

Baring the Windigo's Teeth: The Fearsome Figure in Native American Narratives

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Abstract

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Whereas non-Native American fictional fearsome figures tend to produce anxiety from their resistance to categorization, their unpredictable movement, and their Otherness, many contemporary Native American writers re-imagine fearsome figures and monstrous systems as modeled after, and emergent from settler-colonial transgressions against Indigenous values and relationships: these behaviors spread to tribal people/s through incorporation or assimilation into the “body” of the fearsome figure. Such violations can be represented by, and better understood, through an exploration of the behavioral traits of the Algonquian figure of the Windigo, or *wétiko*, even when the text in question would not be classified as horror. In the Indigenous works of fiction that this dissertation explores, villainy is depicted as behavior that destroys balance, and disrupts the ability for life to reproduce itself without human mediation or technological intervention.

In this dissertation, I develop and apply “Windigo Theory”: an Indigenous literary approach to reading Indigenous fiction, especially intended to aid recognition and comprehension of cultural critiques represented by the fearsome figures. I draw especially from

four quarters: Jack D. Forbes' concept of colonialism as a manifestation of *wétiko* psychosis; ethnographical works that feature fearsome figures from the stories of North American tribal peoples; Indigenous philosophical worldviews; and the figures in contemporary Native American novels that also serve as the objects of analysis. To show how fearsome figures disrupt Indigenous values and relationships, there is emphasis on what the fearsome figures *do*, as opposed to what fearsome figures *are*. In other words, this approach is geared to follow motion and relationships, rather than to define or circumscribe. As part of this work, I also explore the radical reinscription of generic conventions by Native authors, and discuss how some features of contemporary Indigenous fiction are extensions of “traditional” pre-contact narratives.

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INTRODUCTION

The noun *windigo* [Ojibwa *wīntikō*, Cree *wīhtikōw*] refers to one of a class of anthropophagous monsters, “supernatural” from a non-Algonquian perspective, who exhibit grotesque physical and behavioral abnormalities and possess great spiritual and physical power. Either many or all windigos were once human beings, transformed, usually irreversibly, into their monstrous condition.¹

Sometimes it’s easy for any audience to recognize and disparage a character’s unrestrained consumption, and to thus recognize the insatiable character in a novel or film as villainous. Recognition of the antagonist is challenged for readers of Native American fiction, however, since Indigenous ways of knowing, what Indigenous peoples understand as extant, the values derived from that knowledge, and concepts about the fundamental nature of being and of the world (epistemologies, ontologies, axiologies, metaphysics), conflict with Western epistemologies, ontologies, axiologies and metaphysics. Therefore, it may be difficult for audiences from Western perspectives to recognize a villain as a villain in Native American literature, since without a perspective emergent from Indigenous worldviews, the relationships that are understood through Indigenous perspectives as *crucial*, may instead be understood as *optional*, or even superfluous. Characters, then, who disrupt vital Indigenous relationships are crafted by Native American authors to be interpreted as fearsome or threatening, but because of reader worldview, some readers of Native American fiction will fail to sense that protagonists face acute circumstances, and compelling threats. Since it’s clear to me (and many scholars of Native American literature) that a great deal of contemporary Native American fiction is meant to be resistant to colonialism in some way, the rhetorics embedded in these narratives may be ineffectual for readers who, because of worldview, cannot perceive the threats where they exist.

In the following chapters, I seek to address this disjunction. I develop and apply a theory for examining how Indigenous writers re-invent fearsome figures as a means to critique the epistemic, social, and environmental violence of colonialism, and how Indigenous texts describe strategies for fighting, reforming, or resisting fearsome figures. Scholars before me, and indeed,

countless Indigenous peoples (mainly from Algonquian peoples) have demonstrated how the *wétiko* or windigo figure of Algonquian oral narratives represents a vehicle for social criticism. My research draws on this intellectual heritage, and owes much to Jack D. Forbes (Renapé/Lenape), and other thinkers such as Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Jeff Berglund, who connect the cannibal figure to discursive and literary representations of the “primitive savage” in EuroAmerican literature, or the colonist in Indigenous literature, depending most often on the subject position of the writer. Tracing literary representations of what I call “fearsome figures” to see how their behavior correlates with that of windigos allows me to analyze the source of violence in American Indigenous texts. Thus, reading literature through critical Indigenous theory based on observation of the habits and actions of the fearsome figures reveals that the source of fear or anxiety is generally *not* the result of, nor is it often depicted as, monstrous hybridity, which is common in the popular (and historical) narratives of the West. Instead, Native American authors depict fearsomeness as derived from unrestrained consumption, and essentially, action that breaks apart inter-dependent relationships.

I apply this lens or methodology to brief readings of popular film and short stories, such as the 1958 horror/sci-fi film, *The Blob*, and Sherman Alexie’s short story, “What You Pawn I will Redeem.” I also use this theory to analyze the discourse around current events, such as the 2010 Seattle Police shooting of John T. Williams, the Nuu-chah-nulth woodcarver, and two texts that emerged in response to the shooting: Deborah Miranda’s poem, “For John,” and the John T. Williams Memorial Pole carved by his brother, Rick Williams. In addition, I apply this theory to a close reading of the characters and contexts of several other texts, including one of the first Indigenous sci-fi—slipstream novels, *The Dreams of Jesse Brown* by Joseph Bruchac (Abenaki); and the vampire novel, *The Night Wanderer* (Drew Hayden Taylor / Anishinaabe). As far as I know, there is little if any scholarly work that examines these last four texts, or the discourse surrounding the shooting of Mr. Williams. Aside from the lack of scholarly attention to these works, I’ve chosen to write about them because they allow me to demonstrate the flexibility of

the *wétiko* figure as critical Indigenous literary and social theory—an approach that for me, has developed over the past dozen-or-so years.

In 2003, I had the opportunity to read the novel *Solar Storms* (1995) by Chickasaw author Linda Hogan, as part of a linked environmental studies and literature course. Out of approximately 60 students, I was the only one in the class who identified as Native (I am Koniag Sugpiat, Dena'ina Athabascan and A'aninin), and the two instructors were not specialists in Native American literature. By their own admission, they were rather unfamiliar with Indigenous cultures, histories, experiences, narratives, and worldviews. Throughout the class discussions of the novel, I realized that my position to and my interpretation of the characters, relationships, and events depicted in the book were markedly different from those of my peers and instructors.

The images evoked by *Solar Storms* haunted me: holistic systems of balanced interrelationship were scarred and fragmented by sharp, voracious, gnawing teeth. Bodies, families, communities, places, rivers, forests, histories, discourses, medicine plants, bears, fish, deer – all were consumed by people who were animated by a spirit or energy that engorged itself on everything whole and beautiful, until only fragments or traces of a former life survived: shredded and scarred peoples, forests, four-leggeds, and memories remained. Rivers were corralled and reversed. Animated places where people had lived in balanced, interdependent relationships for thousands of years were depopulated, then inundated. I struggled to explain what I saw happening in the novel to my instructors, and I was rather unsuccessful. If memory serves me right, I wrote that the people, the animals, the families, the lands, the waters, the plants and the even the stories within the novel were portrayed as a whole circle—everything was interconnected and dependent on everything else. Colonialism's agents and systems, however, were depicted as ravenous sharp teeth that froze, chopped, gnawed, and consumed chunks out of this circle. All that remained were scattered fragments, unable to survive, separated from their relations in what used to be a circle. I finally had to draw a picture of what I

was seeing in my mind's eye, and once I did that, my instructor "got it," and asked why I hadn't been able to describe that image in my paper.

Much later, when teaching Native American literatures, I noticed that students who didn't share in an epistemology or ontology of interrelationality had a difficult time connecting with what's at stake for the protagonists who live in these stories. What had prompted a visceral reaction in me seemed to not phase many of my students. Threats to life-sustaining systems and processes didn't seem to register with some students as legitimate threats. Students posed questions like, "People move away from home all the time. What's the big deal? Why wouldn't a child be excited about traveling to far-away places for school?" Or, "Cattle are a more reliable source of food than elk, deer, or buffalo anyway. What's wrong with gaining a more dependable source of food?" Or, "That character's life was hard because her home was primitive and labor intensive. Why does she resent her beautiful new house with indoor plumbing and centralized heat?" In other words, students seemed to reduce the needs of the human to the individual, to the biological, to the consumer. Underpinning their statements were ideas like "homes are just dwellings, songs are just a form of entertainment, all religions serve the same purpose—who cares if there's a bit of a formal shift? After all, protagonists are *supposed* to adapt to new circumstances, right?" In other words, all of these things—homes, songs, mountains, stories, forests, rivers, other-than-human animals—were thought to be as independent as the individual, and as expendable as the apartment, river, or neighbor one moves away from when a new job presents itself across the country. All are thought to be discrete, inanimate *things*. My suggestion that these "things" might be relations implied an unfamiliar set of values. And when I suggested that human beings might have a responsibility to these entities, it seemed (to some of my students) to be an idea that was not only "foreign," idealistic, and primitive, but also, a burden.

During the period of westward expansion, Indigenous peoples were thought of by the colonizer as being "in the way of progress." "Indians" made it difficult for non-Natives to acquire

the goods that made life comfortable; likewise, today, whether it's an endangered species like the Spotted Owl, Canada's Boreal Forest, or rivers that run in an inconvenient path or direction, so much of life is "in the way" of continued human expansionism and consumerism. Not to put too fine a point on it, my students didn't interpret disruptions in life-sustaining systems or processes as life-threatening—as life-*ending*. Instead, the fictional figures who readers are supposed to understand as fearsome, became read as rational—as figures who provided some sort of reliability, who represented some sort of teleological progress. Along with that interpretation, the epistemological orientation of such readers meant also, that there were value-judgments passed on Indigenous protagonists. They were sometimes considered intractable, backwards, morally deficient, or lazy. It is occasionally shocking that this perspective—the same one that put the Canadian and U.S. Indian Boarding School system in motion, still echoes, fifty years after the schools' closures or reorganization. These experiences have led me to develop this extended work that might help lead students to a more accurate understanding of Native American texts (and the peoples they represent), and more importantly, I hope this work will encourage people to consider, and nurture, their own relationships in living systems.

Ever after these experiences of reading *Solar Storms* and beginning to teach Native American literature, the vision of voracious teeth that grew out of my reading of *Solar Storms* continued to stay with me through every critical reading of texts, politics, and culture. I could "see" the teeth dice and consume, sever and appropriate, dissect and swallow everything: land, bodies, words, communities, identities, and meaning. So, one day, early in my graduate career, I described the haunting image of voracious consumption to my partner, Shaawano Chad Uran, who said, "That sounds like windigo." Immediately, the stories made sense to me as a critical theory, and I've paid attention to this figure ever since. Shortly after I began to research and conceive of what I've called "windigo theory," I found that historian Jack D. Forbes had already published the book in 1992 that I had hoped to write. He called it *Columbus and Other*

Cannibals: The Wétiko Disease of Exploitation, Imperialism, and Terrorism, and in its pages, he argues that the evolution of the Wétiko, or Windigo figure from Algonquian oral narratives represents the “disease” of empire, terrorism, and exploitation of all kinds. Although my reading of his book is critical, Forbes’ work has profoundly influenced my understanding of the social mechanisms that cause the fragmentation of holism, and thus, it has helped me to shape this dissertation.

I discovered that in addition to Jack D. Forbes’ work, other scholars have written about the ways that the windigo or *wétiko* figure serves as a vehicle for critical Indigenous theory. For example, in Irene Vernon’s “‘We Were Those Who Walked out of Bullets and Hunger’: Representation of Trauma and Healing in *Solar Storms*,” and Vikki Visvis’ “Culturally Conceptualizing Trauma: The Windigo in Joseph Boyden’s *Three Day Road*,” both authors examine the utility of the windigo figure in fiction to represent what trauma theory calls “catastrophes” and “wounds” of Indigenous experience under colonialism as represented in Hogan’s and Boyden’s novels. In her article, “Strategic Abjection: Windigo Psychosis and the ‘Postindian’ Subject in Eden Robinson’s ‘Dogs of Winter,’” Cynthia Sugars argues that Robinson uses the concept of *wétikoism* to strategically deracialize the discourse of savagery, and, following Forbes, as a metaphor that critiques capitalism and colonialism. While these three articles relate to my extended work in terms of their focus on how Native American authors use the windigo figure as a means to critique colonialism, Christopher Schedler’s essay on “Wiindigoo Sovereignty and Native Transmotion in Gerald Vizenor’s *Bearheart*” is even more relevant to my work, especially in regard to how Vizenor uses the wiindigoo figure not only to critique the more familiar aspects of colonialism and consumerism, but also to “to characterize exclusion and assimilation models of sovereignty that lead to the consumption of self and ‘other,’ [and] to serve as a warning to those members of the tribal collective whose excessive self-identification, lack of vision, and binary view of the world target them as easy prey for such wiindigoo forms of sovereignty.”² Vizenor’s argument that Schedler describes is similar in aim

and argument to my second chapter of this dissertation, and while I didn't find Schedler's piece until long after I had written the essay that became that chapter, I'm heartened to know that my work will resonate with these scholars' observations. While each of them focus primarily on the analysis of a single work of fiction, the scope of this dissertation broadens beyond literary analysis. While I include two chapters on fictional works, I also include a chapter that seeks to provide the background for "how to recognize a windigo," a chapter that demonstrates the opposed roles of "movement" and "fixity" in theoretical and generic terms, and a chapter meant to provide a look at how Indigenous "movement" across physical boundaries are understood, policed, and resisted in real, concrete terms. Working across these genres, and what are usually circumscribed fields, allows me to look at a variety of narratives around fearsome figures from multiple vantage points. My motivation for this methodology began with my curiosity about what inspired fear in my Indigenous ancestors, what made the fearsome figures "fearsome," and especially, how ancestral (and now contemporary) narratives describe ways to defeat or disempower fearsome behaviors. I use critical Indigenous literary analysis and critical Indigenous cultural studies to develop and apply the practice of using a figure from Indigenous oral narratives as a method for analysis. I consider the "objects" of analysis to be anything *but* "objects." Instead, I view them as processes and expressions of relationships. This approach allows me to focus on the representation of Indigenous peoples in popular culture (whether produced by Native Americans or non-Natives), and to pay close attention to how these narratives describe strategies for resistance to *wétikoism*.

In my first chapter, "The Literary Fearsome Figure as Indigenous Social Critique," I discuss the extended works that theorize the role of anthropophagism in literature, including *Shape-shifting: Images of Native Americans in Recent Popular Fiction* by Andrew MacDonald, Gina MacDonald, and MaryAnn Sheridan, and Jeff Berglund's *Cannibal Fictions: American Explorations of Colonialism, Race, Gender and Sexuality*, in which he discusses the windigo figure in relation to several works of Native American fiction in the context of Forbes'

wétikoism. I follow with a discussion of Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's influential essay, "Monster Theory: Seven Theses" in order to show how I understand his theory's usefulness in relation to my own project. Then, I briefly discuss how various sources describe windigo, before exploring Forbes' work which frames *wétikoism* as a disease. Throughout, I weave in my understanding of the ways that Indigenous epistemologies, ontologies and axiologies shape the ways writers depict fearsome figures, and the way readers interpret them, so I follow my discussion of windigos with a deeper explication of the difference between *wétiko* cannibalism and ritual cannibalism, and finish with a substantial conversation about Indigenous worldviews.

In Chapter 2, "Fixity, Motion, and Fearsomeness," I offer a meditation on Indigenous motion and transformation-oriented understandings of reality as opposed to western concepts of structurally-opposed, boundaried categories. I show how these perspectives on the nature of existence, and their resultant value-systems determine, to a degree, what is considered fearsome. I discuss my experience with the behavior of slime molds, molten glass, and a short analysis of the 1958 film, *The Blob*, to question taxonomies and impermeable boundaries in favor of Indigenous experiential epistemology. Through tracing the anxieties derived from foiled rationalist categories and structuralist analyses of "blob"-like entities, I demonstrate the process of Indigenous ways of knowing our identities, our relationships, and our organizational strategies without bending to the pressure to define them. Structurally, the paper represents a resistance to established Western generic form. This chapter was inspired by Gerald Vizenor's writing on transmotion, and like many other scholars, I admire Vizenor for his attention to motion. Also like many other scholars, I find his writing to be resistant to quotation and even paraphrase. I also admire this feature of his writing, since its "form" resists the kind of co-optation that he critiques. Perhaps because motion cannot submit to deconstruction, his approach, then, also serves to resist the act of domination.

An interesting dynamic of the features of fearsomeness is the ways in which EuroWestern authors have historically constructed their fictional monsters in ways that map

onto Indigenous peoples. I gesture toward this discursive process in the chapter on “Fixity, Motion, and Fearsomeness,” and then, in Chapter 3, “The Usual and Accustomed Places of Indigenous Life and Death,” I show how this applies in real life, to real people, and how the categories that are policed are often the conceptual and physical boundaries placed on and around identities and physical space. To illustrate, I present an analysis of the discourse that emerged after the 2010 police-shooting of John T. Williams, an Indigenous woodcarver, to show how transgressions across EuroAmerican classificatory systems figure into EuroAmerican constructions of fearsomeness. In that Chapter, I also show how the literary activism of Indigenous authors and artists such as Sherman Alexie, Deborah Miranda, and Rick Williams—controversial EuroAmerican attempts to frame Indigenous peoples as “fearsome,” and critique the behaviors of colonial police power that correlate with *wétikoism*.

In Chapter 4, “Blood Suckers, Real and Imagined,” I shift into a close reading of the way that an Anishinaabe author “Indigenizes” a vampire figure. Drew Hayden Taylor’s *The Night Wanderer* makes use of the windigo figure to critique ontological and axiological conflicts between Indigenous and EuroWestern knowledge systems and values. This chapter develops an analysis of several instances of appropriation in the production of vampires and vampire stories, and compares the process of appropriation to *wétikoism* and the resultant internal struggle between Indigenous values and EuroWestern values. Through a close reading of several passages and attention to the relationships that are built and disrupted, I am also able to show in more detail how a reader’s worldview could shift the interpretation of an ostensible fearsome figure into the “protagonist” role, and likewise, it could shift an angst-filled, but ordinary teenager into the “at risk” population for contracting *wétikoism*.

My 5th Chapter, “The Aggregate Windigo in Joseph Bruchac’s *The Dreams of Jesse Brown*,” analyzes the ways that fearsome figures are constructed by Joseph Bruchac (Abenaki) in his 1978 slipstream / sci-fi novel, and how such figures are used to critique EuroAmerican / settler-colonial epistemic, ontological, and axiological praxes. Written during the height of the

Red Power Movement, Bruchac's book is a slim but complex volume, in which he experiments with form, time slippage, a variety of intertextual references, and the concept of vision/s as being either liberatory or as a necessary prelude to becoming the object of consumption. *The Dreams of Jesse Brown* imagines a post-apocalyptic North America in 1978, and is interconnected through the visions of the novel's characters with the events leading up to the "end" of the Indian Wars, which culminated with the murder of Sitting Bull on December 15, 1890 and the Wounded Knee Massacre, nineteen days later. The complexity of the novel requires that I put forth considerable effort to contextualize what were current events in 1978 and in the Plains region between 1868 and 1890. This is the longest chapter of the dissertation, since Bruchac's novel is a rich source for application of Forbes' concept of *wétikoism* as an interpretive lens.

Aside from the windigo being a topic of conversation between two characters in *The Night Wanderer*, none of the works I've set out to analyze in this dissertation are explicitly *about* windigos. That's an intentional choice on my part. Since the figure of the windigo represents transgressive behaviors in the worldviews that underpin many, if not most North American Indigenous literatures, the *actions* of fearsome figures in the novels correlate with the behaviors of windigos, though their *identity* might not. In choosing texts for analysis, then, I have avoided those that explicitly depict windigos so that my purpose would remain clear, and so that there would be little temptation to conflate the figures that appear in the novels or texts with my use of the windigo figure as a literary theory that can predict, illuminate, and trace fearsomeness in Native American fiction.

*

A Note on Terminology

While my extended discussion and description of "windigo" or *wétiko* will be found in Chapter 1, it will be helpful to know that I use the term "fearsome figure" instead of the word

“monster,” or “antagonist,” since what I intend to illuminate may or may not refer to an individual, but instead, these anxiety- or fear-inducing figures may be institutions, systems, or technologies. They may incorporate or be incorporated by human beings, and occasionally I do use the term to refer to individuals or “monsters.” In other instances they are discourses that create fearsome inscriptions upon minds, waters and lands.

I use a variety of terms to refer to various groupings and identities that fall under the legal term, “Indigenous peoples,” which refers to culturally distinct people groups who have a long-standing relationship to a particular geographic area – with “long-standing” often meaning “from time immemorial,” that is, thousands to tens of thousands of years. It is also a legal category that refers to culturally distinct groups that were/are subjected to colonization, with some degree of cultural and political separation from the mainstream culture and political system that has grown to surround or dominate them economically, politically, culturally, or geographically. Whenever possible, I endeavor to use a particular name of a tribe, nation or people. When that isn’t appropriate, or when I need to indicate a group of Indigenous peoples that is made up from diverse tribal backgrounds, I may use the term “Native American” or “American Indian,” or simply “Native.” I use the term “Alaska Native” to refer to Indigenous peoples of Alaska, unless I am able to use a more specific name (e.g. Aleut, Tlingit, Athabaskan, etc.) My use of the terms “Aboriginal” or “First Nations” will usually indicate that I’m writing about Indigenous peoples who are from the geographic region now called “Canada.” Further, there are numerous references in this dissertation to people of Algonquian heritage and their stories, since the majority of *wétiko* narratives come from these tribal peoples. This, too, is an umbrella term for a large linguistic group that shares much in terms of stories and worldview, if not culture. These peoples are indexed by my more specific references to Anishinaabe, Anishinabe, Anishinaube, Ojibwe, Ojibway, Ojibwa, Chippewa, Cree, Abenaki, Menominee, Blackfeet, Arapaho, Cheyenne, Powhatan Renapé, Lenape, and some of my own people—

A'aninin (a.k.a. Gros Ventre). All are Algonquian-speaking peoples (although speaking the language isn't a prerequisite for being "Algonquian").

I use the term "Western," "EuroWestern," "White," and "EuroAmerican," fully aware that these are cumbersome terms that suggest uniformity of worldview, position, and heritage that I *do not mean* to convey. I similarly struggle with terms like "the dominant culture," since I realize homogeneity amongst any group does not exist. However, I have yet to come up with a suitable alternative. What I reference with these terms are groups that share a widely dispersed, storied metaphysical orientation: the philosophical orientation that perpetuates the values of acquisition, competition for dominance, expansion, cooptation, and assimilation; the notions of Cartesian dualism, the idea of teleological "progress," and an organizing principle based on structural oppositions.

Chapter 1

The Literary Fearsome Figure as Indigenous Social Critique

The Weendigo was a giant Manitou in the form of a man or a woman, who towered five to eight times above the height of a tall man. But the Weendigo was a giant in height only; in girth and strength, it was not. Because it was afflicted with never-ending hunger and could never get enough to eat, it was always on the verge of starvation. The Weendigo was gaunt to the point of emaciation, its desiccated skin pulling tautly over its bones. With its bones pushing out against its skin, its complexion the ash gray of death, and its eyes pushed back deep into their sockets, the Weendigo looked like a gaunt skeleton recently disinterred from the grave. What lips it had were tattered and bloody from its constant chewing with jagged teeth.³

Whereas non-Native American fictional fearsome figures often produce anxiety from their resistance to categorization, their unpredictable movement, and their Otherness, many contemporary American Indian writers re-imagine monsters and monstrous systems as modeled after colonial figures and systems of dominance, like missionaries, explorers, military figures, educators, bankers, anthropologists, and technologies of surveillance and control, as well as the corruptive effect that they have on Native people. Their behavior and characterization are often based on familiar settler colonial beliefs and practices, and are generated by tracking the influence of colonial (Western) value systems on Native characters, or imagining the effects of colonial discourses and behavior on figures from traditional oral stories and myths. That is, in American Indian fiction, monstrosity often emerges from settler-colonial social and environmental transgressions against Indigenous values and relationships; their behaviors spread to tribal people/s through incorporation or assimilation into the body of the fearsome figure. Such violations can be represented by, and better understood, through an exploration of the behavioral traits of the Algonquian figure of the Windigo. In the Indigenous works of fiction that this dissertation explores, villainy is depicted as that which destroys balance, especially that which disrupts the ability for life to reproduce itself without human mediation or technological intervention.

My observations and research regarding the use of the windigo as a critical Indigenous theory has been augmented by the work of many scholars and storytellers who have come before me. Thus, I begin this chapter with a review of work from several scholars who have either made similar claims, or who have developed theories from which I both draw on and diverge from. Most influential of these scholars is the late Jack D. Forbes, whose *Columbus and Other Cannibals: The Wétiko Disease of Exploitation, Imperialism, and Terrorism*, who, as mentioned in my Introduction, has had a profound influence on the way that I have learned to analyze literature and social dynamics. Although the cultural criticism that Forbes develops in his book isn't literary theory, his work has a foundational role for the critical Indigenous literary theory that I develop and apply in this dissertation. In order to provide my readers with the necessary background to follow along as I discuss Forbes and develop my argument in this work, I also describe the behaviors of the ice-cannibal figure from North American Indigenous oral narratives known as *wétiko*, windigo, and a variety of other names. This then leads me to provide the reader with a way to discern the difference between ritual cannibalism and *wétikoism*, as well as a fairly extended discussion of Indigenous worldviews, since, I argue, conflict between worldviews is the site at which fearsome figures emerge in Indigenous literatures.

Related Theories and Conversations

Andrew MacDonald, Gina MacDonald, and MaryAnn Sheridan, authors of *Shapeshifting: Images of Native Americans in Recent Popular Fiction*, offer a survey of literary representations of American Indians in both Native and non-Native American genre fiction. They are critical of literature that romanticizes and demonizes American Indians and rightly note that “Europeans have shaped, changed, and distorted the indigenous people [in literary representations] to serve white people’s needs.”⁴ Their work, however, claims to describe “how representative Native Americans currently view themselves through the prism of their own literature,” though the authors state that they do not claim that these “self-portraits [are]

definitive or comprehensive.”⁵ Indeed, the authors of *Shape-shifting* claim that the worldview or “perspective of reality”⁶ of a reader plays a deterministic role in how a reader will make meaning out of a particular story, and I agree with this claim. However, throughout the book, the authors seem to conflate “worldview,” or “perception of reality” with “culture.” Certainly traces of worldviews can be discerned through cultural practices and material cultures, but worldviews and cultures are not one and the same.

Shape-shifting seems to express commitment to cultural relativism and pluralism—an ethic that potentially protects (to a degree) against easy replication of stereotypes and misinformation. While I appreciate their stated commitment, their text is troubled with missteps, like the use of past-tense and historicizing language in reference to Indigenous peoples and practice, and also, because the authors conflate epistemology with culture. The latter problem makes some chapters and sections read as voyeuristic cultural tourism, riddled with questionable, un-cited statements that at times border on defamatory.⁷ Nevertheless, some of their observations resonate with mine. To wit, in a section on horror, they write that “what is sacred for one culture is the stuff of Halloween nightmares for the other,”⁸ and they give a number of examples to support this claim from both Native and non-Native fiction. Their approach is complicated, however, since at least some of the readers of the MacDonald, MacDonald and Sheridan text would certainly have a Western ontological and axiological orientation. That is, even though MacDonald, MacDonald and Sheridan seem to attempt equanimity as they describe the effect of cultural knowledge or cultural ignorance on the interpretation of a Choctaw bone-picking ceremony in LeAnne Howe’s “Danse d’Amour, Danse de Mort,” their contextualization of the ceremony before presenting the scene from Howe’s text is so inadequate that I suspect they hope their readers are repulsed by the bone-picking ceremony, to substantiate their argument.⁹ The ceremony depicted by Howe’s short story elicits a horrified reaction not only from the fictional 18th Century French Jesuits who witness the ceremony, but as Macdonald, Macdonald and Sheridan point out, the scene would elicit a

similar revulsion from readers who do not share some awareness of Choctaw social conventions and belief systems (and perhaps even contemporary Choctaw people who are no longer familiar with, or accepting of, their traditions). However, if the reader (of Howe's book) is not prepared to accept ideas about death, bodies of the dead, mourning and burial rites that conflict dramatically with Eurowestern ones, reader reaction may be very like the "Jesuits' reactions to this sacred ceremony,"—reactions that "demonstrate [Jesuit] weakness, their bad manners, and their lack of understanding" in the opinion of the Choctaw characters.¹⁰ In the end, though, Macdonald, Macdonald and Sheridan describe details from Howe's short story that they admit, "[seem] like a gory tale of horror meant to shock the senses and evoke nightmares," and yet, they do not attempt to correct the aforementioned "lack of understanding" for their *own* readers. Missteps notwithstanding, it is also my contention that recognition of beauty, value, or protagonism as such, and horror or antagonism as such, depends upon the epistemic, ontologic, and axiologic orientation of the reader. Since epistemologies and ontologies are in part ideological, readers may not always be aware of their own orientations, so much of my effort in this dissertation is devoted to describing both Western and Indigenous epistemologies, ontologies, and axiologies.

In *Cannibal Fictions*, Jeff Berglund traces the appearance, development and transformations of the term "cannibal" and its meanings in European and American discourse. *Canibale*, first coined by Columbus to signify the Carib peoples, became synonymous with anthropophagy, and its usage became a flexible tool that demonized peoples who were objects of European imperialism, and especially Indigenous peoples of the Western hemisphere whenever White commercial interests (such as the slave-trade) required some form of dehumanization in the service of political or moral expedience. Berglund demonstrates that cannibal discourse was and is used as a means toward classification and dominance over Indigenous Others, and as a means to transform the meaning of difference based on race, sex, gender, class and culture *into* dehumanized Indigenous Others.

Cannibal Fictions is divided into two parts: the colonial and post-colonial. The first section focuses on imperialist constructs of the figure of the cannibal through eighteenth and nineteenth century exhibition and literature, and describes how the resultant material culture substantiated expropriation and incorporation (i.e. cannibalism) of Indigenous lives and lands into colonial bodies. The second “post-colonial” section of the book tracks the cannibal figure of American literature into the domestic sphere, then briefly describes how Jack D. Forbes’ *Columbus and Other Cannibals* “outlines in broad thematic strokes what might be characterized as the heart of imaginative works by four different Native American writers,”¹¹ before launching into an examination of the contemporary literary use of the cannibal figure by the Native American fiction writers Gerald Vizenor, Anna Lee Walters, Leslie Marmon Silko, and Sherman Alexie. Berglund finds that Native American authors have been

...wrestling like never before with the construction of the cannibal Other as well as the national narratives of conquest, pacification, and patriotic acquiescence. In different fashion, each of these writers/artists demonstrates that European/American policies are truly cannibalistic and have laid the seeds of their own destruction.¹²

The presence of analogous cannibals as representative of EuroAmerican practices, beliefs, systems and policies in Indigenous fiction, especially Native North American fiction, was what initially led to my own project. These figures are not anomalous throughout recorded Native American discourse, however,¹³ and indeed, their noticeable prominence in contemporary Native American fiction extends the literary life of some traditional figures in Indigenous oral stories. Berglund sees the same trend, but restricts it to contemporary works, as he explains “[t]he sheer number of Native writers addressing this topic marks a historical and cultural milestone in terms of political and creative expression,”¹⁴ and while he states that these works “must be understood within the broad matrix of cannibal fictions that [he has] isolated as racial practices in the United States,”¹⁵ he does not connect the contemporary cannibal figures to the not-so-contemporary oral (e.g. ethnographical) archive. Even though my aim is not to fill the

historical gap that Berglund leaves in his otherwise careful and useful genealogical project, Berglund's "matrix" is but one way to contextualize Native North American writers' use of the cannibal figure as resistance. My project instead locates the emergence of such figures in Indigenous ontologies, axiologies, and thus, oral narratives. That is, since the practice of demonizing Others through accusations of anthropophagy is an ancient and global discursive phenomenon even within the western hemisphere,¹⁶ my project differs from Berglund's analysis of Native American fiction in that I focus not so much on the politics of the term "cannibal" and its implications, but instead direct my attention to the ways Native American writers describe the process of becoming a "cannibal" or *wétiko* in relation to Indigenous animism, concepts of time and value, as well as the *outcome* of the indulged *wétiko* appetite.

In Jeffery Jerome Cohen's edited volume, *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*, his chapter "Monster Culture (Seven Theses)" presents a method of reading cultures from the monsters they engender. I will summarize some of these theses, as they will come up later in this larger work; indeed, they will help frame how readers, depending on their cultural orientation, may recognize and interpret protagonism and antagonism in Native American literatures. It is worth noting, though, that Cohen's project of "Reading cultures from the monsters they engender" is also a similar, though not identical undertaking to mine, though my aim is not to read or interpret Native American cultures. Instead, I endeavor to explain how the fearsome figures—or that which produces anxiety and fear in literary works by Native North Americans—represent axiological, epistemological and ontological crises that arise when animist and non-animist (western) worldviews and praxes collide.

Cohen's first thesis refers to temporality, in that the monster is "an embodiment of a certain cultural moment,"¹⁷ and "exists only to be read . . . [as it] signifies something other than itself: it is always a displacement, always inhabits the gap between the time of upheaval that created it and the moment into which it is received, to be born again." He means "*Zeitgeist*,"¹⁸ as specified in his endnotes, or, "the crossroads that is a point in a *movement* toward an uncertain

elsewhere.” In other words, the fearsome spirit or figure does not just emerge at the point where all paths intersect; it is that point—or rather, it is the “place” where “temporal boundaries” bleed into one another—where pasts and futures infiltrate the present. This is an important feature of monstrosity from a western ontological orientation that is usually absent in Indigenous renderings of fearsome figures. Indeed, such temporal blurring in Indigenous narratives, from and Indigenous worldview (in which time is always relative or relational), is more often a source of strength for Indigenous protagonists—a strength that is often viewed as a threat, or even monstrous, from western characters’ perspectives. That is, disruption of linearity, directionality, and an obscured sense of where the path goes, so-to-speak, evokes anxiety in some readers when their ontological and axiological orientation is grounded in the concept of universal, unilinear progress. Such readers can become disoriented by Indigenous non-linear time in a narrative’s schemata. Perhaps, then, such features of Native North American literary techniques could be perceived as fearsome even without any representations of monsters at all.

Thesis 2 in Cohen’s list should resonate with anyone familiar with familiar fearsome figures such as vampires, ghosts, Windigos, monsters from kitschy cult films like *The Blob*, or even the “savage” of 18th and 19th Century American literature: “the monster itself turns immaterial and vanishes, to reappear someplace else,”¹⁹ and that reappearance is “read against contemporary social movements, or a specific, determining event.”²⁰ In EuroAmerican discourses, these figures represent a kind of categorical disruption that causes anxiety or fear; the threat emerges from the blur between corporeality and intangible energies.²¹ Again, this fear emerges from the internalization of western positivist ontology. What is blurred are the metaphorical fences at the borders of what is “material” and “immaterial.” Boundaries around “real” and “unreal” are the sure security of structuralist ontologies, and include a variety of comfortable organizing taxonomies, like genre and identity, for example. When frozen grids around rationalized spaces or beings melt or fail to hold, coherence of Western epistemologies, ontologies, and indeed, cosmologies, break down, and people, to be frank, freak out. (“Space,”

here, refers to the stuff contained by the delimitation, such as pathogen, speciation, nationality, normality, the individual, or even death).

Cohen's third thesis is thus related to the second, and is entitled, "The Monster Is the Harbinger of Category Crisis."²² He explains that

. . . this refusal to participate in the classificatory "order of things" is true of monsters generally: they are disturbing hybrids whose externally incoherent bodies resist attempts to include them in any systematic structuration. And so the monster is dangerous, a form suspended between forms that threatens to smash distinctions.²³

That is, reactionary anxieties emerge when rationalized structures are perceived to be violated. Border-crossings, or organisms that defy taxonomical and behavioral organization (e.g. "the blob," spiritual and scientific "heretics," zombies, miscegenated Indigenous people, "illegal" immigrants, or mutations of any kind), can catalyze enough anxiety in popular culture to serve as the raw material for the production of monsters.

Indeed, the construction of "difference" in Native and non-Native texts are where we can find critiques of colonial powers, as well as critiques of Indigenous peoples of the Americas in both fiction and lived experience. Further, the "difference" created through the blurring of rational hermeneutics leads to Cohen's fourth thesis: "[monsters are] difference made flesh." That is, "[a]ny kind of alterity can be inscribed across (constructed through) the monstrous body, but for the most part monstrous difference tends to be cultural, political, racial, economic, sexual,"²⁴ and "threatens to destroy not just individual members of a society, but the very cultural apparatus through which individuality is constituted and allowed."²⁵ EuroAmericans are the philosophical heirs of a kind of individualism constructed by ideas built on the Aristotelean "good life," developed through Protestantism, celebrated by frontierism, entrenched by the Enlightenment, and the concepts of (post)modernity. These movements work together to form an ideopisteme with an axiological orientation that concretizes individualism (and the stratifying hierarchies that maintain it) as a cherished moral imperative. Threats to these

systems are threats to the individual (from a Eurowestern perspective), and anxiety around this kind of threat becomes particularly significant if we notice that this kind of monstrosity is representative of conflict between social groups.

My discussion of Cohen's fourth thesis needs more attention than the previous three theses, since a related anxiety often contributes to the construction of fearsome figures in Native American literature as well. Between the Native and non-Native positions, there is an important difference, however. That is, when Native American authors represent EuroAmerican colonists as fearsome figures, such figures are perceived as a threat because they aim to destroy integrally animist Indigenous relational institutions—the inter-relationships that are necessary for life to sustain itself. The resultant fearsome figures are fearsome because of what they *do*: they disrupt relationships, and thus, all of life (even their own lives, which is why they are also often described by Native characters as “crazy”). Furthermore, what is perceived as threatened is not a bounded category, but rather, as in Cohen's third thesis, this “difference made flesh” is representative of epistemological, ontological, and axiological difference rather than “alterity.” While some fearsome figures depicted by Native American authors bear Caucasian phenotypes, and while these physical features are portrayed as fearsome or anxiety-producing, the same authors just as often depict fearsome figures as having Native identities and phenotypes. What I mean to clarify is that Native American peoples do indeed create categories like “self” and “other,” but as categories, they are not *static*. Further, the fearsomeness of the “other” in these cases is derived from epistemological, ontological, and axiological clashes rather than alterity, since alterity is difficult to locate in centers and margins when balance is the shared value in a society (as opposed to societies that aim toward “progress.”) Indeed, the protagonists in Native American fiction often bear features that are frequently associated with “alterity” in western culture. In other words, “difference,” or “the unknown,” is not inherently fearsome from Native American epistemological and ontological perspectives.

On the other hand, Native Americans have historically been represented by EuroAmerican authors as fearsome because their very Indigeneity and humanity threatens the legitimacy of colonial conquest. This European, and then EuroAmerican anxiety, has led to countless depictions of Native Americans as monstrous in EuroAmerican literature. But from this perspective, Native Americans have been depicted as monstrous not because of what we do, but because of *where* and *what we are*: we are connected to place—that is, we have stood “in the way of progress,” as defined by the west. As animists, we have been considered primitive or barbarian, criminal, heathen, and thus, monstrous. Indeed, Indigenous peoples of the Americas have historically been represented as *not human*—a belief that has its roots in the famed debate between Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda and Bartolomé de las Casas at Valladolid in 1550.²⁶ (In Chapters 2 and 3, I will compare examples of fearsomeness as constructed, depicted, and interpreted from both EuroAmerican/rationalist and Indigenous/animist positions.)

Monstrous traits described in Cohen’s fifth thesis “[prevent] mobility (intellectual, geographic, or sexual), [and] [delimit] the social spaces through which private bodies may move. To step outside this official geography is to risk attack by some monstrous border patrol or (worse) to become monstrous oneself,”²⁷ and are fearsome traits that are also recognizable in the works I will focus my attention on in a later chapter—particularly Chapters 2, 3, and 5. Called by Cohen the “monster of prohibition,” they “[exist] to demarcate the bonds that hold together that system of relations we call culture, to call horrid attention to the borders that cannot—*must* not—be crossed.”²⁸ This is the monster that punishes incest, miscegenation, or national borders, and at the same time, “arises to enforce the laws of exogamy,” since it is “transgressive, too sexual, perversely erotic, a lawbreaker; and so the monster and all that it embodies must be exiled or destroyed.”²⁹ Although miscegenation only minimally figures into the generation of some of the monsters in the Indigenous fiction I examine, the anxiety produced by that miscegenation is an artifact of colonialism. Other instances of miscegenation in Native American novels are sometimes sites of possibility and occasionally, liberation. Of

course, monsters “ask us to reevaluate our cultural assumptions about race, gender, sexuality, our perception of difference, our tolerance toward its expression. They ask us why we have created them,”³⁰ and I seek to explore answers to this question in relation to the fearsome figures appearing in some North American Indigenous fiction.

Cohen backs away from the “compulsion to historical specificity and the insistence that all knowledge (and hence all cartographies of that knowledge) is local.”³¹ While I’m not sure if Valentine Cunningham, the author of the influential *Reading After Theory* influenced Cohen, Cohen writes that, “we live in an age that has rightly given up on Unified Theory, an age when we realize that history . . . is composed of a multitude of fragments, rather than smooth epistemological wholes,” yet the fragments he speaks of come together in Western grand narratives in ways that seem to dissolve and consume Indigenous epistemologies, as well as the contextualizing power of Indigenous relationships to place, time, and indeed, all of existence. From my perspective, some historical, epistemic, and cultural context of Indigenous peoples’ lives, literature, and theory are necessary for the reading of texts that represent Indigenous peoples, Indigenous imaginaries, or even the *simulation* of the real (*indian*), indeed, even of their absence (as Jane Tompkins notes in *West of Everything*).³² Doing away with these factors would result in gross misinterpretations, not just of the fearsome figures in Indigenous texts, but also of the peoples all of these texts purport to represent, the cultures of said people, and indeed the humanity of the people who produce the texts. Admittedly, walking the path of “providing context” brings one dangerously close to the hubris or fiction of Western authority over colonized Others, and closer to the *manifest manners* used to ensure the perpetuation of dominance, since context of a place and moment (other than a solipsistic *here and now*), is never reproducible, let alone entirely knowable. The goal, instead, is to provide enough historical, cultural, and epistemic information to open up *possibilities* for interpretation that aren’t provided by the West’s grand narratives or cultural epistemic optics (including Western epistemes, Christianity, the Enlightenment and modernity), and that allow for what Gerald

Vizenor, in his description of “trickster hermeneutics,” describes as the “interpretation of simulations in the literature of survivance, the ironies of descent and racialism, transmutation, third gender; and themes of transformation in oral tribal stories and written narratives.”³³ Indeed, Vizenor’s devotion to “the brush of natural reason” in tribal stories—a term that correlates with Indigenous epistemological and ontological orientations—and his identification of postindian “characters that liberate the mind and never reach a closure in stories,” generates an interpretive approach that he calls “trickster hermeneutics.” I attempt to engage in “trickster hermeneutics in this dissertation, since my interpretation, at times, shows how Native stories disrupts structural oppositions and “closure.”

Even though Cohen rightly notes the slippery nature of historical “fragments” that make up the narrative whole, and even though I agree that the grand narratives of history (especially Western versions) don’t hold up, his assertion that there are no “smooth epistemological wholes” does not acknowledge that the oppressive dominance of Western episteme(s) are *smooth enough* to be hegemonic, and vehicles of dominance through institutions whose practices continue to dominate even when individuals within such institutions are aware that grand narratives subtend them.³⁴ Granted, Cohen’s abandonment of what he calls a “theory of teratology” (of monsters) and the production of “cartographies of knowledge,” could be a form of resistance to taxonomic domination. I, too, avoid a Linnaean-style anthropological categorization of myths and the doubly exoticized figures of so-called “primitive” cultures. But an Indigenous cultural and literary critique (at least the one coming from *me*) necessitates the inclusion of *some* historical, geographic, and social contextual fragments, so that through Indigenous interventions, the disruption of grand teleological narratives and cohorts will be preserved. Such works critique the notion of humankind’s supposed unilineal evolution and the ever-increasing domination of all things as being a necessary path toward, and the outcome of, “civilization.” The work in this dissertation aims to underscore, or make explicit such critiques.

While some of Cohen's ideas about monsters will prove useful to readers, so that they may understand the representational and critical role of fearsome figures in the North American Indigenous literatures that I read in later chapters, I do not focus on monsters *per se*. As mentioned in the Introduction, "fearsome figure" as I use the term, may or may not refer to an individual at all. Some of the figures are systems or technologies—sometimes designed or implemented by groups that include human beings; in other instances they can be individuals who have become incorporated into a monstrous system, and sometimes, they are discourses that create fearsome inscriptions upon minds, waters and lands. In some instances, however, they are a re-vision of monsters.

Like Jeff Berglund's *Cannibal Fiction*, and Deborah Root's *Cannibal Culture: Art, Appropriation, & the Commodification of Difference* (1996), cannibalism as a metaphor for cultural dis-ease has purchase in the most well-known and influential work of historian Jack D. Forbes (Powhatan Renápe/Delaware Lenápe—both are Algonquian peoples). His *Columbus and Other Cannibals, The Wétiko Disease of Exploitation, Imperialism, and Terrorism*, was first published in 1978, then revised for republication in 2008 with an additional chapter. In it, Forbes draws his Indigenous sociocultural criticism based on the monster of Algonquian peoples' oral traditions known by many names, including Windigo, or *Wétiko*. Forbes demonstrates how the ravenous being is an apt analogue for a disease that afflicts people who inherit and incorporate exploitative epistemology, ontology, and axiology of the West, and as a result of that worldview, cannot help but become *wétiko* (in most cases). *Columbus and Other Cannibals* does not model or describe literary theory *per se*, but it does lend itself to the development of a way to read fearsome figures in literary works by Indigenous peoples. The cultural criticism in its pages not only influence my interpretation of contemporary social dynamics, but it informs my approach to understanding cultural criticism in Indigenous narratives. Indeed, Forbes' description of *wétikoism* models a way to develop critical Indigenous theory that's useful for understanding a multitude of contemporary circumstances and

relationships. This is exciting because the theory itself is already present in many North American Indigenous oral traditions and narratives, and therefore, is an example of an Indigenous philosophical, interpretive, literary heritage that precedes Continental philosophy and literary theory in this hemisphere.

Windigo as a Fearsome Figure

Before I further discuss Forbes' *Columbus and Other Cannibals*, it will be helpful to begin with a brief introduction to windigos or *wétikos*. Etymologically derived from the Cree *windigo* or the Powhatan *wintiko*, the *wétiko* refers to a person or spirit who terrorizes other creatures through deception, confusion, isolation, and especially, through insatiable anthropophagy. Some of the names for the entity known by Algonquian peoples are *Windigo*, *wétiko*, *chenoo*, *weendigo*, *wiindigoo*, *atoosh*, *wittigo*, *wendigo*, and a host of other phonetic, semantic and lexical permutations. Ever hungry, the creature is “a complex, voracious spirit-being who, they say, has wandered the subarctic forests and icy swamplands . . . throughout time [and is a] conspirator with starvation.”³⁵ Through tracing the etymology of the many Algonquian words that refer to the “cannibal monster,” these words are sometimes also a cognate for “owl” in their respective languages, (which will become significant for my reading of Drew Hayden Taylor's novel, *The Night Wanderer*, in Chapter 4). The frequency and distribution of cognates for the windigo figure “both in Cree and Ojibwa and in languages of the Eastern Algonquian subgroup [. . .] indicate, in the absence of evidence for borrowing, that [the idea of, and the words for] 'cannibal monster' [are] reconstructible for the prehistoric period.”³⁶ In other words, the vast linguistic distribution of the cognates for “cannibal monster” (and the stories that accompany the names), show that the stories about windigo predate the immigration of Europeans to the Western Hemisphere that began in earnest after 1492. Further, similar stories about monsters that behave identically to windigos exist in the narrative traditions of many people groups across the continent, even beyond Algonquian groups.³⁷ Human beings can “go windigo,” or become possessed by a windigo spirit in such a way that the spirit controls the

person's behavior. The windigo gains entry to the person either through the machinations of a sorcerer (who is ostensibly controlled by a windigo spirit),³⁸ through isolation and starvation in the wintry north, through ingestion of human flesh, or through the person's disrespect for the animals and environment that sustain the people.³⁹ In Cree and other Algonquian stories, people can stumble into these vulnerable positions by "unbalancing . . . the 'old agreement[s]'" through "insulting one's *Mistabeo*," or one's "attending spirit" which are "largely benevolent in nature, [and] with whom each person maintains a relationship."⁴⁰ Some elders speak of "bad conjurers,' who fragment or distort this relationship"⁴¹ between an individual and their *Mistabeo*, with disastrous imbalance and consequences that disrupt all relationships for the sufferer's community. Indeed, it is often imbalance and disrespect for interdependency that presages the appearance of a windigo spirit, who then attempts to further disrupt harmonious balance in families and communities—including environments.

Anthony Wayne Wonderly offers a helpful analysis of fifty oral windigo stories told by a variety of Cree, Ojibwe, and other Algonquian peoples. Ironically, (given my critique of taxonomies), he offers a classificatory system for windigo stories:

At a higher order of generalization, the story types are classifiable into three larger categories. In the first, mythical heroes or godlike protagonists oppose powerful mythical giants. Unfettered by the exigencies of reality, the tales of Category One (Windigos in Narrative Space) make no allusion to quotidian circumstance or specific place. In the second (Category Two, Windigos in a World of Spiritual Power), a human gifted with spiritual power usually assumes windigo form, most frequently to do battle with a malevolent windigo invader. In the third (Category Three, Windigos in a Human World), the cannibal monsters are humanlike predators inhabiting the human world. Whether or not they are giants, these windigos are capable of living among, being mistaken for, and even intermarrying with Algonquian folk. In their icy hearts, however, their sole interest is to secure human prey.⁴²

Of course, there are windigo stories that fall outside of these categories, and it appears that contemporary Native American authors use a variety of windigos as inspiration for the fearsome figures in their fiction. Cannibal monsters that behave similarly to windigo (and yet are not exactly the same as windigos) are found in many North American Indigenous narratives.

Wonderly asserts that

The “mythical windigo” is not limited to Cree/Chippewa/Ojibwa peoples who employ the word *windigo*, and, as Fogelson (1980) observed, a similar or cognate cannibal monster is not confined to the Algonquian-speaking world. Indeed, had anthropologists begun their windigo studies with an examination of oral narrative, it is difficult to imagine they would have been strongly committed to the idea of cultural exclusiveness.⁴³

These windigo-like entities continue to appear in contemporary Native American literature, but the one that correlates most strongly with one of Forbes’ definitions of the *wétiko* is a corporate or conglomerate entity that consumes everything it can, making its prey become part of the *wétiko*, contributing to the size and forms the *wétiko* or windigo can take.

When a person goes transforms into a windigo, they may continue to appear to be human, although their thoughts and behaviors change. That is, even though they may or may not develop cannibalistic tendencies, they do become murderous, and often begin to perceive other human beings as if they are typical food animals of the boreal or tundra, like ptarmigan, moose, or beaver.⁴⁴ In other words, the windigo’s perception is “off”: food animals are not recognized as “food,” but humans *are*. Humans thus become slaughterable and consumable in the perception of the human-gone-windigo.

According to the one hundred and fifty Swampy Cree elders who talked to folklorist Norman A. Howard about windigos in the 1970s, the windigo spirit is also a “wandering giant with a heart made of ice who preys on Indian people,” and who is so frightful that given an encounter with the spirit, a person would be so overtaken by fear and disorientation that their heart would stop.⁴⁵ Indeed, windigo’s association with the harshness of northern winters adds to

their terrifying and disorienting effect. Occasionally, “Windigo appears as an ‘ice skeleton’,” or has a “huge, gaping [mouth] totally devoid of lips, [is] capable of exploding trees with hysterical [sic] exhalations, and can swim across glacial lakes in seconds.”⁴⁶ Sometimes bodies of water or terrestrial features like sink-holes can behave as a windigo, in that they are described as “swallowing” places that people fall into.⁴⁷ Other names for Windigo (the Manitou, or spirit) translate to English as “He-who-lives-alone,” or “Hermit Windigo,” and it is said that sometimes “[i]gnomious sorcerers intent on disrupting Cree culture are known occasionally to isolate a person” until that person is overwhelmed by a “hunger for people,” at which time they transform into a windigo, complete with a heart of ice.⁴⁸ Windigos can be cured (or killed), through a variety means, including melting their icy heart.⁴⁹ The stories in Norman’s study mostly end with the melting of a windigo’s heart, which “reestablishes . . . the equilibrium of the threatened Cree village as opposed to the chaos and starvation caused by the Windigo.”⁵⁰ In other words, the windigo’s acts cause disequilibrium, or imbalance. This is not just because humans are their food: it’s because they will continue eating and eating until nobody from a village is left. The point is, Indigenous peoples have always interacted with predators in their environment: wolves, bears, and mountain lions, for example. Individuals have lost their lives to such mammals, and humans in turn become predators as well. But the peoples (as groups and individuals) have not, as a rule, considered these beings to be particularly fearsome, because such mammalian predators typically do not have a problem with greed or acquisitiveness. They do not kill and consume prey to the point of breaking apart ecosystems, cultures, or interconnected relationships that are necessary for life to maintain itself. They do not cause extinctions. This distinction is important to note: the practice of cannibalism, or more accurately, anthropophagia, is not inherently fearsome from an Indigenous ontological and axiological perspective. Instead, what is fearsome is unrepressed greed because it motivates actions that ultimately fracture and consume life-sustaining systems. Elucidation of such

fearsomeness is the focus of Jack D. Forbes' cultural criticism in *Columbus and Other Cannibals: the Wétiko Disease of Exploitation, Imperialism and Terrorism*.

Forbes on the Evolution of Wétikoism as a Cultural Disease

The title of Forbes' book and the development of his analysis clearly indicates that Forbes views *wétikoism* as a human pathogen—an infection that humans can contract and spread. I therefore use similar medical terminology in my discussion of *wétikoism*, in order to accurately represent the extended metaphor Forbes uses in his cultural criticism. Additionally, Forbes claims that “*imperialism and exploitation are forms of cannibalism and, in fact, are precisely those forms of cannibalism which are most diabolical or evil.*”⁵¹ (Italics original). His use of the word “most” in the previous sentence unfortunately infers a hierarchy of “evil,” or “wicked,” where some “evil” or “wicked” acts are worse than others. To affix the term “evil” onto a being, however, reifies the structural oppositions that I interrogate in this dissertation, since such hierarchical constructs do not seem to underpin Algonkian worldviews until after contact with missionaries. Basil Johnston, the Anishinaabe storyteller, scholar, and cultural storehouse seems to support my skepticism regarding the use of the term “evil” to describe *wétiko*, since he writes, “though Weendigo was fearsome and visited punishment upon those committing excesses, he nevertheless conferred rewards upon the moderate. He was excess who encouraged moderation.”⁵² Despite this assertion, the word “evil” is often used to describe the being; to avoid replication of a hierarchical order of “evil,” I prefer to use the term “fearsome” instead. That is, in relation to Forbes' assertion, I prefer to reject the implication that “evil” or “wickedness” is open to hierarchical stratification. Instead, I understand his phrase, “*most diabolical or evil,*” in terms of virulence—how fast the *wétiko* disease spreads, the reach of its destructive power, and its form. These three depend in part upon the host, the context of how the host caught the “disease,” the conditions and environment wherein the *wétiko* operates, and its pervasiveness, insidiousness or repulsiveness. That is, as a host, a single individual who suffers from *wétikoism* increases their power to consume as they incorporate other individuals

into their consumptive goals. In Forbes' view, corporate personhood, nation-state governments, the corporate "body" of the Church, and similar groupings are all examples: such organizations would be all at once symptoms, manifestations, and vectors of *wétikoism*, since these aggregate bodies incorporate the individual wills and efforts of the individual humans who make up the "body," which becomes a "giant" with an even bigger appetite, reach, virulence, and the power to create imbalance in the world.

If indeed the cannibalism of *wétikoism* is the "*consuming the life of another for one's own private purpose and profit*," the *wétiko* figures of Forbes' work do not always engage in anthropophagia. While they indeed consume lives for their own purpose or profit, the act of "eating" is a metaphor for destruction of relationships through different kinds of consumption. The *wétiko* consumes life as fuel for its body.⁵³ It must feed: it cannot exist or grow without continual consumption, and of course, a historical materialist perspective would find resonance with Forbes' concept of *wétiko* psychosis. Whether consumption is fast or slow, Forbes is clear that the disease leads "*the wealthy and exploitative literally [to] consume the lives of those that they exploit*,"⁵⁴ and although I would not restrict *wetikoism* to the wealthy (and a full reading of Forbes shows that he does not), Forbes does suggest that the wealthy have a much more virulent and aggressive strain of the disease, and their cannibalism is likely to also "consume the Native people's land and resources,"⁵⁵ cause early and high death rates to marginalized peoples, plants, animals, landscapes, waterways and the beings that inhabit them, all while making other lives miserable and unbalanced. Such a world is unsustainable; the condition forced on the world through *wétikoism* breaks and hobbles the praxis of interrelationality and mutual respect, which is an axiological orientation that is described as integral to the traditional worldviews of many Indigenous peoples.

According to Forbes, sustainability and balance are further disrupted by *wétiko* discourses that heroize *wétikos*, their acts of *wétikoism*, the worldviews that justify the consumption of others' lives, and their value systems. Forbes' genealogy for how *wétikoism*

came to the Americas begins with Cristobol Colón, better known as Christopher Columbus. Celebrated for his “discovery” of America, Columbus became a mythic folk hero to EuroAmerican citizens of the United States through the discursive practice called heroification.⁵⁶ Through Forbes’ descriptions of their horrifying acts toward Indigenous peoples, Forbes shows that Columbus’ men were likewise infected with *wétikoism*, and were incorporated into the “body” of Columbus, making Columbus more powerful than a single *wétiko* acting alone. Forbes demonstrates that Columbus fully intended to “consume” the thousands of Indigenous people that he enslaved for the Spanish crown and his personal enrichment, and the stories are told in many tomes of how Columbus and his men debased, raped, tortured, murdered, and sold Indigenous people into slavery.⁵⁷ Indeed, he engineered and carried out a program of genocide against the Indigenous peoples of the Caribbean Islands, and vectors of *wétiko* disease fanned out from there across the Americas to consume and reproduce both the disease and more *wétikos*. The way that Forbes traces the introduction of this ideological and hegemonic pathogen to the Americas is significant, since it reappears to flesh out the characteristics of literary fearsome figures through intertextuality, metaphor, and analogy, as contemporary Indigenous writers and filmmakers repurpose the diaries, letters, and acts of Columbus and his ilk in the creation of the characters who populate their novels.⁵⁸

Windigo as Cultural and Literary Theory

The stories that Forbes tells in order to illustrate *wétiko* psychosis are not new stories. Likewise, stories of Columbus’ interaction with Indigenous peoples are not novel subjects of scholarship or theorization. Certainly numerous cultural theorists and philosophers have provided a variety of ways to understand the dynamics of economic, sexual, racial, epistemological, and cultural subjugation, and how these dynamics inform, and are informed by, cultural products like literature and film. However, few develop their theories from an Indigenous epistemological and ontological standpoint using Indigenous critical narratives. Some postcolonial and post-structural cultural theorists attempt to understand (or explain) the

dynamics of power, empire, and their relationship with Indigenous peoples of North America in particular and the Americas in general, but also seem constrained to dancing around the term “genocide” (especially as it pertains to North America), its discourses, and its acts, as if assertions of genocide in the Americas are controversial, biased, and overreaching. There are certainly some noteworthy exceptions, but for the most part, the consciousness of North Americans (and academics) regarding genocide in the Americas abstracts both genocide and the fact of Indianness to a bare wisp—one that “moves not through absence but through reiteration, through meme, as theories circulate and fracture, quote and build.”⁵⁹ Jodi Byrd, an Indigenous scholar whose *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* is an intellectually blistering and precise exception to timorousness or delicacy, shows, too, that these wisps, or . . . traces of Indianness are vitally important to understanding how power and domination have been articulated and practiced by empire, and yet because they are traces, they have often remained deactivated as a point of critical inquiry as theory has transitioned across disciplines and schools.⁶⁰

I venture that Forbes would have readers of Indigenous fictions look for these traces in Western discourse, and how Indigenous fiction writers activate them as sites of critical resistance. Such an approach to interrogating the fearsome figure implicates the practice of *wétiko* discourse, which deactivate “traces of Indianness” in order to frame what Byrd describes as the “discourses of indigenous displacements that remain within the present everydayness of settler colonialism, even if its constellations have been naturalized by hegemony and even as its oppressive logics are expanded to contain more and more historical experiences.”⁶¹ Indeed, the “massive cannibalistic orgy”⁶² (read: genocide) waged against Indigenous peoples of the Americas is framed in such discourses as having “‘positive’ consequences” that are celebrated even more than Columbus himself, since though his actions are perceived as having “paved the way for the white conquest of the Americas, provided Europeans with cheap labor, helped to finance the economic development of modern Europe, and set the stage for five centuries of rule by white

and near-white elites in the Americas,”⁶³ but these actions are not often consciously acknowledged as the precondition for what *is* celebrated in *wétiko* discourse: things like “progress,” “economic development,” and the “civilizing” projects undertaken by Western governments, NGOs, corporations, and financial institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Indeed, discourses of “economic development,” for example, are so naturalized that a reader’s cognizance of their relationship to settler colonialism and their positionality within that structure can be the key to whether a villainous character is recognized as a villain by the reader or not. A literary theory or critical framework emergent from Forbes’ idea of the *wétiko* disease, however, would illuminate fragments of discourse that represent Indigenous peoples’ presence and absence, and would critique the discourse of settler-colonial exculpation; it would trace *wétiko* acts of genocide and the ravages committed by *wétikos* against land, waters, elements, and other-than-human-beings.

As I already mentioned, for Forbes, *wétikoism* is a disease that spreads through discourse and through *wétiko* parenting or socialization. It can also be contracted by the subjugated population when a person is subsumed or brutalized and pressured into carrying out *wétiko*-like behavior. Forbes claims that the disease is highly contagious and spreads rapidly as *wétikos* “recruit or corrupt others. It is spread by history books, television, military training programs, police training programs, comic books, pornographic magazines, films, right-wing movements, fanatics of various kinds, high-pressure missionary groups, and numerous governments,”⁶⁴ and scholarly writing (or writing that puts on academic or authoritative airs.)⁶⁵ Forbes is unapologetically blunt in his assessment of such discourse:

We could safely ignore biased or racist ‘scholarship’ except for one thing: such propaganda kills. It not only justifies the genocidal policies of past governments, but it provides ammunition for racist teachers, missionaries, and so on—bullets which they can use to destroy a people’s pride, dignity, and psychological means of survival through

statements like “Your people are savages” or “Your people stood in the path of development.”⁶⁶

Space opens up for *wétikoism* to thrive through discursive modes meant to dissociate cause from effect by institutional structures or public personae. Myriad *wétiko* stratagems disguise predatory intentions and skew reports of devastation or representations of resistance, while at the same time, representing Indigenous behaviors based in Indigenous animism as regressive, primitive, naïve, or even terrorist. Brutality is abstracted by façade, corporate personhood, distance, Western epistemologies (e.g. based in Christianities, rationalism, Enlightenment, or “themes of humanism”),⁶⁷ and such discourses provide inspiration for the characterization of villainy in Indigenous fiction.

For Forbes, the process of *wétiko* infiltration as a disease includes strategies that disrupt the maintenance of mutual respect and interdependent or symbiotic interrelationships in socio-environmental contexts through the offer of a limited amount of power.⁶⁸ These offers of power lure the already stressed or subjugated and encourage aggression. The potential to escape the most severe forms of abjection and abuse in any system of domination and subordination, Forbes points out, is a clichéd but effective strategy: “divide the conquered masses into rival groups.”⁶⁹ In a reading of an Indigenous-made film or novel, it is useful to follow the movement of these “infectious” processes between fictional characters and social groups, and to observe their correlations to extradiegetical, lived realities for Indigenous peoples. This is especially helpful for decoding fictional examples of lateral violence.⁷⁰ Tracking the power flows of *wétiko* infection in the lives of Indigenous peoples (both real and fictional), can offer a reader some revelatory insight into which characters or systems are intended to be read as *fearsome*.

Forbes’ engagement with Paolo Friere’s concept of dehumanization also highlights the insidious and ironic internalization of *wétiko* attacks on animist worldviews and the people who ascribe to them. In agreement with the “thrust” of Friere’s argument that “dehumanization, although a concrete historical fact, is *not* a given destiny but the result of an unjust order that

engenders violence in the oppressors, which in turn dehumanizes the oppressed,”⁷¹ Forbes confirms that “negative appraisals of human life” have been replete throughout *wétiko* thought, but whether the focus is on humanization or on dehumanization, the central problem for Forbes, is this construct’s anthropocentrism.⁷² He explains that:

Europeans seem to live in a world where other living creatures are merely a part of the environment. Native people, on the other hand, believe that we are all children of the same parents and that humans can learn a great deal from animals, which will result in better behavior . . .

Animals and humans are part of the same community, the earth and the universe. I can accept “humanization” as an ideal only if it embraces the concept . . . of becoming aware of one’s relations and learning to live in a non-exploitative manner towards all living things.⁷³

An example of discursive moves deployed in *wétiko* society that dehumanize humans and express the anthropocentric domination of non-humans, is when “classes of people [are] frequently referred to (collectively) as sheep, snakes, brutes, vermin, pigs, beasts, heifers, stallions, studs,”⁷⁴ thus transforming humans into “slaughterable” beings, or “suitable objects to be consumed by *wétiko* cannibals.”⁷⁵ To further parse this pattern of *wétiko* discourse, the comparison of people groups to non-human animals is remarkable because these comparisons make the collective labeled group not only slaughterable, but also, *consumable*. While I will focus my discussion on Indigenous animism and its significance with regard to the depiction of fearsomeness later in this chapter, it is useful to keep in mind that from a Western perspective, what makes a thing consumable is its absence of “life”: beings with hearts that pump blood must be dead before they can make a suitable meal, and further, humans must be transformed (by discourse) into something *inhuman* before killing can be made acceptable. (I discuss this process in Chapter 3, in relation to justifications made on behalf of the Seattle Police Officer who shot and killed a First Nations woodcarver.)

For me, *Columbus and Other Cannibals* is most useful when Forbes shows the movement of *wétikoism* as a dynamic process that turns all into consumable resources, but this is not the method that he most often employs. His ideas have application and resonance with Indigenous feminisms and will inform my discussion of Indigenous epistemologies, ontologies and axiologies, and of course, I will integrate some of his ideas into my later chapters. But, Forbes also introduces some problems. His book sets up a series of structural oppositions (good/evil, sane/insane, European/Indigenous), that rely on essentialist, absolutist, and reductionist renderings of both Western and non-Western peoples, including their roles throughout history, and in contemporary events. Further, as his critic, Richard C. King notes, Forbes appropriates the medical term, “*wétiko* psychosis” from psychiatric medicine and uses it in a new way to describe what he claims is a social “disease,” rather than the psychological disorder that psychologists have for decades discussed in their research on starvation cannibalism in northern Algonquian territories. However, Forbes is from an Algonkian-speaking people, so his use of the word and its interpretation is a transcultural reclamation act. As imagined and described by Forbes, *wétikoism* is a disease, and so, for him, the “history of the world, for the last 2,000 years, in great part, is the epidemiology of the *wétiko* disease.”⁷⁶ I understand this “disease,” as Forbes describes it, as having an epistemological, ontological, and axiological cause, rather than a physical, biological cause, but the “disease” can indeed lead to biological, physical, and psychiatric symptoms.

Following Forbes’ tracing of *wétikoism* through history, however, is a complicated undertaking, since he describes traits and features of *wétikoism* and then provides examples—sometimes by sharing extended quotes from both primary and secondary sources—and these examples are from various locales in terms of time and place. In other words, what Forbes presents is not systematically linear in the way that academics have come to expect. Instead of a typical Western genealogy with generations, antecedents, and descendents described as if they are points on a forward-leading time-line, Forbes’ method describes the ways that people

suffering from *wétikoism* *behave*—the conditions they thrive in, and what tactics they deploy in order to grow in power and size. Forbes discourages readers from expecting any kind of genealogy, in fact, since he advises his readers to be suspicious of written histories, and claims that they are likely infected with *wétiko* discourse. So, we are left with a bit of a conundrum, and notably, without citations in many instances. Forbes tracks the symptoms, the disease’s vectors, the progression of the disease, and how it responds to different hosts and environments, which is far too detailed for me to summarize. His text, therefore, shows how colonialism is no different from human pathology. However, the structuralist aspects of his description, like other structural analyses, provides a lens, or a grid that we can lay over society (or literature) to help us see what is and is not there, and the relationships between people and the conditions that replicate *wétikoism*.

Forbes’ use of the *wétiko* figure and his extended metaphor of *wétikoism* as a disease is, in effect, a diagnosis. He examines the symptoms and describes an illness of the spirit or mind which in turn causes people to become unrelenting consumers. This description of symptoms and resultant diagnosis comes from an Indigenous intellectual history, rather than historical materialism. Therefore, I find it necessary to continue in the next section by building upon my statement that anthropophagy is not inherently “fearsome” from an Indigenous perspective. This explanation will lead into the final section in this chapter, where I discuss Indigenous worldviews, and especially animism, since, as mentioned, violations against interrelationality as conceived by animists makes some forms of consumption both indicative of, and predictive of *wétikoism*.

Ritual Cannibalism vs. *Wétiko* Cannibalism

Forbes differentiates *wétiko* cannibalism from “[t]raditional ritualistic “cannibalism” (so-called) found among many folk peoples [that] was essentially an act of eating a small portion of a dead enemy’s flesh in order to gain part of the strength or power of that person or to show respect (in a spiritual way) for that person. (Thus, usually only a respected enemy warrior was so

used).”⁷⁷ In this sense, the ritualized eating the flesh of any creature or plant—like the heart of a deer or buffalo, the “first salmon” to return in the summer runs, “first fruits,” “first corn,” or “first rice” ceremony, would similarly be “to show respect (in a spiritual way) for that person.” The persons/peoples who partake in such consumption are metaphysically or epistemologically oriented toward a belief that all things have spirit, and all things are relatives, and so this kind of eating is essentially similar to the ritualistic, spiritual act of eating part of of another human. The modes of *being and practice* of ritualistic ingestion are based on and derived from belief in the interrelationship of all beings. The emphasis is also on the *kind* of relationship that the eater has to the eaten, which, as mentioned, aligns with the ritual recognition of interrelationalist animism, and while Indigenous practices of this sort have been interpreted and represented as horror by people who hold a Western worldview, the symbolic cannibalism involved in the transubstantiation of Christ seems to be likewise abhorrent to at least *some* Native Americans. Indigenous praxes of eating and food gathering, meant to sustain consciousness of interrelationality and thereby sustain relationships and balance are just as diverse as the peoples are. Some practices might involve the ritualistic offering of tobacco or corn pollen before gathering medicinal or plants for food, or they may involve preparation before hunting or fishing with smudges, a sweat, the *oo-simch*,⁷⁸ or any number of other rituals depending on the people group, the role of the individual, and the purpose of the hunt. Further, many people groups practice daily rituals associated with eating—not just for “firsts” or for gathering. They may sing particular songs, smudge their food with smoke from cedar, sage, or sweetgrass before eating, or put small portions of a meal on a leaf or dish and leave it outside as an offering.

As a young person, I often participated in the ceremonial practices common in my neighborhood, which had a high population of Scandinavian immigrants (mostly Norwegian), whose livelihoods were, in many cases, dependent on the fishing industry. And because the location of our neighborhood happened to be the off-season home of the biggest fishing fleet on the Pacific Coast south of Alaska (Seattle’s Fisherman’s terminal), and because the fishers would

head to the dangerous waters off of Alaska and the Aleutians, the community would always gather each spring for a “blessing of the fleet” ceremony. The ceremony was usually conducted by an officiating pastor of a certain Lutheran church, and there was usually a community band or choir that would play songs or sing hymns meant to encourage communication between the attendees and God. A moment of silence was always set aside to remember the fishers who had lost their lives during the previous season. Requests for God to bless and protect the fishers and their families, to prosper the families, and to take care of the families whose loved ones had lost their lives was the purpose of the ceremony. Such practices are similar to hunting or fishing preparations that Indigenous peoples make, but the differences are significant, especially when attempting to understand how worldview becomes hunting, gathering, and eating praxis, and how in turn, violating the norms of Western worldview and praxis, can lead to the (re)production of savagery stereotypes (in Western representations of Indigenous peoples). On the other hand, when Indigenous food praxis is violated, Indigenous representations of EuroAmericans are often depicted as evidence of *wétikoism*.

Practices present in some Pacific Northwest tribes’ “return of the salmon” ceremonies that are absent from the aforementioned “blessing of the fleet” ceremonies, involve conscious moves to sustain relationships between the fishers, their communities, and the community of the salmon. The sentience, interrelationship with, and peoplehood of salmon goes unrecognized in EuroAmerican rituals. While there is prayer for a sizeable catch and the safety of the fishers, none of this proceeds without first ritually welcoming an important visitor: the Salmon Chief, who shares its body with the human community’s ancestors, and is asked to return to its village underwater to extend a welcome to its kindred from the tribal peoples. Certain officiators of the ritual tell stories that remind people of their ancestral and ongoing relationship to the salmon people, and how the wellbeing of both peoples—salmon and human— is interdependent.⁷⁹ Similarly, the cultural and spiritual beliefs and practices of the Wishram peoples who fish on the Columbia River in southeastern Washington State are derived from and dependent on their

relationship to the salmon who offered themselves to the people of the region. The late Nisqually tribal member Billy Frank Jr.--a fishing and treaty activist and chair of the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission until his passing in May 2014—explains that

When the Indian takes a fish he makes an offering. He has respect for the fish. When he wrestles a big salmon into the boat and then it gets away, he doesn't get angry. 'Well, it wasn't his time to come in here. It was his time to go up the river.'

When he takes an elk or a deer, he makes an offering. It may be some ceremony he does, or it may just be thinking to himself about his appreciation for the elk and the forests it lives in. I've talked to Indians from other tribes. They do the same thing. The Indian doesn't take all the elk. He doesn't shoot him for his horns or as a trophy. He doesn't waste him. He does it to use the elk. He knows that the elk and the salmon run in his blood.

We have ceremonies for the first salmon of each run. We bring everybody together and share the first salmon, and we train our children that way. When we eat the salmon we give our offerings to the fish and the river. We're not separate from the river. Indian people don't have a cathedral. We have the land and the river.⁸⁰

Forbes' description of Indigenous guidelines for killing an animal for food resonate with Billy Frank Jr.'s. That is, to have a respectful relationship with the beings you're going to eat, he suggests a step-by-step process: "When a plant, tree or animal is to be killed, first, the need must be great; second, permission is asked for, if time allows; third, the creature is thanked; and, fourth, dances, prayers and ceremonies are used to further thank the creatures so killed and to help those that are alive to grow and prosper."⁸¹ Again, such respect, rituals, and expressions of interdependence are not universal amongst tribes or Indigenous peoples or for every kill, and although the outward performance of such rituals has become reduced to cliché and stereotype, it is the relationship that's remembered, honored, and sustained by such practices. Maintained in praxis, the measures ensure sustainability, the survival of the various peoples, and also serve

to remind people to take only what they need. Unfortunately, some people have used such performance as cultural capital through which to achieve self-aggrandizement or enrichment. Further, there are plenty of contemporary examples of *wétikoism* having been contracted by Native people and displayed in the form of trophy-hunting and exploitation. Hence, Forbes' concept of *wétikoism* as a disease is apt, since indeed, it is catching.

My attempt to differentiate between ritual cannibalism and *wétiko* cannibalism is important when it comes to reading literature in which there are acts of ritual eating or sustainable consumption as contrasted with exploitative consumption. Depending on the worldview or orientation of a reader and the kind of depiction, such scenes and characters can either be rendered as savage or cause the characters them to be interpreted as such. Alternately, a reader who has a non-hierarchical worldview (or at least, has a worldview without specie-determined, essential rights of domination and subordination), might interpret such acts (like eating an animals heart or head, for example), with all of the responsibilities of mutual care and respect that the act implies.⁸² Therefore, a reader's epistemic, ontological, and axiological orientation will determine whether they will be able to identify characters as *wétiko* or windigo, when the authors have not explicitly identified the characters as such.

Understanding the concepts of animism and interrelationality is a necessary background for understanding the critical Indigenous literary theory that I and others have derived from theories embedded in Indigenous oral narratives about *wétiko*. Because the work of this dissertation is meant to trace the processes of relationship disruption and consumption in the actions of a *wétiko*, I also intend to illuminate and *critique a kind of deconstruction*, as well as the dominance inherent in the social processes of that deconstruction. Without understanding animism and other indigenous ontological and axiological orientations (see my earlier discussion about Cohen), a reader could not trace what I'm referring to when I say that relationships are disrupted. More specifically, the idea of what a "relationship" is, its need for reciprocity, its reliance upon mutual respect, the way that responsibility to relationships are

expressed in praxis, and a conscious praxis of redistribution between participants in interrelationship would not occur to a reader who doesn't share a correlating worldview.⁸³ Further, the concept of "interrelationship" as opposed to "relationship" would seem like a neologistic redundancy without an animist ontological orientation.⁸⁴ How people know what they know, how they justify their beliefs, and how they make meaning are philosophical questions, and literary theory is undeniably underpinned by the work of philosophers. As philosophers like to say, even though many people study philosophy or have a philosophy of life, not many people actually *do* philosophy. The same can be said of tribal peoples; just as in Western societies, various Indigenous peoples have or had specific roles for such philosophers within the community. The philosophical research of James Maffie provides an exemplary description of the role that Indigenous philosophers have in "Nahua societies," and these "individuals [are] called *tlatatinime* ("knowers of things," "sages," or "philosophers"; sing. *tlatatini*) [and are] given to puzzling over such questions as, what is the nature of things? Where did we come from? what is the proper path for us to follow? and what are we able to know?"⁸⁵ While all people have some sort of philosophy, such organizing systems operate similarly to grammar, in that while everyone has a worldview, perception of reality, or epistemology, they may not be able to describe it, let alone how it works, what its assumptions are, or what that worldview means; they also might not devote a sustained effort to examine its internal consistencies and inconsistencies. I will therefore proceed in the next section, first to discuss the need to recognize the diversity amongst Indigenous peoples and their philosophies (in order to avoid misrepresentation or stereotype), before I further identify some of the similarities amongst Indigenous worldviews that will become important to know about when the reader proceeds to successive chapters in this dissertation.

We don't always do Philosophy, but when we *do*...

Tribal philosophies and philosophical inquiries are neither universally shared between tribes nor between members of a specific tribe, nor does philosophical inquiry taken from a

specific tribe's metaphysics result in uniform conclusions. I cannot overstate the importance of this diversity: without consistent reminders of the diversity amongst Indigenous peoples, we often revert to stereotype and generalization. With this in mind, I attempt here to present an Indigenous way of representation and interpretation of literary figures—to make meaning out of them as informed by Indigenous worldviews or perceptions of reality, with the intent to avoid universalizing Indigenous epistemologies, ontologies, axiologies, metaphysics, especially given that Indigenous peoples have been primary targets of imperialist constructs that stereotype in the service of domination.

Many scholars in Indigenous Studies have penned lengthy narrations on Indian stereotypes, and although some academics choose to focus on the development of certain permutations, the description and analysis of the phenomenon that I return to was penned almost forty years ago by Robert Berkhofer in his book, *The White Man's Indian*. For Berkhofer, in addition to the “good” Indian and the “bad Indian,”⁸⁶ there are four “persisting fundamental images and themes” found in popular discourse that typify the American Indian, namely “(1) generalizing from one tribe's society and culture to all Indians, (2) conceiving of Indians in terms of their deficiencies according to White ideals rather than in terms of their own various cultures, and (3) using moral evaluation as a description of Indians,”⁸⁷ and, while not a stereotype *per se*, the fourth persisting theme that contributes to permutations of the “good” Indian and the “bad” Indian is “a curious timelessness” imposed by Whites onto Native Americans. That is, “Whites picture the ‘real’ Indian as the one before contact or during the early period of that contact,” frozen in time, so-to-speak, “without history” or a future.⁸⁸ Jace Weaver extends Berkhofer's “bad” Indian with his description of the “halfbreed” stereotype, which “has no redeeming virtues,” because “they are [viewed as] the degenerate products of miscegenation, distrusted by both cultures and fitting in nowhere,”⁸⁹ and certainly Native authors make use of all of these stereotypes in order to undermine their power. We will see some of these in my analysis of several texts in later chapters.

Indigenous worldviews are diverse, not only between cultural and linguistic groups, but also within the groups themselves, and yet, one of the more pernicious “persisting themes and images” found in representations of American Indians is “generalizing from one tribe's society and culture to all Indians.”⁹⁰ Of course, such conflation is a feature of innumerable simulations of the imaginary Indian in popular culture and even in legal and policy discourse. Thus, it’s understandable that Indigenous activists and scholars would resist such universalization and insist on the recognition of Indigenous identity as members of *particular* peoples and nations. However, American Indian Studies (a.k.a. Native American Studies and Hemispheric Indigenous Studies) developed and grew out of the recognition amongst Native activists (especially during the resurgence of Native American resistance to colonialism in the late 1960s), that tribal nations are positioned similarly to one-another in their relationships with colonizers (politically, culturally, environmentally, economically, and in many other arenas). They noticed that many of the conflicts between colonizers and particular tribes are similar across the hemisphere, and that many of these conflicts proceeded and still proceed in a familiar pattern. Further, ontological and axiological conflicts between tribal peoples and EuroAmericans were and are not only profound, but their epistemological, ontological, and axiological contact points have been volatile sites where tribal cultures are suppressed, fragmented, and dismantled through structural and other violence, which results in a broad spectrum of relatively consistent problems for Indigenous peoples. Strategies that tribal nations deploy to grapple with the outcomes of epistemic violence and other aspects of colonization often grow from various levels of intra- and inter-tribal collaboration—even on an increasingly global level since 1982, when the Working Group on Indigenous Populations was formed as part of the United Nations Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, and the subsequent drafting and adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007.

However much Indigenous peoples share in common, they are also diverse. In urban areas (especially in North America), and in activist movements, problematic expressions of pan-Indianism seem to emerge through the decontextualization of relationships between people, place, histories, stories and other entities. Such communities of Native people in cosmopolitan places are often comprised of a mix of Indigenous peoples whose ancestors are from the geographic space upon which the urban landscape is built, and are joined by a variety of people/s who are members of North, Central, and South American Indigenous peoples; tribal peoples from the Pacific Islands, and indeed, from colonized spaces all over the world—including their non-Indigenous allies and those who have either married-into a community, or have become incorporated into various Indigenous groups through the creation and recognition of a relationship with a tribe. Such groups are heterogeneous. Members bring a wide range of competencies that may or may not include Indigenous epistemes, ontologies and axiologies, and these perspectives may represent an overdetermined range of intertribal and Western philosophical or religious syncretism. Such a mixed population can (at the individual level), include members that have acquired cultural competency within their own tribe/s, including knowledge about how to respect and relate to peoples, lands and entities when visiting another Indigenous nation. Individuals from this kind of background tend to follow behavioral protocols (especially in North America) which are employed to create, manage, and maintain such relationships. Again, while such praxis is not universal, many members of the hemispheric Indigenous “diaspora” (people who are Indigenous to the continent or hemisphere, but perhaps, live quite far from their tribes’ traditional region and migratory places), are often “conscious visitors” to the traditional territories that underlie a city. By “conscious visitors,” I mean people whose positionality as a visitor to another tribe’s hereditary space is primary in their consciousness, unlike a settler-colonial consciousness whose positionality or entitlement to live in and occupy a North American city derives from citizenship in the occupying Nation State without regard to older Indigenous territorial rights and relationships. (I further discuss this

difference in relationship to place in urban centers in Chapter 3). Innumerable practices (such as performance of specific songs, dances, ceremonies, offerings, ways of introduction, etc.) are shared at small and large Native community gatherings, with deference to local community leaders and elders in terms of what is shared and in which order. In the urban Native communities I refer to (Seattle, Portland, Vancouver, Victoria and Minneapolis, for example), Native community members continually negotiate their identities and belonging through relationships with, and recognition by, other Native community members. It is a dynamic, ongoing process. Pan-Indianism in such communities comes from the lateral borrowing of practices between tribal peoples, either with or without permission (from the originating entity, the person/people with the rights to the practice, and the receiver's tribe or people); such borrowing is further complicated by the disruption of Indigenous knowledge transfer practices as an outcome of colonization. In these circumstances, individuals lacking instruction or socialization regarding tribes' ethics and forms of intellectual or cultural property rights, may combine practices (without appropriate transfer of rights) in ways that can range from inappropriate to offensive and even dangerous. Since the purpose of each practice is to renew or maintain specific relationships—even when rights to particular practices are held only by certain families, clans or individuals—their performance is always meant to maintain balance and sustainability. Decontextualization, abstraction, and disruption of specific relationships are some of the more insidious consequences of the kind of pan-Indianism described here.

While an approach to topics from a position of tribal specificity can help deconstruct the power of stereotype and essentialist universalism, and though I often feel guarded when I witness the kind of pan-Indian appropriation described in the previous paragraph, the “either-or” choice (between pan-Indian and tribe-specific-standpoint approaches) constructs a false and rigid structural opposition that can lead to ineffectual and absolutist reductionism. Another point worth consideration is that the demand to completely eschew pan-Indianism diminishes the value of the very real collaboration and similarities of practices shared by many tribes. In

some cases, these relationships have been ongoing since time immemorial, and in other cases, the exchange is remembered in oral stories that continue to renew intertribal connections through each retelling. Further, tribalism can draw from and (perhaps unintentionally) perpetuate notions of “purity,” by way of another persistent misconception about tribal peoples that attributes authenticity and therefore legitimacy to Native identities based on how closely a tribe appears to be preserving their pre-contact culture.⁹¹ This misconception lies at the heart of legal challenges to federal tribal recognition, and thus wreaks havoc with efforts to ensure recognition tribal *national* sovereignty.

In any case, the lived realities of Indigenous peoples in their varied communities, and the ways in which meaning-making and problem-solving are collaborative, indicate an Indigenous preference for dialogic negotiation of group values, goals, and ambivalent commitments to particular beliefs and practices within a context of interrelationship. That is, dependent on contexts, needs, and relationships; both syncretic and tribe-specific beliefs, identities and practices are accepted and negotiated in mixed groups without the goal of closure or fixity. Many scholars have grappled with the same problem, and one philosopher, Viola Cordova (Jicarilla Apache/Hispanic), settles on a straightforward explanation for her position on the notion of pan-Indianism:

One of the objections to studying “Native American philosophy” is that the groups called “Native American” represent too diverse a group to subsume under one label. The ideas of each group, it is argued, might be so different as to require an exploration of each group. In other words, one cannot generalize about the Native American peoples. The same is also argued in defending the diversity of European peoples and their thought: “A Descartes and Kant are not the same,” one might hear. Nevertheless, there are enough similarities in the thought patterns of Descartes and Kant that no one would doubt that both are “Western” thinkers. We will see that there are, spread throughout the Americas, some similar concepts that allow one to speak of Native American thought *in general*.⁹²

It turns out that the “similar concepts” noticed by Cordova overlap so closely in some cases as to be barely distinguishable between tribal groups, or are at least complimentary between tribes, and resonate between traditions. Such concepts include the typical philosophical preoccupations with the nature of time, humanity, consciousness, being, the world, the universe, matter, reality, and truth.

Cordova’s position that there exists “Native American thought *in general*,” is significant to me, not only because it supports my own position, but because it could just as easily describe the position taken by Jack D. Forbes in *Columbus and Other Cannibals*. As mentioned in an earlier section, his ideas find their genesis and metaphorical vector of social disease in the *wétiko* stories, but his application of this figure to interrogate the exploitation of Indigenous peoples of the Americas *in general*, has been criticized harshly by C. Richard King,⁹³ who complains that Forbes “poaches” the idea and name of *wétiko* psychosis from the Cree,⁹⁴ along with other sources from a variety of tribal groups.⁹⁵ King’s criticism of Forbes’ act of appropriation is summarized and partially countered by Jeff Berglund, who argues instead that

Forbes shows how the logic of colonization can be used for anti-colonialist ends. If Forbes is a-cultural in his pantribal insistence on Wetiko illness, it is because he attempts to develop an anticolonial, non-Western methodology for understanding and then curing and dismantling Empire.⁹⁶

Certainly it has been a struggle for Indigenous academics’ critical methodologies and writing styles to gain acceptance within Western academic institutions, and indeed, Forbes’ narrative weaves together multiple Indigenous voices and perspectives on reality from across a temporal and spatial spectrum. Forbes’ book seems modeled in some ways after Vine Deloria Jr., whose work, too, comes under fire for its generalizations and political edge. Indeed, like much of Deloria’s work, *Columbus and other Cannibals* comes flavored with bitter polemical tang and no small amount of anger. Forbes’ technique, however, helps him communicate his perspective on systemic domination and other phenomena such as genocide, terrorism, and ecocide

(essentially, the brutalities that are structural components of colonialism). One advantage of this method is that it allows Forbes to support his assertions and illustrations from a deep and wide archive of social and historical evidence without the need to argue for, or from within, anthropologic “culture group” taxonomies (which usually have a questionable biological basis when applied to human beings), and hierarchies. King denounces Forbes for his habit of “decontextualization,”⁹⁷ and while I can understand King’s frustration, Forbes provides context through the cumulative effect of lists, rather than through the voyeurism and ventriloquism of anthropological authority.

Since Forbes’ cultural analysis is somewhat comprehensive (he frames how the presence of *wétiko* disease is discernible across all fields of social interaction), it is indeed Indigenous cultural criticism as King notes, and as I argue previously. My aim is to further his work through developing a way of reading Indigenous constructs of fearsomeness in Indigenous novels, and in addition to a generous helping of Forbes’ work, this undertaking is shaped and informed by other thinkers such as Gerald Vizenor, Jodi Byrd, Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, Jeff Berglund, Dian Million, Viola Cordova, Megan Bang, and Vine Deloria Jr., to name a few. This lens is specifically kitted for interpreting the fearsome figures that appear in the contemporary North American Indigenous literatures which I read in later chapters. I track the symptoms, spread, and outcome of *wétikoism* in these works as they depict what Forbes claims is the hallmark of the *wétiko* disease: the “*consuming the life of another for one’s own private purpose and profit*”⁹⁸ (italics original).

Indigenous “Worldviews” and Orientations of North America

I am arguing that a basic understanding of shared epistemological, ontological and axiological orientations—what I call “worldviews”—that are held by Indigenous peoples,⁹⁹ is a necessary knowledge base in order to identify fearsome figures in Indigenous literature and to decode their actions that are meant to be fearsome. As I use it, the term “worldview” refers

especially to the central ideas of philosophy, which V.F. Cordova also calls “matrices” in her book, *How it Is*. Writes Cordova:

Each distinct cultural group, perhaps in an original isolation from other groups, provides three definitions around which they build all subsequent determinations about the world they live in. First, each has a definition or description of the world; second, there is a definition of what it is to be *human* in the world as it is so defined and described; and, third, there is an attempt to outline the role-of a human in that world. The distinct pattern of a culture may be seen to derive from these three definitions and may account for the distinctions between cultural groups. I refer to these definitions and descriptions as a worldview or *matrix*, because they are not singular and disconnected definitions, but compose a whole picture of interrelated concepts and ideas.¹⁰⁰

In other words, actions and ways of being in the world are a direct outcome of the aforementioned “interrelated concepts and ideas,” and these, when they become conscious, can provide a means to map the source of conflict between peoples. Vine Deloria Jr. explains that “the fundamental factor that keeps Indians and non-Indians from communicating is that they are speaking about two entirely different perceptions of the world.”¹⁰¹ When worldviews conflict, the stakes are high, as problematic outcomes range from miscommunication and misunderstanding to localized or structural violence against human beings, other life forms, and Earth herself. Because the concepts in any worldview are interrelated and complex, and because Indigenous worldviews feature movement and interrelationality of a kind that is difficult to represent succinctly in English, I will take just a few pages to describe several basic ingredients in an Indigenous worldview.¹⁰²

The Universe, or the essential stuff of reality, as understood through many Indigenous metaphysics, is made of “ceaseless and uncaused motion,”¹⁰³ or vibration and flux, and there is no “forward” or “backward” directionality to this motion, but instead, it is relational or relative—the essence of relativity. James Maffie, a philosopher who has spent a considerable effort in

researching North American philosophy, with an emphasis on Aztec philosophy, describes the Nahua concept of *teotl*, which has correlative words and ideas in a variety of Indigenous languages and metaphysics.¹⁰⁴ He describes *teotl* as:

essentially power: continually active, actualized, and actualizing energy-in-motion. It is essentially dynamic: ever-moving, ever-circulating, and ever-becoming. As ever-actualizing power, *teotl* consists of creating, doing, making, changing, effecting, and destroying. Generating, degenerating, and regenerating are what *teotl* does and therefore what *teotl* is. Yet *teotl* no more chooses to do this than electricity chooses to flow or the seasons choose to change. This is simply *teotl*'s nature.¹⁰⁵

Maffie further explains that

The cosmos is the operating of this vital power, and all existing things are products of its operating. Since this power is sacred, so is the entire cosmos. This power is neither “spiritual” nor “material” as these terms are customarily understood by Western secular and religious metaphysical thought. Indeed, indigenous metaphysics considers this a false distinction. Nature, too, then, is neither “material” nor “spiritual.”¹⁰⁶

These ideas about *motion* rather than *is-ness*, are discernable in many North American Indigenous languages as well—languages which are “largely dominated by verbs.”¹⁰⁷ Because nearly all Indigenous American languages are verb-based rather than noun-based like Latinate languages, Indigenous languages express these concepts of interrelationality, motion, and non-linear time, in linguistic structure. Time, in particular, is described variously as vibration, waves, pendular movement, cycles, circularities, spirals or webs,¹⁰⁸ and other related concepts in everyday grammar and syntax, while expressing the same concepts in English and other Latinate languages can be quite a challenge.¹⁰⁹ But to be clear, I do not mean to insinuate that Native people have no “traditional” concept of the past and future. Such an assertion would not only be mistaken, (not to mention impossible to support), but would also play into the universalization of Indigenous peoples and would reproduce primitivizing notions.

The conflict between the West and Indigenous peoples regarding time constructs play a pivotal role in colonial justifications for dominance of Indigenous peoples on all continents.

Along these lines, Linda Tuhiwai Smith points out that

Different orientations toward time and space, different positioning within time and space, and different systems of language for making space and time ‘real’ underpin notions of past and present, of place and of relationships to the land. Ideas about progress are grounded within ideas and orientations towards time and space. . . .

Deeply embedded in these [Western] constructs are systems of classification and representation which lend themselves easily to binary oppositions, dualisms, and hierarchical orderings of the world.¹¹⁰

As I’ve already thrown suspicion onto the ways that hierarchical orderings of the world and classificatory systems of the West are powerful concepts that underlie the production of fearsome figures (from a Western perspective), I also want to make clear that when Native American authors play with Western time constructs, such manipulation is a tool of resistance. Such ontology is a strength, and a sign of resilience and flexibility, while fearsome figures in Native American fiction are often depicted as making attempts to control, limit, or harness time. Just as often, they are unable to comprehend time’s non-linearity. As mentioned in my earlier discussion of Jeffrey Jerome Cohen’s “Monster Theory: Seven Theses,” disruptions in time and “hierarchical orderings of the world,” are fearsome from a Western perspective, and again, anxiety about such disruptions lead to the monster that represents a “harbinger of category crisis.” What I’ve hoped to open up with this exploration of time constructs is the idea that many Indigenous ontologies allow for a more permeable and organizationally different structure of time and reality than the one accepted by Western rationalism.

If all things are vibration, then so is the sacred, and that idea is what Maffie, Deloria, Cordova, and others find across the fields of many Indigenous peoples’ metaphysics. More clearly, Indigenous American philosophies are *monist*¹¹¹—not monotheistic in the Abrahamic

religions' sense. That is, Indigenous metaphysics seem to consistently affirm that all that exists are manifestations of *one thing*, rather than the idea that there is a single God who *made* all things, despite the commonly uttered name, "Creator,"¹¹² in prayerful address. Again, Maffie's work is useful, as he explains that "Aztec metaphysics thus holds that there exists *numerically* only one thing – energy – as well as only one *kind* of thing – energy. Reality consists of just one thing, *teotl*, and this one thing is metaphysically homogeneous. Reality consists of just one kind of stuff: power or force."¹¹³ Vine Deloria Jr. also claims that Indigenous ontologies are monist, which "describes the experience of encountering the underlying energy of the world."¹¹⁴ Western ideas about what *is*, in comparison, is a teleological and progressive construct: an idea of what *is* that begins with *nothing*, which then became *something*. That is, "[t]he original [Western] metaphysical view postulates a creator-being that *causes* something to begin; the current [Western] view, regarded as less metaphysical (meta-physical: beyond the physical) is that the world *begins* out of *nothing*—with a 'big bang'."¹¹⁵ However, in many Indigenous worldviews, the idea of "nothingness" is extant, though such nothingness "is not empty,"¹¹⁶ and instead, is full of possibility. Indeed, it is energy—or "*something* that manifests itself in all things [but] is difficult to comprehend" let alone explain. Like Maffie and Deloria, Cordova mentions a list of words in several tribal tongues for the idea that *something*—some power, or energy—has always existed, and explains that "[r]egardless of the names applied to the concept, it is generally thought to be something that drives, sustains, and is the universe," and that "manifests into the many diverse things of the world. Each thing is, in a sense, a 'part' of the greater whole. Diversity is its hallmark."¹¹⁷ That *something* is variously represented by words that roughly translate as "spirit," or "energy," (but *not* the equivalent of "Great Spirit"¹¹⁸), and whether spirit or energy is personified (and *how* it is personified) to particular Indigenous groups varies between individuals and said culture groups.

Among Indigenous groups, respect for diversity—even a need for diversity—extends to the acceptance that there are multiple creations across space and time. That is, creation stories

communicate the origin and worldview of each group, and whether the narrative frames the creation of a people as a migration, a transformation, a birth, an emergence, or any other process of *becoming* as a people, there is a general acceptance that each group's story is *true for them* amongst other tribal peoples, and such a narrative verifies that the people group "*rightfully* occupies a place for which they were created, produced, or into which they emerged."¹¹⁹ The attempt to undo these connections to place from without through removals, genocides, economic depredations, discourse, legislations, treaties, missionization, appropriation and expropriation of lands and disruptions of ecosystems, does *not*, in the worldview of Indigenous peoples, eliminate the *rightfulness* of a people to occupy a particular place and maintain a relationship with that place. Such forced disruptions are understood as violations against balance and the integrity of the Universe, because origin stories also either imply or explicitly describe the people's *responsibilities to* a specific place (including bodies of water, beings who visit or live alongside humans, plant-life, specific minerals, and land formations of that place). Since "American Indians hold their lands—places—as having the highest possible meaning, and all their statements are made with this reference point in mind,"¹²⁰ these connections are respected between Indigenous people groups, even when tribes or individual members of tribes are unable to live in their home territories.

Earth herself is a personified entity in many instances, understood to be alive, and for some Indigenous groups, she has sentience, albeit a sentience that requires that a human "tap in," to comprehend it viscerally. This is done through ritual, ceremony, dreams, and visions, and for several purposes, such as "maintaining and restoring balance [and] renewal," and "for accessing knowledge and establishing relationship to the world,"¹²¹ *inter alia*. The shape and form of ceremonies, rituals, and obtaining visions varies from tribe-to-tribe (and from religion-to-religion—sometimes called "roads," as in "the Peyote road," or "the sundance road"—which are sometimes shared amongst *groups* of tribes). But again, the diversity of methodology is usually respected between tribes (except perhaps for some instances in which Christianity or

Christian syncretism has become the central religion for particular groups). Further, all that is on or from Earth are manifestations of the same energy or spirit described in the previous paragraphs, whether animal, vegetable, or mineral. Other manifestations of the same spirit or energy in the universe, like the sun, the moon, or stars, are interconnected with Earth, and work relationally with the way energy manifests in/on Earth to create forces like fire, magnetism, and wind. While the name “Mother Earth” is now clichéd through romantic overuse, the idea is more than metaphorical or symbolic for Native American tribal peoples.¹²² Beings (human or otherwise) are made of energy that is *temporarily* organized in a particular pattern, are nurtured and brought forth by Earth, and “The creature, man, stands at all times to the earth as an infant child to its mother. The child is a product of the mother and dependent on the mother for sustenance and life itself. The relationship is a good one, and the mother is a good mother.”¹²³ To exercise one’s humanity in this described world is to be aware of one’s responsibility to observe the phenomenon or manifestations of energy in the world, and to maintain balance between such energies. Many rituals and modes of living, as mentioned in my discussion of ritual cannibalism vs. *wétiko* cannibalism, as well as sustainable modes of living, are some of the means toward the fulfillment of these responsibilities.

As one might imagine, borders and taxonomies in these worldviews are less important and therefore less policed, than the ways in which relationships are maintained. Here, I would like to pause in order to clarify that when I use the word “taxonomy,” I’m referring especially to a kind of categorization that, in the West, is an extension of Linnaean, biological, or genetic classification schemes that have a particular set of assumptions about biological descent (from primitive to advanced), and the unilineal-progressive concept of time, built in. These notions undergird much of Western ideopistemology, ontology, and axiology and the categories that Cohen describes as the ones that are “policed.” I’ve mentioned earlier, too, that Indigenous peoples *do* construct categories, but I would like to emphasize that these categories—especially when rooted in Indigenous epistemology—are derived from ontologies of *relationships*, and

often, these relationships are ecological.¹²⁴ One set of studies that supports my assertion was conducted by researchers Douglas Medin and Megan Bang, who found “a large cultural difference in conceptual organization, favoring ecological relations for Menominee and goals and taxonomic relations for European Americans.”¹²⁵ That is, the Menominee participants the Medin and Bang studies were more likely to categorize beings according to their relationships to one another *in a particular environment*, rather than in relation to economic or temporal goals. Relationships are not static: they move in a back-and-forth, reciprocal motion and are never absent of motion. The motion, or exchange, is yet another expression of oscillating energy, and when reciprocity in a relationship is undisturbed, the relationships tend toward balance. The acceptance of such continual “motion” means that transformation is expected from an Indigenous epistemological orientation, and thus, from such a paradigm, transformation is not considered particularly fearsome.

One of the borders that seems entrenched in Western ontologies, axiologies, and religions is the idea that “nature” is a thing of itself—a frightening thing, even—one that conceives of humans as *apart from* nature (rather than *a part of* nature), and therefore, “nature” is understood as something “out there” that can be entered and exited, and something that either must be tamed or controlled: in a word, dominated. Even the notion of “stewardship,” popular in some forms of environmentalist or ecocritical thought and sects of Christianity, is hierarchical in that putting humans in the role of the “steward” sets up the human as a caretaker, and is thus paternalistic and dominating. In comparison, most Indigenous peoples’ worldviews do not separate humankind from “nature,” and even though the word “nature” itself is used for the purposes of easy communication with English-speakers and non-Natives, all evidence suggests that the idea of such separation is foreign to the Americas. But again, Indigenous ontologies indicate that every particle or part of energy that manifests as a human being, is in relationship with all other energies. This idea can be difficult to convey, in part, because of the stigmatization of animism by anthropologists and Christians, and also,

because it can seem like an unapproachable abstraction.¹²⁶ But, if enough consideration is given to the “objects” around us in our homes and places of work—if contemplation is devoted to every process, life, relationship and energy exerted to fashion these “objects” we interact with on a daily basis—it is clear that all human beings are intimately interrelated with all other lives and energies, and are not separate—certainly not separable from “nature,” no matter how encased in cement, steel, and glass we might seem to be. Consider steel reinforcement beams, for example: their “raw” form is extracted from the Mother’s body and manipulated through energies also harnessed from the Earth and sky. All of the elements in steel are also present in human bodies; I say “elements,” but I mean *forms of energy*: carbon, iron, phosphorous, manganese, sulfur, oxygen, nitrogen, aluminum, and silicon—all of these forms of energy manifest differently in the human body. How do these elements or energies become incorporated into the manifestation of energy that is a human being? We ingest them through food, and absorb them from the air, and they become transformed in us and by the systems in our own bodies. We eliminate them and they become transformed into other manifestations of life energy. Thus, transformation is also viewed as a necessary process of all energy, including the transformations known as birth and death.

Indigenous worldviews hold the idea that all things have life force,¹²⁷ and that We (all life forces) are all related; hence the affirming term, spoken in rituals and ceremonies across the hemisphere: “All my relations.” I am reminded of a story that the late Skokomish teacher and spiritual leader, Bruce-subiyay Miller, tells in *Spirit of the First People: Native American Music Traditions of Washington State*.¹²⁸ Miller remembers attending a five-day-long ceremony in the home of an elder Chinook woman, who became irritated with the way the young people disregarded and mistreated what they thought of as “objects” in her home. Toward the end of the ceremony, after singing the first chorus of her medicine song, and “[i]n keeping with the structure of Chinook dance songs, she then stopped and related what she had received spiritually after that verse.”¹²⁹ Miller says the woman began by saying, “It makes me so angry.

The young people in there [the kitchen] throwing people around like that. Treating those people with disrespect,”¹³⁰ and went further:

You might wonder what people I’m talking about. I’m talking about those you call dishes and plates in there. In my youth they were like people. They fed us when we were sick, they fed us when we rejoiced, they fed us when we were in sorrow. They nourished us. [. . .] Each one had a story of its life. When I was a girl we were taught to treat these people with respect, and to take care of them because they were somebody important. . .

and after saying more, and singing more, she paused to continue her exhortation:

. . . This person we live in, they slam the doors, break the windows, curse one another, stab each other with words. We call this person our house, our home. Now, we wonder who allowed the young people to jump up and down on their furniture, to throw the dishes around. When they get old, their children are going to treat them the same. They’re going to put them in old folks’ homes. . . . They strive to fill their kitchens with beautiful sets of matching dishes that have no history, no spiritual quality. And when these dishes become old or chipped they are given away, thrown out because they have no meaning . . .¹³¹

Clearly, the elder has intimate relationships with all of the objects in her life that to her, are beings. She mourns the shift in worldviews that she sees in some of the people who attended the ceremony at her home. For her, the “spiritual quality” and even sentience of objects develop over time through cognizance of interrelationality.

In *The Dance of Person and Place: One Interpretation of American Indian Philosophy*, Philosopher Thomas Norton-Smith (Shawnee) describes one animist feature of Indigenous worldviews as a reoccurring theme, which he calls the “expansive concept of persons.”¹³² He observes that indeed, there are no taxonomical hierarchies in Indigenous philosophies.¹³³ That is, “Human beings are not lowered to the status of other animals [. . .] instead, animals and other sorts of nonhuman beings are raised to the ontological and moral status of *person*,”¹³⁴ and

indeed, “nonhuman beings” can also index songs. Along these lines, in the same edited volume as the Bruce-subiyay Miller story, an interview with Lake elder Jeannette Timentwa tells of a “power song” that came to her as a child. The song not only had a will of its own, but offered her help in hunting, fishing, food gathering endeavors, and in recovery from health problems.¹³⁵ However, this song insisted that she sing it even if she felt reticent, under threat of breaking all of the bones in her body and the bones in her children’s bodies. She tells the story of how for many years she refused, and how she and her children barely survived harrowing accidents and many broken bones, until she finally decided to sing the song. After that, nobody in her family or religious/ceremonial community lacked for food, and all who sought the song’s help for attaining sobriety or health did indeed become sober and healthy. Any attempts to record the song in full were troubled by technological malfunctions. Timentwa’s experience is a clear example of Norton-Smith’s “expansive concept of persons”—the Indigenous recognition that non-human persons have sentience, will, and power, and such recognition can apply to *all* things—including songs.

The features of animism that I have thus far described, such as animist views of reality, time, and monism, will be expanded upon in later chapters, as a means to illuminate ways that *wétikoism* disrupts or deconstructs interrelationality. In the novels I examine, such interrelationships include non-linear concepts of time, place, Indigenous relativism, reciprocity, gender, the expansive concept of persons, and the responsibility to maintain balance. These concepts are mere introductions to the ideas that will be relevant to the project of recognizing fearsome figures in Indigenous literatures. As much as I balk at categorization, the identification of the ideas that make up a matrix or worldview must, to some degree, employ some sort of comparison in order to trace the movement of such concepts in Native fictions, and like those stories, allow me to show how these ideas (and other ingredients in Indigenous epistemologies, ontologies and axiologies) interact or conflict with Western ideas.

To Summarize and Give a Glimpse of the Road Ahead

I've argued that the actions of fearsome figures in Native American literature correlate with the techniques and behaviors of *wétikos* as described in numerous Indigenous oral narratives. Of course, as Jack D. Forbes' text attests, *wétikoism* has a pattern of behaviors and methods that disrupt life-sustaining systems built on interrelations, respect, reciprocity, responsibility and redistribution. Such disruptions come from uncontrolled consumption, but this is more than a Marxist or ecocritical critique of consumerism. Indeed, the consumption that Indigenous oral narratives, Forbes, and I describe, is aided by a specific kind of discourse that always derives from a conflict between EuroWestern and Indigenous worldviews. Further, I have demonstrated that recognition of fearsome figures in Native American literature depends upon either the epistemic, ontologic, and axiologic orientation of the reader, or at least a cursory understanding of Indigenous worldviews, mixed with some relativism and pluralism.

At the beginning of this chapter, I argued that in Native American literature, villains destroy balance and relationships (and I hope that I've made clear that balance *is inherently, motion*—that is, there can be no balance without a series of reactions, and is thus, also inherently interrelational). Disruptions to balance are methodologically based on imposing some form of stasis. I develop the application of this theory more fully in the next two chapters; in one, I offer a meditation on fearsomeness and movement as embodied by various sorts of “blobs,” or amorphous entities. In that particular chapter, the essay form is meant to model the theory that I write about and describe. In other words, I attempt to stretch the generic category of academic writing to more adequately serve my goal of producing theory and criticism that is particularly Indigenous. That is, I make use of Indigenous narrative techniques in hopes that the reader will recognize that the stakes of my critique are applicable to academia, and to the work Indigenous academics are “supposed” to produce. But more importantly, the upcoming chapter is meant to interrogate the stasis that underpins the formation of Indigenous “nations” as a result of federal and state recognition. I hope that the questions and insights that the next

chapter inspires will help Indigenous peoples look toward their own narratives that predate the missionary and boarding school era—the narratives that have had little influence from Western grand narratives. In claiming and living our epistemologies, ontologies, and axiologies, Indigenous peoples can ensure movement, and thus, survival. While this movement may in turn cause us to be interpreted and portrayed as “fearsome” to EuroAmericans, The next chapter will demonstrate that such discourse is evidence that resisting the *wétiko*’s icy bellow is the most viable path toward survival.

Chapter 2

Fixity, Motion, and Fearsomeness

Once we speak of a relational activity, a boundary line must be drawn, and problems of definition emerge. . . .
—Bruce Ziff and Pratima V. Rao

Indigenous philosophers from the western hemisphere seem to agree that all contents of the cosmos are related to one-another—or even that all things *are* each other.¹³⁶ That is, all “things” are not things at all: they are *process* or movement. Beings and “things” are in a continual process of becoming and un-becoming—of trans-formation—which can be seen as a new phase of becoming. In this view, all “matter” is temporary form taken by energy or vibration; these pulsing oscillations cycle through birth, life, death, renewal, and again, life. To think about the nature of reality in this way begs some questions: Are there boundaries between individuals or between individuals and any other thing? Have we—through discourse—created categories and the boundaries around categories that accurately represent our relationships? Or, have we reified categories that obscure our inter-relationality, (and thus, our identities as Indigenous nations, or “peoplehood”)? Is this ontological conflict due to an imposed metaphysical concept of a static universe? Of course, some Indigenous scholars have resisted categories of self/other and a variety of boundaried dualisms. For example, Paula Gunn Allen once expressed her view that such divisions are fallacious and referred to herself as “this conglomerate of critters that I like to call my body,”¹³⁷ but this kind of insight, while accurate, still seems esoteric and maybe even a little eccentric to ears acclimated to Westernized ideopistemes.

In Indigenous religious ceremony, Natives often shift epistemologically, sometimes regardless of how acclimated we are to Western ways of knowing. In those spaces, we utter prayers for relatives who fly, walk on two legs or four, swim, and crawl. As I have experienced such shifts, I have also felt compelled to offer prayers for our less romantically-constructed

relatives: those who slip, slide, or swim in their own ooze, and who, in human language, are characterized as disgusting, alien, or monstrous. These amorphous or blob-like relatives have much to teach us about relationality, social organization, kinship, identity, Indigenous self-determination, and perhaps surprisingly, the exercise of sovereignty. They can help us further the interrogation of how, why, and where boundaries are placed, and the discourses that concretize and police such boundaries.

This chapter is the result of my meditation on such obviously transformational entities as “blobs.” I examine the strategies that the slime-molds employ to achieve movement, exercise individual and collective will, organize their bodies, and survive. I also use descriptions of blob-like materials to interrogate discursive, physical, and political control over amorphous or non-conforming social bodies. The “blob” metaphor further helps me explore the pressures to conform to a metaphysics of stasis, and how such stasis enfolds Native Americans into a cosmos that is hostile to Indigenous worldviews and relationships. My inquiry is aided by a reflection and short analysis of the 1958 science-fiction horror film, *The Blob*. My methodology is narrative, reflective and experiential—an approach described by Dian Million (Tanana Athabascan) as “intense dreaming,” or, as an Indigenous epistemological “effort to make sense of relations in the worlds we live, dreaming and empathizing intensely our relations with past and present and the future without the boundaries of linear time.”¹³⁸ Million explicitly characterizes “intense dreaming” as theorizing, or as “a part of a process of comprehension and reformulation, one that stimulates the creation both of narratives *and* of analytical narratives that are theoretical across a wide field of participation not necessarily bound by ‘discipline.’”¹³⁹ This chapter therefore blurs the boundaries around the generic conventions of “theory,” “story,” and disciplinary specialization. Structurally, then, its unconventional form bears a relationship to its topic.

This is Not a Vase

Long before I imagined myself teaching at a university, I became enamored with the process of glassblowing. Having been raised just one or two neighborhoods away from Dale Chihuly's hot shop, I benefitted from the close proximity of his production glassblowers, who moonlighted as instructors in various studios around town. I enrolled in courses at Seattle Glassblowing Studio, and learned first to make paperweights, Christmas tree ornaments, cups, vases and bowls, then graduated to using color. Like the clear batch glass that forms the foundation for any piece, glass color medium is derived from various minerals. In glassblowing, color is applied on top of the colorless base; through heat and shaping, the color becomes embedded in the whole. The melting points, the speed of motion, how much and what kind of pressure it takes to get colors to comply to shaping, varies greatly from color-to-color, depending on the mineral. Working with color gave me extra satisfaction when I could design a piece, execute it (usually imperfectly), and have something "unique" to give away. At the time, Martha Stewart was still in her tag-sale and thrift phase: kitsch, distressed patina, found objects, and shabby chic were trendy amongst DIY home decorators, too. *Techné* (or at least the appearance of highbrow, precise, modern craft) had not yet made a comeback, so my amateurish glassworks were popular amongst my friends.

As with other liquids, I had a few accidents in glasswork. My favorite accident was a vase about a foot tall, with large, deep red flecks on its body, the fluted lip wrapped in yellow. In glassblowing, when a gaffer is finished working on a piece, and the piece is ready to come off of the steel rod called a punty (or pontil), the glass piece goes into the annealer to cool slowly: if the cool-off period is too rapid, the piece will shatter or explode. To remove the piece from the punty can be tricky. One method requires that the gaffer drip two or three drops of water between a small blob of glass that's used as a sort-of glue at the base of the vessel to hold it securely to the rod. Next, a tap on the rod with the back of the jacks cracks the little blob, and the vessel falls into the mitted hands of a waiting assistant who rushes the piece to the annealer where it cools

for several days. The process is collaborative: people, water, earth, fire, breath. It's risky, too. If water lands on the bottom of the glass vessel during the removal process instead of the connection point, the piece can shatter or explode in the gaffer's face, or break during the annealing process. My vase was beautiful, even though there was an errant drop of water. I brought it home, and put it on the mantle over the hearth.

But one maxim bore out: glass, even though seemingly fixed or static, is still in motion. Several months after the "completion" of my vase, we had an abnormally humid and hot spell in summer, and the water that entered the base of the vessel began to expand. That sweltering afternoon, I heard several pings coming from atop the mantelpiece. Nothing appeared amiss until later that evening, when I noticed that my vase had cracked into two even halves. Disappointed, I considered recycling, in hopes that what I had formed could be melted down and made into something whole and useful, but decided instead to take the pieces to someone who specialized in cold glasswork; he ground the sharp edges smooth for a small fee. The two halves now serve as shades for two electric-candlelight wall sconces, and offer far more aesthetic and utilitarian pleasure than they did as a simple vase. When lit, they make beautiful wavy, speckled patterns on the ceiling, yet I'm under no illusion that they have permanence in their current form. Someday, they will shatter, melt, or otherwise disintegrate. They will take new forms and become other things; of that, I am sure.

With the growing desire for more bench time, I apprenticed with one of Chihuly's master gaffers at another studio. He insisted that I suspend working with color until I had absolutely mastered the forms: sphere, cylinder, disc. The biggest challenge in achieving these forms is the constant motion of the glass, and in turn, the gaffer's need to continually rotate the pipe or punty in order to control the blob's motion—to work with, and against that motion. The trick is to apply just enough heat to ensure some pliability of the material, but not so much that the blob falls off of the pipe and lands on the floor—all while executing the constant, controlled manipulation of the piece so that it takes a particular shape according to the gaffer's will.

Through the applied pressure of certain tools, the molten material becomes something other than a blob as it gains definition. Under the gaffer's machinations, the material loses its amorphous quality and becomes intelligible. It signifies. In the eyes of the human, it gains purpose.

I began to become comfortable with the simple tools of glasswork: the end of a rod to gather up a blob of glass batch, kept white-hot in a crucible at around 2,400 °F; the steel table called a marver, wooden paddles and blocks (blocks roughly resemble thick wooden spoons), wads of damp newspaper (cupped in the hand, they work well for smoothing the sides of a vessel), jacks (a metal hybrid of giant tweezers and tongs), large shears, (to cut glass in its rubbery stage), the glory hole (a furnace for reheating a piece of gathered batch glass), the blowtorch to reheat glass when motion in a particular part of the vessel is desired, and of course, the blowpipe and punty: the hollow and solid rods that the molten glass sticks to while it is turned, blown, and shaped. After a couple of years of benchwork, I was still far from completely mastering the techniques, and the cost of the courses became prohibitive for me. It has now been years since I've donned dark sunglasses to face the glory-hole, or been anywhere near the business end of a blowpipe.

Knowledge of a few processes and methods from glassblowing stayed with me, however, as valuable metaphors for understanding the interactions at play in acts of creation, or definition. Glassblowing, as mentioned, is collaborative—between fire, trees, minerals, humans and of course, breath; this collaboration is my favorite part of the process. The tools are simple, but the skills are not. It takes focus, teamwork, and trained reflexes to shape a molten liquid into a utilitarian or decorative object; to manipulate the liquid into holding a supposedly fixed or frozen and desirable form, especially considering the risks of distortion, breakage, or even injury. A glassblower begins the creative project with a vision in mind, but sometimes, one of the collaborators—either an element or a human—contributes to the process in such a way that the outcome doesn't much resemble what the designer or gaffer planned. As mentioned, my second

instructor, who restricted me to working with clear batch, forbade me to work with color in an effort to reduce the variables and increase my chances of producing pieces that matched my intention. The goal of my practice, he said, should be to master the forms to achieve predictable results. Essentially, my goal as a glassblower was to learn how to control the glass blob completely: to define it, so that it would hold a shape that serves my purpose. In hindsight, the exertion of such control feels like domination, and the resulting object is fragile, rather than flexible.

Cosmological Microcosms: Slime Molds, Morphology and Movement

About ten years after I left glassblowing, I was able to go back to school, and I took several studio arts courses to keep my inner artist alive. Along the way, I developed other interests, and I was privileged to be taught many different topics by people who had other passions. One memorable learning experience stands out: a botany class taught by a specialist in myxomycology. A myxomycologist's favored organisms of study are plasmodial and cellular slime molds—ubiquitous life forms that defy fixity in terms of taxonomic categorization, morphology, and motion, but with a name intended to be “defamatory” because slime molds were thought (by the namers) to be “ugly.”¹⁴⁰ They can be quite beautiful, though, especially in their fruiting phase. Cellular slime molds are also called “social amoebas” by botanists since the amoebas live freely as single cells when their food is abundant, but they congregate together either when their food is scarce or their environment becomes less hospitable.¹⁴¹ As they morph into a collective, they work together as a single body. Botanists say that in the collective phase, the slime molds' “multicellular fruiting stage is really a society,”¹⁴² and when they take the collective form (before they “fruit” and send out spores), they so closely resemble the common garden slug in shape and motion that the moniker, “slug” is used to describe slime molds in this morphological phase. Some species, when organized into a “slug,” will morph again, and “altruistically [differentiate their parts] into a non-viable stalk, supporting the remaining cells,

most of which become viable spores,”¹⁴³ in order to ensure reproduction. That is, the cells that make up the stalk sacrifice themselves so that other cells can reproduce.

Slime molds are more like protists than molds, though none of the hundreds of species have stayed neatly into their assigned taxonomic categories for more than a few years at a time. Their species further tend to be denigrated through names like “dog vomit slime mold,” (*Fuligo septica*)¹⁴⁴ and through discursive emphasis on their unfamiliar, unsettling features. There are even slime mold “monsters” in a popular role-playing game, described in the *Pathfinder Bestiary* as “revolting ooze that wallow in rot and decay.”¹⁴⁵ *Pathfinder* characters “who succumb to fungal rot become tired and listless. Eventually, paralysis sets in and the victim's flesh begins to blacken and decay, running from the body in liquid streams that the slime mold can easily absorb.”¹⁴⁶

Although I wasn't inspired to become a myxomycologist (my later training and scholarship has primarily focused on Anglophone Indigenous literatures and Indigenous critical and cultural studies—though my approach is interdisciplinary), I found slime molds to be fascinating in their ubiquitousness, diversity, habits, and morphology. They are not rooted to the ground, but they are intimately part of and interrelated with the soil and decomposing leaves or substrata—the base/place where they live. Myxomycologists can spend all day identifying the hundreds of slime molds living on a single fallen log, so these organisms are common, but often go unseen or misrecognized by the untrained eye. For example, some bright pink slime molds can be mistaken for wads of discarded bubble-gum, while others are misrecognized as something onerous or fearsome that has fallen from the sky. Slime molds also live on other plants, on the forest floor, in gutters, forest canopies, garden mulch, on wooden siding, and essentially, anywhere that's damp and isn't too terribly bright. Some slime molds, particularly the plasmodial kind, morph into a gigantic single cell with thousands of nuclei, but no cell walls. Further, they have been shown to have decentralized intelligence, externalized memory, and synchronous pulsation between cells that helps them navigate collaboratively to obtain food.¹⁴⁷

Their movement and transformational collaboration excites artist Heather Barnett, who does interdisciplinary research on slime molds. Barnett shared her excitement via a TED Talk lecture, entitled “What Humans Can Learn from Semi-Intelligent Slime.” Barnett asks,

So . . . how does [the slime mold] work? It doesn't have a central nervous system. It doesn't have a brain, yet it can perform behaviors that we associate with brain function. It can learn, it can remember, it can solve problems, it can make decisions. So where does that intelligence lie?¹⁴⁸

Barnett’s questions emphasize the remarkable capabilities of slime molds that are usually associated only with organisms that have brains—and without a centralized brain, slime molds provide an example of collaborative organization without centralized power. Usually metaphors for social organization represent a hierarchical understanding of the parts of the human body: we’re all familiar with “the long arm of the law,” the “heart of the nation,” and so forth. And our metaphors also give us a “head of state”—a single human being who is supposedly responsible for the wellbeing of the “body” of the nation. But Barnett’s observations present a non-hierarchical method of social organization and a ready metaphor to represent them. After briefly describing the research findings of several scientific studies conducted on slime molds, Barnett presents some film footage that clearly shows

inside the slime mold, there is a rhythmic pulsing flow, a vein-like structure carrying cellular material, nutrients and chemical information through the cell, streaming first in one direction and then back in another. And it is this continuous, synchronous oscillation within the cell that allows it to form quite a complex understanding of its environment, but without any large-scale control center. This is where its intelligence lies.¹⁴⁹

This pulsing, rhythmic intelligence and growth of the slime mold demonstrates not only its own bodily locomotion and its collaborative intelligence, but it also resonates with the description philosophers use to characterize *teotl* or *usen*, since the plasmodial slime mold is always

vibrating, shifting, moving, becoming. It is always liminal. Indeed, its intelligence is achieved and expressed in motion and transformation, not fixity and stratification.

Especially in their fruiting body form, slime molds express themselves for a time in an incredible array of fantastical colors and shapes. The challenge for Western science, and for people who wish to describe and understand slime molds, is that these life forms challenge the rigidity of Linnaean taxonomies: the binomial nomenclature meant to chart out and describe relationships of descent between kingdom, phylum, class, order, family, genus, and species. Slime mold placement in these family trees is a formal structure that defines relationships based entirely on morphology and phenotype—a familiar, if irritating concept for many tribal peoples where phenotype is, at best, a specious indicator of relationships or a measure of kinship.¹⁵⁰ Completely part of and responsive to their environment, slime molds continually change their own corporeal organization and bodily expressions based not on phenotype, but on chemical signals between cells.¹⁵¹ If we're to learn something about non-hierarchical social organization from plasmodial slimes molds in order to make use of the slime mold as a metaphor for group self-organization and determination, then it's important to reconsider how we read the signals of belonging and not-belonging that are sent by other individuals.

Yet, in human experience, phenotype as a formal tool for social categorization and control, creates structured realities for racialized beings who are then forced by that structure to navigate life within that structure. To violate categories or the hierarchies they're arranged in can be transgressive enough to garner violent push-back from people who perceive that their own individual wellbeing is threatened by the breakdown of categories or hierarchical statuses. Of course, there is more than just one dominant "group," more than one hierarchy, and more than one human analogue of the "social amoeba," so social relationships are constructed and navigated in domains beyond just that of the nation-state polity. That is, under settler-colonialism, tribes also make use of racialization as "signals" that determine the structure of social organization—sometimes in ways that are, in the end, self-destructive. Slime molds

surprise, however, since their morphology is transformational: they look and act at turns like fungi, plants, and animals. It should *not* be surprising then, that these organisms inspire disgust or fear, being that they may represent what Jeffrey Jerome Cohen calls a “category crisis,” earning them a place in the imagination alongside monsters or aliens:

Refusal to participate in the classificatory “order of things’ is true of monsters generally; they are disturbing hybrids whose externally incoherent bodies resist attempts to include them in any systematic structuration. And so the monster is dangerous, a form suspended between forms that threatens to smash distinctions.¹⁵²

Distinctions between taxons are as well defended by a static worldview as structural oppositions are (like alive/dead, inside/outside, male/female, and, I would argue, dark/light, fullblood/mixedblood, or urban/reservation). Perhaps, then, what is unsettling about myxomycota speaks volumes more about the fearful person than it does about the fearsome being.

An instructive allegory for social organization and processes,¹⁵³ individual slime mold cells recognize others of their own kind, (i.e. their relatives, regardless of morphology). In that sense, they recognize a category of relationality, using a language humans cannot speak. Those relatives—or cells—who share goals and a particular environment, join together for purposes of locomotion, food gathering, and reproduction. As they combine and join together, they exercise both collective and individual will. From a slime-mold perspective, (if such an imaginative exercise is allowed), it might be fortuitous for slime molds to characteristically elude the urge of humans to define them, since that feature makes them resistant to opportunistic human cooptation and commodification.¹⁵⁴ More plainly, slime mold cells’ ability to recognize their own relatives, to join with or split from an aggregate body of relatives based on shared or divergent goals, is an act self-determination. Further, when (or if) the conglomerate body splits apart through asexual reproduction into many individual pieces, there is no hierarchy between the

resultant bodies; they are essentially clones.¹⁵⁵ After such a split, the resulting bodies are neither progenitor or descendent, so authenticity or purity of the bodies cannot be mapped.

It should go without saying that the organization and existence of slime mold does not depend upon scientists' recognition of their intra- and inter-cellular relationships. Regardless of what empirical research scientists do in a lab, slime mold cells still come together, move, thrive, or divorce, so-to-speak, and start new collectives. Indeed, when they do suffer the act of definition, they are often misrecognized. Historically, human misunderstanding of the intra- and interrelationships of slime mold cells and bodies shape interactions between myxomycetes and humans. That is, some people will not see slime molds at all, or if they do see them, they may think they're seeing nefarious aliens rather than terrestrial species who really get along just fine with or without humans.¹⁵⁶ When fears are triggered, people may recoil, kick, stomp, or otherwise attempt to destroy them. Alternately, when scientists bring slime molds into the laboratory to study and define them in human terms, myxomycetes lose the freedom to exercise their collective will; they can no longer live in their chosen habitat, they are constrained by the walls of their petri dishes, and cannot reproduce according to their own choices. The Western process of identification and definition is therefore often an act of *misrecognition* and the imposition of a limited use-value onto the organism. Controlled by humans, the slime mold's purpose shifts, and becomes foreign and antagonistic to the slime-mold's natural relationships, environment, and self-determination. It seems to me that this definitional process is both analogous to the work of a gaffer on a blob of glass, and the effect of external definitions of identity and boundaries in treaty language. Transformational capabilities are slowed, relationships between people and peoples are constrained by formal (codified) language, and relationships in places suffer under the pressure to commodify and control.

The Gaffer Effect

Years after my introduction to slime molds, and now, as a junior scholar engaged in the production and teaching of Indigenous Studies, I am excited by any life or existence that defies

the rationalist bent to impose onto life forms a language of authoritative definitions: the unilinear, cartographical, bordered, and hierarchical structures that constrain the meaning of identities, self-determination, places, and the exercise of sovereignty. If slime molds can defy the Western will to freeze dynamism and border crossings (whether definitional or spatial boundaries); and if slime molds can thwart the hegemonic impulse to bind both will and collective action behind borders or “with nouns and deverbatives” (i.e. ossifying discourse),¹⁵⁷ then I want to learn from that kind of organism.

My interest in slime mold continues to grow after reflection on some of my academic training in literary studies, with courses designed at first to teach me structural and formal literary analysis (especially as framed by scholars in New Criticism),¹⁵⁸ since I discovered that even though the techniques are not as straightforward as glassblowing, formal analyses shape the meaning or utilitarian function of the object of study, regardless of where the scholar’s work resides in terms of “discipline.” Like errant tools and elements applied to hot glass, interpretive accidents can be destructive, especially when it comes to Indigenous texts, the people who create such texts, and the Indigenous peoples that are purportedly represented by figments of the collective European or Euro-American imagination in other texts; these sites are where evaluative judgments are made, propogated, and sometimes internalized. Without a consideration of the worldviews, histories, and relationships of the author, interpretation of the object of the text can be an example of misrecognition. The ideological part of any person’s subjectivity and experience that they cannot see or recognize contributes to acts of violent definition, violent incorporation, or violent shattering of the defined object. So, as a younger scholar, formalist and structuralist techniques were drilled into me, and for a time, I was convinced by the pretense of elegance that these basic tools and analytical manipulations needed not only to be mastered, but were the only legitimate methodology for analyzing texts; these tools and methods were the foundation, I was told, and all other nuance would be built atop of

that foundation. Since I remembered being told to “go back, and don’t use color until you master the forms,” I was, for a time, dutiful.

As indicated, formal analyses and the epistemologies embedded in the assumed authority of certain Western academic and legal institutions, is, in many cases, a way to cage meaning and effect epistemic violence to both Indigenous thought and Indigenous lives. So, as an alternative to the tools offered by my early literary academic overlords, the “blob” analogies have given me ready terminology emergent from my direct experiences and from my interrelationships with other-than-human life, despite some theorists’ sentiments that “analogies are slippery customers and too-easy friends.”¹⁵⁹ But I don’t apologize for the way my ideopistememes work, or for the way they derive from my observations and relationships. While I cautiously respect mastery of form along with established Western literary theories, philosophies, and methods of analysis, I do so inasmuch as they are tools at my disposal, appropriate for certain contexts and purposes, just like the tools available to me at my old glasswork bench. But, part of my respect for these tools is akin to my respect for elements as powerful as fire. Like fire, structural analyses and definitions are both necessary and dangerous; they may be useful in creative or nurturing endeavors, but in many other contexts, they are disruptive, all-consuming, or utterly shattering. The subjectivity and context of the analyst can place a boundary or meaning onto a work that blocks the view (and therefore consideration) of Indigenous authors’ relationships. Some of my Indigenous scholar-friends see the latter sorts of usages as justification for the abandonment of all non-Indigenous theory and I can see their point. Certainly, many of those tools have epistemic and ontological foundations that differ from my own orientation, and their use has, in many ways and many disciplinary fields, been dogmatically prescribed as the only rational methodology for understanding humans, their social organization, their discourses, and the world. The rationalist or positivist orientation embedded in the praxes of these tools are sometimes the source of intractable conflict with both my worldview and axiological orientation, since to define, fix, and constrain—regardless of genre

and without regard to culture and epistemological orientations—carries inherently violent risks, having both the potential to incorporate and erase, or freeze and fragment the object.

On the other hand, it is possible to recognize categories in terms of how the subjects relate to one another rather than naturalizing the hegemony of structural oppositions and linearity derived from classical Western ontologies.¹⁶⁰ Relationships, being a series of exchanges, are in continual motion.¹⁶¹ Once fixed, however, a relationship, an idea, a process, a nation, or an identity, is vulnerable. Like a colorful flourish—perhaps a dash of yellow on the rim of a vase, or as semiotic ornamentation lain atop a rigid, fixed structure—any act of definition carries the potential to fold ones' being into hegemonic structures, and, by doing so, suspend animation, like a pinned butterfly in an entomologist's display case. However, the dash of yellow, on a glass vase is a reminder that while fixity makes the object vulnerable, such stasis is an illusion.

Even though literary scholars routinely perform acts of identification, analysis, and definition, it seems to me that ethical theory favors processes, or movement, and the dynamics of interrelationality. Such was the goal of Fredrik Barth and colleagues in their 1967 game-changer, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: the Social Organization of Culture Difference*. In this much-cited collection of essays, the authors debate with structural-functionalist anthropologists to argue that on an individual level, group membership is self-ascribed and negotiated between members of a group, while collective identity is ascribed by others outside the group “in interaction,” viz. relationally, through external recognition, and thus, externally defined.¹⁶² Similar to taxonomic identification imposed by scientists onto slime molds, colonial governments extend federal recognition to Indigenous nations (complete with the requirement to codify how we recognize each other)—and while there are some benefits to federal recognition of sovereignty and tribal membership, the codified structures that define such identities act like the slime-mold's petri-dish, so-to-speak, creating structures that “fix” Indigenous peoples (as groups and individuals), making certain parties vulnerable. Commenting on such structures in

the context of climate change and tribal nations' ability to adapt and survive to changing relationships (in terms of seasons, waters, beings and plants, for example), philosopher Kyle Powys Whyte (Potawatomi) says that treaties and other binding discursive structures “reduce the adaptive capacity” of Indigenous peoples, since they impose limitations on tribal nations while “ensuring [settler] flexibility.”¹⁶³ Granted, Boasian approaches to social science, New Critical or formalist literary dogmatism, legal or biological definitions of race, nation, or ethnicity by blood quantification or borders, seem so anachronistic that they make a too easy target, but their “name it and claim it” premises still have purchase and power in legal, social, and academic spheres. Further, Indigenous peoples have internalized these structures and have redeployed them to the detriment of self-determination and sovereignty.

As mentioned, then, I appreciate the flexibility and inherent resistance to domination embodied in organisms similar to the blob-like slime mold, and I suppose my methodology for this chapter is an effort to resist the “gaffer effect” on Indigenous peoples, tribal nations, their cultural products, worldviews, and especially, their relationships.

Freezing *The Blob*

Following the motion of the slime mold is fascinating; I ponder what it means for Indigenous theorists to observe such an organism's life-cycle processes, its vulnerabilities, its means of survival, its organization of “self,” and its tendency to exercise its collective will. For these reasons, and for an inquiry into what makes a “blob” frightening, the classic horror film, *The Blob* (1958), likewise intrigues me.¹⁶⁴ Its anti-hero bears an obvious consanguinity with slime molds, represented as an anthropophagous gob of goo from space that grows in mass with each human it engulfs. Its first earthling-meal is an aged Olin Howlin, who violently thrusts a stick into a meteorite, which releases a clear, jelly-like mass that clings to the stick. Olin stares at the goo, ostensibly to decode and define this alien material. To his horror, Olin finds that the mass has some means of locomotion and intentionality: instead of just dripping off of the stick like a gob of clear glass batch, it defies gravity, lunges upward and sticks to him, causing great

pain as it covers his hand. Whether it excretes something that causes pain, or whether the Blob is hot like molten glass, is never explained.¹⁶⁵

The young protagonists, Steve and Jane (Steve McQueen and Aneta Corseaut), see the meteorite fall from the sky as they neck on lovers' lane, and go investigate. They find the old man and take him to a doctor, but soon, they discover that the amoeba-like creature has consumed the old man entirely, along with his doctor and nurse. As Steve and Jane attempt to warn people of the threat, they turn first to police and parents, though all but one of the authority figures disbelieve the teenagers. Police return the teens to their respective homes; Jane's father sends her to bed, and Steve is also banished to his bedroom for the night. The two teens sneak out of their houses, meet up, and convince some of their peers to help them figure out how to stop the ravenous foe. The Blob has by now changed from clear to red, possibly from its diet of townspeople including a projectionist and some movie patrons—mostly teenagers—who the Blob engulfed while they viewed *Daughter of Horror* (1955) at the Colonial Theater.¹⁶⁶ Steve and Jane find that the Blob can pass underneath doors and through grated heater vents. Besides its flexibility and adaptability, it is resistant to acid, electricity, fire and bullets. Nothing can contain the Blob. It splits its body in order to pass through ventilation ducts, before reforming on the other side. In an attempt to escape the Blob by hiding in a chilly meat-locker, Steve and Jane fearfully watch the “monster” slip under the door towards them, but when it senses the cold, it retracts, allowing their escape. Later, the Blob engulfs a diner with Steve and a few other people inside. They are trapped, and unable to leave the basement, though Steve has contact with the police through a telephone. He has an epiphany, and remembers that the Blob is vulnerable to cold. Outside of the diner, Jane's father—also the school principal—rounds up a group of young people to fetch all twenty of the high school's fire-extinguishers so that they can freeze and immobilize the mass. A U.S. Air Force jet is called in to transport the now frozen alien to the Arctic, where presumably, it will remain in suspended animation, fixed for all time, unless, of course, the Arctic melts. Presciently, the film hints that this scenario is plausible, since

before the credits roll, across the screen looms a huge comic-sans question mark superimposed over the red Blob, which lays still on the frozen horizon.

Like the gelatinous phase of some slime molds, the Blob surrounds its food and ingests it whole through absorption, leaving behind what it cannot digest. Even though the Blob looks much more like molten glass than a slime mold, I'm certainly not the first to recognize the similarities between the two, as Brandon Condon, a 2007 plant pathology graduate student at Cornell University notes in his blog, "Beware! The Slime Mold!" He explains the behavior and structure of an indigenous Earth organism (lower-case "i"-indigenous), not the fictional, alien blob:

. . . Slime molds begin their life cycle as a single, mononucleate cell. This cell can switch depending on its environment between a swimming cell with flagella and a crawling amoeba. It swims or crawls around in search of food, until one day it decides to mate and fuse with another single cell. Fusion is what distinguishes the plasmodial from cellular slime molds. Plasmodial slime molds crawl around, ingesting bacteria through absorption and digesting them intracellularly, growing and growing into a large multinucleated mass, the plasmodium. The plasmodium has no cell wall, and no membrane dividing its many nuclei: it is a single giant cell with many nuclei enclosed by a single membrane. Cellular slime molds are actually many single cells aggregating and acting as a plasmodium, but they maintain their cellular integrity.

Hopefully you have already noticed a few similarities between The Blob and a plasmodial slime mold. The Blob's feeding habits are quite like a slime mold. Slowly crawling around, the Blob searches out its food, surrounds it, and absorbs it. Slime molds do the same thing, even absorbing particles they cannot digest and passing them out the other side, always hoping to engulf more bacteria. Is this any different from The Blob absorbing an entire phone booth to eat the waitress

inside? Of course, The Blob has evolved to eat people (and kittens), not just bacteria, but this is appears to be a common mutation acquired in space.¹⁶⁷

Making a comparison of the Blob's mode of consumption to the slime mold's would lead to the recognition of pop-culture's postwar anxieties about American consumerism, and that's the direction taken in Bruce Kawin's short essay included in the 2000 Criterion Collection DVD rerelease. Kawin points out that the original 1950s American movie-going audience "may have felt threatened as consumers," since they might have "forgotten the War and wanted to live in a world of play, their complacent desire to stuff themselves with goods and good times had shown itself to be a monster."¹⁶⁸ On the one hand, *The Blob* expresses right-oriented fears of communism, but since the Blob completely engulfs the *Colonial* Theater, one might also interpret the Blob as a leftist critique of consumer capitalism, or of the monstrosity of "the social," in Hannah Arendt's terms.¹⁶⁹ That is, Arendt's concern is the tendency of "the social" to behave monstrously, to paralyze individual agency, and to incorporate the individual into the body of the social. Since one way capitalism works is through the seemingly paradoxical effect of economic individuation and concomitant absorption into the "social," Arendt's noun, the "social," is represented by political theorist Hannah Fenichel Pitkin as the "Blob": a paralyzing mass that absorbs the individual, then becomes more powerful as a consumer.

The opportunities for such ambivalence are further nuanced beyond such binaries, precisely because of the Blob's absolute illegibility, and the impotence of rational strategies to contain such a "monster." These nuances, while of interest in their own right, are taken up by film scholars such as Kawin, but for my purposes, the anthropophagic Blob can be compared to slime molds, and perhaps unsurprisingly, Othered groups that EuroAmericans feared in the post-war era. Indeed, the Blob may even represent tit-for-tat EuroAmerican anxiety regarding the potential for *indian*¹⁷⁰ retribution, borne by a nation that both suppresses consciousness of its own blob-like features (its anthropophagia, for example), and the way that it maintains its own flexibility while suppressing the flexibility of those it consumes.

No matter what taxonomical form the “eater” takes in pop-culture products, whether a vampire, zombie, alien, or mutant flora and fauna, anthropophagism is often interpreted as a representation of bloated consumerism and colonial expansionism. Of course, the “alien” feature of many fictional anthropophagous monsters can be read in literary and film studies as anxieties about a strange Other—and in this case, a *red* Other—one that must be defined, immobilized, and expelled in order to purify and liberate a community. Says Jeffrey Jerome Cohen in reference to Cyclopes, who were alien to the Greeks: the one-eyed man-eaters represented the “quintessential xenophobic rendition of the foreign (the *barbaric*—that which is unintelligible within a given cultural-linguistic system),” whereas its food—those who live “within a system of tradition and custom” like the townspeople of *The Blob*, “are devoured, engulfed, made to vanish from the public gaze: cannibalism as incorporation into the wrong cultural body.”¹⁷¹

I consider it worthwhile to now invert this structural opposition for a moment, like switching to multiplication to check the accuracy of long division, since whether or not my calculations are correct, at least I’m showing my work. To that end, if the non-animist Western representations of the (Earthling) slime mold portray the organism as alien, unintelligible, and just plain weird, could Indigenous peoples also suffer the same representational alienation as demonstrated in *The Blob*? Does the filmic alien Blob represent xenophobic anxieties of the Indigenous-as-alien? Through application of the film’s internal structural logic, who does the Blob immobilize and ingest? Whose identity is erased? While no references to Indigenous, Native, or otherwise *indian* people appear in the film, their absence is significant, since the engulfment of the *Colonial* Theatre by an unintelligible red Blob could signify anxieties emergent from the redefinition and relocation of American Indians during the 1950s termination era. In that era, American Indians were noticeably *on the move*. Certainly, that historical context is important to consider. It is therefore at least possible that fears associated with a new flush of “alien” (i.e. Native American) presence in white American cities sparked fears of miscegenation or cultural loss, and thus find expression through *The Blob*.

How Immobilization or “Freezing” Precedes Consumption

But if the Blob incorporates humans (and in the film, only *white* humans), what does the slime mold eat and what does it leave behind? For the plasmodial myxomycetes that scientists call *Dictyostelium*, the usual fare is bacteria, yeasts and fungi, leaving behind rigid cellulose-based structures. But one of these social amoebas—*D. caveatum*—eats other social amoebas, like *D. discoideum*, for example.¹⁷² In its predation mode, *D. caveatum* will surround and trap another *Dictyostelium*, say, a *D. discoideum*, and excrete a chemical that fixes the prey in its early reproductive stage so that it cannot complete the process of sending up its reproductive stalks, effectively blocking the release of spores.¹⁷³ Frozen and fixed, like Frodo in the clutches of Shelob, or Olin Howlin’s seized-up hand, *D. discoideum* cannot escape, let alone reproduce itself. *D. caveatum* eats the entire body, and incorporates *D. discoideum* into its own body. There is no new social amoeba created by this act, and no hybridization between species occurs. That is, the slime mold eaten for breakfast has lost the identity and self-determination of its former self, since it has been “incorporated into the wrong cultural body.” Admittedly, there is a value-judgment in the word, “wrong,” which isn’t fit for application to slime mold life. But as illustrative analogies go, this process is still a useful one to observe, since notably, consumption in this case is preceded by the mechanism of *freezing*.¹⁷⁴

To me, *D. caveatum*’s freezing chemicals represent the effects of the gaffer’s tools—the jacks and paddles, for example—and likewise, colonialism—in that both the cannibalizing organism and the gaffer force the Other (the prey, or Indigenous people)—to take one form, to stop moving, and to fill one reduced purpose, determined by the “fixer.” The gaffer’s object, whether a vase, a test-tube, or a chandelier, becomes a commodity, and thus reproduces the gaffer’s social and economic life. Native people are subject to the same kind of immobilization and incorporation into the goals of “gaffers,” so-to-speak, when their bodies, lands, religions, relations, and aesthetics are defined in such a way as to foreclose political dynamism, constraining action to a limited set of options that become increasingly unattractive as the world

around us changes. Those who are fixed through treaty, law, policy (and the internalization of settler-colonial discourse) become commodified and incorporated into the colonial, or “wrong” national body.

Of course it might seem like a mistake to compare slime molds to “cannibals,” both because of the racist and ethnocentric history of that term’s etymology, and also because such usage implies, first, that *D. caveatum* is autophagous when it ingests *D. discoideum*, even though the current binomial nomenclature indicates the two are not the same species. And further, my use of such a term might seem to carry a connotative value-judgment against the slime mold, but that would be anthropocentric. Instead, I use the term because I lack a better one to indicate that kind of ingestion.

Naming and Claiming, Definition and Ownership

As for both kinds of *Dictyostelium*, I admire them for what they teach me. To wit, the *D. caveatum* teaches me that there are actions I wish to avoid: actions that might constitute violence and incorporation of some (usually marginalized people and entities) and into others (a homogenous ruling social body and ontology), both discursive and structural. They demonstrate patterns of relationships that work like this:

Person A performs action X on Person B

Action X freezes Person B

Person A absorbs Person B

Person A is strengthened

Person B disappears

Person A performs action X on Person C

And the cycle repeats, *ad infinitum*.

“Person,” in this instance, represents individuals, social institutions, and their discourses.

Certainly, I wish to avoid the actions performed by “Person A,” both as the actor and as the object of action, and I hope to point out what we risk when we allow ourselves to be immobilized

by an uncomplicated, single-faceted definition. Along these lines, a recent conversation with someone I met at a gathering of one of my tribes might be illustrative.¹⁷⁵ My conversation partner (a lawyer), argued that Native people should create more educational media for public consumption as a means to “define ourselves” instead of allowing the settler-colonial imagination to define us. I replied that although it’s clear that self-representation is an important part of disempowering stereotypes, my feeling is that *definition*, as a discursive act—even if the group “defines” itself—uses one of the most effective strategies of colonization because the act of definition *fixes* the object of definition, and renders it (in this case, Indigenous peoples), controllable, domitable and ultimately, consumable. When we do it to ourselves, such internalized colonization represents an epidemiological crisis.

Motion as a Model of Sovereignty and Resistance

Fixity *vs.* dynamism represents a clash between an Indigenous metaphysics of motion and a Western metaphysics of stasis. Re-familiarization with Indigenous concepts of constitutional monism—the idea that reality essentially consists of one thing—and the resilience inherent to transformation and motion—could illuminate potential for new-old ways to mobilize Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination. As Gerald Vizenor writes, “Natives have always been on the move, by chance, necessity, barter, reciprocal sustenance, and by trade over extensive routes; the actual motion is a natural right, and the tribal stories of transmotion are a continuous sense of visionary sovereignty.”¹⁷⁶ Part of that “visionary sovereignty” would be the dynamic self-representation in and out of “tribal stories,” where interrelationships are an essential part of that representation. Further, key to the exercise of self-determination would be an actively negotiated representational strategy that leaves options open for the tribal “body’s” morphological and behavioral variation, in response to circumstances, interrelationality, and the environment.¹⁷⁷

It also needs to be said that people tend to mistakenly assume that the definition of Indigenous tribal sovereignty comes only from federal judicial, legislative, or executive

government branches, and once defined, sovereignty is “given” or “handed down” by a “higher” authority to a “lower” authority. Such notions exemplify the internalization of biological, binomial nomenclature and its taxonomical hierarchies; the fixed power-relations are all but completely naturalized through a static structure. Again, many Indigenous individuals (and thus, their governments) have internalized this structure as well. However, sovereignty and self-determination are *exercised* by the collective will of Indigenous peoples, and no nation can *bestow* it upon another group. One nation can only *recognize* another’s sovereignty.¹⁷⁸ Note that these italicizations all indicate action-words; they describe motion, not states of being, and as such, they are concerned with relationships. Motion, of course, isn’t possible without relationships, or interrelationships. For motion to happen, there must be something to hold onto, exchange with, or resist.

I don’t pretend to always understand slime molds as a biologist, botanist, or myxomycologist would, but myxomycetes have plenty to teach in terms of social organization. For example, they help me think about the possibilities of an eco-critical Indigenous relationship to sovereignty and the state, and the possibility of new morphological expressions—new or revitalized expressions of interrelationality and organization. The faces and actions of tribal nations have the potential to manifest sovereignty if dynamism and animism are expected rather than simply structured through settler-colonial discourse that replicates settler-colonial flexibility and Indigenous fixity. Though not as romantic or “traditional” as lessons learned from the Buffalo, Bear, or Coyote, the “lowly” slime molds provide a moving example of how the individual and the collective are interrelated in Indigenous ontologies. And perhaps the blob-like organization of Indigenous collectives around common goals—the way our structures ebb, flow, split and rejoin—should be recognized and valued for the way that they offer strategies for resistance to stasis, incorporation, and commodification. Perhaps the cellular slime molds, with their decentralized intelligence, externalized memory, and synchronous pulsation—can be seen as cooperative collectives and as models of Indigenous kinship and governance: the structural

antithesis to centralized, hierarchical government. Their internal order, flexible structures, and their corporeal expressions are derived from, responsive to, and part of, the particular places in which they live. Perhaps, like us, their diverse forms, their modes of cooperation, their defiance to stasis, and their resistance to binomial nomenclature, are the features that make these other-than-human-beings what might be some of our most eloquent teachers.

Chapter 3

The Usual and Accustomed Places of Indigenous Life and Death

In the previous chapter, I discuss motion, “blobs,” and the Eurowestern urge to contain and control all things through definition, hierarchical categorization, and the policing of boundaries. Such boundaries and categories can be spatial or geo-local; they can be discursive; they are always political, and indeed, they can demarcate identity and produce limitations on human rights. The problem is not categorization *per se*. Indeed, “[c]ategorization is a universal cognitive strategy, a tool humans use to cope with the complexity of the world,” and I do not argue that Indigenous ontics dispense with categorization.¹⁷⁹ Instead, I reiterate here that the ontological dominance of atomization, individualism, and unidirectional linearity of time and human “development” as conceived in the west, means that *what* is violently policed by *wétikoism*—the norms and divergences, centers and margins—are nearly always reducible to what people are perceived to *be* (as nouns, or things), rather than how they behave—how they *verb*, and interrelate with all else. These western categories are based on a variety of intersectional human features, including, but not limited to race (as perceived or as claimed), economic status, nationality, sex, gender, language, religion, ethnicity, culture, age, health (e.g. physical and mental vigor, sobriety), hygiene, familial roles, education, and occupation. Indeed, even though the urge to categorize is universal, the kind of categories that Eurowestern epistemologies and ontologies create are “also the very cornerstone of stereotype and following from that, prejudice.”¹⁸⁰ When a group or individual violates the accepted norms of such categories through what I call “movement” beyond the boundaries of one or more intersectional categories, vilification ensues. That is, people who have internalized the notion that such categories are valid, definitive, and rigid, begin to act with discursive, psychological, and/or material violence against the one who has violated norms. Policing adherence to Eurowestern norms through discursive vilification is intended to restrict or erase difference (from the

Eurowestern norm), since maintaining the integrity of the aforementioned categories, (or at least, the illusion of integrity), reduces difference, and thus, uncertainty and fear. The “violator” is accordingly perceived as monstrous, despicable, or otherwise fearsome. As a result, in the contact zones between Europeans and Indigenous peoples, people who commit violations against Eurowestern categories have historically been described with a spectrum of denigrating terms, such as “red devil,” “demon,” or “cannibal.” Ironically, this terminological deployment is typical of *wétiko* discourse; the human subject who becomes described as monstrous in these interactions is not only labeled as fearsome, but also becomes *fixed* by the freezing nature of the terminology, and therefore vulnerable to *wétiko* consumption: that is, death. In this chapter, and in an attempt to ground this theory in material experience, I give one contemporary example of this phenomena at work, and describe how an Indigenous man became a victim of this process on the streets of Seattle. I demonstrate how Indigenous authors anticipate and respond to this and other instances of *wétikoism*.

Bullets and Bodies: the Shooting of John T. Williams

On August 30, 2010, on-duty rookie Seattle Police Officer Ian Birk took the life of John T. Williams, a Nuu-chah-nulth woodcarver of the Ditidaht Nation in British Columbia, whose repertoire of at least 250 designs along with their traditional stories had been passed on to him by his ancestors.¹⁸¹ Shortly after reports of the slaying surfaced, police and news media commentary emphasized Williams’ criminal record, chronic alcoholism, and mental illness, even though Williams did not pose any threat to Birk or bystanders.¹⁸² Months before an internal firearms review board found the shooting “unjustified and egregious,” some media outlets obtained and broadcast edited footage of police interactions with Williams that occurred in the weeks prior to the shooting, yet these incidents had no relevance to Birk’s first and only encounter with Williams.¹⁸³ Anthony Vicari, who viewed the Q13 FOX News report, wrote that “the video shows a mild-mannered John T. Williams being singled out as a target for constant harassment by the SPD,”¹⁸⁴ yet the Q13 broadcast was clearly an attempt to portray Williams as

a dangerous individual. The story was picked up by other news media beyond the region and included a statement from Birk's attorney, who said that "John Williams' behavior alone caused his tragic end."¹⁸⁵ Outraged at such attempts to blame the victim by constructing Williams and other Native American people who live on the streets as *homo sacer*, or expendable,¹⁸⁶ Seattle area urban Natives and their allies controverted this discursive diminishment of the police officer's crime and of Williams' humanity, by claiming Williams as "our brother."¹⁸⁷ As the community collectively worked through the stages of grief, regional Natives expose, counter, and protest the legitimacy of this and other violent colonial actions that end or otherwise circumscribe Native lives—acts occurring particularly in Seattle, but also in the Pacific Northwest more broadly, and indeed, across the hemisphere.

In remembrance of Williams and other fallen relatives, Indigenous people use their creative works to contest conditions imposed by what many believe to be an illegitimate and violent hegemonic presence. Drawing from a long literary and aesthetic tradition of unsettling nation-state-imposed boundaries, identity demarcations, and authority over space and belongingness, Seattle's urban Natives engage in what Cherokee scholar Jace Weaver calls *communitism*. Described as a combined focus on community and activism particular to Native American literary production, the portmanteau represents a "proactive commitment to Native community, including [. . .] the 'wider community' of Creation itself."¹⁸⁸ Through their aestheticized responses, Seattle's Natives engage in the "promot[ion of] communitist values [. . .] to participate in the healing of the grief and sense of exile felt by Native communities and the pained individuals in them,"¹⁸⁹ and indeed, to re-assert Indigenous territorial entitlement. Communitist Indigenous works that pre-date the four-second encounter between Ian Birk and John T. Williams, as well as the aesthetic production that arose after the tragedy, span, stretch, blend, and refer to a multitude of generic possibilities to break open the confines of settler ideologies around legitimate lifestyles and Indigenous occupancy of urban spaces.

Living a Life of Resistance

Out of respect for John T. Williams, and to complicate the aesthetic resistance of Native communitist artists, poets, authors, and musicians, it is important to recognize that the woodcarver himself also challenged prescribed and policed categories, both aesthetically and existentially, and for that, he paid the ultimate price. While the official statements of the Seattle Police Department and news sources alike emphasized Williams' arrest record and substance abuse, it is true that he presented a problem for public service providers and police, but *not on that day*.¹⁹⁰ As agents of the monopolization of legitimate violence, police discipline bodies to categorical conformity, and John, like many marginalized people, did not stay within the neatly demarcated borders of "normal" behavior. The existential threat posed by Williams as the possessor of a racializable Indigenous body with an unsteady gait—a body that manifests Indigenous presence rather than vanishment—would trigger a frontierist, or *wétiko*-like action from Birk, who misread Williams' three-inch jackknife as an instrument of violence rather than a tool of creativity. Colonial ideology would structure Williams as the fearsome figure of the frontier, with Birk as an agent of sanctioned violence. Creative Native discourse that emerged after the shooting asserts the historically-rooted connection of Williams and other American Indigenous peoples to Seattle's landscape, contra domination's erasive action and ideas.

In the final chapter of this dissertation, I end with a description of how Indigenous stories depict some means of defeating a windigo. But here, during the pre- and post-shooting discourse, and in a variety of venues, Indigenous activists resist *wétiko* discourse by reconstructing "a people" through: 1) reaffirmation of kinship bonds; 2) declarative reminders of continuous Indigenous place-based relationships in the region, including its urban areas; 3) demonstrating continuity with local Indigenous aesthetic heritages; and, 4) disturbing rigid, stereotyped notions of "traditional" and "authentic" Indian creative content and aesthetics.¹⁹¹ Even though the scope of this chapter does not allow for a thorough discussion of each of these reconstructive and resistant moves, I do touch on each one. Moreover, the connective thread

that I follow charts the means by which a small selection of *postindian* texts respond to *wétiko* hegemony and violence against Native peoples in general, and against John T. Williams in particular.¹⁹² They are contemporary examples that defy “proper” (or colonial) containment in terms of genre, venue, behavior, and place.

Similar to Weaver’s notion of communitism, Indigenous resistant works perform what poet and scholar Dean Rader refers to as “aesthetic activism,” accomplished through a tradition of “Indigenous interdisciplinarity.”¹⁹³ This tradition is highly referential, intertextual, and politicized.¹⁹⁴ Salient in Rader’s work is his understanding of LeAnne Howe’s “collative theory of tribalogy,”¹⁹⁵ described by Howe as:

Native stories by Native authors, no matter what form they take—novel, poem, drama, memoir, film, or history—seem to pull together all the elements of the storyteller’s tribe, meaning the people, the land, multiple characters, and all their manifestations and revelations, and connect these in past, present, and future milieu. (Present and future milieu means a world that includes non-Indians.) The Native propensity for bringing things together, for making consensus, and for symbolically connecting one thing to another becomes a theory about the way American Indians tell stories. Oral or written, I have called this genre ‘tribalogy.’¹⁹⁶

As a process of temporal, relational, environmental, and semiotic interconnection with the cultural work of communitist literatures, tribalogy is a process that for the Indigenous aesthetic activist, who works in and writes about Natives in urban spaces. Such work must begin with home before branching out in a web-like series of connections to further-afield places and peoples.

It should be clear by now that Weaver and Rader are not alone when they describe what Indigenous communitist or aesthetic activist texts *do*. In addition to providing an example of how contemporary Indigenous people are constructed as fearsome figures in public discourse (from the Euroamerican perspective, that is), in this chapter, my modest contribution to the

discussion aims to show ways that the tribalographical work of communitist texts—especially in the Pacific Northwest, in relation to Native peoples who live in colonized urban spaces—shift the typical postcolonial signifiers known as “borders” and “transnational movement,” when the work is epistemologically and culturally rooted in Indigenous place-based relationships.

In *Red on Red*, Creek scholar Craig Womack argues for Indigenous literary production to be organically anchored to place and nation. Womack models such a relationship through his insistence that “[what] identifies a Creek work . . . in addition to its authorship by a Creek person, is the depiction of geographically specific Creek landscape,” and that “literature is moved closer to activism and politics rather than farther away” when the political connections to clans and lands are foregrounded through tribalographical context, rather than occluded in the more popularly familiar and infantilized retellings of traditional stories.¹⁹⁷ Poet, writer, and filmmaker Sherman Alexie (Coeur D’Alene/Spokane), also plays with and critiques such a “perspective of isolation and provincialism” brought about by retellings of tribal narratives outside of the context of a discursively and physically circumscribed tribal nation.¹⁹⁸ His stories, however, are always rooted in his peoples places and relations (though not language, as Womack advocates), and so, the movement of Alexie’s Indigenous characters within and without tribal-nation boundaries emphasize rootedness, the porosity of Indigenous borders, and the legitimacy of authentic relationships with people and places forged through trans-tribal-national movement.¹⁹⁹

In Sherman Alexie’s film *Smoke Signals* (1998), his Coeur D’Alene characters Velma and Lucy ask Victor Joseph and Thomas Builds The Fire whether the two are carrying their passports, because for Indians leaving the reservation, the United States “is as foreign as it gets.”²⁰⁰ Although the four characters laugh, the object of humor is serious: Alexie’s parody ridicules the logic of imposed colonial authority over American space, despite uninterrupted, ancestral and ancient Indigenous presence in and of the land. In quintessential Alexie style, his characters move through oppressive hegemonical space and imagined borders by mocking the

logic of colonial constructs, even as the constructs are based on colonial fantasies that manifest in *wétikoist* policy, creating tragic, and even deadly realities for the colonized. Wittily resistant, Alexie's creative expressions, like those of other Indigenous North Americans, "contravene Hollywood images; refashion public perceptions of Indians; participate in the linguistic coding of American discourse; and reshape the social, geographic, and cultural map of America."²⁰¹ Indeed, Alexie's collaborator, filmmaker Chris Eyre (Cheyenne/Arapaho), points to the "passport" comment as a consciously political moment in *Smoke Signals*.²⁰² Even so, the film's content and style is dialogic, pairing universal themes with resistance to universalism, while putting the "linguistic coding" of American borders under a microscope.

The discursive coding of borders and surveillance is germane to the justifications used by Birk and his supporters regarding the shooting of John T. Williams. This coding of culturally-inflected positionality informs the discourse of homelessness in relation to Alaska Native, American Indian, and First Nations dislocation, and Indigenous communitism aimed at legitimizing Native presence in Seattle's urban landscape—even the presence of Canadian First Nations citizens. The 2001 Canadian Census reports that 56 percent of Canadian Aboriginals resided in (Canadian) urban areas a decade ago,²⁰³ and according to the 2010 U.S. Census, 78 percent of American Indian and Alaska Natives live "outside of American Indian and Alaska Native areas."²⁰⁴ Data for Canadian Aboriginals residing in U.S. cities is currently unavailable, but the Chief Seattle Club, "a private nonprofit providing hot meals and social services for Native American and First Nations people" had a long relationship with Williams, his family, and numerous Canadian First Nations clients.²⁰⁵ Census data purports to accurately reflect residence and identities of Native Americans through demographic representation, yet, the discursive strategy of U.S. Census Bureau semiotics occlude complex Indigenous identities that are overdetermined by mixedness and displacement, love, diaspora and transnational movement.

Movement of North American Indigenous peoples across the continent begs the question of how belongingness and Indigeneity itself is interpreted, asserted, and mediated “off the reservation,” between tribal national territories, and across colonial borders. Here, of course, the terms of legitimacy are defined and set by federal institutions; such is a characteristic trait of *wétiko* discourse. Categorical strategies of the U.S. Census delegitimize Indigeneity itself by first discursively erasing Indigenous connections, relationships, and treaty-recognized rights to “usual and accustomed places,” and then engages in adjectival identity-erasure through policy, juridical decisions, and police enforcement.

Specifically in Seattle, *wétiko* erasure and incorporation of Indigenous peoples has been ongoing since the earliest days of the metropolis: its identity pitched to the rest of the world involved the appropriation and expropriation of historical Indigenous texts and symbols to display out of context in its public spaces, with concomitant settler re-interpretations of the symbols and their stories.²⁰⁶ When settler recognition of Indigenous peoples’ primacy of place in the region does occur, representation of that primacy by colonialist discourse still distorts that relationship through new narrations in which “visitors and residents alike tell and are told stories about this city: that it is built on Indian land, that that land was taken to build a great metropolis, and that such a taking is commemorated by the city’s Native American imagery. These stories in and of place, these place-stories, define Seattle as a city with an indigenous pedigree,”²⁰⁷ as if the consumption of Indigenous peoples occurred without violence. Indigenous material wealth, either stolen or commissioned, substantiates non-Native entitlement to Native places in this discourse. However, pole narratives communicate information of historical importance to their Indigenous readers, and can delineate or proclaim information about relationships (of people, places, and other-than-human beings).²⁰⁸ In other words, such texts can also be instruments that proclaim, among other things: social roles, entitlements, contracts, histories, responsibilities, and most notably for this conversation—land rights. Illiterate in the language of the poles and other structures ornamented with stylized form-line art of the Pacific

Northwest, colonizers would for the most part refer to them as “grotesque” and “grotesque idols from Alaska and B.C.”²⁰⁹ Or, like the Native captives of Indian Boarding Schools in the U.S. and Canada, the poles would become “civilized,” by virtue of their proximity to white people.²¹⁰

Of course, as the poles and Indigenous peoples’ testimonies across the hemisphere testify, *all* continental lands under the subjection of the United States and Canada are American Indian and/or Native Alaskan “areas.” Any rights to homelands were given up under duress in response to police power, the imposition of EuroAmerican land entitlement philosophies, and their foreign instruments. Furthermore, any rights not expressly given up by treaty are retained by Indigenous peoples through the international concept of sovereignty.²¹¹ Indeed, the U.S. Census Bureau’s reductive insistence on separate racialized categories for mixed American Indians and Native Alaskans (with “black” or “white” for example), as opposed to the “American Indian Alone” category (a neologism now used instead of “full-blood”), is a “conflation [that] masks the territoriality of conquest by assigning colonization to the racialized body, which is then policed in its degrees of whiteness.”²¹² Currently in the United States as elsewhere, authority to set and enforce boundaries depends upon who wields superior martial power.

Until 1978, all United States passport requirements for international border crossings were temporary, and were usually only enforced during wartime. However, during the 19th and early 20th Centuries, passes issued by Bureau of Indian Affairs agents were often required for American Indians who wished to cross their own reservation borders into the United States until the 1924 Indian Citizenship Act. Sherman Alexie, having moved to Seattle in 1987, framed his personal transition to an off-the-rez high school years earlier in terms of a border-crossing, explaining that his decision “might sound self-mythologizing, but [his] flight across the reservation borders was an outrageous and courageous act.”²¹³ Surely for Alexie’s characters who venture past reservation boundaries (and for many contemporary American Indians who are racially read as “Indian”), a shift into the double consciousness of racialization ensues once the border is behind ones’ back. But, the complex sociopolitical identity of Indigenous Americans in

relation to colonizing governments means that racialization causes but one sense of Otherness.²¹⁴ As “Indians,” and as object of racialization, individual Indigenous Americans also become recognized and treated as metonyms for a *former* political group, rather than citizens of contemporary, recognized sovereign nations.²¹⁵

Tethers, Not Boundaries: Defying Fixity through Movement

Even though Alexie’s “What You Pawn, I Will Redeem” pre-dates Birk’s shooting of Williams, the short story set in Seattle pushes against the philosophy and ideology of natural law which represses cognizance of an identifiably Native presence in Seattle.²¹⁶ Such ideological repression renders Indigenous title (as proclaimed by a historical and contemporary Indigenous presence) ultimately indecipherable by the historically unaware and culturally illiterate.²¹⁷ At the same time, Alexie’s short story celebrates the interrelationships of his tribe-specific characters to other Indigenous people/s and places as an enduring fact (by way of Seattle)—relations that Native Americans continue to navigate within colonized Indigenous territory by retelling their personal and tribal-relational histories.²¹⁸ Their multi-generational migrations in and out of Seattle are represented in a variety of oral, photographic, written, and carved records.²¹⁹ Such records track the transnational movement of Ditidaht Nation citizens as antecedent to colonial invasion of regional Indigenous nations by two nation-states.²²⁰ Through their economic subjugation into a wage economy (as part of a complex system of subjugation and incorporation), the Williams family’s transnational migration to Seattle makes them doubly transnational: across the policed Canada-U.S. border, and across tribal-nation borders.

On the surface, “What you Pawn, I Will Redeem” is the story of a homeless Spokane Indian’s quest to buy back his grandmother’s powwow regalia from a pawn shop. Stolen fifty years earlier, the regalia is indeed a “text,” and as such reveals whose labor produced it, and thus, identifies the rightful owner. However, this text is only readable by the members of the protagonists’ family and probably other members of his tribe, that is, it can only be decoded by a specific interpretive community.²²¹ Thus, Alexie’s story exposes and problematizes historical

settler illiteracy and their inability to decode Indigenous signs of property ownership. The stolen-property metaphor goes hand-in-hand with another leitmotif that posits an articulation with an Indigenous conception of place, rather than borders: one that reasserts and recognizes Indigenous “peoplehood” and Indigenous territories as remembered and legitimate, despite the theft of property through machinations of colonialism. That is to say, the short story responds to property theft, including the rights associated with that property (such as the ability to claim relationships to peoples and places). It depicts the violation of relationships as the disruption of Indigenous connections rather than a violation of boundaries. Alexie’s Native characters maintain (and sometimes violate) their own relationships within and across international (transtribal) boundaries—however permeable those boundaries may be—but they also recognize the primacy of other tribal nations’ places, relationships and boundaries, and the peoples who embody these relationships.

In keeping with Alexie’s characteristic fixation on the valences and consequences of racialized double consciousness, he immediately toys with the reality of racially-hinged dialectics. Beginning straight-away with a first person narration that disturbs rigid, stereotyped notions of “traditional” and “authentic” Indian content, Alexie gives the narrator a lively tone that never turns tragic while relating tragic events. The protagonist, Jackson Jackson starts out by explaining: “One day you have a home and the next you don’t, but I’m not going to tell you my particular reasons for being homeless, because it’s my secret story, and Indians have to work hard to keep secrets from hungry white folks,”²²² with the descriptor, “hungry,” implying that Indigenous “secrets” are a particular delicacy for *wétiko*-style consumption. On a foundation critical of the consumptive EuroAmerican salvage ethnography tradition and its characteristic incite to discourse, Alexie’s protagonist will talk, but he will not allow his tale to be turned into poverty porn for readers who might hope for a tale of vanishment.²²³ Instead, the narrator resists what Vizenor calls the “[s]imulation of the tragic [that] has been sustained by the literature of dominance.”²²⁴ Nevertheless, Jackson Jackson adds a few more personal life details

that, while indexing dysfunction and heartbreak, still resists pathos. More noticeable is how Alexie draws on tribalographic knowledge as he creates characters with connections similar to his own. That is, when Alexie writes a Spokane or Coeur D'Alene character, the character ventriloquizes Alexie's connection to his relatives. Temporality and place are centered, even tethered, but unboundaried:

I'm a Spokane Indian boy, an Interior Salish, and my people have lived within a hundred-mile radius of Spokane, Washington, for at least ten thousand years. I grew up in Spokane, moved to Seattle twenty-three years ago for college, flunked out after two semesters, worked various blue- and blue-collar jobs, married two or three times, fathered two or three kids, and then went crazy.²²⁵

Here, Jackson Jackson reaffirms his kinship bonds and reminds readers of continuous Indigenous place-based relationships in the region. Being the territory of Coast Salish peoples, Seattle's proximity to Spokane fits within a reasonable range of what treaty language calls the "usual and accustomed places" that Interior Salish people would have traveled to for trade and for maintenance of intertribal relationships.²²⁶ In other words, the relationship of Spokane peoples to Seattle could be understood as both Indigenous and transnational, given a more complete understanding of the historical and contemporary relationships that Indigenous peoples maintain.

Alexie's depictions of characters' commonalities might at first evoke stereotypical generalizations about Indians, such as Jackson Jackson's statement that "we Indians have built-in pawn-shop radar."²²⁷ Yet it would be inaccurate to take such statements as an indication that Alexie advocates Indigenous universalism, or a writer who is unaware or unconcerned about the potential to reinforce stereotypes. Instead, these representational moves of his necessarily show that North American Indigenous peoples share interrelated histories, familiar socio-economic struggles in colonized spaces, similar relationships to the newcomer society, and compatible epistemologies. These shared features position urban Indigenous Americans as articulated with

the colonizing society in correlative ways: an on-the-ground reality that enables North American Indigenous people to develop group identity in Seattle's urban space *as* Indigenous people, and as a group with multiple allegiances, organized and based on similar values that prioritize relationships with people *and* place. Alexie's tribalographical work thus expands out from his own people in a web-like fashion rather than crisply bordered, and that, in itself, reflects a foundational tribal epistemology.

All through "What You Pawn, I will Redeem," the Indigenous characters are positioned and characterized in relation to their respective tribes or peoples—where they come from—and when a Native character doesn't identify himself with a particular tribe, Alexie's character is "kind of suspicious of him, because he describes himself only as Plains Indian, a generic term, and not by a specific tribe."²²⁸ It has always been difficult for me to read smoothly past Alexie's drive to continually racialize his characters, but this pluralizing move directly resists "generalizing from one tribe's society and culture to all Indians."²²⁹ Identifying a person by tribe denotes who that character's relationships are, including relationships to an essential part of Indigenous identity—that is, to place. Readers may understand why a group of Aleuts "stared out at the bay and cried,"²³⁰ waiting for a boat to take them home (they are in a traditional migrational space rather than "home"); we further get the joke, and imagine the relatively straight route "as the crow flies" on Interstate 90 between Crow Agency and Seattle, when the Crow Indian says he "flew here."²³¹ While this technique may bump into the narrow line between characterization and stereotype, Alexie's quick brush-strokes that denote tribe or people group allow him some technical advantages. He can toss together a mix of tribal peoples in an urban space without unnecessary descriptive flourishes. But more than that, Alexie accurately mixes the broad range of tribal backgrounds represented in Seattle's actual Indigenous population. Whether or not a "Plains Indian" in Seattle is Indigenous or whether he or she is diasporic, depends upon the rubrics used to determine whether crossing into another Indigenous group's home territory is truly a case of border-crossing, or whether that transnational movement

represents the continuity of relationship-centered, pre-contact, porous Indigenous borders and traditional North American Indigenous migration patterns.

If migration is understood as a survival strategy when resources at home are scarce, then homelessness for Seattle's Indian population could be understood as forced migration and displacement—even for Duwamish and other Coast Salish peoples, whose lands are directly beneath the city's cement. And yet, for those whose territories are just over the mountains, (as with Alexie and many of his characters), or just across the Salish Sea from Makah territory in Washington State to British Columbia's Vancouver Island and its imagined U.S./Canadian border (like for John T. Williams and family), the tethers to a particular geographic space on the same continent still have a sense of anchoring North American Indigenous people within a matrix of relationships. They are *of* places that are physically, economically, historically, and socially connected to *this* place (i.e. Seattle). As Jackson Jackson describes his rootedness earlier, he also acknowledges the displacement or wandering that characterizes his life, saying,

I wander the streets with a regular crew—my teammates, my defenders, my posse. It's Rose of Sharon, Junior, and me. We matter to each other if we don't matter to anybody else. Rose of Sharon is a big woman, about seven feet tall if you're measuring over-all effect and about five feet tall if you're only talking about the physical. She's a Yakama Indian of the Wishram variety. Junior is a Colville, but there are about a hundred and ninety-nine tribes that make up the Colville, so he could be anything.²³²

Again, Alexie's tribalographic knowledge fills the biographical background of his characters. Alexie is intimately aware that the Colville Confederated Tribes and Yakama Nation are nearby nations, both comprised of a several distinct tribes or bands (12 and 7, respectively). They are neighbors and relatives of the Spokane and other Interior Salish people, with deeply intertwined relationships to each other and lands and waterways of the Eastern Washington/Oregon/British Columbia region. Like Williams, who with his older brothers Rick, Sam, and Dave, named themselves "The Wrecking Crew" and sometimes "the Four Horsemen," Jackson Jackson's

“posse” looked after each other as relatives do, and through their wanderings would appear and disappear in each other’s lives, akin to the way that one journalist describes “the salmonlike quality [of] the [Williams] brothers’ wanderings and reunions.”²³³ Continual naming of place, people, and ancestral connections reaffirms Seattle as legitimate Indigenous “area” and resists both the gaze and discourse of erasure, regardless of whether or not these characters (and human beings) have a permanent address or sleep each night in a particular residential structure.

Laughter through the problems of homelessness is a survival technique used by the Native American characters in Alexie’s short story, which correlates with Indigenous axiological and aesthetic heritages (see my discussion of Coyote, *Heyókħas*, and sacred clowns in Chapter 5). Basil Johnston (Anishinaabe) also highlights the importance of humor, claiming that “behind and beneath the comic characters and the comic situations [in tribal stories] exists the real meaning of the story . . . what the tribe understood about human growth and development.”²³⁴ In the short story, a non-Native police officer asks Jackson, “You Indians. How the hell do you laugh so much? I just picked your ass off the railroad tracks, and you’re making jokes. Why the hell do you do that?”²³⁵ Jackson Jackson responds, “[laughter says] something about the inherent humor of genocide”—an ironically funny remark about something inherently *unfunny*, so the two laugh together, understanding that survival requires its own emotional antiseptics.

However, depending upon their epistemological orientation, readers may interpret Jackson Jackson and friends as uprooted and shiftless or worse—since stereotypes that people bring to the reading may reinforce the “[conception] of Indians in terms of their deficiencies according to White ideals rather than in terms of their own various cultures,” and in so doing, make a “moral evaluation” of Indians.²³⁶ Again, such discursive moves are characteristic of *wétiko* discourse as described by Forbes. If audience response as registered in comments to online reports of the Williams shooting and its investigation are any indication, a seemingly significant (though perhaps unquantifiable) portion of readers uncritically accept and parrot

this *homo sacer* representation of Williams, saying that Williams “brought [the shooting] upon himself,” or that the shooting was “the end result of the choices Williams made in his life.” Indeed, these online and usually anonymous comments demonstrate the spread of *wetiko* disease through discourse: it is “propaganda” that Forbes says, “provides ammunition,” or “bullets which they can use to destroy a people’s pride, dignity, and psychological means of survival through statements like ‘Your people are savages’ or ‘Your people stood in the path of development’.”²³⁷ Indeed, even the previously well-meaning journalist’s description of the Williams brothers’ “salmonlike migrations” would render humans as both “slaughterable” and “suitable objects to be consumed by *wétiko* cannibals,” for Forbes, even though this outcome is likely not the intent of the journalist.²³⁸ To further parse this pattern of *wétiko* discourse, the comparison of people groups to non-human animals is remarkable not only because these comparisons make the collective labeled group not only slaughterable, but also, consumable. It identifies specific categorical violations and frames the defense of such boundaries as a moral imperative. Such boundary-crossing is punishable by death, and justified from the *wétiko* perspective.

On the other hand, these reductionist mal-representations are familiar to those of us whose families have shared histories of relocation, the reprogramming of identity and trauma of Indian boarding-schools, environmental destruction, and land-loss through the Dawes Act’s individuation of land holdings, and/or the disenfranchisement of Indigenous identity and land through the Indian Act in Canada, to mention just a few of the policies and practices that have been justified by reductionist discourse.²³⁹ Familiarity with such praxes and discourse may be at the the root of why Alexie has Jackson Jackson keep “secrets” from “hungry white people.” Instead, Jackson Jackson-and-friends embrace life, strength, survivance, and “the realities of chance, fate and tragic wisdom” that Gerald Vizenor says are “denied in the literature of dominance.”²⁴⁰ Again, the aforementioned “persisting themes and images” form audience’s moral judgments, and the signs of up-rootedness are read as moral deficiency.²⁴¹ Sometimes

such judgments move beyond literary *manifest manners*.²⁴² Sometimes moral evaluations are enough for a real-life cop to deny Indigenous presence and life itself on Seattle's streets.

When Jackson Jackson first catches a glimpse of his grandmother's powwow regalia in the window of a pawn-shop, Jackson Jackson confronts the shop-owner, and proves that the regalia is indeed his grandmother's that was stolen 50 years earlier. "That's his family's sad story" one of the posse members says. "Are you going to give it back to him?" she asks, loyal to the fictive (and possibly affinal or sanguinal) relationship that the character Rose of Sharon has with Jackson Jackson.²⁴³ The shop-owner responds, "That would be the right thing to do . . . But I can't afford to do the right thing. I paid a thousand dollars for this. I can't give away a thousand dollars." Here, the regalia is a metonymic representation of all that was and is stolen from each individual Indian, as well as their families and peoples. Indeed, some would agree that stripping off the inclusive/exclusive borders of property ownership, returning land, human remains, and other "artifacts" to Indigenous people would be "the right thing to do," but most people would respond as the U.S. Government and various auction houses have: that they either cannot afford to do the "right" thing, or the question of what is "right" is determined by the values of imperialism and capitalism.²⁴⁴ Through this interaction, the theft of powwow regalia critiques the Western notion of *real* property (land), and the exceptionalist U.S. and Canadian nation-state metanarratives. In the dialogue between the pawn-shop owner and Jackson Jackson's posse, the conflict reinforces the legitimacy of Indigenous rights claims, and interrogates the rights of settlers to hold what they know is stolen property—including land in urban spaces.

Jackson Jackson comes up with a series of strategies to earn money that will help him purchase his grandmother's powwow-regalia, and one of those strategies is to buy "one thousand four hundred and thirty papers" at thirty cents each, then sell the copies of *Real Change* for a dollar each on the streets of Seattle to passersby.²⁴⁵ The character's strategy could reasonably be interpreted as an analogue for the troubles that beset tribal nations when they lay claim to their stolen artifacts or *real* property (real estate), and attempt to purchase it from the

ideological (and sometimes actual) descendants of the thieves. Further complicating the attempt to purchase ones' own heritage from a thief (or a thief's customer), is the conflict between Western and Indigenous concepts of "property," especially if we take into consideration Indigenous animism: the pow-wow regalia was not only made and worn by Jackson Jackson's grandmother—from an animist perspective, the regalia itself is a relative, too.

Jackson Jackson's desperate search for a means to reclaim his relation and inheritance is a vehicle that depicts the complex property relationships for urban Native Americans in Seattle. In the city, Coast Salish peoples can see their property, they can have limited interaction with their property, and they can even be recognized as entitled to their property, but they cannot "own" or interact with their property in Indigenous cultural context without first achieving successful competition under capitalism. The "rules of the game," so-to-speak, are set by the newcomers, and the newcomers cannot—or will not—become literate in Indigenous rules that manage entitlement and property relations. Western rules of entitlement, including law that codifies the "bundle of rights" in regard to ownership, fracture, consume, and (attempt to) erase Indigenous relationships. Jackson Jackson must therefore navigate the institutions of the (still new) market economy, but his Indigenous cultural fluency affords him an ongoing sense of critical irony. For Seattle's homeless Native Americans, to play by the new "rules" frequently means selling *Real Change*—a newspaper that often features the concerns of Seattle's homeless Native Americans. Indeed, John T. Williams' story and the story of his family's historical presence on the streets of Seattle, as well as updates on the post-shooting investigation have also been featured in *Real Change*.²⁴⁶

Re-membered Relations and Starving the Beast

On September 6th, 2010, just a week after Officer Ian Birk shot John T. Williams four times in the side of the chest from ten feet away, and after the first week of vigils, press-conferences, marches, and social-media-facilitated coalition-building began; poet and activist, Sara Marie Ortiz (Acoma Pueblo) posted a note on her Facebook page. The note was a poem

entitled, “For John,” by poet and scholar, Deborah Miranda (Chumash/Ohlone-Costanoan Esselen), in response to Williams’ death.²⁴⁷ Miranda, who lived in the greater Seattle area off and on for many years, has a relationship with the city, and with the Indigenous people who make the city’s streets their home. Like many of us who are Indigenous North Americans and who have lived in Seattle, the poem indicates that Miranda has, from time-to-time, interacted with Williams and his brothers and friends on various occasions. These exchanges are remembered in “For John,” and a reading wrenches the gut and refuses to dress up the ugly reach of destitution and brutality in anything like hope or silver linings. Personal and immediate, Miranda’s poem expresses sorrow, anger, resentment, hatred, shame, and the kind of love she “can’t ever run away” from. Further, the lines reveal so much pain that to call “For John” an “elegy” is reductive and inaccurate. Since the poem has not as yet been published anywhere else, and since it is indeed, “For John,” (and not so much for the rest of us), I will therefore touch upon several lines that will help move the overall purpose of this paper forward, but out of respect, I will refrain from an extended close reading and analysis of the poem.

Narrow and undulating on its 4 pages, its unrhymed and unmetered four stanzas recall Miranda’s interactions with Williams and other Native Americans who lived on the streets of Seattle. The text describes his death and her sense of loss, but Miranda opens the poem through her memory of relationships built in, and with, place: “On Broadway or 1st Ave, on Capitol Hill / down by the Aquarium or Pioneer Square the Indians / gather in doorways on benches or grassy bits of park,” she begins. With the mental slideshow of well-known hang-outs in place, the poem presents a tour of familiar Seattle gathering places and the people whose lives are lived in them—some are “Indians”—those who call her “sister” or “auntie.” Once the poet shows us *where* these lives and relationships intersect, she goes on to legitimize the presence of Indigenous peoples *in* those urban places. She writes, “this is Indian Country, these potholed streets / these are Indian trails up and down steep sidewalks,” and the statement resonates with veracity, even though this land is not included in any designated Indian reservation.

Historian Coll Thrush corroborates the assertion in “For John,” that Seattle is Indian Country, in contradistinction to the U.S. Census Bureau’s erasure of Seattle as an American Indian area. That is, Thrush observes that “Every American city is built on Indian land, but few advertise it like Seattle,”²⁴⁸ and truly, the reminders seem to be everywhere: aside from the popular story poles (known by most people as “totem poles”) and other carvings that are placed in both visible and unexpected places around town, and aside from the likeness of Chief Seattle that graces the city’s official seal, Pacific Northwest Native formline art embellishes numerous municipal structures from manhole covers, ferries, bridges, tunnels—indeed, the imagery graces hundreds of public and private structures, and even the most popular consumer goods associated with the city.²⁴⁹ Lately, many of these goods have something to do with the Seattle Seahawks, since the team’s logo is based on a transformation mask of the Kwakwaka’wakw people, whose home territory, like the Ditidaht First Nation, is located nearby on Vancouver Island, British Columbia.²⁵⁰

Although Miranda’s relationship with Seattle is similar to Alexie’s Spokane or Aleut characters, the question of whether or not “For John” is exemplary of literature emergent from a specific tribal orientation seems too much of an abstraction to apply to such raw emotions. However, every statement and feeling expressed in the poem comes from the poet’s relationship to Williams, to the Indigenous people who live on the streets of Seattle, and to her own tribal heritage. The poem describes an instance in which Williams struggles to give a “blessing” to the poet. Of this “blessing,” she writes, “I’ll have to carry it with me, in your name, / the rest of my sorry ass Indian / life,” and clearly such exchanges are familial (fictive, or “Indian way”), and reciprocal. Even without an explicit declaration or hint in the poem of whence Miranda hails, the relationships and conversations described in the poem imply that she is accepted *as a relative* by the Indian people she interacts with around town. Like Williams himself, Miranda’s poem is a declarative reminder of continuous trans-tribal Indigenous place-based relationships in the region, including its urban areas.

“For John” evokes the people the poem’s speaker meets in human terms, doing quotidian things, like “sleeping selling Small Change telling stories,” and while it’s unclear if she switched “Small Change” for “Real Change” intentionally, the effect of the shift emphasizes the disenfranchisement that in many cases precedes forced migration of Indigenous North American people around the continent, as represented by the poem’s line, “sister I’m a long way from home.” On the other hand, her shift to “Small Change” may refer to one “small” change after another—the kind that systematically shoves people over the edge into life on the streets in their home territory. Referring back to Alexie’s Jackson Jackson in “What You Pawn I Will Redeem,” even with the opportunity to sell the newspaper *Real Change*, sometimes the problem is that “you have to stay sober to sell it,” but even then, selling large quantities is a rare occurrence.²⁵¹ Again, whether intentional or not, Miranda’s switch to “Small Change” may express the turmoil she feels when considering how much to pay for the baskets, beadwork or carvings people like Williams offered on the street, since she writes, “I never give as much as I could / that might be the fatal dollar / that keeps them out of the shelter / or lands them in the morgue one night.”²⁵²

“For John,” insists on a value system of memory, reciprocity, and responsibility in Indigenous relationships, and questions whether an Indigenous person in Seattle can really be “homeless.” That is, after naming the place “Indian Country,” Miranda’s poem goes on to describe the people in terms that embed them in the landscape, while saving a description of John for later in the poem. Miranda writes: “that’s Indian graffiti splashed as scars / across the faces of men / from families of carvers, women / from clans of basketweavers,” in language that gives a sense of being tethered to the local territory through Coast Salish aesthetics, and to the streets of Seattle through their scars and their histories.

Williams, along with his brothers and sisters, are fifth-generation wood-carvers—descended from people who, along with other Indigenous people from as far away as Alaska, came to Seattle around the turn of the twentieth century to sell their creations to settlers when

their local economy was disrupted.²⁵³ A highly respected occupation amongst Nuu-chah-nulth and Makah peoples,²⁵⁴ woodcarvers like John Williams and his siblings are recognized by Miranda for the ways that they carry and reproduce the Indigenous signs and associated knowledges intertwined with being *of* and *part of* this particular geographic region rather than *apart from*, or just *on* the landscape. Miranda also recognizes that the acts of “telling stories / carving little totem poles” for tourists does not often lead to exchanges that reflect the same level of honor that Indigenous peoples afford their culture-bearers. Fittingly, the stories Williams told and still tells through his carvings are represented in “For John” as other manifestations of Williams’ life and death—and this was witnessed when he “he bled / out / on / the street / the curves of an old design / spilled out of his body / like a truth too ugly to bear.” Though such imagery may remind us of familiar refrains in Indigenous communities—that the peoples’ stories are “in the blood,” and “in the land”—the “truth too ugly to bear” is *real*, and it is indeed fearsome: our relatives are always at risk of *wétiko* attack. This is no metaphor. But here, Miranda also makes plain the enduring connections between generations of carvers through blood, stories, and land. She references the esteem with which we hold our culture-keeping storytellers, for indeed, Miranda and Williams share this role in the community. She, like many of us, mourn the *wétiko*-caused conditions of Williams’ life—conditions that articulate with the lives of all North American Indigenous peoples whose presence in Seattle reasserts its status as “Indian Country,” and re-members the relationships fractured by *wétikoism*.

After his passing, John’s brother Rick Williams created a 34-foot story pole in his brother’s honor. On February 26th, 2012, with four eagles circling overhead, the pole was raised by members of Seattle’s urban Indian community at the Seattle Center, under the shadow of the Space Needle. During the year after the shooting, hundreds of people visited the carving site at Seattle’s waterfront, and under Rick’s guidance, took up carving tools and paint to help bring the stories on the pole to life. An *Indian Country Today* article notes that 90 people carried the pole from the waterfront to the Seattle Center and helped to raise it, confirming *en masse*

appreciation for John T. Williams' life, and insisting on the validity of his presence in Seattle. Inscribed in a lexicography that not many people can interpret, the pole's figures include an Eagle perched at the top, and at the bottom, a mother Raven and her baby. Between these figures is a representation of a Master Carver holding a carving of a Kingfisher. According to a well-known and well-loved Seattle arts blog, the Eagle

represents the transformation from youth to a place of courage and understanding of the connection between spirit and humans. The Eagle as carved on the John T Williams Pole is unique to the Williams family and developed by John's father Ray 'Hombre' Williams in the '70s. The forward wing position indicates the Eagle has just landed and is not quite settled, as [are] many of us walking the earth today. The Eagles head and eyes look down examining what is taking place.²⁵⁵

Below the Eagle rests the Master Carver, who represents John. He holds a kingfisher in his hands, and the interpretive plaque at the pole explains that this particular kingfisher "is a Williams family symbol handed down through seven generations of woodcarvers. This master carver is John T. Williams displaying his own signature totem, which features the Kingfisher and the Salmon. This carving, at the age of 15, made John a master carver in the Ditidaht First Nation, in British Columbia," while the bottom figure—the foundation—is a mother Raven and her baby, and is perhaps symbolic of the way that Raven and Raven stories continue to nurture John T. Williams, as well as the many people who have a storied and direct relationship with Raven in the Pacific Northwest, across a variety of tribal, regional, state, and national boundaries.

The *Indian Country Today* article that describes the installation of the story pole comments: "It's fitting that the Native imagery of the main pole was . . . carried down these

streets, home to Native peoples now and since time immemorial, a history and a future that cannot be erased with a bullet.”²⁵⁶ Despite the fact that

...Euramerica remains involved in an unceasing ideological struggle to confine Native Americans within an essentialized territory defined by the authoritative utterance ‘Indian,’ Native Americans . . . continue to resist this ideology of containment and to insist upon the freedom to imagine themselves within a fluid, always shifting frontier space.²⁵⁷

The assertion of such freedom continues to be met with *wétikoism* that still violently seeks to manage and erase non-conforming Others, and to consume those who *do* conform. Despite the risks, shrinking back from the responsibility to resist containment and incorporation would betray the coming generations of Indigenous descendents. Thus, the value and legitimacy of Indigenous lives and lifeways in urban spaces will continue to be asserted by storiers like Rick Williams. As Rick led the creation of John’s memorial pole, his grief joined with the grief of hundreds of participants to reaffirm his time-immemorial tribal connection to the region, his family’s historical connection to the city, and the legitimacy of the kind of border-crossings that characterize his and his brother’s lives. By extension, he has done the same for other Indigenous North Americans living in urban spaces. Similarly, Alexie’s stories re-member transtribal and intergenerational connections to place and people that pre-date any frontierist attempts to manage Indigenous populations, and to redefine Indian Country as something else.

Rick Williams’ gift to the Ditidaht people, Seattle’s urban Natives Americans, his family, to John T. William, and to the multitude of people who helped him transform the Western Red Cedar into a story pole, is a trickster-like testimony of Indigenous presence, since movement beyond circumscription and resistance to subjection is part of the trickster’s function. Further, the stories Rick Williams, Debora Miranda, and Sherman Alexie tell are exemplary of communitist action, and these three are not alone in their efforts. Indigenous American people(s) continue to respond to acts of domination with creative works and collaborations that

claim space in Indigenous “areas,” and at the same time, claim relatives through Indigenous ways of building and maintaining relationships. Doing so might begin with the use of tribalographical stories, voice, art, testimony and music, but self-determination in urban settings is possible even when the group itself is made up of people from many tribes, especially when the individuals maintain their tribal connections and identities. Such solidarity can challenge the ideological footing of *wétikoism*, whether such boundary enforcers take the form of police, policy-makers, or corporations. Indeed, through community meetings, remembering, telling stories, and through careful, persistent critique of *wétikoism* and its discourses, the Seattle Police Department was forced to retract their support of Birk. While justice was not achieved, the emphasis on relationships and connections to place are acts of political sovereignty that have continued to have an impact on Seattle. Indigenous peoples have persisted in the assertion of their Indigeneity, even for those who live outside of their tribal nations’ borders. This persistence has had some success, as the 2014 abolishment of Columbus Day and the institution of an annual Indigenous Peoples’ Day in Seattle attests. Practices like Indigenous transtribal community recognition, spiritual recognition, genealogical recitations, and respect for ancestral connections to place can reinforce Indigenous identity so that the challenge to *wétiko* discourses and confinements persist. Such practices re-establish cognizance that urban Indigenous are political beings who belong to a political community, and who demand political recognition. Such direct resistance includes challenging western worldviews and discourse on a local and global scale, and is often accomplished in aesthetic or creative works, including literature. These works reveal the strategies and behaviors of *wétikoism*, just as “traditional” *wetiko* or windigo narratives do, so that readers can learn ways to protect themselves and their relations from becoming *wétiko*, or from becoming a victim of *wétiko*.

Though the fearsome figures I have described in this chapter are often unrecognizable in their physical form (I have yet to hear of a contemporary eye-witness account of the fearsome ice-giants as described in Cree and Ojibwe narratives), I have attempted in this chapter to

demonstrate that for Indigenous peoples, it is reasonable to attribute police officers and the institutions they represent as *fearsome*. And without the identifying markers of the *wétiko* as described in oral narratives, the “monsters” are, to my mind, even more frightening, since they are anything but fictional. In the next two chapters, however, I will explore how the Indigenous authors have constructed fearsome figures in their contemporary fiction, in order to trace the ways that they depict fearsomeness, and in order to show them as correlative of *wétiko* behaviors.

Chapter 4

Blood Suckers, Real and Imagined

The sacred will ever be sacred. What is the definition of sacred? Very simply and profoundly it is this: That which can be destroyed but not created.
-Vi [taqʷšəblu] Hilbert

If it is possible to read cultures through their monsters as Jeffrey Jerome Cohen suggests in *Monster Theory*, then it may also be possible to learn something about Indigenous worldviews from the way they change the monsters that emerge from Europe and EuroAmerica. Such changes might be thought of as acts of transculturation and autoethnography.²⁵⁸ Especially in the last two decades, a variety of undead or monstrous figures from EuroAmerican genres have been appropriated by Indigenous authors and filmmakers as vehicles for social criticism. Sometimes the social criticism found in the source cultures' monsters isn't too far from the kind of the critiques Indigenous authors might want to make through the appropriation and repurposed use of a EuroAmerican fearsome figure, and the vampire is one such figure.

Critical use of vampires as analogues for each more voracious iteration of capitalism is a "venerable" practice in Europe, going back at least as far as the seventeenth century, but also, the genre is also a vehicle for the celebration of consumerism.²⁵⁹ Vampires have enjoyed immense popularity for decades, but were given an influential overhaul starting in 1976 with Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire*. Rice's *Vampire Chronicles* feature the vampire Lestat de Lioncourt, a former French nobleman, who, along with his cohorts, purify consumer capital "by its association with the aesthetic and cultural realm represented by [their] vampiric connoisseurship."²⁶⁰ It would be a mistake, however, to think that whenever a vampire appears in popular culture, the author is critiquing consumerism, since the critique may exist only in the interpretation, rather than the text itself. Besides the expected plethora of vampires in literature and film, they are the source of a variety of reinventions for many venues, from Joss Whedon's *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and its spin-offs, to videogames, RPGs, comic books, Japanese Manga, vampire-themed goth, punk, and metal bands, and of course, the *Twilight* series (not to

mention innumerable urban fantasy novels and online fan-fiction). Not surprisingly, Indigenous authors have also targeted the vampire genre for reinvention, but these figures, whether sympathetic or unsympathetic, are different: while Indigenous authors use them to critique consumer capitalism (and resource extraction), they are specifically used to critique *colonialism* as an act of consumerism—and as one systematic expression of *wétikoism*. In this Chapter, I will look at two such novels: briefly, Martin Cruz Smith’s (Pueblo/Yaqui) 1977 horror novel, *Nightwing*,²⁶¹ and then in a more extended manner, the Anishinaabe author Drew Hayden Taylor’s 2007 young adult fiction, *The Night Wanderer: A Native Gothic Novel*,²⁶² to show how Indigenous authors pursue modes of critique that are complementary to Forbes’ description of *wétikoism*.

Similar to Marx, who once referred to capital as “vampire-like, [which] lives only by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks,” Forbes’ description of *wétiko psychosis* is critical of the workings of capitalism. Interestingly, some ethnohistorians link the increase in windigo phenomena and stories to the starvation Algonquian peoples experienced when capitalist ventures began to alter access to traditional resources, and so, the stories about encounters with windigos may also be interpretable as evidence of Indigenous social criticism and theory.²⁶³ Even though Western theoretical tools exist to critique colonialism and capitalism (and ironically, these tools enjoy wider distribution through capitalism), tracing the spectrum of *wétiko* behaviors in Indigenous vampire fiction not only facilitates a critique of colonialism, capitalism, and all of these institutions’ associated behaviors (specifically from an Indigenous perspective), but also, such an approach could undermine the notion that vampires are inherently fearsome simply because of their eternal liminal locus (and superhuman powers). Instead of a structuralist or historical materialist analysis, Indigenous narratives that critique *wétiko* behaviors do so by showing how they violate Indigenous axiologies and relationships, whether a story’s *wétiko* analogue is a three hundred year-old vampire or a sixteen year old girl.

Further, fearsome figures populate Native stories not so much to express anxieties or fears (like those described by Cohen), but rather, the “indigenization” of an appropriated figure is often meant to teach readers *how to behave* through a depiction of *how not to behave*. For Indigenous peoples, stories are more than entertainment or analysis: they are pedagogical. The stories are not characterized by structuralism or a methodology of deconstruction when they offer cultural critique. Instead, they focus on what happens to cause either imbalance or restoration of relationships, and often, they answer philosophical questions like “[what is] the role-of a human in [the] world?”²⁶⁴ Indeed, many of the Algonquian windigo stories give answers to such questions about balance and behavior, and likewise, this is sometimes the case when Indigenous authors appropriate the European or EuroAmerican vampire. That is, these stories reproduce Native worldviews and value systems.

Throughout my brief discussion of *Nightwing* and my more extended discussion of *Night Wanderer*, I will discuss the process of cultural appropriation as it relates to the production of several vampire stories, and in particular, how such an act may be an example of *wétiko* consumption. I will also discuss how, alternately, appropriation can be used to “indigenize” the vampire figure by writing such characters as interested in the restoration of sustainability, and balanced interrelationships.

Vampires and Misattribution: Cultural Appropriation’s Fraternal Twin

As mentioned in Chapter 1, when structural oppositions fail to hold—when the boundaries between structurally-opposed categories break down, it can cause a lot of anxiety. I’ve argued that this is especially true for readers who hold a EuroWestern worldview, and also that this response is not as prominent from Indigenous perspectives. Perhaps the reason is because Indigenous categories are often constructed based on place-based relationships rather than on a teleological conception of “goals,” and on taxonomic descent. Transformational abilities, in fact, are such common features of the characters in Native American oral and written narratives, that transformation or hybridity itself wouldn’t be interpreted as inherently

fearsome. Indeed, there are a plethora of human-animal transformation stories from every Indigenous culture group across the hemisphere, if not every tribe, and these transformations do not universally signify events that are inherently “good” or “bad”.

While there are plenty of legendary beings in Native American oral narratives who, in one way or another, possess traits not unlike the European vampire, vampire bats are the only vampires indigenous to North America that I know of, and are depicted in Cruz Smith’s *Nightwing*. The novel features a huge colony of vampire bats from the genus *Desmodus draculae*, which take up residence in a cave near the Hopi and Navajo reservations.²⁶⁵ With their nightly attacks on livestock and human beings, the bats leave behind fleas that cause a bubonic plague outbreak around the region. The plague, of course, threatens to cross the boundaries of the reservation, especially because Navajo Nation Tribal President Walter Chee insists that the plague outbreak be kept secret, since awareness would disrupt his negotiations with Peabody Coal and Kennecott Copper to open up a particular sacred site to oil extraction and mining. Chee’s nemesis, and the protagonist of the novel, is a Tewa Pueblo member, Youngman Duran: a Vietnam veteran who works as law enforcement for the Hopi Nation. Duran tries to determine what is killing people and livestock, and when he figures out that vampire bats and their plague-infested fleas are to blame, Duran attempts to release the news to the public so that the area can be quarantined. Chee intervenes with threats, and Duran has to flee. With the help of Anne Dillon, his non-Native girlfriend who works in the Hopi clinic, and Dr. Joseph Paine, a biologist who has been obsessively tracking the bats, Duran locates the vampire colony in an ancient kiva-like cave, which also happens to be the site of a long-abandoned Puebloan housing complex. The site also happens to be the site that Chee and the mining company hope to exploit.

While *Nightwing* doesn’t feature any anthropomorphic vampires in the European tradition, Smith’s yarn blames Abner Tasupi, a Hopi Fire Clan priest, for bringing the vampire bats north from Central America across a presumed boundary. Abner achieves this feat through

the unconventional use of ritual sandpainting. Abner's goal is to "end the world" and exact retribution on humankind for their many violations against Indigenous peoples and the Earth, especially their greed, dishonesty, and environmental rapaciousness.²⁶⁶ More particularly, he attempts to exact judgment in response to the collusion between the Navajo Nation and large-scale mining interests which have violated Hopi sacred sites. In order to summon the vampire bats from their more southerly habitat, Abner violates his Fire Clan responsibilities and his responsibilities to the medicine knowledge that has been entrusted to him. He performs the rituals backwards in order to end life, rather than to generate or sustain it. Duran, who is Abner's friend, worries that Abner's bizarre behavior has caused other Fire Clan members to fear him. Abner is killed by the bats, but Duran suspects that members of the Fire Clan have desecrated Abner's grave when it is found to be empty. Later, however, Abner appears to Duran and speaks with him; Duran presumes that Abner has caused his own resurrection. Once Duran and his two accomplices locate the cave where the bats sleep during the day, Duran, Dillon, and the biologist find that there's a pool of oil at the bottom of the cave, and that all of the many other caves scattered around Maski Canyon also feature oil shale.²⁶⁷ Duran is able to undo Abner's medicine through a ritual that he performs inside of the cave, but before he leaves, he sets the oil on fire, which destroys Abner, the bats, the ruins of the ancient pueblo, and Chee's hopes of exploiting the oil.

The collection of choice excerpts from book reviews printed on *Nightwing's* paperback cover indicate that the bats are to be considered the fearsome figures behind the this story's horror. This is in keeping with Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's claim that "the monster is best understood as an embodiment of difference [and] a breaker of category."²⁶⁸ That is, from the Western epistemic orientation, the vampire bats of *Nightwing* are fearsome not only because of their impressive and unusual destructive power, but especially because of their swarming behavior, their role as a vector of biological contagion, and their obedience to Abner's "supernatural summons."²⁶⁹ Their colony is only found through the cooperation of some

unusually skilled and knowledgeable individuals, and, as with most Western monsters, their destruction can only be assured once all that can be known about them is revealed. In other words, the narrative forces the bats into a categorical definition—a completely diagnosed and described taxonomical category. Smith’s frequent divergences into detailed description of vampire morphology, feeding habits, evolution, and other biological details *fixes* them. Only then can they be destroyed.

For readers who approach the novel with an Indigenous or animist episteme, however, the bats may not be the fearsome figure in this tale. At worst, the vampire bats might be considered dangerous in the same way that a swift river, a wild horse, an automobile, or *any* human being, could cause another being some serious damage. Alternately, the bats might be understood as pawns, or even admired for their strength, their cunning, their commitment to their young, their lack of fear, their ability to move undetected under cover of night, and a variety of other traits which would be respected from an animist and relativistic position.²⁷⁰

While Abner also seems a likely candidate to inspire anxiety or fear, I believe that the character’s actions could be read as fearsome no matter what the reader’s position and worldview may be, but for some, Abner may not be fearsome at all. However, for some readers, Abner’s desire to cause the deaths of all people (except for Duran and Dillon—who Abner plans to spare), combined with his unfamiliar religious practices, his fraternization with Masaw—the Hopi “god of death,”²⁷¹ along with Abner’s ability to defy the structural opposition categories of life and death, would likely make Western audiences consider Abner a fearsome figure. He would certainly appear to be “evil,” and might even trigger associations with contemporary “weapons of mass destruction.” For an Indigenous audience, or, for someone who holds an animist worldview, Abner may be understood as fearsome because he misuses sacred medicine and violates the relationships that he has been entrusted to maintain. Some Native people(s) may indeed understand this kind of betrayal as “evil” or as “witchery,” while others would not. They may instead understand and even sympathize with Abner’s feeling that the Earth must be

protected above all—that as a Mother, her abusers seem intent to not only rape her, but to kill her. From such a perspective, and from the Hopi prophecies (however mangled) that appear in *Nightwing*, Abner works to usher in the “fifth world” of Hopi prophesy, although he performs the backwards ceremony before the appointed time.²⁷² For such an audience, Abner is imbalanced and destructive, but sympathetic. However, Walter Chee would also represent a fearsome figure, since his actions clearly correspond to Forbes’ description of *wétikoism*. His early attempts to recruit and subsume Duran and other community members into the bodies of corporate “giants,” and his eventual suppression and violence against Duran, would indeed correlate with the more virulent strains of *wétiko* psychosis described by Forbes.²⁷³ Incidentally, another conglomerate fearsome figure that figures into Chee’s motivation underpins the narrative: Cruz Smith uses the names of two corporations in his novel that are not fictional companies: Kennecot Copper and Peabody Coal. Both have a history of utterly consuming large swaths of Hopiland and the lands on the Navajo reservation, and severing numerous relationships between people and other entities, like water and sacred sites, for example.²⁷⁴

Even with these accurate references to specific enemies of Hopi people, unfortunately, Cruz Smith makes numerous representational missteps in *Nightwing*. The novel’s distortions include everything from inaccurate descriptions of locations, relationships, and features of key southwestern landscapes, to misrepresentations of the traditions, beliefs, practices, social relationships, and contemporary realities of Hopi people.²⁷⁵ Reviewer Peter Beidler notes that a problematic outcome of these mistakes comes from the fact that most people learn about Native peoples through books and film, but also, he says, “It is doubly unfortunate that, because the author of *Nightwing* is himself Indian, readers will assume—especially when encouraged to do so by reviewers of the novel—that this is what contemporary Indians [Hopis and Navajos, in particular] are really like.”²⁷⁶ Such cultural appropriation (lateral, or Indigenous-Indigenous appropriation of representational authority) is under-theorized (except marginally, from a nationalist perspective),²⁷⁷ and yet, this kind of appropriation is particularly vexed when cultural

competency is assumed to be *typical of all* Indigenous people, both between and within tribes, and innate rather than learned. At the same time, horror or fantasy fiction emergent from and representative of Western ontologies never need satisfy similar authenticity rubrics (however fallaciously based), since such a rearrangement of “reality” would be recognized straight-away by Western audiences.

Persistent misrecognition by outsiders often follows the representations of American Indians and other tribal peoples. That is, the diversity of Indigenous beliefs, worldviews, practices and narratives are vast, and yet, in many cases, insider knowledge is only ethically transferrable with adherence to culture-specific protocols. Designation of the “boundary” around “Native American” or even something as specific as “Yaqui” is not the solidly reliable demarcation that Westerners might assume. Insider knowledge—even to a member of a particular tribe—may simply be unavailable to that individual because certain knowledges are *relationships*, and passed on through relationships—complete with responsibility *to* that knowledge and to that relationship. Thus, many Indigenous stories and practices are not only kept out of the public eye, but are often only shared within a certain group (like a clan or society, for example). To make matters even more fraught with culture-specific inclusions and exclusions, many of the intergenerational knowledge-transfer practices have been disrupted by a variety of *wétiko* systems and structures. But for the practices that are maintained or are in the process of revitalization, the protocols for handling them are meant to assure balance in relationships between the peoples and other entities. Such protocols are based on specific epistemologies, ontologies and axiologies that are sometimes also kept from broad dissemination to the outside public, and instead are maintained as embedded in practices and narratives within the originating community. While such protections can keep tribe-owned intellectual or cultural property from being found on a shelf in the storehouse of appropriable human cultural production, those protective measures can cause tribal cultures to be perceived by outsiders as culturally deprived (if the outsider views their own culture as superior), or as

stingy and secretive (if the outsider wants insider knowledge because they're disaffected members of a dominant culture, yet they find that this knowledge is inaccessible).²⁷⁸ Outsiders, then, fill such perceived vacuums with stories and practices of their own creation, sometimes derived from a compilation of narrative fragments found in a variety of ethnographical sources (if they exist at all), or from the imagination of outsider storytellers.

The tale of Jumlin, “a vampiric demon, the father of all vampires,”²⁷⁹ is one such imaginative fiction that seems to have arisen from outside (non-Native) sources. The “demon” Jumlin, the story goes, was brought into this dimension by a Native American medicine man who wanted Jumlin’s help, but instead of helping, the demon possessed the “witch doctor,”²⁸⁰ and still lives, passed on by the “spawn” of Jumlin “to this day.” This story appears to have had its genesis in a 2004 Marvel Comic, *Tomb of Dracula*,²⁸¹ and yet, the tale has since spread to many vampire-themed websites and several popular novels,²⁸² with the source cultures unabashedly attributed to “Native Americans” in general, and other times, to “legends of the Black Foot [*sic*], Lakota, and Cherokee nations.”²⁸³

The problems that result from such misattribution are similar to the outcomes of cultural appropriation, with a few significant, though nuanced differences. Outcomes of misattribution includes the erasure of tribal specificity, and ignore both the context of peoples to their narratives, cultures, places, and other relationships central to Indigenous belief systems. Also, as with the reproduction of stereotype, the self-determination involved in self-representational choices for specific cultures and tribal nations are compromised; such misattribution can be used to increase prejudice against certain tribes or Indigenous religious practices.²⁸⁴ Further, misattribution makes it difficult for Indigenous people who have been separated from their tribal homelands or traditions to reconnect with their tribes’ actual beliefs and practices, and so, results in confusion about identity and what constitutes “tradition.”

I should make it clear that many Native communities have good-sized chunks of the tribal population that adhere to forms of Christianity, and this is a result of forced appropriation

(i.e. assimilationist policies and practices). It's not unusual to find large and active Native congregations of various denominations on reservations (primarily Christian or Mormon, but there are other religions as well), whose members also reject their Indigenous heritage religions. Likewise, it's common to find significant numbers of Native people on any given reservation who practice a syncretic blend of Native beliefs with Christianity, or completely reject their ancestral religious practices. Through this dynamic, non-Native epistemologies, ontologies, and axiologies are mistakenly represented as Native, especially since elders—many who have been the subject of assimilationist policies and practices in government or church boarding schools, for example—are as likely to be Christian or Mormon as they are to follow the smokehouse, longhouse, or sundance religions, for example. I look more closely at this syncretism, the dynamics of appropriation, and Indigenous re-use of the vampire figure in the following sections.

Indigenous Appropriation of Vampires

Drew Hayden Taylor's (Curve Lake Ojibwa) *The Night Wanderer: A Native Gothic Novel*, would likely earn itself a PG13 designation on the Motion Picture Association of America ratings system. Taylor's novel explicitly compares the vampire to the "wendigo," which shouldn't be surprising, given that his characters (like the author himself), are Anishinaabe and live in Anishinaabeg territory. The book offers a syncretic "cure" for vampirism that combines Algonquian traditions employed to cure wendigo-possessed humans, along with the legendary weakness of the European vampire to sunlight. The discord between European and Indigenous worldviews, cosmologies, and histories fuel plot tension, and sustainable interrelationship and interdependency of holistic systems become disrupted by what Forbes would identify as *wétikoism*.¹ Further, the source of disruption and epistemological conflicts, when traced, can reveal the cultural critique embedded in *The Night Wanderer*, and it can upset the categories of

¹ In this chapter, I use the form, "*wétiko*," to index Forbes' usage of the term, and occasionally use the form, "wendigo," since this is the form that Taylor uses in his novel.

protagonist and antagonist, to unsettle the structural oppositions that readers have come to expect.

The Night Wanderer blends a coming-of-age story with a homecoming story on two disparate timelines for two primary characters. Taylor uses generic gothic elements to create anxiety and suspense (e.g. the high and overwrought emotion of a young, misunderstood female; close-up movement in shadows to create a sense of claustrophobia; characters see things that oughtn't be possible, and experience situations that seem uncannily threatening). However, the novel is relatively tame in terms of violence and sex, unlike most vampire novels. The only murders committed by the vampire in Taylor's novel are represented by the vampire himself as both historical and shameful; and while this vampire's senses are often intently attuned to the sensual—tastes, sounds, sights, scents, textures, and other feelings—only a bare hint of eroticism can be detected. It might be that Taylor's decision to repress the eroticism so frequently associated with vampires is out of concern for *The Night Wanderer's* targeted teen demographic, but putting the brakes on sex and violence in made-for-teens vampire literature hasn't proved to either be commonplace or profitable for other authors. Indeed, the tensions of dangerous desire account for a great deal of the genre's appeal, not only for teens, but to writers and publishers alike. However, in the "Acknowledgements" section at the end of the book, and in a public reading by the author,²⁸⁵ Taylor describes the emergence of his vampire story, which began as a play, commissioned by Young People's Theatre in Toronto in 1992, and was originally staged by the young actors of Saskatoon's Persephone Theatre. Taylor then rewrote the play in novel form, years later. Perhaps, then, writing the play for the young student actors who would stage the piece (with their parents and relatives in the audience), contributed to Taylor's decision to avoid gory violence and concupiscence.

In his public reading at the 2009 Words Aloud Spoken Word Festival in Durham, Ontario, Taylor says that he began writing *The Night Wanderer* years before "everybody was writing a vampire novel"—a statement met with a significant laugh from the audience. Given the

context of the media hype at that time, Taylor's offhand remark refers implicitly to the media-storm and sparkly-vampire frenzy inspired by Stephenie Meyer's popular *Twilight* series.²⁸⁶ Published between 2005 and 2008, the *Twilight* series has earned both fans and the ire of Native people for many reasons. The cause of Indigenous indignation against Meyer would be her appropriation and malrepresentation of Quileute culture in the series—from the way that Quileute men and women are portrayed, and especially because of the appropriation of Quileute transformation stories, which describe the Tribes' relationship with wolves and their landscape.²⁸⁷ At Taylor's reading, the audience chuckles at his wry clarification: he says that even though he aims his novel at a teen audience, he had begun the work many years earlier.²⁸⁸ With that, he implies that his novel shouldn't be perceived as an answer to the appropriated "Indian" presence in other teen vampire novels. The audience finds the novelist, playwright, journalist, short-story writer and humorist entertaining, and they laugh along with his irony when he says, "I love the idea of appropriating a European legend and indigenizing it." Taylor continues:

What's particularly funny about doing a novel like this is first of all, how the *heck* do you *make* an aboriginal vampire? 'Cause there's no real history of vampire mythology at least in the Anishinaabe/Ojibwe world. So in remembering my Canadian history, it used to be quite common for French and English fur ships to kidnap Native people and take them back to Europe to display them in royal courts, almost like zoo animals. [. . .] So that's how he became a vampire and he spent three hundred and fifty years wandering Europe until he gets homesick and wants to come home to where his community was and now it's a contemporary First Nation's community.²⁸⁹

Even though Taylor's vampire story successfully draws readers into its suspense and sense of foreboding, Taylor's buoyant, humorous, and flippant tone—especially in the scenes that feature the subjectivity of one of the primary characters (16-year old Tiffany), keeps the novel from too much melodrama, even though Tiffany *herself* is self-centered and reactionary. Taylor's

humorous style—as is the case with so many Indigenous people—seems to emerge from an awareness of five hundred years of colonization, a history of boarding schools, the adoption “scoop” across Canada that removed a disproportionate number of First Nations children from their homes and identities, and other horrors too numerous to list here. My point is that Taylor’s humor, woven throughout the narrative, is a narrative survival strategy comparable to Gerald Vizenor’s, Vine Deloria Jr.’s, or Sherman Alexie’s—as described in the previous chapter in my discussion of “What You Pawn, I Will Redeem”—and as such, his humor can be caustic. He further claims in the interview that “humor works from the bottom up, while racism works from the top down,”²⁹⁰ and while this statement might oversimplify the dynamics of dominant/subordinate discourse, such directional flows of power are similar to those instantiated by cultural appropriation.²⁹¹ That is, achieving an effectively resistant narrative through appropriation can work from the bottom-up, but when an appropriator operates from dominant position, and “borrows” something that’s particular to a subordinate culture, the act reinforces the dominance of the appropriating culture. For example, Meyers’ appropriation of Quileute culture distorts the origin stories of the Quileute people, and disrupts relationships of living Quileute people with their land and religious practices. A small, select group within Quileute society practices these ceremonies; the privacy around the practice is respected and maintained by Quileute people—even by those members of the Tribe who are not practitioners. Quileute people who are not part of the religious society would not violate protocol by insisting that everyone in the Tribe have access to the practice or ceremonies. Such an act would not be as much of a violation of boundaries, but instead, a violation of interrelationships—of articulations, agreements and interdependencies; it would violate values of respect, responsibility, and reciprocity. Thus, it would be dangerous. But when Meyers appropriates Quileute culture, it reinforces generalized, classist, racist, and gendered stereotypes of “The Indian.” That is, when a group’s cultural property or identity is “borrowed” from a member of a dominant group, the act of “borrowing” changes the meaning of the social institutions, beliefs, and practices of the group

whose cultural property is, in effect, stolen. Essentially, it ignores the ways that Indigenous peoples maintain and negotiate their relationships.

Not only has *The Twilight Saga* been one of the most profitable franchises of the new millennium, but “the Quileute [Tribe, who is] featured prominently in the *Twilight* stories, [. . .] has not seen any of the *Twilight* proceeds,”²⁹² and instead, must continually correct misrepresentations of their lives, their “nature,” and their culture. Further, with limited resources, and out of necessity, the Quileute Nation is now forced to respond to the thousands of young visitors to their rural reservation who have internalized Meyers’ romanticized vision of Quileute people and their lands.²⁹³ At the same time, the Tribe risks incorporation into the system that would commercialize their culture. This is no minor problem, and could, for the purposes of this project, be understood as a mechanism of *wétikoism*, with the disease vector evolving into forms the Quileute people must work to inoculate themselves against, or otherwise heal their cultural property and relationships.

Whereas Meyers, a non-Native, and corporations like Nordstrom, Hot Topic, and MasterCard, have ridden the wave of *Twilight* popularity through the commercialization and appropriation (or cannibalization) of Quileute society stories, landscape and identities,²⁹⁴ Taylor appropriates the European vampire with a bottom-up dynamism that critiques cannibal culture, its appetites, self-centeredness, and distortion of historical memory. To lay the foundation for the novel’s criticism, Taylor reminds readers of the historical intersections of the fur trade and Indigenous peoples of Canada. He presents the context of the early contact period in the Great Lakes region between Europeans and Anishinaabeg, which may seem, by the near-sighted, to be *distant* by temporal measure, and thus, musty and irrelevant. But time is not equal to distance in many Indigenous worldviews. Nevertheless, Taylor’s vampire story corrects Western forgetfulness. As his story’s narrative describes the period in question, this particular era is indexed as a site of commodification and consumption of Native bodies and culture, such that the North has never before seen. That is to say, the early French and English incursions into

Anishinaabe territory transforms the land and its non-human beings into mere resources for further consumption. *The Night Wanderer* brings the reality of this contact period and its consequences visible and near, in close proximity to one of the main characters, Tiffany, and to the reader.

The Night Wanderer

The book's first chapter opens with its vampire on a nighttime flight from Europe to Canada. The "man," has arranged to be a lodger in the family home of 16-year-old Tiffany Hunter, a home that she shares with her Granny Ruth Hunter, and Granny Ruth's son, Keith Hunter (Tiffany's father). Their home is on the fictional Otter Lake First Nations reserve in the central lake region of Ontario, an Anishinaabe First Nations community.²⁹⁵ Keith's wife Claudia (Tiffany's mother), left the family fourteen months earlier—for a White man—a *chuganosh*,²⁹⁶ as Granny Ruth calls him. In addition to the pile of broken hearts, Claudia left the household finances in a shambles. To try to make up for the budget gap, Keith conceives a plan to turn their home into a bed-and-breakfast, which he mentions while on a visit to the Otter Lake Reserve band office. Serendipitously, an office employee produces a just-received letter from one Pierre L'errant, who expresses by mail his dire need of a quiet place to stay at Otter Lake for a few weeks. Keith and Granny Ruth assume the visitor is French, but as there are no details of his identity or purpose in the letter, L'errant remains a mystery.

Before L'errant arrives, we learn that Tiffany loves and yet resents both her father and her grandmother, and she also feels ashamed in many ways of her culture and homeland.²⁹⁷ She dreams of a day when she can escape life on the reserve to see the world,²⁹⁸ and later, we find out that she thinks of her new boyfriend as "her white knight in denim armor"²⁹⁹ – an idealization that makes Tiffany a less-than-sympathetic character. Her embarrassment concerning the family's socio-economic status intensifies through her relationship with Tony Banks, who lives in the predominantly non-Native border town of Bayview, off the reserve.

Tiffany is the only Aboriginal Tony knows, and his Whiteness triggers new expressions of Keith's hatred toward Claudia's new husband—a hatred that Keith projects onto Tony.

One morning early in the novel, Tiffany is so preoccupied with thoughts of Tony that she doesn't hear her father when he informs her of L'errant's impending visit and his plan to have the visitor stay in Tiffany's bedroom while she relocates her sleeping quarters to the basement for several weeks. Later that day, she finds out about the plan through a pithy note from her father, but the arrangement enrages Tiffany, and the first of many arguments between the Keith and Tiffany ensues. Fortunately for the sullen teen, the arrangement doesn't pan out, since L'errant expresses his wishes for a dark room in the basement, despite its dank, spider-infested gloom.

Even though Tiffany is relieved that her tenure in the basement only lasts a matter of a few short hours, tensions continue to mount between her and Keith, her friends, Claudia, Pierre, and of course, Tony. Throughout the story, Tiffany becomes at turns angry, escapist, defensive, and depressed, due to circumstances in her life that she thinks are unfair, yet only a few of the circumstances are indeed, unfair. While Keith's prejudice against Tony is race-based, Tony's racist family and friends refuse to acknowledge Tiffany, except to laugh derisively at her behind her back. Eventually, Tiffany refuses to let Tony take advantage of the sales-tax breaks that he obtains on luxury items when they shop together (due to her Indian status card), and Tony then becomes evasive. Once Tiffany realizes that Tony has simply been using her, and that he has had a White girlfriend all along whom he spends more time and money on than Tiffany, she becomes depressed and angry. They have a spectacular breakup that leaves Tiffany both sad and enraged.

Understandably distraught, Tiffany later runs away one evening and plans to commit suicide, which of course, terrifies her father and Granny Ruth.³⁰⁰ While Keith and Granny Ruth search for Tiffany through conventional means, Pierre, whose "whole body was designed to hunt, kill and feast,"³⁰¹ sets out to find the distraught teenager, guided by his super-human sense of smell, hearing, agility, night vision, strength, and especially, his "blinding hunger."³⁰² He

finds Tiffany hiding in a tree-house in the woods and struggles to control his raging bloodlust before he confronts her.³⁰³ She manages to escape, and runs through the woods to the lake, finds a rock to sit on while she cries and contemplates killing herself.³⁰⁴

Of course, Pierre easily follows and watches Tiffany for awhile, without Tiffany realizing he is there, although, she senses that something “evil” lurks outside the walls of the treehouse. Being so focused on herself, there is much that escapes Tiffany’s notice, including the fact that L’errant is a vampire, and even though his strange aura and behavior has not gone unnoticed by Granny Ruth, (who has an inkling that Pierre’s “sickness” and unwillingness to eat meals with the family might indicate that he could be a wendigo),³⁰⁵ she has not shared her suspicion with Tiffany. Therefore, although Pierre “creeps out” Tiffany, and although his persistence makes her angry, he initiates another conversation with Tiffany. He tries talking to her, but Tiffany eventually pushes him out of the treehouse, and he falls. Tiffany runs away in the dark, and eventually, she ends up on the beach, soaking wet and hurting. Pierre finds her, initiates another conversation, and this time, she begins to interact with him and Pierre builds a small fire on the beach. While she warms herself, they talk about life, death, history, and being Anishinabe. In this dénouement, Tiffany learns who she is—and who Pierre is, in relation to the land and their ancestors. This encounter is not entirely safe or gentle by any means, but it ends in the reconciliation of Tiffany to her family and her circumstances. By then, it is clear to the reader that Pierre has returned to Otter Lake to perform a ceremony, for which he must prepare by fasting. His fast has made him so weak that all of the protocols must be completed so that the ceremony can occur in the next hours, or he will no longer be able to resist feeding. The self-denial of his bloodlust brings tension to a pitch as the narrative progresses. Tiffany’s perspective changes throughout this ordeal and through what she learns from Pierre. Eventually, he takes her home before sun-up, then returns to a drumlin on the edge of the lake to complete his ceremony: he lights a smudge, prays to Creator, and greets the sunrise one last time.

Taylor's Native gothic makes the awareness of the relationships memorialized by Indigenous historical narratives central for the maturation of Tiffany. In an early chapter, Tiffany Hunter feels that the histories of the Great Lakes Region, and especially its Indigenous histories, have no bearing on contemporary reality. Unenthusiastic about the history she is supposed to study in school, Tiffany daydreams about the "classy" bracelet she received from Tony a week earlier, but as she shifts on her bed, her history book falls to the floor, and

Somehow it had remained open to the page she was supposed to be reading. Something about the fur trade. The topic appealed to her about as much as the ancient mangy furs she'd seen in the local museum. All this fur-trading stuff happened so long ago, what possible relevance could it have in her life now? Canadian history teachers seemed obsessed with the topic.

Those days were long gone and though she was proud of her Native heritage, she found the annual powwow events quite culturally satisfying enough, thank you very much. The thought of herself in a buckskin dress, skinning a beaver, almost made her laugh and throw up at the same time. But while she wasn't particularly fond of buckskin, Tiffany did have a love for leather jackets. If there was only something called the Versace Trade.³⁰⁶

Her ruminations on luxurious material goods, when viewed in combination with both her first name (Tiffany) and her boyfriend's last name (Banks), alert us to notice the two characters' relationships with consumerism. Combined with the status symbols that they both covet for their power to signify membership in a wealthier class, and their willingness to deceive and defraud people for personal gain,³⁰⁷ it becomes clear that these characters' axiological orientations are indeed individualist, and unaligned with Indigenist communal values. However, even though the novel seems to punish *wétiko*-like self-centeredness and consumerism, Taylor's novel constructs Tiffany as redeemable, as though she has been exposed to *wétikoism* (as a pathogen) and carries the virus, so-to-speak, but has not yet developed the full-blown disease.

Tiffany's flirtation with materialism becomes the novel's warning shot over the bow to Indigenous teens (indeed, *all* readers): one that points out how *wétiko* values disrupt the careful balance of interdependence and interrelationality.

As with Anishinaabe ethnographic accounts of *wétiko* psychosis, the story also offers an opportunity for liberation and restoration for those who have succumbed to *wétiko* infection. Taylor thus blurs the distinction between Indigenous and Western (specifically Christian) axiological orientations, and opts to present a syncretized Indigenous and Christian moral center for his novel. In concert with the syncretized Indigenous and Christian moral framework, Taylor's *The Night Wanderer* presents a problematic misattribution that is necessary to parse in order to understand the rhetorical goals of the novel.

Before the novel begins, a half-page Prologue presents an over-used and misattributed parable. In this iteration, Taylor writes that an "ancient Anishinabe (Ojibwa) man" tells his grandchildren that there are two wolves fighting inside him; one is "evil—he is fear, anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, competition, superiority and ego," while the other is "good—he is joy, peace, love, hope, sharing, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, wisdom, friendship, empathy, generosity, caring, truth, compassion and faith."³⁰⁸ When the grandchildren ask, "...which wolf will win? Which one is stronger?" their grandfather replies "The one you feed." The frequency with which versions of this story appear in or on inspirational posters, chain emails, memes, counseling sessions, therapist's walls, films,³⁰⁹ self-help books, and other assorted popular culture products, makes the parable so clichéd that its structural didacticism is only its second-most-annoying feature. Unfortunately, a third irritant of the parable is that the story is likely a twentieth-century invention of a Protestant proselytizer, is not of Native origin, and is not necessarily representative of Indigenous worldviews.

The oldest published version of the "Two Wolves" story that I have been able to confirm appeared in Pastor John Bisagno's 1965 book, *The Power of Positive Praying*.³¹⁰ This version

describes the teller as “An old missionary [who] returned to the home of a convert among the Mojave Indians. When the missionary asked him how he was doing, old Joe” described the white and black dogs who habitually fought for control of the man’s spirit.³¹¹ In Billy Graham’s 1978 version of the story, the speaker is unidentified, but the black and white dogs belong to an “Eskimo fisherman” and Graham writes that the story is illustrative of the “inner warfare that comes into the life of a person who is born again,”³¹² since the “new nature” given by God to the born again believer, is at war with the individual’s “flesh”: their fallen, sinful nature. Various claims circulate on the internet by people who say they heard the story in church in the 1950s, but none are verifiable. Most versions describe the “evil” wolf (or dog) as “dark,” or “black,” while the “good” wolf or dog is said to be “white,” although Taylor does not use this racially-charged construct. The color association of dark with evil and white with goodness also supports the Christian etymology of the story, and not Anishinaabe or Indigenous provenance.

Once reasonable clarity is established regarding the origin of the “Two Wolves” story, it then becomes necessary to analyze the effect achieved by Taylor’s appropriation of the parable along with its revised ontics and values in relation to *The Night Wanderer*. As mentioned, one of Taylor’s stated goals is to “indigenize” the vampire. Perhaps another of his goals is to “indigenize” the framework for reading the struggle going on inside of Pierre L’errant (or “Owl,” as he was called before his “conversion”), and by extension, to illustrate the struggle going on inside of post-contact Anishinaabe people, through casting a spurious light on the imposition of Christian and Cartesian dualisms as constructed by the parable. That is, perhaps in this instance of appropriation, Taylor removes the Christian/Western contexts and inserts an Indigenous ontology as an act of transculturation. In the process, the novel is able to assert that the *pollution of Indigenous blood* via European monstrosity is not a reference to miscegenation, as is the usual association, but instead is analogous to epistemic/ontologic pollution through colonialism, as it frames internal conflict for Indigenous peoples as symptomatic of imposed Christian/Cartesian hierarchical dualisms.

Consider, for example, that Owl/L'errant is given a "new nature" by an outside entity (the vampire who bites him). It may be significant to note that Owl's linguistic and predatory association with wendigo is easily deciphered and thematic throughout the book's text and artwork. For example, a stylized owl with the image of an upside-down human in its belly adorns the first page of each chapter, and, as mentioned in Chapter 1 of this dissertation, there is also a correlative etymological association of the word "owl" with many variants of "wendigo." Additionally, the cover of Taylor's book features an owl with glowing red eyes. Likewise, L'errant is described as having glowing red eyes in many scenes throughout the book. Evidence that Owl's "new nature" (when he is made into a vampire), comes into him, unbidden, through an act of another vampire's consumption; this event appears in a flashback.

After he had lived in Europe for some time, Owl misses home terribly and wants to return, but is stricken with a deadly case of the measles. When he is just about to succumb to the virus, a vampire flies into the open window one evening and changes everything:

The man, or creature, Owl didn't know what to call the thing that had changed his life, had left after taking some of the young man's blood and then sharing some of its own.

"You come from a new land, a new people. I am intrigued. I will let you become the first of your kind to join my kind. If you survive long enough, maybe you will return to your home."³¹³ (Italics original.)

Even though the "new nature" and the "old nature" inside Owl/L'errant battle with each other for dominance of his body, it is clear that in the Anishinaabe worldview presented in the novel proper, Owl's/L'errant's "flesh," or "old nature" is only "fallen" as an outcome of *pollution*: contrary to Christian ontology, the fallen nature is not depicted as inherent to Anishinaabeg. Therefore, despite the parable's "good" v. "evil" construct, the binary itself is untenable, nor would it be possible to evaluate the body (e.g. as fallen or unfallen), independent of its spirit, soul, or other components. Instead, all that makes up the human being is indivisible, and cannot be configured into neatly bounded and hierarchical parts: the categories crumble. In *The Night*

Wanderer, however, the “new” nature of Owl/L’errant— imbalanced, predatory, driven by hunger, and anthropophagous—is alien. It enters the Indigenous person without informed consent, then colonizes and incorporates the individual into a system of voraciousness, as happens with the spread of *wétikoism*. In Taylor’s act of appropriation and transculturation, the prologue breaks down the structural binaries of Christianity (good/evil; body/spirit), and Cartesian dualism (mind/body). As the “Two Wolves” story is retooled and re-rooted in Indigenous ontologies, in which human beings are not inherently fallen, the flesh is not inherently evil, and the human is an integrated being with agency. And yet, the human is susceptible to the politics—or disease, rather, of consumerism. Further, new, but *flexible* categories are introduced: the Indigenous, the miscegenated, and the alien.

Indigenizing the Vampire

Pierre’s act of “starving” his inner vampire contrasts with Tiffany’s frequent outbursts and self-centered arrogance, and provides an interpretive framework for readers as the story unfolds—a framework that the author seems to intend, but that is derived from a syncretic Indigenization of a Christian / Western ontology and axiology. Taylor represents Tiffany as a self-centered teen who feeds the “evil wolf” through behavior that aligns with the negative traits listed in the Prologue, and Taylor employs the metonymy of gothic fiction and other tropes of the gothic to increase tension around Pierre—like the darkness in many scenes that represents the unknowable, or the pair of “red lights” in those same shadows that make characters sense that they are being hunted. However, this vampire not only denies his appetite for blood, but also, the appetites he indulged as a young human man—the same ones that Tiffany hooses to indulge. Further, Taylor’s narrative makes it possible for those who have become infected by *wétikoism* to be redeemed in a sense, and at the same time, Taylor denies any particular dogma its day. In a sense, L’errant is the ultimate prodigal and the ultimate communitarian animist: his choice is like the old-timers in Indigenous communities of the north, who, having aged beyond their ability to contribute to the wellbeing of their group, gave themselves up to *be consumed* by

animals or the elements. Pierre not only denies himself physical sustenance; he is also uninterested in turning anyone else into vampires. He has no desire to find or create a companion to relieve his boredom, as Anne Rice's vampires do. He's not interested in resurrecting or creating a vampire substitute for his long-dead queen and true love. A vampire who hasn't lost touch with the Anishinaabe worldview of his human life, L'errant realizes that "the creature he has become" is incapable of living in sustainable, respectful, interrelationality and his transition to the next dimension is long overdue. As Pierre explains his decision-making process to Tiffany (though he pretends to be speaking about someone else), he explains that the "Native vampire" in his story had to

[find] a way to return home. To die. Among his people there is an understanding of how the circle of life operates. With every death, there is a birth. . . . Even though he had been wandering the world for hundreds of years, he was still Native deep down inside, and it was very important to him that he return home as a Native man. So as such, there were ceremonies to observe and preparations to make. For instance, before he left this world for the next, he wanted to fast, to purify himself, as was the custom of his people.³¹⁴

Therefore, it turns out that even though this vampire has the same hunger and physical capabilities that make vampires such dangerous beings, he does not act on individualist impulses. Indeed, his choice to self-immolate is the only option for a vampire who has had an epiphany about his place in the world and therefore, he becomes characterized by the "good" traits enumerated in the Prologue (though he can still behave in a threatening way). Taylor's parabolic device, then, cues the reader to understand that the identity of the "fearsome figure" does not derive from the static realm of essences, but rather from agency and action. In this, Taylor refuses to sanction the extreme self-interest embedded in Western axiological orientations, as well as biological determinism: a move that can be doubly read as Indigenous resistance to *wétikoism* and the tropes of savagery and stereotype.

Student Reaction to *The Night Wanderer*

Despite the ready interpretive framework that the Prologue provides, when I presented *The Night Wanderer* to a mixed-major and mixed-level group of undergraduates who were primarily non-Native, the absence of legible stereotypes still troubled the students' ability to decode or identify any of Tiffany's behavior as fearsome. Indeed, most of the students identified with Tiffany to the point of sympathy, while a handful of the students indicated that they thought of her as a self-centered brat. Further, approximately three quarters of the students did not at first recognize Owl/L'errant as Indigenous at all, aside from some racial markers described in the text. More than anything, the character was viewed by students as frightening (because of what he *is*: some said he's scary simply because "vampires are scary"), though many complained that he was a simplified vampire in the European tradition, by which they meant that he did not try to seduce or eat anyone.

After several lectures on gothic fiction and "Indian" stereotypes, plus related reading and writing exercise, the students were asked to break into six small groups and compose discussion questions about the novel for the whole class. All but one group composed a version of the question: "Is Taylor indigenizing the vampire? Is there a reason why Taylor chose to depict a westernized vampire rather than a Native vampire?" To resolve this question we discussed how stereotype disruption is impossible simply through depiction of the stereotypes' opposite, because such moves only validate the converse, as with any framework dependent upon structural oppositions. Instead, we considered what it means to "Indigenize" the representation of a European fearsome figure in terms of North American Indigenous peoples. Certainly, there is a difference between Indigenizing a fictional character, and turning a fictional character into an "Indian," *a la* Berkhofer's persisting themes and images (stereotypes).³¹⁵

But what are Taylor's choices? He could turn Owl/Pierre into a grandfatherly figure, or a wise old sage, who speaks an archaic version of Anishinaabemowin, wears buckskin, feathers, and travels by canoe (at night, of course). However, such a strategy would play into the Noble

Savage trope, and reinscribe the persistent (and false) notion that the only legitimate Natives are those who are historical and unchanged through European contact. Alternately, Taylor could represent Owl/Pierre as a vampire who only drinks the blood that runs from the severed scalp of his victims, or something equally ridiculous and gory, only to revive the ignoble/bloodthirsty savage trope. Ironically, Owl/Pierre is *truly* bloodthirsty. And for his 350 years as a vampire in Europe, he has been a savage.³¹⁶ Importantly, though, his bloodthirstiness is not inherent to his Indigeneity, and instead results from his domination and subjugation: or, if we are to use Forbes' terminology, it is inherent to the *wétiko* disease that L'errant contracted from another vampire.

Indigenization of the vampire differs from what some of the aforementioned students expected, since Taylor makes Owl/Pierre *particularly* Anishinaabe, and combines this strategy with stereotype play, but not stereotype reversal. As a vampire,

In the uncountable years, [Pierre] had killed frequently. Without thought. Without effort. He was dangerous to those voices [the people at Otter Lake] out there going to bed, like the owl to a mouse. He was strong. He was quiet. He was deadly. And what was worse, there was nothing the unsuspecting people could have done. Because, many would argue, he did not exist. And when you do not exist, it's very hard to defend against you.³¹⁷

That is, Pierre's hunger (before his return to Otter Lake), and his vampiric abilities are generic for a vampires: he is dangerous. And like wendigos or vampires, the world of this novel argues, are not fictional, but the generic "Indian" figure *is*. The human remnants of Owl's identity—his mind and physical appearance, are markedly Anishinaabe, though he speaks with an undifferentiated European accent and acquired many European languages over the years. But Taylor renders the character *Anishinaabe* as opposed to "*Indian*" *in general*. Non-Natives that Pierre encounters in the book are frustrated, (just like many of the students were), in part, because they cannot locate the signs of race in/on him, despite persistent attempts. Such frustration is also depicted in a scene from the first chapter, when Pierre begins the flight from

Europe to Canada. A woman seated next to Pierre is foiled in her attempt to racialize him. She eventually moves to another seat as soon as one is available because he makes her anxious, but she cannot place him in any fearsome category except for

. . .dark. That was the word for it. It was like there was an ominous storm inside him. It wasn't just his skin—and where could he be from? she wondered. The Middle East? Could he be a terrorist? Maybe he was Spanish or Central American. They were dark too. Egyptian possibly.

But more than anything, it was the feeling of loneliness or, more accurately, the sense of emotional detachment that reached across the armrest between them. [. . .] Moments before, she had been cheerful and optimistic about this flight. Now, she felt engulfed in a more sober and bleak mood. And it seemed to be coming from the man seated next to her.³¹⁸

This character, Irene, tries without success to racially “read” Pierre, which sends her mind on a scramble to tack the source of her dread onto a racializable (and later, spiritual) cause. This frustrated goal characterizes the anxiety that Pierre engenders for the non-Native characters he encounters throughout the novel as it does for some of his non-Native readers.

While Owl/L'errant does tend to make most everyone at Otter Lake but Granny Ruth feel varying shades of uneasy, most recognize him as Anishinaabe—like themselves. Granny Ruth looks Pierre over when they first meet. She thinks he's handsome and young, but in some ways, she finds him ageless. To her, he appears “Anishinabe. Very Anishinabe. Almost more Anishinabe than her. She had been expecting some white European guy, but there, standing in front of her, she would wager good money on the fact that he was Anishinabe.”³¹⁹ Granny Ruth continually poses questions to L'errant about his family and upbringing as an attempt at restoration rather than a need to name his Otherness and thereby disempower a threat. Epistemologically, Granny Ruth and other residents of Otter Lake are oriented toward recognizing relationships: they are interested in who L'errant is related to, while Irene is

oriented toward demystification through categorization, and a shot at anxiety relief through taxonomic domination.

While Taylor borrows the vampire (not to mention the form of the novel and the gothic genre), and even though Owl/Pierre is “deadly” and “dangerous,”³²⁰ Taylor gives the vampire an Anishinaabe history and foundation for his identity. That is, Taylor goes beyond “Indian” gestures and flourishes by refusing to dress the vampire in buckskin and feathers. Instead, Taylor offers subtle cues that other Anishinaabeg would recognize as the marks of Anishinaabe life experience and lived-knowledge. For example, one dark early-morning at the Hunter home, Pierre enters the kitchen soundlessly and startles Keith, who has just had breakfast and is making preparations to go duck hunting. Suddenly, Pierre says, “Maple syrup! Is that maple syrup I smell?” Though he is offered some pancakes and maple syrup, all Pierre can do is taste a small amount of the syrup that he gathers on his little finger. The resulting sense memory triggers an intense flashback to his childhood experiences in sugar-bush camp,³²¹ described in detail for the reader. Such a thorough description of the activity around collecting maple sap and boiling it to make maple syrup in the traditional Anishinaabe way was insignificant to my non-Native students until it was pointed out to them. However, these passages stood out to the Native students in the class as a technique Taylor uses to mark the character Anishinaabe. Likely, anyone who is either familiar with northern tribal food harvesting practices, or who is Anishinaabe themselves, would also come to the same conclusion. To such readers, Pierre’s “bittersweet memories” of sugar-bush activities would mark him as a cultural insider, and *particularly* Anishinaabe. For Anishinaabeg, the process in an integrated experience of language, song, knowledge transfer, affirmation of reciprocal relationships with ancestors, the trees themselves, other beings, and further, has particular meaning in relation to the Ojibwe calendar.

Taylor’s playfulness with his audiences’ expectations of generic vampires and “Indians” might therefore be better understood if we consider these techniques to be genre play. That is,

the European vampire in *The Night Wanderer* stands as a metaphor for *wétiko*: for consumerism, incorporation, assimilation, and the other threats that accompany colonization. At the same time, Pierre's non-conformity to the generic "Indian" undoes the "tragic simulations" of the Vanishing Indian stereotype that some readers expect.³²² Pierre engenders a "category crisis" *vis a vis* his illegibility as "Indian," as "good," or as simply "evil."³²³ Rather than look for intelligibility in an imposed taxonomical category, it is more fruitful to trace the relationships that were disrupted through Pierre's transformation into one of the blood-sucking undead, and then, to trace relationships that are restored through his acts of self-determination.

As mentioned in the first chapter of this dissertation, some of the Cree and Ojibwe wendigo narratives describe people who fear they have, or will soon become a wendigo, and yet, they despise their own desire for human flesh. They appeal to relatives or medicine people for help, and ask that their hearts be melted through ceremonies like sweat-lodge or through the ingestion of a medicine made of hot tallow. Likewise, Owl/Pierre desires freedom from this enslavement to his appetite, and indeed, by the time the reader meets Owl/Pierre, his only desire is to go home, perform his ceremony, transition out of his current corporeal state and its inherent enslavement.³²⁴ Granny Ruth seems to recognize his predicament, which becomes clear on the evening that Tiffany runs away. Pierre and Granny Ruth sit on the porch that evening, just before Pierre's nightly walkabout on the reserve, and she asks him what his family had told him about "wendigo." He answers that they are

Demons. Or monsters. Cannibals whose souls are lost. They eat and eat, anything and everything. And everybody. They never get satisfied. In fact, the more they eat, the bigger they get, and the bigger their appetite becomes. It's a never-ending circle. They become giant, ravenous monsters marauding across the countryside, laying waste to it. They come in winter time, from the north.³²⁵

While Pierre's version of the wendigo lends itself to an easy comparison to expansionist capitalism, Granny Ruth brings the analogue closer to home, as she replies,

That's one story. Another says they were once humans who, during winter when food was scarce, had resorted to cannibalism. By eating the flesh of humans, they condemned themselves to aimless wandering, trying to feed a hunger that will not be satisfied.³²⁶ As she continues to describe the version of wendigo that reminds her of Pierre's nightly wanderings and his other strange habits, she "unconsciously slipped into Anishinabe," and says (in Anishinabe) that "the only way to kill one is to burn them in a fire, to melt their frozen heart. Only then will they be destroyed and free."³²⁷ Indeed, self immolation by sun-exposure is the goal of his planned ceremony, since watching the sun rise will melt his heart, destroy his body, and according to Granny Ruth, the process will set him "free." Even so, he doesn't tell her of his plans.

Indigenizing Fear

If readers' fear responses are triggered by perceived threats to the health and survival of a protagonist (depending on whether or not the audience identifies in some way with the protagonist), it's also possible that a reader with epistemic, ontological, and axiological orientations that differ from the organizing worldview of a novel can result in reader affinity with a character who is supposed to be understood, instead, as fearsome. The reverse is true, too: epistemic or ontological difference can also account for a reader's dislike of a character who is supposed to engender affinity or sympathy. Of course, characters are not usually quite so one-dimensional, and neither are readers, but the phenomenon certainly exists.

One way to account for the indeterminacy of audience affinity or revulsion to a character like Owl/Pierre, is to consider the West's long veneration of individualism and independence. Especially in North America, these are considered admirable traits and survival skills for the settler population, while for Ojibwe peoples, the same traits have historically been viewed as degenerate and opposed to survival. As Owl/Pierre becomes a brutal consumer of human flesh and is alienated from his Indigenous identity, the vampire in *The Night Wanderer* takes a new name that reflects his diasporic status in Europe and the new hardness of heart he gains as a

result of vampiric transformation. Since Taylor names the character “Pierre,” (*stone* in French), and “L’errant,” (*The Wanderer*), it is possible that the author intends to draw attention to the sense of eternal homelessness that the vampire experiences. Such bleak loneliness and atomization was likewise brought to Indigenous peoples through assimilation and the resultant internalization of such values as individualism and consumerism. While EuroAmericans often consider the result of successful parenting to look more like fledging, I think I can safely make a broad statement in regard to Indigenous attitudes about individualism and still retain accuracy, in pointing out that for an eighteenth-century North American Indigenous young man to be on his own in the world, would, in most cases, indicate that something had gone terribly wrong. One circumstance that would have caused a young man to be so alone, would have resulted from banishment. However, banishment was relatively rare (and still occurs, on rare occasions). I don’t mean to insinuate that there are no Indigenous societies that value the individual. To the contrary, group recognition of an individual’s value in the community encourages individuals to put effort into developing their gifts and skills, so that individuals will be able to contribute to the survival and wellbeing of everyone else in the group, and the group as a whole. But, identity and meaning is found in relationships, and after Pierre had become a vampire, he had to live for many decades without such relationships. He had, however, begun to abandon his relationships even before he found himself in Europe.

The journey that led to Owl’s encounter with a vampire in Europe began with the “hunger” that he cultivated as a young man, and serves as an example of extreme individualism. He wanted to see more of the world, and to gain wealth, which led to his decision to deceive his family and leave his homeland.³²⁸ In Pierre’s flashback scenes, he remembers that as a young man—as Owl—he had been obsessed with riches and the wider world beyond his homelands. The obsession began when fur traders, the “*people with different values and understanding*” visited his village in a 14-foot birchbark canoe.³²⁹ They told him about

*far-off places, and strange animals, and even bigger canoes than the one he sat in [which] took the boy's imagination captive and refused to release it. His father and the other village elders were wary of these men, for they had heard stories about them. Strange stories. But Owl was more interested in stories that told of big fishes called whales and giant wigwams of stone called castles.*³³⁰

Later that night as he tried to sleep, Owl found that

*The longer he lay there, the more demanding his need to see [exciting new places and the people in them]. By dawn, the young man had come up with a plan. It would mean leaving his family, but he could always come back. It would mean deceiving them, but he could always apologize later, when he returned with great gifts. In the end, it wasn't that hard a decision after all.*³³¹

Clearly, Owl rationalizes actions that would be transgressive in his community,³³² and entertains the idea that “*he could always come back,*” or that “*he could always apologize later,*” which goes against Anishinaabe values of integrity—and with that word, I intend to convey the sense of an integrated, or whole, human subjectivity and identity—like a building in which the foundation and framing is strong and not susceptible to collapse under ordinary pressures. A community based on interrelationality and interdependence would hold such integrity as a central and necessary ethic. Owl’s obsessive desire to leave his home becomes an irresistible hunger that completely takes over his thought life, and through his rationalizations, he begins to *dis-integrate* and to become *wétiko*, in Forbes’ terms. This enslavement begins with captivation through his thought life, but once he is transported to France, Owl is also held *physically* captive, and is only allowed out of his quarters when “beckoned by their king” to be paraded around as an exotic curiosity.³³³ In his quarters, the relationship between captivity and disease intensifies, as Owl, dying, is quarantined with the measles,³³⁴ a disease that he says “fed more strongly on Owl’s people” than on the French.³³⁵ In these chambers, the vampire visits and pollutes Owl’s blood, which severs Owl from his community for all time. The cause-and-effect of

Owl's decisions—from the first-indulged fantasy to the last meal of his existence, might seem like nothing more than a slippery slope, but indeed, the first obsessive thought to the last selfish act violate core Anishinaabe values. Taylor thus points to individualism and independence as the source of community disintegration and disease, analogous to vampire-transformation as well as wendigo possession.

As an Anishinaabe morality tale, *The Night Wanderer* makes use of something similar to the “there’s no place like home” idea, but at the same time, the novel characterizes obsessions, deception, and disregard for kin and *their* survival as a disease. Further, it especially punishes Owl for his extreme individualism and self-centeredness (which may, for Taylor, represent “ego,” as a feature of the “evil wolf” in the Prologue). As a morality tale, the novel could also remind readers of the losses Indigenous people have suffered through assimilation and forgetfulness, warning Indigenous readers to be guarded and wary lest they ingest (or internalize) the values embedded in European material culture, discourse and practices, and thus, become ingested by a wendigo. Even before his journey begins, Owl’s eagerness to travel across the ocean is accommodated by a Frenchman who advises Owl to “Eat well” before the journey. Owl obliges, and “eagerly . . . began to consume the stew [prepared for him by the captain]. He was very hungry.”³³⁶ The conspicuous use of the word “consume,” foreshadows the horrible consequences Owl will face once bitten by a vampire, but also indicates again that while there may be no shortage of food or material goods to indulge in, Western-style individualism and consumerism has deadly ramifications. Owl’s enslavement to hunger and his atomization are his punishment: it is living death for a person whose worldview and values are oriented toward the group, rather than the individual. By the time the reader meets Owl/Pierre, he has transformed once again: his body still inspires fear, but he has mastered self-control, and as much as is possible, he does what he can to reconnect people with the land, their ancestors, and in a sense, awaken them to the dangers of their own attitudes that could potentially disrupt connections between ancestors, land, kin and community.³³⁷

What Does it Take to Stop an Anishinaabe Vampire?

As mentioned earlier, vampires get a lot of mileage as fearsome figures, in part because, as Cohen says, they are “harbingers of category crisis.” However, the ability of a vampire to make people in their vicinity feel cold—or frozen—in some ways represents stasis. That is, the vampiric association with frozenness is not unlike the frozen heart and blowing winds associated with wendigo. Cold is thematic in all these narratives, and *The Night Wanderer* is no exception. From the Hunter’s basement, which takes on an unusually deep chill while the vampire makes it his temporary home, to Pierre’s hands, which are often noted as being freezing cold, to the cold dread that overcomes people when they encounter him. We could say that this is a feature common to almost all vampires, and remember the blasting snow as it whirls about Stoker’s Count Dracula when he is weakened, unable to transform, and boxed-up on a carriage bound for the Carpathians. Though Stoker’s vampire takes many forms, Coppola’s Dracula begs Mina for freedom from the never-ending torture of eternal *death*, or stasis. Some vampires, like Anne Rice’s Louis and Claudia from Anne Rice, also complain about the lack of change that characterizes their existence. For example, Claudia blames Louis and Lestat for dooming her to eternal life in the body of a four-year-old. This feature of the vampire, or the wendigo, to cause or be associated with frozen stasis correlates with the necessary conditions of ingestion, as described earlier in Chapter 2’s analysis of slime molds and other blobs.

Likewise, Pierre is unbearably bored; he is, for all intents and purposes, frozen, and has tired of every option a vampire might have to make his existence interesting. Not only that, he has lost the ability to engage in the series of offerings and exchange necessary for sustained relationships. While telling his story to Tiffany without revealing that it is indeed, his own story, he says:

Look at it this way. Boredom to you is a small stream, a creek, a minor inconvenience to put up with until something more interesting happens later that day. To [the vampire], boredom was an ocean, a chasm that just got bigger and bigger. He’d seen everything,

done everything, and there was nothing left to keep his interest. The world was changing and he wasn't. Sadly, there was no end in sight. He was very bored.³³⁸

Pierre's boredom is with sameness—his own unchanging appetite, abilities and restrictions, he can only consume. He is unable to transform back to life as a human or reproduce. While some transformations are possible for Pierre, these transformations are morphologically generic for most vampires,³³⁹ along with so many of the same limitations that beset most vampires (e.g. they must avoid the sun, they can only eat blood, they are always cold, and they are nocturnal). Such lists of morphological possibilities, biological characteristics, and behavioral traits, are not so different from other life forms also described and circumscribed by taxonomical systems.

Vampires, however, seem always driven to escape such confines, and this has precedence in Bram Stoker's original.³⁴⁰ For example, when Dracula's victim Lucy Westenra is diagnosed as a vampire and Dracula himself is accurately defined by Van Helsing, the vampire is finally vulnerable. A plan of action can be operationalized, and the roles of prey to predator reverse. Though there is no Van Helsing-like character in *The Night Wanderer*, Pierre becomes understood as either a wendigo or a vampire by the two Hunter women (Granny Ruth and Tiffany), but the definition is left open-ended and dialogical since there is no outright confrontation or explicit labeling. For example, just after she describes wendigo, Granny Ruth tells Pierre, "You seem to be doing quite a bit of wandering yourself. I get the hint there's something in you that's not satisfied. Am I a crazy old woman, or am I a clever old woman?"³⁴¹ leaving the act of definition up to Pierre. Later that evening after Tiffany hears the story about the Native vampire from Otter Lake, she lists all of the elements of the story that match up with what she has witnessed since his arrival. She says, "Sounds familiar," and, "This story, it's more than just a plain-old ghost story, isn't it?"³⁴² In sum, Granny Ruth and Tiffany recognize Pierre as uncannily Anishinabe, yet with some difference that they leave up to him to define. Their verbal acknowledgement that he might be wendigo or vampire is secondary, nuanced with a hint of concern, but without the need to "hunt," kill, or even *noun* him. Indeed, these exchanges leave

Pierre without a fearful mob or a slayer to face. Nobody suspects him as a vampire or wendigo other than the surnamed *Hunter* women, who demand nothing more of him than an explanation of who he is as an Anishinaabe. Taylor, therefore, gives agency back to Pierre, as well as his identity as Anighinaabeg, and demands that the vampire exercise self-determination over his own fate. In the act of self-immolation, Pierre disrupts the category that holds him, and, in destroying the vampire threat to the survival of the group, he fulfills his responsibility to the community.

Throughout the novel, however, Tiffany has walked dangerously close to the same path that Owl walked down as a young man. In her outbursts, she negatively defines her father, Granny Ruth, her mother, Otter Lake, and her ancestors. She does likewise to Pierre. After three hundred and fifty years to think about the consequences of certain behaviors, however, Pierre recognizes that once she objectifies, or fixes the people in her life, Tiffany would transform them into nothing more than resources, and thus, render them either consumable or disposable. In that sense, she is well on her way toward becoming wendigo (or vampire). Pierre responds to her urges toward Western individualism, unkindness, and suicidal threats by explaining: “I told you this story because I believe you and this ‘bored Native vampire,’ as you call him, have much in common. You both have responded to incidents in your lives rather drastically. Bad and misdirected decisions were made.”³⁴³ Even though the students in the class I mentioned earlier identified most closely with Tiffany, her desires, and her frustrations, the behavior that she has in common with Pierre would make her nearly as fearsome a figure as the vampire, provided the reader comes to the story with an Anishinaabe (or similar) worldview.

However, Pierre expends the effort to help Tiffany understand that her people, and her community, “...isn’t history. It’s right here.” In other words, he helps her to value her place-based relationships that Western temporal structures would distance. Pierre continues:

Just think, Tiffany. For hundreds or even thousands of years, Anishinabe people lived here. They hunted, laughed, played, made love, and died in the village that once stood

here. And in that same village over those same centuries were hundreds and possibly thousands of young girls just like you, asking the same questions. Standing right where you are standing. . . . The same earth you are standing on has been stood on by generations of your ancestors. The air you breath, even these trees you don't notice, have been touched and climbed by those who came before you. That rock you were sitting on, how many behinds have sat there, watching the sun set?³⁴⁴

This series of descriptions and questions inspire Tiffany to reconsider what it means to be Anishinaabe. Pierre encourages her to thrust her hands into the ground and reconnect with her ancestors at the old village site, and his story awakens Tiffany's awareness of the value of her people, the value of her role in her peoples' lives, and the dangers of dis-integration through the betrayal of those relationships. Tiffany's self-destruction is averted, as is the threat to her family and community. It is the vampire himself who turns out to be interested in melting hearts.

Taylor's vampire may therefore more closely resemble a trickster figure: neither good, nor evil, and both at the same time; or, as Vizenor might say, he is a "[character] that liberate[s] the mind and never reach[es] a closure" in the story, which deconstructs the possibility of placing Pierre in any sort of a moral taxonomy.³⁴⁵ Instead, Pierre "...creates the tribe in stories, and pronounces the moment of remembrance as the trace of liberation."³⁴⁶ While Tiffany and Owl/Pierre alternate between neutrality and fearsomeness, the reader who approaches the text from a Western orientation will find that the characters are most fearsome when they do indeed violate categorical restrictions as part of their biological or taxonomic category. On the other hand, for a reader who organizes the world based on an Algonquian or similar Indigenous worldview, the characters will be interpreted as fearsome when they violate relationships. For such readers, the true fearsome figure in *The Night Wanderer* is not an individual at all, but instead, the meme-like loop of colonial domination through definition and consumption, since they disrupt the relationships that are necessary for the sustenance and balance of life. Taylor's "Indigenized" vampire, which intersects with Canada's history as the site of European

expropriation and appropriation, thus critiques the internalization of capitalist expansionism as analogous to *wétikoism*—depicting it as a way of being in the world that turns humans into both the consumer and the consumed.

In this chapter I have shown how Indigenous appropriation of the vampire figure allows authors a means to critique *wétikoism*, and further, how the internalization of non-Indigenous worldviews can also be portrayed as predatory natures, or, rather value-systems that rationalize *wétiko* behavior; these value systems can enter people without their knowledge or consent and “colonize” them. In the next chapter, I focus on “aggregate” *wétikos*, as appropriation becomes the incorporation of individuals into what Forbes calls “big” or “giant” *wétikos*: that is, systems of domination and consumption.

Chapter 5

The Aggregate Windigo in Joseph Bruchac's *The Dreams of Jesse Brown*

“All Indians must dance, everywhere, keep on dancing. Pretty soon in next spring Big Man [Great Spirit] come. He bring back all game of every kind. The game be thick everywhere. All dead Indians come back and live again. They all be strong just like young men, be young again. Old blind Indian see again and get young and have fine time. When Old Man [God] comes this way, then all the Indians go to mountains, high up away from whites. Whites can't hurt Indians then.”

-Wovoka

Wrapping her arms around him
Famine injected herself
Into his body by breathing on his mouth,
Sowing hunger deep in his veins.

When his terrible malady
Exhausted his provisions, only adding
To his fatal disease, he began to take bites
Out of his own limbs, and in his misery
Fed himself by consuming his own body.

-Ovid

Not too long after Native writers began receiving Pulitzer and other prizes for their fiction in 1968, they also began to stretch, perforate, and even tear apart generic categories. Whether or not the genre-violence is politically-motivated, the plots and characters that fill these volumes make their share of literary guerrilla moves, striking not just at an imaginary world or at the limitations of convention, but at colonial and neocolonial systems of domination—including an imposed EuroAmerican worldview—through gaps left open in popular culture just wide enough to lob in ideological grenades. One such writer, Joseph Bruchac (Abenaki), receives more recognition for his poetry and children's books than he does for the well-aimed strikes found in his adult fiction. Possibly one of the most popular and prolific Native American writers, with over one hundred and forty books to his credit and numerous awards, it may seem curious that Bruchac's 1978 speculative fiction novel, *The Dreams of Jesse Brown*,³⁴⁷ while appearing on reading lists and syllabi for several graduate

studies programs, has received virtually no attention from scholars other than a brief review in *Booklist*.³⁴⁸ In personal communication with the author, Bruchac explains that

Cold Mountain Press, which was my main publisher back then, had some major problems distributing it. The biggest problem was when the warehouse the book was stored in suffered a flood. As a result, nearly all of the press run was lost and only a few hundred copies made their way into the hands of readers. And Cold Mountain Press went out of business not long after that I only have one copy of the book myself. I think that also may explain the dearth of reviews, since relatively few went to reviewers.³⁴⁹

Unfortunately, the resultant scholarly vacuum means there are no ready conversations about this particular novel with which to engage. However, the discussion is under way with regard to Indigenous futurisms, slipstream, sci-fi, and speculative fiction,³⁵⁰ and here I add *The Dreams of Jesse Brown* to the mix, while tracing the fearsome figures represented in the dystopian, post-apocalyptic experience of the novel's protagonist, Jesse Brown, and linking their behavior to what Jack D. Forbes has described as the *wétiko disease*.

As one of the first sci-fi novels published by a Native American,³⁵¹ *The Dreams of Jesse Brown* shares many features of more recently-published Native novels, including a narrative structure that slips between the history of conflict between the United States and a variety of tribal peoples from the Plains region in the 1800's, and what would have been an alternate present in 1978, with futuristic technological applications. In *Walking the Clouds: An Anthology of Indigenous Science Fiction*, Grace Dillon notes that a particular set of historical events frequently appear in Native sci-fi as a way to re-vision the outcome of conflict between Natives and colonizers. Says Dillon:

Recurring elements in alternative Native stories include the Sand Creek Massacre of 1864, the Battle of Little Big Horn and Custer's demise (1876), the Ghost Dances after the Wounded Knee Massacre in 1890 (albeit many forms of Ghost Dances occurred

historically prior to Wounded Knee), and the Oka uprisings of the 1990s at Kahnésatake.

The Ghost Dance may be the most widespread image connected to Native Apocalypse.³⁵² All of these events (except for Oka / Kahnésatake) are rewritten as integral to the visionary experience of Jesse Brown—a messianic character whose name can be read as “Brown Jesus,”³⁵³ and who interacts with the major figures of these and other associated events through dreams and visions, even though he lives in a post-nuclear apocalypse North America. In combination with the epigraph, the technology imagined and described in the novel places many of the story’s events in 1978, but because the vignettes, historical reports, and memorats from the late 1800s are interwoven with this fictional and revisionist “future,” the effect is slippery: since some of the characters are well-known historical figures from the late 19th Century and interact with a fictional character from the 1970s, readers may be driven to question the veracity of the 19th Century episodes, despite Bruchac’s conscientious inclusion of a Selected Bibliography with sixteen of the sources he found most useful, and a note on how, during the research phase, he also “[listened] to the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of those whose lives are spoken of in some of [*The Dreams of Jesse Brown’s*] pages.” This method, he claims, “allowed the people closest to the events of that time to tell their own stories,”³⁵⁴ but their testimonies undergo contextual revision through the elision of traditional Western linear narrative conventions. Both time-as-distance, and structural oppositions like dead/alive melt away, as known historical figures like Wovoka and Sitting Bull speak with Jesse through dreams and visions. Other historical people add contours to the text, such as the Oglala medicine man, Black Elk, whose visionary experiences as recorded in John G. Niehardt’s *Black Elk Speaks* appears palimpsest-like in *The Dreams of Jesse Brown*, at least in terms of the stylistics of several narrative motifs.

Val Morehouse, the aforementioned lone reviewer, did not struggle with the “faction” aspects of Bruchac’s text, but instead, questioned its futuristic vision, evidently because the politics of the novel bear too close a resemblance to contemporaneous (1970s) conflicts between American Indians and the United States. Morehouse found “Bruchac’s future . . . less credible

than his vivid narratives of the past, because the temptation to propagandize disrupts his lyric tone,”³⁵⁵ but credibility seems an odd measure of comparison between known historical events and visionary ethnographies, and Bruchac’s imaginative sf-present. Further, it seems to me that Bruchac uses the “lyric tone” as a device to set apart the dream/vision sequences. The reviewer’s criticism therefore strikes me as representative of dashed genre expectations, a formalist’s rejection of context, a romantic abstraction of history, or, more likely, a knee-jerk reaction to what Christopher Teuton (Cherokee) calls “Mode 2” writing by Native academics: a mode that often “[focuses] on the continued colonial subjugation of American Indian nations by the United States, [that exposes] unlawful land claims, abuses of federal power and the misuse of Native lands.” According to Teuton, this mode of writing “risks overstating the divisions between the Native and the non-Native, and has thus been perceived as overly ideological,” essentialist, and polemical.³⁵⁶ Even though Teuton attributes the mode primarily to scholars writing literary and social criticism, his chapter in *Reasoning Together: The Native Critics Collective* argues that Indigenous theories can be found in Indigenous oral stories. I agree, and would assert that the same can be said of Indigenous texts of all kinds, including lexicographical texts in any genre. Bruchac’s novel is an example, and though it compares and contrasts Native American and EuroAmerican epistemology, ontology, axiology and metaphysics, and traces the actions of both groups to their worldviews, the novel does not attribute their differences to race—but racism is implicated. If a critique of United States colonialism, its ideology, and especially its twining of capitalism, puritanical Christianity, and Western expansionism is “propaganda,” then, yes, Morehouse offers a correct appraisal. Imagining a successful revolution for American Indians, and especially one that portrays Indigenous praxes as liberatory may indeed be transgressive, depending on where the reader is situated when the line that demarcates socially acceptable behavior is crossed.

A Summary: Movements, Arrangements, Motifs and Moments

In the novel, the privileged remnant of the United States' ruling elite, technocrats, and the resource extraction industry, re-form to reassert both technological and political power after nuclear holocaust in North America. To protect their interests, they seek to suppress a revolt led by an American Indian character, Jesse Brown (tribal nation unknown), whose movement depends upon communication and collaboration between himself, trickster figures, the Paiute Ghost Dance prophet Wovoka, Sitting Bull, and Jesse's contemporaneous compatriots, although the novel does not focus on or develop the structure and actions of the 1970s rebellion. Through various surveillance methods, the elite attempt to monitor and control Jesse's communication with other revolutionaries, but they cannot access his dreams and visions where he, like the hero of Joseph Campbell's *monomyth*, undergoes a separation / transformation stage in his dreams, where he prepares to lead a revolution.³⁵⁷

The novel imagines the fulfillment of the Ghost Dance prophecy in 1978, eighty eight years after the Wounded Knee massacre. Whereas Wovoka was considered a prophet of the Ghost Dance, Jesse becomes its messiah-of-sorts, who substantiates the veracity of Wovoka's visions. Such a revolutionary vision is of course dangerous to the ruling elite, so Jesse is the top person-of-interest to Emmet Okun: one of the thirteen "Controllers" who run the "Rejuvenation Project" for the "New States" hidden in deep underground high-security headquarters at Sterling, North Dakota, the geographic center of the continent. Shera, an undercover Agent for the New States, is assigned to get close to Jesse. Jesse moves into Shera's apartment which is fitted with surveillance cameras, wires, and microphones. These enable Okun and a technician-underling to monitor the two on a giant screen. The Controller is particularly interested what Jesse says to Shera after the dreams, and the actions Jesse takes when motivated by his visions. Jesse knows that Shera works for the Controllers, but her assimilated condition motivates him to share with her his thoughts about history, metaphysics, his own life, and the differences in worldview between Indigenous peoples and anti-Indianist EuroAmericans. Jesse's intellectual,

spiritual, and emotional intimacy with Shera leads her to experience visions of her own that ultimately help her become disentangled from the New States Controllers, as well as her internalized colonialism. It could in fact be argued that Shera is the more interesting character, since she undergoes a radical transformation in consciousness and identity, whereas for the most part, the more seismic transformations for Jesse occur before the readers meet him.

Jesse, along with his friend Wade Crow (who is also somewhat of a trickster figure in the novel) along with their relatively anonymous allies, and the people whose corporeal lives were lived in the 1800s, (like Wovoka and Sitting Bull, for example), work together to bring about the demise of the new totalitarian state that is nearing completion of its resource-extraction-based infrastructure: its means to control the continent and the new slave economy, which bears analogous resemblance to the Peabody Coal mine at Black Mesa. Thus, like the Indigenous futurisms in Dillon's anthology, *The Dreams of Jesse Brown* "posit[s] the possibility of an optimistic future by imagining a reversal of circumstances, where Natives win or at least are centered in the narrative."³⁵⁸ Beginning with the decade in which the novel was written, American Indians began to actively campaign for environmental justice, especially in response to the despoilment of their homelands. Of course, such activism was considered as subversive then as it is now. For American Indians to imagine a future *at all* was subversive in the 19th Century, and in the 1970s context of the novel's production, groups like Women of All Red Nations (WARN), the American Indian Movement (AIM), and American Indian fishing rights activists in the Pacific Northwest, not only *imagined* a reversal of circumstances—they fought for, and in many ways, gained, relief of some of their life-conditions that had been orchestrated by law and policy-makers to disadvantage, kill, or assimilate American Indians. This is not to say that the future secured by these activists is all that was, or is, imagined, or that the victories they achieved was all that they sought. Many flaws of the 1970s American Indian activist movements are relatively well-known, but the movements were activated by committed, visionary people who often reverently combined their activism with the revitalization of tribal religious practices

and conscious animism into their goals. This was especially important to those who were cognizant of, and were struggling with, the inherited conditions of settler colonial-induced cultural suppression and loss. Bruchac's Jesse Brown owes much to these individuals who imagined restored relationships for American Indian people, and risked their lives to reassert treaty rights, sovereignty, and self-determination for Indigenous North Americans and Native nations. Reports of their struggles and strategies was current news and inspirational for many young Native people in the mid-to-late 70s (if not still). Likely, Bruchac's novel was influenced by this context of 1970s activism as much as the Indigenous resistances of the 1880s. Powerful oratory was valued in both eras. Some of those who gained the most notoriety were skilled orators with the ability to command the attention of large and diverse audiences. As Jesse Brown speaks in the novel, he similarly attracts the attention of the novel's other characters.

Formal Aggregation in *The Dreams of Jesse Brown*

The New States represent an aggregate fearsome figure, with aggregation itself a formal element of the novel's structure. For example, *The Dreams of Jesse Brown* is arranged in four "books," or sections, and each book is associated with one of four seasons. The books are further divided into chapters, with each chapter containing sections of various lengths and genres, separated one from another with extra line breaks and four asterisks. Because of these formal breaks, readerly identification of each sections' context requires close attention to the relationships between characters, time/timing, motifs, and place(ment) in the apposed sections.

Further, the novel's narrative and form are not linear; this feature should be familiar to readers of postmodernist literature, even though in this case, Bruchac's non-linear narrative strategy primarily represents an Indigenous concept of time and interrelationality. Indigenous worldview combined with cross-cultural or postmodernist studies surely must have influenced Bruchac, and yet, these influences are not reducible to quantities and ratios. Bruchac's sf contrasts technologically-induced virtual realities with Indigenous visionary experience, rends rational limitations of corporeality, recombines with Indigenous ontologies, and comes out the

other end as “Native slipstream [which] . . . is noteworthy for its reflection of a worldview. In other words, it . . . does not simply seem avant-garde but models a cultural experience of reality.”³⁵⁹ The events and characters ask such rhetorical questions as, “Do you think that time is a straight line? Do you think the road of life goes only one way?”³⁶⁰ And clearly shows that the consequences of a unidirectional concept of time include disruptions in all life-sustaining relationships. Thus, the form of the narrative is better thought of as an arrangement, as in a musical arrangement: form that facilitates movement in various relational directions rather than a framework upon which plot, character development, and story arc can hang. This is not to say that there is no plot, nor any representation of an Indigenous concept of history in the novel—no sense of a “before” and “after,” but instead, we are to think of “before” and “after” as permeable categories on either side of *now*. Even though Indigenous peoples have conceptualized time and places as permeable, and even though their literatures have for centuries expressed non-linear concepts of time and spatial arrangement through form, narrative time, and content, this is not why I call *The Dreams of Jesse Brown* “slipstream.” *Jesse Brown* is slipstream because it is sf: the novel makes use of technologies that either don’t exist at all, or didn’t exist when the novel was written. Various technologies (like virtual reality, for example) cannot provide unbounded control of time and vision for Emmet Okun and other agents of the New States. Contrast between the liberty of Jesse to travel undetected in dreams, and the limitations of Okun’s “rational” vision, is also an analogue to Christopher Teuton’s “mode 2” writing, which critiques Western worldviews through disruption of formal linearity.

Coyote Time

The use of mythical time as part of the epigraph and introduction to *The Dreams of Jesse Brown* may seem at first to anchor the narrative at a starting point so “far back,” so-to-speak, that there doesn’t seem to be anything particularly inventive or generically transgressive with this strategy. The familiar language of mythical times entwined in Native narratives seems almost expected, especially in relation to other Native American literature written during the

1970s. The beginning of the story, then, evokes the language of other tribal beginnings. However, a close look at the way mythical time functions in these sections might challenge the reader to consider the possibility that beginnings can occur at any moment that ever has or will exist.

The poetic epigraph points immediately to conflict as articulation between the late 19th Century and the 1970s, along with Native religious practices:

A gathering of lines of force, patterns formed by iron filings when a magnet is held beneath white paper. Sun Dance, Ghost Dance, Peyote Road, Yuwipi.

Eighty eight years. The four seasons circle like flocks of geese seeking a safe landing. A hand traces words, a stick drawn through the dust where a river once flowed and will flow again.

The imagery represented by the phrase, “patterns formed by iron filings” eluded me, until I remembered the toy called “Wooly Willy,” popular with families on long road trips from the 1950s through the 1980s. Once jogged, my memory of the way metallic shards line up to face an invisible magnetic force created the strong visual I needed in order to imagine the way Bruchac’s novel regards these four religious practices and the visions their practitioners sometimes experience. The Sun Dance, the Ghost Dance, the “Peyote Road” (a reference to the Native American Church), and the Yuwipi ceremony, are the implied means by which the “lines of force,” or, the resistances from across time, gather through means of visions to square off with domination’s forces. Characters from conflicts in the historical sections of the novel and the fictional ones come together “Eighty eight years” later (after Wounded Knee), and are thus connected as part of the same plot.

To understand the story as an interconnected whole instead of as parallel storylines, the reader is required to accept that the stories of the historical characters’ lives are not circumscribed by their corporeal, human life-spans, but that, as Jesse puts it, “It is all connected. Listen.”³⁶¹ Through the ceremonies and dreams, characters meet across time and

space with people born in a different era. Indeed, each of the religious practices listed in the first stanza are means of acquiring visions and dreams that can also connect the dreamer with people and other entities across time and space. These possibilities are presented as inevitable as the return of seasons that “circle like a flock of geese.” The narrative depicts numerous time-crossings that can be disorienting unless the reader is familiar with historical events, figures, and the visionary processes that bring them together.

The first chapter opens with an italicized imperative to the reader to “*Listen . . .*,”³⁶² and this storyteller’s motif recurs seventeen times throughout the novel, repeatedly instructing the reader or characters to focus their attention on short vignettes, visions, memories, dreams, Jesse’s readings from historical texts, and the mythopoetic. This initial request (or command) is followed by a story featuring “Old Man Coyote,” and “a burned creature,” whose “lips were red sores,” and whose “hair was falling in great patches from the creature’s head.” The creature describes himself to Old Man Coyote as “the fire that comes without light. I’m the slow death that eats you from inside, the rain that falls but cannot be seen. I am coming for those who call themselves the Whites and for those who call themselves the People.”³⁶³ Through trickery, Old Man Coyote finds out how the creature plans to destroy the People, and how the plan can be foiled. Old Man Coyote determines to instruct the People to hide themselves underground. When he successfully misleads the burned creature, Coyote remarks to himself, “It appears that I am still of some use after all!” so that “when the bombs fell, most of Old Man Coyote’s people survived.”³⁶⁴ Just like their ancestors, the survivors had “been a thorn in the side of the New States,” from the beginning, since even though they worked at rebuilding the country, “there were troublemakers among them”: a reference to Jesse, Wade Crow, and their unnamed allies.³⁶⁵ In other words, they are Coyote’s people—survivors of the destruction—and are the source of regeneration.

Recognition of cycles of destruction and re-creation—or birth, death, and rebirth, are thematic in Indigenous stories and religions. One example that follows in this traditional theme

is the promise of a flood that Wovoka's adherents believed would come about as a result of the Ghost Dance. In regard to that promise, *The Dreams of Jesse Brown's Wade* tells Jesse in a later chapter, that ". . . we knew it that it wouldn't be a flood again. When the Fire came and the Earth opened up to swallow the things of the Whites I thought that time had come,"³⁶⁶ but the burned creature himself never reappears in the novel—at least not in this particular form. In the final chapter, Old Man Coyote returns in a scene that further connects the burned creature and the New States to *wétikoism*. And yet, the placement of Old Man Coyote and the burned creature at the *beginning* of the novel merits more examination.

In this scene, Bruchac attributes the cause of nuclear holocaust to a fearsome figure; this figure resembles a fiery cousin of *wétiko* or Windigo. Like fire, the burned creature exists to consume, and since he admits that his "medicine does not work against the Earth,"³⁶⁷ anthropophagia is his only stated desire or motivation. Further, even though the Earth is not destroyed, the cities are flattened: great swaths are blackened and infertile. Thus, the creature bears resemblance to the *wétiko*, in its "capacity to impart barrenness or infertility to the earth."³⁶⁸

At first, it seems that the introductory chapter's conceit of the interaction between Coyote and the burned creature serves to establish three things: familiarization of the audience with the aforementioned "Listen" motif; to establish that this is an American Indian novel that favors "Indian" characters; and, third, that in the fictional world of the novel, North America has been annihilated by nuclear bombs and fallout. While the chapter does indeed perform this work, it also makes the case that despite their relegation to the children's corner, the folklorist's niche, and the mythical past, Coyote stories are relevant not only to this particular novel, but also to "real-world," contemporary, life-and-death concerns. Published in the middle of the Cold War, the novel's apocalypse mirrors extradiegetic, heightened anxieties in United States, brought by the policy of mutually assured destruction, and radically reinscribes the tension of the Cold War in mythical time.³⁶⁹ Through the "burned creature," Bruchac points out the

monstrosity of the minds and hands bent on mass destruction—those that build and threaten to deploy nuclear bombs against human beings, the surface of the land, and other-than-human persons who inhabit the land. The burned creature’s primary function, then, is to represent the violent, insatiable axiology of consumption-as-power endemic in imperialistic national bodies, (e.g. the U.S., and the U.S.S.R.), while Coyote’s primary functions are to tell stories (to the “burned creature,” and to The People). By doing so, Coyote provides a model of survival for The People.

A radical effect of the re-placement of the “mythical” figures into contemporary terrorizing circumstances could be that it nudges myth toward liberation from abstraction, and likewise, the liberation of “history” from mythologized fiction. The ensuing chapters of the novel do this work, too. I would also argue that the overall effect of *The Dreams of Jesse Brown’s* structural mode of placing mythical, historical, visionary, contemporary, and fictional characters, events, and places, into close proximity to each other on the page and in the plot liberates alienated lands, peoples, individuals, animal-nations, and other non-human beings from atomizing *wétiko* discursive practices, and shows how they are all related. That is, the Western plot structure as traditionally constructed in fiction, histories, legal testimonies, and ethnographies—obscures, and thus, fractures relationships of cause-and-effect as time becomes transformed into impassable space, and *The Dreams of Jesse Brown* works to mend this narrative alienation. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (Māori), says that during the Enlightenment, or the period of the “Age of Reason,”

...history came to be viewed as a more reasoned or scientific understanding of the past. History could be recorded systematically and then retrieved through recourse to written texts. It was based on a lineal view of time and was linked closely to notions of progress. Progress could be ‘measured’ in terms of technological advancement and spiritual salvation. Progress is evolutionary and teleological and is present in both liberal and Marxist ideas about history.³⁷⁰

Of course, such ideas about time being *only* unidirectional and linear did not make their first appearance through the Enlightenment, but the notion was certainly made more powerful as rationalism gained social and ideological ground. In *The Dreams of Jesse Brown*, resistance to the power marshaled by rationalism manifests in its non-linearity. Bruchac's technique plucks narratives off of their variously-assigned (and static) "points" on a linear time-line, and places them near one another in order to emphasize their *relationships*. His narrative methodology, then, decolonizes genre and resists *wétiko* circumscription through the representation of time and the relationship of entities *in* time as unfixed, negotiational, and inter-relational.

Along with the *implied* critique of unidirectional linearity through the form of the novel, the radical re-placement of Old Man Coyote, the fiery version of *wétiko*/windigo, and Indigenous peoples as contemporary beings interrelated with *all* times, Bruchac also has the protagonist voice an explicit critique of, and a corrective to, linear concepts of time. Book Two's sixth chapter begins with a speaker delivering a lecture on time and relationships. Readers are nearly two pages into the monologue before it shifts, and we realize Jesse is speaking to Shera. After a description of how to develop relationships with the spirit world, Jesse says:

"The past isn't just a collection of events that have come and gone. Only those who believe that human beings are just gone after they die can believe that the past is dead. Our great-grandparents knew better. . . . They could see their bodies going back to water and wind and dust, falling back into nature the way a handful of sand falls back into the beach. . . .

"Do you think that time is a straight line? Do you think the road of life goes only one way? If you think that, then the world disappears behind you. If you think that it is easy to throw out your garbage along the way, to waste what you have as you pass through, believing you'll never pass that way again, believing that more always lies ahead of you. When you live that way you don't even believe in the present, much less the past.

“The past isn’t that easy to get rid of. Everything you are and everything you have is made of the past. The air you breathe is full of the dust of holy people. Every bone in your body and every thought in your head is made up of things you touched and felt and heard and saw. . . .”³⁷¹

Here, the protagonist describes interrelationality between all things, and characterizes the Western equation of time with measurable distances, as a fallacious, atomizing, powerful construct that turns human beings into consumers and into consumable bite-sized-pieces, ready for assimilation (or incorporation into *wétiko* society and institutions). As I have argued, the imposition of linear time onto Indigenous peoples during the colonization process constitutes epistemic violence, one with economic, ontologic, axiologic, and certainly, genocidal consequences. Dillon suggests that Indigenous speculative fiction can be a means to point out this violence, since, “Native apocalyptic storytelling, then, shows the ruptures, the scars, and the trauma in its effort ultimately to provide healing and a return to *bimaadiziwin*,” a word in Anishinaabemowin that represents a “state of balance, one of difference and provisionality, a condition of resistance and survival” in accordance with Indigenous axiology—a balance dependent on respectful interrelationality and interdependence.³⁷² Dillon claims *bimaadiziwin* is “the path to sovereignty embedded in self-determination,” and that Indigenous futurisms are also engaged in *biskaabiiyang*, or “returning to ourselves,” a process that

Involves discovering how personally one is affected by colonization, discarding the emotional and psychological baggage carried from its impact, and recovering ancestral traditions in order to adapt in our post-Native Apocalypse world. This process is often called “decolonization,” and as Linda Tuhiwai Smith (Maori) explains, it requires *changing* rather than *imitating* Eurowestern concepts.³⁷³

Bruchac’s novel responds to the necessary first step of recognizing colonial and epistemic violence, and his protagonist makes clear from an Indigenous perspective, how practices

emergent from Indigenous animist epistemes and ontologies threaten the categories that make what is essentially *wétikoism*, work. Says Jesse:

You can touch the spirit world. That is why the old religions were so dangerous. The Government didn't know what it was destroying, but it knew that it had to be destroyed or we'd be too strong for them. Everything is there in your dreams. When things are right you can cross over. That is why we were so dangerous, because we were freer than they were. In our dreams we could find the strength, make the journey, and come back.³⁷⁴

Violent control of Native peoples was nothing new, as Jesse alludes to, but the panoptic technologies meant to encourage compliance among Native Americans had become more invasive. Paired with weapons that could cause death and devastation with more accuracy, more cruelty, and on a scale that previously, only Earth could deliver (through quakes, eruptions, pestilence, severe weather and the like), Jesse recognizes these technologies of control as the source of threat to Shera's wholeness and identity, and thus, she risks "slipping" into homogeneity and losing her identity through assimilation.³⁷⁵ Jesse's lecture seems meant to jog Shera out of her fear—to give her the courage to resist assimilation, and to remember who she is, as interconnected and interdependent with her ancestors as well as her future relations.³⁷⁶ He reminds her that the "old religions" open up another reality, and allow those who can "make the journey," to enter a world where Eurowestern technologies simply cannot follow. In that sense, the "old religions" are tricksters: like Coyote, they construct what is through stories, and they ensure survival.

Clearly, the "Government" Jesse refers to is the United States: the progenitor of the fictional *New States* of the novel's universe. In the novel, historical narratives are sometimes represented without an obvious narrator, and just as often, it is clear from the preceding or following sections that Jesse is the narrator, or that he has read aloud to Shera, the words and actions of various U.S. military and governmental figures and their involvement in genocide, suppression of Indigenous religious practices, the culling of religious implements by

anthropologists, and discursive attacks meant to defame and fictionalize Indigenous religious experiences. He is deeply involved in “recovering our ancestral traditions in order to adapt in our post-Native Apocalypse world,” as Dillon suggests, and convinces Shera that liberation has always belonged to Indigenous people, evidenced by the ability to cross the boundaries that are created and policed by Western epistemology and ontology. Jesse points out that this freedom is not simply a romantic sort of magic, but that it also has a “dangerous” quality, especially from a colonialist perspective. Thus, Jesse’s lecture extends outside of the novel beyond Shera, and points out the reader’s internalization of Western notions about how the world works. Western oppositional stances to Indigenous cosmology are therefore critiqued in the novel for their generation of illusory and ultimately destructive ways of life. Further, Jesse’s statements refer to all the government and military efforts to quash Indigenous religious practices like the Ghost Dance, peyotism, the Sun Dance, and the Yuwipi, efforts that range from missionization and legislation to boarding schools and Hotchkiss guns. Description of these (and other) methods of control that have been deployed against American Indians are beyond the scope of this dissertation, and indeed are so myriad that descriptions and analyses of them could, and have, filled numerous tomes.

“Brown Jesus” Speaks to the Messiah and the “Last Indian”

Non-linearity, Indigenous metaphysics, and Jesse’s role as a messiah-figure, are three of the many recurring themes throughout *The Dreams of Jesse Brown*. Non-fictional characters in the novel, and Jesse’s relationship with them, liberate historical narratives from circumscribed time, in the same way that Old Man Coyote and other powerful beings, are liberated from mythical time. Through Jesse’s dreams, for example, a relationship develops between Jesse and Sitting Bull, the Hunkpapa Lakota holy man and leader, and between Jesse and Wovoka, the Paiute prophet who brought the Ghost Dance religion to North America.

Wovoka, who was referred to by many names in his time, including Jack Wilson, has often been called a “messiah,” as recorded in anthropologist James Mooney’s 1892-93 work, *The*

Ghost Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890. Further evidence of how Wovoka was regarded as a messiah figure emerges from Neihardt's *Black Elk Speaks* (a source that Bruchac drew from). Black Elk calls Wovoka "the Wanekia," or "the One Who Makes Live," "the son of the Great Spirit" in that text, and further, Niehardt entitled the chapter in which Black Elk describes Wovoka's influence on the Lakota people through the Ghost Dance, "The Messiah."³⁷⁷ Raymond DeMallie notes, however, that in the original transcript of Black Elk's visions and memories as recorded by Niehardt's daughter, Enid, Black Elk only refers to Wovoka by the Lakota word, *Waníkhiya*, which DeMallie translates as "savior," or "The One Who Makes Live."³⁷⁸ DeMallie further notes that "In [Black Elk's] visions, the fearful river, the emphasis on redemption, and the Messiah are Christian in their origin—although Black Elk tied them back into his traditional Lakota religious system by interpreting the Messiah as yet another transformation of the red man of his great vision..."³⁷⁹ Further, Mooney claims that some Arapaho, Cheyenne, and Sioux people believed Wovoka to be Christ, while others believed him to be a prophet.³⁸⁰ Wovoka, however, admitted only to being a prophet, not a messiah.³⁸¹ *The Dreams of Jesse Brown* frames both Sitting Bull and Wovoka as prophetic, and Jesse Brown as a messiah-like figure, albeit, not much like the biblical Christ who offers redemption through the propitiation of sins. In my analysis of "Brown Jesus," or Jesse Brown, the terms "prophet" and "messiah" designate permeable categories when used as descriptors for Sitting Bull, Wovoka, and Jesse. These categories are permeable because they are not at all policed by devotees of the Ghost Dance or sun dance religion, as has historically been the dogmatic position of the Christian church in the West, regarding Jesus of Nazareth.

Bruchac's use of the prophetic and messianic revolutionary seems less concerned with the hierarchy implied in the social roles of a prophet or messiah, and more attuned to their tropic value as story-genre that can be interrogated and toyed with. For example, one section ends as Jesse wakes from a visionary dream in which he visits Sitting Bull, first in the form of an eagle, and then transformed into his human form. As Jesse stirs, the surveillance technician tells

the Controller, Emmet Okun, that Jesse is about to awake. Okun replies, “We don’t care what he dreams, but what he says after he has those dreams. We have had enough of prophets.”³⁸²

In the next section, Jesse asks Shera, “. . . do you know who my father was? In a control room a worried technician turned knobs while somewhere, deeper down, a spider’s voice whispered,” and though I will discuss the “spider’s voice” later under the subheading, “Which Web? Which Spider?” here it is important to note the technician’s anxiety. The section ends and a new one begins with a past-tense statement that foregrounds Jesse’s parentage as a story, one that he “told people when they asked him about his father.” What follows is framed again by the storyteller’s imperative, “*Listen . . .*,” and we find then, that as a young woman, Jesse’s mother had disobeyed her parents and went to fetch water in the South—an area her parents thought would be unsafe. Jesse says:

As she was bending over the water she thought she saw the reflection of a tall man with dark skin looking over her shoulder. When she turned there was no one there. Then she thought she heard a voice, a voice that was strong but kind, whispering in her ear. Just at that moment a strong wind blew from the west, almost knocking her down. She grew frightened and ran home. I was born nine months later.³⁸³

Jesse’s story explains (or frames as mysterious, rather), his father’s identity. The story of his conception could be interpreted to mean that Jesse’s father is a strong but kind spirit (perhaps it could be argued that the father is the lecherous and tricky Old Man Coyote), with the implication that Jesse’s mother was a virgin in terms of human-human intercourse. Whether the story-trope of the biblical Jesus’ virgin birth *per se* is the object of disruption or whether the character reclaims the common worldwide trope of the culture hero’s unusual birth, it is the *power* of the unusual birth trope that legitimizes Jesse as a category-crosser, a visionary, and a leader (in this construct, Jesus’ conception is not unique either in terms of story, or in terms of human/non-human parentage). Jesse’s claim would be outlandish and heretical from the view of the puritanical Emmet Okun and other leaders of the New States, and yet, if Jesse’s father is non-

human, Jesse would be considered fearsome in the view of the New States leaders. Jesse's resultant power, or "medicine," if I am permitted to use that term, is as a protector of the people; he is not a healer, nor does he perform the functions for a community that are normally fulfilled by a medicine person. In other words, as a prophet or messiah, his social function is that of a philosophical-warrior-leader. In the novel, he is recognized as such, and thus, legitimated by both Wovoka and Sitting Bull.

The scenes in which Wovoka interacts with Jesse provide an explanation for why the promise of the Ghost Dance was not realized in the late 1800s. For example, in an early two-page scene, Jesse reads an anecdote to Shera about Wovoka that can be found in Mooney's aforementioned ethnography. After an intervening, seven-line section in which we learn that Jesse has fallen asleep and has begun to dream, the dream becomes "a vision as cold and clear as a mountain brook."³⁸⁴ In the vision, Jesse travels, much like Good Thunder, Yellow Breast, Brave Bear, and Mooney himself, to visit with Wovoka/Jack Wilson in Mason Valley, Nevada.³⁸⁵ Wovoka is expecting Jesse, and they have a friendly visit about how Wovoka had given the people a new dance, which developed after he had "lived with the whites": a reference to David Wilson, the devout Christian rancher that Wovoka had lived with and worked for, and from whom Wovoka took his English name. In the novel, Wovoka says that he "took their words and made them ours," as the Ghost Dance transforms the biblical prophecies Wovoka had studied. The conversation turns, and Wovoka says:

" . . . And now this age is old. It is almost time for it to end. When I said the Earth would be made new again I did not lie. I was only wrong about how long it would take."

"Where I come from," Jesse says, "We are even further into the night than you are now."

"No," Jack Wilson says, stopping and holding up one hand to place it against Jesse's heart. "You are not further into the night. You are closer to the Dawn."³⁸⁶

I read the words “now,” and “almost time,” to refer in part to the circumstances of Jesse’s life: he is almost ready to lead the revolt, and thus, the rebirth of Indigenous reciprocity and interrelationality in the “New World” promised by Wovoka in his original prophecies; Wovoka imparts approval of that leadership. In this passage, time isn’t linear: Jesse’s consciousness is not restricted to “now,” and can shift between time dimensions.

Even though the notion of unidirectional time is unsettled, the narrative still uses an organizing principle with regard to time. In the novel, time seems web-like. People’s corporeal time on Earth seems fixed in terms of kinship relations, life-span, and the relationships that construct identity, and their corporeal time on Earth corresponds to the connection points in a web between different threads. However, beings are mobile and intersectional throughout times and spaces. They can visit, interact with, and affect what happens in the corporeal time/space and consciousness of other individuals. The historical portions of the novel are therefore not related chronologically; the visions seem to occur on linear points in Jesse’s life, but take him outside of chronological time. Yet, the events in Jesse’s, Shera’s and Wade Crow’s lives leading up to the overturn of the New States seem chronological, because these take place in the corporeal dimension. As well, the chronological organization of time in this narrative thread is necessary because time is chronological for the New States and for Emmet Okun. The line, then, is part curved time-line, as in the “eighty eight years” that “circle like flocks of geese” that arrange the characters to face one another like “iron filings.” Importantly, in his discussion with Wovoka, Jesse does not refer to *when* he comes from. Instead, he renders time as *place*, (i.e. “*Where* I come from”), and even though both Wovoka and Jesse speak about whether they are “further into the night” or “closer to the dawn,” the words “further” and “closer” measure location in terms of the spherical Earth’s relationship with the sun, rather than distance between points on a line. Perhaps it is significant that night and dawn are part of the cycle of death and renewal, which, as mentioned, is central to the Ghost Dance prophecy.³⁸⁷

This web-like temporal structure is even more striking in Jesse's interactions with Sitting Bull, as are legitimations of Jesse's role as a messiah-like figure. In Book Two, the historical narratives focus on various events in the 1800s, including those in December 1890 that lead to Sitting Bull's arrest and murder. Of course these events also occurred extradiegetically, outside of the novel, and were carried out by several of Sitting Bull's own people who had been made tribal police officers by Major James McGlaughlin, the Indian Agent at the Standing Rock Sioux Agency. With the pressures of reservation life, the disappearance of game, and the temptation to take advantage of a few benefits, McGlaughlin was able to transform some Hunkpapa men into people who served his purposes: a dynamic that demonstrates the *wétiko* tendency to "recruit or corrupt"³⁸⁸ those who were "willing to carry guns and to beat and kill their fellows for a few dollars or a few cents, depending upon their positions in the hierarchy of exploitation."³⁸⁹ These events are laced throughout the narrative of *The Dreams of Jesse Brown* to offer context when Jesse and Sitting Bull dream of each other.

In Jesse's dream, he transforms into an eagle on December 15th, 1890, the day that Sitting Bull would be arrested by 39 Lakota police officers, and shot by two of them. Jesse hears:

Grandson, said the voice which flowed like a deep river, Do you accept this shape?

It is good, the Eagle said.

Then it is time.

*It is time.*³⁹⁰

The exchange between Jesse and "Tunkasila" or "Grandfather" correspond to a similar dream-state interaction in a very early section of the book, when the Grandfather figure says, "*It is coming. It is coming. Listen.*"³⁹¹ This motif is borrowed from John G. Niehardt's *Black Elk Speaks*, as a phrase heard by Black Elk immediately before his first vision. Says Black Elk, "While I was eating, a voice came and said: 'It is time; now they are calling you.' The voice was so loud and clear that I believed it, and I thought I would just go where it wanted me to go. So I

got right up and started,” and indeed, Black Elk’s vision brought him into the tipi of six grandfathers who wanted to speak with him.³⁹²

“It is time,” as a recurring motif spoken by a disembodied voice, has the cumulative effect of building an extraordinary anticipation around Jesse, even without the familiar linear narrative conventions of rising plot tension. After an intervening historical anecdote about Sitting Bull’s experience in Europe, Jesse is back in human form, but he has been observed by a “young man who had watched the Eagle drop from the sky.”³⁹³ The young man fetches Sitting Bull from his cabin to come and talk with Jesse. They have a long discussion, and “Jesse may have spoken of things yet to come, for when he finished, he saw tears in the eyes of the man who called himself the last Indian.” After more talk and reflection, Sitting Bull says, “These times are hard. . . . But you are here. This is a good dream. I think today would be a good day to die.”³⁹⁴ Jesse leaves, again in the form of an eagle, and hears the bullets below. Much later in the novel, just preceding the denouement, we are privy to Sitting Bull’s view of the same dream:

Let this dream be a true one, he prays. I have called myself the last Indian, but let my people live, let the people everywhere live. I give my flesh that they may survive . . .

And he is dreaming. He knows this. It is the dream of the Eagle who comes to see him. Once, long ago, there was another Eagle. . . . [who left Sitting Bull his song:]

My Father has given
me this nation,
A hard time I have
protecting them.

. . .

. . . he turns again in his dream to the Eagle, the Eagle who has come to see him, the Eagle who is also a young man whose shoulders are as broad as those of Mato, the Bear. Eagle-Bear. Wanblimato.³⁹⁵

As mentioned, this scene is just before the denouement, and Sitting Bull dreams of Jesse, a.k.a. Wanblimato, as he descends into the Controller's lair, metaphorically referred to in the text in biblical terms as "the belly of the great fish," to defeat the rulers of the New State.^{396 397} Sitting Bull then sings a song to help Jesse, "and as he sings, he knows that he is also in the mind of that young man, a dream himself. He laughs at this," and wonders if he is the dream, or if he is the dreamer, then decides, "*Might it not be . . . that he was both?*"³⁹⁸ Indeed, it is not only the unidirectionality of linear time that is undone, but also, the concept of static dimensionality, individual subjectivity, and the very substance of being that are challenged by the novel's epistemology, ontology, ontics, and metaphysics.

Nineteenth Century *Wétikos*

Although I have already shown a parallel between the "burned creature" and Windigo or *wétiko*, it will be necessary to further discuss and trace the behavior of some of the antagonistic individuals woven throughout the novel who are part of an aggregate, all-consuming system of domination. Many of the historical nemeses to the Arapaho, Cheyenne, and Lakota people featured in *The Dreams of Jesse Brown* contribute to the novel's plot, and thus make appearances in the historical, non-fictional sections of the novel. While they are fearsome because of their earnest desire to exterminate American Indians, they are represented as complicated human beings, capable of ruthlessness, humanitarianism, and shades in-between. As in the earlier described analogues of the "burned creature"—the individuals who would imagine, construct, and deploy nuclear bombs with the intent to destroy and consume, it is important to trace the *inhuman* motivations of consumption and destruction to be able to view these individuals as *wetiko*, and thus, fearsome.

The historical sections do not noticeably stray from the historical record, except for minor embellishments to the dialogue. The minor dialogue shifts represent the opinions, actions, and actual statements of the historical figures as documented in the historical record, yet they read as more conversational, and less like the primary sources from which they are

taken. The most offensive statements and actions in the novel are true to the historical record, although the historical record of United States anti-Indianism is full of even more shocking discourse and gruesome acts than Bruchac includes in *The Dreams of Jesse Brown*.

Except for framing the histories as connected to Jesse's world, Bruchac has also refrained from imposing the false binary of American Indian=good and EuroAmerican=bad onto the characters. For example, Major Edward W. Wynkoop, featured in Book Two, is the military figure who is known for earning the trust of chiefs Black Kettle and White Antelope (Cheyenne). Wynkoop was both an agent of the State, and yet, the Cheyenne considered him to be a person of bravery and integrity.³⁹⁹ However, Wynkoop's guarantee of safety for the surrendered Cheyenne could not be fulfilled, since John Evans, Governor of Colorado, and Colonel John Chivington, shared Arlington General Curtis' desire to have "no peace until the Indians suffer more,"⁴⁰⁰ so they conspired to remove the Cheyenne from Wynkoop's protection.⁴⁰¹ The Cheyenne's trust in Wynkoop led them into a vulnerable position, which tragically ended in the grisly Sand Creek Massacre, in which nearly all of the victims were horribly mutilated. Jesse uses this history to paint a picture of the brutality of the United States for Shera. Like most Americans, and probably most of Bruchac's readers, Shera was not previously aware of this history, but she reasons, "You're living in the past. Who cares any longer about Sand Creek or Wounded Knee? What about the people who died when the bombs fell?"⁴⁰² This line of reasoning is familiar to me, and likely familiar to other Native Americans, who, in attempts to show how contemporary problems are rooted in, and connected to, complex historical events and relationships, are often told that we are "living in the past," that there are "more important problems to deal with," and that we should "get over it." Jesse answers these popular refrains as he responds to Shera, "I *am* talking about now. It is all connected. It is all the same thing."⁴⁰³

The narrative about Wynkoop is contextualized first with the story of Lean Bear, "who carried a medal from Washington, had ridden out to greet a party of soldiers, his empty hands

raised in peace. The [Colorado Volunteers] had answered his peaceful gesture by shooting him off his horse and killing him.”⁴⁰⁴ Again, the Cheyenne found Wynkoop to be brave, in part because he rode into the large camp of Cheyenne with a small party to broker peace, even though “the “camp [was] filled with many young warriors who were not quite ready to forget the attacks which had been made on them [including Lean Bear] without cause by the Colorado Volunteers.” Yet, Black Kettle and White Antelope trusted Wynkoop to protect them from further attacks, and so, surrendered.⁴⁰⁵ In life, as in the text, Wynkoop and the Cheyenne are betrayed by the Methodist minister and military commander of the Colorado Volunteers, Colonel Chivington. Chivington, “a natural bully,” is famous for saying, “Nits make lice. We must kill all the Indians in Colorado, whether great or small.”⁴⁰⁶ He, along with other military and political leaders make up a composite fearsome figure reflected in the character of Emmet Okun—and I *do* mean the term, “reflected,” to imply the concept of mirroring, since, the epistemological function of history in the novel is revealed through Shera’s and Jesse’s discussion about the past, in which Shera asks, “Then if we look at the face of the past . . . [w]e see the reflection of our own faces, don’t we?” Jesse responds in the affirmative, adding that “we also see something of the future.”⁴⁰⁷ For Bruchac—or for Jesse and Shera, the historical experiences of the Lakota, Arapaho, Cheyenne, and other American Indians at the hands of the state, the church, and individuals like Chivington—*must* be visible in representations of a Lakota, Arapaho, or Cheyenne futurism.

Knowing that Wynkoop was soon to be relieved of his post and replaced with Major Scott Anthony, Chivington told the Cheyenne chiefs that if they wanted peace they must “Go to Major Wynkoop,” although they were prevented from doing so. It was to Major Anthony that Chivington brought 600 men to within 40 miles of where the Cheyenne were camped, and announced his plans for them: “The time has come to collect scalps. We shall soon be wading in gore!”⁴⁰⁸ Anthony, who had offered a pledge of safety to the Cheyenne along with Wynkoop was excited about the chance to “pitch in against them,” despite his promise. Jack D. Forbes

identifies such duplicitous behavior as a “psychological [trait] that [helps] form the *wetiko* personality. Greed, lust, inordinate ambition, materialism, the lack of a true ‘face,’ a schizoid (split) personality . . . are all terms which can be used to describe most *wetikos*,” and it is this “lack of a true ‘face’” that is exhibited through Major Anthony’s duplicity.⁴⁰⁹ Bruchac includes Lieutenant Joseph Cramer in the narrative, however, who is on record as arguing that “If we violate Major Wynkoop and Major Anthony’s pledge of safety to the Cheyenne...It will be murder in every sense of the word.”⁴¹⁰ The inclusion of Wynkoop, Cramer, and others who voice opposition to annihilation of Cheyenne, specifically, and American Indians in general, is echoed in Bruchac’s portrayal of Jesse’s allies, since

Many of them were Indians, many were not. They were laborers and farm workers, the sons of ranchers and miners, ordinary men who had not forgotten how to dream. They were men who wanted peace, people who had grown to love this land, this land which had made them.⁴¹¹

The specific dreams this passage refers to are unclear, but considering the role and quality of dreams and visions in the rest of the narrative, I would argue that this is *not* a reference to the “American Dream” of acquisition and individualism. The “people who had grown to love this land” implies that Jesse’s (highly gendered group of) allies want the land to continue to *live*, and thus, they recognize the foundations of all life as a series of reciprocal inter-relations that demand respect and reciprocity in order to be sustainable. Admittedly, we learn little else about this group of allies, but in addition to establishing the connection between these seemingly honorable people and Jesse, Bruchac also features the words and actions of Chivington, Evans, Anthony, and a host of others who terrorized Lakota, Arapaho and Cheyenne in the late 1800s, to show that *they too* are “all connected,” and that they are some of the carriers of the disease suffered by the 1970s-era fearsome figures of the novel.

Given that Wynkoop led an investigation into Chivington’s conduct at Sand Creek which eventually led to Chivington’s condemnation, it seems strange that Bruchac would omit this fact,

and the seemingly schizophrenic Presidential statement issued forth after the massacre.

Theodore Roosevelt opined that the killing and mutilation of over 400 Cheyenne men, women and children was “as righteous and beneficial a deed as ever took place on the frontier.” Such celebration is evidence that genocide of American Indians was not just the work of a handful of blood-crazed military leaders, but was part of a larger, aggregate *wétiko* giant—one that was, or is, in the business of “consuming of another’s life for one’s own private purpose or profit.”⁴¹²

Indeed, as Forbes says, “the ‘cosmology’ or ‘world-view’ of a people is closely related, of course, to all of their actions. *The world-view influences actions and, in turn, actions tell us what the world-view really is!*”⁴¹³

Hungry for All Time: Custer as *Wétiko*

While Roosevelt’s words go unmentioned in the novel, and both his historical role and his worldview is unexamined, the number of military and government officials whose words and actions are woven into *Dreams of Jesse Brown* is impressive. Most of them can be useful for a demonstration of how *wétikoism* spreads and behaves, but out of all the historical figures in *The Dreams of Jesse Brown*, General George Armstrong Custer is the primary historical individual who represents the *wétikoism* of the United States, as none other have been heroified in popular culture to the same degree as Custer. Custer as synecdoche makes sense in the text, since revenge for his death at Little Big Horn in 1876 motivated infamous revengeful attacks on various bands during the ensuing years—especially at Wounded Knee, as emphasized in the following passage that describes some of the events of that day:

Listen. It was the morning of December 29th. During the night four more troops of the Seventh Cavalry had come up, bringing with them three more Hotchkiss guns that were placed on the ridge. Corporal Paul H. Weinert, a man with no combat experience, was commanding the guns.

“Remember Custer!” Corporal Paul H. Weinert said to himself as he watched the camp of the hostiles. “Remember Custer!”

Remember Custer. Two words which most of the other green troops had been saying to themselves since their arrival in the Dakotas. Remember Custer. Like an invisible wind, the ghost of Long Hair was everywhere that morning, his name on hundreds of lips. Remember Custer.⁴¹⁴

The phenomenon of “remembering Custer” has persevered into the 21st Century, so much so that the historical study of Custer has its own sub-disciplinary neologism: Custerology.⁴¹⁵ Indeed, the racialized universalization of tribal peoples quickened various members and battalions of the United States cavalry to take revenge for Custer’s death on all American Indians, and one can still encounter a plethora of anti-Indian racism in online Custerphilia. One individual focus of revenge is Sitting Bull, and although he was not a participant in the Battle of Little Bighorn, he was credited with this deed during his tour with Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show, so that fiction persists in the popular imagination.⁴¹⁶ As mentioned, Sitting Bull’s death was notable, given that fifty of his own people were made into “metal breasts,” or tribal police officers by Major McGlaughlin, who then furnished them with a wagonload of whisky before they were sent to arrest Sitting Bull. They ended up killing him instead.⁴¹⁷ Spotted Elk, also known as Big Foot, and his band of Minneconjou, also suffered retaliation for Custer’s death, even though they had surrendered to Major Samuel J. Whitside just eight days after Sitting Bull’s assassination. At the time of their surrender, the group was covered in

clothes...so ragged they were falling off their bodies. Even their blankets were full of holes. Frostbite marked their faces and hands and their feet were wrapped in bits of cloth and untanned furs. The few horses left could only travel a few yards at a time before they stopped, stumbling from exhaustion.⁴¹⁸

They were no longer in a position to negotiate, let alone resist except through spiritual practice, and indeed, the inherent resistance of the Ghost Dance was perceived as a still-potent threat to U.S. imperialism, and was outlawed. Soldiers brought the band of mostly women, children, and elders to Wounded Knee, near Pine Ridge, where Big Foot—starving, frostbitten, and sick with

pneumonia—was given a tent and food, along with his people. Concurrently, Hotchkiss guns and ammunition were being positioned along the ridge above them, aimed at the weakened group. Again, *wetiko* duplicity rules the day. Jack Forbes says that the subsequent massacre was “intended ostensibly to suppress the ‘Ghost Dance’ religion,” but it was also, “in fact, a terrorist act designed to break the back of the Sioux political-social resistance and to open up large areas for white settlement.”⁴¹⁹ As mentioned, the “it is all connected” motif resonates with Bruchac’s representation of fearsome figures, since the end *wétiko* goal is to consume the life of the people, and to change the meaning of land to “resource,” so that it, too, can be consumed.

Another outcome to Bruchac’s use of Custer as the analogue for the arrogance of the West is that this strategy serves as a framework for comparison: Custer’s infamous megalomania clashes dramatically with the self-sacrifice of Sitting Bull and Jesse, and highlights the vast gap in worldview and axiological orientation between EuroAmerica and Indigenous America. An exemplary juxtaposition in Book Four of the novel begins with a short chapter that describes Sitting Bull’s sun dance, in which the chief’s prayer, “*Let my people live,*” is strengthened through fasting and through the offer of a hundred small pieces of his own flesh—fifty slices from each arm—to Wakan Tanka.⁴²⁰ In the same short chapter, Jesse also makes a flesh offering during *his* sun dance, and “as the Earth accepts the sacrifice of his own blood,” Jesse offers the same prayer, “*Let my people live.*”⁴²¹ Neither of these leaders pray for victory or personal power. In the sun dance, the petitioner enters a pitiful state: besides their days-long abstinence from food, water, and other comforts, there is also no self-glory and no self-aggrandizement. Furthermore, since other people in attendance are not to look at the dancers, the sun dance is not (or, is not supposed to be) performative. The dancer suffers on behalf of others, and in the case of Sitting Bull and Jesse, they suffer to reduce the collective adversity of their people, and the distress of the land and other-than-human persons. In this sense, the sacrifice of Jesse, and the sacrifice of Sitting Bull, evoke the sacrifice of Jesus of Nazareth, although, as mentioned, they do not map directly onto each other because there is no indication that the flesh and blood

offered by Jesse or Sitting Bull is in any way a payment for the People's sin. On the contrary, the blood and flesh offered by Sitting Bull and Jesse is a recognition that all life is interdependent. The plea, "Let my people live," asks a greater power for the continuance of life, not for forgiveness.

The next chapter begins, "George Armstrong Custer was not a man who waged war the way the Indians did," and because of proximity of the sun dance section to the next one in the text, the implication is that religious practices are necessary preparation for all human endeavor, inclusive of war. The novel and history make plain that Custer was nothing if not performative, and he habitually disregarded the lives of those under his command, who died in great numbers as a result of his lack of foresight and care.⁴²² The text goes on to contrast Custer's approach with the Indigenous practice of counting coup—a form of warring especially common on the plains—where the goal was "not so much to kill the enemy as to win honor and fame" through getting close enough to touch the opponent with a coup-stick, like "the world's most exciting game of tag."⁴²³ There is some romanticism in this familiar yet relatively accurate description, so Bruchac's narrative diminishes the romanticism through the admission that tribes often "talked all the time about rubbing each other out," and the reality of the occasional violation of this code, when an entire village would be "wiped out." However, the novel represents such acts as rarities, and not a feature of ordinary intertribal war. Bruchac explicates expectations of the warring party: "if any Indian war leader lost as many as three or four men on a war party he would usually find himself in deep disgrace."⁴²⁴ The text contrasts this concept of responsibility to the people with how "wasichus fought," which is simply described as

...killing. The more that died, the greater the victory. It didn't even matter if the dead were mostly on your side. George Armstrong Custer has made his name famous in the Civil War by leading company after company of his own men to their doom. . . .

There were times when Custer had to have his own soldiers horse-whipped to keep them following his orders. In July of 1867, after only a few weeks on the plains,

Custer faced a court-martial when he ordered some deserters from his command to be shot. That was also the time when he left many of his own soldiers behind to die of thirst or be killed. No good Indian war leader ever left behind any of his men, even when they had been killed.⁴²⁵

Although I am not sure of the universal veracity of this last statement, in a sense, United States military structure along with a Western, market-driven concept of war, creates wars led by sovereigns (e.g. Custer, Chivington, et al), because police power is at their disposal, albeit with temporal and spatial restrictions (even though *all* human sovereigns have spatial and temporal restrictions). As long as the individual commander furthers the prime objective of the war, there is rarely any imposed restrictions on their brutality—even when that brutality is levied against individuals in the commanders' service. If they violate the war-ethics of a powerful person who decides to exercise control over the military commander, they can eventually be court-martialed when their "reign" is over, (if I may further the metaphor), but again, that only underscores the impermeable temporal and spatial boundaries of their sovereignty. Even though Custer (and Chivington, too, for that matter) were eventually court martialed within the so-called democratic system that they represent, the hierarchical chain of command and the weaponry at a commander's disposal replicates the power of the state sovereign, and therefore, these figures wield the kind of spectacular control that is so effective in small populations, where anyone who is similarly spatially located can see the evidence of a terrifying threat.⁴²⁶ Bruchac's novel contrasts this power of social control with the interrelational spiritual power exemplified by figures like Sitting Bull, Wovoka, and Jesse. The novel condemns EuroAmerican attitudes toward life and death as it manifests in military life, which disregards the relationships that each soldier has with each other, their family and community. For these reasons, it seems the novel posits that when an individual goes to war the EuroAmerican way, they enter a state wherein their lives matter only inasmuch as an individual can obey their sovereign, pull triggers, and end the relationships that constitute the object of control. Control, then, is exercised over both

populations: the one in service of the sovereign, and the one whose existence threatens the sovereign's personal ambition. In the mind of the *wétiko*, the relationships that make life, matter little. People situated at both ends of the gun are consumed, whether they are incorporated into the *wétiko* body, or whether their blood is spilled.

The text offers many further examples of Custer's arrogance and disregard for life—whether it was the lives of the men and horses under his command or the lives of American Indian men, women, and children. Of course, Custer's arrogance and his resultant foibles are well documented. Forbes claims that “[a]rrogance is a *key* trait of the *wétiko* or of a person liable to become a *wétiko*. On the other hand, *humility* is an essential value of traditional Native American life,”⁴²⁷ not to be confused with humility in the Christian sense, which stems from the belief that humanity is “fallen,” and in need of redemption. For Forbes, Native American “humility [is] based upon an awareness of one's own lack of strength and knowledge and also upon one's awareness of being only one member of a huge universal family. With this kind of humility comes respect for other creatures' lives and dreams,” though I would add that even though one is aware of their “own lack of strength,” there is also an awareness of the strengths that an individual *does* have, and can offer to their relations. Without such an awareness, there is no meaningful reciprocity. Forbes further argues that “*humility is the basis for democracy, just as arrogance is the basis for authoritarianism.*”⁴²⁸ If we accept this assertion, then the actions emergent from arrogance (as Forbes describes arrogance), will make clear the connections between the historical fearsome figures to the novel's 1970s fearsome figures.

Blind Spots, or How the Anthropologist, the Pederast, and the Controller “See”

Toward the end of Book Three, the text develops some of the 1970s fearsome figures through further comparisons and contrasts between various characters' worldviews and actions. Bruchac seems to encourage his readers to question rationality's epistemological limitations, or rather, the ontological blind-spots that result from epistemological narrowness. This comparison is implicit through the ways various characters in *The Dreams of Jesse Brown*

acquire “vision,” or knowledge, and what is either hidden or revealed as a result of their vision-seeking methodology. If we trace the motivation for obtaining certain kinds of vision, the means by which vision is obtained, the extent of vision that each character acquires, the type of empowerment conveyed by each characters’ vision, and the actions that are based on a particular vision—we will find that the limitations and blind-spots in Western ontology—at least for the fearsome figures in *The Dreams of Jesse Brown*—are evidence of a worldview that distorts reality, one that can only lead to actions that dismember both the subject and object of action. It is through tracking these features that the concept of “epistemological violence” will lose some of its abstraction.

Because of the formal slipperiness of the novel, I must warn you that I will, out of necessity, have to take a couple of side-trips before I can trace the characters’ “vision.” The many interrelated vignettes and narrative character sketches in the novel build an impressive network of connections, but also make summarization an arduous project. For that reason, I will begin in this section by introducing a scene in the novel. Its setting is important for its extradiegetic significance. That context from the non-fictional 1970s is imported into the scene, but only as part of the implied sociocultural criticism: context that makes the vision-seeking and violence that occurs at that place, motivated. A set of characters who have been introduced in short vignettes woven throughout the narrative intersect at this location, and it is in their interactions that I will look to for evidence of epistemological narrowness, ontological blind spots, and of course, evidence of *wetiko*-like behavior.

As Jesse prepares to lead a revolt against the New States, he experiences two kinds of visions: ones kind comes to him through dreams while he sleeps, and another kind of vision is induced by religious practices like the sun dance, as already described. Foreshadowed in the prologue, another of Jesse’s ostensible vision-inducing religious practices is peyotism, albeit, as depicted in the novel, it occurs outside of the ritual norms as practiced in the Native American Church. That is, there appears to be no official Roadman to administer the sacrament, sing the

songs, and lead the people in their all-night prayers. Peyote becomes part of the story when Wade Crow contacts Jesse, and the two meet up to go on a road trip in Crow's "one eyed Ford"—a car that responds to Wade when he speaks a few quiet words, dispensing three sandwiches from a panel in the car's dashboard.⁴²⁹ Wade gives a sandwich to Jesse, but then in trickster style, Crow ends up eating all three, including Jesse's sandwich, while he gestures to a "grey blur" on the side of the road. Crow identifies the "blur" as "Coyote," and comments that Coyote "steals the bait and stays alive. He just isn't too good at taking things over," and, without segue, Wade continues and says, "You don't want to eat anything now anyway." Because Coyote (and Raven) appear on occasion throughout the novel in tandem with Wade, and because he shares some of their characteristics (e.g. he doesn't seem to age, he is both lucky and unlucky, he defies death, is a contrarian, and he blurs rules, even in relation to Peyote), I will treat him as a kind of trickster figure, not unlike a *Heyókħa*. (*Heyókħas* are sacred clowns, and are sometimes powerful medicine people.)

The two friends come to a place that is near strip mines, but is also "Wakan," or sacred, and as they sit in the moonlight by their campfire, Wade says, "Over there . . . is where they dug the trench to bury the dead," with the implication that they are at Wounded Knee.⁴³⁰ Wade holds fourteen buttons of Peyote in his hand, seven for Jesse, and seven for himself. As Wade gives some to Jesse, they converse. Jesse begins:

"You aren't supposed to eat before you take Peyote."

"That's alright, you haven't eaten."

"But you did."

"That is just the way I do everything, Chief. Don't worry. You chew yours and I'll chew mine."

A Coyote's voice ululated into the sky, followed by another calling from farther off, so distant that it seemed to be among the stars.⁴³¹

Again, Crow's tendency to do things backwards and to blur rules seems to indicate that he is *Heyókħa*; one of the clown's roles is to disturb dogmatic inflexibility—especially when people take themselves a little too seriously, or not seriously enough. Indeed, this is Coyote's role in the life of the People, too. In this case, Crow takes the role of the Roadman, or the leader of the Peyote ceremony. This storyline is picked up four days later at the end of Jesse's fast, and, whatever it is that Peyote helped Jesse to see, is kept a private matter. That is, the novel does not reveal anything that happened during that four day period.⁴³² That readers are kept in the dark about his probable vision is significant, since it reminds the reader that the contents of ceremonial visions are usually private matters, and Western entitlement to know all the details of such experiences has met resistance from Indigenous peoples for some time. Indeed, protection of such privacy is one of the aims of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978, which, incidentally, also aims to protect the religious use of peyote for American Indians.

As Jesse comes off of his fast, Wade takes Jesse to an American Legion bar in the reservation border town of Gordon, Nebraska, and gives Jesse a pitcher of beer, even though at this point in the novel, the reader knows that “peyote and alcohol don't mix.”⁴³³ Then again, this happens four days after the ingestion of Peyote—so the two substances are not consumed together, and further, the beer comes from Crow, the breaker of taboos.⁴³⁴ Before I discuss the bar scene further, I will fill in more context to help unpack its analogues and trace the “vision” of the fearsome figures.

The novel's events that occur in Gordon, Nebraska pay homage to Raymond Yellow Thunder, a (real life) Oglala Lakota from Pine Ridge, who, on February 12 1972, was accosted by a group of White racists in Gordon, Nebraska. Yellow Thunder had been drinking, and as a result was unable to defend himself. The group stripped him of his clothes, kidnapped him, viciously beat him with blunt instruments, and shoved him in the trunk of a car. Then, after driving around with him, they pulled Yellow Thunder out of the trunk and threw him naked into a crowd of gawking, laughing onlookers at the town's American Legion Post No. 34.⁴³⁵ A few

people felt sorry for him and offered to help him, but he refused help after the perpetrators left. Yellow Thunder died of his injuries in his truck the following morning. The incident sparked AIM and other American Indian protestors to demonstrate in Gordon, stage boycotts, and bring national attention to reservation border town racism and violence. Less than a month later, 300 of the demonstrators left Gordon, made the short drive to Wounded Knee, and got into an altercation with the owners of the Wounded Knee Trading Post and Museum.⁴³⁶ A year later, Wounded Knee would be occupied by AIM and their allies once again, only this time, the occupiers would last 71 days and capture the attention of the world.

The Dreams of Jesse Brown was written less than a decade after the Yellow Thunder's murder and the occupation of Wounded Knee, and was published during the same year as "The Longest Walk," in which American Indians walked across the continent from Alcatraz to Washington, D.C. to bring attention to pressing American Indian issues of the era, including the forced relocation of Navajo and Hopi people from Black Mesa and Big Mountain in 1974. The Walk was effective in some regards, since the Native American Religious Freedom Act was passed during the week of the activists' presence in D.C., and other legislation failed to pass that would have had a negative impact on Native nations' sovereignty. These external events add contextual contours to *The Dreams of Jesse Brown*, and thus underscore the novel as a work of sociocultural criticism.

In the novel, the American Legion Bar is the only one left in Gordon, Nebraska, and from Jesse and Wade's conversation before the Peyote ceremony, the reader is led to believe there are no other sources of food in the area. At the bar, Wade Crow waits for the bartender to fill a pitcher of beer for him "as slow as humanly possible." Crow smiles, amused at the situation, since he is aware of the racialized irony of the situation: Crow and Jesse experience the undercurrent of White racism in the room—maybe especially because they are Indians—who happen to be drinking (as if they are the only ones). And yet, Crow is aware of Jesse's now "uncontrollable" power that would eventually prove to be too much for anyone but Crow to

handle. Crow brings the pitcher to Jesse who sits in a dark corner of the room, but on his way to their table, a man introduces himself: "Local doctor here, work for the Government. Name is Froidling. Sort of a student of you, you Indians, you know. Interested in primitive man, survivals, you know," as he touches Wade on the shoulder. "No," says Crow. Froidling doesn't understand, and Wade responds, "No, I don't know." Of course Crow *does* understand Froidling's insinuations and assumptions, but Crow answers as a contrarian and "steals the bait," so to speak. Froidling follows Wade to the table and asks to join the two. Jesse drinks the beer at an alarming pace as the exchange continues, and Froidling notices that Jesse "Seems rather . . . far off." Wade acknowledges Jesse's condition with "You could say that." Froidling watches Jesse drain the pitcher and asks, "Your friend always, ah, drink like that?" It is then that we find out that Jesse "hasn't eaten for four days." This piques Froidling's interest even more, and his...

...face brightened. "Oh! How interesting! Some kind of ceremonial observance. I was afraid that was all in the past. Tell me about it?"

"No," Wade Crow said, sipping his beer.

Jesse finishes the rest of the pitcher, and Wade goes to the bar to get another one. When he returns, the doctor wears a look of consternation and remarks that Jesse "seems to be in a paralytic state. Even his eyelids haven't moved," but Jesse picks up the next pitcher with his "paw," and drains it, which alarms Froidling. Even though he becomes visibly anxious, Froidling says, "I did want to ask you a few questions. Nothing personal." Again, the answer is...

"No," Wade Crow said.

"No?"

"No, it would not be 'nothing personal.' Anything you could think to ask would be personal."

Froidling begins to feign ignorance, or innocence, and Wade interrupts, launching into an extended critique of Froidling, and by extension, a critique of anthropologists, psychologists, and other scientists who study Indigenous populations:

“I know you,” Wade Crow said. “You’re a professional, an expert. You think you know us and you’ve been paid to study us. You write about primitives and dying people doomed by civilization. You feel sorry for us and you feel superior while you’re feeling sorry. You said you wanted to listen. *Listen*. You say we are dying but you think we are dead already. You have certainly tried to kill us, with guns, with crosses, with booze. But we are not dead. . .”⁴³⁷

Wade continues to give example after example of the ways that “You have certainly tried to kill us,” without any explanation of who “You” refers to, except for the initial indication that he blames people who have “been paid to study . . . primitives,” and significantly, Froidling has already indicated that he “work[s] for the Government.” Clearly, the United States and other governments who similarly fund such research are implicated in Crow’s condemnation. Thus, the motivation for Froidling to seek a vision, so-to-speak, to *know* personal details about “Indians,” “primitive man,” and “survivals,”⁴³⁸ is for his own personal gain—a kind of rape—whether he is rewarded with financial gain or a reputation that places him higher up in the Western hierarchical structures of domination. Forbes indicates that the “*Big Wetikos*,” or those who have the power to incorporate others into their feeding scheme, offer various forms of capital to its aggregate parts, like “the Government” offers to the doctor, whose name, “Froidling” may, among other possible meanings, be understood as “little Freud,” or, more closely tied to *wétiko* as the diminutive of “cold.”⁴³⁹

On the other hand, Wade Crow’s “vision,” or insight, is not blind to the aim of consumption inherent in the “study” of “primitives.” He identifies the connection between the scholarly gaze and objectification, the discourses of objectification, and the death of American Indians. Forbes calls such discursive acts “psychological terrorism,” and “scholarly assaults,”⁴⁴⁰

and in setting this exchange in the American Legion Bar in Gordon, Nebraska, Bruchac also connects the “expert’s” sense of entitlement to see, to observe, to ask, and to know—to Raymond Yellow Thunder’s experience of being stripped, beaten, and pushed into the focal center of the barroom so that White patrons could gawk, laugh, and “feel superior while [they felt] sorry,” for Yellow Thunder.

This is the only place in the novel that Froidling appears; he isn’t an important character in terms of plot, but he is significant as a vehicle for Indigenous critique of the domination in, and limitations to, Western epistemology and ontology, or “vision.” For Froidling to obtain his “vision,” he attempts to exercise the *will to knowledge*, without any regard for the relationships that he disrupts as he pries into private, personal affairs, and then would, as part of his work, “frame” his ethnography for public view, judgment, and consumption.⁴⁴¹ Wade ends his lecture, saying, “You look at us on our reservations. Our children speak your language. Our clothes are like yours. ‘The poor Indian,’ you say, ‘His whole culture is gone. Soon he’ll be gone too.’ I say *watch us*. We are very hard to kill!”⁴⁴² This harkens back to earlier (and later) statements about Coyote being a “blur,” hard to focus on, difficult to see all at once, or indeed, kill. Crow condemns the history of government-funded study of American Indians in this passage, e.g. the text by Dr. Joseph K. Dixon that purports to be an ethnography gathered at the “Last Great Indian Council” held in 1909 at Little Big Horn, Montana, found in his volume with the impressive title, *The vanishing race, the last great Indian council: a record in picture and story of the last great Indian council, participated in by eminent Indian chiefs from nearly every Indian reservation in the United States, together with the story of their lives as told by themselves, their speeches and folklore tales, their solemn farewell, and the Indians' story of the Custer fight*.⁴⁴³ First published in 1913, this text was funded and approved by the United States Bureau of Ethnology, the Superintendants of the various reservations, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and approved by state powers of that era, including President Taft. Froidling is

representative of people like Dixon, who have continued to be funded by government agencies for their studies of American Indians from before Lewis and Clark to today.

Froidling is uncomfortable with Wade's words, but not as uncomfortable as he is in response to the growls coming from Jesse, who "had begun to beat the table with ham-sized fists."⁴⁴⁴ The doctor leaves when Wade explains that Jesse "has the power of being uncontrollable. Usually takes four, maybe five people to handle him. Don't think I can do it by myself, but if you'd like to help?" Froidling takes off, and Jesse utterly destroys the bar as Wade escorts him out. His actions express a pan-Indian outrage for the gaze of dominance and violence that led to the 1972 death of Raymond Yellow Thunder at the American Legion Bar, Post No.34.

Meanwhile, another character whom I have yet to introduce, is about to meet up with Jesse and Wade outside the bar. The bounty hunter's name is Red Girk—a man who "resembled a priest," "had a weakness for children," and when he was through with the children, he "disposed efficiently of the bodies."⁴⁴⁵ Girk is in the employ of Emmet Okun, who, after reviewing Girk's incarceration file, had the pederast and murderer released from prison, and gave him a job as both a bounty hunter and an assassin. Apparently, Okun wanted to hire a methodical, sociopathic individual who enjoyed killing. Aside from children, the only thing Girk ever thought about was his job, since "few things gave him as much pleasure."⁴⁴⁶ Girk's car is outfitted with a computer system in the dashboard that locates and tracks Jesse's whereabouts:

Information fed back from far points to [the computer]. Millions of watts of electricity, for which the hills were ripped for coal, for which the rivers were chained, were sucked into its web. It gathered information and made plans. It spun its strands in all directions. It drank power and became power.

Red Girk did not worship the computer, but he obeyed it.⁴⁴⁷

This "web" of power seems similar to the "web" of time and relationships that I describe in an earlier section, but they differ significantly. Indeed, the "web" that ensnares rivers and lands in

exchange for power is a counterfeit version of Indigenous relativity. Because its creation emerges from consumption, it can do nothing but ensnare and consume. The computer gives Red Girk a kind of “vision” that he uses for “hunting, a hunting that was easy, for the computer had it all figured out for him.”⁴⁴⁸ Girk’s mission is to kill Jesse, before he can lead any sort of revolt. Armed with a laser-pistol, he pauses on his journey, and steps out of the car as the computer advises him to “wait.” Standing on the side of the road, a jackrabbit jumps up out of the brush, and Girk draws his pistol and shoots a laser beam at its head, piercing the rabbit. A reflection of *wetiko* characters from the historical sections, Girk is a sharp-shooter, who kills for his own personal entertainment.

When Jesse and Wade emerge from the bar, Red Girk is waiting for them, “but the sight and sound of Jesse Brown as he stepped through the door of the American Legion Bar” intimidates Girk. He fired off shots at both men. They dodge, and Jesse impossibly disappears from Girk’s sight, but eventually, Girk

[fingers] off a series of shots toward the running, dodging figure of Wade Crow. The thin man collapsed like a rubber doll. Then, as Red Girk aimed for a final shot, he was struck by the growling bulk of the man-bear who came hurtling over the top of Girk’s car. The gun went flying.

For one moment Girk fought back, trying to use the karate he had spent long months learning. A sword-hand blow bounced off Jesse Brown’s neck. Then Red Girk was lifted, lifted like a child. His bones snapped like reeds. His scream broke with his spine. Darkness came over his eyes.

Jesse shook the body once, the way a dog shakes a rat. Then he dropped it and shambled over to Wade Crow. There was a frightening stillness about Wade’s face, a deep wound in his side. Jesse tore off his own shirt and bound it around Wade’s waist, lifted him careful and put him into their car.⁴⁴⁹

Jesse finds the laser, adjusts the beam, and uses Girk's own weapon to vaporize the body. This character is one of only two that Jesse kills in the novel; the other is a rogue bear that had been killing children.⁴⁵⁰ As Girk is "lifted like a child" and then "screams," his death gestures toward ironic justice. Jesse evidently uses the power he is given not only to defend himself and Wade, but also to save children from sexual abuse, torment, and murder (although there is no hint that Jesse is aware of Girk's pedophilic pastime.) Girk's motivation for attempting the assassination of Jesse is not altogether complicated: Girk enjoys killing so much that he goes about his assignment with religious fervor; indeed, the narration says that "no acolyte ever gave himself so completely to a new religion as Red Girk gave himself to his work."⁴⁵¹ The sole reason that Okun has provided Girk with a computer tracking system, is that so that he can "hunt" Jesse, and the tracking system that Girk uses appears on his computer screen as a "perfect cross" at the points of intersection. The symbolism of the "perfect cross" in combination with other character features, (i.e. he resembles a priest, sexually abuses children, then disposes of their bodies), suggests that Girk represents the notorious pedophilic clergy who have preyed on American Indian children in missions and boarding schools for centuries—and hunted them, when they attempted to escape. Red Girk finds Jesse through an image of the "cross"—a technology provided by the more powerful *wétiko* figure, Emmet Okun, whose religiosity is portrayed as puritanical. Though the tracking system is effective enough to put Girk within lethal proximity of his prey, (Jesse and Wade), the "vision" that the cross affords is inadequate. That is, Jesse disappears from Girk's vision when they are in combat, and even with the computer to aid him, Girk does not have the vision necessary to recognize that Jesse has received an extra measure of power, until it is too late.

As opposed to the way that a commander like Custer would ignore his fallen men, Jesse does not abandon his friend, Wade. He carries Wade Crow to the car, and drives him to the cabin of a medicine man. As he lifts his friend from the car, he thinks, "*So thin. . . . but heavy as*

the Earth. His bones must be made of stone.” The old man calls from the cabin as Jesse waits outside.

“He will be alright?” Jesse says.

“Yes,” the old man answers. “He is sleeping now.”

“I was afraid they had killed him.”

“They can never kill him. Even though they have tried for 500 years, he will not be killed by them.”

“What did you say, Grandfather?”

“I said they have failed to kill him.”⁴⁵²

In combination with the accreting themes and motifs in the novel, the ambiguity about who the medicine man refers to suggests that Wade represents either American Indians, Coyote, and Earth—all of them at once, because they are all connected. All of these are targeted for exploitation and consumption, and yet, the shifting “he” in “he will not be killed by them,” seems to indicate that survival and resistance (or survivance, rather) is achieved in ways that evade the comprehension of academics, Christians, military, and representatives of the state. With Wade pierced in the side and brought back to life, it seems that he, too, bears an analogous relationship to the biblical messiah, but it is both Jesse’s efforts and the medicine man’s work that saves Wade. It is therefore worth noting that the Ghost Dance prophecy gives the responsibility of “saving” The People to The People themselves as a collective, and not to a single messiah.

As mentioned earlier, the character of Emmet Okun uses surveillance technology to spy on Jesse as he sleeps and interacts with Shera. Okun is described as “an ordinary man”—a phrase repeated at the beginning of each of the two paragraphs that introduce this character.⁴⁵³ As if to reassure the reader that Okun is indeed “an ordinary man,” the statements are supported by examples of his ordinariness in terms that emphasize the quotidian nature of his home-life (he is “devoted to his wife,” and “scarcely complained about the things which most consumers

found difficult,” and he “subscribed to the *Consumer Co-op*”; italics, mine). Indeed, the name “Emmet” means “ant”—the swarming, ever-working insect, which underscores Okun’s fixation with orderliness, his regimented, puritanical Christian ethos, and thus, his religious work ethic.

Despite the repeated (and thus insistence) on Okun’s ordinariness, Okun is not *average*. Besides his physical markedness—a “long S-shaped laser scar on his left cheek” Okun has the new nation’s highest security clearance along with only 12 other men.⁴⁵⁴ His commute each day begins in an “ordinary” way, with “a thousand other people,” but eventually Emmett Okun goes “beyond the blue check,” the “white check,” and then, after his palm is scanned, he goes “past the last security level of the red symbol: the scarlet phoenix rising from its own ashes.” Okun’s job title—Controller—is apt, since his job is to control the population of the New State, through panopticism. He is not just a Controller in name and occupation, however, since his anxiety is most aroused when he cannot constrain or contain the actions of other people, whether it’s Okun’s technician assistant, Virginia, himself, or most importantly, Jesse. Okun surveils the technician as well and constantly tries to guess what the technician is thinking, since Okun fears that the technician will report Okun for being unsuccessful as Jesse’s Controller. His paranoia manifests as anger toward the technician, which in turn makes the technician fear for his life. Jesse’s ability to “make the journey and come back” in dreams represents the utter failure of the Controller to police the boundaries of rational time and space. Through the rigid frame of rationalism, Okun cannot account for anomalies.

I have already described the technology that Okun uses to surveil Jesse and empower Red Girk, so I would like to continue expanding upon the way Okun obtains “vision,” with the description and analysis of an event shared between Emmet and Virginia that articulates with the conditions of post-nuclear holocaust North America. Emmet and his wife, Virginia, are under medical care and routinely submit to treatments due to “the radioactive rains of the decade past,”⁴⁵⁵ and we eventually learn that they were in O’ahu with their children when the bombs dropped. More is revealed about the character and the “vision” he and his wife obtain on

their “two week” vacation to a tourist’s version of 1960s O’ahu—a vacation made possible via a four hour immersive multimedia system that provides more sensory experience than current virtual reality technology can provide. Technology that turns four hours into two weeks represents the counterfeit, limited access to time slippage that rationalism affords, especially when contrasted with the ways that Jesse, Wovoka, and Sitting Bull traverse time through Indigenous epistemic and ontic means.

In the novel, the Hawaiian Islands were destroyed in the nuclear holocaust brought about by the “burned creature,” and since Virginia and Emmet had traveled to the same location with their children before the war, their memories of that trip threaten to unravel their visionary, virtual, experience.⁴⁵⁶ At the travel agency, they are served by a man who attempts to hide his fear when he realizes Okun is a “*A Controller . . . One of the Thirteen!*” and notes to himself that Virginia seems to be “*looking for someone and is frightened to death that she’ll find them.*”⁴⁵⁷ As the travel agent wires Virginia and Emmet into the system by “blocking off the sensory channels which let the real world in,” Virginia and Emmet appear as unscarred, youthful, and attractive to each other as they did before the war.⁴⁵⁸ However, Virginia continually makes references to things that the system should have prevented her from remembering, like Emmet’s scar—evidence of the war—and their previous trip with their children. Emmet also struggles with shutting off the memory of his real history and experiences, as “the line of smiling brown-faced girls” that met their cruise ship,

reminded him of other brown faces, which mocked him. Hawaii had been a mistake, but it was too late now. The lei settled against the back of his neck like the blade of a guillotine and he thought he saw a smirk in the face of the girl who kissed his cheek. But he kissed her in return and grabbing Virginia’s arm shouted in a voice loud enough to startle himself, ‘COME ON SWEETHEART! LET’S PAINT THIS TOWN RED!’⁴⁵⁹

More than racist, Okun thinks the “brown faces” he sees “mock” and “smirk” at him, since they remind him of the people that he means to control (but apparently, can’t). Their smiles and gifts

are perceived by Okun as dangerous, and his fear evokes Jesse's claim, "That is why we were so dangerous, because we were freer than they were. In our dreams we could find the strength, make the journey, and come back."⁴⁶⁰ His response, to "PAINT THIS TOWN RED," evokes the spillage of blood, like the enthusiastic Chivington as he exclaimed that he and his cohorts would be "wading in gore!" Taxed by the effort it takes to suppress Virginia and all that he has experienced, and blind to his reflection in the "mirror" of history, Okun senses that the only way to keep Virginia from seeking after her children is to control her via distraction: to engross her so thoroughly in the project of entertainment (i.e. consumption of anything, especially what is Indigenous), that she would have no room left to yearn for anything else.

For Emmet, the problem worsens. As the two walk to the top of a volcano, Virginia "disappeared for a few minutes. That shouldn't have been possible. They were on the same tape,"⁴⁶¹ Emmet thinks, and later, she disappears while snorkeling, and appears again later, running along the beach. Each time Emmet loses sight of Virginia, he reminds himself that the occurrence is out of the realm of possibility, since "the information [needed] to reconstruct the rest of the island beyond a few selected and well-documented areas," apparently did not exist—it had been erased from recorded history—and yet, Virginia *remembers*. When Virginia returns from snorkeling, she asks Emmet to come and see what she's found.⁴⁶² He declines and becomes angry, perhaps because her disappearances demonstrate the inadequacy of technologically-mediated "vision," and he seems to sense that Virginia's memory prevents him from controlling her, even in this controlled, fake, "environment." In either case, she brushes off the disappearance by saying "I saw someone...or thought I did," but just before falling asleep that evening, Virginia whispers, "I saw the children." On the beach the next morning, she asks Emmet, "We weren't supposed to remember while we're here, were we?" and yet, Virginia remembers everything outside of the VR fantasy, from their life in Sterling to what came before that, "...the blood, the children screaming." Emmet's anger boils over again, and soon Virginia runs away on the beach and dives into the water, saying "I'm going in! You can't catch me!"

Indeed, he can't catch her because she swims outside the edges of technologically-recorded history and into her memories, where she rejoins her children, laughing and playing in the surf. When Emmet awakes, his wife has died with a smile on her face, "forever in Hawaii."⁴⁶³ Ironically, the technologically mediated "vision" keeps Emmet from following Virginia into a reality constructed from memory, and they are permanently separated. Apparently Virginia could not "find the strength, make the journey, and come back."

From a Western perspective, Emmet could arouse the sympathies of the reader. When he reappears in the narrative, he is described as

...more than just a hard-working man. Each morning when he entered his office he pored through the morning's pile of work the way a religious man fingers prayer beads. But now his devotion was colder, stronger. It was as if some final link which had made him like other human beings had been severed. People stepped aside more quickly now when he passed and the thin technician longed to be invisible before that frigid stare was trained on him.⁴⁶⁴

Emmet has lost his relations: those things that make him a human being, and his new "colder, stronger" commitment to his work directs him to devote more energy toward consuming the land and its people; Virginia's death results in a *wétiko*-like growth spurt. Even so, his increased commitment to work is understandable, perhaps, since the sublimation of grief could potentially make anyone pour themselves into their work, or any other task, with greater fervor. But when we keep in mind the *modus operandi* of the *wétiko*, and follow Okun's next thoughts, his *wétikoism* becomes more salient:

Soon, Okun thought, *Soon*. In other offices in this complex other men were working with a devotion like this. This continent would be theirs again. The plans were being made, the machines were strong and certain. They would weave the old web of power from sea to sea . . .

Emmet Okun shook himself out of his dream. There were problems which must be dealt with before that day could be. There were only a few who could deal with those problems, himself and a handful of others, a tiny aristocracy blessed by manifest destiny.

It would not be easy. There was always the problem of the mongrel population. There was an imbalance. But that could be rectified. The population could be eliminated bit by bit until only those who were fit would remain. Then they would roll across the continent, cutting down the enemies of the state as a harvesting machine cuts down stalks of wheat. He saw in his mind's eye a giant with legs of titanium striding across mountains, sweeping up tiny enemies in his hands and crushing them. He would live to see that.⁴⁶⁵

With familiar genocidal terms on his mind like “manifest destiny,” the “mongrel population,” and “cutting down the enemies of the state,” Okun mirrors the fearsome historical characters that Bruchac includes in his novel, especially the *Big Wétikos*—the ones who not only consume for their own desires, but those who also direct others to kill, control, or terrorize; those who provide other *wétikos* with weapons and technologies of control; and those who seek only greater power to consume. Nevertheless, if a reader cannot identify in some way with what has been historically called “the mongrel population,” or a people group targeted by the state for genocide, it is possible that they may still identify with Okun due to his grief-induced sublimation, especially if they approach life from Western epistemology and Christian metaphysics. That is, such a believer may project onto someone like Okun the memory of their own repentance and salvation. Blindness to the way an individual's life reflects what Tom King refers to as “turtles all the way down,” or the stories upon stories that construct us, could keep them from being able to “see” Okun as fearsome, in lieu of an interpretation of Okun as the “backslidden” Christian. However, even if Okun were to be reconciled to God in the Christian sense, there would be no restoration of the broken lives and lands that he (and other *wétikos*) had already destroyed, and the processes of relativity-disruption that he set in motion would

continue. He would not have to face or enter into relationships with the lands he had destroyed as part of his restoration, nor would he be reconciled to the families of his murdered victims, since he would only need answer to God. Contemporary Western Christianity, and individualistic axiological orientations, can therefore occlude the reader's ability to understand the fearsome figure as truly fearsome, since even if *wétiko* behavior is condemned by the reader, restoration and reconciliation is a hoped-for eventuality. Such restoration is limited to an event that occurs between an individual and God, and every other relationship is expendable. Thus, to guide some Western readers to identify with the protagonists and recognize the fearsome in the truly despicable characters, it is helpful to direct the reader's attention to the continuity between the fearsome brutality of many of the historical figures in his novel, and the speculative / futuristic 1970s fearsome figures. This continuity, combined with the narrative's demythologization of The People,⁴⁶⁶ and their reflection in Jesse, Shera, and Wade, opens a way for a reader to connect with this novel in a way that they might not be able to achieve on their own.

But, how did Okun become *wetiko* in the first place? Is he the biggest *wetiko* in the cast of Bruchac's characters? A further look may not reveal all the details of Okun's transformation into a *wétiko*, but there is certainly a dimension to what Jack Forbes would identify as Okun's "disease," that *The Dreams of Jesse Brown* seems to indicate comes from the desires of another entity: Iktome.

Which Spider? Which Web?

As I have already mentioned, the web-like concept of time, interconnection and relationality runs throughout the narrative in *The Dreams of Jesse Brown*, and I've used the term "web" as a suggestion for how the structure of Indigenous inter-relationality and time can be imagined. It is admittedly an imperfect, though serviceable metaphor—one that is also used by numerous scholars in Indigenous Studies, although this usage of the metaphor does not appear in *The Dreams of Jesse Brown*. Notably, there is another, more explicit "web" woven

throughout the novel's narrative by a "metal" version of Iktome: the Nakoda, Dakota, and Lakota spider-trickster figure. Iktome is represented in the novel as a "spider of metal" whose web ensnares and enslaves people, lands, rivers, information, and makes plans to consume more: "It [spins] its strands in all directions. It [drinks] power and [becomes] power."⁴⁶⁷

Because Bruchac depicts Iktome's behavior such that it evokes *wétikoism*, the figure bears closer examination.

In John G. Neihardt's 1944 interviews with Black Elk, the visionary said that "Ichtomi is a smarty who knows everything and can turn himself into other things and fools the people very much. He is known as One Fools the People. He is no good but comes in handy once in awhile."⁴⁶⁸ Even though traditional Iktome stories told and recorded by Nakoda, Dakota and Lakota people characterize this trickster as "no good," they also avoid descriptions that frame him as entirely evil since he is sometimes useful to the people; for example, he created human language and taught the people how to make arrowheads and spear-points.⁴⁶⁹ Delphine Red Shirt claims that Ikto's frequent travel companion is "Íya," a "giant creature" who eats everything, including human beings," and is "more dangerous [than Ikto] because he is evil."⁴⁷⁰ Perhaps Bruchac chooses in *The Dreams of Jesse Brown* to identify Iktome as "the maker of evil,"⁴⁷¹ based in part on his association with Íya, combined with Iktome's dietary habits, his yen for power, and also because of the ways other beings are deceived and enfolded into his ways and means of operation, as aggregate parts of an all-consuming whole. Even though the "spider of metal" in Bruchac's novel is not described as a "giant," the variety of its diet, means of deception, metabolism, and the disruption in relationships it causes, maps onto many *wetiko* traits. Indeed, its growth seems as unlimited as its power to consume. This assimilating, homogenization of purpose functions in the same way as many origin stories or myths: it provides discourse and systems of power that construct the identity of a people, it provides common goals, and it constructs the overculture's values. Further, if Iktome can "turn himself into other things and [fool] the people very much," then he is an expert at the kind of deception

that leads people to transform themselves into agents of Iktome's power-generating scheme. However, the spider in Bruchac's novel differs slightly from the traditional Iktome. Even though *all* organic life forms ingest food to convert it to energy, *this* version of Iktome is more diabolical than other trickster figures (like Coyote, who can also be a culture hero), and has features that surpass the powers of consumption and growth beyond the scope of any known organism, unless, of course, we open up the notion of "organism" to include *wétiko*.

Tracing what the "spider of metal" *does*, is more illuminating than the question, *who* is Iktome? That is, Iktome is not developed as a character in the novel, but is discernable as a fearsome figure through his actions (as well as how his "members" act or behave), rather than the nouns that define him. In fact, Bruchac reveals very little about the "spider of metal" through conventional character description or dialogue, and instead, other characters like Jesse and Shera sense wisps of Iktome's presence, but they never discuss him directly. As with the fleeting shadows and ominous creaks that hint of a fearsome presence in gothic fiction, the "spider of metal" haunts the narrative as a disembodied threat:

As Jesse dreams he thinks he hears a whispering, the sort of whispering which one would hear if a spider of metal had a voice. Something is stretched across the darkness in front of him and it holds him back for a brief second before he breaks through its strands and his eyes open to a vision cold and clear as the water of a mountain brook.⁴⁷²

The "[s]omething" that "is stretched across the darkness in front of" Jesse and "holds him back," is thematic, in that there are several instances throughout the novel when Jesse must pass through a web-like structure in order to attain a vision-state, while the "spider's voice" "whispers" inspiration to Okun and the technician when they surveil Jesse and Shera.⁴⁷³

However, when Jesse eludes Okun and the technician's gaze, and goes to visit Wovoka, Jesse wakes to a "noise like a creaking whisper, a metal spider afraid of its own web," that may imply Iktome is vulnerable to Jesse—especially because of the medicine that Jesse gains through his visions and relationships with the spirits.⁴⁷⁴

Two means of consumption that the spider of metal employs seems derived directly from the two policies the United States has continuously implemented against American Indians: genocide through outright killing, and genocide through the erasure of Indigenous identity, relationships, and worldview. Shera's experience with the spider of metal represents the latter form of genocide. In Book One, Shera struggles with the allure of assimilation. She is about to be subsumed into what appears to be a beautiful mirage that appears on a wall before her. She watched as:

Tentacles of light spread in benediction, became starbursts of red, flowed into orange and then gold, the gold which was once the color of the sun. For a moment anger stirred at the edges of her mind, but it was washed over by the everchanging, ever-softening colors. She relaxed, felt herself flow into the wall, her body slipping into that tide. She was all washed away, all washed away . . . but wait! Something was holding her back.

There was a rope around her wrist. She tried to pull free, but the rope held.⁴⁷⁵

The "rope" turns out to be Jesse's hand, and she feels that "All she could do was try to pull away, let herself be subsumed by that gentle wall. But the rope would not let go, it wouldn't let go, it wouldn't let go! The tide was slackening and she was falling away from that unity."⁴⁷⁶

Importantly, Shera perceives that what began as bright, beautiful colors, do not maintain their vividness. Instead, the "everchanging, ever-softening colors" suggest the disappearance of identity, similarly to what one would expect of the clichéd notion of the United States "melting pot" ideal. As the beautiful vision fades, she mourns its disappearance. Jesse asks,

"Did you want me to let you go, go all the way?"

"I don't know. Why not?" . . .

"Shera," he said, taking her hand in his, making it disappear in his giant fist, "We can't let go. It is all connected. Listen."⁴⁷⁷

As alluded to earlier, this part of the narrative evokes the powerful draw of assimilation for American Indians into a "unity," or a collective conscious with a collective purpose. But that

collective purpose in the New States, just like in the United States, involves the loss of Indigenous identity, relationships, and worldview, and forces the individual to become “subsumed” into the culture of consumption and power. In the next vignette, Jesse sleeps, but Shera remains awake,

. . . remembering the stories he has told her, remembering what he said after telling those stories. She lies there, not believing a word of it. It is insane. But what if it were true? What could they do? How could they fight back against those who had everything when they had nothing? But he has answered that too, hasn't he? Even when they say you have nothing, you can still have courage.⁴⁷⁸

Shera seems to have been moved by Jesse’s words—the historical descriptions of the processes of genocide, as well as his insight with respect to connectivity, Native religious beliefs, practices, vision, and strength. Her sense of Indigenous identity and purpose begins to reawaken, and with Jesse’s assistance, Shera resists the spider of metal and the entrapment of the web. As Shera dreamed,

She was running from a shape which glittered in the shadows. It followed her, glistening and dark, growing in size. Like a storm cloud, it swallowed the light. It was almost upon her and it cast a web which tangled her feet. She tried to escape. If she could try just a little harder she might be free. *I can't give in to it*, she thought. Then she felt a hand on her shoulder. It was lifting her. She grasped the hand with her own hands and pulled her feet free of the web. The touch of that hand cleared away the darkness which had surrounded her the way a current of fresh water clears a muddied pool. She opened her eyes. “I'm back,” Jesse said. He was sitting on the edge of her bed, his hand on her shoulder.⁴⁷⁹

This interaction arrives in Book Three, just before Jesse leads the rebellion, and depicts Jesse’s touch as one that could free Shera, “lifting her” out of entanglement—out of “darkness,” so that she could free herself from homogenization. Shera’s self-concept as Indigenous had returned,

and the text, while not completely explicit, suggests that Shera is really a woman named Mary Whitecrow, who returns to her family from her well-paying job in the New States, and at the closure of the novel, is reconciled to her grandmother who had formerly rejected Whitecrow because of her deceit and assimilation. The relationship between Whitecrow and her grandmother—now healed—correlates with Jack D. Forbes' description of how *wétikoism* wrings every ounce of potential that it can from the “divide and conquer” technique, in order to create “caste systems” or hierarchies within reservation communities. Shera had fallen into, and then, through courage and resistance, freed herself from the process that Forbes says is the “secret of how the white governments have controlled Indian reservations or communities.”⁴⁸⁰

Because of the correlation of the spider of metal and *wétikoism*, it is easy to see how Froidling, Girk, and Okun were incorporated into the spider's plans. To further the connection between this spider and the historical narrations in *The Dreams of Jesse Brown*, Bruchac includes an exchange between the Cheyenne medicine man and chief, Leg-In-The-Water, with James Medicine Calf Beckwourth—a freed slave, mountain man, trader, and envoy from the U.S. Government to the Cheyenne. Leg-In-The-Water asks, “Have you fetched the white man to finish killing our families?” Beckwourth assures Leg-In-The-Water that he has “come to talk peace with the whites,” since “the whites are as numerous as the leaves on the trees,” so, his goal was to argue that there are “not enough of you to fight them.”

“We know this,” Leg-In-The-Water said. “But what do we want to live for? Those spider people have taken our country and killed our game, but that wasn't enough. Now they kill our wives and children. Now there can be no peace. We want to go and meet our families in the spirit land.”⁴⁸¹

Leg-In-The-Water's term for whites—“spider people”—is used by a variety of Plains tribes, including Arapaho and some Lakota people (alongside, or in addition to the Lakota/Dakota word, *wasichu*), and to reiterate support for my claim that certain literary figures' fearsomeness in Native American literatures are fearsome because of what they do rather than what they are,

this claim is applicable to Indigenous critiques of settler-colonials as well. Like many American Indian terms for white people, “spider” refers to what the people *do*, rather than how they look. The “spider people” terminology may also be drawn from *Black Elk Speaks*. This longer passage from Black Elk’s narrative serves to demonstrate an Oglala Lakota’s use of “spider” as a vehicle for describing the behavior of white people. Says Black Elk:

Once we were happy in our own country and we were seldom hungry, for then the two-leggeds and the four-leggeds lived together like relatives, and there was plenty for them and for us. But the Wasichus came, and they have made little islands for us and other little islands for the four-leggeds, and always these islands are becoming smaller, for around them surges the gnawing flood of the Wasichu; and it is dirty with lies and greed. A long time ago my father told me what his father told him, that there was once a Lakota holy man, called Drinks Water, who dreamed what was to be; and this was long before the coming of the Wasichus. He dreamed that the four-leggeds were going back into the earth and that a strange race had woven a spider’s web all around the Lakotas. And he said: When this happens, you shall live in square gray houses, in a barren land, and beside those square gray houses you shall starve.” They say he went back to Mother Earth soon after he saw this vision, and it was sorrow that killed him. You can look about you now and see that he meant these dirt-roofed houses we are living in, and that all the rest was true. Sometimes dreams are wiser than waking.⁴⁸²

The “strange race” that “had woven a spider’s web all around the Lakota” refers not to white people as a racialized group, but instead, the term “race” is referential to a worldview that constructs a certain relationship to existence that entails domination and control of all that can be controlled. Fences, barriers (solid and discursive), railroads, and the electrical wires that drape across the lands from former tree to former tree—including the consuming relationship

toward water, coal, and other “natural resources,” increases the power of the “spider people” to use power. This relationship between the spider and resource extraction—especially in the strip mined landscape—is a feature of the landscape outside of a town Jesse and Wade pass through on their way to Wounded Knee, where “The barren pits behind the town were darker than the darkness itself. Emptiness which should have been filled by the life of the Earth, an emptiness which, seemed to be waiting like the strands of a spider web in shadow. Strip mining. The fastest way to get the most and leave the least behind.”⁴⁸³ In the novel, resource extraction is explicitly linked to the hunger for power and the act of consumption and growth, as demonstrated in the previous section where I discuss Emmett Okun’s desire to “weave the old web of power, from sea to sea...,” since what is entangled in a spider’s web, is eventually consumed by the web’s architect.

If you’ve ever looked down at the landscape in the U.S. from the window seat of an airplane, you can see more vividly the webs that have dissected the land, as well as the eviscerating dams and mines; they are self-evident. Leg-In-The-Water’s term for “spider people” may be more accurately rendered as Iktome’s possessive: “spider’s people.” The people with such a worldview and relationship to the world earn their name because they treat the game the same as land: as an exploitable resource—and because they break apart families, bands, clans, tribes, and cultures through taking the land and killing “wives and children”—the ones whose role it is to carry on the way of life and culture for future generations.

As I’ve argued, the behaviors attributed to Iktome in this novel suggest a strong correlation with *wetikoism*, and provide a stark counterexample for ethical action in the world, which is also one of the purposes of windigo stories—to teach people how *not* to be. Certainly the historical figures that are critiqued in *The Dreams of Jesse Brown* are recognizable as part of the spider-of-metal, *wetiko*-like giant, as are Froidling, Red Girk, Emmett Okun. Until she frees herself, Shera is on her way to becoming subsumed into *wetiko* as well. Jesse himself remembers how he, too, had formerly been part of that system and then freed himself.

The question left to answer is, *how does one fight a windigo?* Especially, how are people supposed to fight a windigo that does not appear in the frozen north where the spirit-giant has appeared in traditional Ojibwe and Cree stories? Forbes extended the meaning of *wetiko*/windigo beyond the Algonquian stories, in much the same way that Basil Johnston describes in his book, *The Manitous: The Spiritual World of the Ojibway*, who explains that

...new Weendigos are no different from their forebears. In fact, they are even more omnivorous than their old ancestors. The only difference is that modern Weendigos wear elegant clothes and comport themselves with an air of cultured and dignified respectability. But still the Weendigos bring disaster, fueled by the unquenchable greed inherent in human nature. Perhaps, as in the past, some champion, some manitou, will fell them, as Nana'b'oozoo did in the past.⁴⁸⁴

Even though I do not agree that “unquenchable greed” is “inherent in human nature,” (I would argue that greed’s parentage is a mix of complex psychological, environmental, and cultural conditions), it is worth noting that Forbes and Bruchac are not the only authors of Algonquian heritage who recognize manifestations of *wétikoism* as corporate entities, and as a spiritual disease, in places other than the frozen north. Since Bruchac has articulated the struggle in *The Dreams of Jesse Brown* as a spiritual and material confluence happening across time but situated in the Plains, it makes sense that the author would replace the greedy windigo with a version of the greedy Iktome who is material and spirit, mechanistic and metaphor, individual and corporate. But again, what “champion” can “fell” all of these at once?

How to Fight a Windigo, Part 2

As mentioned in an early chapter in this dissertation, “The “mythical Windigo” is not limited to Cree/Chippewa/Ojibwa peoples who employ the word *windigo*, and, . . . a similar or cognate cannibal monster is not confined to the Algonquian-speaking world,”⁴⁸⁵ and neither are Algonquian peoples (nor their stories) confined to the northern Arctic, Woodlands, Great Lakes, and North American Upper East Coast regions typically thought of as the home of Algonquian

tribes. Indeed, by the time the EuroAmericans made their way across the western Plains, various Cree bands, Cheyenne, Arapaho, Gros Ventre and Blackfeet peoples made their homes on the Plains alongside the buffalo, and often traded goods, ceremony, story, medicine and intermarried with each other, with Sioux, and other peoples. Though not all of the languages are mutually intelligible between the nations, it was common to be multi-lingual, and to speak a common sign language through which they shared many things, including news, features of worldview, and cultural practices. Similar to the inter-tribal exchange of beliefs and practices like the Ghost Dance, other cultural property was and continues to be exchanged between Indigenous nations all over the hemisphere—especially between close-by neighbors. It's likely that stories, characters from stories, and features of fearsome figures, have been shared between Indigenous peoples across the continent for millennia.

The Blackfeet tell of the culture hero Kutoyis, also known as Blood Clot Boy, whose *raison d'être* was to restore justice when a bully of one kind or another hoarded food, demanded tributes, killed people, or were otherwise cruel, leaving people in certain bands or encampments impoverished, essentially enslaved, or worse: dead. Kutoyis travels around to various places on the premise of wanting to “see the people.” The people he meets are usually poor, and cannot offer generous hospitality to Kutoyis because of their impoverishment. When the people explain their problems to Kutoyis, he responds with a plan of action to correct the situation. After outwitting the offender, Kutoyis usually kills the person whose actions are demonstrated as individualistic. Sometimes, other members of the socially transgressive individual's family are also killed, but Kutoyis often leaves one small survivor (e.g. a “little snake,” or a “tiny cub”) so that the family can reproduce. In one of the villages that Kutoyis visits, the bully doesn't just take all of the peoples' food and cause impoverishment. Instead, the people are few, since a nearby monster who draws people into its mouth and eats them has dwindled their numbers. Kutoyis enters the mouth of the monster known as the “Sucking Wind,” and cuts the monster's heart to pieces. When the monster dies, all of the people who had been swallowed are freed.⁴⁸⁶ A

Nez Perce story of “Coyote and the Swallowing Monster” tells essentially the same story, in which the culture hero, Coyote, enters the mouth of the Swallowing Monster and affixes a stone knife to his head. He then dances under the Monster’s heart, and as he does so, he strikes fatal blows into the heart of the one who had been eating the people.⁴⁸⁷ In some windigo stories, killing the cannibal monster is achieved in a similar way. For example, in Robert Brightman’s ethnology of the Rock Cree, two stories are recorded in which Weasel assists Wīshkīcāhk’s escape from a wīhtikōw who plans to roast his victim and eat him. Wīshkīcāhk, the culture hero also known as Nanabozho (among other variants of the name), convinces Weasel to climb into wīhtikōw’s body and kill him by chewing up his heart.⁴⁸⁸ The hero’s journey into the belly of the monster should have features familiar to ethnologists and anthropologists well-versed in Joseph Campbell’s hero monomyth, but such a lens isn’t the methodology of this dissertation. Instead, it is more interesting to me that these themes become metaphorical in Indigenous discourse—including Native American literature—as justifications, or inspiration, for Indigenous infiltration and radical change of oppressive and abusive structures.

Under the earlier subheading in this chapter called “Brown Jesus” Speaks . . . to the Messiah and the “Last Indian,” I write about an interaction between Sitting Bull and Jesse as they both visit with each other in mutual dream-visions, which provide some of the context for the climactic entry of Jesse into the Controller’s headquarters. As Jesse, Wade, and their allies descend, Sitting Bull dreams that

He sees that young man (Wanblimato / Jesse) entering the web of the Spider. Iktome, the maker of evil. A voice cold as metal whispers from deep inside the body of the Earth. It is deep in the body of the Earth Mother, lodged like the point of a spear or a bullet in the side of a warrior. The voice whispers, and the whisper is a weapon aimed at that young man's heart. And now Sitting Bull sings in his dream. *Be Silent, he sings, You have no power like mine.*

We are a Thunderbird nation. The Father told me so. Ate heye lo. That metal whisper seems to cringe at his voice and he continues singing, singing as Wanblimato goes deeper into the cave, deeper into the body of the Earth Mother, seeking that spear point which threatens her life, threatens the life of the people. Sitting Bull sings in his dream and as he sings he knows that he is also in the mind of that young man, a dream himself.⁴⁸⁹

Earlier, I demonstrated that Sitting Bull legitimizes Jesse's role as a messiah-like figure, and in this passage it becomes clear that Jesse does not fight the Phoenix (the New States), or the spider, alone. Sitting Bull's voice and song makes Iktome "cringe," and protects Jesse from ensnarement. In another short passage, Jesse "stands in the darkness" and expresses his sentiments to all of the warriors discussed in the historical sections who "were brave," and "*who fought well*," including the ones who had chosen "*the wrong side*"—those who had left their corporeal life, but still exist in another dimension, but can manifest themselves in the dimension we know. He tells them, "*Your people forgive you, for there is nothing to forgive. You who were warriors, hear me. I too was a gun in the hands of the wasichus. Now it is almost dawn and we must walk the Red Road together. We must strike for our Mother, the Earth,*"⁴⁹⁰ indicating that even when Jesse is not in a dream or vision-state, he communicates with people and entities who no longer have their human form. But Jesse is no Tolkien's Aragorn, and these warriors are not the cursed dead of Middle Earth's White Mountain. That is, Jesse senses the presence of warriors who no longer have corporeal bodies, and perceives them as relatives who share a common need and goal with Jesse: there is no curse to be lifted, there are no threats exchanged, and his sentiments carry no connotation that there is a debt they must repay.

Jesse senses the warriors with him as he enters the underground headquarters of the Phoenix, and they are joined by Old Man Coyote in a redux of the previously-described "swallowing monster" meets Coyote story. This time, however, a strong wind carries Old Man Coyote to a "great fish" whose "sides shone like silver," where he is "drawn in through the mouth

and in to its stomach.”⁴⁹¹ He notices there are many people inside the fish—some are still alive, but others are not. Coyote hums a little song to himself, wanders around, then sees “a big red thing,” and wonders aloud, “Now what is this?” Coyote hears a “big voice that seems to come from all around him” that responds, “That is my medicine.” Coyote tricks the disembodied voice into revealing that the “big red thing” is what keeps the fish alive. While the “great fish” attempts to kill Old Man Coyote and fails, Old Man Coyote draws his stone knife. The text implies that Coyote successfully stabs the heart of the great fish, freeing the people caught inside. The “great fish” in this passage ostensibly represents the headquarters of the Phoenix, and the narrative indicates that Old Man Coyote again enters the drama in 1978, outside of mythical time. Yet, Jesse never sees or interacts with Old Man Coyote, and since this passage transforms the “spider” to a “fish” that behaves like the “swallowing monster”—or like windigos of many tribes’ traditional oral stories—it is clearly more important to note that the fearsome figure’s *function* as an uncontrollable consumer is more significant than the *form* of the fearsome figure. Further, the spatial dimension where Old Man Coyote interacts with the “great fish” may be parallel to the “reality” that humans most often perceive, and the “stuff” of this dimension is *motion*.

Two sections later, the human beings gather outside of the fence surrounding the headquarters when the buffalo nation returns out of the mist and knocks down the fence: they return as prophesized by Wovoka.⁴⁹² The allied forces cut the power to the facility, “those among them who had spent long years working for the Phoenix and they knew many of its secrets.”⁴⁹³ Now, all the players on the side of The People are lined up “like iron filings,” ready to infiltrate the lair and fight for Mother Earth. Undeniably, the scenario becomes analogous to the Nanabozho stories that tell of a culture hero entering the body of the anthropophagous monster, and stabbing its heart until the monster is dispatched.

The Circle Begins to Mend

Even before the end of the Phoenix and the New States, the protagonists live a lifestyle of resistance to the oppression of the consuming fearsome figures. Several remarkable insights can

be gleaned from the strategies of resistance that they deploy. In the novel, acts of resistance by the protagonists reveal aspects of *wétikoism* that might seem so commonplace that the behaviors cease to strike fear in the hearts of ordinary readers. Further, the means of resistance also depends upon the revitalization of Indigenous metaphysical practices that lead to the acquisition of power. These practices have suffered intense state control and suppression in the United States as well as in the fictional New States, but Bruchac's narrative positions such ontics and power as the no-longer-missing ingredient to a successful fulfilment of the Ghost Dance-as-revolution.

The People draw on memory and a commitment to their relations to gird them for resistance and survivance. These are learned practices—what some might call “traditions,” “story,” or “medicine,” that provide a means of escape, camouflage, comic relief, and sometimes an extra measure of power or insight at a critical juncture. For example, Coyote tells The People to hide themselves in the Earth. Likewise Wade “hides,” by refusing to submit to examination by Froidling. Indeed, Froidling and Red Girk have the need to *see* in order to control or kill their targets. Jesse gains the advantage over Girk outside the bar, as Jesse disappears from Girk's sight, which, for Girk, didn't seem “...possible,” or rather, it was an anomaly.⁴⁹⁴ In the historical passages, The People are vulnerable whenever the soldiers positioned themselves so as to be able to *see* The People (e.g. on ridges around Big Foot's camp). The survivors are often the ones who can successfully hide from the gaze of the Hotchkiss gun handlers. Another example of the critical role of *vision* as a tool of control emerges when the technician panics in fear of Okun as soon as Jesse impossibly disappears from the surveillance screen. Further, Okun needs Virginia to stay where he can *see* her, within the borders of the rational imagination, or space. He becomes powerless, and thus, angry when she follows the path of her own memory, since it takes her out of his sight.

State surveillance technologies expand the limitations of human eyesight and threaten the object of control through the mechanization of vision. The process of this “vision” attempts

to isolate and immobilize the targets, making them easier to control or consume, whereas Indigenous epistemological and ontological orientations allow for what Dian Million calls a visionary “intense dreaming.”⁴⁹⁵ Through experience and dreaming, the American Indian characters in *The Dreams of Jesse Brown* realize that everyone and everything necessary for a holistic, balanced, and sustainable life, is threatened by the gaze that defines, isolates, then subsumes (or consumes) the isolated entity. Bruchac’s novel posits that Indigenous peoples’ trickster stories model a methodology of “blurring” self-representation in order to avoid fixity, reification, and vulnerability, and that Indigenous “technologies,” or medicine, is a gift of Earth and cosmos that is the source of relativity and must be continually maintained through reciprocal exchange, mutual respect, and interdependency. Isolation, or individualism, makes the object of the gaze consumable. Though the technologies of control used by the state “drinks power” from the Earth, and “becomes power,” it is a power that is only gained through severing a relationship of respectful reciprocity with the Earth, and is therefore, limited in its vision, and therefore, its reach.

As mentioned, the final two pages of the novel describes a hopeful new dawn and the reconciliation of Mary Whitecrow with her grandmother. This is the first and only appearance of this character in the novel, unless “Shera” is Whitecrow’s pseudonym—and I believe this to be the case, although that is open to interpretation. In any event, the novel ends with the mending of once broken relationships—relationships that were shattered by the machinations of the figures I have identified as “fearsome.” The modus operandi of these fearsome figures strongly resembles that of the windigo that we know from Algonquian oral traditions, as well as the figures who behave in ways that Jack D. Forbes identified as *wétiko*.

In an earlier section of this chapter, I mention that a bear and Red Girk are the only characters that Jesse kills in the novel. The narrative does indeed provide the by now expected death of Emmett Okun, but not by Jesse’s hand. While Sitting Bull has offered protection and strength to Jesse through his voice and song, Old Man Coyote has inspired enough mutual

distrust and paranoia between Emmett Okun and his technician that they are found by Wade and Jesse on the floor of the control room, having killed each other, “their two forms making a cross on the metal floor.”⁴⁹⁶ The rest of the conflict is suggested, and the denouement of the 1978 storyline is effectively intertwined with the denouement of the story of the Battle of Little Big Horn, and Custer’s demise.

The narrative assures the reader of the rebellion’s victory, through Jimmy Kicking Bear’s announcement as he rides through the town of Sterling on the Sheriff’s horse, singing an echo of Wovoka’s prophecy, “People . . . Lay everything aside. Now we shall have a dance. Bring your best clothes. Everybody had better come or you might not see everyone else again . . . Hurry up . . . get ready! It is time.”⁴⁹⁷ As the people don their treasured regalia that had been stored for generations in dusty boxes, “the women began singing the high ululating cry. They came out of the shacks with bent television antennas on the roofs and wrecked cars in the backyards. Their faces were glowing.”⁴⁹⁸ The final section of the novel describes Sitting Bull’s evaluation of the event referred to in the refrain, “it is time”—that is, the end of the “night”—or, oppression—and the beginning of a new day.

In the final paragraph, Sitting Bull’s thoughts drift toward his observation that, “The circle has been broken, but it will be mended. It will be long and slow in mending, but the hoop of the nation, of the nations will be mended.”⁴⁹⁹ Indeed, as I have argued, windigo-like figures are fearsome because throughout their attempts to satisfy their insatiable need to consume, they destroy relationships. However, even though Okun, Girk, Froidling, Custer, Iktome, and all of the other manifestations of the novel’s fearsome figures behave heinously, in some ways, they seem just unlikeable, rather than dread-inducing—unless, of course, the reader’s subject position is such that carries first-hand, or intergenerational memory of the ways that *wétiko* behaviors rend and tear at all relationships needed for life to regenerate itself. Victory over the fearsome figures does of course, begin the mending process.

CONCLUSION

In “Theorizing American Indian Literature: Applying Oral concepts to Written Traditions,” Christopher Teuton builds on Jonathan Culler’s description of what theory does. Adding to Culler’s assertion that theory “is interdisciplinary,” is “analytical and speculative,” that it is “a critique of common sense, of concepts taken as natural,” and that theory is “reflexive, thinking about thinking, enquiry into the categories we use in making sense of things,”⁵⁰⁰ Teuton explains that Indigenous theory functions similarly, but that it also “arises out of the dialectical relationship among artists, art, critics, and Native communities.”⁵⁰¹ Teuton concludes that “[i]n Native theory the subject is Native experience, the object, Native community,” and therefore asserts that it is now “crucial at this moment in the field of Native American literary studies . . . to continue to develop terms and concepts that can further the study of American Indian experience in all its richness,”⁵⁰² and such has been the goal of this dissertation.

Many of the experiences and the intellectual and creative works that the previous chapters engage with are rooted in the concern for Indigenous continuance and wellbeing, given the conditions, structures, and effects of colonialism. Settler-colonial axiology constructs agents that value and thus impose definition, circumscription, fixity, and consumption onto all things. Windigo narratives warn listeners that this value system and the behaviors it generates skews perception, so that the unfortunate person or institution gone windigo can only spread distorted windigo ontology—and thus, replicate its behaviors—to those under its control. These warnings in windigo narratives are theoretical and predictive. More than that, windigo narratives often give listeners what may seem like new ways to interrogate colonialism, but truly, these are old, but often ignored theorizations and criticisms of social behavior that in some ways have been neglected by their heirs due to the perception that the world has changed, with the accompanying assumption that windigo narratives are obsolete. However, once colonialism is understood as *wétiko* disease, a more elegant and accurate understanding of the problems afflicting Native peoples, their communities, and indeed, the world can be achieved. The

narratives further give listeners examples and suggestions for how to trick, evade, or defeat a windigo once it sets its designs on a person or a people. In this sense, windigo narratives are examples of Indigenous sociocritical theory grounded in the desire for balance, life, and wellbeing, and the hopeful effect of modeling strategies for resistance to *wétikoism*. The problem is, not everybody sees these narratives as applicable to contemporary realities.

Years ago, as a student in a combined environmental studies and literature course, I witnessed the fearsome figure in Linda Hogan's *Solar Storms* become reduced through interpretation to simple "evil" by my instructors and cohorts. To me, the character was not only a house for ugly things, but she had also been incorporated into, and transformed into an agent of a much larger and voracious system of consumption and fragmentation. The character Hannah Wing was more than someone who had been abused, and who in turn was an abusive parent. She had become windigo, and a synecdoche for the other examples of *wétikoism* in the novel. As mentioned in Chapter 4 of this dissertation, I've heard students comment and respond to Native texts with a similar blindness to the fearsomeness of antagonistic figures in Native fiction. This dynamic should signal the need for pedagogical approaches that remove such occlusion, in line with the goal of "[developing] terms and concepts that can further the study of American Indian experience in all its richness,"⁵⁰³ as Teuton suggests. That is, like Teuton claims, "...American Indian oral traditional stories may be read as theories or may be used as theoretical templates . . ."⁵⁰⁴ The windigo figure from oral Algonquian peoples narratives is therefore theory that can also explain how and why, in contemporary Native American fiction, villainy is not made of what a fearsome figure *is*, but instead, on what it *does*. Windigos disrupt interdependency, skew reciprocity, and destroy relationships, especially the relationships needed for life to reproduce itself without human mediation or technological intervention.

At the outset of this project, it was clear that Indigenous worldviews would be vital for the development of "windigo theory" to understand literary representations of *wétikoism*, Indigenous experience, and a variety of texts. Since respect, reciprocity, redistribution, and

responsibility are consistently-shared values that underlie practices and attitudes among Indigenous peoples of North America,⁵⁰⁵ this context is key for the Indigenous literary and experiential analysis in this work. Each of these practices and values stem from the notion that the individual's place is an integral and necessary part of the communal, on a spectrum between micro- and local, to macro- and universal. The communal includes humans and other-than-human beings who are tethered to particular geolocal places—not boundaried, but tethered. For this reason, my approach has privileged *connections* in contradistinction to containment or definition.

Throughout this dissertation, I've argued and demonstrated that when any entity or group is contained, boundaried, isolated, fixed, or frozen, either materially or through discourse, the connections of the communal are disrupted. Relationships are thus severed, and life is threatened. This dynamic is described in the first three chapters of this work: how threats to all that is required for life to continue in interrelationships and balance give rise to Indigenous narratives that depict fearsome figures, or *wétikoism*. These depictions often do not emerge from the same sites of anxieties that give birth to the West's fearsome figures. Admittedly, however, the anxieties from each ontological orientation may overlap to a degree, like when nature, government, or technology is perceived to be out of control. But from an Indigenous perspective, it isn't the *thingness* of a mutant animal, a government, or a technology that causes horror; instead, horror is generated from distorted values and actions which precipitate mutations and unnecessarily voracious consumption. In contrast, popular Western culture has a set of conditions that give birth to the fearsome out of anxieties about disruption of order as defined through Western epistemologies and ontologies. These disruptions to accepted categories give rise to the familiar "monster" of popular culture--those hybrid combinations of human and non-human life forms (like werewolves, Voldemort,⁵⁰⁶ or Brundlefly,⁵⁰⁷ for example), or as a blend of two structurally-opposed categories like alive/dead, (e.g. zombies, vampires, ghosts). Any being who violates what are perceived to be stable categories may be

viewed as “difference made flesh,” or uncontainable, illegible, savage, alien, and indeed, monstrous. These trans- and category-blending features trigger, in part, the Western conception of Indigenous North Americans as fearsome. As I’ve argued, however, the breakdown of what are perceived to be stable and uncrossable boundaries is not inherently fearsome in Native oral stories or cultures. While some tribes have stories about “evil” category-crossers or hybrids, there are many more examples of human-non-human transformations or other manifestations of apparent category disruptions that are known and simply accepted.⁵⁰⁸

Through my discussion of slime molds, hot glass, and other “blobs,” I’ve shown how violations of identity-taxonomies can be perceived as a threat to Western hegemony and the legitimacy of colonialist land tenure. Likewise, the Seattle Police shooting of John T. Williams and the discourse generated in response, shows that transtribal movements of individuals across identities and bounded geographical sites inspires the growth of *wétikoism* and its discourses. These are essentially words that kill, and frame Indigenous people as *homo sacer*, illegible, uncontainable, alien, “difference made flesh,” and indeed, monstrous. I’ve further demonstrated that when the terms of engagement are set by *wétikos*, and when Native discourse gets pressured into the realm of definitions, boundaries, treaties, and other fixing language—Indigenous peoples are vulnerable to becoming consumed by the same *wétikos* we mean to resist. At the same time, I have argued and demonstrated that the self-determination and sovereignty shown by resisters in windigo stories and other Indigenous texts are characterized by motion and flexibility. The literature suggests that such strategies employed by Indigenous peoples can help maintain enduring tribal “peoplehoods.” The assertion of the sovereign right of motion and exchange, in other words, is where Indigenous resistance finds its strength and resilience, and such flexibility is also portrayed as a source of Indigenous survivance in Native texts and discourses. Perhaps the older windigo narratives and the many contemporary Native narratives are concerned with movement, balance, and relationships because it’s awfully difficult to freeze and consume a being that’s on-the-move. I therefore view the “movement” of

the “blob” as motivational, and as something from my direct experience that correlates with instructions in windigo narratives in terms of how to avoid becoming fixed, despite attempts to “freeze” and “consume” Indigenous peoples when our “movement” across boundaries becomes unnerving for *wétikoists*. Resistance to being seen, fixed, and defined, is depicted as an effective survival strategy in *The Dreams of Jesse Brown* as well, though I concede that such resistance arouses the irritation of *wétiko* characters in the novel, and will likewise arouse demonstrations of power or domination from *wétikos* in extratextual situations as well.

Again, movement, evasion, and tricksterism become Jesse Brown’s initial means of resistance to Emmet Okun and Froidling in *The Dreams of Jesse Brown*. Both antagonists are depicted by Bruchac as being driven to see and thus fix and consume American Indians. They first pry into private spaces, and demand that Native characters give up their secrets. Even though the novel was published long before the Patriot Act opened the door for increasingly intrusive surveillance, *wétikoism* is expansionist by nature, and the deployment of more invasive snooping technologies are now nearing Orwellian predictions. Further, NSA demand for access to our private lives is becoming naturalized and accepted by people who use the tired cliché, “as long as you have nothing to hide, you have nothing to worry about.” That this refrain is by now a cliché illustrates the insidious way windigo discourse and worldview skews perception and values. Indeed, *wétiko* discourse are “vectors” of “infection.” This tendency to “infect” is clearly depicted in *The Night Wanderer*, since both young Owl and Tiffany are susceptible to *wétikoism* through the allure of luxury goods and class mobility as presented to them through seductive discourse. In this particular novel, the means for “fighting” a windigo or resisting the temptation to become one, is answered through Indigenous discourse, through place, and through the re-familiarization of the individual with their innumerable relationships and responsibilities. Other than a critical examination of the categories Tiffany takes for granted and a reconnection to her identity, no medicine or “supernatural” intervention is needed to keep her from going windigo. That is, Tiffany is able to resist *wétikoism* through Pierre L’errent’s

story—through a conscious intergenerational transfer of knowledge between the ancient L'errent and the teenager. The finding here is that narrative does present and propagate worldview, and Indigenous worldviews may “inoculate” us against *wétiko* disease. This is one of the most encouraging findings in my study: that both “old” and contemporary narratives about windigo-fighting describe several successful strategies, and some of the most potent methodologies are stories—specifically those that re-establish relationships between peoples, places, and praxes.

The analysis of *The Dreams of Jesse Brown* reveals another strategy for fighting or killing a windigo. Jesse, for example, is able to avoid the gaze of the agents of the Phoenix. Along with Sitting Bull, Wade, and allies, Jesse and his group collaboratively dispatch the fearsome figure of the novel through infiltration—by going inside of the “body” of the fearsome figure for the purpose of killing key Controllers, only to find that the *wétiko* had already consumed itself.⁵⁰⁹ All of the preparatory methods used by Jesse and his crew were formulated through the revitalization of relationships and practices that existed as long as anyone can remember. Some of the power wielded by Jesse and his allies came to them through what we sometimes call “medicine,” and Coyote and other characters are depicted as having vital roles in the narrative. Rhetorically, then, the novel argues that a key tool of resistance to *wétikoism* would be through the revitalization of Indigenous spiritual and religious practices.⁵¹⁰ From my vantage-point, and from this era in which Indigenous peoples may have limited opportunities to learn their peoples’ spiritual and religious practices, I return to the traditional narratives to find other strategies that might be effective in terms of resistance. The stories of “Blood-Clot Boy,” “Coyote and the Swallowing Mouth,” and indeed, *The Dreams of Jesse Brown*, suggest that one effective way to dismantle or “kill” such a beast is from the inside. On the other hand, *The Dreams of Jesse Brown* and the traditional narratives also seem to warn that this cannot be accomplished without a collaborative effort, and without a conscious re-connection to Indigenous epistemological, ontological, and axiological praxis.

Resistance, however, might not be of interest to all readers. Indeed, I have shown through this dissertation that readers who have a Western-oriented worldview may struggle with a sense of engagement when reading Native American literature—especially literature with an explicitly resistant and critical theme. That is, such readers may remain unconvinced that the threats presented by the fearsome figures in Native American literature—not to mention the dangers of real-life *wétikoism*—are compelling, and such readers will therefore find it difficult to “connect” with protagonists. Thus, the rhetorical goals of the author may remain unrealized for their readers who have not critically examined *wétikoism* and *wétiko* discourse (even if this particular term isn’t used). Some of this disconnect can be mitigated through pedagogical strategies such as teaching Indigenous histories, contemporary realities, knowledge systems, and contexts of relationships interwoven into the curriculum. Further, some of the barriers to engagement with Indigenous literatures could be alleviated through careful description and analysis of the stereotypes that many readers don’t realize that they carry with them into each encounter with representations of Native American characters. The organizational expectations that some readers have—those who depend upon Western categories, for example—might shift through discussion, readings and activities designed to help students recognize their own position in relation to Indigenous peoples. Further, it helps to give students some familiarity with the idea that there are other, valid ways to conceive of reality than the ways that dominate Western epistemology. Feelings of guilt, anger, or defensiveness, or a sense of over-identification with Indigenous peoples in the narratives, can be addressed and potentially circumvented through a unit on appropriation.

As I conclude, however, it’s important to acknowledge that in Indigenous literatures, and in Western literatures, there are characters who show ambiguous or overlapping fearsomeness (disruptive of categories, and disruptive of relationships), and this arises when aspects of the character’s epistemology and the character’s actions conflict, or lack integrity. For example, some characters’ goals are consistent with their tribe or Native nation, but their actions violate

Indigenous axiology. That is, such characters may violate the values inherent in interdependent relationships. The sand-painter and Fire Clan priest, Abner, from Martin Cruz-Smith's *Nightwing*, would be an example of such a figure, and such characters can be depicted as disruptive or restorative, or both. The pedagogical foci I pointed out in the previous paragraph may help a reader wade through and interpret all of these ambiguities as well.

Future development of “windigo theory” as an Indigenous sociocritical and literary theory would entail the application of the theory to more texts. For an example, a more comparative consideration of a variety of Indigenous vampire novels may demonstrate the flexibility of “windigo theory,” especially with the addition of *Eye Killers* by A.A. Carr (Navajo, Laguna Pueblo), and the books in the *Red Eye Chronicles* series by Sequoyah Guess (Keetoowah). Carr's book in particular has already inspired an excellent reading of the ways in which resource extraction mirrors the vampires' violence and consumption.⁵¹¹ But neither Carr nor Guess are from Algonquian peoples, so their work would provide an opportunity to see if windigo-as-theory helps or harms interpretation of Indigenous literatures that do not share an Algonquian background. A reading of the fantasy fiction, *The Way of Thorn and Thunder*, by Daniel Heath Justice (Cherokee), will likewise provide an opportunity to develop the understanding of fearsome figures based on the Flint Coat or Stone Skin, who comes with a different ethnographical history, and may contribute to the development of the theory I have outlined in this dissertation. Justice's book will also provide an important opportunity to discuss how gender figures into fearsomeness as conceived by *wétikoism* and the internalization of *wétikoism*'s discourse. It would also be important to devote some attention to contemporary Native American fiction and film that features explicit representation of windigo characters. These readings would help refine the use of the *wétiko* figure as a model for tracing fearsome figures' effects on the novels' protagonists—their relationships—and especially, their communities.

Jack D. Forbes *Columbus and Other Cannibals: The Wétiko Disease of Exploitation, Imperialism, and Terrorism* is a passionate outcry and analysis of the processes engulfing Indigenous peoples and indeed the world, and is packed with numerous historical examples that demonstrate specific *wétiko* tactics and behaviors. Any contemporary scholar of Indigenous studies with similar inclination would have no trouble finding as many or more examples that would illustrate how windigos attempt to consume the world, but it would be difficult to find someone with comparable passion and dedication. Windigo is mighty, and resistance is like paddling upstream on the precipice of Niagara Falls—but even though the windigo’s strength is far beyond that of a single individual, I think that Forbes would agree that collaborative resistance can be successful. Indigenous storytellers like Forbes recorded their insights not only to tell listeners or readers how to recognize a windigo, but also, to teach people how to live in a way that nurtures and sustains life rather than a way that destroys life. I can only hope that my commentary on these stories have illuminated more brightly some reasons for being attentive to windigo stories, some ways to help readers learn from the stories, and some hopeful strategies for people who realize that the world is indeed in the sharp maws of a voracious fearsome figure.

Notes

1. Robert A. Brightman, "The Windigo in the Material World," *Ethnohistory*, 35, no. 4, (1988), 337.
2. Christopher Schedler, "Wiindigoo Sovereignty and Native Transmotion in Gerald Vizenor's Bearheart," *Studies in American Indian Literatures*, 23, no. 3, (2011), 37.
3. Basil Johnston, *The Manitous: The Spiritual World of the Ojibway*, (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1995), 221.
4. Andrew Macdonald, Gina Macdonald, and MaryAnn Sheridan, *Shape-Shifting: Images of Native Americans in Recent Popular Fiction*, (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2000), xi.
5. Macdonald, Macdonald, and Sheridan. *Shape-Shifting*, xv.
6. Macdonald, Macdonald, and Sheridan. *Shape-Shifting*, 21-43.
7. For example, see Macdonald, Macdonald, and Sheridan, *Shape-Shifting*, 216-217. The authors claim that "Many religious leaders—medicine men, shamans, or healers—still massage, dance, singe, smoke sacred tobacco, or use powerful drugs (marijuana, peyote, and so forth) so that with the aid of spirit helpers, they can discover the cause of ailments (often attributed to the loss of the soul, an imbalance in nature, or the intrusion of a foreign object through witchcraft)." While some parts of this statement are true, the authors do not present this information in a sensitive way, and neither do they claim any connection with any practice or community that would inform them of such activity or give them the rights to represent such activity. The cavalier mention of the employment of "powerful drugs" leaves out any mention of long and intricate training, protocols, relationships, entitlement, and accountability that are necessary for the use of any such substances. Additionally, Native American healers do not commonly use marijuana for healing or diagnostic work, and often advocate abstention from drugs and alcohol. One elder informant explained to me that the protocols for properly using the herb have been "lost," and while these protocols and practices may "return" at some point, this kind of use would be quite different from the ways Western society uses cannabis for medical and recreational purposes. The authors' insensitive misrepresentation of Indigenous beliefs and practices therefore reinforce damaging, and defamatory stereotypes.
8. Macdonald, Macdonald and Sheridan, *Shape-Shifting*, 211.
9. Ibid., 211. See also LeAnne Howe, "Danse d'Amour, Danse de Mort," Clifford Trafzer, ed., *Earth Song, Sky Spirit: Short Stories of the Contemporary Native American Experience*, (New York: Doubleday, 1993).
10. Macdonald, Macdonald and Sheridan, *Shape-Shifting*, 210-211.
11. Jeff Berglund, *Cannibal Fictions: American Explorations of Colonialism, Race, Gender and Sexuality*, (Madison, Wis: University of Wisconsin Press, Internet resource, 2006), 132.
12. Berglund, *Cannibal Fictions*, 23.
13. See: C.R. King, "The (mis)uses of Cannibalism in Contemporary Cultural Critique," *Diacritics*, 30, no. 1 (2000), 106-123, for King's discussion following Pierson, that African people feared their capture meant they would be shipped off to be eaten by Europeans rather than sold into slavery, and for King's discussion of Shoshoni experience with EuroAmerican cannibalism, including the little known occurrence at the signing of the Ruby Valley Treaty of 1863, in which White Americans shot and cooked Shoshoni resisters, and forced the signators of the Treaty to partake of the stew made out of their dead relatives' bodies.

14. Berglund, *Cannibal Fictions*, 133.
15. Berglund, *Cannibal Fictions*, 133.
16. King, "(mis)uses of Cannibalism," 106-109, and Deborah Root, *Cannibal Culture: Art, Appropriation, and the Commodification of Difference*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), 10-11.
17. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*, (Minneapolis, Minn: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 4.
18. Cohen, *Monster Theory*, 21.
19. Cohen, *Monster Theory*, 4.
20. Cohen, *Monster Theory*, 6.
21. See Victor Turner, "Betwixt and Between: the Liminal Period in Rites de Passage," *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*, (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1967).
22. Cohen, *Monster Theory*, 6.
23. Cohen, *Monster Theory*, 6.
24. Cohen, *Monster Theory*, 7.
25. Cohen, *Monster Theory*, 12.
26. See: Bartolomé de lasCasas, *Aqui se contiene una disputa, o controversia entre el Obispo don fray Bartholome de las Casas, o Casaus, obispo que fue de la ciudad Real de Chiapa, que es en las Indias, parte de la nueva España, y el doctor Gines de Sepulveda Coronista del Emperador nuestro señor: sobre que el doctor contendia: que las conquistas de las Indias contra los Indios eran licitas: y el obispo por el contrario defendio y affirmo aber sido y ser impossible no serlo: tiranicas, injustas y iniquas. La qual question se ventilo y disputo en presencia de muchos letrados theologos y juristas en una congregacion que mando su magestad juntar el año de mil y quinientos y cincuenta en la villa de Valladolid.* (Sevilla: Casa de Sebastian Trujillo, 1552), <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/IbrAmerTxt.Spa0035>.
27. Cohen, *Monster Theory*, 12.
28. Cohen, *Monster Theory*, 13.
29. Cohen, *Monster Theory*, 15-16. Cohen remarks in his endnotes that this discussion "owes an obvious debt" to Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), 24.
30. Cohen, *Monster Theory*, 20.
31. Cohen, *Monster Theory*, 3.
32. Jane Tompkins writes, "The absence of Indians in Western movies, by which I mean the lack of their serious presence as individuals, is so shocking once you realize it that, even for someone acquainted with outrage, it's hard to admit. My unbelief at the travesty of native peoples that Western films afford kept me from scrutinizing what was there. I didn't want to see. I stubbornly expected the genre to be better than it was, and when it wasn't, I dropped the subject.... I never cried at anything I saw in a Western, but I cried when I realized this: that after the Indians had been decimated by disease, removal, and conquest, and after they had been caricatured and degraded in Western

- movies, I had ignored them too,” Quoted by Gerald Vizenor in *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance*, (Lincoln, Neb: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 15.
33. Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, 15.
 34. Thanks to Brian Reed, for pointing this out.
 35. Howard A. Norman, *Where the Chill Came from: Cree Windigo Tales and Journeys*, (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1982), 3. Norman spoke with one hundred and fifty Cree or Ojibwe elders to collect Windigo stories between 1969 and 1980, and thirty one of these stories are recorded in *Where the Chill Came From*. In most cases, the narratives were translated from the Swampy Cree language to English, usually with the help of his informants.
 36. Brightman, “Windigo in the Material World,” 339-340.
 37. See my discussion of the Nez Perce story of the “Swallowing Monster” in Chapter 5. Similar stories are told throughout Pacific Northwest tribes, and amongst Yupik and Chipewyan peoples, for example.
 38. Norman, *Where the Chill Came from*, 21.
 39. Norman, *Where the Chill Came from*, 10, 16-17.
 40. Norman, *Where the Chill Came from*, 20-21.
 41. Norman, *Where the Chill Came from*, 21.
 42. Anthony Wayne Wonderley, “The Story of Windigo,” *At the Font of the Marvelous: Exploring Oral Narrative and Mythic Imagery of the Iroquois and their Neighbors*. (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2009), 95. <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10493624>.
 43. Wonderly, *At the Font of the Marvelous*, 94.
 44. Norman, *Where the Chill Came from*, 3-4.
 45. Norman, *Where the Chill Came from*, 4.
 46. Ibid.
 47. John Rains, quoted in Norman, *Where the Chill Came from*. 6., and Norman, *Chill*, 21.
 48. Norman, *Where the Chill Came from*, 4.
 49. Norman, *Where the Chill Came from*, 5.
 50. Ibid.
 51. Jack D. Forbes, *Columbus and Other Cannibals: The Wétiko Disease of Exploitation, Imperialism, and Terrorism*, (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2008), 24.
 52. Basil Johnston, *Ojibway heritage*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), 167.
 53. By “life,” I mean human, animal, and all that is on and in the land. From an Indigenous “animist” epistemological orientation or worldview, these categorical distinctions would be unnecessary if the

- goal was simply to indicate all of life, since everything is interrelated and depends on the health of all beings, including land, plants, and water.
54. Forbes, *Columbus and Other Cannibals*, 25.
 55. Forbes, *Columbus and Other Cannibals*, 25.
 56. Forbes, *Columbus and Other Cannibals*, 30, 34. Also James Loewen, "Handicapped by History: The Process of Hero-making," and "The Importance of Christopher Columbus," *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong*, (New York: New Press, 1995), and Howard Zinn, "Columbus, the Indians, and Human Progress," *A People's History of the United States: 1492-present*, (New York: HarperCollins, 2003).
 57. I refer to writers such as Columbus himself (his diaries), and writings by both Dominican and Franciscan monks like Antonio de Montesinos, Pedro de Córdoba, Bartolomé de las Casas, and de las Casas' rival, Toribio de Benavente.
 58. Here I refer to well-known historical figures who continued the violent project of genocide against Native Americans.
 59. Jodi A. Byrd, *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), Introduction, xviii.
 60. Ibid.
 61. Ibid.
 62. Forbes, *Columbus and Other Cannibals*, 34.
 63. Ibid.
 64. Ibid., 49.
 65. For a discussion of how travel writers have assumed the discursive registers and pretense to objective authority, see Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, (London: Routledge, 1992).
 66. Forbes, *Columbus*. 110.
 67. Foucault, Michel, and Paul Rabinow. 1984. *The Foucault reader*. New York: Pantheon Books. 44. In "What is Enlightenment?" Foucault explains that humanism "is a theme or rather a set of themes that have reappeared on several occasions over time in European societies; these themes always tied to value judgments have obviously varied greatly in their content as well as in the values they have preserved. Furthermore they have served as a critical principle of differentiation." There are and have been many humanisms and the discourses generated from humanistic discourses, and according to Foucault, they have "always been obliged to lean on certain conceptions of man borrowed from religion science or politics." Humanistic themes in discourse, then, can also smuggle in epistemological, ontological, and axiological orientations that are compatible with *wétikoism*, and reproduce *wétikoism*.
 68. If a *wétiko* person or system desires to dominate a particular people group, Forbes explains that they will appeal to the weakest members of the group by offering a limited amount of power. That power can take various forms, and correlate in some ways with Pierre Bourdieu's notion of symbolic capital (e.g. badge, uniform, lab coats, clerical garb, etc.) See Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1984). *Wétiko* power can also be a means to change people's behavior and lure them into a dependency situation (i.e. alcohol,

drugs, factory work, prostitution, pornography); it can be the means to impose martial force or threat upon the bodies of people (firearms, surveillance technology, detention facilities, mercenary forces – and the promise of turning a blind-eye to acts of aggression against the subjugated group, or even rewarding murder, torture, and rape). Forbes, Jack D. *Columbus*. 63-65.

69. Forbes, *Columbus*, 65.
70. “Lateral violence” is peer-on-peer violence, between people who are both members of a colonized or similarly subjugated group. It is considered displaced violence, in which the members of the subjugated group attack each other rather than the system that oppresses them both.
71. Friere, Paolo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971), 27-28. Quoted in Forbes, *Columbus*, 36.
72. Forbes, *Columbus*, 37.
73. *Ibid.*, 36.
74. *Ibid.*, 83.
75. *Ibid.*
76. *Ibid.*, 46.
77. *Ibid.*, 24.
78. Charlotte Coté, *Spirits of our Whaling Ancestors: Revitalizing Makah and Nuu-chah-nulth Traditions*. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010), 109.
79. Further details of the ritual are not mine to share. It is a community event that I have attended as a guest, and is not meant for performance or entertainment.
80. Billy Frank Jr., quoted in Charles F. Wilkinson, *Messages from Frank's Landing: A Story of Salmon, Treaties, and the Indian Way*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), 99.
81. Forbes, *Columbus*, 13.
82. I acknowledge that an argument against this assertion arises from some Indigenous people who consider themselves animists as well as vegetarians or vegans. A brief, though insufficient answer from me would be that such a philosophical orientation is inherently hierarchical, and therefore, represents an animism that might acknowledge “spirit” in all things, but not sentience or consciousness (otherwise, killing and eating plants would also be disrespectful). This is an important argument that I will address in a later work, but I cannot do so fully in this dissertation. For more on the arguments from Indigenous vegetarians, see: Craig Womack, “There Is No Respectful Way to Kill an Animal,” *Studies in American Indian Literatures*, 25 no. 4, (2013), 11-27.
83. For more on these concepts, see La Donna Harris, and Jacqueline Wasilewski, “Indigeneity, an Alternative Worldview: Four R's (Relationship, Responsibility, Reciprocity, Redistribution) Vs. Two P's (Power and Profit). Sharing the Journey Towards Conscious Evolution,” *Systems Research and Behavioral Science*, 21 no. 5, (2004), 489-503.
84. An exception seems to be growing in the field of postcolonial ecocriticism, although the hierarchical concept of “stewardship” and its foundation still threads its way through these theories. For more, see: Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin, *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment*, (London: Routledge, 2010).

85. James Maffie, *Aztec Philosophy: Understanding a World in Motion*, (2014), 1. <<http://site.ebrary.com/id/10850175>>.
86. Robert Berkhofer, *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present*, (New York: Knopf, 1978), 28.
87. *Ibid.*, 25-26.
88. *Ibid.*, 28.
89. Jace Weaver, *That the People Might Live: Native American Literatures and Native American Community*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 104.
90. Berkhofer, *White Man's Indian*, 25.
91. *Ibid.*, 28.
92. Viola F. Cordova and Kathleen D. Moore, *How It Is: The Native American Philosophy of V.F. Cordova*, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2007), 3.
93. King, "The (mis)uses of Cannibalism," 106-123.
94. *Ibid.*, 117.
95. Although King does not acknowledge that Forbes is from an Algonquian people (making the accusation of appropriation of the idea of *wétiko* psychosis moot), King's criticism of Forbes and Deborah Root's *Cannibal Culture* is complex, and I agree with King on some, but not all of his points. An important observation of King's is that in Forbes, there is an element of rigid fundamentalism that creates a series of structural oppositions, (good/evil, disease/health), and rigid, inflexible categories, such that they do not seem compatible or even tenable within "traditional" Algonquian/Anishinaabe/Cree worldviews.
96. Berglund, *Cannibal Fictions*, 132.
97. King, "The (mis)uses of Cannibalism," 121.
98. Forbes, *Columbus*, 24.
99. I realize that I run the risk of playing fast and loose with philosophical terminology since I am not a philosopher in terms of academic discipline. I have nonetheless tried to be as accurate as possible given the ideas I am attempting to convey. "Worldview," "matrix," "conceptual framework," "perspective of reality," "world version," and the combination of "epistemology, ontology, axiology," are terms that Indigenous philosophers and scholars from other disciplines have chosen to represent such concepts, and I am following their lead. See V.F. Cordova's *How It Is*, the authors in Anne Waters' edited volume, *American Indian Thought: Philosophical Essays*, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2004), Vine Deloria Jr. in *God Is Red*, (New York: Dell Pub. Co., 1975), and Thomas M. Norton-Smith, *The Dance of Person and Place: One Interpretation of American Indian Philosophy*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010), and Shawn Wilson, *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*, (Black Point, N.S.: Fernwood Pub, 2008).
100. Cordova, *How It Is*, 1.
101. Vine Deloria, *The Metaphysics of Modern Existence*, (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979), vii.

102. I use the term “ingredients” as a conscious metaphor, rather than the more static “components,” or “parts.” This helps, I hope, show the interrelationality of ideas, much like the chemical bonding/binding that happens when cooking.
103. Cordova, *How It Is*, 100.
104. Maffie notes that “Cordova, Jace Weaver, Gregory Cajete, George Tinker, Willie Ermine, Deloria, and other Native scholars liken us to other indigenous North American conceptions of a single, primordial, processive all-encompassing and ever-flowing creative life force including *natoji* (Blackfoot), *wakan tanka* (Sioux), *yowa* (Cherokee), *orenda* (Iroquois), and *nil’ch’i* (Navajo). According to Leroy Meyer and Tony Ramirez, Sioux metaphysics conceives all objects as “distinct manifestations” of *wakan tanka*. Once again, we see that native North American philosophies reject as false the distinctions between sacred and profane, spirit and matter, mind and body, and natural and supernatural. My purpose in introducing these views is to suggest that the Aztec notion of *teotl* is well within the realm of indigenous North American metaphysical thinking about the ultimate nature of reality. I do *not* claim exact correspondence, cross-cultural influence, or the existence of a shared pan-Indian way of thinking. I am *not* arguing that my interpretation of Aztec metaphysics is correct on the grounds that North American philosophies believed something similar. Rather, showing resonance between indigenous Mesoamerican (Aztec and others) and indigenous North American metaphysics enables us to see that this kind of metaphysical picture is *not* inconceivable or even uncommon” 36.
105. Maffie, *Aztec Philosophy*, 23.
106. *Ibid.*, 36.
107. Cordova, *How It Is*, 100.
108. See: Gregory F. Hayden, F. Gregory, “Evolution of Time Constructs and Their Impact on Socioeconomic Planning,” *Journal of Economic Issues (Association for Evolutionary Economics)*, 21, no. 3 (1987), 1280-1286.
109. See: Benjamin Lee Whorf and John B. Carroll, *Language, Thought, and Reality: Selected Writings*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Technology Press of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1956). And, see Stephen O. Murray and Peter C. Rollins, “Benjamin Lee Whorf: Lost Generation Theories of Mind, Language and Religion,” *Historiographia Linguistica*, 9, no. 1-2, (1982), 156-161.
110. Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, (London: Zed Books, 1999), 55.
111. Cordova, *How It Is*, 114.
112. Generalizations about the meaning of “Creator” in prayerful address is troubled, because syncretic religious beliefs and practices have emerged amongst tribal peoples due to missionization and other institutions (like Alcoholics Anonymous, for example). While many people have attempted to “Indigenize” Christian beliefs with Native American terminology and symbols, or have Christianized tribal beliefs and practices with a switch to monotheism and other Christian beliefs, I am in the position of having to differentiate between philosophical worldviews or cosmologies that are *consistent with tribal origin narratives*, from the Westernized/Christianized beliefs, discourses, and practices that are also a reality in the social world of Indigenous Americans. I usually make an effort to jettison the term “traditional” because it reinscribes the notion that “authentic Indians” and “authentic Indianness,” correlates with *purity* (of lifestyle, genetics, and indeed, worldview), and is thus, fictional. I am therefore left without a single term to describe the beliefs and practices that are indeed consistent with tribal origin stories—those that are monist and not monotheistic.
113. Maffie, *Aztec Philosophy*, 22.

114. Vine Deloria, *Evolution, Creationism, and Other Modern Myths: a Critical Inquiry*, (Golden, Colo: Fulcrum, 2002), 147.
115. Cordova, *How It Is*, 103.
116. Ibid.
117. Ibid., 104.
118. Ibid., 107.
119. Ibid., 105.
120. Deloria, *God Is Red*, 62.
121. Gregory Cajete, "Philosophy of Native Science," Anne Waters, ed., *American Indian Thought: Philosophical Essays*, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2004), 54.
122. See: Luther Standing Bear, *Land of the Spotted Eagle*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 200, and Cordova, *How It Is*, 115.
123. Cordova, *How It Is*, 115.
124. Douglas D. Medin and Megan Bang, *Who's Asking?: Native science, Western science, and Science Education*, (Cambridge, Massachussetts: The MIT Press, 2014). Data on this distinction was generated by a series of studies conducted by Medin and Bang. For a description of their research design and findings, see especially Chapter 8.
125. Ibid., 133.
126. See, for example, Edward B. Tylor, *Anthropology: An Introduction to the Study of Man and Civilization*, (New York: D. Appleton and Co, 1898).
127. Vine Deloria, Barbara Deloria, Kristen Foehner, and Samuel Scinta, *Spirit & reason: the Vine Deloria, Jr. Reader*, (Golden, Colo: Fulcrum Pub. 1999), 50.
128. Bruce Subiyay Miler, "Seeds of Our Ancestors," Willie Smyth and Esmé Ryan, eds., *Spirit of the First People: Native American Music Traditions of Washington State*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 34-35.
129. Miller, 34.
130. Miller, 34-35.
131. Miller, 35.
132. Norton-Smith, *Dance of Person and Place*, 1.
133. Or if there are taxonomical hierarchies, they are unusual.
134. Norton-Smith, *Dance of Person and Place*, 11.
135. Jeanette Timentwa, Interview and Transcription by Rebecca Chamberlain, "Native Songs and Seasonal Food-Gathering Traditions," Willie Smyth and Esmé Ryan, eds., *Spirit of the First People*, 50-61.

136. There are numerous philosophical writings about Indigenous concepts of motion and inter-relationship. For a sampling, see: Anne Waters, *American Indian Thought: Philosophical Essays*, V.F. Cordova and Kathleen Dean Moore, *How It Is*, Maria Sháa Tláa Williams, *The Alaska Native Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10395808>, Vine Deloria et. al., *pirit & Reason*, and James Maffie, *Aztec Philosophy*. Maffie claims that “[Vine] Deloria, [Jace] Weaver, [V.F.] Cordova, [Brian Yazzie] Burkhart, and other native North American thinkers interpret many indigenous North American philosophies as upholding a like-minded constitutional monism according to which reality consists of a single, uniform, homogenous energy or power – usen, natoji, wakan tanka, yowa, orenda, or nil’ch’i – that is neutral between spirit and matter, mind and body, and so on” (49). Cordova says that the “concept of this mysterious ‘force’ also shares the notion of its being all pervasive, that is, it is everywhere and in all things; perhaps is all things,” and is a concept that may be “pan-Indian,” since it “may be widespread throughout North America”(107).
137. Paula Gunn Allen, “She Is Us: Thought Woman and the Sustainability of Worship,” Melissa K. Nelson, ed., *Original Instructions: Indigenous Teachings for a Sustainable Future*, (Rochester, Vt: Bear & Company, 2008), 141.
138. Dian Million, “Intense Dreaming: Theories, Narratives, and Our Search for Home,” *The American Indian Quarterly*, 35, no. 3, (2011), 315.
139. Ibid., 321.
140. John Dawson, “Who’s in a Name?” *EPM Features*. Eastern Penn Mushroomers. (Lancaster, PA., ND., June 26, 2009), <http://www.epennmushroomers.org/Who%27s%20in%20a%20name%201.htm>
141. There are dozens of instances in which the term “social amoeba” is used by scientists to describe slime molds. For just one of many examples, see: Natasha Mehdiabadi, et. al., “Phylogeny, Reproductive Isolation and Kin Recognition in the Social Amoeba *Dictyostelium Purpureum*,” *Evolution*. 63 no. 2, (2009). 542-548.
142. JE Strassmann, Y Zhu, and DC Queller, “Altruism and Social Cheating in the Social Amoeba *Dictyostelium Discoideum*,” *Nature*, 408 no. 6815, (2000), 965.
143. Ibid.
144. Tricia Edgar, “The Blob Attacks: Goopy Slime Mold is an Example of Leaderless Motion,” *Decoded Science*, (October 29, 2011), <http://www.decodedscience.com/the-blob-attacks-goopy-slime-mold-is-an-example-of-leaderless-motion/4652>
145. Jason Bulmahn, *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Bestiary 2*, (Bellevue, Wash: Paizo Publishing, 2011), 249.
146. Ibid.
147. C.R. Reid et. al., “Slime Mold Uses an Externalized Spatial ‘memory’ to Navigate in Complex Environments,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 109 no. 43 (2012), 17490-4.
148. Heather Barnett, “What Humans Can Learn from Semi-intelligent Slime,” *TED Conferences LLC*, (TED.com.: Berlin. Filmed June, 2014). http://www.ted.com/talks/heather_barnett_what_humans_can_learn_from_semi_intelligent_slime_1?language=en
149. Ibid.

150. John Tyler Bonner, *The Social Amoebae: The Biology of Cellular Slime Molds*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009). Bonner says the number of cellular slime molds that have been identified is at about 100, although, designation of species-status for microorganisms is “a muddy matter,” 19.
151. Bonner, *Social Amoebae*, 44-45.
152. Cohen, *Monster Theory*, 6.
153. Barnett, “What Humans Can Learn from Semi-intelligent Slime.”
154. One favored species, *Physarum polycephalum*, is an acellular slime mold that has now become a popular organism for those interested in interdisciplinary research, including biological computing. The movement and morphology of these organisms does not prevent human beings from attempting to commodify them; however, my point is that the organisms are in some ways resistant to cooptation. For more on biological computing with slime molds, see Andrew Adamatzky, *Physarum machines: computers from slime mould*, (Singapore: World Scientific, 2010).
155. Slime molds are currently thought to primarily reproduce asexually through spore release or division, but they can also reproduce sexually, where two amoebas might fuse to become a zygote. Bonner explains that “This is accompanied by a normal aggregation, and the amoebae will cluster around the zygote. Ultimately the cell mass becomes spherical and surrounded by a cell wall. The zygote then proceeds to cannibalize the other amoebae while it undergoes meiosis. Unfortunately it has proved very difficult to germinate the macrocysts in the laboratory, making genetic crossing experiments impossible. It is not known how common the sexual cycle is in nature, but one might guess that it is relatively rare, especially compared to the asexual cycle” (14). We can imagine ways in which human social groups (families, tribes, nations) have also reproduced in a variety of ways—whether bands split and go their separate ways, or individuals from one tribe marry into another, or when two tribes combine.
156. I’m not sure if this example is humorous, sad, or both, but slime molds have gained the attention of conspiracy theorists as well, which may illustrate the organisms’ tendencies to cause anxiety, especially from a hierarchical perspective of the world in which human affairs have the highest, or central concern. One such conspiracy theorist has a YouTube channel with 9,823 subscribers, and has characterized *Physarum polycephalum* as something that “has likely been merged with human beings, and being delivered by various methods, one of which is Chemtrails.” Salient, here, is the fear of blended boundaries between individual species, and the fear of external control, but that is also part of the irony. See: “Physarum Polycephalum Complete Control of Human beings,” (YouTube video, 20:53, July 3, 2013), Username, “traitorsbeware.”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zD_ceddHudY
157. Gerald R. Vizenor, *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance*. (Lincoln, Neb: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 9.
158. See: John Crowe Ransom, *The New Criticism*, (Norfolk, Conn: New Directions, 1941); Eliot, T. S. “Tradition and the Individual Talent,” *The Sacred Wood; Essays on Poetry and Criticism*, (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1920); Roland Barthes and Stephen Heath, *Image, Music, Text*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977).
159. Valentine Cunningham, *Reading After Theory*. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 22.
160. Medin and Bang, *Who’s Asking?*, 123-136. See chapter 8 for a study that demonstrates a difference between ways that non-Natives categorize specific fish and other animals and Native Americans categorize them.
161. Thanks to Shaawano Chad Uran for teaching me that relationships are a series of offerings and exchanges.

162. Fredrik Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference*, (Prospect Heights, Ill: Waveland Press, 1998), 6.
163. Whyte, Kyle Powys. "Indigenous Climate Justice and Settler States," Closing Keynote: Native Organization of Indigenous Scholars, 14th Annual NOIS Research Symposium. (University of Washington, Seattle WA. May 8, 2015).
164. Theodore Simonson, Kate Phillips, Jack H. Harris, Irvin S. Yeaworth, Steve McQueen, Aneta Corsaut, Earl Rowe, Olin Howland, Alden Chase, John Benson, Robert Fields, Thomas Spalding, Alfred Hillman, Ralph Carmichael, and Irvine H. Millgate, *The Blob*. (Irvington, NY: Criterion Collection, 2000).
165. When I write about the entity depicted in the film, *The Blob*, I use capitalization to signal that I'm referring to this particular antagonist and not a different blob.
166. John Parker, *Daughter of horror* (1955). Also released under the title, *Dementia*, the film *Daughter of Horror* is described in one library catalog record as a descent into "psycho-sexual madness." Entirely without dialogue, the film depicts a young woman who stabs and kills or dismembers various men in her life as retribution for the abuse that they inflict upon her, whether that abuse is physical, sexual, or emotional. Essentially, her violent acts respond to objectification, erasure, and control, and yet, neither she nor the audience are certain whether the violent scenarios are dreams, or if they are "real."
167. Brandon Condon, "Beware! The Slime Mold!" *Cornell Mushroom Blog*. (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, 2007). <http://blog.mycology.cornell.edu/2007/10/31/beware-the-slime-mold/>
168. Bruce Kawin, Untitled essay, DVD insert, *The Blob*, (Irvington, NY: Criterion Collection, 2000).
169. See: Hanna Fenichel Pitken, *The Attack of the Blob: Hannah Arendt's Concept of the Social*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).
170. Gerald Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, vii. In the 1950s, the popular figure of the "Indian" was by then a firmly established, essentialized and mythologized category, not least of all because of the proliferation of Western dime-novels and thousands of Western films produced in Hollywood (the 1950s audience would have been entirely steeped in this mythology). I use the lower-cased and italicized "indian" in this particular sentence as Gerald Vizenor does at times, in order to call attention to the fictional nature of what is signified by the term "Indian" in the American imagination.
171. Cohen, *Monster Theory*, 12.
172. Bonner, *Social Amoebae*, 2. According to Bonner, *Dictyostelium discoideum* is the most popular species of slime molds used in laboratories for experimentation. It's thus considered the "model" species.
173. It is worth noting that one of the acts of genocide as defined by the United Nations in 1948, is "preventing births within a group."
174. C. Nizak, R.J. Fitzhenry, R.H. Kessin, "Exploitation of Other Social Amoebae by *Dictyostelium caveatum*," *PLoS ONE* (2007). 2(2): e212. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0000212
175. My Grandfather was Sugpiaq (Alutiiq) and Dena'ina Athabascan, and my Grandmother was A'aninin (a.k.a. Gros Ventre). My relatives are enrolled in four different village tribes in the Kodiak / Cook Inlet regions of Alaska (Afognak, Seldovia, Kenaitze and Ninilchik), and in Montana at Fort Belknap. I'm enrolled in the Ninilchik Village Tribe, Ninilchik, Alaska.

176. Gerald Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*. ix.
177. Kyle Powys Whyte argues that the fixity of treaties and other rigid structures keeps tribal nations from being able to adapt to climate change as effectively as the colonizer. Treaties don't constrain *everything*, however. For a description of how to envision more flexible ways to exercise sovereignty, see: Shaawano Chad Uran, "The Negative Space of Sovereignty," *shaawano.com*. March 21, 2014. <http://shaawano.com/index.php/politics/80-sovereignspace>
178. Shaawano Chad Uran, "Professor Breaks Down Sovereignty and Explains Its Significance," *Indian Country Today Media Network*, (January 3, 2014). <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2014/01/03/professor-breaks-down-sovereignty-and-explains-its-significance-152958>
179. Rosina Lippi-Green, *English with an Accent Language, Ideology and Discrimination in the United States*. (Hoboken: Taylor & Francis, 2011), 104. <http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=958316>.
180. Ibid.
181. Neal Thompson, "The Carver's Life," *Seattlemet.com*. (Sage City Media, Inc., May 2011). <http://www.seattlemet.com/issues/archives/articles/john-williams-the-carvers-life-may-2011/1/>.
182. Casey McNerthney, "Police brass: Shooting was unjustified and 'egregious'," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, (Last modified February 16 2011), <http://www.seattlepi.com/local/article/Police-brass-Shooting-was-unjustified-and-1016449.php>
183. Dominic Holden, "Q13 Makes Case that John T. Williams Was, in Fact, A Threat to Police Officers," *The Stranger Slog*, (Index Newspapers, LLC., November 30, 2010). <http://slog.thestranger.com/slog/archives/2010/11/30/q13-makes-case-that-john-t-williams-was-in-fact-a-threat-to-police-officers>. The video footage mentioned here is no longer hosted on the internet, although a description and a critique of the contents can be found on the cited news source.
184. Ibid.
185. Dana Rebik, "Dash Cam Video Depicts Seattle Woodcarver Threatening Officers," *The Baltimore Sun*, (November 29, 2010). I originally accessed this article on November 2, 2013 but a recent search of the online news source no longer has a record of this article, which is critiqued in Holden, "Q13 Makes Case."
186. Coll-Peter Thrush, *Native Seattle: Histories from the Crossing-Over Place*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007). 67. Thrush writes here that "Late into the twentieth century, Native people in the city [of Seattle] would signify places in need of renewal, particularly in neighborhoods such as the historic Pioneer Square district—the place where the term 'skid road' was coined—that had become 'Indian Territory' and the core of an Indigenous community."
187. Leela Yellesetty and Chris Mobely, "Four Seconds to His Death," *SocialistWorker.org*, International Socialist Organization, (January 27, 2011). <http://socialistworker.org/2011/01/27/four-seconds-to-his-death>
188. Jace Weaver, *That the People Might Live: Native American Literatures and Native American Community*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). xiii.
189. Ibid.
190. Thompson, "The Carver's Life."

191. To disturb rigid stereotyped notions of what is “traditional” and “authentic” reminds dominating and other people (including Indigenous peoples ourselves), that Natives are a political people, rather than solely a minoritized group in a multicultural *mélange*, and that Native presence is more than just existence. Rather, since colonization began, our historical presence has, and will continue to be, political: Indigenous sovereignty is recognized in treaties, international law, and the U.S. Constitution, and is asserted outside the boundaries of these codified instruments as well. Further, disturbing stereotypes exposes measures of authenticity as specious when such measures depend upon the historicization of Native peoples as static and historically “pure” – including “purity” of “race,” “purity” of culture, and “purity” of “tradition,” whereas Indigenous traditions, like all traditions, maintain cultural continuity in a dynamic, responsive network, or web of relationships.
192. Gerald R. Vizenor, *Manifest Manners: Postindian Warriors of Survivance*, (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1994), 5. My understanding of Gerald Vizenor’s term *postindian* comes from his assertion that the “Indian” is a figure that endures as a place-holder in a pathological American consciousness; that is, the “Indian” is *something*, a universalized, stereotyped figment of the imagination—a resource to mine or to be mined and refined; what is refined, or left over from the taking process, is false, but it is believed to be the *real*. Postindians, or postindian warriors, “counter the surveillance and literature of dominance with their own simulations of survivances.”
193. Dean Rader, *Engaged Resistance: American Indian Art, Literature, and Film from Alcatraz to the NMAI*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011), 5, 2.
194. Rader, *Engaged Resistance*. 2-5. Jane P. Tompkins, *Sensational Designs: the Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790-1860*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986). Paula Gunn Allen, *Spider Woman’s Granddaughters: Traditional Tales and Contemporary Writing by Native American Women*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989). Dale A Turner, “Oral Traditions and the Politics of (Mis)Recognition,” Editor, Anne Waters, *American Indian Thought: Philosophical Essays*. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2004). Joy Harjo and Gloria Bird, *Reinventing the Enemy’s Language: Contemporary Native Women’s Writing of North America*. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1997). Rader also resists a label-friendly critical framework; his approach is synthetic, using “a wide-ranging assortment of critical and theoretical methodologies” since “[neither] Native writers nor Native tribes have ever been particularly wed to monolithic ways of looking at the world.” Perhaps this is also because Rader is deeply influenced by Jane Tompkins, her blend of methodologies, and what she calls a text’s “cultural work,” or “the actual influence a text has within a context” (5). I, too, am indebted to her concept, and though I do not draw on her text explicitly, her work paves the way for me to focus on reactive and active socio-political effects of activist texts as a scholarly endeavor. Paula Gunn Allen’s “word warrior” concept—the idea of the weaponization of words in Indigenous aesthetic activism—informs Rader’s analysis and mine, too, although I rely more heavily on Dale Turner’s development of the “word warrior” concept in his essay, “Oral Traditions and the Politics of (Mis)Recognition” (2004). Turner describes a “word warrior” as a Native person who has learned the language (e.g. ideology, epistemologies, theories, policies, practices) of the colonizer in order to successfully engage in discursive battles, whether the theatre of such conflicts are in courts of law or academia. Similarly, Rader finds inspiration in the concepts articulated by the title and content of Joy Harjo’s and Gloria Bird’s *Reinventing the Enemy’s Language*, and Gerald Vizenor’s concepts of survivance and postindianism.
195. Rader, *Engaged Resistance*, 4.
196. LeAnne Howe, “Blind Bread and the Business of Theory Making, by Embarrassed Grief,” Edited by Janice Acoose, Craig S. Womack, Daniel Heath Justice, and Christopher B. Teuton, *Reasoning Together: the Native Critics Collective*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), 330. Howe’s concept of tribalography is an engagement in epistemological work – that is, the people, land, multiple characters and all their manifestations in the past, present and future have an epistemological significance that is dependent upon concepts of time that are not linear, and what is known as animism, including relationships characterized by reciprocal responsibilities with all, in order to work toward balance (not stasis, and not teleological “progress.”)

197. Craig S. Womack, *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 20, 62.
198. Rader, *Engaged Resistance*, 2.
199. See: Shari Huhndorf, *Mapping the Americas: The Transnational Politics of Contemporary Native Culture*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 2. Huhndorf uses the more orthodox term, “transnationalism” to refer to this kind of “[defiance of] colonial erasure of Native peoples exemplified by absences on the map [while it simultaneously] traces a continuous indigenous presence on the land that challenges U.S. possession” (2). Her discussion of “transnationalism . . . refers to alliances among tribes and the social structures and practices that transcend their boundaries, as well as processes on a global scale such as colonialism and capitalism. [Huhndorf concentrates] on the connections that tie indigenous communities together rather than on the boundaries that separate them . . .” (2).
200. Chris Eyre, Larry Estes, Scott Rosenfelt, BC. Smith, Adam Beach, Evan Adams, Irene Bedard, Sherman Alexie et al. *Smoke signals*. (Burbank, CA: Miramax Home Entertainment, 2000).
201. Rader, *Engaged Resistance*, 2.
202. Michael Jones, “Michael Jones Talks with Chris Eyre and Sherman Alexie about Bringing the Reservation Life of *Smoke Signals* to the screens of America,” *Alien Nation. Filmmaker: The Magazine of Independent Film*. (New York: Filmmaker Magazine. Winter 1998).
<http://www.filmmakermagazine.com/archives/issues/winter1998/aliennation.php#.VG8AHGfDWS0>.
203. Evelyn J. Peters and David Newhouse, *Not Strangers in These Parts: Urban Aboriginal Peoples*. (Ottawa: Policy Research Initiative, 2003), 16.
204. Tina Norris, Paula L. Vines, and Elizabeth M. Hoeffel, *The American Indian and Alaska Native Population: 2010*. (Washington, D.C: U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, U.S. Census Bureau, 2012), 12-13.
205. Lynda Mapes, “Native American leaders call for probe into shooting death,” *The Seattle Times (WA)*. (Fourth, News: A1. NewsBank., September 4, 2010, updated May 4, 2012).
http://seattletimes.com/html/localnews/2012804180_williams04m.html
206. Thrush, *Native Seattle*, 113-117.
207. *Ibid.*, 4.
208. “Pole narratives” are the stories and histories represented on what are commonly called “totem poles.” “Totem” is a word that comes from the Anishinaabemowin word, “doodem,” which means “clan.” The stories on these poles do not exclusively tell clan stories.
209. Thrush, *Native Seattle*. 117, 132. Thompson, “The Carver’s Life.”
210. Thrush, *Native Seattle*, 114.
211. Felix Cohen and Rennard Strickland, *Felix S. Cohen's Handbook of Federal Indian Law*. (Charlottesville, Va: Michie, 1982), 122.
212. Jodi A. Byrd, *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism*, (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), xxiii.

213. Sherman Alexie, "Every Teen's Struggle: Speaking to a Universal Need: the Truth Is, Despite My Insecurities, Those Rich Kids Did Care About My Story. (soapbox)," *Publishers Weekly*, 255.7 (2008), 160.
214. The gaze I'm describing racializes, and subtracts the political particularity of Indigenous nation citizenship from the identity of Native Americans. Such acts coopt Native Americans into a homogenous "people of color" group, which denies both treaty relationships and recognition of the rights of Indigenous peoples (as described, for example, in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples), and the inherent obligations of those relationships with other nations.
215. In addition to my critique in Chapter 2 of treaty-defined nationhood, an additional problem with asserting nationhood as opposed to what Vine Deloria Jr. and Clifford Lytle call "peoplehood," is that not all Indigenous Americans are members of federally recognized "nations," and further, the concept of "nation" reinforces federal hegemony, and consequently, the power of the *wétiko* institution to control and define (and consume) such populations. See Vine Deloria and Clifford M. Lytle, *The Nations Within: The Past and Future of American Indian Sovereignty*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), and for further discussion of the problems of "nationhood," see Shari Huhndorf, *Mapping the Americas*.
216. By "natural law," I refer to the Lockean notion that accords legitimacy of land ownership to individuals, who, by their labor, have "improved" property, and thus, justified their ownership of said property.
217. Carol M. Rose, "Possession as the Origin of Property," *Faculty Scholarship Series*. Paper 1830. (1985). http://digitalcommons.law.yale.edu/fss_papers/1830. Rose explains that in the U.S. property entitlement depends on the possessor's public and persistent declaration of their possession. The problem (according to Rose) is not so much that Indigenous peoples do not meet the Lockean demand that "improvements" be made to land in order to earn title. Instead, the problem is that the "text" that the possessor communicates ownership through (in this case, pole narratives, or other markers), must be in a form that the "interpretive community" (i.e. the settlers) can decode.
218. Sherman Alexie, *Ten Little Indians: Stories*, (New York: Grove Press, 2003). It is not inconceivable that Alexie's characters could have in part been inspired by an encounter with Williams and his brothers on the streets of Seattle, or at least, an encounter with their friends and acquaintances. Indeed, Alexie's character, Jackson Jackson comments on the reality: "Homeless Indians are everywhere in Seattle. We're common and boring, and you walk right on by us, with maybe a look of anger or disgust or even sadness at the terrible fate of the noble savage. But we have dreams and families" (170).
219. Thompson, "A Carver's Life."
220. Ibid. and Thrush, *Native Seattle*, 116.
221. Stanley Eugene Fish, *Is There A Text in This Class?: The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1980), 147–174.
222. Alexie, *Ten little Indians*, 168.
223. See Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), and United States, Bureau of Indian Affairs, *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1865*, (Washington D.C.: Government Publications Office, 1865). Foucault describes the fetishization of the will to knowledge, and the BIA Report records the order and funding for collecting All Things Indian. Besides "salvage ethnography" or "salvage anthropology," I know of no other figuration for the institutionalized practice of inciting people to explain their culture, experience, and views, and all manner of belongings—even bodily remains—in addition to ethnographic and oral narratives. As for its incite to discourse, we can look back to the 1865 *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*,

which says: "Some years since, an application was made to Congress for an appropriation to be placed at the disposal of the Department of the Interior, to provide for such expenditures as might be necessary to obtain and preserve in the department such memorials of the Indians, whether portraits, implements of industry or of warfare, specimens of apparel, &c., as would be valuable for preservation. I beg leave to call your attention again to the subject. The Indian race, by what seems to be the law of existence is fast passing away, and in contact with the white race the tribes are rapidly losing their distinctive features, in language, habits customs &c. A modest appropriation, judiciously expended, would enable the office, through its agents, teachers, missionaries, and others interested in the various tribes of red men, to collect annually a large and incredibly valuable collection of the memorials referred to"(3-4).

224. Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, 15.

225. Alexie, *Ten Little Indians*, 168.

226. The term "usual and accustomed places" is a common term in U.S. American Indian treaty language used to indicate places outside of reservation boundaries where tribes hunt, fish, and gather. The term is usually used to indicate that the rights to continue to use these areas are both retained by specific tribes and that these rights are recognized by the U.S. government.

227. Alexie, *Ten Little Indians*, 171.

228. Ibid. 170.

229. Berkhofer, *White Man's Indian*, 25.

230. Alexie, *Ten Little Indians*, 144.

231. Ibid., 148.

232. Ibid., 170-171.

233. Thompson, "A Carver's Life."

234. Basil Johnston, "How Do We Learn Language?" Conference on Editorial Problems, Keren Dichter Rice, and Laura Jane Murray, eds. *Talking on the Page Editing Aboriginal Oral Texts: Papers Given at the Thirty-second Annual Conference on Editorial Problems, University of Toronto, 14-16 November 1996*. (Toronto, Ont: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 49.
<http://www.deslibris.ca/ID/417922>.

235. Alexie, *Ten Little Indians*, 186.

236. Berkhofer, *White Man's Indian*, 25-26.

237. Forbes, *Columbus*, 110.

238. Forbes, *Columbus*, 83.

239. Thomas Biolsi, "The Birth of the Reservation: Making the Modern Individual among the Lakota." *American Ethnologist*, 22 no. 1, (February 1995), 28. 31.

240. Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, 15.

241. Berkhofer, *White Man's Indian*, 25-26.

242. See: Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*. As I understand Vizenor's concept of "manifest manners," it refers to the stories of dominance over the "simulated" or invented "Indian;" the stories are simulations because they are *just stories*, not real. However, they are socially active stories, since they reproduce and justify the thoughts/beliefs that become the continual *manifested* or *enacted* dominance—even to the death of *real* tribal people. The "Indian" is invented as a place-holder-Other that Americans could (and do) use as a model of *something* they concomitantly want to destroy and *be*. My understanding is that Vizenor is describing American pathology; that is, in the colonialist consciousness, the "Indian" is an object or resource to mine or to be mined and refined; what is refined, or left over from the taking process, is false, but it is believed to be the *real*.
243. Alexie, *Ten Little Indians*, 173.
244. The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act does not ensure the repatriation of land, and does not mandate the repatriation of human remains or artifacts held by private institutions or individuals, even if the items were originally stolen property.
245. Alexie, *Ten Little Indians*, 176.
246. Timothy Harris, "Director Tim Harris Decries the Senselessness of a Police Officer Shooting a Homeless Man," Director's Corner. *Real Change*, 17:35, (Seattle, WA: Real Change, September 1, 2010). More than a dozen articles in *Real Change* have featured parts of John T. Williams' story, beginning with the cited Tim Harris' article.
247. Debora A. Miranda, "For John," *facebook.com* (September 6, 2010). Retrieved from: <https://www.facebook.com/notes/sara-marie-ortiz/for-john-by-deborah-miranda/10150243924355013>.
248. Thrush, *Native Seattle*, 3.
249. Ibid.
250. Robin K. Wright, "Searching for what Inspired the Seattle Seahawks' Logo," *Burke Museum*. Blogspot, University of Washington, (Seattle, Washington: University of Washington, 28 January 2014).
251. Alexie, *Ten Little Indians*, 176-177.
252. Miranda, Deborah, "For John."
253. Thompson, "A Carver's Life."
254. Charlotte Coté, *Spirits of our Whaling Ancestors: Revitalizing Makah and Nuu-chah-nulth Traditions*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010), 61.
255. Joey Veltkamp, "John T. Williams Totem Pole," *Best of: a Northwest-centric art blog*. (February 27, 2012. Seattle, WA.) <http://joeyveltchamp.blogspot.com/2012/02/john-t-williams-totem-pole.html#links>
256. Richard Walker, "From Tragedy Comes Beauty: Memorial Pole Erected for John T. Williams," *Indiancountrytodaymedianetworks.com*. (February 27, 2012). <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2012/02/27/from-tragedy-comes-beauty-memorial-pole-erected-for-john-t-williams-100144>.
257. Louis Owens, *Mixedblood Messages: Literature, Film, Family, Place*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 27.

258. My use of the terms “transculturation” and “autoethnography” are based on Mary Louise Pratt’s use of the term in her lecture, “Arts of the Contact Zone.” See: Mary Louise Pratt, “Arts of the Contact Zone,” *Profession*, (1991) 33-40.
259. Frank Grady, “Vampire Culture,” in Cohen, *Monster Theory*, 225-226; 231.
260. *Ibid.*, 228-229.
261. Martin C. Smith, *Nightwing*, (New York: Norton, 1977).
262. Drew Hayden Taylor, *The Night Wanderer: a Native Gothic Novel*, (Toronto: Annick Press, 2007)
263. Grace Dillon, “Windigo,” Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock, ed., *The Ashgate Encyclopedia of Literary and Cinematic Monsters*, (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2014).
<http://public.ebib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=1570478>. 590.
264. Cordova, *How It Is*, 1.
265. Smith, *Nightwing*, 72. The size of the bats described in *Nightwing* are too large to be any extant species, but they seem to match descriptions of the extinct Giant Vampire Bat, or *Desmodus draculae*, which exists in South America’s fossil record. Note: Hopiland falls within the boundaries of the Navajo reservation.
266. Smith, *Nightwing*, 17.
267. Smith, *Nightwing*, 223. Maski Canyon is another name for the Grand Canyon, but it’s unclear from the text if it is meant to be understood as a reference to the Grand Canyon, or to a fictional location.
268. Cohen, “Introduction,” *Monster Theory*. x.
269. A “supernatural summons” is how it’s framed on the book’s jacket.
270. Smith, *Nightwing*, 214-216. Here, Paine, the biologist, describes the traits of the vampire bat that the Aztec peoples revered – at least this is true in the world of this novel.
271. *Ibid.*, 22. Masaw is a much more complex spirit in the Hopi cosmology than he is portrayed in *Nightwing*. The oversimplification of spirits and spiritual beliefs during the representational process is problematic, and parallels the overgeneralization of Indigenous peoples.
272. *Ibid.*, 18.
273. “Lateral violence” is peer-on-peer violence, usually among people who are both members of a colonized or similarly subjugated group. It is considered displaced violence, in which the members of the subjugated group attack each other rather than the system that oppresses them both.
274. See: Maureen Trudell Schwarz, “Unraveling the anchoring cord,” *American Anthropologist*, 99 no. 1, (1997). And also, for a meticulous analysis of the relationship between the coal mining industry in the American Southwest and *Nightwing*, plus A.A. Carr’s (Navajo/Laguna Pueblo) *Eye Killers—another Native appropriation of the European vampire figure--see: John Beck, Dirty Wars Landscape, Power, and Waste in Western American Literature*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009). <http://public.ebib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=471727>. Beck says that both novels “employ the gothic as a means of plunging into the legacy of mineral extraction in the West. They conjure out of the disturbed surface of the earth monsters awakened or produced by the invasive extraction and burial of matter, and locate in the exposed depths of Western space a notion of contamination that functions critically as a model of unpredictable mutation opposed to the rational control of a knowable ‘nature,’” (184).

275. See: Peter G. Beidler, "The Indians in Martin Cruz Smith's *Nightwing*: a Review Article," *American Indian Quarterly*, 5 no. 2 (1979), 155-159, for a discussion of some of the missteps in *Nightwing*.
276. Ibid., 158. Beidler notes that periodicals like *Time*, *The New York Times Review of Books*, and *Publisher's Weekly* all promoted the authenticity of Smith's representations of Hopi and Navajo people and cultures, solely by virtue of Smith's Yaqui and Pueblo ancestry.
277. See my discussion of lateral cultural appropriation between tribal groups in Chapter 1, "We don't always do Philosophy, but when we *do*...". Further work should be undertaken to expand on the cultural appropriation that occurs between tribes, and between Indigenous individuals who have unequal knowledge of (or access to) tribal histories, practices, stories, or even places.
278. This is just one manifestation of oppositional identification, or counter images, which are described by Robert Berkhofer as a "persisting theme" of White Indian imagery. See: Berkhofer, *The White Man's Indian*, 27.
279. The core of the story of Jumlin is found in many online sources, with few variations. For an example, see "Jumlin," *The demoniacal.blogspot.com* (July 15, 2010).
<http://thedemoniacal.blogspot.com/2010/07/seed-of-jumlin.html>
280. Some of the Jumlin tales call the medicine man a "witch doctor," including J.D. Gordon's *Field of Screams*, (New Leaf Books, 2012).
281. Robert Rodi, Bruce Jones, *Tomb of Dracula*, (Marvel Comics, 4, no. 2., Dec 2004).
282. For more texts that feature the Jumlin character (and misattribute the provenance to "Native American" or "Sioux" people), see: Alythia Brown, *Dakota Captive*, (S.I.: Crescent Moon Press, 2013); Melody Clark, *Jumlin's Spawn* (Evernight Publishing, 2011), Kindle Edition; J.D. Gordon, *Field of Screams*, (New Leaf Books, 2012); Joules Taylor, *Vampires*, (London: Spruce, 2009).
283. I have not been able to find any evidence of the story's existence prior to the 2004 Marvel Comic.
284. Indigenous peoples of the hemisphere have been subject to centuries of religious suppression, demonization and intolerance, primarily from adherents to certain sects of Christianity, which has increased as it intersects with resource extraction industry and national security interests. This is not only a historical problem, but an ongoing struggle.
285. "Drew Hayden Taylor, The Night Wanderer," YouTube video, from Taylor's reading at the 2009 Words Aloud 6 Spoken Word Festival in Durham, Ontario, posted by "WordsAloud2," on February 23, 2010. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xpS01H81c04>
286. Stephenie Meyer, *Twilight*, (New York: Little, Brown and Co, 2005). I am only listing the first book in the series, and have not listed any of the films or critical works on the *Twilight* phenomenon.
287. Kristian Jensen, "Noble Werewolves or Native Shape-shifters?" Amy M. Clarke and Marijane Osborn, eds., *The Twilight Mystique: Critical Essays on the Novels and Films*, (Jefferson, N.C: McFarland & Co, 2010).
288. Taylor, *Night Wanderer*, 216. In the "Acknowledgements" section of the book, Taylor explains that the novel began as *A Contemporary Gothic Indian Vampire Story* in 1992, which was a play commissioned by the Young Peoples Theatre in Toronto, and first staged by Persophone Theatre in Saskatoon.
289. Taylor, Words Aloud 6 Spoken Word Festival, 2009.

290. “Drew Hayden Taylor on Aboriginal Humor,” *Allan Gregg In Conversation With*, (TVO Broadcasting, June 2006), video and podcast uploaded on March 28, 2012. <http://feeds.tvo.org/podcasts/video/AllanGreggInConversation>
291. Bruce H. Ziff and Pratima V. Rao, “Introduction to Cultural Appropriation: A Framework for Analysis,” *Borrowed Power: Essays on Cultural Appropriation*, (New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press, 1997). Ziff and Rao’s “Introduction” provide a clear description of how cultural appropriation harms the appropriated *thing itself* (practice, knowledge, object, pattern, etc.), how the act of appropriation harms the community that the appropriated thing comes from, and how the act of appropriation harms the appropriator—when the appropriation is a top-down action. Ziff and Rao also show how appropriation by a counter-culture movement can, in the end, reinforce the power of the dominant group, despite the intentions of the counter-culture (disaffected members of the dominant group), while cultural appropriation by a “sub-culture” can be an effective means toward resistance to domination. Ziff and Rao present a chart that helps the reader track the flow of power in these relationships.
292. Deana Dartt-Newton and Taisa Endo, “Truth versus Twilight,” *Adjusting the Focus on Twilight’s Misconceptions*, Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture, (University of Washington, Seattle, 2010). http://www.burkemuseum.org/truth_vs_twilight/index.php
293. Bryn Nelson, “The Quileute Reservation Copes with Tourists Brought by ‘Twilight’,” *High Country News*, Lander, Wyo: Camping News Weekly, July 2, 2012).
294. Dartt-Newton, Deana. Taisa Endo. *Truth versus Twilight*. (Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture, University of Washington, Seattle. 2010). http://www.burkemuseum.org/truth_vs_twilight/index.php
295. Anishinaabe, has various spellings, including Anishinabe, Anishinaube, and Anishinawbe. Anishinaabeg means “The People” in Anishinaabemowin, an Algonquian language, although there are other names and spellings, such as Ojibwe, Ojibway, Ojibwa, and Chippewa. Crees and Oji-Crees speak a dialect of the same language, and they are related peoples, as are Odawa, Potawatomi and more. The large Indigenous people group whose communities in Canada and in the U.S., are spread throughout the Great Lakes region and beyond. Drew Hayden Taylor was born and raised on the Curve Lake First Nation in Ontario, which is about two hours north of Toronto. In interviews, Taylor says that he is half Ojibwe and half Caucasian.
296. Taylor, *Night Wanderer*, 17.
297. Tiffany feels most ashamed of what she calls “Elder Verbiage,” (22), or the sentence structure of speech on the reserve, which one of her teachers attributes to “turning Ojibwa thoughts into English words.” Tiffany is also embarrassed about the shoes her grandmother forces her to wear (6), the way that Otter Lake was so isolated and isolating (12), and uncivilized (16) in Tony’s estimation. She also resents non-Natives fetishization of Native culture.
298. *Night Wanderer*, 12.
299. *Ibid.*, 138.
300. *Ibid.*, 157.
301. *Ibid.*, 179.
302. *Ibid.*
303. *Ibid.*, 175.

304. Ibid., 190.
305. Ibid., 170.
306. Ibid., 29.
307. When they are first dating, Tiffany illegally allows Tony to use her status card so that he can purchase goods without paying sales tax. Eventually, Tony convinces Tiffany to use her status card when he buys a gold bracelet. He tells Tiffany that the bracelet is for his mother, but he gives the bracelet to his other girlfriend, Julie. See: Taylor, *Night Wanderer*, 31-33, 106-107, and 136-139.
308. Taylor, *Night Wanderer*, v.
309. For two examples, see: Brian Grazer, et al., *The Missing* (Culver City, Calif: Columbia TriStar Home Entertainment, 2004), and Marcus Nispel, et al., *Pathfinder*, (Beverly Hills, Calif: 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2007).
310. I'm obliged to Chelsea Vowel's blog post, "Check the tage on that 'Indian' story," âpihtawikosisân, posted Feb 2012, entitled "Check the tag on that 'Indian' story."
<http://apihtawikosisan.com/2012/02/21/check-the-tag-on-that-indian-story/>. Vowel cites "Pavor Nocturnus," the name of a Tumblr blog, whose author published her/his research on the good wolf/bad wolf story's provenance. See <http://tsisqua.tumblr.com/post/17650658915/the-history-of-the-two-wolves-two-dogs-story>. At the time that Vowel published, Billy Graham was cited as the originator of the story in his book, *The Holy Spirit: Activating God's Power in Your Life*. (1978). However, the Tumblr page, "Pavor Nocturnus" has been updated since then, and now he/she says the earliest known appearance of the story is from *The Power of Positive Praying* by John Bisagno (1965). One website, however, credits George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) for the story. See: <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/73699-a-native-american-elder-once-described-his-own-inner-struggles>. Goodreads does not indicate when or where Shaw said such a thing, and I have not been able to find a verifiable source. All of the earliest known published versions of the story, and even the versions claimed to have been heard by anonymous participants in discussion threads such as the one found on Google Answers at <http://answers.google.com/answers/threadview?id=321024> are unverifiable, and are always attributed to a pastor, missionary, or Sunday School teacher, who indicate that a Native American convert to Christianity originally told the story. It appears that every teller seems to choose a different tribal affiliation for the elder in the story.
311. John Bisagno, *The Power of Positive Praying*, (Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan Pub. House, 1965), 56.
312. Billy Graham, *The Holy Spirit: Activating God's Power in Your Life*, (Waco, Tex: Word Books, 1978), 80.
313. Taylor, *Night Wanderer*, 180.
314. Ibid., 207-208.
315. Berkhofer, *White Man's Indian*, 25-28.
316. Taylor, *Night Wanderer*, 61.
317. Ibid.
318. Ibid., 2.
319. Ibid., 52.

320. Ibid., 61.
321. Ibid., 86-87.
322. Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, 15.
323. Cohen, *Monster Theory*, 6.
324. Taylor, Drew Hayden. *Night Wanderer*, 58.
325. Ibid., 170.
326. Ibid.
327. Ibid.
328. Ibid., 130-132.
329. Ibid., 77.
330. Ibid., 130.
331. Ibid.
332. Thomas Peacock and Marlene Wisuri, *The Good Path: Ojibwe Learning and Activity Book for Kids*, (Afton, Minn: Afton Historical Society Press, 2002). "Be Moderate in Our Thoughts, Words, and Deeds," is described and explained through Anishinaabe history and narrative in one of the book's chapters.
333. Taylor, *Night Wanderer*, 146.
334. Ibid., 161.
335. Ibid.
336. Ibid., 132.
337. Pierre does this for Granny Ruth. He also does it for Dale and Chucky, two teenage hoodlums who harass Pierre one night and he deposits the two, naked and stranded on the island in the middle of Otter Lake, with no provisions (Pierre has employed an old form of rehabilitation that was used by the community when he was young). Most of all, he helps Tiffany figure out the value of her life, the value of the lives of her ancestors, her community, her family, and their history.
338. Taylor, *Night Wanderer*, 206.
339. The narrative suggests that Pierre may be able to transform into either a bat-like creature or an owl, although the text never explicitly describes his morphology when he takes another form.
340. Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, (New York: Modern Library, 1897).
341. Taylor, *Night Wanderer*, 170.
342. Taylor, *Night Wanderer*, 208.
343. Ibid.

344. Ibid., 200.
345. Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, 13.
346. Ibid., 15.
347. Bruchac, Joseph, *The Dreams of Jesse Brown: A Novel*, (Austin, Tex: Cold Mountain Press, 1978).
348. Val Morehouse, "Review of *The Dreams of Jesse Brown*," *Booklist*, 75 no. 8 (December 15, 1978), 667.
349. Joseph Bruchac, Personal communication with the author, (January 23, 2014). Private message, Facebook.
350. While futurism, speculative fiction, sci-fi and slipstream produced by Native Americans have been the topic of scholarly study for some time—see, for example, the many critical writings on: Gerald Vizenor, *Bearheart: The Heirship Chronicles*, (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), and Leslie Marmon Silko, *Almanac of the Dead: A Novel*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991), some of the more recent critical works devoted at least in part to Indigenous and postcolonial speculative fiction, sci-fi and/or slipstream include Jeff Berglund's *Cannibal Fictions: American Explorations of Colonialism, Race, Gender and Sexuality* (2006)—particularly the chapter entitled "Turning Back the Cannibal: Indigenous Revisionism in the Late Twentieth Century," Grace L. Dillon, *Walking the Clouds: An Anthology of Indigenous Science Fiction*, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2012); Stephen Graham Jones and Theodore C. Van Alst, *The Faster Redder Road: The Best Unamerican Stories of Stephen Graham Jones*, (Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 2015).
351. The novel most often pointed to as holding this distinction is Gerald Vizenor's *Darkness in St. Louis: Bearheart*, also published in 1978 and recently anthologized by Grace Dillon in *Walking the Clouds: An Anthology of Indigenous Science Fiction*. Another notable yet often overlooked work under the umbrella term of speculative fiction is Martin Cruz Smith's (Senecu del Sur/ Yaqui) first novel, *The Indians Won*, (New York, Belmont Books, 1970), which imagines an alternate history of the United States. Chadwick Allen offers critical analysis of *The Indians Won* in his book, *Trans-Indigenous: Methodologies for Global Native Literary Studies*, (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2012).
352. Dillon, *Walking the Clouds*, 9.
353. Thanks to my former student, Martha Flores Pérez, M.A., for telling me that for Spanish-speaking people, the name "Jesus" often gets replaced with "Jesse" in the United States for socio-political reasons.
354. Bruchac, *Dreams of Jesse Brown*, 199-200.
355. Morehouse, "Review of *The Dreams of Jesse Brown*."
356. Christopher B. Teuton, "Theorizing American Indian Literature: Applying Oral Concepts to Written Traditions," Janice Acoose, Craig S. Womack, Daniel Heath Justice, and Christopher B. Teuton, eds., *Reasoning Together: the Native Critics Collective*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), 203-204.
357. Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, (New York, Pantheon Books. 1949). I did not find that *The Dreams of Jesse Brown* maps directly onto Joseph Campbell's *monomyth* cycle as detailed in *The Hero with A Thousand Faces*, although some of the stages are evident.
358. Dillon, *Walking the Clouds*, 9.

359. Ibid., 4.
360. Bruchac, *Dreams of Jesse Brown*, 86.
361. Ibid., 36.
362. Ibid., 13.
363. Ibid., 14.
364. Ibid., 15.
365. Ibid., 25.
366. Ibid., 142.
367. Ibid., 14.
368. Robert A. Brightman, *Ācađoḥk̄īwina and Ācimōwina: Traditional Narratives of the Rock Cree Indians*, (Hull, Que: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1989), 173.
369. “Radical reinscription” is the term given by Ziff and Rao in their book, *Borrowed Power*, to describe the political act that subjugated people engage in when they use a dominating group’s material culture, aesthetics, technologies, processes, or resources, and change or otherwise invert the power/politics embedded in the original deployment of the material culture, aesthetics, technologies, processes or resources.
370. Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, (London, Zed Books, 1999), 55.
371. Bruchac, *Dreams of Jesse Brown*, 85-86.
372. Dillon, *Walking the Clouds*, 9.
373. Ibid., 10, and Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 39.
374. Bruchac, *Dreams of Jesse Brown*, 85.
375. Ibid., 35.
376. Ibid., 86-87.
377. John G. Neihardt, Philip J. Deloria and Vine Deloria, *Black Elk Speaks: The Complete Edition*, (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 2014). *Project MUSE*. Web. 3 Oct. 2014.
<http://muse.jhu.edu/>. 144-149.
378. Ibid., 146.
379. John Gneisenau Neihardt and Raymond J. DeMallie, *The Sixth Grandfather: Black Elk's Teachings Given to John G. Neihardt*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), 87.
380. James Mooney, *The Ghost-Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890*, (Lincoln, Neb, University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 653. Internet resource, Originally published: Washington, D.C. : G.P.O., 1896 as pt. 2 of the fourteenth annual report of the Bureau of Ethnology, 1892-93.
<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=45465>

381. Ibid., 773.
382. Bruchac, *Dreams of Jesse Brown*, 70.
383. Ibid., 72.
384. Ibid., 29.
385. Neihardt, P. Deloria. and V. Deloria, *Black Elk Speaks*, 145.
386. Bruchac, *Dreams of Jesse Brown*, 31-32.
387. Mooney, *The Ghost-Dance Religion*, 661.
388. Forbes, *Columbus*, 49.
389. Ibid., 67.
390. Bruchac, *Dreams of Jesse Brown*, 61.
391. Ibid., 23.
392. Neihardt, P. Deloria. and V. Deloria, *Black Elk Speaks*, 14-16.
393. Bruchac, *Dreams of Jesse Brown*, 62.
394. Ibid., 63.
395. Ibid., 175-177.
396. See: Campbell, *Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 83-88.
397. Bruchac, *Dreams of Jesse Brown*, 188.
398. Ibid., 178.
399. Ibid., 75-80.
400. Ibid., 77.
401. For an extensive study of John Evans' involvement in the Sand Creek massacre (and his involvement in Northwestern University for its first 40 years), see: Ned Blackhawk, Loretta Fowler, Peter Hayes, Frederick Hoxie, Andrew Koppelman, Carl Smith, Elliott West, and Laurie Zoloth. "Report of the John Evans Study Committee," Northwestern University, posted by Alan K. Cabbage, (May 29, 2014). <<http://www.northwestern.edu/newscenter/stories/2014/05/john-evans-study-committee-issues-report.html#>>
402. Bruchac, *Dreams of Jesse Brown*, 73.
403. Ibid.
404. Ibid., 76.
405. Ibid.

406. Ibid., 79.
407. Ibid., 87.
408. Ibid., 80.
409. Forbes, *Columbus*, 52.
410. Bruchac, *Dreams of Jesse Brown*, 81.
411. Ibid., 195.
412. Forbes, *Columbus*, 24.
413. Ibid., 20.
414. Bruchac, *Dreams of Jesse Brown*, 101.
415. See: Michael A. Elliott, *Custerology: The Enduring Legacy of the Indian Wars and George Armstrong Custer*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).
416. Bruchac, *Dreams of Jesse Brown*, 61.
417. Ibid., 53.
418. Ibid., 95.
419. Forbes, *Columbus*, 51.
420. Bruchac, *Dreams of Jesse Brown*, 166.
421. Ibid., 167-168.
422. Ibid., 115.
423. Ibid., 170.
424. Ibid., 170.
425. Ibid., 170-171.
426. Here, I am referencing the kind of spectacular control of the sovereign described by Michel Foucault in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, (New York, Pantheon Books, 1977).
427. Forbes, *Columbus*, 52-53.
428. Ibid., 55.
429. Bruchac, *Dreams of Jesse Brown*, 142.
430. Ibid., 145.
431. Ibid.

432. There is one thing revealed: Jesse comes off of his fast, “blessed by a Grizzly Bear spirit,” which is likely linked to a single bear from a storyline I have not included in this chapter.
433. Bruchac, *Dreams of Jesse Brown*, 34.
434. Even though Wade’s *Heyókña* traits can help explain the uncomfortable association between beer and Peyote, it might be interesting to remember that Jesse can also be read as “Brown Jesus,” and this is likely the last sustenance Jesse takes before he leads the revolt. Further, Peyote is considered a sacrament in the Native American Church, so this association bears some resemblance to a very different sort of a Last Supper. At the very least, there are messianic analogues and undertones to these features. However, following these lines of inquiry will not help me trace the *wétiko* behaviors of the fearsome figures in the novel, so I will take up these details of the novel in a later paper.
435. Paul Chaat Smith and Robert Allen Warrior, *Like a Hurricane: the Indian Movement from Alcatraz to Wounded Knee*, (New York, New Press, 1996), 116.
436. P. Smith and R. Warrior, *Hurricane*, 118.
437. Bruchac, *Dreams of Jesse Brown*, 153.
438. *Ibid.*, 150.
439. Forbes, *Columbus*, 113.
440. *Ibid.*, 109.
441. See: Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, for discussions about the “will to knowledge.”
442. Bruchac, *Dreams of Jesse Brown*, 153-154.
443. Joseph K. Dixon and Rodman Wanamaker *The vanishing race, the last great Indian council: a record in picture and story of the last great Indian council, participated in by eminent Indian chiefs from nearly every Indian reservation in the United States, together with the story of their lives as told by themselves, their speeches and folklore tales, their solemn farewell, and the Indians' story of the Custer fight*, (Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday, Page & Co., 1913).
444. Bruchac, *Dreams of Jesse Brown*, 154.
445. *Ibid.*, 146-147.
446. *Ibid.*, 146.
447. *Ibid.*, 149.
448. *Ibid.*, 148.
449. *Ibid.*, 155-156.
450. *Ibid.*, 20-21.
451. *Ibid.*, 146.
452. *Ibid.*, 159.
453. *Ibid.*, 41.

454. Ibid.
455. Ibid.
456. Ibid., 118-119.
457. Ibid., 117.
458. Ibid., 119-120.
459. Ibid., 120-121.
460. Ibid., 85.
461. Ibid., 121.
462. Ibid., 122.
463. Ibid., 125.
464. Ibid., 142-143.
465. Ibid., 145.
466. This is what some would call “humanization,” but as explained in Chapter 1, “humanization” implies the hierarchical domination of other-than-human persons, like land, plants and animals.
467. Bruchac, *Dreams of Jesse Brown*, 149.
468. Neihardt and DeMallie, *Sixth Grandfather*, 408.
469. For a helpful character description of Iktome, see: Delphine Red Shirt and Lone Woman, *Turtle Lung Woman's Granddaughter*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002).
<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=71832>.
 See also: Richard Erdoes and Alfonso Ortiz, *American Indian Trickster Tales*, (New York: Viking, 1998); Zitkala-Sa, *Iktomi and the Ducks and other Sioux Stories*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004); Hartley Burr Alexander, *North American [mythology]*, (New York: Cooper Square Publishers. 1964); Marie L. McLaughlin, *Myths and legends of the Sioux*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990).
470. Red Shirt and Lone Woman, *Turtle Lung Woman's Granddaughter*, 96.
471. Bruchac, *Dreams of Jesse Brown*, 177.
472. Ibid., 29.
473. Ibid., 71.
474. Ibid., 32.
475. Ibid., 35.
476. Ibid.
477. Ibid., 36.

478. Ibid., 36-37.
479. Ibid., 161.
480. Ibid., 65.
481. Ibid., 84.
482. Neihardt, P. Deloria, and V. Deloria, *Black Elk Speaks*, 7.
483. Bruchac, *Dreams of Jesse Brown*, 140-141.
484. Johnston, *Manitous*, 237.
485. Wonderly, *Font of the Marvelous*, 94.
486. George Bird Grinnell, *Blackfoot Lodge Tales; the Story of a Prairie People*, (Lincoln, Neb, University of Nebraska Press, 1962).
487. Jarold Ramsey, *Coyote was going there: Indian Literature of the Oregon Country*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1977).
488. Brightman, *Acađohkūwina and Ācimōwina*, 40-45. Further, Wonderly discusses and distills this kind of windigo story in *At the Font of the Marvelous*, 82-83. Says Wonderly: "In all, windigo is a fierce giant, and the action occurs in purely narrative space or mythic setting. Generally, the windigo's nonhuman nature is clear. *Manibozho and the Windigo* (n=3). Three examples derive from Ojibwas in Minnesota and Crees in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. All recount the same incident in the Manibozho (Ojibwa)/Wesakaychak (Cree) sequence of trickster adventures (Brown and Brightman 1988, 124-36; Vecsey 1983, 84-98). Manibozho has the bad fortune to meet a windigo who, both parties seem to understand, is the more powerful being. Preparing to eat Manibozho, the windigo has him gather firewood and/or a spit for his own broiling. Manibozho prevails upon an ermine or weasel to leap inside the windigo (entry via anus or mouth) and kill it by eating or disabling its heart. In gratitude, Manibozho paints the small animal with white stripes and black trim—the weasel's winter look today (Ahenakew 1929, 352-53; Michelson 1917, 197-203; Teicher 1960, 25-26, 34-35). This theme ("hero is rescued from cannibal") was discussed by Fisher (1946, 247; see also Barnouw 1977, 72-73 and Bloomfield 1934, 293-95)."
489. Bruchac, *Dreams of Jesse Brown*, 177-178.
490. Ibid., 181.
491. Ibid., 185.
492. Ibid.
493. Ibid., 188.
494. Ibid., 155.
495. Million, "Intense Dreaming," 313-333.
496. Bruchac, *Dreams of Jesse Brown*, 188.
497. Ibid., 196.

498. Ibid., 197.
499. Ibid., 198.
500. See Jonathan D. Culler, *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 14, quoted in Christopher B. Teuton, "Theorizing American Indian literature: applying oral concepts to written traditions," Janice Acoose, Craig S. Womack, Daniel Heath Justice, and Christopher B. Teuton, *Reasoning Together: The Native Critics Collective*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), 209.
501. Ibid.
502. Ibid.
503. Ibid.
504. Teuton, "Theorizing American Indian literature," 194.
505. Harris, LaDonna. Jacqueline Wasilewski, "Indigeneity, an Alternative Worldview - Four R's (Relationship, Responsibility, Reciprocity, Redistribution) versus Two P's (Power and Profit). Sharing the Journey Towards Conscious Evolution," *SYSTEMS RESEARCH AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE*. (2004)
506. See: J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, (New York: A.A. Levine Books, 1998). The antagonist Voldemort in Rowling's series becomes a hybrid of human and snake.
507. See: David Cronenberg, et al., *The Fly*, (Beverly Hills, Calif: 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2005). The character Seth Brundle (played by Jeff Goldblum), gives himself the name "Brundlefly" after a teleportation device merges his genetic information with a housefly's.
508. For a discussion, see Cynthia Landrum, "Shape-shifters, Ghosts, and Residual Power: An Examination of Northern Plains Spiritual Beliefs, Location, Objects, and Spiritual Colonialism," Colleen Boyd and Coll-Peter Thrush, eds., *Phantom Past, Indigenous Presence Native Ghosts in North American Culture and History*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011).
509. For an analysis of Brian Yazzie's mural, "Fear of a Red Planet," in which democracy similarly "eats itself," see: Berglund, *Cannibal Fictions*, 130-132.
510. For several examples of medicine being used against windigo, see: Brightman, *Acađohkīwina and Aćimoōwina*. For discussion of the flexibility the medicine allows, see: Vine Deloria, *The World We Used to Live in: Remembering the Powers of the Medicine Men*, (Golden, Colo: Fulcrum Pub, 2006.)
511. See: John Beck, *Dirty Wars Landscape, Power, and Waste in Western American Literature*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009).
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