundaryless river […] a metaphor for a globalized, culturally amorphous space" ("All the Talk" 458). The tension between the unifying potential of water and the risk of losing one's distinctive identity by merging is revealed in these remarks. Characters struggle with the necessity of transcending borders and boundaries without being uprooted and erased. Indeed, in *Little*, water does not merely stand for a mobility in any idealised sense but also for displacement, the most salient example being when it motivates Stan to sign up with the army and go to war. Stan attributes his going to war to the Mississippi River, after a particular night spent close to the dam. The river connects the reservation to Minneapolis

and, ultimately, the ocean: "It was our river, the Mississippi. It flowed by Poverty. It stretched clear from our reservation down to the Cities and kept on going. And we lay by it" (123). Like a road, it seems to pull Stan away from the reservation and send him overseas across the ocean in spite of his fear: "I felt like I might just slip into the river and float. I would float clear down into the ocean and keep on going. The ocean scares me. It's too big. It's too deep. The river kept pulling me there […]" (124). As if answering the river's calling, that very morning, Pick and Stan enrol in the army. War creates a disrupted sense of geography, but Stan and Pick, who both come from the same reservation although Pick lives "on the other side of town" to Poverty, find a sense of ease in Vietnam by staying together: "how comfortable we were there, in the jungle. 'It's just like home'" (116). Four months later, however, when Pick gets killed and Stan loses his arm, memories of a hunt with his father are juxtaposed with the gruesome scene to emphasise a history of dispossession: Stan's father went to prison when he was a child for a crime he hadn't committed, and now Stan's friend and his own arm are also taken away. Stan's blood soaks into the sand along with Pick's and he "couldn't hold onto it before it was emptied into the ocean" (130), as though a reverse movement from the one that occurred near the Mississippi and brought them to Vietnam were now drawing them back home. At home however, no news from the war were given on City radio stations (133), nor did any letter inform anyone of Pick's death or Stan's return (132). As in *Tracks*, there is thus a movement out of the reservation and back, situating it as a place to which characters return –the homecoming theme pervasive to Native American literature, at least until recently. But in *Little*, just as Stan and Pick first think that the jungle looks like home, going back to the reservation does not necessarily re-establish normality. Another instance of this is when Jeanette returns to the logging camp at the end of the second world war "along the lake to the river and across" and finds the place changed: "The landmarks were gone, the trees gone, and the roll of the land crushed flat by oxen and pushed up by dynamite. The men

who were just returning from the war, who came back to a place that had turned into a desert, said that our mud looked the same as French mud" (56-57). Thus, Treuer does not completely antagonise reservation space and the other places that cause disruption for characters. Homecoming is not represented as an idealised solution because it bears the imprint of history rather than embodying a stable, preserved place. Characters need to reclaim their own land and its significance in order to belong. The reservation does not in and of itself offer solace; instead, its boundaries are porous and affected by the events that characters undergo on the outside and later bring home with them. Water, too, is only imbued with meaning in accordance with characters' interaction with the element: after leading Stan to war and back, following Little's death and the hatching of the eggs released into the river, it becomes a fertile space again. The movement and regeneration represented by trees and water emphasise the mobility and adaptability of Anishinaabe characters, both on the reservation and beyond.

Pathways and waterways are intersected by borders–reservation boundaries, state lines, and the international border with Canada. Lines and boundaries are markers of an imposed colonial geography but are regularly crossed by Indigenous characters for whom their lack of geographical reality is evident. Playing as children, Jackie and Donovan run "[p]ast all the old places, beyond the old lines and boundaries of the reservation (8). These signs, "like any state line, marked no change at all, marked changes that couldn't be seen with the eye" (20). These contrasts, such as different hunting laws (126) nevertheless have a real impact on characters, as in the example of Stan's father who is arrested, allegedly for shooting a deer on the wrong side of the reservation boundary (126). These lines carry a distressing, oppressive weight. Significantly, when Stan returns from the war in Vietnam, his lover Celia describes the lines around Stan, "clear as if they were painted on everything around him" (133). The lines are experienced as disturbing: "I knew I had to get Stan's mind off the lines" (135). They separate people from one another and constitute

attempts at enclosure. Other lines in the narrative signal a completely different order: the old paths in the woods along the Mississippi connect the reservation to faraway places and also remind characters of their ancestral relationship with the land in a much wider scope than current reservation borders represent. Not only are the old paths signifiers of continental Indigenous mobility, they also recall characters to a sense of continuity as the hidden pathways are revealed to new generations. Walking the old paths allows them to renew an ongoing relationship with the land and provide a sense of recovery and belonging that is not accessible by any other means. Jeanette first walks the old path when Duke and Ellis come to find her in Davenport, Iowa, where she works as a servant, and the three of them walk the five hundred miles back to the Minnesota reservation, guided and sheltered by a natural environment that provides both secrecy and sustenance by ensuring that their escape remains undiscovered, pointing out the way, and offering them food:

> When we pulled away from the river because it bent too far to the east, and took to the fields, the grass bent under our feet. At night when we walked, stopping only to pick sweet corn and squash from people's gardens, the grass was slick with dew, so so no matter how dry it was there was no rustle and no cracking. Some nights, when there were no clouds, the northern lights pointed our way across the sea of soy and corn. They arched overhead, and shimmered and danced. We walked lighter because of them. After we crossed the fields they still guided us, prodding the three of us along […] until we reached our river. Behind a hill, suddenly, it came snaking from the north, and we followed it upstream. We followed its bank along the old paths our parents had shown us, that their parents had shown them, which we all thought had been buried under ten feet of moving water, but which had actually been waiting for us. Once we were back in the woods, there was only the whisper of branches, the touch of waist-high grass. (69)

As the three characters walk along this path, a shift operates: "the river" becomes "our river," even though it was the Mississippi all along. The path is linked with remembering,

with recalling not only a geography of the area but a sense of belonging to the land, the ancestral relationship to place which turns out not to be "buried" but is actually "waiting" to re-establish a connection between the path and the people. The "whisper of branches" and "the touch of waist-high grass" further demonstrate that this mutual bond is expressed through language and the physicality of touch. The old paths thus open up the potential to counter the "images of sorrow, silence, and repressed memory" which Kirwan notes in the novel ("All the Talk" 455). When Jeannette recounts the long way back from Iowa, she is sixty and recalling the experience as she escapes her nursing home to walk back to Poverty. The two paths are thus juxtaposed in the narrative to reveal the role of remembrance and renewal performed by the act of following the old paths. Even though they are now covered by the highway, Jeannette knows that their presence can be felt and reclaimed:

> I walked the highway back to this tract, to Poverty. I walked it and the secret of my feat is that underneath the broken asphalt, the crumbling tar, and the frost-heaved dips, underneath the gravel bed and the levelled ditches there used to be a path. This wasn't a river path. It was a woods one, a quiet one, and we remembered each other as I placed my foot on the shoulder of the highway. We recognised one another, and that is the secret of what carried me home to Poverty […] (69)

The distinction between river paths and quieter woodland paths shows that they have different, specific qualities. The reciprocity involved in walking on the land is stressed by the statement that Jeannette and the old path "recognised one another" and that this knowledge provides her with the strength she needs to make her way home. Years before this event when Little, Jackie and Donovan are still children, Jeannette transmits her knowledge of the traditional pathways by showing them the way to the dam, a place where Donovan and Jackie keep returning after Little's death, "when we knew the river was finally ours" (99). Just as walking the old paths for the first time allows Jeanette to shift from seeing the river as an external object to appropriating it by calling it "our river" (69),

Donovan recalls his first walk through the cedars along the banks of the Mississippi as an event imbued with significance and describes the path in very vivid, sensory terms:

> [W]e walked under the drooping branches of the smooth-barked cedars that cut a smell so good that it was everywhere: hovering just behind the trunks, in the air ahead and above, and it cloaked us from sight along the old path we never knew existed before […] We never knew of the path, could never had known what to look for; the creased trunks, the mat of roots, the saw grass and red willow, all of which hid and protected that path that courted the river, and that Jeanette said was "really old-time" […] But not forgotten, like a scar or a favorite shirt left at a cousin's house during deer season. When we find these things again they come back, we are visited again by how the mark found its way onto our skin forever […] So our journey down the trail at the river's edge was marked by silence on our part, and the careful feet of Jeanette remembering over the twisted roots and over the dips and bends. At times the trail looked like nothing; the weeds and marsh grass sprang up among the sweet-smelling trunks and I thought it was done, that Jeannette had forgotten or lost the way. But she pushed through, while the river flowed on our right. She pushed through gently, gently remembering through. (100)

These almost-forgotten pathways are concealed so that Donovan "could never had known what to look for;" "hid[den] and protected," the path often "looked like nothing" and requires an intimate and instinctual knowledge in order to be recovered and reclaimed, a process likened to a wound that heals but does not disappear. The process of "remembering through" is thus embedded in the senses and involves the body, especially Jeannette's feet as they communicate with the path, "remembering over" its features, the creases of the land. Although buried, hidden, nearly invisible, this traditional knowledge is not forgotten: "[w]hen we find these things again they come back" (100). Despite this certainty, the endurance of the bond between people and place is not guaranteed. Looking

back on the day and retrospectively stating that "[w]e believed that our relationship with the Mississippi River was untroubled," (108) Donovan indicates the complexity of the tie between people and the land, and indeed when the four characters return to Poverty in the darkness that night, the presence of the Mississippi is more subdued: "The cedars shrouded us and even though the river was only a few feet to our left, it was hard to hear. There wasn't any moonlight to be seen between the trunks. No reflection off the river's surface were visible. It was like the river was cowed […]" (115). With the river "hushed" and "slunk" next to them, they walk "without sound and without light," any starlight "shut out" by thick cedar branches (115). In spite of the tempered quality of the walk back, Donovan says that Jeannette "led us all the way without faltering once" (115), as they follow the old path home. The main risk in the narrative derives from a severance from the earth, as when Donovan follows Little to the water tower where the boy eventually drowns. Donovan feels cut off from the ground (231), leaving him alone with "the sky, Mother Earth so far below" (229) so that he finds it difficult to know "what the world is trying to tell [him]" (227). Away from the ground, Donovan loses his capacity to act responsibly. The old paths, however, affirm that very connection between people and their ancestral homeland, not only within reservation boundaries but beyond their reach in what may well be a nation-wide network of Indigenous pathways.

To conclude, *Little* does not articulate a definite split between reservation boundaries and wider areas; rather, it shows how mobility has influenced people's lives on the North American continent for centuries. Like the motif of flowing water and the old paths running along the Mississippi, these movements seem to be part of a natural order; they may not always benefit Indigenous characters but can participate in the reclaiming of a much wider Indigenous relationship to the land. Treuer shows how a relational framework, centred on Anishinaabe characters' understanding of the land, also connects with other places through pathways, provided characters remember the practices of their ancestors

and go on using them. The danger of separation from the land, represented by the figure of Father Paul and the artificial landmark of the water tower, risks cutting people off from one another and causing damage to relational networks.

The Trickster of Liberty and Hotline Healers

Gerald Vizenor's *The Trickster of Liberty* (1988) and *Hotline Healers* (1997) are situated on a fictional baronage named Patronia at the northeastern end of White Earth Reservation in Northern Minnesota. These two novels narrate the lives of several generations of trickster characters from the Browne family, tracing them back from the first Baron of Patronia in *The Trickster of Liberty* and developing anecdotes for each of its family members in a short story cycle format. *Hotline Healers* focuses more closely on main protagonist Almost Browne, although it sometimes follows other characters such as Gesture and Cozie Browne. Patronia is used as a departure point, as well as a centre, for all the different narratives that occur in different parts of the United States and the world, thus enabling an evolving Indigenous framework to be applied to a plurality of contexts as a form of self-determination. As James Cox argues in *The Red Land to The South*, Vizenor's fiction makes sovereignty and citizenship "at once indigenous transnational and tribal-nation specific" (176), linking up the reservation as a place of agency with various forms of interaction in the wider world. Wherever they are present, Anishinaabe characters engage with other people and institutions on their own terms to allow creative interchanges to take place. The land itself is subject to constant change and reinvention, people are highly mobile, and the natural world makes its presence felt throughout the narrative. These manifestations help Vizenor delineate an open-ended yet assertive Indigenous framework.

First of all, it is interesting to note that, much like Erdrich and Treuer, Vizenor chooses to transpose a fictional space onto real geographical terrain. Indeed, the setting of the two narratives attaches an imaginary baronage onto the northeastern border

of White Earth Reservation. *The Trickster of Liberty* (1988) and *Hotline Healers* (1997) share the same setting as they both take place on Patronia, which is described as "a wild crescent on the White Earth Reservation northeast of Bad Medicine Lake" (5). Its natural surroundings consist of a "shallow creek at the treeline" bordered by "huge granite boulders" among which "white pine and a rush of paper birch" grow (5). A "weathered hutment" stands behind a "cedar on the west bank of the creek" (5); from there the sunrise can be observed above a "natural meadow" on the eastern side of the creek. There is also a pond on "the northern brow of the wild crescent" (5), from which the meadow apparently stretches all the way to the shore of Long Lost Lake" (7). It is difficult to draw a definite map of the area using these indications, yet they allow the reader to envision a loose geography of the place. Likewise, the narrative depiction of the reservation itself is all but fixed. Although Vizenor designates White Earth as the location for the novel, the narrative is almost exclusively situated on the imaginary baronage. As Vizenor explains in the epilogue of *The Trickster of Liberty*, the idea for Patronia derives from the legal document issued by the U.S. government to Vizenor's grandmother:

> The quotations on land allotment in the first chapter of this novel are from an original patent issued to Alice Beaulieu, my paternal grandmother, a White Earth Mississippi Chippewa Indian. The patent was issued by order of the secretary of the interior and signed by President Theodore Roosevelt on May 21, 1908. (*TL* 156-157)

Imitating the formal language of the historical patent, Vizenor adds an ironic twist by giving "heritable tribal noblesse" (5) to protagonist Luster Browne: "the United States of America, in consideration of the promises, has given and granted, and by these presents does give and grant, unto the said Luster Browne, and to his heirs, the lands above described, and the title, Baron of Patronia." (4) Intended as a "colonial hoax" (5), the "land patent that banished [Luster] to the outback on the reservation" (4) becomes "a virtue in

one generation" (5) as the wild baronage develops and becomes the site of many activities, including a small international airport and a platform for the trade of ginseng. Among the buildings of the baronage, a "tavern and sermon center," the "Last Lecture was built on a watershed below the scapehouse at the south end of the baronage" with seven phone booths affixed to the back of the building, one of their door providing access to the tavern and the other opening onto a stone precipice carved by urban mixedbloods (107). The "scapehouse," a safe space for "wounded reservation women" where men come to confess their acts of violence, is situated "at the base of the crescent" (*TL* 91)–although it used to be situated elsewhere on Leech Lake (91-92)–and its confessionals/phone booths are later used for the Last Tavern. In addition to these buildings, at the headwaters of the *gichiziibi* (Mississippi), monks who sailed across the ocean two decades before Columbus (*HH* 161) built a monastery, then a second monastery and library on the eastern shore of Bad Medicine Lake (*HH* 165). All of these features are located on the baronage; in fact, White Earth Reservation is scarcely described. The U.S.-Canadian international border seems to be fairly close to the baronage, where it crosses the many islands of Lake Namakan–including Wanaki Island–so that people can easily drift over the border by mistake (*HH* 145). In reality, Lake Namakan is situated on the international border approximately one hundred miles northeast of White Earth, and Wanaki Island is even farther, in Ontario, but in the fictional environment of the two novels, characters live on islands crossed by the international border, cultivate ginseng on these border islands, and navigate these waters frequently. What is more, characters also engage in activities in a plurality of national and international locations: courts, casinos (in particular Ozaawaa Casino on White Earth), urban university campuses such as the University of California at Berkeley (where Vizenor was a professor for many years), but also in England where the University of Kent and Canterbury cathedral (*HH* 42) are recurrent settings. Several characters also travel to communist China. Thus, although the narratives are both centred on the reservation

baronage of Patronia, which is constantly evolving and described in a lot of detail, the geographical scope of the two narratives is much wider than either Erdrich's in *Tracks* or Treuer's in *Little*: its reach is worldwide.

The purpose of both the imaginary reservation baronage and the national and international exchanges staged by the narrative is to cultivate and assert the sovereign right to self-determination. Indeed, reservation mixedbloods attempt to establish an internationally recognised tribal sovereignty as they travel outside the reservation, regulate their own immigration politics and establish trade agreements with countries such as China. In line with characters' refusal to see the international border as a limitation to their own use of space or the range of activities they perform, many of them also travel out of state to lecture on university campuses, teach internationally, or establish trade agreements for wild ginseng with delegations from several Asian countries as well as Canada on the reservation. These performative acts of self-determination allow them to assert their sovereignty outside reservation boundaries as well as to challenge U.S. law in courts. Anishinaabe characters thus maintain a highly innovative and assertive stance rather than appealing to authorities for their rights to be recognised.

In *Mohawk Interruptus,* Audra Simpson examines how the community of Kahnawá:ke "refuse forms of recognition if they so choose" (33). Arguing that recognition is "structured by the claims that settler colonialism places *upon* their land, their lives, and their aspirations" (178, italics in the original) Simpson articulates a "politics of refusal" to demonstrate that resistance can be a productive political stance in the light of external and internal pressures to be recognised and approved by the settler state. Such debates often crystallise around issues of tribal membership. In *The Trickster*, human migration is normalised and sanctioned as Chinese people are perceived to be "coming back" to the reservation in reverse Bering Strait theory; are given White Earth citizenship when their American visa runs out; and Natives represent their own interest at universities, in front of

the White House, or by telling tribal trickster stories in China. To begin with, Ginseng Browne's effort to cultivate ginseng root on the reservation and contract trade agreements with China addresses many of the issues that surround tribal sovereignty. Using a secret preparation of maple syrup and herbs, Ginseng prepares "amber roots" that are soon in high demand. While inducing buyers to believe that his primary material is wild ginseng from the reservation, he actually cultivates the root on an island close to the border (*TL* 139) and keeps the wild strain for local consumption exclusively. Following controversy over the seed stock he steals from a commercial grower (*TL* 147), he starts buying commercial ginseng and turns it into his trademark amber root, again hiding that fact from the China National Medicines and Health Products Import and Export Corporation (*TL* 154). Despite being accused of trading "an endangered species" (*TL* 146) with foreign governments (China, Hong Kong, Korea, Japan, and Canada all have representatives in the courtroom), thereby violating the "International Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora treaty […] ratified by the United States" (*TL* 151), the trickster assures that he "would never sell this wild ginseng on the world market [to China or] to any other government" (*TL* 136). His intervention, therefore, also represents a rejection of the globalised market supported by capitalist states and signals a refusal to participate in a liberalised marketplace that might ultimately subsume tribal self-determination. Although he never fully reveals his scheme, Ginseng's commercial activities enable a discussion of Native sovereignty –more specifically "the sovereign right to hunt, fish, and gather ginseng and other natural herbs […] protected in treaties" (145)– to be discussed in the trial.

However, as is often the case, determined by "international political and economic schemes" happening "[b]ehind the scenes" (146), the outcome of the hearing is in favour of the jurisdiction of the federal government at the expense of the tribe (*TL* 147). Ginseng Browne ignores the prosecutor's remark that "[t]he judge will decide" of the outcome and instead negotiates directly with a Chinese trade representative, asserting: "[w]e

have a right to the ginseng seeds […] Honour our sovereign right to the seeds and we've got a deal" (TL 153), and thus bypassing the federal ruling entirely in favour of an unusual form of self-determination based on the ratification of international trade agreements rather than governmental politics. Indeed, the Republic of China is not originally in favour of acknowledging Indigenous rights, preferring instead to deny tribal sovereignty so as to "terminate communist negotiations on the reservation," a decision motivated solely by economic interest (TL 148). In spite of these tensions, Ginseng Browne is inclined to carefully build a tentative rapport with the Chinese. Emphasising similarities between Indians and Chinese people, he argues that all of them were racialised by white people, saying that "whites made us both red" (TL 137). Starting with the idea that the railroad "out West" was built by the Chinese (*TL* 136), he goes as far as to advance that the reservation is their original homeland, in typical trickster inversion:

> "The Chinese, you see, are one of the long lost tribes, our brothers," said the trickster with a smile. "You must have heard of the Bering Strait? Well, we migrated from here to there, and now they are coming back. So you see, this is their real homeland." (*TL* 136)

In this reversed Bering Strait theory, emergence occurs in Turtle Island and story migration occurs in the other direction, westward towards Russia and Asia. The reference to the lost tribe of Israel is a reminder of the paternalistic expression used by colonial forces to integrate Native people into a biblical framework, now applied to the Chinese to recast them as brothers. And finally, the migration back to an original homeland also recalls and normalises the movement northward across the Mexican border where migrants are returning home. Ginseng Browne's trickster statement, therefore, asserts tribal knowledge and stories, challenges colonial logic, and defends the right of people to move across borders in one ironic remark.

When Ginseng's partner She Yan, a translator from China, stays on the

reservation after the delegation leaves, Ginseng again insists that "This is her original homeland. She […] is back with us after a long migration, an heir to the sovereign baronage" (TL 144). He thus envisions a rationale for She Yan's belonging the community. When her visa expires, she stays in Patronia, the "tribal sanctuary" where "federal agents tried to enforce immigration laws […] but the courts ruled that tribal members had a sovereign and inalienable right to live" (TL 144). She Yan takes care not to leave the reservation "so that she would never cross the border by accident and risk arrest by immigration officers;" she carries a map and studies the geography of the reservation, its border towns and the distance between them with utmost care. Thus, even though "Ginseng had never been outside the reservation and She Yan could not leave" (TL 144), the limitations imposed by reservation boundaries in the narrative liken the Baronage to a haven which offers protection from somewhat tyrannical federal politics, rather than to a place from which characters might wish to escape. White Earth, and Patronia more specifically, are productive spaces from which characters envision the wider world and conceive of creative ways to establish new connections that not only benefit tribal members but also allow them to reinvent themselves. Unlike Ginseng, who stays on the reservation, Griever goes to China as an English teacher (as Vizenor did) and tells reservation stories (this character will be featured at length in chapter three). When she in turn travels there, China Browne hears "stories about the fourteen nuns at the mission" during her trip to the school where Griever used to teach and is surprised that "a gatekeeper in the middle of China" would tell her "stories about our reservation on the other side of the earth" (TL 41). Instead of carrying his stories to the far east, Ginseng Browne does the complete opposite, "imagin[ing] time and place and wait[ing] for the world to come to him on the baronage" (TL 136). In Vizenor's fictional world, the imagination bears the same weight as travel, as long as creative exchanges are made between people; as long as boundaries are places of contact to be superseded rather than

rigid spaces of separation.

Similarly, Indigeneity is transposed onto activities and spaces that are imaginatively reclaimed within an Anishinaabe framework; it is never a rehearsed tradition dependent on fixed cultural memes. The reservation thus provides a sovereign land base from which to experiment with acts of self-determination and establish complex systems of exchanges with allies from other states and countries in order to champion Indigenous sovereignty worldwide. There is no attempt to appeal to the U.S. government to be granted rights but, rather, the system is skirted as much as possible and exploited to the tribe's benefit, thus outlining a "cartography of refusal," to borrow Audra Simpson's terminology (*Mohawk Interruptus* 33)–a rejection of being assimilated into the settler's distorted definition of justice. Taking it one step further, in *Hotline Healers*, the President of the United States calls Almost to ask him to organise his people in order to take over Cuba. Remembering the tribal takeover and occupation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs by the American Indian Movement in 1972 in Washington D. C., and arguing that "your people are the true revolutionaries," (*HH* 104) Nixon offers Cuba as a new site for Indigenous sovereignty:

> You get to overthrow Castro, take Cuba, and declare some sort of Indian sovereignty over the island, and for that, my friend, you will become my next vice president," said the president. "Don't forget, Columbus discovered Cuba and your people have the absolute right to liberate Cuba." (*HH* 106)

Nixon's appeal to Almost constitutes a reversal of the dynamics of disempowerment of Native nations. Here, the United States government appeals to Indigenous tribes in order to handle a situation that it finds itself powerless to address. "Treaties and comedies never end" is Almost's ironic reply, a refusal to become further enmeshed in American colonial politics (*HH* 106). Instead, the White Earth Nation engages with external political structures and institutions on their own terms.

Finally, movement through the land is a constant feature of the narrative

where nothing is ever stable since people, the natural world, and stories are in constant motion. Rather than paths, other symbols of transportation are mobilised, such as the old wagon, the train tracks that circle the reservation, boats, or the shopping carts hauled by a homeless man. Almost (*gegaa*) Browne was almost born on the reservation in the late autumn, "in the backwoods north of Bad Medicine Lake on the White Earth Reservation in Minnesota," more precisely "in the back seat of an unheated station wagon" (*HH* 9). The exact location of his birth creates a controversy: "*gegaa*, almost on the reservation" (*HH* 10) being a problematic site, legally speaking, that causes his birth certificate to be "*almost* accurate" (10). Much like Bruyneel's "third space" of sovereignty, Almost Browne's birth location constitutes a "nonbinaristic political mapping articulated through [a] refusal of the imperial binary" that is "inassimilable to the liberal democratic settler-state, and as such [...] problematizes the boundaries of colonial rule" even though it "does not seek to capture or erase" them (*The Third Space of Sovereignty* 21). Almost is described as "born on the road" and "on his way ever since" (*HH* 9), his very name the sign of a constant shift that represents the impossibility of containment and stasis for the character. In Erdrich's and Treuer's reservation novels, pathways across the narrative convey the meaning of an Indigenous relationship to the land, and Vizenor's transmotion performs a similar function. However, instead of paths, a series of movements reveal a perpetual motion where nothing is ever fixed on the baronage and where encounters with other people and the natural world enable a range of influences. For instance, a train, the Naanabozho Express (*HH* 141), circles the reservation and a Native dentist offers his services on the express. Gesture, the dentist, calls the native railroad an "island in motion" (*HH* 143), a "native state of survivance" that expresses a "shout of native sovereignty" (*HH* 150). By circling boundaries, the Naanabozho signals that reservation space is dynamic even as it demonstrates Native agency and ingenuity. Despite its circular route, the express train is also able to join national train tracks to make "one last run to the White House in

Washington" in protest of corrupt reservation agents (*HH* 150), thus showing its ability to connect to the U.S. in order to defend self-determination, not cut out from the work but an active participant in political life. The narrative pays particular attention to other automobile features such as the old wagons where Almost was born; the Animosh driving school, which trains mongrel dogs to chauffeur elders around; and microlight airplanes built for "an airborne revolution" (*HH* 20). Transportation as a motif is transposed onto a range of signifiers–the settler wagon for Native birth, circular train tracks for "acudentistry," and dogs as drivers–which shows how Vizenor's use of irony as a form of language in motion to perform creative trickster acts that liberate meaning in the world by challenging preconceptions. Throughout the narrative, there is also a strong sense of natural presence in the world, one where the natural environment and Indigenous epistemology constantly manifest themselves: "Silence is never natural in creation" (*HH* 141). Rather, sounds reveal the unfolding of natural processes: "Overnight, you can hear our ancestors in the birch, and the chase of wild crows" (*HH* 141). Making the presence of the land felt without resorting to stereotypical representations or romanticised notions of Indianness, Vizenor suggests the ongoing interplay of weather, plants, and animals in beautiful prose: "storms are on the rise, rivers cut the stones to the ancient heartline" (*HH* 141). By storying the land in this way, he also makes it clear that natural features are not merely a backdrop to human imagination but possess their own agency: "[Gesture Browne] could have been a child of the wind and timber wolves. The otters heard his stories on the stones in the spring, and he was more elusive in the brush than cedar waxwings" (*HH* 142). Kathryn Hume describes how these juxtapositions allows invisible dimensions to make their existence felt, arguing that Vizenor's "cosmos has multiple layers or dimensions, and they interconnect and intersect unexpectedly" ("Gerald Vizenor's Metaphysics" 590). Places are alive with traces of Native presence, the "ancient blue ancestry of native stories" (*HH* 145) swim like blue children in Lake Namakan, and "Wild Voices" can be heard on Ghost

Island (*HH* 100). Characters are always crossing boundaries, be they the geographical borders of the reservation (or even international ones); the political/legal boundaries that place artificial limitations on Native agency; or the constricting definitions of what is considered possible for Native people to engage in. In short, as Gesture says, "Native sovereignty is motion, stories straight to the heartline, not the mere sentences of scriptures not the cruelty of dead words […]" (*HH* 144). Constant reinvention of Native potential characterises the Baronage on the reservation, and it implies the freedom of boundary-crossing. Tribal presence makes itself felt outside the reservation, too, in California, where a homeless Native man declares that the two carts he lugs with him and which are home to himself and his cats "are a sovereign place" (*TL* 64). He tells stories about "the nesting cart, my tandem wheels, my mobile home where the urban buffalo roam" (*TL* 65), which suggests a wild imagination, a sense of what Vizenor calls natural motion, in the middle of the city. Such presencing of campus and urban spaces likewise embody the "metaphysical and ontological" characteristics of Indigenous views of the land, which Dylan Miner describes as the "kin relationships […] created with the earth" that "move beyond capitalist machinations and imagination" (*Creating Aztlán* 52). At the University of California, where Tune Browne performs a "tribal striptease" (*TL* 45) as a "mythic satire" (46) to challenge the legacy of anthropology, tribal presence is manifest in the sense that natural motion makes itself felt in the auditorium: "The paper birch whispered in the back rows. Crows called in the distance, an otter slid down a riverbank and snapped back in mythic time" (*TL* 46). The auditorium becomes a dialogic site to promote a Native epistemology and challenge colonial legacies of anthropology. When graduation ceremonies are "held in the redwoods, in the wild hills above the campus where "[t]ribal ghosts hover[…] over the outdoor amphitheater," birds, bears and crows respond to the gathering (48) to signal that the ancient forest is an inclusive yet fundamentally Indigenous space.

In short, *The Trickster of Liberty* and *Hotline Healers* stage many varieties of

creative interactions between characters and environment across a wide range of spaces. Elaborated in Patronia, stories, ideas, and products travel around the world to enable surprising exchanges between people while signalling Native presence in unexpected places. Vizenor explores new avenues for tribal self-determination far from fixed views of what defines Indigeneity by keeping his characters in motion, open to change and exchange, yet firmly rooted in the creatively fertile space of Patronia on White Earth Reservation.

Conclusion

Mapping out the narrative of these reservation novels enables new critical elements to come into focus. They all merge real geographic elements with imaginary spaces in their delineation of fictional reservations, thus making these places both recognisable to an extent and yet impossible to pin down, and ensuring that such locations are not fixed but can keep evolving in sequels (in the case of Erdrich and Vizenor). Reservation borders are highly permeable, which allows characters to travel beyond their confines and return to the reservation later on, although settler boundaries and legal regulations can also be enforced. Characters' movement through the land is a salient feature of these literary cartographies, which may be read as a counter-narrative to the imperialist mapping traditions that construct the land as something of an abstraction, separate from human activity and sensory participation. Paths, therefore, as well as other forms of tracks, become important signifiers of a mobility that has human interaction with the land and other life forms at its core. They also represent the communal aspect of the relationship to place. In chapter two, the paths that lead out of the reservation become more salient as urban spaces are reclaimed imaginatively as part of an Indigenous tradition of movement.

CHAPTER TWO: URBAN NETWORKS

Theoretical Framework

This chapter shows that reservation space is tied to a series of networks that extend native space beyond tribal boundaries to include urban areas. While the first chapter of this thesis focused on Anishinaabe fiction as a form of dynamic mapping of Native space, this second chapter aims to show the networks of relationship that reach out across reservation boundaries towards so-called "non-Indigenous" urban spaces, and to examine the spatial relationships based on sharing resources which are used to create networks across borders, often questioning their logic or countering their enforcement. In the fiction of Erdrich, Treuer and Vizenor, bonds are created between the inhabitants of reservations and urban Natives through a range of art forms which constitute a sovereign aesthetics in order to reclaim urban spaces as Anishinaabe. In the three novels analysed in this chapter, characters create different forms of art that express a sense of continuity between life on the reservation and urban relocation. David Treuer's *The Translation of Dr Appelles* (2006) takes place in an East Coast city where the main protagonist's translation of an Anishinaabe story becomes an act of co-creation which ties his own life to that of his ancestors. Louise Erdrich's *The Antelope Wife* (1998) weaves together occurrences taking place on her fictional reservation with the experience of Native urban dwellers through the metaphor of beading patterns that extend relationships across space and generations to include the city of Minneapolis. In *Shrouds of White Earth* (2010), Gerald Vizenor's main character is banished from the reservation due to his controversial art and finds refuge in Minneapolis. The artist uses art as a sovereign gesture which establishes links between tribal art on the reservation and cities across the United States as well as Europe, thereby affirming movement and exchange beyond boundaries through art which succeeds in non-

Indigenous spaces. Thus, all three novels employ what Padraig Kirwan calls "aesthetic sovereignty" (*Sovereign Stories* 23) in order to explore the ways in which inhabiting urban centres reasserts Native presence rather than erasure.

The status of tribal nations in relation to Indigenous sovereignty is interpreted in various ways by critical discourse. In her introduction to the anthology *Sovereignty Matters*, Joanne Barker examines the contemporary meaning of sovereignty in Indigenous scholarship and remarks that the term has shifted, noting that it first "seemed to belong to nations but was then understood to originate either from the people who made up those nations or as a character of the nation itself (nationhood)" (2), until it became perceived as "an inherent and inalienable right of peoples to the qualities customarily associated with nations" (3) in legal debates. She traces the history of that shift and points out that in the United States, tribal nations' rejection of ethnic minority status acted as refusal to participate in the logic of assimilation as well as a claim to tribal sovereignty (19). Then, when the UN charter associated human rights with self-determination for all Indigenous people, these rights became closely tied to sovereignty (19) and "solidified within indigenous discourses as an inherent right that emanates from historically and politically resonant notions of cultural identity and community affiliation" (20). Such claims have often converged with essentialist discourse, and Barker argues that "essentialist rhetoric" actually stands in the way of "a politically strategic one," including within tribal activist circles. Because sovereignty as a construct is complicit with colonialism (26), it often works against an Indigenous understanding of governance (21) and therefore contradicts attempts at decolonisation (21). Another issue is that while intellectual sovereignty aims to deconstruct the theories and methodologies of colonialism, that discourse sometimes involves the "invocation of or reliance on racialized notions" of Native identities (25). Indeed, such a reliance employs definitions of race that derive from colonialism and thus undermines theories that aim towards liberation from settler

ideologies. Therefore, Barker encourages scholars to "question[...] how a European term and idea [...] came to be so embedded and important to cultures that had their own systems of government since before the term *sovereignty* was invented in Europe," as well as "the implications of adopting the European notion of power and governance and using it to structure the postcolonial systems that are being negotiated and implemented within indigenous communities today" (39). For tribal nations, cooperation with a patronising system masquerading as altruism, which gives them the status of minorities and guarantees "a limited but perpetual set of rights" (45) risks undermining the sovereignty which Indigenous peoples wish to achieve politically. Alternative models have long existed within Native communities which tend to be based on principles of reciprocity between people and the land (45). Barker also mentions models of "distributive or social justice" that counter the current focus on natural resources as commodities (45); and "nonintrusive frameworks of respect" (46) which may likewise facilitate transition into a decolonial world restructured around notions of justice and expressed through "the philosophical and governmental alternative to sovereignty and the central values contained within [...] traditional cultures" (49). Ultimately, she insists, "sovereignty is historically contingent. There is no fixed meaning for what *sovereignty* is" (21, italics in the original). Indeed, each of the three novels explored in this section tackles the question of sovereignty and citizenship differently. As I will demonstrate, Erdrich draws networks across reservation boundaries that enable characters to maintain connection with their communities; Treuer shows how an urban dweller mediates/translates his tradition into his present context; and Vizenor shows that art conveys an Anishinaabe sense of transmotion to international spaces. Thus, they start to gesture towards specific ways to envision an Anishinaabe self-determination that adapts to new spaces while staying grounded in its traditions, tied to the reservation yet not geographically restricted.

Indigenous Nations have long conceived of land as an entity to be shared

simultaneously within a community and among the different tribal groups in a region. Lisa Brooks addresses early relationships between Europeans and Natives in a way that demonstrates that Native space is perceived as communal and based on usage. In *The Common Pot*, she explains how "the dish" which serves as a metaphor for land sharing throughout the book was divided by colonial forces and, crucially, shows that relational dynamics were central to Algonquian politics. Relying on William Cronon to articulate the changes which occurred in Algonquian New England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, she states:

> The village was generally defined by the watershed it inhabited, and its "collective sovereignty" was based on long-standing inhabitation and continuing use, which was recognized by contiguous communities. While European land tenure, in both conceptualization and practice, involved delineating boundaries between subjects and between subjects and objects, Native understandings of land "rights" were always relational. Native land tenure was rooted in the interdependent relationship between a community and its territory. (68)

Shared according to the needs generated by land use, territories did not have strict borders but rather a flexible, relational exchange across wider boundaries based on the notion of interdependence. The framework was both intercommunal and interspecies in the sense that nonhuman entities such as animals and other features of the land were taken into account. Developing further, she adds that "[t]hese relationships also extended outside the village territory" by forming "kin networks" (68) which allowed several nations to regulate access to trading, fishing, or hunting places and were maintained by intermarriage, alliances and councils or "land conferences" (69):

> Sachems might meet to make agreements over specific rights in a particular area of shared space, or one sachem might grant usage rights within his community's territory to another group in order to create or support a relationship of alliance. Thus, considerable

> confusion erupted when English deed making began to enter the space of Algonquian councils and the practices of Algonquian sachems began to enter the space of colonial land transactions. (69)

These political tensions regarding space still endure today even as tribal councils and scholarship experiment with new avenues for Indigenous sovereignty. In spite of ongoing colonisation, many contemporary Native writers hold inclusive views of space, which do not adhere to the notion that reservation boundaries delineate Native space in strict opposition to settler space, thereby enabling limiting spatial conceptions to be rethought and relationships to be redefined. Such ideas help envision a different kind of sovereignty, one that is less reliant on divisive notions of inside versus outside, be it in terms of political boundaries or citizenship.

In a similar vein to Brooks, Tol Foster's regionalist stance makes room for cohabitation within the same space. In "Of One Blood," Tol Foster makes the bold statement that "Native and settler histories and culture are not capable of being separated" (268). Thus, somewhat counter to the separatist interpretation of tribal nationalism, he argues that they form a single community, one which must engage in mediation and dialogue in order to endure. The hard line between tribal nationalism and cosmopolitanism has been challenged by a number of critics, notably Jace Weaver who, in "Turning West," articulates "a literary criticism based on internally derived sources [...] while at the same time not erecting impermeable barriers to outside influences" (23). Weaver provides a historical overview of tribal nationalists' critical position and argues that a new generation of scholars (including Brooks and Foster) have moved away from that strict dichotomy. As Lisa Brooks also points out, there is a long tradition of Native incorporation, of what Tol Foster calls "historically and theoretically astute regionalism" ("Of One Blood" 268) to draw from. His approach avoids certain pitfalls of tribally specific theoretical frameworks, such as conservatism – although even Craig Womack argues that "sovereignty is not an

isolationist position" but rather "has a profound cosmopolitanism at its core" (*Reasoning Together* 37). Regionalism as Foster defines it is not a negation of tribal foci; rather, it positions tribal nations at the spatial centre (289), a centre from which the possibility of relating outwards creates a network of fluid exchanges. As he remarks, "[w]e find relations in the strangest of places" (270). In his essay "Against Separatism," Foster likewise argues that a focus on tribal realities needn't be a reductive stance but can accommodate a wide scope and enable many interdisciplinary exchanges (568). These networks of exchange share similarities with contact zones yet also fundamentally redefine the nature of intercultural relationships from an Indigenous perspective. Contact zones are defined by Mary Louise Pratt as "social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived in many parts of the world today ("Arts of the Contact Zone," 34). The asymmetricality of colonial relations are, to an extent, compensated for in Foster's model by his placing tribal nations at the centre of the frame. Regionalism as a study of contact zones therefore reshapes the border as an inclusive space rather than a line of separation in "an act of sovereignty that refuse[s] to recognize borders as limitations" (Foster, "Of One Blood," 271), but it does this from an Indigenous perspective in which tribal epistemologies might be employed "as a theoretical frame even over the output of our regional neighbours by imagining them as our relations" (275). Thus, Foster's "relational regional" framework makes it possible to use a regionalist scope that is also inclusive as a model for relationships in wider contexts. Foster's framework does not depend so much on boundary discourse due to its regional focus which displaces the contact zone from the site of the border to wider areas. This is important given the critiques that have been made of the cultural contact zone. For example, Scott Michaelsen's and David E. Johnson's introduction to *Border Theory* (1997) challenges readings of the border as sites of cultural production and exchange, arguing that "a border is always already

crossed and double-crossed, without the possibility of the 'trans'cultural" (15) and attempts to reframe "the place of the border in border studies" (28). The book aims to "produce[...] defamiliarizing border readouts without the possibility of laying it on the line – or at least a straight or straightforward one. Borders everywhere, but a world where no geographer's or cartographer's science is up to the task of mapping" (15). This last statement questions the notion that borders constitute a single line that can be firmly located in the landscape, just as it does not represent a clear site for the production of separation and violence on the one hand and/or multicultural discourse on the other. In his chapter titled "Resketching Anglo-Amerindian Identity Politics," published in the same volume, Michaelsen further argues that the coloniser and colonised are always defined in relation to one another and, therefore, "far from living in a world of singular cultures and their borders and contact zones, 'we' are stitched together and shot through with all of 'our' others" (245). In this chapter, urban Native space is likewise defined not so much by the boundaries that are crossed from reservation to cities but, rather, by the plurality of lines, drawn across such borders, that tie Indigenous communities to one another beyond complex histories of displacement and migration. Leanne Simpson establishes a similarly paradoxical dialectic between belonging to a specific place and maintaining communication beyond boundaries in a model where the distance relative to a centre replaces border lines. She claims the land to be constitutive of her identity when she states that "[m]y consciousness as a Michisaagig Nishnaabeg woman, a storyteller and a writer comes from the land because I am the land" (*Dancing* 95). Instead of representing boundaries as static lines crossing the land, she describes a progressive loss of familiarity with the territory, a loosening of connection which implies the need to work on relationships carefully in order to maintain a peaceful rapport:

> As someone moves away from the centre of their territory – the place they have the strongest and most familiar bonds and

> relationships – their knowledge and relationship to the land weakens. This is a boundary, a zone of decreasing Nishnaabeg presence as you move out from the centre of the territory. This is a place where one needs to practise good relations with neighbouring nations. Presence is required to maintain those good relationships. Communication is required to jointly care-take this region, which is much wider than a line. (89)

Simpson's contact zone is defined as a wide, fluid region of decreasing presence, which again stems from Indigenous epistemologies. What derives from this is that places where Anishinaabe people are present, especially if they have inhabited the place for a long time and are numerous, constitute Native space. The asymmetrical relations mentioned by Pratt above are not addressed at all; like Foster, Simpson seems to assume that a recentring of inclusive tribal perspectives might constitute a sufficient response to unequal power dynamics, and both of them rely on a tribal zone that resembles pre-colonial territories. Their models resist settler-colonial modes of discourse and define the land as operating according to a different set of principles. In such regions, responsibility towards the environment is shared with other neighbouring nations and land implies much more than the notion of place as a territory inhabited by people only–it is not a flat surface but a world of relationships between humans and other beings. As Glen Coulthard also points out, the land consists of "a system of reciprocal relations and obligations" that shows people how to live "in relation to one another and the natural world in nondominating and nonexploitative terms […]" (*Red Skin* 13). The relational framework, therefore, operates from the smallest unit and can then be enlarged to incorporate interchanges between different communities and nations in a much wider scope. The question remains how exactly such relationships can be established. Erdrich, Treuer and Vizenor, as I will show below, attempt to create these networks through art forms that extend beyond the reservation.

In legal terms, however, borders have direct consequences that cannot be sidestepped and, therefore, call for models of tribal sovereignty that rethink the limitations imposed by the settler state. The geographical perspective has important political implications in regards to tribal sovereignty due to the dominant (colonial) perspective that tends to tie up land and government together as one to conform with the model of the nation-state. Thomas Biolsi theorised several configurations for Native sovereignty that can be added to the model currently employed by most tribal nations, that of the reservation-as-nation. In addition to being demarcated by colonial boundaries, the reservation-based model has many disadvantages when it comes to the regulation of citizenship and the status of its members and therefore needs to be reconsidered. Biolsi focuses on political and territorial claims in his exploration of expanded models of sovereignty for Native nations and argues that the reason why the U. S. government offers no fundamental opposition to the model of sovereignty currently demanded by tribal nations is that its implementation conforms to the modern notion of territorial space as nation (241). Instead, tribal politics have assimilated into the government's "strategy of graduated sovereignty" (241) which regularly has recourse to "court-ordered reductions of tribal sovereignty," using "abrogations" to limit the jurisdiction of tribal governments (243). Because the limited scope of this particular kind of sovereignty does not usually correspond to Native political views, and because it is often undermined, Native peoples have often moved beyond, and negotiated, the boundaries of the nation-state through a range of political actions, including the assertion of off-reservation fishing rights when fishing was banned and the occupation of off-reservation spaces such as Alcatraz, thereby suggesting new political geographies. Biolsi identifies four kinds of Indigenous space. While the first one, the sovereignty model, is the form most easily sanctioned by the U.S. government–although only as "a profoundly limited" version of sovereignty (243) so as not to constitute too much of a threat to the nation state–the three additional models have also been used by tribal nations to assert

their rights. They offer alternatives to the political boundary-based model, or at the very least expand it beyond its usual limitations. As Biolsi points out, "[n]one of the four kinds of Indigenous space to be examined here are consistent with the received wisdom–scholarly or popular–regarding the supposedly homogenous political space of the nation-state" (241); all of them undermine the homogeneity of the U.S. states and federal governments authority over American space to some extent. They are:

a) Tribal sovereignty within a Native homeland, with a modern government and citizenry (sometimes formalised by a constitution, as is the case for White Earth).
b) Territorially-based rights to off-reservation resources with co-management, or shared sovereignty, of overlapping territories by tribes and states or government (for example fishing and hunting rights outside reservation boundaries).
c) Claims for a "National Indigenous space" or rights over/within an inclusive space which spans the territory of the contiguous United States (i.e. the inter-tribal occupation of Alcatraz in 1969-1971).
d) A hybrid Indigenous space with simultaneous citizenship in Native nations and the U.S. (dual citizenship).

Biolsi moves beyond sanctioned tribal territorial boundaries towards off-reservation sovereignty when he asserts that:

> [T]ribal advocates believe that, on the basis of the treaties and their reserved off-reservation rights, Indians have what amounts to the right of shared sovereignty […] or at least co-management, with the federal, state, municipal, and county governments in the ceded areas. […] One should understand that this vision of shared sovereignty entails an assumption of coequal sovereignty […] ("Imagined Geographies" 246)

In addition to crossing political and territorial boundaries, this off-reservation extension of tribal sovereignty actually questions the power of the overruling U.S. nation-state. The third

model especially not only claims but actively "produces a Native space in which Indian people have indigenous rights across the national landscape, not just within reservation enclaves" (248), thereby extending the notion of "home" much further than Leanne Simpson's "zone of decreasing presence." The last, fourth model of dual citizenship has been criticised by Audra Simpson who, although she makes no mention of Biolsi, discusses the refusal of some Mohawks to travel with either an American or a Canadian passport as a way to assert the sovereignty of their own government. For instance, when the Iroquois National Lacrosse Team was prevented from attending the 2010 world championship in the United Kingdom due to the British government's failure to acknowledge their Haudenosaunee passport, the media reported its members saying, "[w]e are not Americans; we are not Canadians; we are members of the [Iroquois] Confederacy," and that they refused to use "passports of a government that is foreign to ours" (*Mohawk Interruptus* 183). Simpson, therefore, advocates "refusal" as "an alternative to recognition" by the U.S government and internationally (177). The dual citizenship model is also undermined by the difficulty of fighting racism and discrimination within the U.S. political system. However, Thomas Biolsi envisions a rather bold political landscape, which would offer viable solutions to the current tribal struggles for sovereignty by employing several of the models above simultaneously to extend Native political space:

> To the mosaic, or actually the archipelago, of tribal homelands would be added continuous, national indigenous space. This geography is not – or, not necessarily – inconsistent with tribal sovereignty, but it operates at a different spatial scale, in terms of imagined Native community. (247)

He further frames this within the "transnational, continental, or hemispheric perspective among tribal people" (249), which will be discussed in chapter three of this thesis. Aligning with Biolsi's view, Kevin Bruyneel argues that envisioning new spatial configurations: "requires a decolonization of our spatial imaginations to reveal forms of political space that

cannot simply be mapped onto the boundary lines of the international state system" towards Indigenous politics that "imagine a postcolonial supplemental remapping of sovereign relationships that can include but will not be dictated to or contained by state boundaries" (*The Third Space of Sovereignty* 222). Bruyneel's "third space of sovereignty" designates an intermediary space situated on and across the border with the contiguous United States and which refuses to be assimilated to it:

> [O]ne cannot simply classify indigenous tribes as "part of or not part of the United States"–as inside or outside–because indigenous tribes straddle the temporal and spatial boundaries of American politics, exposing the incoherence of these boundaries as they seek to secure and expand their tribal sovereign expression (xv)

Resistance to the colonial order imposed by boundaries, therefore, "engenders […] a 'third space of sovereignty' that resides neither simply inside nor outside the American political system but rather exists on these very boundaries" as a "supplemental space, inassimilable to the institutions and discourse of the modern […] settler-state and nation" (xvii). Thus, the third space is where political resistance and negotiation both take place, on the boundaries which, for the U.S. nation-state, now stand for the last frontier since, as Patrick Wolfe writes, "the frontier ha[s] become coterminal with reservation boundaries" ("Settler Colonialism" 399). Reservation boundaries constitute a productive space from which to develop alternative models of sovereignty. However, through close analysis of the literary texts, this chapter shows some of the limits of the border model, with its implication that self-determination stays within its confines. Contemporary Anishinaabe fiction imagines possibilities for further spaces that resists such geographical containment, instead crossing reservation boundaries (be it through intergenerational beading patterns, cultural translation, or artistic transmotion) to create webs of connection with wider areas. Instead of a contact zone or circles of decreasing presence, the novels suggest creative acts that maintain ties to communities.

In this way, the Anishinaabe writers analysed in this chapter likewise engage with reservation boundaries by envisioning imaginative geographies which call into question the validity and stability of the establishment of settler colonial political geographies. Two of the novels take place in the urban landscape of Minneapolis, which Molly McGlennen calls "the 8th Rez" in addition to the seven official Anishinaabe reservations in the state of Minnesota. She attributes this phrase to Anishinaabe scholar Ben Burgess in personal email communication ("By My Heart," 22). To reframe Minneapolis as the 8th Rez does much more than acknowledge the presence of Anishinaabe and other Indigenous people in the city; it gestures towards the possibility of reclaiming the urban centre as a fundamentally Native space, which would create an overlap between Biolsi's model of territorially-based rights of shared sovereignty and a claim for a national Indigenous space. Given that nationhood requires anchorage in a homeland, Ben Burgess argues that "[f]or this to happen in the city, Anishinaabe must claim the city as their territory" (1). Despite the scope of the Indian Relocation Act of 1956, which moved Native populations to urban centres, was an assimilative measure, it also had the consequence of indigenising some areas of the cities. McGlennen argues that urbanisation should not be read solely as a consequence of colonisation, since "the First Americans have, in fact, gone through periods of deurbanization and reurbanization on various occasions in their history" (12). Through "alliance building," tribal nations have indeed gathered regularly or come together to collaborate on projects, as is for instance evident in earthworks. The city is therefore characterised not only by current Anishinaabe presence, but also as a place of return: "Minneapolis becomes a location transformed by Anishinaabe people because of relocation, but it is also a place recuperated by the Anishinaabeg as traditional homelands" (16). Identifying "a current of resistance which seems to have always been moving in and beyond Anishinaabe physical and cultural territoriality" (6), McGlennen adds that Vizenor's poetry collections *Almost Ashore* and *Bear Island* "delineates a kind of autonomous

Anishinaabe territory that also includes non-Anishinaabe peoples," an inclusive space enabled by the adaptability of Anishinaabe experience (21). Based on Anishinaabe conceptualisations of territoriality, such an "Indigenous cartography" inevitably "undoes the natural order of conquest" (21) by reclaiming lost territories. In her reading of Vizenor's poems, Mc Glennen describes the "heart" as "a communally shared contract that originates from the center […] and moves outward to all Anishinaabeg, no matter where they reside" (21). Following this, it would make perfect sense to induce that spaces currently occupied by Indigenous communities and individuals can be reframed as Native spaces no matter where reservation boundaries are actually situated. What is more, Audra Simpson's notion of a "feeling citizenship" (*Mohawk Interruptus* 189), although meant to describe the sense of belonging of non-status Mohawks living on the Kahnawà:ke reservation in Canada, could inspire a new vision of what citizenship entails for Native peoples and help counter "the claims that settler colonialism places *upon* their land, their lives, and their aspirations" (177-178) outside the reservation as well. Described as spaces that "comprise tolerance, exceptions, snubs, social lacerations and affectations," feeling citizenships are "alternative citizenships to the state that are structured in the present space of intracommunity recognition, affection, and care, outside of the logics of colonial and imperial rule" (109). In contrast to tribal membership, the feeling citizenship also reaches beyond the geographical constraints of the reservation (189) and could help create alternative critical models of citizenship, which might in turn inform definitions of tribal sovereignties beyond the reservation. In the fiction discussed in this chapter, the urban space of Minneapolis (and other locales) is reclaimed not so much as an extra reservation, which would imply communal politics that do not take place in these novels, but as a space where Anishinaabe characters can maintain, and even transform, their relationship to reservation culture.

The development of mixed forms of writing across genres in Indigenous

literature finds precedents in earlier texts. In *Sovereign Selves*, David J. Carlson examines the conjunction between law and literature in the "relationship between legal discourse and identity" by looking at the autobiographies of early Native American writers. Drawing attention to the performativity of the "autobiographical impulse" (4), he situates these texts within "specific linguistic and cultural contexts" (5), thus shifting the critical focus toward the context of authors "writing back to power" (12) rather than ultimately unproductive considerations regarding authenticity. He argues that the treaty-making period engendered a "process of engagement" which allowed "new forms of protest and accommodation" (55) to emerge by acknowledging a certain level of sovereignty, although hierarchical colonial relationships meant that these were difficult for signatories to navigate skillfully. However, in tracing a "developing autobiographical tradition" (171), Carlson shows that the colonial discourse of Indianness, even when it may seem to comply with colonial impositions, constituted a dynamic form of engagement in the colonial contact zone, which had a strong impact on twentieth century Native autobiographical writing. This, he states, signals an "ongoing relationship between contemporary Native American autobiography and legal institutions" (177). He demonstrates that "Indian law has been built on a foundation of storytelling; its models of Indian identity and Indian rights are rooted in a wide range of legal fictions and narratives" (177-178). He concludes that "[b]y rearticulating and disseminating new ways of conceptualising Indian identity and Indian rights, these texts are an important part of the ongoing struggle for Native American sovereignty" (178). These early writers thus established the foundation on which contemporary writers have built their narratives and therefore provided an entryway into current representations of sovereignty in Native American fiction. It is interesting, then, to look at the ways in which contemporary Anishinaabe writers build upon this tradition–especially in the case of Vizenor, whose novel reflects upon his work as principal writer of the nation's Constitution.

Stuart Christie's *Plural Sovereignties* traces the evolution of this sovereign discourse into present day Native American writing. He picks up the thread Carlson left it by examining the ways in which the "contest between competing sovereignties and cultural values has produced a plurality in the contemporary indigenous imagining" (2). Situating his approach at the intersection between Native law, the sociology of Native communities, and cultural studies, he explains that "Indigenous peoples' reimagining of the contemporary colonial experience has actually diversified and enlivened discrete indigenous sovereignties as modern 'nations' in their own right" (2). Arguing that Indigenous sovereignty is grounded in "linguistic signs" (the power of words) as well as the autonomy of material worlds (4), he suggests that "contemporary indigenous novels in English offer substantive evidence for the persistence of such traditions emerging in newer forms without serving as substitutes for them" (2). In an attempt to reconcile materialist and constructivist perspectives, Christie emphasises the necessity for nationalism to bring concerns back to actual communities and argues in favour of a "third road" of "sovereign pluralism," a term borrowed from Cardinal (5). Applied to literary works, these plural sovereignties "have their origins in legal entitlements (or the fight to achieve them)" and "document[...] the effects of colonialism" (6). Literature expresses one of two memes: it constitutes "a reaction to ongoing condition and legacy of colonial structures and relationship constraining the viability of indigenous traditions," or it "articulates forward expressions of sovereignty in emerging forms" (11). By these means, creative imagination has the ability to affect the material world (213). Carlson, meanwhile, argues that far beyond the critical discourse on hybridity, literature "allows for the recentring of landed sovereignty within a multivariate discourse of sovereign belonging" (219). What is more, the growing focus on pan-Indianism, he states, "raises important questions about how local sovereignties (e. g., Ojibwe) and global identities ('Indian' or 'Native') are negotiated in everyday life by individuals leveraging multiple sovereignties in different situations [...]"

(32). Thus, Christie effectively demonstrates that Native American fiction can, and does, explore new avenues for sovereignty. By arguing that artists open "doors onto adjoining sovereignties," "adjoining terrains of discourses, cohabited by both Anglo-European and indigenous sovereigns" which "open onto third spaces of imagining" (196), Christie points out the possibilities, theorised by Thomas Biolsi and Kevin Bruyneel, to reconceive of Native space beyond reservation boundaries. In Vizenor's *Shrouds* for instance, art gestures towards such "spaces of imagining" as an Anishinaabe artist exhibits artwork that conveys Native agency from Minneapolis to Paris.

Mishuana Goeman likewise explains that fiction can create cognitive maps of "forgotten geographies" to invoke them into the present. In *Mark My Words*, she remarks that borders, being neither "a natural structure" nor "concrete spaces" (197), require constant reinforcement in order to be maintained. She highlights the role played by language in their naturalisation: "[a]s subjects of empire, Native peoples' mobility was severely limited by legal codes […] in particular, non-reserve spaces are naturalized as white settler spaces. These normative geographies are determined not just through violent conquest and law, but also through imagined and forgotten geographies" (61). Borders, therefore, "are performative acts of language that rely on constative practices such as repetition to secure their dominance" (198). Pointing out the violence inherent in borders, she argues that "[t]he settler narrative of the rez/off-rez dichotomy is a lie at its very conception – Native death through assimilation eased the consciousness of a nation that relies on the theft of Native land" (104). Thus borders, "while not arbitrary or without material consequences, are imagined into being and reinforced through state apparatuses" (164). What Goeman calls "the narrative function of mapping," which maintains "settler ideologies" (171), outlines "cartographies of violence" (80), "artificial constructs that limit our sense of self and connection to others, because of the way in which they make meaning by excluding certain relationships. Borders, both material and cognitive, limit the

possibilities of Native existence" (171). However, the same strategy can be used in order to challenge borders by writing "imagined, but very real, geographies" (110) into fiction. Indeed, Goeman states, "the geographies foundational to Native communities have not disappeared but are waiting to be (re)mapped and 'grasped'" (205), as many Native writers do through narratives written across borders and by recreating spatial practices which tell stories that run counter to the boundary-enforcing, colonial model. Moving away from the dominance of the nation-state, narratives can use the power of stories to map out space differently: "[b]y thinking through critical geographies' assertions that the nation-state uses nationalism to make place out of space, we can begin to think of the power of cognitive maps produced through narrative" (27). In this chapter, fictional maps demonstrate how Anishinaabe writers conceive of Indigenous space in a plurality of settings, drawing lines not along boundaries but across them to link up communities that used to be conceived of as separate, irrevocably split and pushed towards assimilation.

Native American literature, then, brings up the question of sovereignty as an aesthetic. If writing is a way of mapping Native space, as discussed in chapter one of this thesis, then storytelling, painting, sculpture, and beading also constitute different types of maps. These maps are performative since their mere existence and strategic presence has the power to shape reality. In the novels of Erdrich, Treuer and Vizenor, art forms assert relationships across and beyond boundaries as a way of reclaiming Native space outside the reservation, thus participating in the "aesthetic sovereignty" defined by Padraig Kirwan as a "spatially-informed aesthetics" (*Sovereign Stories,* 27). Regretting the "troubling differentiation between cosmopolitanism and nationalist or indigenist positions" (17-18, note 34) held by many scholars within Indigenous studies, Kirwan reads Native American texts as "expressions of tribal sovereignty" (23) that bear an "aesthetic" which not only expresses but also produces tribal autonomy (23), and thus articulates a critique of tribal nationalism in relation to the "artistic, political, and cultural sovereignty" (37) found in

literary works. Indeed, Native authors' writing "maps out a crucial set of distinct and discernible indigenous spaces" (4) while their "novels speak not just from, but also of, indigenous worlds, and do so through a distinctive use of narrative style" (5). The sovereign aesthetic which emerges can link "rhetorical sovereignty" with the current "political and legal debates" taking place in Indian country (17) by providing "a deeper understanding of both the means by which political movements are supported by the discrete mobilization of spatialized metaphors in fiction as well as critical theory, and an appreciation of the ways in which Native American fictionists create multifarious narrative spaces" (17). In response to Pulitano's cross-cultural analyses focusing on hybridity, Kirwan argues in favour of a recentring of the lens on tribal stories so as to:

> place a little more emphasis on diversity and on boundary than we have done, thereby containing talk of hybridity and crossing. It is not so much a case of seeing nationalism as being opposed to cosmopolitanism or sovereignty, as being in conflict with interculturalism. Rather, Native communities create their own realities, perform acts of sovereignty, and, above all, tell new stories. (275)

That the study of boundaries might somehow contain previous critical discussions which need to be reframed, while also allowing for a closer focus on the tribal real and its sovereign concerns, suggests possibilities for the literary study of boundaries as sites of diverse interventions recreated and re-imagined through story. Kirwan reminds us that tribal stories of "narrative and presence" (265) delineate "narratological, cultural, and spiritual spaces" (317) which gesture towards new models for tribal sovereignty, and successfully places Native American literature at the heart of political debate by showing how central such creative sovereign acts are to a redefinition of tribal sovereignties. Although Kirwan defines space as both "an extended metaphor *and* a physical presence" (30, italics in the original), he tends to focus more on the metaphorical in relation to

political space than to material space per se and calls attention to the ways in which "fictional form often carries extratextual consequences" (22). He applies the term territory (be it in a physical or metaphorical sense) to refer to a range of different notions: the specific locations of tribal literatures; the sense of a cultural and tribal presence; and the literary space of the novel (30). His attention to the trope of "material *and* imaginative" boundaries (27, italics in the original), to the border which "can separate, protect, and link" (28), and which "signals indigenous autonomy" (37) even as it provides a point of contact (29), help him bridge the lived, physical space of tribal realities and that which Louis Owens called the "critical frontier" (1), thus moving beyond a discussion "about territory" to include the question of "why the wider concept of territory and space continues to be one of the main unifying thematic principles within Native American Literary studies" (29). Using Lisa Brooks's simile of reading a book as "entering a place-world" (32), Kirwan argues that her notion that "the continuing act of writing" constitutes "a means of creating a worldview" provides "a useful framework through which we might consider the connection between […] aesthetic and material spaces […]" (31). In the three novels under scrutiny, the tie between the aesthetic world not only of the writing, but also the artistic metaphors contained within the narrative, and the material spaces delineated by the reservation, its borders, and urban centres is particularly clear. The present chapter expands on the link beween art, literary aesthetics, and the possibility of extending Native space beyond reservation boundaries to identify how off-reservation spaces are created and maintained by Anishinaabe writers. Rather than drawing attention to borders, however, these authors suggest ways of establishing relationships across them, thereby demonstrating that Indigenous space need not be constricted by these boundaries.

The Antelope Wife

Compared to *Tracks*, *The Antelope Wife* offers different points of view on what constitutes Native space. By first mapping out the reservation at the end of the nineteenth century before breaking out of its boundaries in order to spread out towards urban communities not typically associated with Indigeneity, Erdrich's narratives inscribe mobility in her depiction of narratological space. In addition to the territorial dimensions of the fictional environment, attention also needs to be paid to the spatial structures of the narrative, which differ widely between these texts. This analysis will focus on *The Antelope Wife* and the way in which beading functions as a map of characters' interactions in the novel. By extending the web of relationships from the reservation to the city of Minneapolis, the beading patterns that pervade the narrative map out a dynamic Indigenous space. As Laura Furlan explains in her reading of *The Antelope Wife*, "[t]he prevailing belief that Indians have a "natural" connection to the land is problematic in many regards. While historically speaking reservation land is "home," this land is only a fraction of what was previously Indian land, and indeed the "[t]he reservation represents a moment of fixity, of fixed identity" (Furlan 57-58), and is thus a colonial construct. This is particularly true in this novel, where the city to which characters migrate occupies what was previously acknowledged as Anishinaabe land but is no longer perceived as such by the U.S. government. James Clifford likewise argues against a fixed view of tribal identity when he asks how indigeneity is "both rooted in and routed through particular places" (469). Although he borrows the concept of roots/routes, Eric Gary Anderson disagrees with Clifford's critique of nomadology, arguing that colonialism influenced, but did not engender, tribal mobility: "tribal cultures were migratory before the arrival of European explorers and colonists; their status as people-in-motion does not originate with and thus depend on the incoming and often intrusive movements of these colonial cultures" (*American Indian Literature and the Southwest* 23). In *Politics and Aesthetics in Contemporary Native*

American Literature, Matthew Herman warns against the critical discourses that polarise cosmopolitanism and nationalism, calling for a more integrated approach in his statement that "there are theoretically viable and politically supportable forms of nationalism and cosmopolitanism that are compatible with tribal sovereignty on political, cultural, and aesthetic levels" (8). Herman suggests that:

> cosmopolitanism functions as a mediating filter rather than a strict opposition between the universal and particular poles of culture, articulating modes of attachment, allegiance, and identity that inhere simultaneously between the local and the global […] cosmopolitanism recognizes that the bounded spaces comprising culture, nation, and self are fluid, provisional, overlapping […] (11)

Having examined the notion that cosmopolitanism is a "disabling approach" for Indigenous sovereignty, Herman proposes that it is in fact "a tribal idea" and turns to Ortiz's "internationalism" (20) to argue that when read as maps, Ortiz's poems situate the poet within a cosmological order (23). Building on the notion that Indigeneity is constituted by movement but that mobility is not synonymous with displacement, this section argues that *The Antelope Wife* uses beading as a spatial trope to expand Native space beyond reservation boundaries and into the city. Indeed, although their designs are rearranged, beading patterns nevertheless extend from the reservation to an urban landscape which is reclaimed by this traditional form of writing/mapping that maintains the ties of the community in the city–the old trading post named Gakahbekong, or Minneapolis. In that urban landscape, where the characters "are stretched from top to bottom from both ends of our being," a different order needs to be established so that they can be "held equally by sky and earth, home and city" (*The Antelope Wife* 141). Therefore, the function served historically by wampum belts, which Lisa Brooks claims consolidated ties between people and clans, is embodied by the beading metaphor which also reclaims the city as Indian land. Indeed, wampum sometimes incorporates stylised elements related

to the land while also reinforcing relationships between groups of people (G. Malcolm Lewis, "Maps, Mapmaking, and Map Use" 90). Here, the analogy illustrates how beading can be used in *The Antelope Wife* to reinforce the ties between urban Natives and their relatives on the reservation. As Laura Furlan points out, "[t]he boundary between city and 'rez' becomes blurred in this novel as characters move across that 'border' frequently. In fact, this dichotomy becomes obsolete when the Minneapolis [*sic*] gets remapped as Indian land" (55). Relationships between characters are also determined by the designs of the beadwork, which pass on family traits and stories from one generation to the next. Before glass beads were traded, materials such as bone, semi-precious stone, shell and porcupine quill were used to create intricate designs, and when glass beads arrived from Europe they were quickly integrated into the artwork, thus incorporating change into traditional culture. Just as new types of writing were developed in the northeast to negotiate the sharing of the common pot, the beading pattern in *The Antelope Wife* evolves to accommodate the changing realities of Anishinaabe characters so that as "the design grows, the overlay deepens"(*The Antelope Wife* 73). Women are at the centre of creation, as well as destruction, in the novel, in charge of the continuum of people and time. They are the ones who make or unmake relationships and who tie the community together as they "sew with a single sinew thread, in, out, fast and furious, each trying to set one more bead into the pattern" (1). The novel uses beading as a spatial trope to expand Native space beyond reservation boundaries. By rearranging their design, beading patterns extend into the urban landscape, reclaiming it in order to maintain the ties of the community in the city even as they incorporate new elements.

In *The Antelope Wife*, beading patterns connect people and places together like maps. Throughout the narrative, beading functions both as a plot device and as a map to characters' experience and interactions. Jonathan Little has argued that the novel focuses on "weaving new patterns for individual and communal cohabitation and survival out of

the chaos and pain of the past" ("Beading the Multicultural World" 501), thus suggesting that the beading evolves even as it maintains continuity. Since the beginning of time, sets of twins have been stringing beads together to create meaningful patterns. At times these twins are recognisable in the narrative as twin sisters Mary and Zosie while at other times they take on cosmological qualities, for instance when "[o]ne sews with light and one with dark" (1). Human beings are tied to the earth, arranged in accordance with particular designs in this singular creation myth, "as crucial to this making as other animals. No more and no less important than the deer" (73). As in Lisa Brooks's common pot, space is shared with the other beings who inhabit it. For example, the windigo dog called Almost Soup says: "Though I live the dog's life and take on human sins, I am connected in the beadwork. I live in the beadwork too" (91). In addition, the "beads are sewn onto the fabric of the earth with endless strands of human muscle, human sinew, human hair," (73), thus threading human tissue to other animals and the earth. Like the eponymous antelope wife, whose ancestry belongs to both human and animal realms, the dog also shows how people's and animals' lives are intertwined: "We dogs know what the women are really doing when they are beading. They are sewing us all into a pattern, into life beneath their hands [...] We are the tiny pieces of the huge design that they are making – the soul of the world" (83). The pattern thus connects every being to the web of life and creates a map onto which each individual fate is inscribed so that "characters that are human, animal, and other-than-human […] form ever-shifting cyclical narrative patterns" (Little 514). However, the twins who bead the pattern do not intend to create a stable order but, instead, are "trying to upset the balance of the world" (1). While Annette Van Dyke writes that the beads signify "obsession and unbalance" in the novel ("Encounters with Deer Woman" 179), they are also an attempt to maintain a certain equilibrium. Julie Tharp explains that Erdrich's narrative "relies on the Ojibwe notion of balance" ("Windigo Ways" 129) and, although violence is an integral part of the design, as in Neej's beadwork whose "pattern

glitters with cruelty" (73), Little points out that "[t]he deepening pattern unifies opposites" ("Beading" 514). Twins compete to dominate the design temporarily, and the needles they use are "so straight and fine they slip right through the toughest hide" while the stitches establish "a pattern to the anguish" (83). People's fate can be sewn onto the pattern, manipulated by the designs. When Mary and Zosie sat at the table with Augustus–Mary's husband and Zosie's lover–every night, they were silently beading his fate separately on both ends of a single thread (206). Zosie works alongside her sister to gain control over Augustus through the beadwork by "adding to their own peculiar pattern, bead by bead" until "the thread pulled taut" (207), leading to his demise. Having become apt at dissimulating her stitches and knots into the "wild leaf or prairie rose or vines" sewn with "invisible thread," Zosie "used those threads, too, on Mary and Augustus Roy" (209). By hiding her knots, making her thread inconspicuous as though there was "no visible beginning or end to the design" (209), and arranging her colours perfectly, for a long time Zosie kept her intentions secret. In Minneapolis, the grandmothers use similar skills to "shroud their whereabouts" as they move constantly, are rumoured to be in various states, reservations and cities, thereby making it impossible for Cally to locate them (109, 119).

While these events cause disruption by excluding people from the design, beading can also be used to reestablish order by reincorporating members of the community. When Rosin loses her daughter Deanna, her grief distances her from her other daughter Cally, but as she works in "agonizing stitches," using brightly coloured "manidominenz, little spirit seeds," she creates a pattern in which Cally is called back: "[t]he flowers are growing, the powerful vines. The pattern of her daughter's wild soul is emerging" (91). These vines are ubiquitous in Cally's life and represent kinship and the reproduction of old family patterns reflected in familiar objects in the kitchen, the centre of family life where "golden deer race along the borders of the tablecloth […] Red candles, ivy plants" (201). At Christmas, the "plates and the gold leaves and vines and the festive

patterned cups" become signifiers for Cally's relationship to her family's traits repeated over generations. As she says, "[o]nce the pattern is set we go on replicating it. Here on the handle the vines and leaves of infidelity. There, a suicidal tendency, a fatal wish […] I'm trying to see the old patterns in myself and the people I love" (200). When Cally realises the connectedness epitomised by the beadwork, she sees that "everything is all knotted up in a tangle. Pull one string of this family and the whole web will tremble" (239). The image reifies the strength of the design by stressing how strong kinship ties are, but it also points out that when a single family member suffers, everyone else is affected. Every generation needs to maintain the web so that continuity is maintained in the face of disruptions such as wars, intermarriage, and urban relocation.

In *The Antelope Wife*, the horizon line finds an echo in the threads used for beading, which provide the underlying structure to the narrative. That line which links earth and sky is observed either longingly, or with distrust, by different characters; it represents "that place of the deer people" (Van Dyke 181). Sweetheart Calico, the antelope wife, is associated with free movement on the Plains where she comes from, the horizon line towards which she runs, and the beads which have come to define her experience and determine the outcome of the novel. She is "created out there where the distances turn words into air and thoughts to stone" (218). The larger movement of the novel occurs from the western Plains, shifting to the east as family members progressively move to Minneapolis; finally, Sweetheart brings it back west again in the final scene. This finds an echo in the story of previous generations: the first scene of the novel shows Scranton Roy attacking Blue Prairie Woman on the Plains. Later in life, he takes his grandson Augustus and undertakes a trip east to find the woman's village (238), describing the change in the landscape as they walk through the Plains: first the land is "poker-table flat underneath a low green sky," then further on "the edge of a series of regular hummocks of land […] seemed patted into place […] an earthscape of sloughs and lakes, potholes, woods of

delicate yellow-green lace, undulant hills," a "perfectly made land" in which tribal people were "now confined to treaty areas, reservations, or as they called them ishkonigan, the leftovers" (239). Thus, in *Antelope*, contemporary urban relocation finds an echo in the story of previous generations and situates movement at the core of the narrative. Movement from east to west and west to east, where the sky opens up in a "sky-hung space" (155) and closes down again, defines people's relationship to place. As character Klaus Shawano puts it, "I'm an Ojibwa […] so I don't know about the plains much. I am more a woods Indian, a city-bred guy" (26). This opposes him to Sweetheart, who lives on the Plains: while he finds the place "where sky meets earth" disturbing because "[o]nly humans see that line as an actual place. But like love, you'll never get there" (21), he knows that "[t]he antelope are the only creatures swift enough to catch the distance"–they "*live there in the place where sky meets earth*" (32, italics in the original). This space, Van Dyke argues is "a mystical site, between worlds" (Van Dyke 176). Klaus associates Sweetheart with running, distance, and describes her as deer-like (46), thus casting her as a prey he wishes to conquer and possess. Once he captures her and brings her to Minneapolis, in spite of endless walking Sweetheart finds herself unable to leave the city (52), and her silent longing for open space affects other characters strongly. As Cally explains, Sweetheart "is something created out there where the distances turn words to air and thoughts to stone" (218), a wide open space which other characters find hard to apprehend. Geographically, *Antelope* negotiates a line between two cardinal directions, east and west, the reservation being situated northwest of Minneapolis (228), across the western Plains. In her front note to the 2016 edition of the novel, retitled *Antelope Woman*, Erdrich recounts her many drives along the I-94 from Minneapolis to Wahpeton, the two places she considers home: "Each time my thoughts fly out where the sky opens. I've plotted out many books along this route. The Great Plains sky is a source of ideas for me, a touchstone of greatness and familiarity. The sky is a geographical family relative" ("A Note from Louise Erdrich" np).

She adds that "[a]long the way, I got to use my own experience of traveling back and forth, reservation to city, home to home" ("A Note"). Characters similarly travel down this route and, while older generations still see the reservation as their primary home, the relationship between relation and home is less straightforward for the young Cally. These repeated journeys challenge the logic of American expansionism by reclaiming the right to eastward movement across the plains, thus reversing the westward colonial movement by asserting the right to travel freely. Furlan suggests that "[t]he migratory nature of the Ojibwa people is carried over into the present, and it offers some rebellion against the confines of the reservation borders" (60), and indeed characters' movement between the Plains and the city determines not only the geography but the meaning of the novel, where freedom is found in the relationship between the city and the vast expanse towards the homeland. Towards the end of the novel, this sense of freedom is made clear as Sweetheart and Klaus walk north-west along a path which is "absorbed back slowly into the earth" (228) until turning "due west" where "over a slight rise […] the sky suddenly and immensely opened up before them in a blast of space" (229). The horizon line is tied back into the beadwork, which always recedes into the distance, making it impossible to catch more than "a glimpse of the next bead on the string" when observing "the needle flashing over the horizon" (240).

Started long before the establishment of reservations, the beading patterns have included the lives of many successive generations of Anishinaabeg, connecting them together and passing on family traits and tribal histories. Finally, this web helps women hand down an Anishinaabe heritage from the generation of Mary and Zosie, who spent most of their lives on the reservation, to their granddaughter who has migrated to Minneapolis. Erdrich actually started writing the novel after moving to the city herself: "When I moved to Minnesota, I began to write the book. For the first time the setting was the city. Over half of Native Americans live in the city, but this was my first time writing an Urban Indian novel" ("A Note"). *Antelope* shows characters coming to terms with their new

environment while maintaining relationships to people and places on the reservation. However, although the beading metaphor works as a reminder that characters are tied to their tribal pasts and remain connected to traditional ways, urban life also causes disruption. In Windigo dog's story, the reservation is synonymous with home; he describes the reservation as the place where reservation dogs reside: "Wherever they are, that's their rez" (224); but Klaus Shawano disagrees, saying that to him the reservation is a "special place […] of authority" (224). The question whether reservation remains the true home, or whether the city could become a reservation of sorts, is of crucial importance. In *Antelope*, Minneapolis is recast as a mixedblood space where Anishinaabe people may also have French, German, Swedish, Norwegian, Irish or Hmong ancestry (110, 118) and get married to Winnebago, Lakota, African and Brazilian partners (167); their grandchildren range from pale and blond to "obsidian" (171). This vision of the city argues against restrictive notions of belonging. Moreover, in parallel with that sense of openness, Minneapolis is also reclaimed as Anishinaabe space. The iteration of the Anishinaabe name for the city, Gakahbekong, is another way of reclaiming it. Gahkabekong is "the name our old ones call the city, what is means from way back when it started as a trading village" (124) and, as Cally recalls, "[t]hat same land is hunched underneath […] I get this sense of the temporary. It could all blow off. And yet the sheer land would be left underneath. Sand, rock, the Indian black seashell-bearing earth" (125). Minneapolis is perceived as a momentary construct, which does not prevent the land upon which it is constructed from being remembered by Anishinaabe characters. The two older generations seem at ease with navigating tensions between the reservation they call home and their new urban surroundings. Rozin "uses her Indian name on everything she can, insistent that the chimookomanug get used to her language as she'd had to theirs" (142), thus claiming her right to exist socially as an Anishinaabe woman. Her twin mothers' inclination to "call the city Mishimin Odaynang, in Ojibwa Apple Town, because of the sound of the word" (198)

likewise signals a reclaiming of the space as Anishinaabe. While Rozin sometimes spends weekends on the reservation (191), Mary and Zosie "spend most summers on the reservation homestead, the old allotment that belonged to their mother, a farmed patch of earth and woods and mashkeeg" (198), thereby maintaining the sense of the reservation as home. They come to inhabit a transient space, like Rozin who is "held equally by sky and earth, home and city" (141). There is a refusal to be fixed in space; for these characters living in Minneapolis means traveling back and forth rather than staying in place. Laura Furlan notes a shift in the discourse around urban communities from the "loss of identity portrayed in pre-1980s literature to a site where "Native peoples gain political power in collective tribal communities and attempt to reclaim portions of the American landscape" (*Indigenous Cities* 31). In more recent novels and films, "cities are where identities are remade and where intertribal collectivity offers the greatest means of survival and resistance" (7). Further, these "modes of mobility and movement mean that 'home' and 'away' are readily exchangeable–and that Indian bodies are not bound by state-imposed borders, even as home places remain important in terms of tribal identities and ongoing disputes over those boundaries and sites" (7). Urban centres enable tribal politics that, while they refer back to the reservation as a place of significance, do not therefore view cities as devoid of potential for new forms of alliances and identities to take shape beyond and across boundaries. Zosie and Mary Shawano may have spent most of their lives on the reservation but, "once they get down to the city, it turns out they never stop moving. They are out, and out again. Impossible to track down" (102). Their constant trips to a wide range of spaces call the relevance of reservation boundaries into question, as well as challenging the sense that their movement can be controlled or contained. Indeed, Laura Furlan urges scholars to "broaden the formulations about the 'borderlands' to include all of the spaces of city and reservation, all of which was once Indian land and is now the whole of the Americas" ("Remapping" 55). Cally, however, suffers from a sense of being uprooted, starting with

the loss of her beaded indis turtle, which contained her umbilical cord, when she was a child (101). The event causes her to progressively "wander from home" (101) until she finally reaches "the city's bloody heart" (102) where she chooses to reside. From her room in Minneapolis, Cally observes "the swaying of the branches of the trees" through the "rattling old window" which provides her "outlook on the world" (141) and misses the reservation: "Sometimes a branch tosses high […] and I think of it out there, streaming against the wind, and the very thought of that same wind ruffling my leaves and heading north along no highway to ruffle the leaves of my mother's house pulls at me with a longing I cannot make sensible" (141). The word that haunts her, "Daashkikaa," means "cracked apart" (213), and was first uttered by her ancestor Blue Prairie Woman. Living in close contact with Sweetheart Calico also affects Cally, urging her to look at the beading design that determines her: "I am not the same afterward, nor will I ever be until I understand the design" (106). Cally's journey to belonging and a sense of purpose in her urban environment necessarily negotiates tensions between the reclaiming of Minneapolis as Anishinaabe space and the pervasive risk of displacement (in the sense of family ties and tribal heritage being severed) and assimilation. Matthew Herman identifies a "complicated ambivalence toward history" in the novel, due to "the way it approaches yet retreats from a decidedly engaged, historicized account of Ojibwe life" (*Politics and Aesthetics* 52-53). Ultimately, however, he argues that the novel performs "an affirmation of a reterritorialized, pluralized, and hybridized Ojibwe historiography" (64).

Much of the power of beads derives from the meaning of certain prized colours, which are often imbued with a highly symbolic value. For example, "[t]he blue beads are colored with fish blood, the red with powdered heart [...] The yellows are dyed with the ocher of silence" (73). In *Antelope*, the colour of beads holds symbolic meanings which, once embedded into the design, are of special significance. The most important beads in the narrative are particular shades of red and blue, and characters go to great

lengths in order to obtain them. Carried into Minneapolis, these objects become "ethnic markers" which "exist to abolish the boundary between past and present, reservation and city, rural and urban, Native and colonial. They are enablers in a reclaiming of Indian history and space" (Furlan, "Remapping" 72). Blue beads are said to contain "the depth of the spirit life" (214). Often described in terms that refer to the natural world, these Czech beads cause their beholder to "see sky as through a hole in your body. Water. Life. See into the skin of the coming world" (214). The "Czech beads called northwest trader blue" (214) are attached to Cally's name through her ancestors, Blue Prairie Woman, whose daughter "Other Side of the Earth" ran with the antelopes, wearing the beads around her neck (20). Sweetheart, keeper of those blue beads, fills others around her with longing, rearranging the design as she "alters the shape of things around her, and she changes the shape of things to come" (106), and especially Cally who feels "a blueness that is a hook" (217). Zosie had been pursuing this particular shade of blue since childhood, when she glimpsed their distinctive blueness in the necklace worn by a Pembina woman (215) but soon found out they were as fleeting as time itself: "There. Gone." (215). Gambling with the Pembina woman in a dream, Zosie acquired both the beads and the name attached to them, a name that is long-lasting, that unlike Cally's sister Deanna won't disappear: Blue Prairie Woman (217). Looking at the history of wampum, Angela Haas identifies the beads as a "sign technology" ("Wampum as Hypertext" 78) that "embodies memory, as it extends human memories of inherited knowledge via interconnected, nonlinear designs" (80). Sinews, patterns, and colour come together as a type of multimedia mnemonics: "strings are encoded with information. Thus a wampum hypertext constructs an architectural mnemonic system of knowledge making and memory recollection through bead placement, proximity, balance, and color" (86).

The Antelope Wife likewise employs beads as encoded memory as well as the identity given by the name attached to them. When the beads are passed on to Cally,

Sweetheart recovers the freedom that "was so powerful, her traverse of boundless space" (222) and goes back to the plains. Finally, in the place by the river "where the lost always congregate," Cally finds her place within the design. Surprisingly, it is not her own twin grandmothers, but old Hmong women working in their gardens among "the vines and the leaves" who, as Cally feels, are "digging" for her, reconnecting her to her motherline: "This feeling comes up in me of how much and what I miss, my birth holder, indis mashkimodenz, little turtle connecting me back to my mother, all the mothers before her who dug in the dirt (219). The presence of the Hmong women at this turning point manifests the inclusion of a multiculturalism which, Jonathan Little argues, "is made possible by the eternal presence of Native American heritage, which is carried forth into the present and the future by the living and unconquerable earth" ("Beading" 513). Rather than "displace Ojibwa heritage and the past," this shift in the design shows "resilience and creativity" (510). Therefore, it does not mean that Anishinaabeg presence is assimilated into a global, multi-ethnic community but, rather, reasserts that new elements can be integrated into the beadwork, thus embracing them within an Indigenous framework. Finally, Cally sees that she is in Minneapolis "to understand and to report" (220) as she realises that in a vision years before her mother saw, "[r]ising in a trance and eroding downward and destroying what is […] Gahkabekong. The city. Where we are scattered like beads off a necklace and put back together into new patterns, new strings" (220). She designates the city as the manifestation of a different kind of pattern, one which may erode and even destroy older ways but nevertheless maintains an overall design that takes its roots in tradition. Unlike Sweetheart Calico, who disappeared westward into the distance "until she was a white needle, quivering, then a dark fleck on the western band" (230), Cally is integrated into the urban landscape.

To conclude, beading in *The Antelope Wife* functions like an inclusive map of Indigenous relations that extends from the reservation to the city. In *Writing Indian Nations*,

Maureen Konkle refers to sovereignty not as a theory of chronological precedence but as a "claim to geography," the assertion that "Native peoples' connection to land precedes and persists through European colonization and the formation of the United States to the present day" (2). When Brooks deplores that "so much Native writing is focused on the very subjects that are often absent from contemporary scholarship" (*The Common Pot* xxxviii), she insists that space has not been explored fully in Native American studies and that Indigenous writers' engagement with the land deserves further attention. *The Antelope Wife* shows how contemporary forms of fictional map-making allow urban space to be re-appropriated as Native space. Since time is also described as a flexible entity, informed by the histories tied to people and the land rather than as a continuous, linear progression, urban areas can be reincorporated into Anishinaabe space–not seamlessly, but fairly naturally–as their inhabitants are beaded back into the design. The beading pattern thus constitutes an inclusive framework which expands to incorporate spaces inhabited by Anishinaabeg and reclaims Minneapolis as Gakahbekong, a place where new generations live in relationship with the wider designs created by their ancestors, which they are now in charge of maintaining and creating anew. Little states that Erdrich's inclusion of immigrants within the urban landscape "implicitly suggests that Native American survival depends in part on extending traditional epistemologies that stress reciprocity, interdependence, and revision to the idea and practice of multiculturalism" ("Beading" 522). This suggests that the Anishinaabe framework represented by the beadwork in *Antelope* is flexible enough to incorporate new elements without compromising its continuity. As a trading post, Gahkabekong has long been a place of contact and exchange. Furlan further states that "[n]ovels like this about the movement of Native people from the reservation into the city are in fact producing a whole new narrative that is not about where and how Native peoples now live in urban places but about what that space of 'the Indian' has always potentially been" ("Remapping" 57): it cannot be restricted to the reservation

borders that only represent a highly contested "moment of fixity" (57-58). Webs of connections maintained across boundaries establish a relational space able to withstand settler attempts to divide and displace.

The Translation of Dr Apelles

Marking a departure from the style of David Treuer's first two novels, which were strongly grounded in identifiable locales (a reservation in *Little*, Minneapolis for *The Hiawatha*), *The Translation of Dr Apelles* juxtaposes a researcher's rather unremarkable life with the unlikely story of two Native lovers, which he is in the process of translating. Set in "an unnamed eastern US city" (Treuer cited in Kirwan's "Language and Signs," 88), the contemporary setting depicts the solitary tedium of Apelles's urban existence while the story within the story hails back to what is presumably an Anishinaabe reservation in Minnesota, bordering on the fictional Agencytown. The contrast between these two narratives has made the purpose of their pairing difficult for critics to pin down. In particular, John Kalb's fierce review of the novel notes that the "twists and turns" of the two sections are "equally implausible" (116). The two strands have been interpreted by reviewers as running parallel to each other, so that Dr Apelles's narrative as he falls in love with his colleague Campaspe mirrors the more mythical adventures of lovers Bimaadiz and Eta. However, in contrast with previous reviewers' perceptions, David Yost argues that the two parts of the story do not stand in parallel but as counterpoints ("Apelles's War" 60) and serve to demonstrate the critical issues outlined by Treuer in his *Native American Fiction: A User's Manual*, published simultaneously. He writes that the novel "emphasizes the importance of 'translating' one's own story for a lover to 'read.' In order to reveal what this self-translation entails for Indigenous subjects, "*Apelles* also complicates this process by showing the text that Euroamerican culture has already created for its Indian characters: an idyllic pastoral romance modelled on *Daphnis and Chloe*" (59, italics in the original), a story

which the plot mirrors rather faithfully with only minor adaptations (65). This calls to mind David Treuer's statement, in *Native American Fiction*, that "like the Romans in dramatic literature [Indians'] corporeal selves are, from the moment they are born, catching up with their fated selves" and they are "also vested with nobility, strength, even savage sensibilities" (16), various qualities which Treuer playfully imbues Eta's and Bimaadiz's narrative with. While very little criticism has been published on the novel so far, other scholars have looked at Treuer's fiction in relation to his criticism, which denounces the cultural lens through which Native American literature is usually read and promotes its relevance as an aesthetically astute literature. Reading Treuer's novels in this light can be a vexed attempt since, as David Stirrup remarks, it can be difficult to differentiate "the artist's artistry" from his "cultural background" ("Life After Death" 652). Padraig Kirwan likewise states that "the claims made in *Native American Fiction* can appear astonishing when we consider the author's engagement with his Ojibwe heritage" ("All the Talk" 447), also noting "the apparent discrepancies between Treuer's critical work and the themes of his first novel *Little*" (448). Both Kirwan and Stirrup, however, attempt to reconcile these seeming oppositions by looking for cues of Treuer's critical approach in his own fictional work. Stirrup's "double-stranded reading" aims to accommodate both Treuer's "teasing of disclosure and refusal" and "those aspects of the novel that do invite a cultural reading" ("Life After Death" 652). His analysis reveals that the novel *Little* "doesn't mythologize but rather enacts," and thus "ultimately points to the self-reflexivity of *reading* Native American literatures" (667, italics in the original). Stirrup, however, does not systematically establish a sharp distinction between Treuer's work and other Native writers', for instance when he describes how in the novel "[an inter-generational] movement encapsulates both individual and collective stories, establishing narratives that locate characters in relation to their community and the text in relation to the wider narrative of Native American experience in the United States" (665), thereby suggesting its adherence to a wider Indigenous writing

tradition rather than merely stressing its departure from it.

Comparatively, Kirwan tends to lend even more credit to Treuer's criticism, analysing his fiction almost solely in the light of his criticism. He posits that "the work of Native American scholars and writers demonstrates that there is in fact a great deal of synergy between the domains of art and culture" ("All the Talk" 444-445). He further argues that Treuer's "emphasis on artistic sovereignty […] reflects rather than contradicts the political sovereignty insisted upon by American Indian nationalists, and displays how fiction can indirectly suggest the ways in which spiritual and tribal communities conceive of tribal values today" ("Language and Signs" 74). In "All the Talk and All the Silence" he concludes that "Treuer's novel [*Little*] rigorously interrogates the boundaries between literary form and tribal presence, pointing out fiction's limits and capabilities" and "launches a directive against cultural readings per se" (454). It seems obvious that these aspects appear even more explicitly in *The Translation* where Treuer so clearly "differentiates between contemporary fiction and Ojibwe culture, separating each into discrete but vital and intertwined constituencies" (Kirwan 459). For example, in *The Translation*, Anishinaabemowin is employed as cultural artefact in one section and as an assertive distancing act in the other. As David Yost points out, while Anishinaabemowin is used "as little more than decoration" in the manuscript (Yost "Apelles's War" 63), language in the contemporary section "conceals meaning that resists penetration by the non-fluent" (64). The fabricated version of an idealised past, therefore, needs to be translated into a text which resists simplistic interpretation. Indeed, Yost explains that the section depicting Bimaadiz and Eta "represent[s] the simulation of Indigenous life into which Apelles […] fears disappearing, and only by writing his life story in explicit counterpoint can he 'translate' his life for others as well as for himself" (59-60). In opposition to what Judy Wakabayashi, in her study of author-translator relationship, qualifies as an "ambivalent case" of "writer manqué" ("Fictional Representations" 91), Dr. Apelles actually needs to

shake off the styles pertaining to the American literary canon in order to develop his own voice, as David Yost explains:

> Apelles appears to achieve self-translation not by adopting [Euroamerican authors'] styles but by transcending them. In his final chapters, his imitative voice disappears, breaking into a fragmentary style that Apelles seems to consider a more accurate self-reflection […] By learning to position himself relative to the styles of these canonical authors, Apelles has by implication learned to position himself vis-à-vis the racist underpinnings of their texts. (70-71)

While Dr Apelles "cannot create anything," he is nevertheless "the only one who can make sense of the thing, who can give it sense, give it life" (*Dr. Apelles* 31), and he achieves this not by merely mapping his own experience onto the primary text but by freely rewriting the story to liberate it from its tired tropes. When, at the end of the novel, he finds his own voice, Dr Apelles has succeeded in showing "the cultural freedom available in tribal writing," thus making way "for a newly imagined, liberatory form of Native American fiction writing" (Kirwan, "All The Talk," 461). With *The Translation*, David Treuer consciously upsets the binaries often associated with Native American writing, such as the view that the reservation is the centre of Native life, a home where subjects can be at peace and reintegrate the community. What Kirwan calls "Treuer's attempt to confound the preconceived notions concerning the Native's 'natural' relationship with place" (Kirwan "Remapping" 6) allows Treuer to establish "a new form of literary realism within the Native American novel […]" (8). What is more, Kirwan shows that the reservation is no more important than urban centres in Treuer's fiction since "past experiences on the reservation […] are no less disorientating or discomforting than those actions that have occurred in the city" (13), but the reservation is nevertheless positioned as "a location that has agency through and because of the authors and communities who live there […]" thus ensuring "an equality of space and comprehension of setting" (14). Treuer's *The Hiawatha*, a

more typical urban novel focusing on Ojibwe workers relocating to Minneapolis, "frustrates any allegorical placement in which [the protagonist's] naturalized past stands resplendent against the tarnished façade of his postcolonial self. The reservation is not represented as a safe space to which [he] can withdraw, either in the past or his memory of the past" (14).

Dr Apelles likewise questions the safety of idealised past narratives for contemporary Native subjects who need to position themselves against such fraught stories. The reservation, like the past, is a space that must be liberated from preconceptions of cultural authenticity. However, as Kirwan points out, that location maintains its importance through the presence of the people inhabiting it. As Treuer himself says, "[…] every act of defiance by a native leader or by a community activist is registered in our currently lived landscape" (Will Swarts 43). This landscape is not a romanticised fantasy but a space that bears the imprint of ongoing experience. Lived experience marks landscapes in urban centres as well, although Indigenous markers have been erased from city spaces for much longer. As Treuer points out, until the end of the eighteenth century, rural areas still required white people to be conversant with Native cultures:

> In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, if you were white and you were going to survive anywhere away from urban centers, you not only had to have a knowledge of the cultures and the people you were dealing with, but the languages and customs as well. You were necessarily integrated, in sometimes peripheral and sometimes central ways, into Indian culture. *That* was the dominant world. (Treuer cited in Kirwan's "Language and Signs" 76, italics in the original)

Over the last three centuries, however, urban centres have become the dominant world, and the relationship described above has thus been reversed. Treuer's description of a space where Indian culture dominates the non-urban landscape, and where white people are *integrated* into rural Indigenous centres, calls to mind Lisa Brooks's vision of the

common pot as well as Tol Foster's regionalism–a vision of a Native space of inclusion and cooperation emerging from Native centres that adopts a regionalist scope as an inclusive model for relationships in wider contexts. Where Brooks urges critics to"more fully examine the relashionships between those concepts that we have put in opposition" (Womack et al. *Reasoning Together* 241), Foster states that "[t]he danger [...] of the tribally specific frame is that it too often leads us to close off voices that do not obviously seem to be part of the tribal community and to privilege the more conservative voices" ("Of One Blood" 270). Although Treuer does not directly thematise this inclusive space in *The Translation*, he normalises a sense of Native presence in the city and uses Dr Apelles's textual translation and interpretation as a link between his immediate urban environment and the reservation.

In *The Translation of Dr. Apelles*, the document to be translated acts as a mediator with place. The main protagonist was born and brought up on a reservation, and his narrative starts with his reminiscence of the time when he left the reservation for college as a young man. The plane "felt heavy, awkward–rooted to the place like he was" and when the land receded he started to cry "because that awkward heavy connection, that love of place and the sense of self it can bring, can be severed so easily" (23-24). Leaving the reservation is described as an act of severance from the self that is grounded in a particular place. Further, a parallel is created between place or, more precisely, the sky above the reservation when the plane takes off, described as "his sky, which domed his little world" (26) and the document for which, in contrast, "there is no sky into which it can climb. Because, for stories, the sky is made of the endless dome of readers and freckled with constellations of the kindly and curious" (31). The dome of the sky, to be climbed into, represents the possibility of multiple connections and interpretations which Dr. Apelles enabled by leaving the reservation and now stirs up again as he translates the story. Textual space, which "has to be created in the first place and then […] has to be recreated"

(24), is a clear medium for the redefinition of a relationship to place, one which Dr. Apelles lost when he left the reservation and is reminded of as he reads the document:

> [H]e was in the grip of the plane now and he fell away, up, higher, from those small anonymous and communal worlds he knew so well, and he had felt, acutely, that he was leaving himself behind. And that is why the document he found, quite by accident, has unsettled him so, and given him that sickening sense of vertigo. It is with terrifying certainty that he realizes now that he has been falling away, away, forever. (26)

Indeed, at the beginning of the novel, Dr Apelles isn't particularly grounded in his immediate environment. When he steps out of the library at the end of the day he remembers that "there exists a world in which he actually lives […] a place that continues, that has not gone the way of dust and death, that is represented by more than a few words on a page" (33). His relief at finding the world again outside the building shows how distant his connection to the urban landscape had been. In comparison, Eta and Bimaadiz narrative are much more attuned to their surroundings, although particular locales are unclear. It seems likely that Treuer attempts to distance his protagonist from the cliché of the environmentally attuned Native, always rooted in place–as was the case with Jeanette's character in *Little* when she instinctively remembers the old paths in chapter one–although *The Translation* also explores other ways of being grounded. In *Native American Fiction,* Treuer writes that one of the particularities of Native American literature is that it "contains within it links to culturally generated forms of storytelling" (195). The story which Dr Apelles translates, however, has long been fixed on a written document, cut off from its oral, living origins. As the narrator describes, the document "has languished–unknown and untranslated in a language no one save him speaks" (26-27). This obviously does not signify that the original manuscript is written in an extinct language of which Dr Apelles would be the last remaining speaker, since such a suggestion would establish an

uneasy affiliation with the popular trope of the vanishing Indian. However, the insistence that "[o]nly he can translate it," that "he himself is the only remaining key" (24) reveals how closely D. Apelles identifies with the original narrative and announces the mirroring effects that the document will have on Dr Apelles's personal life. In his review of the novel, Douglas Robinson has noted the telling change of pronouns which indicates that Dr Apelles is the narrator of the section written in the third person as well as the translator of the Indigenous story. In a paragraph that starts with the impersonal consideration that "It is strange for him to think of himself as having a soul," a sudden shift to the first person occurs: "*He* touches *his* chest with *his* fingertips and thinks: there is something inside. Past *my* shirt, and past this old skin, and deeper still, there is something inside of *me*. *I* can sense it yet […]" (30, italics mine). As suggested above, the loss of relationship to place is related to a loss of connection to self. However, at this point Treuer suggests a postmodernist twist on what has often been an essentialised view of Indigenous ties to the environment– what the author defined as an "ancient form of 'postmodern' discourse" (*Native American Fiction,* 198). While by the end of the novel Dr Apelles concludes that "What was lost has been found" (315), he also resists the notion that the original manuscript exists in a fixed locale. When he tells Campaspe "I found myself," she asks "but where's the original, then? *what* is the original?" to which he replies "you should know that by now" (312, italics in the original). Having completely integrated the original document through its translation into his personal experience, Dr Apelles no longer needs the actual manuscript. If what "is real" also "feels like make-believe" (312), it is because the original text has no existence as such but only manifests itself through active participation in its possibilities. Coming back to a quote mentioned above, the translation "has to be created in the first place and then […] has to be recreated" (24), once through the textual translation of the original, and again through his life until it becomes a shifting but fertile ground for his sense of self. Thus although "the manuscript is not lost […] it might not ever be found" (314). It is accessible

through Dr Apelles's visualisation, which shows that he knows exactly where it is located, but it is forever out of reach in the material world. By extension, his place on the reservation and within tribal history is tied to his own story, much as the spot occupied by the manuscript in the library constitutes a thread from inner to outer worlds as he translates himself. The document secretly filed away is a physical marker of the immaterial connections that Dr Apelles bears with other locales.

In short, Dr Apelles's translation counters the essentialist view of Native people as belonging strictly to the reservation, not by severing those ties, but by filtering the old narrative of authenticity through his own contemporary urban life. The novel suggests that the Anishinaabe protagonist needs to translate the romanticised story of his ancestry into a version of himself that enables him to establish more genuine connections with his context. In doing so, he transforms a tired version of a tokenised tribal past into a living legacy, thus indicating that the city can be an apt vessel for renewal, if not of tribal tradition per se (since the only community to speak of in *The Translation* is constituted by non-Native library staff), then at least of an Indigenous heritage, provided it goes through a process of translation into the new environment.

Shrouds of White Earth

Gerald Vizenor likewise explores the implications of urban relocation and the productive ways in which Anishinaabe heritage can be created anew in the city, although his protagonist's eviction from the reservation is imposed rather than voluntary. In *Shrouds of White Earth*, an Anishinaabe artist whose creations defy common notions of what constitutes Native art elicits international interest. Drawing inspiration from painters such as Marc Chagall, the main protagonist Dogroy Beaulieu creates images "of the earth [...] not of the head" and portrays visionary creatures and characters that escape the fixity of realism. By questioning the relevance of cultural and aesthetic categories, he offends so-

called casino politicians, who banish him from the reservation. In spite of this, Beaulieu's art underlines the artist's agency and affirms his right to self-determination by asserting his ties to the White Earth nation while also travelling beyond the reservation to Minneapolis, other American States, and France. Liberated from the more conservative aspects of tribal politics, he is free to reinvent new ways of relating to the world as an Anishinaabe artist. As Joseph Bauerkemper argues, "Vizenor's conception of sovereignty […] is neither absolutist nor separatist: it is relational" ("The White Earth Constitution" 6). This section explores how Beaulieu's use of "natural motion" transcends boundaries and manifests the "active sense of presence" which is defined as "transmotion" in Vizenor's work. The analysis then demonstrates the subversive nature of a mobile representation of space, which undermines the constructed categories that attempt to delineate and contain Indigenous people's spatial, as well as aesthetic, practices. *Shrouds of White Earth* shows that communication between art as aesthetics and art as political subversion is necessary, and that the boundaries enforcing containment and exclusion can be transcended by a more fluid articulation of space. Throughout, the narrator of the novel addresses the author as "my friend" as if the narrative were a casual conversation with Vizenor himself (*Shrouds* 111). From his anchorage in the reservation to his exile in Minneapolis, and finally through the wider circulation of his artwork, Beaulieu sketches out new possibilities for Native presence and agency far beyond models of sovereignty contingent on reservation boundaries.

First of all, *Shrouds of White Earth* speaks very directly to the debates concerning sovereignty, and is specifically tied to the current political situation of the White Earth nation. In *Manifest Manners*, Gerald Vizenor states that "[t]ribal sovereignty is inherent, and that sense of independence and territorial power has been the defence of sovereignty on tribal land and reservations" (146). From the start, however, Vizenor has defended a wider view of sovereignty rather than restricting it to reservation boundaries,

for instance when he suggests that "an international presence could secure more [than casinos]" (*Manifest Manners,* 148). His later work tends to filter discussions of sovereignty through transmotion, positing that "Native transmotion and permanence are contingencies of governance and sovereignty" (*Fugitive Poses,* 186). Vizenor's *Shrouds of White Earth* similarly exploits the issues raised by *The White Earth Nation: Ratification of a Native Democratic Constitution*, published two years later with co-author Jill Doerfler. The small volume contains the new constitution of White Earth, of which Gerald Vizenor is the principal writer. Vizenor incorporated many of the critical concepts developed in his scholarship in the wording of the constitution. In the chapter titled "Constitutional Consent," he states that "[t]he constitution was created in the spirit of resistance and independent governance, by the sentiments of Native survivance […]" (52). He insists on survivance and natural reason being foundational, and unique, to the White Earth constitution: "There is no other constitution in the world that contains the profound sentiments of survivance, natural reason, and the native capacity of continental liberty" (53, 59). Gerald Vizenor explicitly defends the modern constitution against the more conservative traditionalists when he denounces "[t]he advocates of the sacred and Native traditions, the steadfast utopian fanciers of Native theocracies and federal reservations, the cocky cultural revisionists, and the political ideologues"–the forces preserving a fixed view of the totemic system who would promote "a configuration of governance similar to the conception of a copper barrier of Native ancestors and traditions, otherwise a council of headmen and their families," and in that name "protest a modern constitution that provides for an actual system and process of democratic governance, a necessary separation of powers, and […] human rights" (31). While he acknowledges that "[t]he wisdom of Native ancestors is a crucial mediation," he refuses any preconceived notion likely to constitute "a barrier to the sentiments of survivance and liberty" (31). In *Shrouds* as well as in his critical work, Vizenor criticises the reservation-as-nation for being too readily compatible with neo-liberalism and

too easily inviting corruption and disregard towards the rights of its citizens, especially where it imitates the United States Constitution, which "has compromised many times the rights of citizens" and made "native rights [...] contingent on the truth games of the time" so that [t]he Indian Agent has become the tricky dominance of native politicians" (*Shrouds* 111). As he states in *The White Earth Nation*, "[s]ome democracies were weakened by consumerism, corruption [and] political factions" (15), and the constitution therefore tries to foreclose avenues for such unequalities: "A good Native government of natural reason must control the 'reign of excess,' and must certainly do so in the political turns and tease of a constitutional democracy" (10). Beaulieu further states that despite being "the primary sources of income," casinos represent "the reversal of sovereignty," "the sardonic termination of sovereignty" and "[t]he new frontier" (112). His articulation of sovereignty attempts to move away from the Western neoliberal model and reinstate "the ironic art of native liberty" (112). In an interesting interchange between fiction and reality, two articles of the constitution actually ward off the scenario applied to Beaulieu in the novel. The first one is Article 5, which defends artistic statements by stating that "[t]he freedom of thought and conscience, academic, artistic irony, and literary expression, shall not be denied, violated or controverted by the government (65). Beaulieu's contentious art would, clearly, be protected by this clause. Likewise, a measure is taken which "prohibits exile and banishment" (56) in Article 16, which ensures that "[c]itizens shall never be banished from the White Earth Nation" (66), thus forestalling the eventuality that Beaulieu would be expelled and forbidden to enter the reservation again, as is the case in *Shrouds*. However, in the novel, the tribal council tries to "amend the constitution to allow banishment" and, when that fails, to pass "an obscure ordinance about the abuse of native tradition" (*Shrouds* 4). The narrative thereby serves as a warning against the potential abuse of reservation politics and provides a rationale for some of the articles of the White Earth constitution by illustrating how censorship would affect the integrity of tribal sovereignty. This sets up

Shrouds as an overtly political novel that communicates directly with contemporary contexts and discussions around tribal nationalism, with Gerald Vizenor at the centre of recent development. In "The Constitution of the White Earth Nation," Lisa Brooks points out that at the time when Craig Womack's critique of Vizenor's lack of political investment came out in *Reasoning Together* (where Womack states that "Vizenor's interest in the nonrepresentational modes of postmodernism [...] marks a similar movement in his fiction away from the real world–that he has traded tropes for reality" (68)), "Vizenor was in the process of creating a pragmatic, visionary, and most politically relevant text of indigenous and tribally specific nationhood" ("The Constitution" 58). Framing Vizenor's contribution to the Constitution as "revitalizing a longstanding indigenous tradition," (71), Brooks also notes the document's conceputalisation of "kinship not based exclusively on biology" (62) and relates it to the community networks represented in contemporary literature: "Its imagination of this network of nationhood calls to mind the image of Louise Erdrich's kinship chart, which maps her fictional Anishinaabe community [...] Clearly the Constitution [...] could accommodate the complex relationships it delineates" (62). Such networks are not based on individualism or nuclear family units but, instead, "citizenship is based on kinship affiliation with a large extended family," as well as "a network of related families" (63) that may spread outwards to wider areas while still being covered by the Constitution:

> The constitution gives White Earth Citizens, who live in geographically distinct areas (both within the reservation and off-reserve, as with urban enclaves in Minneapolis) the right and the responsibility to create deliberative bodies within their self-defined communities (65).

Although this particular possibility is not explicitly addressed by *Shrouds*, the novel nevertheless suggests that urban artistic communities can assert Native transmotion away from the reservation and are a vital part of Indigenous politics in their resistance to "tradition fascists."

Secondly, Beaulieu's refuge in Minneapolis marks an extension of the reservation into the city, or even the creation of a new urban reservation. Thus, despite attaching his narrative firmly to contemporary White Earth politics, Vizenor eschews the limitations inherent in the reservation-based model of sovereignty by expanding his vision for Native agency beyond its geographical boundaries. Indeed, art in the novel works as a vessel for the extension of sovereignty beyond reservation boundaries and establishes the Band Box Diner as an urban-based reservation in Minneapolis. In the diner, Dogroy Beaulieu discusses his life and art with a silent protagonist who, as James Mackay points out, "[…] shares many autobiographical details with Vizenor himself" ("Wanton and Sensuous" 174), and indeed appears to be a rather straightforward fictionalised version of the author. Vizenor's 2008 novel *Father Meme* was constructed on a similar model, that of a confession or a testimony, but the roles were inverted in that the narrator shared fictionalised elements with the author's life while the listener was a fictional French woman. In *Shrouds*, the position of the implied author as the silent witness of Beaulieu's narrative seems to suggest the author's approval of the protagonist's actions. When Beaulieu says "You had the pluck and nerve, my friend, to include a constitutional article on the freedom of artistic irony and literary expression" (111), the teasing tone indicates a level of complicity between narrator and implied listener. Here, Beaulieu makes a direct reference to decisions made during the elaboration of the Constitution of the White Earth Nation, of which Vizenor was the principal writer. Because Beaulieu produces art that offends "casino politicians" and "tradition fascists," they respond to his artwork by banishing him from the reservation. The narrative, therefore, is situated in the Elliot Park neighbourhood, a part of Minneapolis where many Native Americans converge. As Beaulieu explains, the Band Box Diner has "almost become a reservation" (*Shrouds,* 12). This signals the first expansion of Native space in the novel, out of the official reservation, and suggests that a diner can become a reservation in the heart of the city. Indeed, in his work, Vizenor outlines a

sovereignty that does not rely on a monolithic nation-state but, rather, depends upon people's creative vision and bolsters inventiveness. In her essay titled "By My Heart," McGlennen shows that Vizenor's poetry "delineates a kind of autonomous Anishinaabe territory that also includes non-Anishinaabe people" (21) and "offers a blueprint for Anishinaabe definitions of nation and citizenship marked not by states' attempt to regulate movement of people across borders, but rather by the people themselves determining the locales and ideals of the nation" (2). In many respects, Vizenor's fiction can be perceived as an exploration of mobile forms of citizenship, which do not attempt to regulate subjects but allow a celebration of communal as well as individual identities. Jodi A. Byrd likewise points out how Vizenor's "mode of chance, tricks, and irony […] are constantly in motion and constantly resisting dominance" (*Transit of Empire* 220). She describes his work as relying on "[m]ovement and complexity, rather than static dioramas of tattered clothes" (220). Like David Treuer, Vizenor makes a conscious attempt to avoid stereotypical reliance on cultural artefacts and simulacra, preferring playful exploration of meanings and creative ambiguity instead. Applying a similarly mobile approach to the city, McGlennen also argues that Vizenor reclaims Minneapolis as an Anishinaabe city that supports transnational movement:

> Minneapolis is understood not as an Indigenous space constructed as a result of Relocation legislation of the 1950's, but as a "nationalized" homeland of the Anishinaabe–a heart center, thereby suggesting the transnational identities of Anishinaabe people […] Minneapolis becomes a location transformed by Anishinaabe people because of relocation, but it is also a place recuperated by the Anishinaabeg as traditional homelands. In each way, Anishinaabe life ways are marked by bold political moves and acts of resistance. (16, italics in the original).

Vizenor's vision of Minneapolis as an Indigenous transnational centre is foundational to *Shrouds of White Earth*, which is narrated from "The Band Box Diner" situated in town and

described as "a secure reservation of exiles" (13)–a stable meeting ground characterised by departure from traditional forms of citizenship. A politics of resistance is expressed through artwork which positions itself "against the politics and stories that please the court and casinos" (35) even as it evolves from ancient tribal art forms, "inspired by the images on native birch bark scrolls, mainly those associated with dream songs, and the rock art paintings of the Anishinaabe" (13), and is thus tied to the culture of a particular place. Vizenor's postmodernity, therefore, does not eschew relationship to place but, rather than assimilate it to static notions of belonging, extends its reach towards greater freedom of movement. In "By My Heart", Molly McGlennen's also quotes Ben Burgess, who articulates a fluid conception of nationhood when he explains how to "build nationhood by relating to a particular place" (22), a concept transferable to the art of first person narrator Dogroy Beaulieu in *Shrouds*, whose White Earth citizenship is an artistic rather than political one.

What is more, the protagonist's cosmopolitanism prompts him to theorise the necessity to "sideline the romance of the primitive as a representation of native reality," and counter it with a "Native Visionary Cosmopolitan Primitivism, or Cosmoprimitivism" (17), thus allying the primitive to the cosmopolitan in new and productive ways. For Beaulieu, Ojibwe artist George Morrison, whose production is grounded in the Minnesota landscape, "represents a key figure in the development of 'Native Modernism,' a unique configuration of modernist and indigenous artistic practices" that incorporates what Vizenor calls transmotion (James Mackay, "Wanton and Sensuous"175) as well as "totemic" elements derived from Anishinaabe aesthetics (176). In the novel, Vizenor attempts to disrupt " the negative associations that inhere in the word 'primitivism'" (177), a term that is simultaneously defined as "the idealization of the primitve" (176) while also bearing connotations such as lack of refinement (177). The question remains whether Vizenor's cosmoprimitivism manages to fully break away from such associations or ends

up reifying a romanticisation of the so-called primitive. In order to avoid "lumping together the arts of peoples from the Americas Oceania, Africa and Asia into a single category"–as the Parisian museum does in *Shrouds*–(178), it is necessary to articulate a more specifically Anishinaabe cosmoprimitive art. While Vizenor fails to differentiate his perspective from the primitive in a convincing manner when he adopts The Musée du Quai Branly as a counterpoint to American settler politics, he does however propose a distinctly Anishinaabe art form in the novel. Visionary art constitutes Beaulieu's only political home. As he states in the opening of *Shrouds*: "I have no native state but my visionary portrayals in art," a "sense of nation" which flies in circles over the White Earth Nation (3). His displacement from the reservation creates the necessity to revisit it through art in order to find a "place in the sun by art and literature, and a place name" (5). The Band Box Diner represents a new reservation for controversial artists (12), also called "artists once removed" or "removal artists" (25), to signal the importance of the reservation as the place of reference as well as a fundamental separation from it. Instead of political sovereignty, Beaulieu talks about "intuitive sovereignty"(34), which is reminiscent of Audra Simpson's "feeling citizenship" and explores a more liberatory, personal form of politics. The crumbling church building which he calls a "sanctuary" rather than "a party homeland" (43) is likewise a rejection of the simulations central to the "tradition fascism" and aspects of reservation culture rejected by Beaulieu (6). In his art, he tries to distance himself from simulation by eschewing representations in favour of sensations (116). His "creative vision of art across time, place, cultural tradition and nostalgia" posits the notion of art as a form of "native liberty" that positions itself against the politics of "court and casinos" through a "sense of nature" related to motion (35).

This radical rupture with reservation culture, however, does not preclude the maintenance of a certain kinship with the reservation reflected, for instance, by the animals which have followed him to his city studio, "a more secure destination" than their

place of origin (53). Beaulieu also states that art and survivance can both be learnt on the reservation (138). Nevertheless, following his relocation to the Twin Cities, Beaulieu adopts a very critical stance toward the reservation he has been forced to leave, and he especially resists the political conservatism which he calls tradition fascism. The latter is best understood as the inability to keep reinventing new possibilities for Anishinaabe culture rather than becoming nostalgic about a falsified past–resisting humour and its transformational power–or placing monetary value on Native culture by commodifying it, as is apparent in the critique of casinos, deemed to represent "the reversal of sovereignty" and a "new frontier" (112). While reservation culture is cast as an unlikely assemblage "of colonial, foisted, bribable, simulated, countered, postponed, and ironic good stories, taste and company" (6), Beaulieu is particularly wary of a certain strain of Native purists whose traditions he describes as "the nostalgia of the unimagined," conspicuous "scenes of absence" that deny irony (34). Beaulieu's banishment thus marks the absence of irony for the sake of nostalgia (76) and, given that the constitution expressly forbids banishment in addition to protecting artistic irony as a constitutional right (159), signifies political irony (111). Since justice must protect "native imagination" against "cultural tyranny" (150), Beaulieu proposes a "straightforward, heartfelt sense of freedom" and "continental liberty" as an alternative to compromised reservation politics. He describes it as an "emotive experience that creates light" (116), the kind of light that the artist finds in Paris (133) and which therefore transcends international borders as well as reservation boundaries. Again, the model of the reservation-as-nation is called into question due to its rigid political structures which mirror U.S. politics of exclusion. In *Shrouds*, Vizenor envisions a more fluid alternative for the assertion of Native agency through presence in urban spaces which he then extends further.

Finally, the novel showcases the artist not only in other states but also in Europe, thus crossing international boundaries as well as artistic ones. In order to create

his shrouds, Dogroy Beaulieu wraps animals that died on the reservation in white linen to transfer "a trace of flight" (10) onto the textile. This term invokes Deleuze's lines of flight– the energy that reveals gaps in dominant systems by passing through their interstices– which Vizenor then ties to the "traces," one of his favourite terms, defined as the marks left by the invisible realm onto the sensible world (Kathryn Hume, "Gerald Vizenor's Metaphysics" 590). The main protagonist also associates his work with what Vizenor terms natural motion, the "shamanic, the creation of a native vision" (13). The sight of Beaulieu's artwork, while repelling and infuriating the so-called tradition fascists of the reservation, enchants museum and gallery curators who see in them the suggestion of Native totems. In *Shrouds*, Beaulieu's art participates in transmotion, an assertive sense of movement tied to sovereignty through "native motion and an active presence," as Vizenor defines it in *Fugitive Poses*:

> The connotations of transmotion are creation stories, totemic visions, reincarnation, and sovenance; transmotion, that sense of native motion and an active presence, is sui generis sovereignty. Native transmotion is survivance, a reciprocal use of nature, not a monotheistic, territorial sovereignty. Native stories of survivance are the creases of transmotion and sovereignty. (15, italics in the original)

Just as creation stories and totemic visions are expressly cited as sources of inspiration in Beaulieu's art (15), and the places staged in his work, always as sites of Native presence, manifest a sense of sovereignty. Through his evocative use of language, which resists easy capture, Vizenor outlines a sense of sovereignty which, likewise, cannot be contained within strictly defined territorial bounds but is rather dependant upon movement. It is crucial to think of movement here not as a nomadic practice or a lack of emplacement but, instead, as the signifier of an active Indigenous presence written onto a wide range of spaces. In *Shrouds*, Beaulieu's art pieces echo the subversive nature of such a fluid

representation of space. The second expansion of Native space in the novel thus involves Beaulieu's artwork's travelling to museums and galleries across the United States as well as Europe, and more particularly finding success in France. Despite its ties to the reservation, where Beaulieu's art was incubated and carried out, the kind of sovereign aesthetic employed in *Shrouds* enables international connections and exchanges through unrestrained mobility when his creations travel to other countries. In his article "The Unmissable," Vizenor explains his use of transmotion as an aesthetic theory that specifically defines Native artists' use of creativity:

> The discussion of transmotion, a spirited and visionary sense of natural motion, has evolved in my critical studies as an original aesthetic theory to interpret and compare the modes, distinctions, situations, and the traces of motion in sacred objects, stories, art, and literature. Native literary artists, those who pose in the emotive shadows of natural motion and totemic cultures, are clearly obligated, in my view, to create innovative narratives and poetic scenes that tease and reveal the fusions of native ethos, transmotion, and stories of survivance. (65)

According to Vizenor, art is imbued with the potential to transmit and transform Native modes of creative expression in innovative ways that speak to transmotion and ensure survivance. As James Mackay states in his analysis of the novel, "Vizenor performs an act of what he has termed 'transmotion,' recognizing both the grounded nature of art and its ability to transcend borders and ethnic lines" ("Wanton and Sensuous" 175). In order to achieve this, however, Vizenor seems to place limitless trust in France. Mackay argues that some Native writers' idealised view of Europe "allows [many Native writers] rhetorically to ally with Europeans against the rapacious force of (whitestream) American power, seen as an artificial and constrained cultural force when set against the deep-rooted sense of tradition shared by indigenous and European people" (170). He also notes that in *Shrouds*, "the incorporation of France as a space of Vizenorian imagination, while still firmly

rejecting imperial institutions" (174) furthers the trend he started in *Father Meme* and continues in his recent novel *Blue Ravens*. Furthermore, Mackay contextualises *Shrouds* as a response to primitivism and critiques the approach employed by Vizenor who, although he "seemingly denies the attitude of primitivism, nonetheless celebrates notions of shamanism and native visionary art" (177). Indeed, it is strange to note that "when his narrator actually arrives in France he chooses to ignore the evidence of the continuing colonial attitude towards "primitive" peoples in a specific powerful institution. Instead, he has Dogroy Beaulieu celebrate artistic freedom […]" (180), thus reinforcing the notion so pervasive in the French art scene of Native artefacts as nothing but art objects, thereby obscuring cultural context, colonisation and theft, spiritual implications, and individual artistic skills. However, it seems that the French theory with which Vizenor regularly engages in his critical work, precisely because "it does not tend to be bounded by, [and] indeed mostly tends to subvert the logic of, the […] nation state" (Mackay 172), reflects practices of contestation that are deeply entrenched in French culture. In addition, the cover of *Shrouds* is adorned with Pierre Cayol's "Le Début et la Fin," a painting inspired by expressionism which mirrors Beaulieu's artistic process by representing a woman at the forefront and revealing her transformation into the shadow trace of her former self, her skeleton visible as through an X-ray with lingering breasts and lips–a shroud of sorts. But perhaps the question of Vizenor's artistic vision of France is best approached through the art piece which Beaulieu titles "Band Box Diner Over Mont Sainte-Victoire" (12). The piece refers to Paul Cézanne's series of paintings of the mountain situated near Aix-en-Provence where Beaulieu relocates the Band Box Diner, "pinched narrow on one side, abstract, uneven corners, towing a cubist historic plaque, and with many huge native faces in various colors at the window […] tilted over the deep slant at the south side of the mountain" (11-12). The scene also depicts "a green shaman and several animals in flight, bright and bold colors, over the mountain" (11), thus adding totemic elements which act as signs of what

Vizenor calls natural motion–the "shamanic, the creation of a native vision" (13)–to the piece. The painting, he adds, was first presented in Santa Fe, yet another transposition. White Earth (represented by the shaman and animals), France (the Provence landscape and setting), Minneapolis (the Band Box Diner), and America (the studio exhibition in New Mexico), are all juxtaposed in that passage. Vizenor is effectively remapping Native presence and agency onto a range of locations, thereby creating a potentially world-wide community of values between the Native artist, similarly-minded visionaries from other backgrounds, and receptive viewers sensitive to his vision. By relocalising the diner in Provence, Beaulieu's reinterpretation of Paul Cézanne's Mont Sainte Victoire likewise creates new connections within the artistic community in order to establish an open-ended Indigenous ground for artistic sovereignty, thus illustrating Vizenor's view of transmotion as visionary rather than territorial–the manifestation of a movement towards survivance rather than a conservative view of place and time. However, his optimistic vision involves a strong risk of misinterpretation. As Mackay points out, Dogroy Beaulieu's art also seems to imply that "the tribal tradition can be metaphorically seen as corpse-like" ("Wanton and Sensuous," 181), which is indeed what Vizenor accuses some traditionalists of suggesting when they resist constitutional forms of modernism. Vizenor is well aware of the danger of simulations when it comes to the reception of Native narratives and art, and it seems that Beaulieu's shrouds, reminiscent as they are of dead creatures, could easily come across as the narrative of victimry, thus reinforcing stereotypical views of the doomed Indian who only manifests traces of tribal people's glorified past. Other novels by the author, such as *Griever*, could perhaps counterbalance that issue or add missing pieces to this interpretation of Vizenor's international vision for Native transmotion. This will be addressed in the next chapter of the thesis.

To sum up, *Shrouds of White Earth* reveals how aesthetics, as a form of political subversion that enables more inclusive models of sovereignty, move beyond

containment within reservation boundaries and gesture towards a mobile, even international, vision of Native space. Native space is constituted by the artist's relationship to a place as a form of self-definition re-enacted through art rather than a prescriptive model of enclosure within a static Indigenous tradition. Because it incorporates distinctly Anishinaabe elements transposed onto international settings, cosmoprimitive Native art is rendered highly mobile and made capable of asserting tribal sovereignty throughout the world while conversing with other art springing from compatible perspectives. Although a harsher critique of the novel may point out the limits of Vizenor's perception of France–epitomised in Le Musée du Quai Branly–and reveal pitfalls in Beaulieu's artwork that question its liberatory potential, Vizenor nevertheless extends Native sovereignty far beyond the reservation through a literary aesthetics which showcases art as a vessel for Native transmotion. By creating an urban diner-reservation and transposing it onto a post-impressionist painting of a Provence mountain, he deploys a sovereign aesthetic that playfully explores potential avenues for Native sovereignty, a space where like-minded individuals can find refuge and create a new order in which Native voices are heard. Artistic influence is mutual since Indigenous arts inform the modern western artistic movements which Native artists like Beaulieu then use as inspiration for their work. In *Shrouds*, their art is also supported by museums and galleries (especially in Paris), thus allowing further exchange. Aesthetics, as a form of political subversion, enable more inclusive models of sovereignty to move beyond containment within reservation boundaries and gesture towards a mobile, even international, vision of Native space.

Conclusion

This chapter has mainly focused on the ways in which Louise Erdrich, David Treuer, and Gerald Vizenor extend Native space beyond reservation boundaries by using different art forms capable of establishing and maintaining ties between the

reservation and urban spaces. *The Antelope Wife* employs beading to map out networks of relationships between the reservation and Anishinaabeg living in Minneapolis. In this way, the novel also echoes Audra Simpson's notion of a "feeling citizenship" and touches upon the question of identity politics by re-rooting characters in the city. In contrast, *The Translation of Dr Apelles* does not rely on clear parallels between the reservation and the urban landscape of its protagonist, but instead unsettles that very relationship. By illustrating that the original story is tainted and therefore needs to be translated into everyday life, *The Translation* takes a more individualistic stance on Anishinaabe identity. Finally, *Shrouds of White Earth* creates bonds not only between the reservation and the international locations connected through Beaulieu's art, but also between Native artistry and French impressionists (which often bears the influence of so-called primitivism). By blurring categories in this way, the novel questions the conservative aspects of reservation politics just as much as it decries stereotypical conceptions of Native art as turned towards the past. Instead, art becomes the conveyor of transmotion and survivance. What these three works of fiction point towards in their representation of Native space is not so much an expansion of sovereignty beyond reservation borders as a redefinition of sovereignty, both politically and territorially, as well as the need to rethink the terms of citizenship. They use a sovereign aesthetic, not only through fiction writing, but within the narrative also, through the use of the artistic metaphors of beading, translation, paintings and shrouds, in order to assert Native presence and agency in urban spaces.

CHAPTER THREE: TRANSNATIONAL INDIGENEITY

While chapter two extended the spatial framework of Native space from reservations to urban areas, this chapter widens the focus further to include hemispheric studies and establish transnational Indigenous connections. It shows how Anishinaabe fiction explores new forms of Indigenous sovereignty that span beyond political borders, including international ones. Rather than losing its coherence, Indigeneity maintains a point of reference that enables characters to produce imaginative understandings of new spaces, making them productive participants in these environments in ways that are recognisably Anishinaabe. This relational expansion, which constitutes an exploration and redefinition of the notion of kinship, suggests that non-Indigenous spaces such as Europe or China can be reframed to open up to Indigenous epistemologies. The novels explored here outline dynamic maps of transnational networks that nevertheless retain their Indigenous, tribal-specific focus even as they open up the field for new exchanges in global spaces. By maintaining its focus on Anishinaabe writing, this chapter also demonstrates that tribal national specificities can enter transnational space unchallenged by adapting and evolving rather than compromising their integrity.

Given the extension of the discussion to Western Europe in this chapter, a brief overview of its critical contribution to spatial studies is necessary. The "turn to space" that took place in the late 1970s and 1980s, led by thinkers such as Henri Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau, Edward Soja, Michel Foucault or Yi-Fu Tuan, transferred the historical paradigm that had become the central concern of Marxist thought to a focus on space. Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space* (1958) acted as a precursor to this shift. Primarily concerned with social space, these thinkers created a new research paradigm which placed space at the centre of discourse, sparking an interdisciplinary interest that has included

literary studies. By the time the "spatial turn" was well established in the 1990s, the field of Native American studies was also becoming more prominent, which is particularly interesting given its concern with space and place. While the paragraph that follows briefly describes some of the spatial concepts drawn from the work of Western spatial thinkers that could be applied to Native American literature, as discussed in the general introduction, this thesis aims to prioritise the framework of Indigenous studies.

Henri Lefebvre's marxist analysis views spaces not as either/or parameters (thing/container or product/site of production) but as both/and, simultaneously field of action and basis of action (*The Production of Space* 191). Edward Soja's *Thirdspace* builds up on Lefevbre's work to argue in favour of a "thirdspace" inclusive of spatiality, sociality, and history. This is reminiscent of Kevin Bruyneel's third space of sovereignty (who makes no reference to these thinkers), where tribal space is situated neither inside nor outside of U.S. territory. Foucault coined the term heterotopia to define real places layered with references to other places ("Of Other Spaces"). In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, De Certeau draws attention to the way spatial practices resist architectural control; his focus on the unpredictable pathways formed by daily practices highlights the importance of walking as a subversion of the predictability of urban spaces. Deleuze and Guattari's deterritorialization, in which an isolated element takes on a new set of functionalities, might also lend itself to an analysis of reservation space in which separation yields a new set of meanings and functionalities (*A Thousand Plateaus*). Yi-Fu Tuan describes a humanised space in which place is "a reality to be clarified and understood from the perspective of the people who have given it meaning" (*Space and Place* 387). Finally, Mikhail Bakhtin and Seymour Chatman indicate how these concepts can be identified in language and text. While Bakhtin's chronotope identifies units of language that convey the incorporation of space and time into discourse, Chatman's distinctions between "story-space" (visually depicted by the narrative) and "discourse-space" (implied or alluded to), based on film theory, can help

identify different levels of discourse in fiction. While this is beyond the scope of this thesis, all of these critics could be brought into conversation with Indigenous theory and transformed by the encounter. However, this chapter will use the primary texts to explore the other side of this interaction by focusing on Native American studies instead to unpick the relational dynamics of space when it crosses various geographical and political boundaries.

As discussed in the methodological section of the introduction to this thesis, there is a strong case to be made for Indigenous-centred approaches that resist applying western thought to Native literatures but rather look to the texts themselves to let their meaning take shape more organically. In "Native Literature: Seeking a Critical Center," Kimberly Blaeser calls "for a way to approach Native Literature from an indigenous cultural context, a way to frame and enact a tribal-centered criticism;" she envisions "a critical voice and method which moves from the culturally-centered text outward toward the frontier of 'border' studies" instead of "an external critical voice" seeking to "penetrate" that center and "remake the literary meaning" of Native American stories (53). Blaeser thus urges scholars to move away from attempts to "make the literature fit already established genres and categories of meaning" in order to find "critical methods and voices that seem to arise out of the literature itself" (53-54). Indeed, she points out that the texts already "contain the critical contexts needed for their own interpretation" (59-60). Adding the dimension that Native American literature is structured by connectedness rather than fragmentation, Joanne DiNova states that "to view the literature from a Western worldview is to miss the mark entirely" because "Aboriginal literature is part of an emerging vision of a different world" (*Spiraling Webs of Relation* 15). While this chapter incorporates a series of crossings, be it across the international border with Canada and Mexico, trans-Atlantic journeys, or ventures into other territories, it does so through an Anishinaabe perspective, looking to the texts themselves for cues. Even as it

explores European and other transnational spaces, the literature creates its own cartographies of exchanges in a way that challenges unilateral settler-colonial perspectives.

The first part of the chapter looks at the American Hemisphere. Louise Erdrich's travel memoir *Books and Islands in Ojibwe Country* offers new perspectives on Hemispheric Studies as the narrative crosses the border to Canada to explore old pictographs in Anishinaabeakiing (defined as "the place of the Anishinaabe" by Margaret Noodin in *Bawaajimo*, 181). The book challenges arbitrary settler-colonial divisions: the artificiality of political boundaries separating the U.S. from Canada from an Indigenous perspective, but also the rigidity of a clear-cut distinction between past and future when the Anishinaabe have maintained ancient spiritual practices to honour the land of their ancestors and go on interpreting the ancient stone paintings in contemporary contexts. Also, the narrative makes it clear that settler law attempts to regulate the right of Indigenous bodies to travel freely across their landbase, especially when these overlap international boundaries. By exploring the connection between the islands as texts, the rock paintings as signs to be read, and books as literary practice, *Books and Islands* challenges the notion that reading pertains only to literary texts and instead suggests that all of the above constitute maps that enable the author to situate herself within the land of her ancestors by maintaining its relevance to her contemporary urban life. David Treuer's *Prudence* is somewhat ambiguous in its relation to Native space. There is a not-quite-explicit sense that the white American Washburn family live on what used to be Anishinaabe territory, right next to the reservation. The novel conveys their sense of entitlement and oblivion when it comes to living on occupied land, but it also explores transnational connections during the Second World War, when both Ojibwe and white settler characters are drafted to Europe. In this respect, *Prudence* articulates different types of mobility across and beyond Native space.

The second section of the chapter creates transatlantic connections. With

Blue Ravens by Gerald Vizenor, the narrative turns more decidedly towards France to situate the White Earth-based Beaulieu brothers as artists at the heart of the modernist movement in Paris. The novel envisions a kind of Indigenous space which juxtaposes Anishinaabe perspectives onto new territories through mobile forms of arts that communicate Indigenous aesthetics. *The Crown of Columbus*, co-authored by Louise Erdrich and Michael Dorris, also focuses on trans-Atlantic crossings, this time from the perspective of the Americas, and revises Columbus's narrative of discovery by foregrounding Native agency and mobility. Finally, the third part of the chapter turns to global networks. In Gerald Vizenor's *Griever: An American Monkey King in China*, Anishinaabe and Chinese mythologies converge in the trickster character of Griever, thereby delineating Indigenous ways of being that are compatible with global places. Thus, the chapter progressively moves through hemispheric studies toward transnational and global spaces to suggest different articulations of what constitutes Native space beyond the original landbase.

Hemispheric Americas

Books and Islands

Louise Erdrich's *Books and Islands in Ojibwe Country: Traveling in the Land of my Ancestors* was published in 2003 by the National Geographic Society. The travel memoir is at once ethnographical and autobiographical as it explores the international lakes that stretch across the U.S./Canadian border where the Anishinaabe have left rock paintings and other signs of presence, including stories about the islands, and how they intertwine with Erdrich's life–mainly through books and ancestry. The author says of lakes: "I'm not much in favor of them. I grew up on the Great Plains. I'm a dry-land-for-hundreds-of-miles person" (4). Yet books and islands become a haunting presence and are used as lenses through which to decipher each other. Three lakes are at the centre of the narrative; mainly Lake of the Woods and Rainy Lake, spread across the U.S.-Canada border, but also

Lake of the Isles in Minneapolis, situated close to the author's bookshop Birchbark Books, which represents the return home while maintaining a sense of connection with the larger lakes further north across place and time. Geographically, the border crossings constitute reminders of the international division between Canada and the United States that establishes an artificial border across the land and waters of Anishinaabe-Aki, a line whose political implications are touched upon when Erdrich is questioned by border guards in International Falls (100). However, much of the memoir attempts to map out a spiritual cosmology of land and language which emphasises ancestry, so that place is layered with time. The pictographs become a point of entry into this layered dimension, like the songs that "belong to these islands" and "even if lost for a time, always come back in dreams" when people fast there (38). Described as "alive," the rock paintings constitute a "spiritual geography" and act as both teachers and "dream guides" across generations (50). Oberholzer's island on Rainy Lake, where his library is located, represents the meeting of Anishinaabe and Germans (103). It also inspires the metaphor of books as islands so central to the memoir: "these islands, which I'm longing to read, are books in themselves" (3). The link between place and time that connects the islands to an ancestral heritage challenges the international border, which offers a point of entry into hemispheric American studies and speaks to that field of inquiry from a slightly different angle, based on slower methods of travel that reinscribe the local (canoe-paddling) within the transnational (border-crossing).

Edited by Levander & Levine, *Hemispheric American Studies* proposed a radical shift from regarding the United states as a somewhat unified and concrete entity by "moving beyond the national frame to consider regions, areas, and diasporic affiliations that exist apart from or in conflicted relation to the nation" (2). The volume approaches American locales as "products of overlapping, mutually inflecting fields–as complex webs of regional, national and hemispheric forces that can be approached from multiple

locations and perspectives" (3). Indeed, just as America and the Western hemisphere are inventions–politically and ideologically strategic ones (4)–it is possible to see borderlands not just as restricted to the Mexican-U.S. border but as moving throughout many locales in the U.S., Canada, and South America (15). This latter point seems fairly obvious from an Indigenous perspective, where borders exist within the U.S. as well as across international territories, and have direct implications for everyday life. Hemispheric studies aimed to "chart new literary and cultural geographies by decentering the U.S. nation" (3) and "contextualiz[ing] what can sometimes appear to be the artificially hardened borders and boundaries of the U.S. nation or for that matter, any nation of the American hemisphere" (2-3). As a sub-field, however, it gives little attention to Native American perspectives. When mentioned, Indigenous people are not central to the discussion. Indigenous America is marginally addressed in some of the chapters but the introduction does not theorise that perspective very adequately, inscribing it within an undifferentiated flow of discourses and movements instead. Thus, although the volume shifts perspectives quite dramatically toward a hemispheric frame of analysis, it does little to correct the oversight of Indigenous perspectives pervasive to American Studies. Furthermore, as a counter-nationalist project, hemispheric studies also pose a threat to the Native effort to centre tribal perspectives as a critical methodology. In order to disrupt and displace American Studies as a monolithic site that perpetuates a colonial outlook, another more radical proposal would be to recenter Indigenous perspectives instead by considering Lisa Brooks's question in her introduction to *The Common Pot*: "What happens when the texts of Anglo-American history and literature are participants in Native space rather than the center of the story? What kind of map emerges?" (xxxv). In her response to the tribal nationalist project, Shari Huhndorf also attempts to correct this particular oversight in *Mapping the Americas* by inscribing Native studies within hemispheric and transnational perspectives. As she points out in her critique of literary nationalism, "Although nationalism is an essential anticolonial strategy in

indigenous settings, nationalist scholarship neglects the historical forces (such as imperialism) that increasingly draw indigenous communities into global contexts" (3). The challenge is therefore to consider global issues without decentring Indigenous studies while also examining the questions that arise from these frictions–about gender, culture, the nation state, and their geographical implications–when performing a transnational analysis of Native American texts (4). This is why the nationalist project was followed by a transnational turn, prompted also by a new focus on urban Indians and global tribal relationships (12, 13). Indeed, Robert Warrior's article "Native American Scholarship and the Transnational Turn" promotes an articulation of transnational theory that emphasises "the effects of capitalism, which were once contained and constrained by the sovereignty of nations [but] now supersede and trump the power of states" with a reduced focus on the national boundaries of settler states (119), thus opening up the field of enquiry beyond boundaries: "At best, the transnational turn describes the reality of what we often seek in looking for ways to reach across borders and oceans in search of consonance and […] perspective" (120). Warrior does not, however, decry Native studies' rejection of transnational theory (120), which is also based on widespread rejection of postcolonial studies as a whole (122). As Womack has pointed out, the contradiction between cultural studies' view of "nationalism as a pathology" and Native studies framing it as survival (cited in Warrior 121) can seem disorienting. For Warrior "a resistance to [or against] ideas like transnationality" is not only "intellectually defensible" but can provide "fruitful theoretical insight" (122). Indeed, it is their very refusal to engage with the terms of transnationalism that has enabled Native scholars to articulate a nationalism "born out of native transnationalism, the flow and exchange of ideas and politics across our respective nations' borders" (125). Although "the discourse on nationalism remains […] the domestic and international language in which Native struggle is waged" and provides "a primary vehicle for fueling Indigenous imagination," there is scope to develop the field "toward a sense

that encompasses not just North America, but the Indigenous world more broadly" (126). *Books & Islands* can help solve this tension between nationalism and cosmopolitanism by indicating ways of moving through the land according to Indigenous paradigms rather than settler geographies.

In fact, taken together with Miner's *Creating Aztlàn*, the structure of this travel narrative could point towards Anishinaabe hemispheric studies in ways that might fill in the gap left by the lack of centrality of Native studies in *Hemispheric American Studies*. The question "Books. Why?" (4), which recurs throughout the book, prompts Erdrich to travel with her young daughter, Kiizhikok, to islands that she, at first, deems "incidental" (4). While that landscape is related to her ancestors (and her daughter's more particularly), she grew up on the plains but has somehow "gotten mixed up with people who live on lakes" (4). Navigating between Minnesota, Manitoba and Ontario, the trip crosses the international border into Canada (25), and an encounter with border guards in International Falls prompts a reference to "the Jay Treaty, which guarantees Native People the right to cross the Canadian-U.S. border without hassle" (100) when her kinship tie with the child is questioned. Most of the islands they visit are situated in Canada. Geographically, the journey's ventures into the other side of the border demonstrates the continuity of Indigenous movement across waterways and its disruption by settler encroachment. The enmeshment of people and place challenge the legitimacy of that border. Indeed, people and lake are intertwined. Tobasonakwut, Kiizhikok's father, grew up largely according to traditional lifeways: "His people were the lake, and the lake was them. At one time, everyone who lived near the lake was essentially made of the lake" (34). The notion of ancestry is tied to the land through a sense of kinship and belonging; Erdrich even suggests that wild animals not only are unafraid but also seek out the presence of the baby (58), as though they somehow recognised her as belonging to the place. Cosmology is inscribed "in the surrounding landscape, in the stars, in the shape of

the rocks and islands, and in the mazinapikiniganan, the paintings that his people made on the sides of the rocks" (34). The rock paintings not only operate as maps that "refer to a spiritual geography, and are meant to provide teaching and dream guides" but are also alive (50). The negative impact of settler politics are never far from these considerations, for instance when Erdrich notes that many paintings are submerged under the high waters that also destroyed wild rice beds due to provincial policies (52). The entanglement of people and places is also expressed through language: Ojibwemowin is not only "a language of memory" (86) but also a tongue whose "philosophy is bound up in northern lakes, rivers, forests, and plains:"

> Its origins pertain to the animals and their particular habits, to the shades of meaning in the particular placement of stones. Many of the names and songs associated with these places were revealed to people in dreams and songs associated with these places were revealed to people in dreams–it is a language that most directly reflects a human involvement with the spirit of the land itself. It is the language of the paintings that seem to glow from within the rocks. (85)

While Erdrich insists that Ojibwemowin is not "an elevated language of vanished spirituality" but rather has created new vocabulary to adapt to modern life like any other living language, she also situates it firmly within the landscape and describes it as more than a mediation between people and place. The land appears to exude the language in its arrangement of stones and the dreams it inspires in the people who inhabit it. The paintings themselves speak it, making it an essential tenet of spirituality. Erdrich even states that "learning Ojibwemowin is a lifetime pursuit that might be described as living a religion" (87). *Books and Islands* does not address the implications of writing in English, thereby translating the language of the land through a mother tongue that is not Ojibwemowin. This question nevertheless brings in layers of complexity since movement and intercultural exchanges are part and parcel of Erdrich's relationship to the landscape.

Just as new words have been added to the lexicon, people have migrated onto Native land from other continents and affected the story of the islands.

For instance, the history of Lake of the Woods includes the account of French explorer Jacques de Noyon in the seventeenth century (32), the "island of the books" (102) on Rainy Lake is tied to Ernest Oberholzer, a nineteenth century nativist intellectual whose legacy bears witness to a "confluence of fascinations" that reminds Erdrich of her own family's mixed Ojibwe/German background (103). The materiality of books on the island is another manifestation of the interrelation of place and word. From her visit to the islands back to Birchbark Books in Minneapolis, places are mediated by books she has touched that "would be set in the rare books rooms of university libraries" but also "the rock paintings she has touched, reading "a fragment of their stories" (136). Erdrich's own bookshop Birchbark Books, situated "just off Lake of the Isles" with its two small islands (139), is not separate from the places visited during her trip but rather stands as a reminder that "I live among books and islands, and also must visit them in more remote places" (140) thus maintaining her practice of reading both books and islands at home. The memoir thus describes her relationship with three lakes and their islands–one close, two far away–in a narrative that affirms continuity across the international border and across time and maintains a sense of Anishinaabeakiing through companionship with both books and islands.

This stance also informs literary interpretations by insisting that texts be read as embedded in place, ever-involving but never cut off from Indigenous histories and knowledge. In addition, the notion of "lowriding" can be applied to *Books & Islands* as a different approach to moving through space. The author's slow travels down the lakes and across the international border echo Dylan Miner's hemispheric analysis in *Creating Aztlàn*. Miner views Anishinaabe and Chicano artists through the lens of Aztlàn as a utopian space of Indigenous resistance. Aztlàn redefines spatial relations through "pictorial and

performative practices" that view "Indigenous kin-relationships with the land as a network that allows indigeneity to move past capitalist models of the nation-state" (51). Miner likens the slow movement of Xicanos across the Americas with the process of traveling by lowrider bicycles to claim it as an Indigenous epistemology. He also suggests possibilities for overlapping sovereign Native spaces, since in his views "neither Aztlàn nor Ixachilan impinges on Anishinaabe sovereignty. It is the settler-colonial nation-states that do this. Indigenous sovereignties have always coexisted without fully extinguishing one another. Their territories can mutually exist across one another" (182). *Books and Islands* achieves this by moving through the land by canoe via waterways and thus performing a slow reading of place that decentres boundaries so that spaces overlap and coexist. The songs of the islands and the teachings of the pictographs need to be apprehended at a slow, meditative pace for the landscape to be known intimately.

Prudence

Prudence by David Treuer (2015) describes an ill-fated love story between the white protagonist Frankie Washburn and the Indigenous character Billy, exploring the consequences of an accident during which Frankie kills a Native girl. The story is set against the context of World War Two, when the young men both enroll to fight in Europe, although posted in separate countries. The Washburn family owns the Pines and employs a Native character named Felix, but there is very little sense of it being Native land. While Frankie's parents, Emma and Jonathan, see the Indians are "harmless" (3) and describe them in general terms, for Frankie who grew up following Felix around there is more depth to Native characters but no real awareness of their struggles. When a German prisoner escapes the camp situated next to the Pines, Frankie persuades his secret lover Billy, his friends Ernie and Dave, and Felix to organise a search party (44). When he mistakenly shoots the girl Mary instead, her sister Prudence becomes tied to his own fate.

Billy steps up to take the blame and all of them have to live with the consequences. Felix is very stereotypical with his broken English; impassive, capable, and benevolent, he serves as a teacher and guide for the boy Frankie. The occasional inclusion of Anishinaabemowin in dialogue conveys a certain agency for Felix and other Indigenous characters who can communicate among themselves without being understood by the whites–nor is it entirely accessible to the non-Anishinaabeg reader (165); however, this is also the case with German (192, 193), again obscuring land-based issues. Native characters' limited agency, and the fact that they are only partly intelligible to the white homesteaders, merely enables them to stand in the face of disaster rather than to prevent it; as indeed none of the characters are spared by the narrative. This makes it difficult to draw out clear contrasts between Indigenous land and settler land, instead blurring this distinction although it is still conveyed by the questions of privilege reflected in the prominence of the Washburn family who is able to hire local Natives while maintaining a high level of mobility. At the same time, the complexity that surrounds the issue of sharing the land lends itself well to a regionalist analysis.

The novel focuses on the relationships between characters rather than place, and any political implication is played out implicitly in relational dynamics. There is a sense of sharing the homeland with the settler that can be brought back to Tol Foster's "notion of an extended Indian country" with its "concomitant set of relations" (272), so as to question that framework with regard to communities which are always broken and where people are torn apart by death, distance or alienation. In this sense, *Prudence* asks questions about living together through settler and Indigenous histories that are both deeply enmeshed in each other and yet quite separate in different ways–especially the distribution of power. The novel conveys a sense of subjective, rather than communal space, made visible by contrasting passages focalised through Frankie, Billy and Felix. Although the relationship between the Washburns' homestead and reservation land fails to

be explicitly discussed, there is a possibility that the Pines were built on reservation land that was parceled and sold to whites. The narrative suggests that it lies close to unspecified reservation land, but the presence of a prisoner of war camp across the river would indicate that it is federal land. The fact that a prisoner escaped from the camp might hint at the Bena compound in Leech Lake, from which two prisoners escaped in 1944 (George Lobdell, 115). The Washburn family spends the winter in Oak Park, Chicago and comes back to the Pines every year. Emma is proud of the Pines: "It had been a grand resort once and she would make it great again" (6). She expresses a strong sense of ownership as well as entitlement: "it was hers," "it was *theirs*," "it was a place for them," "a special place that was theirs alone" (6), "a world for which she was *intended*" (7, italics in the original). Her sense of ownership extends to her son Frankie, who makes her feel "the same combination of dread and wonder, fear and pride, that she felt when she arrived at the Pines every May" (8), and indeed her relationship to the homestead and Frankie share the imperative that "everything had to be perfect" (9), everything has to be "in place" (23). She articulates a maternalistic view of the house, with "the smaller cabins huddled around back like children waiting behind a beautiful mother" and needs the family to return there "together again and again" (6), emphasising her need for control and repetition. More than place, it is characters' relationship to time that conveys their rapport with space most accurately. *Prudence* suggests that the pace at which places are experienced is a much more telling signifier of differing Indigenous/settler epistemologies.

Time is a determining factor in the narrative, especially for Frankie who always rushes into action and is blinded by the past–be it his sense of obligation to "be a man" for his parents or the regrets he cannot face–in a way that prevents him from seeing the present moment with any clarity. As a result, he makes mistakes and fails to be accountable for his actions, negatively affecting the lives of others. Felix and Billy, in contrast, view the capacity to slow down as an important quality, which is reminiscent of

Miner's lowriding as a deliberate way to connect with the land. An examination of time reveals stark differences in characters' spatial sensibilities. Two separate reflections, one by Frankie and another by Billy, while they are posted in different European countries during the war (170, 203-204), are particularly telling in that respect. In these excerpts, Frankie goes back in time and place, zooming in, while Billy zooms out of the scene back to the present. Whereas Billy finds a certain connection to the fires raging around him Frankie's mode is that of denial and escape:

> What could he say to any of them, when nothing anyone could say could make time flow in the other direction: back from England to Florida to Texas; back east to Montgomery, and then straight north, following the Mississippi, a fat brown worm in Louisiana, as it shrank, shed tributaries, spit earth and trees back up on the banks, shed cities like a snake shaking off fleas, till the river ran clear and cool, weeds waving in the current, shallow enough for herons to wade along its edges in search of minnows; and Frankie touched down at the Pines. (144)

Although he longs to turn back, however, there is no ideal past for Frankie to come back to, no particular time to settle for given that Frankie stated that his parents' fear "reduced the present and the future not to ash but to fog. A slow-creeping, heavy fog of sadness that hung over his childhood" (84). Slowness is a trap from which there is no escape and it needs to be shaken off. Billy's attitude to the past is to relive it in imagination where it eventually merges with his immediate situation. Preceded by the statement that "They had all the time in the world" (209), he visualises an intimate scene shared with Frankie a few years before:

> Billy's mind's eye retreated until the two of them were framed by the window. Then he moved farther back still, and up, until the boys inside the cottage and the window itself were framed by the trees. Higher and higher in the sky he went, until he lost sight of them, and the firelight was a glow, a smear, then gone altogether.

> The slate-shingled roof was lost among the branches. At last there was only wisp of smoke, which might have been from the chimney or, from that height, might have been from the fires of war burning brighter all around them in the dark. (210)

Despite the pervasive sense of loss and the impression that what happened then cannot be retrieved, Billy accepts that reality as part of his present condition. The movement of the narrative shifts away from the past in order to land in Billy's present, in opposition to Frankie's imaginative travel back to the Pines, which splits his present situation and establishes a dichotomy between places and times that cannot be reconciled. A third point of view, that of Felix, is more physically anchored in his immediate environment, mediated by the senses:

> They ambled down the center of the tote road, staying clear of the ruts. the brush grew closer there. The filberts were still cased tightly in their prickly green purses, the leaves heavy with heat. Felix heard a short laugh, he couldn't tell whose, up ahead, behind a screen of brush. He slowed. *There was no need to rush.* (163, italics mine)

This last statement, like Billy's claim that "[t]hey had all the time in the world" (209), bears witness to a fundamentally different relationship to time. Unlike Frankie, Billie does not experience time as an inevitable process of loss, or express longing for a past that never existed. This passage shows him as a conscious participant in his surroundings, and that attitude facilitates acceptance of difficult experiences. The reference to slow time suggests a way of relating to place that is contingent upon certain temporalities, and this perspective is what characterises Native characters in *Prudence*, despite Treuer's apparent reluctance to address land in terms of territorial claims. Rather than place, therefore, the sense of time is the clearest signifier of Native space in the narrative, suggesting a sense of time beyond that of the white characters, slower and regenerative. Such a temporality adds to the hemispheric lens by using lowriding as an aesthetic quality, a relationship with time that

characterises Indigenous subjects in contrast with the white family.

In terms of mobility, although Native characters such as Felix have traveled to lumber camps across the Canadian border (31), for the most part *Prudence* follows the white boy Frankie who is drafted to Europe (England) during World War II, his Anishinaabe lover Billy enlisting later to fight in France, Belgium and Germany. Far from being unique or new, Billy's role in the Second World War merely mirrors Felix's during the First World War, when he and other Anishinaabeg served in Europe. Felix recounts walking across the border to join the Canadian army along with his brothers (26) and serving alongside the British and Canadians in the Great War (27). Native characters thus have some mobility, especially to walk across reservation boundaries, the international border, or cross-Atlantic to serve as soldiers, but this hardly compares to Frankie's freedom of movement, tied to his white middle-class status. Just as his family moves back and forth between Chicago and the Pines, he is later able to attend university in Princeton and sends Billy some of the books he acquires in New York (42). Thus, despite Indigenous characters' relative freedom of movement, the narrative gives the impression that Billy and Felix are tied to the Pines, or at least its surroundings, while Frankie is granted freedom to disappear and come back as he desires.

The gender gap is even more glaring, particularly for the Anishinaabe characters. In many ways this is a novel about masculinity in which being a man does not mean fulfilling various expectations but is a matter of honesty, of owning the truth and taking responsibility for one's actions. Women stay fixed in place while their men leave, powerless to influence their decisions and basically static. Just as Emma longs for Frankie to come back, Prudence waits for him in the doomed hope that he loves her and Felix's wife and child die while he is away. The death of two Native women, Mary and Prudence, frames the novel; the prologue is situated ten years after most of the narrative and repeated in more detail at the very end. Insisting that the complexity which characters accrue

through their own narrative is a key strength in the novel, Jeremy Carnes says that the character Prudence "is not given agency to tell us her own story until the very end of the novel where, in prose reminiscent of Molly's final chapter in Ulysses, we learn about Prudence's past and her motivations" (112).

The last scene, when a Jewish man arrives at the train station, is important in transnational terms (225) because the man is described as the first Jew who visits the reservation and thus represents the "last of his goddamn tribe" (253), suggesting a link between the Holocaust and the genocide of Native people. I agree with Carnes that the Jew's intervention at the end of the narrative (as in the prologue) jars with the rest of the narrative (112) and is rather confusing. The appearance of the man and his desire for revenge are nevertheless a reminder of the genocide that has taken place across the Atlantic and recalls transnational realities and connections reinforced by the war. Thus, although the sense of the land being Native, rather than settled by whites, is tenuous in *Prudence* and the presence of Native people, however pervasive, does not drive the narrative; like the war prisoner camp these elements act as reminders of a wider history that keeps encroaching on the Pines, deeply affecting the lives of characters. According to Tol Foster, complex stories are the only way to ensure that no voice is silenced. His relational framework "carries with it the radical notion that tribally specific work is necessarily incomplete if it does not have multiple perspectives and voices within it and is even incomplete *if it does not acknowledge voices without it as well*" ("Of One Blood" 272, italics in the original). Similarly, Treuer's *Prudence* shows how "different constituencies collide and, as a result, renegotiate their communal frames" (272). The narrative reveals tensions in the sharing of Native space as well as its pervasive effects on freedom of mobility for settler and Native characters, while power relations remain unequal in "a subaltern space fashioned by those in power over them" (note 15, 294). Foster prefers Kevin Mumford's term "interzone" to the contact zone precisely because it denotes this "imbalance of power" shown in " the ability

of the dominant community to set the terms of these encounters" in the shared space (note 15, 294). The idea of relatedness does not negate these hierarchical dynamics but invites a framework that sees them as "nonetheless bound to each other" (278) in order to yield a wider relational scope not bound by reservation spaces.

Transatlantic Connections

Blue Ravens

Both Treuer's *Prudence* and Vizenor's *Blue Ravens* (2014) depict Native characters fighting for the United States during the World Wars. In *Blue Ravens*, Gerald Vizenor employs his now familiar trickster trope to expand Indigenous networks to overseas territories in ways that affirm and reinvent existing connections between peoples. More than any of the author's previous work, the novel deploys an aesthetic that playfully explores potential avenues for Native sovereignty, a space where like-minded individuals can find refuge and create a new order in which Native voices are heard and artistic influence is mutual since Indigenous arts inform modern western artistic movements. Indeed, Vizenor's fiction can be perceived as an exploration of mobile forms of citizenship, which do not attempt to regulate subjects but allow a celebration of communal as well as individual identities. The novel showcases a Native relationship to space transformed by Indigenous art into inventive, transnational forms of artistic belonging. By so doing, it also outlines dynamic maps of transnational networks that nevertheless retain their Indigenous, tribal-specific focus even as they open up the field for new exchanges with global spaces. The focus on Anishinaabe art and writing demonstrates that tribal national specificities, when entering transnational space, can adapt and evolve without compromising their integrity. As this section will show, instead of breaking its ties to White Earth, the protagonists' art transposes Anishinaabe aesthetics onto Parisian locales, thus exploring new forms of Indigenous sovereignty that span political borders.

The narrative of *Blue Ravens* is partly based on the participation of the author's family members in the First World War, and thus draws from a transnational Indigenous tradition. Jay Whitaker's review notes the novel's autobiographical background, dedicated "to the memory of Ignatius Vizenor, the author's own great-uncle, and […] reminiscent of Vizenor's early years, including the extended family and community contributions to his upbringing in the absence of a paternal figure, his military service, and his work as a newspaper writer" (228). Whitaker also emphasises the author's contribution to Indigenous politics through "transnational and transcultural interactions" that occur during the war when the brothers "meet and learn from Oneida warriors on the front line" before making a place for themselves in Paris:

> [T]he brothers, in their role as veterans, acknowledge that France is the place for them to explore and create their identities because the French soil and the French people remember the specific local traumas of World War I battles; the United States and the White Earth Reservation are in many ways too disconnected, despite the disproportionate ratio of casualties many Native American communities endured during the war. France becomes the place where these brothers can best cultivate their Native cultural productions and, in so doing, continue to form their Anishinaabe identities even apart from their homeland. (229)

A particular relationship to place is thus created in France, where the events of the war impressed themselves upon the land, and thus enable the Beaulieus to bridge place and memory in accordance with "a naturally reasoned existence in relation to a specific surrounding" that is "inherently Native" (229). As Billy Stratton points out, this shares similarities with "what N. Scott Momaday terms 'the remembered earth,'" a feature which Vizenor transposes from Minnesota to other states and Europe as well as Japan and China (112). Thus, the setting of *Blue Ravens* allows its main protagonists to demonstrate "the active presence of Native people in urban spaces" while maintaining "their storied

connection to the lands emanating from the White Earth Reservation" (Stratton 112). The Parisian setting also provides a visual and imaginative freedom that contrasts with the federal stronghold established on the reservation (113), thereby envisioning a Native relationship to foreign land that reinvents and reinforces a mobile Indigenous framework. Vizenor's "movement from hyperlocal to global sources of knowledge" is congruent with transmotion (Eils et. al. 214). Eils, Lederman and Uzendoski provide insight into Vizenor's research process for his historical novel:

> Vizenor incorporated a diverse set of archives: his research brought him from obscure Becker County, Minnesota, records held in the Minnesota Historical Society–in which he found a wealth of information on local World War I soldiers, including Natives from the White Earth Reservation–to Google Earth's Street View in Paris. (Eils et. al. 214)

What added to the difficulty is that "White Earth Reservation treaty boundaries are in three counties" (222), and names were not recorded as Native in order to avoid segregation (223). Due to lack of official records, Vizenor also read journals written by soldiers (221), as well as the newspaper published by his relatives on the reservation, which included opinion pieces about the war (222). Vizenor states that his narrative is "based primarily on my great-uncles and other relatives who were drafted and served in the war, particularly Ignatius and Lawrence Vizenor, who served in the infantry in France" (Eils 221). The two great-uncles served simultaneously in France, but for different units, and by looking into the history of those units, Vizenor was able to identify the combat mission where Ignatius was killed and use the information to imagine a plausible story: "So that for me is what makes, forgive me, 'real' historical narratives–not fiction. You get as much history as you can, you have some need to write something that is placed in a historical situation. It doesn't mean that history is accurate" (224). In fact, most of the narrative focuses on the years preceding and following the brothers' participation in the war, while only about forty

pages are devoted to stories of training and combat, thus giving centre stage to the artistic part of the plot rather than the war narrative. In the interview, Vizenor expands upon his vision of Native transmotion in relation to his entire corpus, as well as *Blue Ravens* specifically, saying that more than geographical movement, transmotion allows a visionary, imaginative motion that participates in the "sentiment of continental liberty" for Native people (225):

> You can live anywhere and have a story of presence on this continent, have a connection to the stories that created this continent–this hemisphere, actually–not just the metes and bounds and treaty borders and territorial boundaries. This is particularly critical for Natives–especially in border states, where in the past they could cross. Physically you had the motion to ignore territorial boundaries because your culture transcended it, but then with security problems, now you can't. My argument is straightforward: Native transmotion is visionary motion, and transmotion creates a sense of presence. (Eils et. al. 225-226)

He goes on to argue that new language is required to convey this notion, a language "that allows history to include theory and emotive possibilities for which there are no documents and that are critical in understanding a people" (227). This quote describes the *Blue Ravens* project very accurately: through the Beaulieu brothers' artistry, he invents new literary possibilities that express transmotion as a way of piecing together the forgotten histories of war. For Indigenous peoples, that imaginative creativity is foundational to a way of interacting with the land as well. Vizenor extends this notion to sovereignty, stating: "I've only written about transmotion in the context of sovereignty–which is an abstract sovereignty–and literature," and explains that for pre-contact Native peoples, sovereignty must have resembled transmotion, in the sense of visionary presence, more closely than contemporary political sovereignty, which is territorial. Native relationship to the land was made of "reciprocal relationships" (226) and did not acknowledge borders: "Natives had

extensive, dynamic trade routes throughout the hemisphere: north to south, usually along rivers but also trails […] There were extensive trade networks" (227). Therefore, although transmotion is not intrinsically territorial, but rather visionary, it also offers a lens through which to apprehend a Native relationship to space that manifests itself dynamically in the land, according to principles of reciprocity and presence instead of ownership. These elements are key to a transnational reading of *Blue Ravens* because they underscore movement as an intrinsic part of Native life across centuries that maintains continuity with more recent developments for mobility such as the First World War.

The narrator, Basile Hudon Beaulieu, is a storyteller who travels alongside his painter brother Aloysius and narrates their encounters as well as Aloysius's evolving portfolio. The narrative focuses on art, both in the representation of Aloysius's visual production and Basile's writing, the novel itself. Once the war is over, the Beaulieus move to Paris where they meet prestigious artists and achieve recognition within the art scene themselves. All the while, a connection with White Earth is maintained through the aesthetic transmotion embodied by the brothers' mobile art, an assertive sense of movement tied to sovereignty through "native motion and an active presence," as Vizenor defines it in *Fugitive Poses*:

> The connotations of transmotion are creation stories, totemic visions, reincarnation, and sovenance; transmotion, that sense of native motion and an active presence, is *sui generis* sovereignty. Native transmotion is survivance, a reciprocal use of nature, not a monotheistic, territorial sovereignty. Native stories of survivance are the creases of transmotion and sovereignty. (15, italics in the original)

Art therefore enables international connections and exchanges through unrestrained mobility as the brothers create art pieces based on Anishinaabe aesthetics in various spaces. Thus, Vizenor imbues art with the potential to transmit and transform Native modes of

creative expression in innovative ways that speak to transmotion and ensure survivance. Padraig Kirwan more specifically articulates the potential of art forms to assert relationships across and beyond boundaries as a way of reclaiming Native space outside the reservation through "aesthetic sovereignty," which he defines as a "spatially-informed aesthetics" (*Sovereign Stories,* 27). Kirwan reads Native American texts as "expressions of tribal sovereignty" (23) that bear an "aesthetic" which not only expresses but also produces tribal autonomy (23), and thus articulates a critique of tribal nationalism in relation to the "artistic, political, and cultural sovereignty" (37) found in literary works. The sovereign aesthetic which emerges can link "rhetorical sovereignty" with the current "political and legal debates" taking place in Indian country (17) by providing "a deeper understanding of both the means by which political movements are supported by the discrete mobilization of spatialized metaphors in fiction as well as critical theory, and an appreciation of the ways in which Native American fictionists create multifarious narrative spaces" (17). This helps conceive of a model in which the Beaulieus are not merely transposing Native artists into a foreign environment but actually engaging with the new urban space as promoting their Indigenous sensibility through their artistic, imaginative engagement with particular locales. In her endorsement of the novel on the dust jacket, Toni Jensen notes that "*Blue Ravens* provides a shift into a global world that does more than include Native characters–it's centered on those characters." Further, the brothers' influence on other artists is suggested by their interaction. Thus, Paris becomes an Indigenised space as the Beaulieus develop their artistic vision of White Earth through their presence in the City of Light, in turn inspiring international artists through their own production. One morning in Paris, Aloysius paints "a throng of blue ravens at the entrance of Le Chemin du Montparnasse" with "abstract wings," "cubist beaks," and "baroque talons" in reference to Apollinaire, Picasso, and Vassilieff (163), adding his own Indigenous art, with a touch of Japanese rouge, to the street where international artists have their atelier and referencing some of the

masters who inspired him. As Pamela Wilson and Michelle Stewart point out in *Global Indigenous Media*, maintaining both "local cultural distinctiveness" while also establishing "transnational affiliation" allows an artistic support network to develop on a global scale and produces "works that question dominant worldviews while at the same time promoting a strategic, internationally conceived Indigenism" (31). *Blue Ravens* provides a fictional example of the ways in which such a model might work. In the first chapter of *Indigenous Cosmopolitans*, Maximilian C. Forte asks what happens to indigenous culture and identity when being in the "original place" is no longer possible or even necessary, and whether displacement signifies a negation of Indigeneity. He wonders how being and becoming Indigenous is "experienced and practiced along translocal pathways," and how philosophies and politics of identification are constructed in translocal settings (2). These productive questions are key to a transnational reading of *Blue Ravens*, since Vizenor's novel offers imaginative answers by staging an Anishinaabe painter and a writer who employ aesthetic sovereignty to inscribe Indigenous meanings onto spaces situated beyond the reservation, and thereby re-envisions them as Native spaces where new kinship networks between similarly-minded artists and war veterans become possible.

Despite being Anishinaabe, when it comes to identity politics, Basile and Aloysius do not situate themselves beyond telling their adventures growing up on White Earth reservation. Instead, art and story convey their particular outlook and experience. This refusal to comply with the discourse of authenticity suggests other possibilities for Native identities and relations–ones that echo Audra Simpson's feelings citizenship. Simpson argues that on the Kahnawà:ke reservation, people have recourse to their knowledge of a kinship network that enables them to recognise one another as tribal members regardless of official regulations regarding membership: "This archive of social and genealogical knowledge operates as an authorizing nexus of identification that also can and sometimes does refuse logics of the state" (15). The question of consent, of individuals

and groups accepting the state citizenship offered to them, is at the forefront of conversations concerning membership (17). In effect, the granting of citizenship asserts the state's power (18), which tribal members can refuse to comply with "based upon the validity and vitality of their own philosophical and governmental systems, systems that *predate* the advent of the settler state" (19). When it comes to overlapping claims to territory, Simpson argues that "[r]ecognition is the gentler form, perhaps, or the least corporeally violent way of managing Indians and their difference, a multicultural solution to the settlers' Indian problem. The desires and attendant practices of settlers get rerouted, or displaced, in liberal argumentation through the trick of toleration" (20). However, far from being benign, these tactics conform to "settler logics of elimination" (12). In *Blue Ravens*, the Beaulieu brothers never identify as American, and in fact often behave in ways that challenge federal politics on reservation Indians–for instance by crossing reservation boundaries without asking for permission. What is more, the freedom they find in Paris is positioned against restrictive reservation politics, suggesting that transnational practices correspond more closely to Anishinaabe identities than the negotiation of Indigeneity as limited to a reservation home base. The novel outlines a fluid relational network that starts by blurring the logic of blood relations as the only family model, history versus fiction and Indigeneity as tied to the reservation. The first chapter establishes partial genealogies and a brief history of the Vizenor and Beaulieu families–Gerald Vizenor's ancestors (9-10, 134). The past is thereby reimagined in ways that create new possibilities for the present and future. In *Blue Ravens*, family is not restricted to direct descendency and blood ties. The Beaulieu brothers, it turns out, are not real twins since Aloysius was adopted by Basile's parents, who raised them as "natural brothers" (3). Namesakes likewise share common characteristics, as though names in themselves provide a form of kinship (9). Formative of the brothers' capacity to create networks around them, these chance associations also carry over into the artistic process. While the Beaulieus grow up as Natives on an Anishinaabe

reservation, their artistry lets them participate in another community with which they share certain aesthetic sensibilities simultaneously, and without any contradiction. Transmotion, it appears, can also entail that meeting of spirits across space. The brothers' destinies merge their missions as warriors and as artists into a single destiny: "We were steadfast brothers on the road of lonesome warriors, a native artist and writer ready to transmute the desolation of war with blue ravens and poetic scenes of a scary civilization and native liberty" (8). There is a sense that artistic engagement provides another type of family, a heritage created by the meeting of aesthetic sensibilities.

Movement is at the forefront of the narrative, not only in terms of aesthetics but also more pragmatically as a form of geographical curiosity which manifests in the brothers' refusal to be bound to White Earth exclusively. Early on, the Beaulieus are connected to the world outside the reservation by the railway that brings travelers from Winnipeg and Saint Paul, and take the brothers from Ogema Station to Minneapolis as they hawk newspapers (15). The names and possibilities of other places stimulate their imaginations and artistic sensibilities, seemingly offering alternatives to the constraints of life on the reservation: "We envisioned many other places, marvelous railroad cities. Places without government teachers, federal agents, mission priests […]" (15). Conversely, the newspaper itself reflects events taking place in the country and elsewhere. Printed on the reservation, the *Tomahawk* started covering international news around 1900, and "the reservation became a new cosmopolitan culture of national and international news. White Earth became a cosmopolitan community" (18). The first opportunities for the brothers to discover urban spaces are provided by that same railway line: "we saved our money to travel on the Soo line Railroad to Winnipeg, Minneapolis, or Montreal" (20). An old Oxcart Trail further enables them to visit Detroit Lakes and Saint Paul (21); a lot of care is taken to list these and other locales in the narrative. When the Great White Fleet leaves San Francisco in 1908, Aloysius paints blue ravens on the ship masts and renames it the Great

Blue Peace Fleet in order to "represent[…] a greater sense of peace than the voyage of dominance around the world by sixteen white battleships of the United States Navy" (22). Already, Aloysius's art expresses a sense of Native motion that counters federal attempts to establish dominance both on the reservation and internationally, while allowing the brothers to travel in imagination far beyond the boundaries of their known environment along with the painted ravens to "Australia, New Zealand, Philippine Islands, Brazil, Chile, Peru" (22) years before they are drafted to Europe for the war. From the beginning, a tight relationship between movement, art and politics is cultivated.

Illustrating the ways in which movement through space gives rise to a particular aesthetic, one specific moment in Minneapolis bears extraordinary importance for Basile. Even though war events, historical elements, and meeting artists and other encounters have a powerful impact on the brothers, the key scenes of the novel are much more subtle and less concrete. Two scenes in particular convey the sense of motion and abstraction that Vizenor particularly likes to promote. During their first visit to Minneapolis, Basile describes a scene where their faces are reflected in a window, juxtaposed by a passing streetcar, and takes on surprising importance:

> Our faces were reflected in the gallery window, and at that very moment a yellow streetcar passed through the scene of our reflection, a throwback to abstraction and native stories. The muted aristocratic setters mingled with passengers on the streetcar. That scene became the most distinctive story of our two days in the city. We told many versions of that story to our relatives. (43)

By reflecting several occurrences and movements, the glass accidentally depicts an abstract scene that recalls the movement of oral tradition as well as composing a very modern collage: "The Irish setters, native faces, and the slow motion of the streetcar that afternoon became a chance union of abstract creation," becoming "an abstract scene" (43) that, a decade later, Basile still finds moving:

> I watched the reflection of my face on the train window, the ethereal motion of my eyes in the trees and meadows, and was reminded of that moment outside the art gallery ten years earlier when the setters and our faces in the window moved with other faces on the streetcar. I considered the creation of stories in motion, a great literature of motion, but not on the reservation. (171)

Mirroring the first, this scene foreshadows the brothers' second departure from the reservation to go back to the cities and, ultimately, to Paris. When Aloysius finally meets Marc Chagall, Basile "reminisce[s] about that crucial moment fifteen years earlier when [his] brother had sensed the extent of various perspectives and dimensions of images reflected in the window of an art gallery in Minneapolis" (264). The superimposition of these two scenes is representative of the brothers' wider experience. The transposition of images both manifests transmotion and destabilises sets of meaning, showing that spatial mobility is tied to tribal memories as well as wider visions. Art is thus created in motion and, in turn, motion is represented through art, shaping the movement of Aloysius's blue ravens. Train rides enable the brothers to touch upon the essential quality of freedom which motivates their art:

> The slow and steady motion of the train created our private window scenes […] We were eager captives in the motion and excitement of railroad time […] We decided then that we would rather be in the motion of adventure, chance, and the future. (27)

Manifesting the impression of movement onto art, Aloysius uses the Stone Arch Bridge over the Mississippi as a setting for "a row of three blue ravens […] with enormous wings raised to wave away the poison coal-fire smoke" raised by the train (28). Abstract art documents the artist's presence and is further reflected by Basile's ekphrasis as he describes the scenes, writing his brother's art on to the landscape. Movement prompts them to create and is then captured in their creations, which remain mobile through their suggestive

power. However, Natives were not allowed to leave the reservation without the permission of the federal government, and thus the Beaulieus remain wary of agents when travelling in cities (28). Dylan Miner's concept of lowriding also indicates how the art created by the Beaulieu brothers functions as a form of aesthetic sovereignty. Lowriding derives from the way in which his Indigenous ancestors migrated to Turtle Island and spread throughout the American continent (23). Miner thus asserts that Indigenous people are "the original lowriders," who developed intimate knowledge of the land by lowriding "across time and space" (23). Deliberately slow and intentional (24), lowriding constitutes an "anticapitalist" and "Indigenous way of moving through the world" (23) and requires one to maintain a sense of "equilibrium" with the environment and the awareness of "moving through space, while being cognizant of the journey and migration itself" (24). The metaphor of lowriding extends to artistic endeavours, as Miner claims that "[b]y lowriding across Aztlàn and into other Indigenous territories, Xicano artists reclaim a sense of self that colonial regimes have tried to destroy" (15). One interesting remark is that "Xicano indigeneity performs space" (67). Aztlàn must therefore be "perform[ed] as a site of sovereignty" (67) as "artists lowride through Aztlàn" (144). By no means nationalised, Aztlàn is transposed onto spaces through creative forms of interaction. As a utopian place, Aztlàn thrives on the "indeterminate space" of the artwork in which meaning is not fixed but rather "lowrides toward sovereignty." In *Blue Ravens*, the Beaulieu brothers lowride from the reservation to Minneapolis and across the ocean, moving back and forth several times across the Atlantic. Aloysius's blue ravens become the tricksterish shadows of Aztlàn which, transposed to a range of inventive environments, claim Indigeneity as a form of aesthetic sovereignty. Indeed, the novel reimagines Paris as a new Anishinaabe Aztlàn onto which traditional modes of seeing, creating and relating are inscribed, opening up new perspectives for viewers and artists alike in an aesthetic that transgresses the politics of fixed boundaries. Vizenor's transmotion becomes a manifestation of sovereignty as the two artists lowride

through the continent and across the Atlantic, applying an Indigenous lens to those space. During their "migration" to Minneapolis, the brothers spend time in the Public Library established by Andrew Carnegie, calling the man "a new totem of literacy and sovereignty" and deeming his libraries "the heart and haven of our native liberty" (36). Rather than a foreign space, the library is described through an Indigenous sensibility as Aloysius paints a blue raven in one of the "turret bay windows" (36) and Basile describes the books as "a native sense of presence, our presence, and the spirits of the books […] revived by our casual touch," enabling them to become "a totem, a voice, and a new story" (37). Such a reading of the books, occurring in Minneapolis and later in Paris, establishes a native aesthetic and sensibility in these urban spaces that in the brothers' worldview evoke a stronger sense of Native liberty than many reservation scenes. While the Twin Cities enable them to taste artistic exchange, real freedom will only be found in post-war France. This does indicate a tendency Vizenor has to romanticise the French as he stresses a particular sense of kinship due to the entanglements of Anishinaabe and French fur trade histories. The brothers express reverence towards "our distant ancestors, the fur traders" (107), and Basile describes French officers as "courteous" but "firm", in contrast to the "arrogant poses and manners" of the British (101). The brothers experience the approach of France by ship as a "magical return and at the same time a discovery" (107)–the magical return to the land of their French ancestors, and a Native discovery of a different continent.

This is but a recent development of a centuries-old relationship across the ocean. Indeed, Jace Weaver's *The Red Atlantic* traces the history of crossings across the ocean, starting with Viking settlements. Weaver takes into account not just geographical journeys through the Atlantic but also traces the various ways in which these affected the wider Native American population through economic and cultural exchanges. He shows that trans-Atlantic relations are not limited to travels across the ocean but soon involved inland inhabitants via trade networks:

> The Atlantic formed a multi-lane, two-way bridge across which traveled ideas and things that changed both Europeans and American indigenes. Some scholars see in the cosmopolitanism and hybridity of Indians and their cultures a loss of Indigenous authenticity, a diminution of Indianness. Such a position fails to account for the fact that Natives and their cultures had always been highly adaptive, appropriating and absorbing anything that seemed useful or powerful. (30)

In short, "The Red Atlantic is part of a larger story of globalization and the worldwide movement of Western Hemisphere indigenes and their technologies, ideas, and material goods" (32). Weaver's book foregrounds many of the biographies that have been obscured, forgotten, or mis-remembered, revealing the erasure of Indigenous political actors and especially women, and representing them as active agents. Applied to *Blue Ravens*, such a recentring of the map across the ocean reframes the narrative as a series of crossings: in and out of the reservation, across the ocean to France, back to Minnesota and to Paris again, while also emphasising the continuous history of such migrations as reflected in the histories of French trading ancestors and Indigenous movement and exchange between the continents.

Memory creates yet another tie between the brothers and French territory as the war leaves tangible traces on both the soldiers' psyches and the land. Even when warfare finally ceases, places are marked by the event, inspiring the artists to engage with these traces. War provides a productive site to perform remembrance in the face of the absences created by conflict and loss, not unlike the ongoing experience of colonisation on the reservation. The need to envision a different future thus creates a bridge between the Anishinaabe brothers and post-war France. Ravens are painted on Quays and bridges, such as the Pont des Arts raven, which reveals "a native presence in our names, blue paint, and in my [Basile's] stories" (151). Nathan Crémieux's gallery provides a space where Aloysius's art is admired and respected. France provides a space in which Indigenous presence can

take hold, provided it is tied to remembrance. There is a strong relationship between land and memory as the former carries indelible markers of the former. For instance, by dying in combat, Ignatius's spirit "returned to the earth of his fur trade ancestors" (164); showing that to the Anishinaabe protagonists France is not an exile, but a return, a coming home of sorts. Conversely, when the brothers go back to the reservation, Basile does not fully leave the evening at the cantine des artistes behind, stating that the "night at the atelier never ended in my memory" (165). Scenes of war also cling to them, making the return to White Earth difficult for them as artists: "Aloysius painted nothing on our return to the reservation. He could not paint the reversal of war" (169). In sharp contrast with the freedom found in avant-garde Paris after the war, their homeland is under strict supervision: "We returned to a federal occupation on the reservation […] neither peace nor the end of the war" (170). The gap between "federal and church politics on the reservation […] and the generous cosmopolitan world of art and literature [that] revealed the wounds of my spirit" (170) is hard to heal. Following the end of the war, what Paris offers to the Beaulieus seems almost post-colonial, free from the weight of settler politics, in sharp contrast with the reservation.

However, the brothers return to the reservation for some time before relocating permanently to Paris. Isolating themselves for a time near Bad Boy Lake, where Aloysius resumes painting, they recover a "basic native sense of survivance" but nevertheless know that there is no "truce of remembrance" or "reversal of war memories" (172), and thus long for the freedom found in France: "the anthem of fraternité, égalité, and liberté was necessary on the White Earth Reservation" (176). Published under the title *French Returns: The New Fur Trade*" (177), Basile's latest stories focus on Native veterans, thus manifesting his will to bear the memory of France but also his hope to return to Paris in the near future; in a reversal of the tradition of their French ancestors on Anishinaabe land, the brothers aim to travel back to France in their artistic quest. Basile agrees that "for

my brother and me, the reservation would never be enough to cope with the world or to envision the new and wild cosmopolitan world of exotic art, literature, music […]" (197). This is due to a receptivity to the brothers' art, unequaled outside of Paris, where their aesthetics of motion as Natives intrigues and moves people. The letter from Nathan Crémieux telling them he has sold most of the raven paintings at his gallery (208) encourages them to carry on, and Aloysius has a creative vision that changes his art: "My brother had awakened with a great vision that would forever change the world of native art," by depicting ravens emerging from stone and water at the Stone Arch Bridge over the Mississippi, thereby effecting "transformations of the material world" (209). They leave their job at the Orpheum Theatre and apply for passports (211) and embark on their "return voyage to France" (215), again framing it as a homecoming that recalls the "premier union" of French fur traders "with our ancestors the native Anishinaabe" (255), somewhat paradoxically relying primarily on kinship with the City of Lights rather than reservation-based relatives.

In Paris, Nathan provides a safe environment for the brothers, becoming their promoter and protector as he denounces "the primacy of the primitive" as a product of "fascist sentiments" (221), believing that "natives had always been modernists" (222). In an echo of the *Paris school* of art, Nathan calls their art *Ecole Indienne* (225). Writing in cafés and enjoying food provides another kind of home for the Beaulieus. Visiting the favourite meeting places of artists, such as Café du Dôme (152), the bothers paint ravens in those locations (153) to act as "visual memories" (250). It is in Café de Flore that the Beaulieus first envision a possible future as artists in the City of Lights (153/154), and La Rotonde becomes one of the few "sovereign cafés" where artists meet and discuss politics (157). In parisian cafés, Basile finds the community conjoined with freedom that was missing from White Earth: "the [Goldenberg Delicatessen] became our reservation without a federal agent" (227). He meets up weekly with other Natives at the Café du Dôme as the place

becomes a "new commune of native storiers that had started many centuries earlier on the Mississippi river" (240). There, they establish a "commune of river veterans" who tease the two artists, a "native sanctuary" (246). These many parallels with life on the reservation demonstrate that, far from a rupture from their Indigenous background, Paris represents a fuller realisation of their artistic sensibilities while they retain their particularities as Native artists. In some ways, the capital becomes an artistic reservation for the Beaulieus, whose aesthetic heritage is honoured. Their engagement with the Parisian artisitic scene becomes a new kind of citizenship reminiscent of the type of belonging which Audra Simpson describes as feelings citizenship. In tribal contexts, the definition of membership can become a point of contention as to what the "terms of recognition" are: memory, blood, participation (40), or simply claims of belonging (41). Simpson proposes the term of "feelings citizenships" as a means to describe the "alternative citizenships to the state that are structured in the present space of intracommunity recognition, affection, and care, outside of the logics of colonial and imperial rule" (109). Distinct from membership (171), they represents "the affective sense of being a Mohawk […] in spite of the lack of recognition that some may unjustly experience" (173). Although not formally recognised by institutional structures, these living citzenships are narratively constructed, linked politically and socially to "the simultaneous topography of colonialism and Iroquoia," creating "a frame of collective experience" (175) that functions in more fluid ways than institutional regulations of tribal membership. This concept can be transposed to *Blue Ravens*, where the Beaulieu brothers' claim to belonging to White Earth, although confirmed by blood and kinship, develops narrative components in a rhetoric that asserts their attachment to the homeland but also encompasses a sense of Paris as a potentially Indigenous space that is part of their heritage. Indeed, the Beaulieu brothers are not alone in perceiving the world through an Anishinaabe lens: other non-Native characters are open to different points of view and understand the Beaulieus very well, perhaps fulfilling the notion that they have

ancestors in common, a heritage to share–ties that are paradoxically stronger in France than in the U.S., where the reservation is described as politically corrupt, in contrast with "the liberty of France" (253). Aloysius creates many paintings of memory in Parisian locales, as well as ironically reinscribing Native presence from stolen stories: painted totem scenes (270), designed as counterpoints to Exposition Universelle and Delacroix's Natchez indigenise the city while also incorporating transnational influences. Among them, Basile calles Apollinaire his "poetic totem" (213) while Aloysius borrows from the Japanese floating world tradition (226), echoing Hokusai in his ravens merging with waves. The sense of movement manifested by Japanese art is shown as compatible with the aesthetic transmotion of the Anishinaabe painter. Similarly, Aloysius honours avant-garde artists but not "the mere ideologies of artistic styles" (250) with his cubist ravens and reinterpretation of wounded veterans (252). His creations are "ambiguous not depictions," revolutionary because "elusive and ethereal" (271). The narrative culminates with a successful gallery exhibition that stages both of their work: the blue raven tricksters (275) and Basile's book of war stories (276). While Basile's stories move the audience to tears, the paintings are bought by a German collector and shipped to Berlin (281), a gesture towards a post-war resolution where art provides the linking element across conflict. This is followed by a celebration at Café du Dôme (282) and storytelling in a continuation of the fur trade tradition: "the atelier was a spirited site of art and trader stories that night" (283). The stories are connected to Parisian locales (284), ascribing meaning to those locales and affirming the artists' ties to place, thus suggesting a sense of belonging that is akin to Simpson's "feelings citizenship" which, although attached to a reservation base, can be reproduced and expanded elsewhere; an "aesthetic citizenship"–a term that combines Padraig Kirwan's "aesthetic sovereignty with Audra Simpson's "feelings citizenship"–which the brothers transpose through art onto transnational spaces that become indigenised. Basile's statement that "the stories never seemed to really end that night"

reasserts the sense of memory established by this coming together of artists and veterans in a "secure sense of presence," "a natural sense of solace" (285). The novel ends with a quote from the last book of *The Odyssey*: "never yet did any stranger come to me whom I liked better" (285) so that the scene ends in perfect transnational harmony, a meeting of souls around visual art and story.

The Crown of Columbus

Staging an unlikely love story between Vivian Twostar, an Indigenous scholar, and academic and poet Roger Williams (perhaps in reference to the homonymous seventeenth century Puritan minister who believed in the separation of church and state and disapproved of the theft of Indian land), *The Crown of Columbus* (co-authored by Louise Erdrich and Michael Dorris) investigates the complexity of settler and Indigenous relationships, both in their distinctiveness and interconnections. Vivian's and Roger's research lead them, separately, to investigate Christopher Columbus's journey of discovery (the novel came out in 1991, in time for the quincentennial celebrations of 1992), with Roger offering a rather conservative poetic interpretation on the one hand while Vivian explores revisionist perspectives on the other. Much to Roger's dismay, she discovers Columbus's lost journal and goes on a investigation that leads the two of them, along with Vivian's teenage son Nash and the couple's newborn daughter Violet, to the island of Eleuthera. *The Crown* brings international links to the fore, showcasing the early exchanges that took place between Europeans and American Indians upon first contact especially. Through the dynamics between Vivian and Roger, the novel also demonstrates how these early transnational experiences go on affecting contemporary interracial relationships. Jace Weaver's *Red Atlantic* takes into account not just geographical journeys across the ocean and how these crossings affected the wider Native American population through economic and cultural exchanges, illuminating the involvement of inland inhabitants in extensive

trade networks (30). Similarly, Dorris's and Erdrich's narrative attempts to trace the complex ways in which Columbus's so-called discovery of the continent has gone on influencing settler colonial relations even as it also tries to disrupt linear readings of discovery and contact by complicating questions of identity beyond simplistic or binary affiliations. In that respect, the novel can be read as both hemispheric and transnational– although transnational in scope, it focuses on the convergence of global spaces into Native American space. Thus, this is a novel of crossings and the meeting of cultures, as the arrival of Columbus on the American continent is represented by the relationship between Roger and Vivian, and the quincentenary anniversary of "discovery" enables characters to establish productive connections as equals, as reflected by the couple's baby, Violet. Vivian's Indigenous-inflected research into the history of Columbus positions itself against Roger's elegiac verse and, by looking at the material with a more transnational, multi-ethnic lens, she re-positions settler to Native relationships so as to envision different possible futures.

Shari Huhndorf offers Silko's *Almanac of the Dead* as an example of a Native American novel in which global connections lay the basis for an anticolonial revolution in order to demonstrate how worldwide networks might be recuperated by an Indigenous agenda. Such shifts test parameters that are at the heart of contemporary American studies: "[I]ndigenous transnationalisms in particular have extended existing American studies critiques of national identity and imperialism as they radically challenge the histories, geographies, and contemporary social relations that constitute America itself" (19). Although by no means revolutionary in its intent, *The Crown of Columbus* also challenges the history of colonialism by revising the narrative of discovery and exploring contemporary incarnations of settler/Indigenous relationships. Using visual representation as a central factor in colonisation as well as a tool for resistance to it, Huhndorf shows that maps can be subverted and recreated to support land claims and thus become supportive

technologies for Native politics (22). Such maps extend far beyond reservation boundaries and surrounding mis-appropriated/occuppied land to constitute highly dynamic maps of transnational Indigenous networks that extend across the continent and hemisphere and run throughout the globe. Just as movement and relationship have always been practised by tribal nations, they continue to be developed and recreated in ways that mediate Indigeneity across the world by asserting a sense of Native presence in unexpected places. *The Crown* draws out a map of transatlantic and hemispheric crossings that attempts to redefine settler-Indigenous relationships. As a wide extension of Brooks's "common pot"–a space where resources are shared–these connections create commonalities based on Indigenous perspectives that maintain awareness of their roots in tribal traditions while opening dialogues with the inhabitants of markedly different spaces. Brooks demonstrates that the frameworks developed by tribal nations were adapted to negotiations with the settler and still constitute a useful tool to redefine land use and sovereignty. She describes Native land rights as "always relational"(68) and shows that coexistence with the settler was repeatedly envisioned but relied on shared responsibility (70, 202). Chadwick Allen, meanwhile, remarks that Indigenous intellectual and artistic sovereignty is global in its scope (xviii), as is indeed the case in literature where Anishinaabe characters write meaning onto transnational spaces. In *Trans-Indigenous*, Allen suggests that the prefix *trans*, as an interpretive methodology, moves *beside*, *through* and *across* (6), suggesting movements susceptible to disrupt colonial order. Allen also insists that local work is of global importance because of its relationship to a particular place (135-136), which implies a refusal of the notion that Indigenous art production is authentic only insofar as it is rooted in typically Indigenous locales. There must remain a centre to talk back to, even as other nodes emerge through exchange. Thus, one needs to postpone the urge to generalise from the local to theorise an aesthetic (141), instead adopting a more mobile framework that sees the local in movement through a range of spaces, just as when characters apply an

Indigenous lens or aesthetic onto the places they visit.

The Crown of Columbus tackles complex questions about ethnic identity, hybridity and emplacement. In the course of her research, Vivian sometimes indentifies with Columbus, and at other times distances herself from him. As a person from a mixed background, like Vivian herself, Columbus tries to forge links between human groups: "He *had* to think global because the whole world was the only context in which he was unambiguously a full member" (124, italics in the original). With ancestry that "defies easy placement" (123), where "territory is the place for asides" (124), Vivian believes that much like Columbus her homeplace is transnational, with "roots spread in every direction" (124). Her grandmother embodies some of these tensions in her ability to accommodate both "Navajo chants and Jesus Christ" and other "directly competing–even conflicting–truths" (133). At the same time, Vivian's purpose for the research she conducts is to claim a voice for herself, to "blow" Columbus's "cover" in order to be able to leave that part of her heritage behind (164). By making him more human, Vivian thus hopes to also make him more fallible and undermine the inevitability of Manifest Destiny. As she engages in this process, she also has to remember the colonial impact Columbus's "discovery" had on Native Americans (134, 138). Aiming to move beyond "the recitation of atrocities in fifty-minute doses" that often constitute her experience of teaching Native studies (139), and critical of her teenage son's propensity for self-romanticisation (30), she hopes to counter some of the enduring stereotypes attached to Native Americans by dismantling the binary thinking at the heart of colonial history. Transnationalism becomes the framework within which this shift can take place. For instance, she remarks that the addition of the American continent to the world map inevitably deflated the size of Europe, thus destabilising its position (125). The new world immediately started to affect the old world's sense of itself; as in what Coll Thrush calls "domains of entanglement" (*Indigenous London* 23). Indigenous peoples have often reflected the empire back to itself. Vivian's research tends to situate

Columbus as a cosmopolitan. From her perspective, Columbus is a Jew–the marginalised member of a minority–who struggles to obtain respect and approval from the Spanish Crown. She uses the phrase "antagonism of equals" to compare the rapport between herself and Roger, also extending the analogy to Columbus and his mistress as well as John Smith and Pocahontas (219). Further, she posits the moment of discovery itself as a tentative meeting of equals where Columbus came bearing a gift that was meant as a "promise," a "pledge" (368). The little box, however inadequate, "was the bond" and "supposed to be a fair trade" (368). As Diane Quantic indicates in her review, the novel constitutes an exploration of "the contemporary role of history" that inquires whether the past is "act or artifact" in its present incarnation (370). The object of the crown, as a relic that crumbles to dust upon recovery, materialises this issue.

The Crown of Columbus designates Eleuthera as the original Native point of contact, a centre to which one must return in order to gain new understanding of transnational relations. Leading back to the place where Columbus is said to have landed, it juxtaposes different discovery narratives on top of this space. When Vivian's research project takes the family to Eleuthera, landing on the island repeats the process of discovery even as it reverses it. As Vivian "discovers" the point of origin of colonisation, it is as though she were meeting Columbus at the shore to receive his gift. Roger's trip on the boat more closely mirrors the notion of discovery as he fancies himself the embodiment of Columbus's experience when he approaches Eleuthera by sea. While Roger's overnight boat trip to the island enables him to reimagine–or even embody–Columbus's coming to shore, and he deems his experience of family life on the island a prison, a "domestic Alcatraz" (253), Vivian's perspective on Eleuthera and its Indigenous inhabitants also places her in a difficult position. A colonial perspective is expressed in some of the descriptions: Vivian says that "the air was different, thicker" (186); Cobb states that the Natives "don't believe in work" (187). The place reminds Vivian of a reservation (188),

which ambiguously claims it as Native space while tying it to poverty and loss. Thus, although colonial discourse is exposed and criticised, it is not altogether eschewed. Knowledge provides a rationale for exploration in the name of academic research, with a claim to discovery. There are times when Vivian finds herself using "the vocabulary of the colonizer" to justify her attachment to Columbus's diary (200), and when the crown is found, Roger and Vivian agree that "the *discovery* belonged to us alone" (353, italics in the original). However, there are times when Vivian unambiguously works to dismantle this colonial heritage. For instance, she employs a constellation of reservations in order to situate herself, triangulating her position in relation to them (338) and says she wants to claim "America back" (199) for Native people. The fact that the lost journals acknowledge a Native "king," attesting to the presence of a "sovereign," bears important implications for Native sovereignty (204). The crown, "Europe's gift to America," turns out to be a crown of thorns (*The Crown* 369), symbolising the Christian rationale upholding the colonial project as well as the difficult and painful encounter between the settler and the Indigenous population. There is a fundamental tension between this original gift and Columbus's explicit intention to enslave the Indians (372) and "conquer a nation" (373) that reflects ambiguity in the way Eleuthera itself is described sometimes as Indigenous land and at other times in ways that comply with a colonial gaze. In the novel, the discovery of the crown represents a second, counter-discovery and prompts International law to re-examine the aboriginal claim to sovereignty, causing it to gain global appeal (375). Although Vivian states that she "had no need of crowns because I had no country" (339), she wishes to revise the history of colonialism in order to foreground Native agency. Narratives are always malleable, much as Grandma's stories are described as evolving truths (362), and history can likewise be rewritten, oriented toward a more favourable outcome for Native peoples.

Similarly, Vivian's children delineate new possibilities for the future. From

Nash's perspective, "the past is only important to people who can remember it firsthand" (363) while he is more concerned with what is to come for people like him who are of mixed heritage. In some respect, Indigenous traditions have been broken. For instance, although Eleuthera has always been Native, direct descent has been lost (364). However, they endure in different ways for Nash, such as in the Navajo chants he inherited from Grandma and his claim that "things connect" (366). Nash's experience of being an Indian is a very transnational one, as is the case for his mother (363), incorporating many influences. Vivian reflects on how connected people have become, observing one another, interacting, and borrowing elements from each other's culture: "The world has become a small place, all parts connected, where an Indian using an ancient Asian art can break into an old European box, witnessed by someone who grew up in Australia. Whatever happens next at least was new, at least had never happened before" (367). The narrative wholeheartedly embraces the notion of hybridity, in turn influencing reviewers' perspectives.

Ann Rayson's review, like many of the earlier ones, takes a melting pot approach to the novel: "Violet is the 'new' American, out of the melting pot, but with a difference" and "Through this novel the authors weave Asian martial art, philosophies, Native American chants and rituals, and the Christian story of death and resurrection" (29). The danger of the "melting pot" analytic angle is that the lack of further academic discussion makes it difficult to locate the Indigenous centre of the novel. It does not help that the authors have expressly stated their reluctance to "use fiction as a smokescreen for advancing our philosophy or our politics" (Dorris in personal communication with Rayson, 29) on several occasions. When Rayson celebrates the authors' "ability to translate the Indian side of their experience for the dominant culture" by positioning Violet as "a resolution of the colonial suppression of the native," the risk of erasure looms large from an Indigenous perspective. If indeed the novel "espouses an extremely positive view of the confluence of two cultures […] the new American" (31), it achieves this aim through

Vivian's perspective, her female child's, and perhaps the girl whose scene concludes the novel. They are the ones who redefine the perspective from which history can be read and re-interpreted; otherwise, the multicultural ideal would merely conflate with the settler ideal of subsuming the Indigenous subject into the forward movement of the nation, and thus reinforce the ideology of manifest Destiny, further justifying the coloniser's claim to space as the Other is incorporated into the settler project.

Offering a much more nuanced analysis of the novel, Jamil Khader's article "postcolonial Nativeness" illuminates some of these pitfalls. Based on Deleuze and Guattari, "postcolonial Nativeness shares with nomadism a propensity for dislocation, for the collapsing of any fixed centre that may block the processes of becoming, connection, multiplicity, and difference" (85). While the term may depart from nomadism by "reinscribing political attachments to tribal land," Khader argues that Dorris and Erdrich "de-sediment this repossessive return to tribe," even going as far as to posit the Native as a colonizer (85). This remark indicates a tension, when reading Native literature in transnational contexts, between the incentive to centre tribal land in the narrative and the risk of blending Indigeneity with other diverse identities so that it loses its specific political implications. In short, by moving away from, firstly, the "postcolonial imperative" to celebrate "multiple subjectivity" (85) and, secondly, the "temporary return of the anti-colonial impetus" focusing on land, history, and memory towards the third category of a "homogenized community of the oppressed" (86), Khader's discursive move risks abandoning the possibility of a tribal centre, or at the very least to deem it somewhat irrelevant. In spite of this, Khader emphasises continuities in the novel's treatment of Nativeness. Thus, even as postcolonial Nativeness "expands the conditions of specific temporal and spatial heterogeneity into global linkages" (89), it also "capitaliz[es] on physical territory in the production of subjectivity, that is, in the reterritorialization of territory itself" (95), thereby maintaining "a productive linkage […] to the land" (96). As

Katalin Bíróné Nagy remarks in her overview of the criticism, Dorris's and Erdrich's narrative "reaches beyond issues of nomadism" (199), and the conflation of Native peoples with nomadism is actually misleading (198). Dorris's and Erdrich's alternative narrative of discovery provides a "destabilizing factor" (189) that eventually enables the restoration of balance (201). Susan Farrell in turn argues that critics have misunderstood the authors' postmodern strategies in the novel (121) and their use of the carnivalesque to represent the clash of cultures (126), as well as the sense of humour which positions Columbus himself as a trickster (128). The political intent of the novel derives from the fact that Vivian is "a native person 'discovering' a European" and that, therefore, "[t]he whole direction of Columbus's voyage has been reversed" so as to free characters "from the restrictions of the colonial moment" (132). Another similar reading of the novel relies on Sephardism to interpret the political project of the narrative. According to Sarah Philips Casteel, Jewish characters "serve as allies, facilitators, and mentors for the Native American protagonists in their quests for political and imaginative sovereignty" (60). Interestingly, this detour into Columbus's Jewish background enables a stronger anchorage in Indigenous realities with a focus on the land, offering an "alternative […] to the 'footloose, rootless, mixed-blood hybridity'" countered by the Native literary nationalists, thus complementing their reading rather than displacing them (64). *The Crown* negotiates difficult ground between its emphasis on hybridity and a serious effort to recentre Indigeneity as the nexus from which other relationships and crossings operate.

Border-crossing need not negate a tribal centre. Thus, *The Crown*'s foregrounding of Native American women's point of views needs to be stressed in order to counter this risk of fragmentation. In transnational Native space, there must remain a centre to talk back to, even as other nodes emerge through exchange. Ancient arts and history open up avenues for experiences that occur for the first time. Violet is the synthesis of such differences, the future in the shape of another Native American woman. The novel

ends with the sea as a place to cross, in this case by a young local native woman (382). The Native girl depicted in the closing chapter, looking at the sea as a place of possibility, is also a key element since Vivian herself is both Native and foreign to the island, and that scene suggests other crossings and possible meetings of cultures. In *The Crown*, crossing is the main movement–across the ocean, across time, across cultures–and all of these crossings can be traced to the place of original encounter. Also, Levander and Levine show that literature can mediate the sometimes-conflated concepts of nation and race (8). *The Crown* shows the need to centralise Indigenous perspectives within that flow of people and discourses–what is somewhat lacking in *Hemispheric American Studies*. To enable the recovery of "indigenous histories, knowledge and cultural forms" that have been "occluded" by colonialism (*Hemispheric American Studies* 5), these must be seen not as contained within the borders of the settler project but as operating across and beyond subject boundaries.

Global Networks

Griever

This section looks at how Griever, a trickster from White Earth who teaches English in China, finds a place for himself as an Anishinaabe within Chinese culture and traditions. Chinese women riding on the bus alongside Griever playfully declare that he is the Monkey King (86). Even as the protagonist disrupts societal memes, he is also following (and revising) the Monkey King mythology and therefore inhabiting a liminal space where trickster is both Indigenous to America and comfortably Chinese, forming a bridge across the world, not by being global in any generic sense but rather by being firmly local and specific, rooted in one tradition even while borrowing from another. Both trickster and the monkey king challenge the social order, making the adoption of Griever's persona contingent upon a certain marginality. His inventiveness underscores the centrality of creativity as a political strategy, but in contrast with *Blue Ravens*, where visual and literary

artistry were at the forefront, in *Griever* the art is inscribed in folkloric traditions that have to be embodied in order to stay alive. One of the strategies employed is to enable widely different mythologies to find echoes in one another and merge in new and productive ways, enabling Griever to revive the Chinese stories of the Monkey King while also representing the Anishinaabe trickster in Asia. In doing so, Vizenor cleverly sidesteps the question of whether China is or should be "indigenous," instead drawing links between separate traditions so as to energise both of them and envision new possibilities for both Chinese and Anishinaabe subjects.

Reviewers of Vizenor's *Griever* (1986) tend to take one of two positions. In the first instance, the Chinese Monkey King is perceived as a liberatory force that, merged with the Native American Trickster, achieves a thorough critique of post-communist, capitalist China (Pearson, Hochbruck). The second standpoint criticises the Monkey King to demonstrate that Griever's attempt to embody the Chinese trickster is ultimately unfruitful. These apparent contradictions can be negotiated through a cosmoprimitivist reading in which two tricksters from different cultures meet across the world and their forces join together for a time. *Griever* picks up some of the threads defined at the end of chapter two (as well as in the *Blue Ravens* discussion above) and takes them further by showing how communities are formed in transnational spaces without decentring Indigenous epistemologies. What is particularly interesting is the use of the Chinese Monkey King as a counterpoint to the Anishinaabe trickster. The two form a sort of transnational alliance across fundamentally different traditions. Mixedbloods are also central to the narrative and often the carriers of particular knowledge or sacred objects, and also more likely to run counter to the culture's norms and ignore its regulations (215). Griever's trajectory in China could be rendered as a series of meetings with other mixedblood characters, starting with his correspondence with China Browne (13-18) and ending with the tragic fate of Hester and the unborn mixedblood child she carried.

However, this analysis is more closely concerned with texts, especially the storyline of dreams and mythology which are revised by the narrative of Griever's visit in China.

Much as Erdrich was invested in hybridity in *The Crown of Columbus*, Vizenor focuses on mixedbloods, as tricksters who are perceived as threats even as they are likened to "mind monkeys." Griever of course is the central mixedblood, who finds an echo (in this bicultural setting) in a Chinese Monkey King and Anishinaabe trickster hybrid: as the "White Earth Monkey King" (151), he is "a close relative to the old mind monkeys" (34) of Chinese mythology. Other secondary characters have Chinese and American ancestry. Hester's drowning at the end of the novel is a grim reminder that these mixedbloods are unwanted, or even shameful. *The Journey to the West* is the main literary reference and this text is the equivalent of a Native American rewriting of it as a way to articulate a critique of contemporary China working simultaneously from inside and outsider perspectives. Chinese poetry is another influence, especially in the imagery that is used for place description. The pond at the back of the guest house represents such a space, at times reminiscent of Chinese verse even as it revises the notion of natural purity when it is drained at the end to reveal the remains of unwanted children, revealing the violence inherent in post-communist China. The moon is likewise of crucial importance, functioning as a symbol that enables a convergence between the reservation-based moon festival celebrated by Griever and traditional Chinese appreciation of the full moon, represented here by rabbit-shaped moon cakes.

By borrowing the Monkey King story and applying it to his own experience in China, Griever also blends it with his own tribal tradition and personal eccentricities. His disruptive public actions (freeing birds on the market and then prisoners awaiting execution) attract the attention of the crowd; by claiming he is the Monkey King, he also attempts to promote and revitalise the Monkey King tradition in its country of origin. As a prostitute and translator tells Griever dismissively, "Monkey Kings are myths for the poor

and oppressed" (154). Ironically, this statement can be read literally as referring to the people of China as well as Indigenous subjects. The fact that the Monkey King appeals to disempowered people actually renders the mythological figure more potent in its ability to reverse the established order. As a member of White Earth Reservation, Griever belongs to a tradition of resistance that, through the Monkey King lens, he tries to convey to Chinese people. Griever's small acts of subversion, therefore, constitute a critique of contemporary Chinese society even as it borrows from its tradition. This opens up potential avenues for inter-cultural exchange and cross-cultural connections. Vizenor's novel offers rich answers to some of the questions identified by Maximilian C. Forte in *Indigenous Cosmopolitanism* concerning what happens to Indigenous culture and identity away from the concept of "original place," when Indigeneity is "experienced and practiced along translocal pathways" (2). The novel demonstrates that politics of identification can be built upon cultural convergence across translocal settings. Obviously, Griever has not lost his land base and is only on a temporary visit to China, but his presence there nevertheless presents an interesting perspective on Indigenous presence in foreign places. His displacement, having left White Earth and the American continent behind temporarily, clearly does not "mean that indigeneity (being indigenous) vanishes or is diminished" (2). Rather, he employs the tradition of tricksterism in order to embody the Chinese Monkey King, thus rendering his actions relevant in the Chinese landscape while simultaneously reinforcing his Anishinaabe background. Thus, in response to the question of how Indigeneity is "experienced and practiced along translocal pathways" (2), this novel strongly suggests that echoes can be found across differing cultural spaces when an Indigenous framework is maintained abroad; it may indeed have the potential to revive older traditions that have been cast away or regarded as irrelevant, thus enabling new connections based on Indigenous ways of being rather than their eradication. Finally, to the question "How are new philosophies and politics of indigenous identification (indigenism) constructed in new, translocal settings?"

(2), *Griever* achieves this by telling reservation stories, shouting into panic holes, importing an airplane from the reservation, and liberating people and animals. His bear dream guides him into the Asian landscape while his response to it is entirely consistent with Indigenous tradition. Politically, his resistance to government oppression originates as much in his knowledge of settler occupation as in his position as a foreigner in China. In short, there is a wide variety of ways in which *Griever* manifests his Indigeneity in a foreign land but, crucially, all of them refer back to the original centre of White Earth Reservation. In other words, the maintenance of a land base is foundational to his sense of himself as a reservation mixedblood. Forte's last two questions are reminiscent of N. Scott Momaday's *The Way to Rainy Mountain* and the particular ways in which it retraces a tribal tradition through imagination back to the beginnings so that the present can be reshaped and ties maintained between the original place and the new land, thereby remythologising the landscape. Vizenor does something like this in China with *Griever*–geographically as well as spiritually–by transposing tribal tricksters onto the land of the Chinese Monkey King and merging the two traditions. In *Indigenous Cosmopolitans*, Forte conceptualises "indigeneity [as] reengaged with wider fields, finding newer ways of being established and projected, and acquiring new representational facets" (2-3). Instead of viewing globalisation merely as a force of neoliberalism, cosmopolitanism can be framed as a "safer and less contested ground for highlighting […] cultural dynamics" (3). He cites Cheah to further define globalisation as the "strategic alliances and networks that cross territorial and political borders" (4), showing that different manifestations of cosmopolitanism are interconnected (6). *Griever* indeed suggests such possibilities. The final outcome of the novel, however, is tempered by the murder of Hester, Griever's lover who was bearing their child, although a relative of hers, Kangmei, "a mixedblood blonde who speaks Chinese" (233) flies back with him to start a silk farm on the reservation. The freed chicken Matteo Ricci is with them on the ultralight airplane, adding to the subtext of freedom and new beginnings.

Two letters to China Browne frame the novel (13, 231). The dream that Griever relates to China Browne in a letter shows how an Indigenous ontology, rather than alienating Griever from the landscape, actually leads him to a place of significance. Instead of separating him from his surroundings, his Indigenous framework constitutes a bridge of sorts. When "a fire bear, a shaman" appears to Griever in a dream, he follows her not to North America but "the Kingdom of Khotan" (16) where other bears are represented on "a mural from the silk cultures" (17). The bear wears jade and lapis lazuli on a rabbit necklace around her neck–the colour blue and the semi-precious stones are connected to bear shamanism throughout the novel. The bear shaman dream and Chinese landscape are completely integrated, indicating that bear shamanism is an integral part of China's folklore as much as Anishinaabe tradition: "we passed mountain scenes, stone people and wild fires on murals, bears with monkeys on their shoulders, monkeys with bats and lotus flowers" (17). Chinese symbols are woven tight into the bear dream. Further, the bear shaman suggests that China is the original birthplace of bear healers when she tells Griever that the first bear woman "saved the first silk cultures from evil" and that through her union with the "old stone man" came descendants who "became healers in tribal cultures around the world" (17). Whether or not Vizenor is hinting at the Bering Strait theory in this passage, Asian mountains and White Earth come together: in "the mountains that surrounded the deserts," she shows him a birchbark manuscript that carries the same "figures and marks […] as those on the tribal medicine scrolls from the reservation" (18). While Griever is surprised by these "tribal visions on birchbark this far from our woodland," the stories on the scroll tell "the histories of this nation" and are thus firmly tied to China. The anticlimactic outcome of the dream is that Griever forgets the scroll on the wagon driving him back to the apartment (18). By the end of the letter that opens the novel, however, Chinese and Anishinaabe mythologies have become so blurred that it is difficult to determine which gave birth to the other. Griever's place in Chinese society, as a Native

American, is not merely that of an outsider but, paradoxically, that of an initiated healer who has insight into Chinese mythography.

The dream also introduces a thread that runs through the novel, focusing on the fraught relationship between Indigenous tradition and authenticity. By playing with readers' expectations, Vizenor subverts mistaken notions of essentialism without removing the imaginative magic from the powerful objects and images represented by the scroll and the bear shaman. He also counters these ideas through the nonsensical outcome of finding out that the sacred scroll is actually a recipe for blue corn chicken (234). By drawing the scroll with coloured pens, Griever resurrects chickens at the market (34). The novel in this sense functions like a quest, and when Griever finally locates the woman from his dream, whom he believes "has a birch bark scroll from the bear cultures" (141), she turns out to be a mixedblood as well, a blonde Chinese woman with an American father (142). The man had "removed" the scroll from the British Museum and passed it on to his daughter. *Griever* shows that mixedblood characters carry sacred powers. Before leaving China on an ultralight airplane imported from White Earth Reservation and assembled by the pond behind the guesthouse, Griever celebrates a moon festival, the "Marxmass Carnival" observed by mixedblood Sister Eternal Flame on the reservation. This provides another occasion for Anishinaabe and Chinese traditions to converge (although, in this particular case, the full moon carnival of White Earth is rather esoteric). Rabbit-shaped mooncakes are consumed, and at first the lyrical description of the pond is reminiscent of classical Chinese poetry: "The moon leaned over the pond, wavered, separated with the breeze, and then flooded the dining room" (216). But the gothic is also present, and the scene turns sinister when the pond is drained that night to uncover the blue bones of unwanted children, as well as the body of Griever's lover Hester, who bore their child (225), drowned by her father (232). The impossibility of that new mixedblood birth, the unborn trickster, signals the end of Griever's stay in China. In the end, the country is best viewed from

above, a vantage from which the land looks "peaceful, like those brush strokes in an ink painting" (232), and provides new opportunities for Griever in this "marvelous world of tricksters" (235). Stories not only make connections between unlikely places through the chance meeting of cultures, but also enable characters to take a step back from the violent immediacy of politics and regain agency.

Reservation stories, as well as Chinese stories, play an important role in relation to mythology, both ancient and contemporary. At its core this novel is about literature–stories and mythologies–exchanged in widely different locations whose traditions meet cross-culturally because of these tales. *The Journey to the West* works in tandem with Griever's bear dream to produce the narrative of the White Earth Monkey King trickster. The "mind monkey" meme (93) is used as a means of translating Griever's disruptive actions and irreverent attitude into Chinese culture. For instance, when Griever tells anecdotes from life on the reservation to a Chinese family, Hester translates "from the traditional stories of the Monkey King" instead (93). Inversely, the Chinese story of how the rabbit leapt into the fire to offer his flesh to the bear, who thanks the rabbit by turning him into the moon, bears some resemblance to traditional Indigenous stories, especially with its reference to bear shamans (228). The tale suggests that Griever's presence somehow reactivates the imaginative power of Chinese mythology by bringing it into the contemporary moment even as his presence modifies and informs these myths in new ways. It also forges a convergence between other countries' Indigenous roots and Native American traditions. Reflecting back on the article by Gemein discussed in the introduction, and more specifically the question whether Indigenous spaces can be found or co-created in Europe, *Griever* articulates interesting answers. In her article "Seeds Must Be Among the Greatest Travelers of All," Mascha N. Gemein presents a cosmopolitical analysis of Leslie Marmon Silko's *Gardens in the Dunes* and outlines promising possibilities for the development of a wider, even global, Indigenous space. She states that Silko's novel

"suggests that ecological recovery and self-determination across the world is bound to each subject's home territory and a loose network of the like-minded" (496). This idea of "a loose network of the like-minded" extending globally is similar to the vision deployed in Vizenor's *Shrouds of White Earth* (discussed in chapter two) and *Blue Ravens* (previous section) of an international community of artists who share a vision of Indigenous art in practice. Gemein mentions "nurturing alliances" within "global movements" (501) that again illuminate Vizenor's effort to establish networks of exchange informed by Anishinaabe worldviews. Gemein points out the ways in which *Garden in the Dunes* delineates the possibility for a more global space informed by Indigeneity, arguing that Silko "pairs the cultural heritage and contemporary existence of a Native American community with the layered cultural and religious heritage in specific European places" (494). In *Griever*, the convergence of Anishinaabe epistemologies and Chinese trickster tradition shows that relationships informed by Indigeneity can be established in global spaces. Like *Shrouds of White Earth* and *Blue Ravens*, *Griever* emphasises the connections that draw people together in unexpected places. While Silko's *Gardens in the Dunes* is mainly concerned with archeological, material evidence of a pre-Christian, pagan past, however, Vizenor circumvents Christianity altogether by looking at the foundational mythologies of China. The indigenisation of contemporary China through Griever's perspective and tricksterish actions offers a productive counter-project to repressive politics. Having experienced settler state oppression on Anishinaabe land, Griever can export a set of attitudes and views that can help liberate China. Unlike Christian texts, Chinese mythology is perhaps less fixed, and can yet be transformed by vital adaptations so that they will effect present realities and thereby endure. One key seems to be that as Griever re-awakens Chinese mythology, he does not unearth a dead artifact but rather actively transforms the tradition through his own Native lens in order to create a meeting point between himself and Chinese culture.

Conclusion

This chapter points out the various ways Anishinaabe writers envisage transnational connections that simultaneously acknowledge the complexity of settler histories and intercultural exchanges while maintaining an Indigenous lens through which wide-ranging spaces are apprehended. After exploring what hemispheric studies might look like from an Anishinaabe perspective that uses slow movement and regionality to connect to place and share the land with others, the analysis looked at trans-Atlantic connections that reverse the narrative of discovery as Anishinaabe characters "return" to France and Columbus is described as an equal to Native peoples, all of them bearing a complex heritage. Finally, the last section reached out to China to forge bonds across differences by drawing Anishinaabe and traditional Chinese mythologies together in order to liberate characters in both territories. Thus, this chapter takes Anishinaabe space not only out of the reservation (which chapter one focused on) and other North American locales (such as the urban areas explored in chapter two) but investigates the connections that characters create with other lands outside the territories that they have historically called their homeland. In this way, it provides key elements to reflect on what constitutes Indigeneity in global contexts as well as what characterises Native space when the reservation is no longer the primary site where Native characters live. It also suggests ways in which Anishinaabe characters can foster meaningful relationships informed by Indigeneity in contexts that markedly differ from Anishinaabeakiing. In the texts discussed above, settler histories are reintegrated and some of their trajectories reversed to break down strict binaries and allow movement across international borders to be reclaimed as a meaningful act for Anishinaabe people–one that stands in continuity with mobile tribal practices. The final chapter turns to territorial futurities to envision new outcomes for Anishinaabe land based on speculative fiction.

CHAPTER FOUR: BEYOND BOUNDARIES

This last chapter explores different ways to approach territorial futurities, using speculative fiction narratives that rethink the relationship to the land. The analysis is based on two primary texts, starting with Louise Erdrich's *Future Home of the Living God*, which problematises the dispossession and exploitation of the female reproductive body while staging the reservation as a temporary refuge from a tyrannical U.S. government. In this novel, the tribal council uses the degradation of the environmental situation to reclaim treaty land. Despite promising possibilities for tribal land and promoting Native peoples' ability to handle apocalyptic situations, the text nevertheless reveals that totalitarian governmental control over bodies remains a real threat. To counter this, people establish secret underground networks, but at the end of the novel perspectives remain fairly bleak. The second primary text is Gerald Vizenor's *The Heirs of Columbus*, in which the heirs found a new pan-tribal reservation on international waters and later create another reservation community that also welcomes healers and artists. *The Heirs* is more utopian in its territorial explorations despite temporary setbacks; it makes an attempt at deterritorialising a reservation founded on international waters, before returning to a landbase at Point Assinika in the Northwest. The novel explores deterritorialism–in the sense of loosening ties to the land–only to more viably return to a landbase that enables Native characters to envision a decolonial future where reservations are open and inclusive (despite problematic portrayals of diversity). Another common thread is the memory of survival in the genes, which informs both of these texts. The heirs' discovery of the gene of survivance echoes *Future Home*'s exploration of reproductive futurities. Blood memory and survival genes suggest that perhaps Indigenous peoples are better prepared for the end of the world, which they know how to handle to their own advantage. This chapter conveys the mobility

across place and time which characterises the history and current practices of the Anishinaabeg, carrying them into the future to envision new forms of belonging, territoriality, and survivance.

Theoretical framework

While science fiction has only recently been embraced by Native writers and critics as a viable genre, critical theory has been catching up with so-called Indigenous futurisms, and the overview that follows provides some markers of the new directions taking place in the field of Native American studies. Many speculative Native American narratives are anchored in contemporary politics and underline issues of self-determination and land tenure. In that sense, Indigenous speculative fiction stems from a decolonial perspective that mirrors the development of Afrofuturism in African American literature while also possessing distinctive characteristics. First defined by cultural critic Mark Dery as "speculative fiction that treats African-American themes and addresses African-American concerns in the context of 20th century technoculture" (cited in Lisa Yasczek's "Afrofuturism in American Science Fiction" 58), Afrofuturism has more recently expanded into what Reynaldo Anderson describes as "a body of systematic Black speculative thought originating in the 1990s as a response to postmodernity that has blossomed into a global movement in the last five years" ("Afrofuturism 2.0," 228). Ytasha Womack's influential 2013 book *Afrofuturism: The World of Black Sci-Fi and Fantasy Culture* helped popularise and expand the definition of the term. In *The Cambridge Companion to American Science Fiction*, Lisa Yaszek also states that contemporary Afrofuturist create connections "to both European science and African or Afrodiasporic 'magic'" (65), to convey how the genre blends traditional practices with western-influenced futuristic technologies. Similar connections inform Indigenous science fiction, as do other aspects of Afrofuturist literatures. According to Sofia Samatar, the Afrofuturist is a "data thief" or "bricoleur" who "excavates" the past

to shape new futures built with "historical fragments" ("Toward a Planetary History of Afrofuturism" 178) and, like Indigenous speculative fiction, blurs the "dichotomy of authenticity and alienation" (183) by bridging past and future. Temporalities shift as time "moves in both directions" to represent "the entanglement of memory and forgetting" (182). The genre's orientation towards outer space influences earthly politics by framing the planet as a star "rather than a map carved up by borders" (176), thus encouraging writers to reconceptualise their mapping of territories. Samatar rightly describes African diaspora and slavery as "the first modernist experience of dislocation" and "alienation" (180). Although African displacement had direct implications for Native Americans whose land and lives were also under threat, this parallel is often overlooked by Afrofuturist critics. Similarly, the current turn towards globalisation risks universalising perspectives and thus erasing specific histories (Samatar 188). However, the move towards a pan-African "sci-fi" mirrors the pan-Indigenous speculative narratives that are increasingly developing all over the world.

While Afrofuturism is concerned with time and space, Indigenous science fiction tends to be more focused on place, sacred geographies, and ties to particular locales. In Indigenous speculative fiction, space is often perceived as a container of time. Connecting with the land becomes a means of time-travelling that enables connection with ancestors, dreams, and prophecies that bring the community into viable futures. Its histories are not diasporic in the same way that Afro-American experiences have been. Therefore, even though in some respects Afrofuturism paved the way for Indigenous science fiction, Native American fiction here maintains a certain specificity of place that acts as an entry point for future explorations. In narratives where place is marginalised–like the reservation in Erdrich's *Future Home*–or displaced–like the pan-tribal nations founded in Vizenor's *The Heirs*–sovereignty takes over as the central concern. Developing at the turn of the twenty-first century, Indigenous science fiction went beyond merely staging Native characters to being created by and for Native people, making it possible to explore futures

for their communities (Medak-Saltzman 142). In terms of timelines, it is important to note that *The Heirs of Columbus* was written for the five hundredth anniversary of Columbus's arrival in the American hemisphere, while F*uture Home of the Living God* came out much more recently, in 2017. Erdrich's novel is a work of speculative fiction that emerged from a context where Indigenous science fiction is fast developing, unlike Vizenor's earlier narrative which has not usually been classified as speculative fiction. However, its central concern with the creation of a new Native nation and focus on genetic therapy makes it fit firmly in the genre, especially as the novel enters into dialogue with Columbus's arrival on the American continent. As Danika Medak-Saltzman remarks, these narratives engage in "a broader and more far-reaching movement of Indigenous resurgence" (142), due to the specific dialogues that Native American speculative fiction has with current debates– around identity politics, women's rights, and sovereignty. In other words, it departs from Afrofuturisms precisely because both genres spring from active engagement with the specific experience and worldview of particular communities.

Eric Gary Anderson already noted in his 1999 book *American Indian Literature and the Southwest* that alien encounters were hardly a new feature of the American landscape but rather inscribe themselves within "a continuation of long-standing, even familiar southwestern encounters between "natives" and "aliens" (191). Basing his analysis on James Clifford's naturalisation of migratory movement of Indigenous peoples, Anderson distrusts "narratives that propose to secure all evidence inside a single, bounded thesis" and, therefore, does not read the Roswell alien conspiracy theory as a new or shocking event but proposes instead that "Roswell's alien bodies should be read specifically in the twined contexts of the American Southwest and a national style of alien management that long predates the summer of 1947" (3). Often perceived by U.S. governmental politics as aliens themselves, Native peoples also tend to define relational networks in radically different ways and this further suggests reasons why Native sci-fi narratives may have been

slow to emerge, as well as highlighting their potential to decolonise narratives that have too closely adhered to colonial worldviews. Anderson's view therefore naturalises alien encounters for Native people, making it seem logical that narratives would reflect this theme. Furthermore, in *The Fictions of Stephen Graham Jones*, Billy Stratton postulates that one reason why Indigenous fiction writers venture into genre literature such as science fiction is that "history might sometimes be too difficult or horrific to describe as it actually happened," and speculative narratives might therefore more adequately convey "this notion of unspeakability or incomprehensibility" (8). Danika Medak-Saltzman explores these reasons in more depth to show that while hegemonic societies only conceive of Indigenous peoples' present according to "settler colonial narratives of Indigenous absence" (141), the narrative traditions of Native people "have always incorporated elements of futurity, prophecy, and responsibility-rooted strategies for bringing forth better futures" (139). She mentions the Seven Fires Prophecy of the Anishinaabeg (146) and its significance as a document from the past that leads the community into the future while also naturalising the ongoing mobility of the Anishinaabe. Speculative narratives are paralleled by activism (144) as Indigenous resurgence works alongside Indigenous futurisms (168). The reason why Native speculative fiction took time to develop is that the themes addressed by science fiction often include "colonization, conquest, exploitation […] and conflict" of both human and other-than human beings and have "too closely mirrored Indigenous experiential realities for many to find the genre enticing" (142). From there, the genre had to evolve towards expressing the possibility of "futures that better honor our epistemologies, traditions, and inherent rights to self-determination" (148) in order to become viable. Playful and imaginative stories counter settler stories to become "a recuperative act" (150). In opposition to the settler colonial view that tradition needs to be left behind for Indigenous peoples to enter the future, the Diné short film narratives that Medak-Saltzman analyses suggest that "Indigenous technologies, and ways of knowing may

end up […] fostering potential futures" (157). Resurgence and futurisms thus become "the antithesis of blood quantum politics, narrative, and policies to eradicate Native peoples" (168) and instead pave the way for a liberating future.

Paul Tremblay explains in the afterword to Stratton's book that personal history can be transposed onto speculative fiction to reveal time and individualism as relative constructs, saying that "Stephen's autobiographies are ghost stories. The ghosts of our past, present, and future are all represented. And we are all haunted by them" (358). Emphasis on the disruptive nature of ongoing colonisation thus naturalises the use of speculative fiction by Indigenous writers whose work tackles the "uncertainty" that, according to Jones, charaterises postmodernist writing (56). Inversely, first accounts of Native people by colonisers such as Columbus, Las Casas, and Cortés may offer "a more sordid form of speculative fiction–one that sought to reimagine as monstrous Indigenous peoples and the landscape they occupied," just as "the truly malicious descriptions of Native people" in Winthrop, Bradford and Mather constitute "another type of pre-gothic horror" (6). The same goes for "the archive of demonizing captivity narratives" in the line of Mary Rowlandson's (6), revealing a historical archive underlying the demonisation and alienation of Native peoples that motivates certain science fiction narratives. By revealing these archives of dystopian Native history, he points to the relevance of the genre in Indigenous contexts. Despite these logical transpositions, breaking the boundaries of genre is still generally perceived as disruptive on the part of Indigenous writers. Challenging essentialist notions by redefining what Native writers are free to venture into, they lay bare the expectations that pertain to Native writing, such as the idea, discussed by David Treuer in *Native American Fiction*, that Native literature must offer cultural cues to the reader. Jones points out that the same rationale applies to writing characters who are not expressly Indian (37), Native authors are expected to stay within a certain type of culturally-inflected narrative. Such is the case also for the works of fiction analysed in this chapter. While

Gerald Vizenor's postmodern style has meant that he is generally expected to break down literary categories, Louise Erdrich's foray into futuristic narratives with *Future Home* pushes up against the limits of her body of work to incorporate features of another genre.

Native writers have brought new elements to science fiction writing. William Lempert applies an anthropological lens onto Indigenous futuristic films to argue that Native film-makers create a "subversive mode of representation" which enables them "to vividly reimagine a multiplicity of futures" for Indigenous peoples ("Decolonizing Encounters of the Third Kind" 164). Native science fiction films question the familiarity of "contact tropes while denaturalizing the projection of colonial violence" (167) usually embedded in mainstream narratives of alien encounters. Rather than representing these beings as "alien," they are "contextualized within indigenous cosmologies" (167). He borrows Keith Basso's idea about imagination as a way to "fashion possible worlds, give them expressive shape" (citing Basso, 168). Reversing the trope of Trouillot's title *Silencing the Past*, Lempert warns against the risk of "silencing Native futures," as he stresses that "Indigenous futurism is about expanding ethnographic theories and methods to address futures as significant copresent realms of study" (173). Thus, Native science fiction opens up new arenas for Indigenous futures while revealing and revising the colonial subtext of Western dystopian fiction. They also denaturalise the assumption that Western culture is the highest form of development on earth and would constitute the centre of alien interest. In the online version of his article, published on *Medium*, Lempert mentions the idea of "Indigenous space rights" that some Native sci-fi gestures towards, thus transferring the question of tribal sovereignty onto futuristic space. Indeed, in many of these narratives, the future is decidedly Indigenous. Since negating the possibility of Indigenous futures is entrenched in colonial attitudes, dystopian fiction has clear implications for Indigenous sovereignty.

Finally, Grace Dillon's 2012 anthology of Indigenous science fiction

Walking the Clouds represents a range of sub-genres including slipstream, alien encounters and apocalyptic stories, and her work attempts to classify them and bring to light their respective characteristics. Slipstream is a particularly fit form for Native fiction to explore alternative realities and histories in which "pasts, presents and futures […] flow together like currents in a navigable stream" (3), reflecting some of the specificities of Native intellectual nonlinear thinking (16). When it comes to alien encounters, Dillon uses Lisa Brooks's designation of the land as *aki*, a "self-sustaining vessel" (7), to point out that to Indigenous peoples, the environment "is already full of life to respect and relate to" (6). Science fiction also foregrounds "Indigenous scientific literacies" and traditional technologies (7) that likewise decentralise the supremacist narratives of Western culture. Having already encountered, and survived, the end of their worlds, Native writers tend to stage the apocalypse as a "state of imbalance" to be countered by *bimaadiziwin*, "a condition of resistance and survival" (9) more often translated as "the good life"(*mino-bimaadiziwin*) or "live well" (Theresa Smith, *The Island of the Anishnaabeg* 24). Another salient feature of Native sci-fi is a framing of the past as prophetic, which enables Indigenous traditions to thrive in futuristic settings. All of these texts constitute a form of *biskaabiiyang* or "returning to ourselves" (10) that engages in the decolonisation of science fiction and its frequent complicity in racist discourse. Leanne Simpson defines this term as "a verb that means to look back" (*Dancing on Our Turtle's Back* 49) and further expands the concept into a research methodology that is "not just an evisceration of colonial thinking" but "a constant continual evaluation of colonialism within both individuals and communities" as well as "a visioning process where we create new and just realities" (52). As author Celu Amberstone states in *Walking the Clouds*, Indigenous people understand that "the specters of corporate greed and colonialism still haunt earth's future" and thus they have a "responsibility to offer humanity a new version of the universe" (63-64). Both Erdrich and Vizenor offer glimpses of what such alternatives might look like from an Anishinaabe perspective.

Future Home of the Living God

Erdrich's 2017 novel *Future Home of the Living God* represents her first novel-length venture into speculative fiction. The dystopian narrative progressively reveals a world not unlike our own where humanity and other creatures appear to be regressing back towards earlier forms of life, indicating that evolution is turning back on itself by generating random mutations. The government responds to this threat to the future of humanity by taking possession of women's bodies to gain control over the means of reproduction. At first they are taken to "birthing centres" (often prison facilities turned into makeshift hospitals) until they deliver their child, but later they are no longer released from these facilities but re-impregnated as soon as possible. Society disintegrates as media is replaced by the ubiquitous figure of "mother," a character who seeks out pregnant women, purportedly for their protection, while shortages of food and gas force people to organise their own alternative networks for the exchange of goods and information in a reproductive dystopia, reminiscent of Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, in which the fertile and/or pregnant body is entirely subsumed to the reproductivist imperative issued by the state. The main protagonist, Cedar Hawk Songmaker, was adopted as a baby by white couple Glen and Sera. When she gets pregnant, she decides to reconnect with her birth mother, Sweetie, who lives on an Ojibwe reservation with her partner Eddy and their daughter Little Mary. Cedar later learns that Glen is actually her biological father, having had an affair with Sweetie when they worked on a court case together. Cedar loves, but strives to remain somewhat independent from, her boyfriend Phil who becomes more protective and controlling as the state increasingly enforces gendered norms. After barricading herself in her cottage with Phil's help for some time, Cedar is intercepted by the government and taken to a birthing facility. Aided by her mother, she and her hospital roommate Tia manage to escape and are led by Sera to an underground cave where Tia

gives birth to a stillborn. Cedar then finds temporary refuge on the reservation but is finally turned in by a tourist and institutionalised again to give birth to her son, who is taken away, and kept on the premises. The events that take place on the reservation are of primary interest for this analysis, and particularly the way in which the tribal council, far from being alarmed about the apocalyptic turn of events, senses the opportunity to take back original treaty land. However, the narrative is far from utopian as the ending remains very ambiguous, leaving little hope for the main protagonist. Even though Ojibwe territory becomes a temporary refuge for Cedar, it ultimately fails to ensure her protection when a couple turns her in for a reward. In his article "(Indigenous) Place and Time as Formal Strategy," Conrad Scott points out that Indigenous literature tends to parallel "the destructive process of colonial European advancement and absorption" by narrating "a sense of ongoing crisis rather than an upcoming one" (77), thus representing an "immanent" crisis instead. Both *Future Home* and *The Heirs of Columbus* employ that perspective. In *Future Home*, Native characters are not surprised by the end of the world, which they have experienced and lived through before due to colonisation, loss of land, loss of family members, and lack of future prospects. In *Walking the Clouds,* Grace Dillon describes such a dire situation not as crisis but "a state of imbalance" (9) to be redressed, which more closely reflects the attitude of the reservation characters in Erdrich's novel. Therefore, the lack of resolution also testifies to the ongoing struggle for decolonisation and self-determination.

Alexis Lothian's *Old Futures: Speculative fiction and Queer Possibility* provides an analysis of a range of dystopian narratives using the lenses of gender, empire, and disruptive temporalities. His book offers critical tools that help categorise and define Erdrich's novel. Queer temporalities are often constructed in opposition to utopian reproductive sexualities in an attempt to demonstrate that "linearity and development are insufficient structures for thinking about time politically" (36). However, despite being

heteronormative, *Future Home* presents a reproductive temporality that resists dominant (settler) political narratives. Also, Lothian notes that "*no baby* and *no future* does not mean the same thing to every gendered and racialized body" (90, italics in the original) and indeed, for Native American peoples, reproduction has been directly linked to the survival of communities in the face of colonialism. In this sense, Erdrich aims to articulate a feminist and Indigenous future that does not rely on nationalism and colonial time, even though their forces almost override, and in the end still threaten to override, the protagonists' interests. Kevin Bruyneel defines colonial time as a state "anchored to a pre-1871 notion of indigenous political life," as though "identity, agency and autonomy" were frozen at the end of treaty-making (*The Third Space* 91). Lothian likewise draws attention to discourses that "mark some bodies as futureless" as they rely on "the colonially inflected temporalities of progress" (93). Cedar, the main protagonist, exemplifies the "people standing up to a regime that has declared their lives impossible even as they lived them" (Lothian 95) while she attempts to escape the government. Lothian also states that "ecological discourses have inherited the eugenic content of reproductive futurisms" (93), a conflation that is present in *Future Home* where American society attempts to counter planet-wide genetic mutation by managing women's pregnant bodies.

Reproductive Futures

Lothian writes that in the 21st century, the future "has become the past, but somehow it still feels like *the future in the present now*" (205, italics in the original)–what Franco Berardi calls the "post-future" (cited in Lothian 253). Through reversals in the unfolding of time, *Future Home* plays with such temporalities. Erdrich's is a contemporary narrative of the future, but the earth is simultaneously reversing back into a prehistoric past, so that futurity does not conform to the idea of progress, but rather unravels humanity to its primal beginnings, with the persistent threat of erasing humanity from the

planet entirely. In so doing, it also plays with stereotypes of Native Americans as less civilized to turn such reductive notions into a strength as in the novel, reservation-based communities demonstrate a superior capacity for survival. This is a twist on the "return of the primitive" so to speak. As the following conversation between the main protagonist and reservation-based Eddy shows, the end of the world is nothing new for Indigenous peoples:

> "Indians have been adapting since before 1492 so I guess we'll keep adapting."
>
> "But the world is going to pieces."
>
> "It's always going to pieces.
>
> "This is different."
>
> "It's always different. We'll adapt." (*Future Home* 28)

The implication is that the Anishinaabe already know how to face the apocalypse, having survived the collapse of their world before, and trust in their own ability to endure. Kyle P. Whyte also states that Indigenous peoples do not "approach the climate crisis as an impending future to be dreaded" ("Indigenous science (fiction)" 227). The novel opens with a discussion of the narrator's name, the name Cedar given by her white middle-class adoptive family and Mary, the name she has recently discovered her Native birth mother gave her. Simultaneously, people are wondering about the state of the world, looking for a "name for what is happening" as the environment seems to degenerate (3). The fundamental opposition of endings and beginnings is set right away, as well as the trope of reversals: a stereotypical Native name given by white parents (Cedar Songmaker) while the narrator's Native name bears Christian associations (Mary Potts); but also the question whether the world reverting back to its origins may turn out to be beneficial, a kind of rebirth: is it going "backward," "forward," or "sideways" (3)? Through a decolonial lens, such movements or slippages may produce favourable outcomes for Indigenous subjects, the first of which is Mary's decision to meet her reservation relatives, made aware by her

recent pregnancy of her "family that spans several cultures" (4). Having grown up in an environment that fetishised her Indigeneity, she discovered in college that she had "no clan, no culture, no language, no relatives […] no struggle" (5). This mixed consciousness informs Cedar's spiritual worldview as well, as she believes that "What is happening involves the invisible, the quanta of which we are created;" the breath, or the word, which finds resonance in both Anishinaabe and Catholic ontologies (3). The icon for her quest is Saint Kateri Tekakwitha, the "Lily of the Mohawks," having converted to Catholicism (her adoptive parents were Buddhists) in an effort to find an "extended family" in a "parish of friends" (6). Other churches advertise "alarming" sermons on billboards, such as the title of the novel, *Future Home of the Living God*, planted in a large "bare field, fallow and weedy, stretching to the pale horizon" (13). The qualifiers "bare" and "fallow" suggest a lack of fecundity as well as the promise of great things to come, while the sign also establishes a parallel between a field devoted to God and the idea that Cedar's womb bears something holy.

The idea of the word, and the word made flesh, is a major preoccupation for Cedar, linking the figure of the unborn child to the incarnation of God. Recent genetic mutations prompt her to envision "a lightless future devoid of the written word" where songs revert back to sound. She weaves these notions into her research on spirituality, developing her interest in the word as a sacred utterance. The following monologue is addressed to the unborn child, highlighting not only the importance of reproductive futures but also suggesting maternity as a productive return to instinct:

> Somewhere outside the actual human experience of words spoken words thought, there exists a language or perhaps a pre-language made up of words so unthinkably holy they cannot be said, much less known. Perhaps you will know how to speak this language. Perhaps it is a language we have forgotten in our present form. (65)

Thus, *Future Home* adheres to the idea of evolution and humanity assuming different forms,

which is a different type of futurity. It is not as simple as a reversal of humanity representing the reversal of colonialism, however: blended forms such as Indigenous Catholicism remain, represented by the "protective presence" of Saint Kateri (217). Nevertheless, as language is lost, more essential forms of communication are recovered. There is a song "made up of sounds" that mothers sing to their babies, "[s]ounds that were made a hundred thousand years ago […] and sounds that will be heard a hundred thousand from now" (185). At the end of the world people go into the streets and demonstrate without knowing why, as though any rationale were impossible to articulate (52). Cedar combines theology with Ojibwe principles and is intrigued by the word or breath as Incarnation and the idea that her baby might know this language: "Perhaps you are dreaming in this language right now" (65). The fear of degeneration is pervasive and often expressed by Cedar's loved ones, reinforced by scientists and the medical establishment asserting that "Creationism bites the dust;" "we have come to the end of science" (61). Her sister, Little Mary, uses this fear of decline as an insult when she refers to Cedar's child as "a monkey" (36). As news report that domestic animals have "stopped breeding true" and that genetics keep "shuffling through random adaptations," the prospect of childbearing brings many uncertainties (44), yet Cedar systematically refuses to give in to the view that her child may be found lacking. As Rebekah Sheldon points out, there is a tradition of representation of racialised labour in the figure of the "fertile woman of color" (*The Child to Come* 156), associated with reproduction of the slave workforce (159) and connotations of animality (160). Crucially, *Future Home* resists such a view by framing animality not as degenerative but as a crucial return to instinct, which questions the detrimental patriarchal conflation of femininity and racialisation with animality: "We're all going down the tubes, the fallopian tubes that is" says Eddy, Cedar's new stepdad on the reservation (27), adding that "Everything's in flux right now. You've got to realize how little we know of our ancestors" (31). In his speech, the future is no different from the past, reproductivity giving

birth to ancestral futures. While the evolutionary ancestors of humanity are largely unknown, they are spoken about with respect. The past is also feminised, as though genetic mutation were folding creatures back into a generative earth. Cedar's ultrasound proves disorienting as she has "the sensation time has shifted, that we are in a directionless flow of time" (50). People are reminded that evolution is random, not progressive, and has no narrative (54). Yet Cedar accepts this fate, willing to see her baby as the beginning of a new species, even wondering whether "[o]ur level of intelligence could be a maladaptation" (57): "Perhaps it is because I saw your brain in an icy whirl, your blood as fire, your tiny hand– which maybe was not a normal baby's hand? Still, you are wondrous, a being of light, and I am not afraid" (57). Cedar's blind faith in her pregnancy when she declares "Nothing *out there* feels as important as what's *in here*" (7) sums up the novel's concern with reproductivity as a call for hope.

What is more, the notion of the word made flesh is tied to a wordless song that pregnant women sing, a deep ancestral song that has spiritual resonance. There is a strange scene at the end of Cedar's friend's prolonged labour, when she gives birth to a stillborn baby:

> Tia uncovers its face and it looks like any baby, a crumpled little stone-idol face, only a blue-gray color. The silence and the stillness of this baby is godly. I get up. I fall down. I am on my knees. I worship. Tia croons, holds her baby, and begins to sing. Not a song composed of words, but a song made up of sounds that I will later hear in another place. Sounds that were made a hundred thousand years ago, I am sure, and sounds that will be heard a hundred thousand from now, I hope. (185)

This episode takes place in an underground room following a narrow passage described as "a dark esophageal tunnel" (180), as though the protagonists were moving through a larger being. This echoes Cedar's words when she sees herself as being "all around" her baby: "I am your home, a land of blood and comfort" (188). There are beings within beings hosting

the babies that possess godlike features and inspire Cedar's devotion. The altar with a plastic statue of Mary that Cedar finds on her way to the domed room confirms this idea the cave system is somewhat holy (180), and the purpose of this underground network in the novel is solely to shelter Tia so she can give birth without being found out and detained. The twelve-page passage that describes Tia's labour is unusually long, highlighting its crucial role in the narrative. Silence and stillness, in the passage above, are not merely signifiers of death but become representative of godliness. The thread of the wordless song reaches its height later, in the prison where Cedar gives birth to her own child:

> [T]he women start to hum. It is a beautiful, powerful, all-knowing sound. They open their mouths to sing a song that I already know. The song must be in me. Is it the song that I sang to Tia? Maybe we all learn it in former lives, deep places, gathering grounds, caves and huts of sticks, skin houses, prisons, and graves. It is a wordless melody that only women sing. Slow, beautiful, sad, ecstatic, we sing a hymn of war and a march of peace. (253)

Once detained, Cedar is left to her own devices, but she senses presences in her room at night. The spirits visiting her cell are silent at first, and then "One spirit shouts, then others, then sound rises up all around me" and "there is a song that I also hear" (257). The narrative describes three distinct types of songs, and Cedar hears all of them as she gives birth: the "women's song" described above, the song of human and spirits claiming that "*the body is in the soul*;" and a new one, the baby's song (264, italics in the original). This metaphysical dimension, embedded in childbearing, indicates that women's role in childbirth reaches far beyond the biological. Medak-Saltzman, in her discussion of reproductivity, notes that "women [...] are endowed with the ability to usher forth our collective futures" without resorting merely to their biological, reproductive function ("Coming to You" 163). Even though *Future Home* reveres reproductivity, the narrative indicates that it bears sacred association and gives birth to more than the physical realm.

The novel resists the view that women's bodies can be controlled and the demise of humanity curtailed by the force of the State.

Such a view goes against patriarchal and settler control over women's bodies, represented by the U.S. government in the novel. When a new section is added to the Patriot Act to "empower[…] the government to determine who is pregnant throughout the country" (72), Cedar makes a narrow escape from the hospital after her echography (51) and witnesses the violent arrest of another pregnant woman (74). "They are rounding us up," she says, "It is for our own safety and we are required to go voluntarily" (72). It soon becomes "a crime to harbor or help a pregnant woman" (80) and rewards are introduced for "anyone who turns in a pregnant neighbor, acquaintance, family […]" (85). Renamed "Future Home Reception Centres," prisons are repurposed to detain women until delivery in order to keep some of their babies (90). Cedar's partner Phil informs her that she "might be carrying one of the originals […] Just a regular baby […] Like the ones before" (245), to rationalise the government's interest in her pregnancy. He even tries to justify the government's actions by explaining that "it's a global crisis, it's the future of humanity, so you can see why they need to keep an eye on women… it's biological chaos" (246). In *The Child to Come*, Rebekah Sheldon signals that "the child, the fetus, and the reproductive woman became subjects of intensive discursive investment under conditions of planetary threat" (6). As a metonym for humanity's future as well as a token of what is already irredeemably lost ("a melancholic anticipation of necessary loss" (4)), the figure of the child comes to "stand[…] in for life-itself" (5). Sheldon draws a striking parallel between visual representations of earth and fetus:

> The famous NASA photo that captures the face of the globe surrounded by darkness[…] singularized for the first time what had before been unencompassable within one frame: Earth as system. At the same time, it produced a deceptively still image. In the same way, ultrasound images disembody and singularize the fetus,

> opening access to the fetus as process at the same time as and by the same movement that it is captured at a single point. (25-26)

Moving beyond the common trope of earth-as-mother, this comparison denounces the scientific tendency towards isolation of phenomena as operating independently from one another. In *Future Home*, fear over the future of humanity and the future of the earth reaches the point where it is used to justify control over women's reproductive systems. The very notion of the "global" is informed by the representation of earth as a closed system, just as Phil's rationalisation that women need to be kept under surveillance relies on the assumption that the fetus, as axiom for the future of humanity, exists as its own separate entity, thereby legitimising governmental control over reproduction. Sheldon notes three features in projections of the child as future: "the conjunction of the figure of the child with the trope of the future; the promise–infinitely deferred–that there will be a time in time that won't be the present; the imperative to replicate the present into the future in the hope that the future won't come" (*The Child to Come* 35). All of them appear in *Future Home* in the intimation that all of creation stands on the cusp of unstoppable change and the government's emphasis on children as the sole signifiers of human survival (rather than an environmental focus) that comes along with the notion that if "healthy," "normal," "original" children can be maintained, the future can be reclaimed (despite intimations that all forms of life, and not just humanity, are mutating). Such single-focus efforts towards reproductive hope signal "a futurity that strips the future of everything but repetition and yet insists that repetition is progress," a controlling mechanism that aims to preclude "nonrepetitive futures" (36). Thus, "the child gives us back a future stripped of the very conditions that make urgent action necessary to begin with" (40), converging with the goals of "capitalist production" (42). In turn, this project justifies intervention, creating a rationale that "reframe[s] violent preemption as necessary precaution and expropriation as management," (49) thereby reinforcing the power and infringement of the state onto

peoples' lives. Mark Anderson's book *Disaster Writing*, despite its geographical focus on Latin America, does not discuss Indigenous contexts beyond a quick overview of Pre-Columbian civilisations, and there are no entries in the index for "Indigenous," "Native," or "colonisation." However, he offers useful insight into the dynamics a government might use to recuperate disaster into a rationale that justifies its power. He writes that "[l]ong-term, recurring disasters tend to be contextualized as legitimizing narratives themselves; the frequency and repetition of the disasters give rise to canonical interpretations of events that uphold particular political orders," to the extent that "initially subversive versions of disaster are institutionalized as foundational narratives for new orders" (193). In *Future Home,* the government increases its power over citizens' bodies through a totalitarian discourse about the future of humanity and by bolstering its statements with a conflation of morals and science, despite disruption initially caused by the announcement that evolution is effectively degenerating.

Additionally, Sheldon remarks that women's reproductive rights are stretched taut when the end of humanity becomes tangible: "Women's control over their reproductive capacity […] is a luxury that cannot be sustained in the state of emergency that attends the specter of extinction" (56). The reference to the child as "him"–and *Future Home* likewise intimates that Cedar's child will be male–above depends on the patriarchal assumption of the female mother giving birth to the future of a male-centred humanity, the latter becoming a symbolic extension of the state that justifies control over, and intrusion into, women's bodies. To return to a previous analogy, the earth is similarly "imagined as a kind of domestic interior for men" (114), and thus management of the planet's ecology and women's bodies tend to converge at the end of the world. Such narratives reveal "ideologies of reproduction" that enable management of cultural ideas regarding birth (83). In these models of "somatic capitalism" (128), the isolated fetus is no longer merely a signifier of life but instead becomes the literal embodiment of life (121). *Future Home* also

relies on narratives of "sterility apocalypses" that stage the inexplicable loss of fertility and its restoration in the figure of "the single fertile woman" who "appears out of nowhere, her pregnant body promising the return of a calculable future" (151), like Cedar in *Future Home*. Although she is not necessarily the only woman capable of delivering a healthy child in the novel, this appears to be a rare phenomenon. Indeed, Cedar's birth name is Mary, just as her biological mother, grandmother, and half-sister are all named Mary, thus furthering Christian connotations of holy mothers becoming vessels for a saviour child. By the time Cedar is captured and taken to the Minnesota Correctional Facility, repurposed as "Stillwater Birthing Center" (249), any woman of child-bearing age can be arrested, detained indefinitely (252), and repeatedly inseminated until the pregnancy "takes" (253). Even those who survive the 80-85% death rate of delivery (263) are rarely let out (259) but get reimpregnated instead. This bleak outcome of the narrative is somewhat countered by the implication that the genetic changes which creation is undergoing poses a threat to science itself. Indeed, the novel resists linearity of thought from cause to consequence as characters realise that mutations are random rather than going back smoothly in time, and the future thus retains a high level of unpredictability. Rebekah Sheldon states that although Charles Darwin is typically associated with the idea that "sexual production is the motor of evolution […] a careful reading reveals a series of fissures radiating outward from Darwin's appreciation of the fluidity of form" (*The Child to Come* 50), and *Future Home* exploits such gaps to suggest that mystery is at the centre of the future, just as it informs humanity's past and present. Cedar trusts the statement that "Mother Earth ha[s] a perfect sense of justice" (246), and that the child might read the journal she has been keeping for him one day (265). Ultimately, the future cannot be known. In some ways, the end of civilisation represents a new birth for humanity, a humanity that returns to the truth of ancient sounds. Thus, the novel offers more than a reversal of temporalities by outlining an alternative view on what may constitute progress.

Mark Rifkin asks in *Beyond Settler Time* how it is possible to conceptualise Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination when they "are understood as occurring within a singular temporal formation oriented by settler coordinates" and the naturalisation of settler narratives "come[s] to serve as the background for articulating and recognizing Native being-in-time" (9). Such temporal conceptions can either take the shape of "anachronizations"–the notion that contemporary Native Americans are either "vestigial" or "contaminated" (5) or adopt an assimilative stance regarding their participation in a Western modernity that is foregrounded "as a singular temporal formation that itself marks the sole possibility for moving toward the future" (15). Rifkin suggests developing frames of reference that distinguish different temporal "trajectories […] without resorting to a notion of shared time […] thereby opening up room conceptually for the expression of varied forms of temporal sovereignty" (30). By reverting back to its origins in unpredictable ways that could likewise be deemed "vestigial" or "contaminated" even as it advances toward an unknown future, the environment of *Future Home* opens up space for a set of temporal trajectories that enable new forms of tribal self-determination as the reservation reasserts some of its territorial rights. Like *The Crown of Columbus* in the previous chapter of this thesis, *Future Home* suggests that the future of humanity may hinge upon the agency of Native women and their ability to birth babies of mixed heritage who can work across the divide brought about by settler colonisation.

Political Futures

Temporalities also affect territorial futures insofar as from a settler perspective, Native Americans can be perceived as temporally, geographically and politically off the map. Perceived as anachronistic, reservation communities seem to inhabit an ambiguous, marginalised space. When Cedar calls her birth mother, "Sweetie" Potts, for instructions to her house on the (unnamed) reservation, some confusion ensues (10). Her

request for a house number confuses Sweetie, "and it occurs to me that reservations–I don't know about them–maybe people just do not give directions on reservations. Maybe everybody just knows where everything is there. Maybe nobody leaves and everyone was there forever" (11-12). This gives the impression that although the reservation does not register on the government's radar anymore, it constitutes the centre of its own world, both deeply familiar and somewhat remote, enclosed, as though no one ever visited and no one ever left. It then turns out that the place lies beyond the reach of GPS: "We ain't on no GPS, and Siri's dead" (11). This gives the strange impression that despite an increase of governmental control over people's lives, the reservation is somewhat off the grid, or in a marginal zone of little importance.

Looking more closely at the indications provided by Sweetie, the location of the reservation is unclear. At first the directions suggest that this reservation does not correspond to the one used in *Tracks* and much of Erdrich's earlier fiction. Indeed, Cedar is not instructed to drive northwest towards Fargo (Road 94), but to take "the highway up to Skinaway" (Road 8) and then "take a left at the river […] the big one" (11). This could suggest that it is situated east of Minneapolis and may coincide with the St Croix Chippewa Reservation of Northern Wisconsin, which stretches over thirty-five miles north of Turtle Lake, the town next to Skinaway Lake. The Great Lake Inter-Tribal Council describes the reservation as "scattered in a checkerboard of 11 separate communities," (http://www.glitc.org/tribes/stcroix). This reservation is a straight line south from Duluth and from Cedar's birth mother's perspective, one either drives "up from Minneapolis" (11), as Cedar does, or "down," assumedly from Duluth (11). However, there is no sign of the left turn Cedar is told to take at the river, although the St Croix reservation does stretch on the lefthand side from the main road. And later, Cedar stops in Fargo on her way back to Minneapolis, which contradicts this hypothesis and suggests that the reservation is in fact in its usual location, loosely corresponding to Turtle Mountain. As usual, Erdrich is

compiling a fictional reservation that combines real and imaginary places, and perhaps locating it precisely is beside the point. As was the case with *Tracks* in chapter one, misdirection (or at least lack of clarity or consistency) may serve to keep these locales off the map so as to protect real places and resist fixed topographies. In *Future Home*, these imprecisions also blur the edges of the map to indicate that Native reservations are somewhat off the chart when it comes to the U.S. government's priorities in establishing and maintaining control, thus giving rise to new possibilities for Anishinaabe self-determination.

Arriving on the reservation for the first time, Cedar describes the Potts Superpumper that belongs to her birth family with a sense of irony: "there it is […] my ancestral holding–a lighted canopy of red plastic over a bank of gas pumps, a cinder-block rectangle with red trimmed doors that match the canopy" and she notices yards "filled with amazing junk" (14). The description of the house and its "sweat-lodge frame […] in the yard" is unfamiliar to Cedar who does not know what a sweat lodge is, but the birdhouses and especially the shrine dedicated to "Mary in an inverted bathtub" (12) give her a feeling of "inherited genetic congruence" (13) that appeals to her Catholic sensibility. However, there is no immediate sense of belonging as she makes two false starts that take her back to her original starting point, asking herself "Where's my birth home? Where's my family?" while the locals watch her "like I'm from the FBI" and "I've invaded their territory" (15). This scene of estrangement from an unfamiliar terrain and community gives way to Cedar finding her reservation home, family, as well as a sense of spiritual wholeness. Once she locates "a promising road I know will end in a yellow house" (15), she meets her mother, grandmother and little sister; three generations of Mary Potts (18), as well as Sweetie's partner Eddy. Another "congruence" occurs when she discovers that a shrine to Saint Kateri is about to be installed on a small grass area in the casino parking lot, "a place on the reservation where people swear they have seen an apparition three times in the past four

years" (22). At the tribal council, Sweetie expresses her hope that the current crisis will prompt "increased interest in appearances of a spiritual type of nature" (24) and argues for the positive financial impact that "pilgrimage crowds" could have "on the local business community" (23). Belonging occurs organically as Sweetie helps unroll strips of grass in preparation for the shrine (25) after participating in the tribal council with the fiberglass eagle (22). When Cedar's adoptive parents Glen and Sera join her there, the Potts take them on a "sunset tour of the reservation"–an old round house, school, racetrack, lake, turtle-shaped tribal office buildings and fiberglass eagle, circular clinic, casino and superpumper as an attraction in and of itself, and they stay at the Casino Hotel (40). Thus, the reservation appears as an independent society that has all the infrastructure it needs to sustain itself.

Indeed, the crumbling down of U.S. governmental structures during the crisis provides new opportunities for the tribe in regard to sovereignty: as Eddy states, "Quite a number of us see the government collapse as a way to make our move and take back the land" (95). Ironically, given the decrepit state of the U.S. government, border politics have turned around and prevent American citizens from emigrating to Canada or Mexico, although illegal crossings are attempted (111), usually by canoe via the waterways that are familiar to Indigenous peoples from the area (117). On the reservation, the tribal council has even successfully "secured state land" in a reversal of the Dawes Act. In a scene of *Tracks* discussed in chapter one, Nanapush looks at the first parceled map of the reservation and deplores "the lapping pink, the color of the skin of lumberjacks and bankers, the land we would never walk or hunt, from which our children would be barred" (*Tracks* 173-174). In *Future Home*, this map is effectively redrawn:

> Little Mary finishes the last bit of coloring and stands back from the map. Everyone looks at the map, quietly, the people behind me craning to see. The map is substantially purpler now and there are little gasps, murmurs. A few of the old people looking on are

weeping silently with their chins thrust out. (215)

The parcels coveted by the tribe remain within "the original bounds of our original treaty" and will not require a removal of non-tribal occupants since they "have all removed themselves. The lake-home people have gone back to the Cities" (214). The lake houses prized by white people as holiday residences are given instead to the homeless (214). Meanwhile, urban Natives are returning to the reservation, bulking up the number of Indigenous reservation residents: "we're set to double in this crisis" (214). In this respect, what is perceived by mainstream U.S. society as the end of the world enables a renewal for Native American nations. When she becomes visibly pregnant, Cedar takes refuge on the reservation for a time, although the place ultimately fails to protect her.

Meanwhile, the reservation becomes a kind of temporary utopia that revives Indigenous traditions and shows them to be well adapted to a high-tech context. Although there are U.S. bug-size drones and "listeners" on the reservation, Eddy "nets them" and keeps them in boxes (222). He also drums and sings old and new songs out on the porch at night to "confuse the surveillors" (226) who are listening in. Now that people have "dumped the phones, the screens" in landfills (222), vintage radios and the "moccasin telegraph" are back in use. Eddy has mobilised kids and "rehabbed gang members as runners" who disseminate news from their "posts at eight places on the reservation" (223). There are large exchange markets in towns based on a barter economy, which means that food is still being supplied (223). Staying true to his earlier statement that the tribe would adapt, Eddy seems to thrive in the ambient chaos. Actively giving speeches and making pronouncements at the tribal council, going through documents and old land deeds to elaborate strategies, he designs a range of survival measures, such as drafting young people and gangsters to put them to use. He searches for seeds, pigs, cows, and chickens, hoping to "make the reservation one huge, intensively worked, highly productive farm" (226), and overseeing the growth of medicinal marijuana seedlings (given to him by a Kiowa travelling

from northern Colorado) "in the grow-lighted aisles of casinos" to be administered for free treatment of tribal members or traded with *chimookomaanag* to obtain more goods (226). Eddy's hope is that "We're gonna be self-sufficient, like the old days" (227). More offensively, the tribe has "seized the National Guard arsenal up at Camp Ripley, which is on our original treaty grounds" and uses the equipment "to spy on the people who are spying on us" (227). Despite Eddy's reference to "the old days," it is clear that tactics have evolved to take on new technology and emergent de-colonial possibilities even as they borrow from Indigenous traditions of agriculture, song, music, and warfare. Casino earnings provide enough cash for the Sumperpumper to be well stocked in oil, and the tribal bank possesses additional funds (as cash is still used in some places) and Eddy, acting as a war chief, has mobilised elite Native and non-Native veterans to train and organise people into two regiments (227). One of them, the "Last of the Mohicans," grow their hair and employ a range of traditional practices (227). Armed tribal members are posted around the reservation and howl like wolves to signal the presence of drones by the casino (228). The tribe is also determined to protect "pregnant tribal members. Our women are sacred to us;" however, Eddy fears a raid, believing that governmental militias will eventually "remember about us" (227). Despite all of these threats, Cedar takes inexplicable risks, even after being spotted by a drone at Saint Kateri's shrine (231), and is finally "hijacked by some random pilgrims" (perhaps suggesting these people are white, or at least external to the reservation), at the same location and turned in to a birthing facility.

Coming back to Alexis Lothian, Erdrich's narrative clearly "shows how the subaltern past can create a new kind of future when it is kept alive, even as it is continually faced with literal and figurative death" (125). The tribal past and present, although not exempt from the risk of failing, are represented as a promising future in an unravelling world, thus offering "counterdiscourses" that can help us understand that "reproduction, futurity, and consumption need not always be put together in the same predictable ways"

(127). As many critics have said, and the character Eddy reiterates in *Future Home*, Indigenous peoples have already lived through the end of the world and learned how to endure. Thus, the end of the world is repositioned not as a future outcome but as a reality that is already being lived. Erdrich's refusal to end the narrative on a positive note also conforms to "visions of 'no future,'" which are "performative because by excluding one type of future, they open up a space for a different outcome" (Lothian 185). Lack of resolution thus maintains a range of possibilities for the present instead of deferring them, opening up a different kind of space.

Finally, to bring the strands of these two sub-sections together, it is important to keep in mind the relevance of pregnancy and childbirth to sovereignty. Ensuring the renewal of Native nations is of primary importance in the wake of genocide. Reproductivity, in this context, is obviously crucial for cultural survival and cannot be assimilated to mainstream narratives of reproductivity as a mere response to ecological crisis. Adding to the dimension of continuance, the notion of hybridity also plays a part in the narrative of *Future Home* in the figure of the Indigenous child with a white father and grandfather. The final outcome for life on the reservation is not ascertained by the ending of the novel, but elements of hope are strewn throughout the narrative, mainly through the figure of the child who stands not just for the future of humanity but for the possibility of a decolonial, Indigenous-inflected future.

Kevin Bruyneel states that "the claim that the American nation's development represents the 'advance' of 'civilization' is the most historically consistent temporal order impressed on indigenous people" (68). He adds that such a temporal order "discursively places the colonizer and the colonized at perpetually irreconcilable ends of political time" (69). While Mark Rifkin likewise notes that "[m]odes of settler invasion [...] become intimate parts of Indigenous temporalities" he also observes that "they do so as part of Native frames of reference, meaning that they are encountered through a perceptual

tradition and a set of material inheritances that include ongoing Indigenous legacies of landedness, mobility [and] governance [...]" (*Beyond Settler Time* 33). In other words, the constraining temporal dichotomies inherited by Indigenous peoples (such as "progress" versus "tradition") are also mediated by Indigenous spatial practices and modes of understanding that are tied to the land. *Future Home* takes on a similar task by, on the one hand, dismantling the binary of evolution/degeneration and reinstating the power of the primal as a category and, on the other, creating a tribal utopia capable of surviving the end of the world in the midst of ecological and political chaos, thus demonstrating how the temporal and the spatial coincide in the sovereign project.

Gerald Vizenor's *The Heirs of Columbus*

While in *Future Home*, Erdrich tackles the question of survival and continuance through the trope of the unborn child, on the one hand, and the tribal nation's capacity for adaptation, on the other, Gerald Vizenor's *The Heirs of Columbus* uses the similarly reproductive aspect of singling out the gene of survivance carried by Columbus's tribal heirs in the attempt to disrupt a strict line between European and Indigenous genetics through the figure of the mixedblood. Territoriality also plays an important role in this novel as a reservation is first founded on a ship in international waters and later relocated on land. In addition, N. Scott Momaday's idea of memory in the blood can be related to the heirs' possession of a common "survivance" gene, as though tribal history were borne by the body and regenerated through the sovereign project of the new reservation. Published in 1991 in anticipation of the 1992 quincentenary celebration of Columbus's voyage, the novel is set in a utopian future that imagines an alternative reality for North American tribal nations a few years after the time of writing. Compared to *Future Home*, *The Heirs* functions in different temporalities. Erdrich's novel is set in the future, although in terms of technologies that future does not markedly differ from the present. It

can thus be imagined as the near future insofar as it reflects contemporary concerns around species extinction and climate change, and the imagined outcome that these issues might produce. Vizenor's story, in contrast, offers an alternative future that, by the time of its publication, was actually an alternative present, albeit one where new genetic therapies were used in novel ways. Unlike Erdrich's novel, it was also written before the current wave of Indigenous science fiction that has been gaining popularity and critical engagement in recent years. In his article "Legal and Tribal Identity," Stephen Osborne asks: "Can regions be bounded not geographically but discursively? Does it make sense to speak of a virtual region, an imaginative borderland encompassing both tribal and postmodern realms?" (119). The intersections between geography and discourse, or between virtual/imaginative places and possible futurities in Indigenous fiction enable contrasted discussion about forms of sovereignty that do not comply with settler notions of racial identity politics; nor do they limit territorial anchors to Native territories as defined by treaties.

Reverse trajectories

In *The Heirs*, humanity and civilization emerge from the headwaters of the Mississippi (13). The Maya give birth to civilization and Columbus comes from the Maya (20), later finding his "homeland" at the headwaters (10). In the previous chapter, Anishinaabe characters Basile and Aloysius Beaulieu likewise saw their travel to Europe as a homecoming that reunited them with the land of their French fur trading forebears. Vizenor uses this pattern of reversals to demonstrate the complexity of origins and deconstruct any simplistic notion of belonging, of citizen or foreign status. By the same token, settler colonialism is undermined as the explorer returns to his place of origin instead of discovering new land. As Molly McGlennen writes, "Anishinaabe nationhood and historiography construct cartographic guides through storied geographical locations rather than linear timelines or colonial boundaries […] Vizenor creates an Indigenous

cartography to understand Anishinaabe territoriality–one that undoes the natural order of conquest" ("By My Heart" 21). This undoing affects other species as well: Mongrel dogs are the ones who imagine humans into existence (16) instead of a monolithic god. In fact Caliban, the white dog mongrel, is one of the heirs of Columbus, further complicating these genealogies (171). Such statements also run counter to the Bering Strait theory, which stipulates that people migrated to the American continent from Asia, by designating Anishinaabeakiing as the point of origin for humanity. Mayan culture then serves as an alternative to Western civilization, a refined society from which Columbus emerges to explore the world. Rather than discovery, Vizenor envisages a world order in which animals come before humans and Native Americans before Europeans. These ideas play with the memes of colonisation, for instance when naming a white reservation mongrel Caliban (16). The Maya created Columbus and gave birth to civilisation (20). Even Jesus is Maya (26) and addressed as "Jesus our Maya, be our shaman on this broken night" (144-145). Thus, the New World has given everything to the old one: "camels, bioshamans, zero, the touch of civilization, and calendar time," creating the "first cultural debt that has never been paid on time" (26).

Vizenor revises Columbus's journals, saying for instance that the first light Columbus spots on the shore is "the blue light of the hand talkers," "the radiance of healers from stories in his blood," which suggests that Columbus recognises the so-called New World as belonging to his past, his ancestry (36). Mark Rifkin writes that "what from a chronological and historicist perspective would be *the past* remains immanently within the expansive and shifting network of relationships that constitute continuing life, as a potentially generative set of forces, trajectories, presences" (*Beyond Settler Time* 172-173, italics in the original). The narrative builds upon the productive friction between past and present to radically redefine colonial relationships from the start. The novel questions the assumptions Columbus makes in his notes by twisting their meaning to imagine a series of

reversals. Repatriation of sacred medicine pouches stolen by the anthropologist Schoolcraft (45) and the remains of Pocahontas also speak to these trajectories of return, finally reburied alongside the (unattested) remains of Christopher Columbus (176). Felipa, the "trickster poacher," specialises in the illegal repatriation of such items (50), risking and eventually losing her life for that cause (172). She argues with Schoolcraft's descendant Doric, who has a "mere trace" of "tribal inheritance" (48) and is in possession of a number of sacred pouches, about the meaning of exploration and discovery. While Doric justifies such acts through his discourse that claims "Explore new worlds, discover with impunities […] never retreat from the ownership of land and language," Felipa corrects his claims to discovery by saying: "*Stolen* is the right word" (50, italics in the original). Another heir asks: "objects can be lost once we have them, but how can a place be an object, or be discovered like a continent, when no one knew what it would become?" (169). The narrative of a place is therefore an unknown factor that renders any claim to ownership absurd. Stories, like the medicine pouches that were stolen from the headwaters, need to be restored (61). Indeed language, the choice of words, has the power to shape the narratives that have become histories: "language is our trick of discovery, what we name is certain to become that name" (169). In the epilogue, Vizenor states that although early colonizers were ostensibly Catholics, many of them were practicing Jews (186), including Columbus himself. Instead of seeing him, like Reagan, as "the inventor of the American Dream," Vizenor proposes that Columbus should "rather be remembered as an obscure healer in the humor of a novel" (189). As a project, *The Heirs* decentralises western history and challenges the doctrine of discovery as well as any reductive view of belonging. Origins are always hard to trace, leading to multiple sources.

Stories in the blood and survival genes

These complex histories are closely tied to the transmission of stories and Vizenor's idea of "memory in the blood." The tavern at the headwaters is a place where the heirs "remember our stories in the blood" (14). Nine of them gather there to remember their own stories, asserting that "[w]e are created in stories, the same stories that hold our memories and thousands of generations in these stones" (14), which suggests that the walls of the tavern themselves hold memories that support their storytelling. The stones were stolen from the Tavern at the headwaters of the Mississippi and subsequently returned; they used to be tricksters who told stories but now listen to the stories of the heirs (13). Through their history and agency, they thus counter the colonising mission that aims to "silence tribal names and stories" (43) and fight for "the repatriation of tribal stories" (69) that, like sacred objects, need to be returned. The area surrounding the tavern likewise bears memory, keeping an imprint of what happens there as "[t]he seasons leave their wild traces in memories at the headwaters" (93). Rather than rehearsing the conventional narratives reinforced by Western histories, the heirs weave "stories that honor new memories, a new inheritance" (18), using the inspiration of the past in order to envision different futures. As Mark Rifkin remarks, "[c]hronologically prior relations of influence, interdependence, and animation help orient actions and movements in the present, providing an active frame of reference for them" (*Beyond Settler Time* 172). The heirs are less invested in pinning down a precise, fixed history than in reimagining themselves within a field of possibilities.

The novel links together memory and the notion of a healing gene. The heirs say they "would give their very genes to save the world […] as they believe their unique genes are healers" (130). They hire a genetic engineer, Doctor Cantrip, whose research team identifies "seventeen genes in the signature of survivance" (132) and learns how to copy and replicate those genes. Now that the "ultimate tribal powers" of ancestors

have been identified as "the healer genes," people with genetic defects or mutations can be healed with these "sacred tribal genes" (161). This creates another parallel with *Future Home* by designating tribal peoples and crossbloods as possessing a superior aptitude to survive. The past is reappropriated in the present to create new futures, using "the powers of the shamans our elders remembered from the tribal past" (165).

Tribal futurities emerge from this interplay between specifically Anishinaabeg histories that can be opened up towards a culturally diverse future mediated by the heirs' healing genes. New communities enable people to bypass political gatekeeping and forge more personal identities in relation to one another. Stone Columbus plans to issue "identity cards for tribal artists […] based on the recognition of peers, rather than the choice of tribal politicians" (162). He believes that "[t]he measures of blood quantums have reduced tribes to racist colonies" (162) and wishes to break down racialised categories. Opposing "the notion of blood quantums, racial identification, and tribal enrollment," he insists that even as a crossblood he does not "envy [...] unbroken tribal blood" and "would accept anyone who wanted to be tribal" (162) in the tribal nation. Soon, Point Assinika starts to offer "gene therapies" using "the genetic signatures of most of the tribes in the country, so that anyone could, with an injection […] prove beyond a doubt a genetic tribal identity" (162). Stone wants to "make the world tribal, a universal identity," and thus prevent the theft of tribal cultures to create a "universal tribe" that shuns "racial distance" (162). University students could "declare the campus a new reservation" and Assinika would welcome "the wounded refugees of the world" (156), chemical mutants (147) and robots (151). Thus, unlike *Future Home*, which focuses in on the situation of a single tribal nation–although there is no reason why the tribal council's actions could not be replicated on other reservations–*The Heirs* envisions a more open-ended and inclusive utopia.

Developed by N. Scott Momaday, the notion of blood memory bears some resonance with dystopian tales by enabling heritage to revive itself even in the presence of

disruption and discontinuity by positing that one's inherent access to one's ancestor's experience and sensibility facilitates survivance and the maintenance of traditional lifeways into an imaginary future. This idea is not to be conflated with the politics of blood quantum, summed up by Danika Medak-Saltzman as a "bloodless genocide [that], by design, serves to 'legally' vanish Native peoples in order to finally and permanently provide unfettered access to Indigenous property" (145). Hsinya Huang states in "Blood/Memory" that Momaday's concept constitutes a productive transformation of the restrictive categories of blood quantum, which have the effect of "estrang[ing] the indigenous into the alien, to make them strangers in their homelands" (178). While federal intervention into the politics of blood and Indigenous identity regulation has produced alien subjects to be regulated on Native land, Momaday's blood memory hints at "transgenerational genetic ties" (191) without pinning it down scientifically, so that the concept remains suggestive and imaginative rather than regulatory. As Chadwick Allen shows in "Blood (and) Memory," Momaday's blood memory aims to upset "distinctions between racial identity and narrative" (93-94) and thus his use of the fraught term "genetic" "should be understood in a narrative sense" (95). In 1989, Arnold Krupat's *The Voice in the Margin* described the phrase blood memory as "absurdly racist," and stated that there was no such thing as what Momaday calls "the memory in my blood" (Allen 94-95). Allen argues that Krupat's response likely conveys anxieties regarding post-Holocaust genetic identity formations (95). With *The Heirs*, Vizenor attempts to defuse the debate between Krupat and Momaday by challenging both sides through trickster discourse, rejecting binaries in favour of a "suggestively ambiguous" stance (96):

> Clearly building on Momaday's work, part of Vizenor's autobiographic agenda is the location of adequate tropes for memory, imagination, consciousness, perception, and their intersections. His description of memory as "transitive" suggests Momaday's process for producing a contemporary indigenous

> identity as text through re-collecting and re-membering the past. (Allen 108)

A passage of *The Heirs* even has characters discuss an edition of Krupat's *Voice in the Margin* allegedly annotated by Momaday (*The Heirs* 110), whose marginal comments criticise Krupat's stance on "racial memory" by asking how he would "know about tribal memories?" (*The Heirs* 111). As Allen indicates, this anecdote can be read as a critique of Krupat's subordination to Western theory ("Blood (and) Memory" 108) and the solipsism of academic practice. In contrast, memory is so crucial in Vizenor's narrative that the heirs' only weapon is a plant, a herb that "in the right combination […] causes people to vanish from memory and history" (126). The idea of "blood tithes" (159) enable the heirs to claim possession of land by virtue of being Columbus's descendants. Thus, *The Heirs of Columbus* explores, even while it makes light of, the possibility of a "survival gene" that validates Indigenous peoples' heritage, "the genetic signature of the heirs that would heal the nation" (8). According to Andrew Uzendoski in "Citizenship Criteria, Human Rights, and Decolonial Legal Norms," this "genetic implant is not a flattening of cultural identity" but rather "provides a potent symbol of how human rights apply irrespective of genetic difference" (39). Instead of reinforcing genetic makeup through the discovery of the survival gene, Vizenor tries to establish a common denominator between all people on a quest for healing.

Non-territorial sovereignty and post-citizenship

The Heirs of Columbus envisions a utopian space wherein the tribal heirs of Columbus start being haunted by dreams of the explorer until Stone Columbus anchors a "bingo flagship," the Santa María, alongside a float comprised of a casino barge and two caravels (a restaurant and a tax-free market), "on the international border near Big Island in Lake of the Woods" and claims it as a new sovereign reservation (6). For two summers, the

casino earns money from tourists; despite a court order leading to the confiscation of the float and Stone's arrest on the Fourth of July, a federal judge reverses the decision and the ship is "anchored once more to his stories at the border" (7). Both Canada and the U.S. send patrols to try and tax casino activities, taking the matter to federal court; however, judge Beatrice Lord rules in favour of the heirs, announcing her decision "from the wild sterncastle […] on Columbus Day. *The Heirs* proclaims that "[t]he notion of sovereignty is not confiscable, or earth bound […] anchor and caravel is as much a tribal connection to sovereignty as a homestead" (7). The federal court rules that the ship and caravels are "limited sovereign states at sea, the first maritime reservations in international waters" (7-8) and that future complaints must be taken to the International Court of The Hague (8). Not all tribal nations support the project: in the novel the *New York Times* reports "the censure of the heirs and crossbloods by tribal governments" (130), and the novel criticises "those big bellies on the reservation […] who fear the liberation of the mind" (155). Despite enthusiastic public support, there are international conspiracies to murder the heirs (75). Stone Columbus makes a million a year in "the new tribal world" (11), but a thunderstorm puts a sudden end to this lakewater utopia as the float is "cracked by lightning" and its remains wash ashore (12).

The form of sovereignty defended by Vizenor is based on a sense of agency and imaginative initiatives such as the ship anchored on the border. Whenever necessary, the heirs also have recourse to modern law and technologies. For instance, they know to protect their sacred pouches in "a fail-safe vault with double-security codes […] Fingerprint scans and a series of coded numbers–as Felipa explains, "The tribes needed a security system" to protect sacred objects from theft (51). Throughout the novel, they also use holographic laser projections to create alternative realities. Having returned to the headwaters, the heirs project a laser caravel casino in the night sky to "resurrect" Columbus's first voyage over the tavern to show that:

> The notion of sovereignty is not tied to earth, sovereignty is neither fence nor feathers […] The very essence of sovereignty is a command laser. The *Santa María* and the two caravels are luminous sovereign states in the night sky, the first maritime reservation on a laser echo. (62)

The projection reproduces a simulation of the broken reservation-at-sea, thus reclaiming Columbus's sea voyage not as a threat to Indigenous existence but as the new symbol of tribal sovereignty. The novel blurs the line between Native and coloniser in order to fully integrate history. At the same time, this scene challenges the materiality of sovereignty by claiming that it lies beyond "fence and feathers" and can be manifest "in a laser echo" (62), intimating that it is a performative act rather than a mere territorial claim. In the epilogue, Vizenor writes that the "Dominican Republic commissioned an enormous monument" which can project a cross into the clouds" (188) to celebrate the quincentenary. The Faro a Colón is out of proportion with the country's economic situation, which prompts Vizenor to deplore that the connection with "the great explorer and his search for gold has been a curse rather than a source of material salvation" (189). The heirs' laser projections work to counter that, both by reclaiming Columbus as a crossblood ancestor and using him as inspiration for self-determination. The laser scenes become healing technologies that recall and reimagine the past in ways that make the holograms transformative for the audience, thus calling forth different futures (125).

The Santa María having come to an end, a new nation is founded at Point Assinika and starts calling for people to be healed on the radio (118): "Point Assinika was declared a sovereign nation on October 12, 1992, by the Heirs of Christopher Columbus" (119). Stone Columbus announces the event with a discourse that replicates Columbus's narrative of discovery, saying "At dawn we saw pale naked people, and we went ashore" (119). The heir who unfurls "the royal banner" is named Miigis, recalling the shells that mark the turtle-shaped island in the Seven Fires Prophecy of the Anishinaabeg that

signified a stopping point. Stone declares that the heirs "have taken possession of this point in the name of our genes" and had "all the necessary declarations and […] testimonies recorded by a blond anthropologist," making certain to use the terminology and procedures of conquest in the name of "the wild tricksters of liberty" (119). Again, the heirs use the language of Christopher Columbus's journal in their comment that "No sooner had we concluded the formalities of taking possession of the island than people began to come to the beach" (119), thus claiming their right of discovery of the Point while also revealing the absurd nature of the colonial settler project. This new nation is founded on the west coast, at Point Roberts, Washington (renamed Assinika) in the Strait of Georgia and, like Lake of the Woods, traversed by the international border (121). They build a marina and pavilions, move the tavern stone by stone, and claim that "soon the earth was warm and healed at the point" (121) to show that the project benefits the land as well; they describe it as "a natural nation" (126). They also erect a statue of the Trickster of Liberty (122). A red flag with a blue bear paw "represents our survivance and the sovereignty of Point Assinika" (123). The Point is claimed "as a free state with no prisons, no passports, no public schools, no missionaries, no television, and no public taxation;" however natural medicine and entertainment are free for all (124). There is a clear parallel with the 1969-1971 occupation of Alcatraz by the Indians of All Tribes, which they likewise "claimed by right of discovery" in their Proclamation, and which was dedicated to many purposes, including "healing rituals" (*Engaged Resistance* 12). As the heirs say, "language is our trick of discovery" (169). Uzendoski remarks that "[b]oth Indigenous states are situated at the border of the settler-colonial states," and that the first state floating on water "serves as a powerful metaphor for Vizenor's interrogation of the international norms of the definition of a state" ("Citizenship Criteria" 31). He further notes that "the implications of the nation's successful establishment are global" (45). The heirs also remove any "inspection at the tribal border" to counter the idea of "political boundaries on the earth" (131). However, as

more and more people travel to the new nation, they are often turned back at the Canada-U.S. border and tribal people are prevented from crossing "the international border on their way to Point Assinika" (144). Despite the agency of the tribal government–a president is elected (166)–to determine its policies, Canada and the United States continue to resist its independence. *The Heirs of Columbus* proposes post-national Native sovereignties. Molly McGlennen writes in "By My Heart" that:

> Anishinaabe people (on the U.S. side of the nation-state border in this case) create autonomous spaces in which the U.S. government has limited access and control. If we are to read the transnational turn into narratives of Native resistance, we realize a context that signifies intertribal experience less as a result of colonial dominance or oppressive policy making and more as a comment on the global designs of Indigenous groups. (18)

Vizenor's new nation at Point Assinika provides a utopian example of what such an autonomous space might look like. The open nature of Point Assinika does not threaten the integrity of the tribal national project but actually manifests the "global design" which McGlennen mentions; not merely intertribal but open to anyone in need of healing, the project shuns colonial dominance completely. Despite this utopian outcome, the question remains as to whether Stone Columbus's outline of a universal reservation in *The Heirs* might also in real terms be a kind of self-annihilation, a dangerous project for a tribal nation. The geographically bounded nature of Point Assinika, a narrow band of land surrounded by water on three sides, does not lend itself to demographic growth. While the fact that "the heirs honored tribal identities" rather than "political boundaries" (131) is intellectually stimulating, the project does not seem politically viable on such a small tract of land as Point Assinika. Perhaps the intimation is that as the nation grows, it would progressively reclaim more land, but the novel does not discuss this aspect of the sovereign project.

Perhaps the answer lies in the tithe claimed by the heirs. Inspired by the memory of Louis Riel, who wrote a draft letter to the President of the United States in 1875 to ask that Canada be annexed in reparation of the wrongs the country perpetrated against the people of the Northwest, Stone demands "the tithe due the Heirs of Christopher Columbus," arguing that "according to precedent in international courts we are due, as documented heirs, the tithe of our namesake, for the past five centuries (160). In opposition to claims of sovereignty by treaty rights, or requests that unceded territory be returned, Stone and the heirs actually claim rights of conquest instead, reminding the President of the documents signed by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella to reward their ancestor with "a tenth of the gold" and other tax-free goods in exchange for the resources discovered on the new continent:

> These rights and capitulations have never been abrogated by treaties, conquest, or purchase; therefore, since we are the legal heirs of the unpaid tithe on this continent, be so advised, that unless your government pays the inheritance due, we shall annex, as satisfaction of the tithe, the United States of America. (160)

The heirs are also willing to settle the five-hundred-year-old tithe through a cash settlement or other agreement if necessary (163), and they go on fighting until their opponent finds an alternative strategy and the windigoo is thawed out by federal operatives to interrupt the project of the new nation (177). The wiindigo threatens to end the tribal world but also announces enigmatically that "The last chance is over the end" (181). The "moccasin game" settles the dispute in favour of the heirs while the laser figures of Jesus Christ, Columbus, Riel and others appear in the cardinal directions (182). This cosmic game has been played before and will be played again: "The game never ends," says the windigoo as he takes leave (183). Such a cyclical temporality indicates that the utopia is periodically interrupted by dystopian events, which in *The Heirs* does not come across as ongoing crisis but as a playful counteraction that needs repeated interventions.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored two examples of Anishinaabe speculative fiction and the different approaches to Native space they articulate through futuristic practices of mobility and experimental forms of territorial sovereignty. *Future Home* not only maintains a landbase but develops it by imagining that environmental and social crisis enables the tribe to reclaim land within their treaty boundaries (although not, strangely, beyond them). In *The Heirs*, land is only temporarily left behind in favour of the ship anchored on International waters, before the heirs found a new nation at Point Assinika to establish an inclusive community in which tribal genes are liberally redistributed. Both novels suggest hope for territorial forms of sovereignty tied to reproductive futures and the importance of remembering, and thus propose that spatial dynamics are informed by temporalities. In *The Heirs*, isolating the gene of survivance shared by the heirs enables the Indigenous population to expand indefinitely and laser projections transpose new stories onto the land, writing a counter narrative to settler history. In *Future Home*, evolutionary reversal creates a loophole through which the Dawes Act can also be reversed, thus questioning the validity of settler temporalities of progress. Although reproductive futurities offer mitigated hope at the end of the novel, the child upon whom survival hinges is an Indigenous child, one who is able to remember the primal sounds at the origin of the word and carry them into the future.

In comparison with previous chapters of this thesis, this analysis not only reexamines the past and present histories and relationships to the land but projects tribal sovereignty into the future. Having progressively expanded Native space from the reservation outward into urban, hemispheric, and transnational spaces, Vizenor's and Erdrich's speculative narratives come back to the North American continent to look at spatial perspectives in a different way. The novels discussed in this chapter hark back to the

questions asked by Maximilian C. Forte in *Indigenous Cosmopolitanism*: "What happens to indigenous culture and identity when being in the 'original place' is no longer possible or even necessary?" (2). While Forte is referring to displacement here, this query also echoes the issues faced by Native individuals and nations without a landbase. *Future Home* indicates how the marginalisation of reservations could turn into a strength amidst the political chaos of the end of the world, *The Heirs* further suggests that the landbase may be a mobile concept that acts as the backdrop for sovereignty rather than being a necessary condition for self-determination. Mobility remains intrinsic to a meaningful relationship with place, one that is linked to sovereignty whether reservation land expands (as in *Future Home*) or is recreated elsewhere (as in *The Heirs*). In the coda that follows, Louise Erdrich's short story "Domain" further questions boundaries of genre while also tackling the notions of memory and intergenerational futurities that have been central to the Anishinaabe speculative fiction analysed in this chapter.

CODA: DIGITAL WORLDS

This coda aims to analyse Erdrich's short story "Domain" (2014) separately from the texts discussed in the previous chapter because it represents a shift from material land to digital space, thereby indicating a new inflection in the conceptualisation of space in Anishinaabe literature. Abstracted from territoriality, this new type of space requires a different approach to be conceptualised adequately. For this purpose, I will also compare "Domain" to the 2011 novel *Riding the Trail of Tears* by Cherokee author Blake M. Hausman. *Riding the Trail* represents a shift in temporality and spatiality in Native American literature to which Erdrich is contributing. Like "Domain," it features an alternative digital environment that disrupts linear time frames. *Riding the Trail* provides another contemporary instance of a digital dimension where Native characters evolve. These works of fiction point to a new development in Native American literature that also affects Anishinaabe writing, coinciding with a shift in the broader field.

In contrast with the possibilities suggested by *Future Home of the Living God* and *The Heirs of Columbus*, Erdrich's short story "Domain" offers no utopian hope. Here, the afterlife is entirely digitised, uploaded onto corporate-owned platforms textured by their participants' memories. The short story foregrounds the importance of memory–specifically memory of one's environment as well as the danger of replicating past trauma–as an art form that enables a digital afterlife based on human creativity. This relationship between place and memory is a salient feature of Indigenous speculative fiction and plays an important role in the legal/political implications of territorial futurities. "Domain" is the most dystopian of the three, leading as it does to a form of intergenerational annihilation. Territoriality is universally abandoned in the digital afterlife. This time, corporations are in charge of delivering an ultimately dystopian (although apparently utopian) future. Thus

there is a movement, in these narratives, from maintenance of the landbase, through attempts to displace/replace it, to doing away with physical space entirely. The short story "Domain" is more abstract and creates a different space altogether, a future comprised of digitalised consciousness wherein the materialities of body and earth are no longer needed, but paradoxically require richly textured memorisation of the environment in order to ensure people's wellbeing in the afterlife. Another common thread in all three narratives is the multi-generational outlook, the notion of inheritance, which is discussed through genetics (in the form of the survival gene) in *The Heirs,* and connection with biological parents tied to reproductive hope in *Future Home*. These titles themselves carry meaningful connotations: while *The Heirs* emphasises the notion of inheritance, *Future Home* suggests a familiar, lived space. However, much like the title "Domain," *Future Home* also bears the idea of inheritable property. In that sense, space acts as a vessel to carry experience into the future, transmitted through generations. The association with "eminent domain" carries a different undertone regarding the expropriation of land, in this case related to the privatisation of space for corporate interest. The importance of memory, of remembering the past and carrying it into the future, pervades all three of these texts. Despite discontinuities within the timelines, balance is maintained through a dialogue between past and future that is filtered through the present.

Louise Erdrich's short story "Domain" was published in *GRANTA 129: Fate* in 2014 and, like her latest novel *Future Home of the Living God*, is both futuristic and dystopian. While in *The Heirs* memory is transmitted in the blood to future generations, "Domain" is set in a digital world which uses participants' former memories to recreate the texture of world experiences as faithfully as possible. By envisioning a world composed entirely of people's memories loaded onto digital platforms, the story emphasises the value of one's capacity to engage with and internalise the imprint of the sensory world so it can be preserved in the afterlife. More problematically, "Domain" never mentions the ethnicity

or community belonging of its protagonists, nor any wider Indigenous issue. The fact that the short story makes no mention of characters being Anishinaabe and no reference to tribal contexts questions whether these concerns would matter in a virtual world. The question whether her characters should nevertheless be assumed to be Native despite the lack of pointers creates new challenges when it comes to defining Native American fiction as a genre–if indeed it can be called a genre, a question that Indigenous dystopian fiction also asks by stretching the field of possibilities for Native literatures and other media. As Louise Erdrich tends to resist being categorised solely as a Native writer, it would probably be unwise to assume that the protagonists are of Native American heritage. Instead, the short story tackles themes and ideas that pick up some of the threads left by the novels analysed in previous sections. For a start, the exploration of the afterlife offers a different kind of post-apocalyptic narrative in the form of a digital future. Abstraction from the materiality of a landbase also echoes Vizenor's narrative by requiring imaginative acts in order to remember and recreate a textured and palpable world. These considerations give rise to a series of questions: what happens to memory when the land becomes an abstraction? Are suburban spaces already divorced from the presence of the land? What if the human tie to place were completely cut off? In "Domain," Erdrich proposes that memory provides the crucial link between human experience and place when the materiality of place is lost. What is more, the short story discusses intergenerational heritage by staging an act of revenge that breaks down the generational order, through the disruption of temporalities.

Memory

Geographically, the story is set in Minneapolis as well as the wider spaces of North Dakota where the main protagonist, Bernadette, grew up (10). These are familiar places for Erdrich and many of her fictional characters. In the online edition of *GRANTA*

128, she explains that the space of the Minneapolis suburbs inspired the story: "an alternate first line of this story came to me: There are no suburbs in the afterlife." In contrast to the "vast sprawl of exurban Minneapolis," which is a "waste of land," we tend to visit and remember "lakes, forests, architecture, cities of wonder, unruly temples, oceans, islands, the ecstasy of nature," and therefore the short story posits that these constitute the essence of the afterlife. She explains:

> We live in these places out of necessity, lucky to have them out of the terrible explosion of humanity […] We remember nature intimately and forcefully, and we recall lovely or powerful cities with delight at their art. That is why they become the focus of meaning in the afterlife. That is why they are wholly remembered.

The digital platforms are created "[l]ayer by layer […] out of our attachment to place, to the earth, all of the beings on the earth." Thus, the capacity to memorise the imprint made by the natural world on human consciousness, as well as the creative rendering of its characteristics and texture, is highly valued by "Domain." On the programme, embodiment and the environment are "made of thought" (15), based on the scenes memorised by its members, thus replicating the real world (15) by using eidetic memories of the past to recreate places, the shape of a body (13) and sensory experience (16). From the time she was a child, Bernadette has learnt to memorise the North Dakota skies and how to use them as a screen to protect her intentions from machines' scrutiny when she is "scanned" by the system. This also makes her more valuable to Asphodel for the precision she will bring to the company's digital environment (11), thus enabling her to join a platform she otherwise wouldn't be able to afford. Asphodel is likened to artwork, a "layering of consciousness upon consciousness" (21) as members animate its world by featuring places, animals and people from their past (20) to add to the quality and credibility of the surroundings, making the experience largely pleasant. Bernadette appreciates this direct interaction with the environment: "my actions add to the texture of this world so that

everything I do here has a purpose" (21). Sleep and dreams are unnecessary but offer the only relief from consciousness (19), and Asphodel provides a higher level of privacy than its competitors by assuring its members' unconscious isn't "tapped" for information during that time (18). Erdrich's imaginary world is both comforting, a world created by human consciousness rather than a God's (23) and uneasy due to the possibility of the system intruding upon one's thoughts (18).

Broken temporalities

Just as temporalities are disrupted in the previous chapter, through a reversal of evolution in *Future Home* and a rewriting of history through genetics and holograms in *The Heirs*, "Domain" disrupts timelines in ways that are reminiscent of Mark Rifkin's statement that "collective dynamics and histories shape individual forms of temporal experience" (*Beyond Settler Time* 29). Indeed, the short story focuses on the personal, subjective experience of abstract temporalities. On Asphodel, time can be replicated at will or otherwise ignored: "Time is gentle. We are flowers. Opening and closing as we respond to the temperature and the light of our thoughts" (21). There is a certain malleability to the fabric of time, as when Bernadette feels that an event "has already happened. It hasn't […] Yet it has already begun" (22). She has come to the platform for a specific purpose: she wants to seek and murder her father, who let her son died from an accident without allowing his consciousness to be uploaded, thus separating them forever. While he did this for moral reasons–believing that people should not shun death–he later changed his mind and requested to be transferred early onto Asphodel (19), a turnaround that Bernadette has never forgiven. She has heard the rumour that people can be erased or "delete" themselves (17), which shows that members' minds can affect digital reality or even rupture it. Bernadette is aware that the act of murder "will create a rip in the fabric of time. Like art, it will jar the past, pierce the future" (21). Several intimations that

the event may not turn out as she expects foreshadow the confusion that will take place. For instance, while Bernadette's hatred enables her to withstand the pain of leaving her physical body, it only gets her through the first part of the transfer before "it wilts and at the base of it is love" (14). To disguise herself and surprise her father, she says "I will be his mother" and she plans to use "the same object that ended my son's life" (22). Thus, the future is not a definitive leap away from the past but the opposite: almost entirely determined by past experiences. At the last moment, her father turns into her son, his forehead bleeding, and she holds him as he dies (24). Even though she knows "he is not real," her experience is totally shaped by the belief that she is holding her son and has, in effect, murdered him (24). The three generations of characters represented show that "Domain" is also concerned with reproductivity, despite its nihilistic outcome. Through this lens, the story exposes the dangers of disconnection with the earth and its imperative of embodiment, especially as timelines become malleable and appearances deceitful. The murder of Bernadette's father, who assumes the shape of her son, suggests reproductive failure by turning her act of revenge into both patricide and infanticide, while destroying her *raison d'être* in the same gesture. What started as a utopian setting suddenly turns into a dystopian reality. In this way, "Domain" annihilates three generations in one single gesture, which asks a new series of questions. What happens to territory, memory, or genetics in such a context? Which notion of heritage or succession is carried forward? In chapter four, these elements were treated in much more tangible ways than in "Domain," where the afterlife is digitally mediated and thus disvorced from any landbase or direct genetic linkage. Bernadette's father and son are nevertheless featured on Asphodel, foregrounding once again both ancestry and reproductivity. Kyle P. Whyte offers the useful concept of "spiraling time," stating that "it makes sense to consider ourselves as living alongside future and past relatives simultaneously" ("Indigenous science (fiction)" 228-229) and encourages dialogue with ancestors and descendants:

> The spiraling narratives unfold through our interacting with, responding to and reflecting on the actual or potential actions and viewpoints of our ancestors and descendants. They unfold as continuous dialogues. The narratives also involve the dramas related to our own transformations as we move from being descendants to ancestors through our own lives. (229)

In the short story, attempts at such communications fail because spatial embodiment and generational timelines are disrupted. In short, "Domain" offers neither territorial possibility (in the sense that it is digitised) nor generational hope (father and son are murdered simultaneously). The domain that is carried forward, then, benefits corporations more than paying individual users who are "mined" for information that is then used as a selling point by Asphodel, much like the cultured, middle-class status of its users. Through the narrative, Erdrich thus questions the matter of corporate ownership of peoples' lives, which can be read as a warning against certain forms of deterritorialisation. Similar disruptions of temporalities in digitised environment take place in *Riding the Trail of Tears*.

Riding the Trail of Tears

Published in 2011, Blake M. Hausman's novel follows a day in the life of Tallulah, a Cherokee who works for the TREPP (Tsalagi Removal Exodus Point Park), an institution offering digital re-enactments of the Trail of Tears. In accelerated virtual time, tourists spend a few days being rounded up forced to march, and trying to survive as nineteenth century Cherokees with Tallulah as their guide. Different time loops are available to offer a range of experiences to consumers, but these do not normally interact with one another. However, on that particular day, a technical glitch allows one of the tourists, an elderly Jewish woman named Irma, to slip into another dimension and thus disappear from Tallulah's tour group. Irma meets Indians from various time periods who are locked up in a stockade and treated as mere programmes to be beaten to death by

soldiers every day, only to wake up at the stockade again the following morning to play their part in a new game. At the blockade, everyday activities pertaining to domestic life, such as cooking, music, and conversation only provide superficial and temporary reprieve from the expectation of trauma to come, the attack that takes place every day at the same time. Her sudden appearance is taken as an omen by the Cherokee, who believe her arrival signals the fulfillment of a prophecy and decide to walk back to South Carolina, stating that they were "placed" in the stockade "in order to keep us out of the mountains" (198). Although Irma wonders how they "could go back to a place they had never been before" (198), the Indian characters, collectively called the Misfits, insist on the notion of reclamation: "Those mountains have protected us before [...] They will protect us again" (199). Such a statement bears testimony to these Cherokees' attachment to their ancestral history of displacement, despite the limits of their digital existence. They were not programmed to return to North Carolina, thereby reversing the trajectory of the Trail of Tears. Instead, they were designed to be caught in a time loop reminiscent of PTSD, re-living their demise at the hands of soldiers daily like prototypical vanishing Indians. The repetitive nature of the game means that their past is also their predictable future and they are constantly re-traumatised. Once they undo their programming by taking up arms and walking in a new direction, they reshape their own narrative: "The thousand Misfits marched forward, marching away from the past and future as they moved together into the present" (245). At that point, different dimensions of the game join up, bringing different temporalities, and the spatial worlds of different tour groups, together as the Misfit Indians ambush and kill the soldiers on the Trail of Tears and persuade the tourists and their guides to walk towards North Carolina. For the Cherokee characters, therefore, the future only becomes available once the ancestral past of dislocation is revised in the present. Tallulah's reflection that "it's hard to be 'from' a certain place when your own stories remind you that you used to live somewhere else" (248) confirms reviewer Ashley Barnett's remark that

Hausman's novel aims to question "Western objectivity and claims to historical fact" in order to "re-create" a story of the Trail of Tears that "does not conform to the accepted data that have been collected concerning Cherokees and their removal," but is filtered through Tallulah as she "walks the trail everyday and is shaped by it" (Barnett 240). Hausman's novel and Erdrich's short story both share digital realities but in "Domain" characters go through an initially violent process in order to be uploaded onto what is purportedly a peaceful platform. Asphodel is supposed to offer liberation from the pain of material embodiment and give solace in a beautifully textured world, but the protagonist ends up reifying pas violence in her effort to seek revenge by changing the course of the past in the future. In contrast, Cherokee characters in *Riding the Trail* are trapped in a game that perpetuates genocidal violence against them and robs them of their personalities (they find refuge in anonymity within the community). The Misfits have to abandon their peaceful conditioning and make use of violence in order to free themselves from the perpetual repetition of colonial oppression. Despite an ambiguous ending for the digital Indian (the game is interrupted and Tallulah taken back to the TREPP), R*iding the Trail* gestures toward liberation from the repetition of violence carried by previous generation. Upon returning from the game, Talullah cuts her hair and resigns from the job, walking away from the heritage of her grandfather, who designed the prototype of the game, as well as from the trauma symbolised by repeated visits to the Trail of Tears. This contrasts with Bernadette in "Domain," who instead of breaking the trauma of losing her son, creates further harm by murdering the child she meant to avenge. "Domain" perhaps denounces the impossibility of rewriting the past, suggesting it is reproduced in the future of the afterdeath, by staging a disturbing generational reversal as the (grand)father turns into the (grand) and Bernadette, by trying to avenge the child's death, actually reenacts the murder. The short story warns against an atemporal, abstract space qualified by the absence of spatial embodiment that could lead to transgenerational annihilation, and therefore the end

of reproductivity.

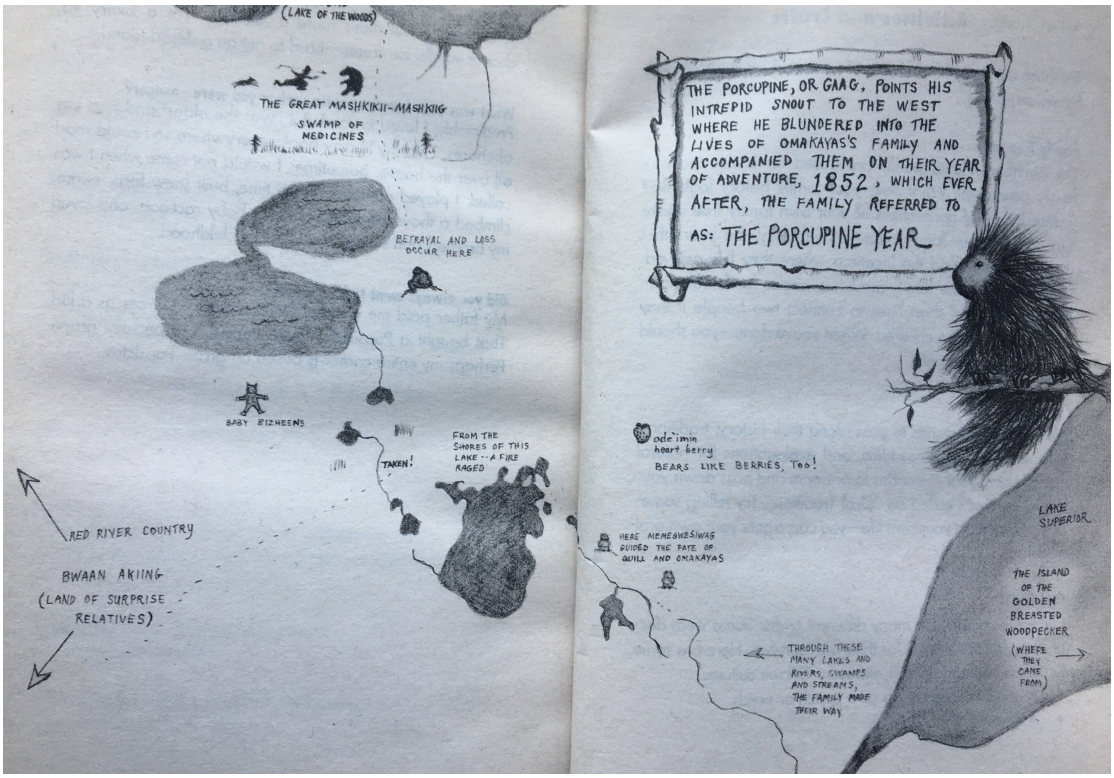
In *Riding the Trail*, the question of land is foregrounded and politicised in the reversal of the march back to the original homeland as well as connected to memory–not only the memory of trauma but its constant repetition. Indigenous characters are avatars for white characters and other tourists to experience the Cherokee trail firsthand. The fact that Tallulah's grandfather designed the first version of the game also implies a transgenerational handing down of culture and a historical trauma to contend with. The Jewish character who strays away from the scripted narrative of the game emphasises commonalities of trauma generated by shared legacies of genocide (both of which converge in the figure of the author). Finally, the aspect of having a Cherokee game used for profit by an organisation with questionable ethics and commitment echoes the lucrative platforms created for the afterlife in "Domain" while also pointing at the economic systems of oppression that perpetuate trauma for marginalised people.

Although the field might be moving towards speculative narratives that involve more abstract conceptualisations of the land, these places nevertheless carry political implications, much as the chronologies that carry the past into the future, tied to an intergenerational heritage–of trauma, tradition, political and economic and identity status. What happens to territoriality in a digitised future? Digitised platforms retraumatise protagonists by replaying past events while corporate interests threaten to override marginalised histories. Despite not being overtly political in relation to Indigenous concerns, "Domain" features many parallels with *Riding the Trail*, although characters have more agency in *Riding the Trail* where they can modify the patterns they were programmed for and the main protagonist is able to walk away from her job. These digital landscapes constitute the latest expansion of Native space in the literature, no longer merely radiating outward from reservations but transposing geographies to create new conceptual landscapes. Far from negating histories, these new spaces forge connections between past

occurences and possible futurities, warning us against the danger of endless repetition and urging for the development of new patterns.

Starting with the historical mobile practices described by Erdrich in her young adult fiction, this thesis has then looked at the fictional trails that connect reservations to wider spaces and then explored the ways in which characters creatively negotiate and maintain ties to the reservation when relocated to urban areas. Contemporary Anishinaabe novels also apply an Indigenous lens onto hemispheric spaces, remembering that Native land is not interrupted by international borders but has always been the site of multiple crossings and encounters, including on the other side of the Atlantic as well as in global spaces where convergences can be forged across cultures, mediated by fundamentally Anishinaabe visions and practices. Futurities enable Anishinaabe writers to imagine sovereign spaces where tribal land expands beyond its current confines, offering new avenues for self-determination and experimenting with different forms of government and citizenship. Finally, the turn towards Indigenous science fiction tackles digital environments to ask how memory, heritage and affiliation can be carried into Native people's future. Louise Erdrich, David Treuer and Gerald Vizenor outline imaginary geographies based in Northern Dakota and Minnesota that encompass many other places and tie them back to these areas. Reading contemporary Anishinaabe fiction as literary cartography thus reveals complex maps of interaction that connect reservation spaces with a much wider range of environments by both integrating and expanding upon Indigenous histories of mobility. Intricate networks emerge out of pathways, artwork, translation, crossings and imaginary spaces to suggest ways in which a more expansive Native space can be shared while revitalising Anishinaabe self-determination and sovereignty.

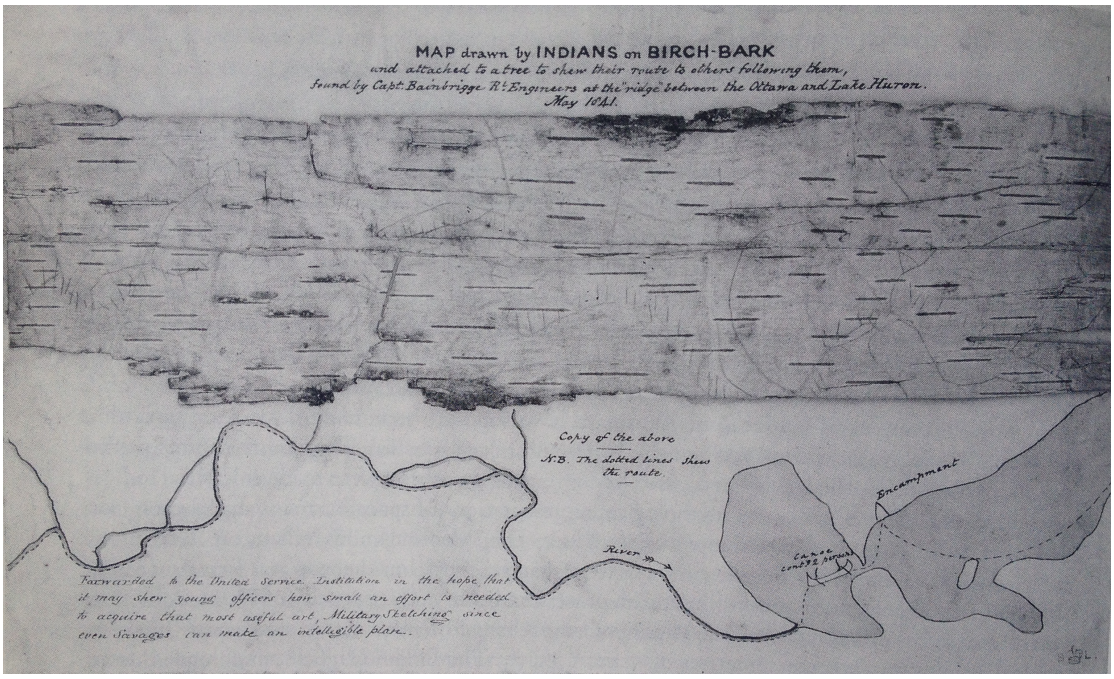
Appendix: Maps



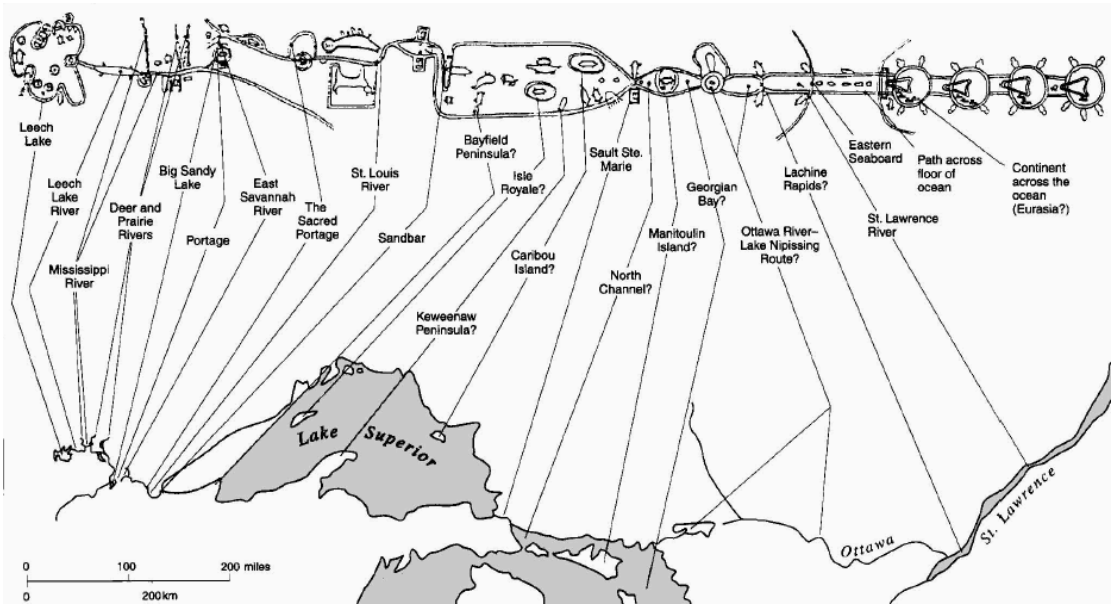
Map 1: "The Porcupine Year"



Map 2: "Pictographic message representing a voyage of Howling Wolf"



Map 3: "Possibly the oldest extant map on birchbark"



Map 5: "Geographical interpretation of Red Sky's birchbark migration scroll"



Map 4: "Another detail from Gero-schunu-wy-ha's map"

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