

Introduction

The World Is Not Enough

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Malinda Maynor Lowery's powerful Preface reminds us that any conversation about the concept of worldedness links the past with the present, the spiritual with the terrestrial, the mind with the body. It is at once rich with cohesion as well as contradiction. It is mutually constructed and bound to place. In the words of the late anthropologist Keith Basso, "[w]e *are*, in a sense, the place-worlds we imagine."¹

More than four decades ago Vine Deloria, Jr. complained that scholars of all types had created a crisis by theorizing Native people as individuals and communities trapped "BETWEEN TWO WORLDS."² This volume began with a seemingly simple set of inquiries. From where did the two-worlds framework come? How has it changed over time? And, how and why does it still persist? The trope itself has birthed a bifurcated lexicon—Savage and Civilized, East and West, Primitive and Modern—that serves as a grammar for settler colonialism. And, while many scholars have chastised this terminology in recent years, it is clear that the ideas behind these words still persist in American culture and society. As scholars of Native histories in North America, the editors of this volume are acutely aware of how this language of two worldedness has influenced earlier research—perhaps best exemplified by the enduring legacy of Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis. While most modern scholars have come to critique or utterly reject Turner's ethnocentric claims, the concept of differing worlds, existing on opposite sides of clearly defined boundaries, still influences more recent works—especially those that have sought to explain how individuals struggle to exist in what they frame as diametrically opposed Native and non-Native worlds.

In scholarship and popular culture, Native people often are viewed as “trapped between worlds,” forced to “walk between worlds,” or simply must exist “in two worlds.” Our own initial query into the origins of the two-worlds trope yielded a growing list of examples—some of which better illustrate our initial contempt for the use of two worldness as an academic framework.³

Perhaps the most striking example is that of Ishi. More than a century ago an approximately fifty-year-old man wandered into the corral of a slaughterhouse near Oroville, California. Dressed in rags, starving, and disoriented, he became known as “Ishi” and was dubbed the “last of the Yahi.” Ishi’s story resonated with the public and local scholars—a man who seemingly stepped out of a bygone era and into the twentieth century—precisely because it represented the two-worlds framework in its most visible and corporal form. For the remainder of his life, Ishi lived as a human relic—studied by anthropologists, linguists, and historians. In 1960, Theodora Kroeber (wife of anthropologist Albert Kroeber) used her husband’s notes to compile a biography of the “last of the Yahi.”⁴ Ishi’s story is instructive here, because it points to the public’s and academia’s shared fixation with worldness and indigeneity. It also points to the ability of this obsession to obscure. As Cherokee author Thomas King reminds us, “His name wasn’t Ishi. He never told anyone his name. Kroeber, under pressure from reporters who got tired of calling the Indian the Wild Man of Oroville, named him Ishi, a Yahi word that means simply ‘man.’”⁵

For one of the editors of this volume, the language of two worldness invaded the very sources he was using to conduct an individual manuscript project. The title of William Armstrong’s 1978 book about the Tonawanda Seneca leader and government official, Ely Parker, illustrates the problems of flippantly employing the two-worlds framework to describe historical actors. Armstrong’s *Warrior in Two Camps: Ely S. Parker, Union General and Seneca Chief* stressed the internal dilemma Parker faced by “walking between two worlds”—a dilemma seemingly lost on the real Parker who never used such language to describe his own life. More disturbing, Armstrong’s book helped solidify this imagined internal dilemma for subsequent historians and storytellers. In 2004, PBS invited viewers to watch, *Ely S. Parker: A Warrior in Two Worlds*. Without attempting to critique the same framework embedded in the documentary’s title, prominent scholars and Native American leaders spoke about Parker’s life and made clear the damage wrought by a lifetime of straddling Native and non-Native worlds. An historian and archivist at the Rochester Museum and Science Center, for example, warned that Parker’s life reminds students “to be careful when going out to be a bridge between two worlds, because if you don’t step carefully, you lose who you

are, you lose who you can become.” In other words, she suggested that Parker’s case provided an example of how attempting to meet a multitude of conflicting expectations could erode one’s sense of self. Perhaps more startling, a historian and Tuscarora Beaver clan member, stated that Parker “was a traitor, because there was a betrayal to his people.” When shown a picture of Parker just before his death, he lamented that what he saw was “a guy with a broken heart.” In both the book and documentary, scholars viewed Parker’s life as a series of conflicts that resulted from a man straddling two very different existences.

Historians and filmmakers have long populated the minds of historical actors with the internalized dilemma brought about by the two-worlds framework. HBO’s 2007 adaptation of Dee Brown’s *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* provides a solid case study and illustrates an American fascination with psychoanalyzing the internal crises among people, especially Native people, who are forced to choose between identities. In it, filmmakers focused on the lives of three Native leaders—Sitting Bull, Red Cloud, and Charles Eastman—from the Battle of Little Big Horn to the massacre at Wounded Knee. In the HBO adaptation, the three men choose very different routes in navigating between Native and non-Native worlds. Sitting Bull resists the non-Native world by leading his Lakota followers first in armed resistance against the U.S. Army, then by escaping north to Canada, and finally by facilitating a religious resistance in the Ghost Dance. He is murdered as a result. In comparison, Red Cloud attempts to forge a middle path through compromise, but in so doing, loses the respect of his own people. In one dramatic—but entirely fictionalized—scene, Sitting Bull (August Schellenberg) argues with Colonel Nelson Miles (Shaun Johnston). When Miles states that Red Cloud signed a treaty with the United States, Sitting Bull fires back “Red Cloud is no longer a chief. He is a woman you have mounted and had your way with. Do not speak to me of Red Cloud!” Charles Eastman (Adam Beach), however, is portrayed as a Native man who abandoned his people, seeking fame and recognition in a “white world.” Near the end of the film, Eastman bears witness to the atrocities of the Wounded Knee massacre and, in a telling moment, realizes his error in abandoning “his people” and has a falling out with Senator Henry Dawes (Aiden Quinn), a man who the screenwriters imagined as a father-like figure to the younger Eastman. Later, down on his luck, Eastman begs Dawes for a job and is soon employed in the “naming project,” randomly assigning Euro-American names to Native men and women on the Dawes Rolls. Eastman experiences an intense psychological breakdown as he is reminded of the moment when he was forced to give up his own Dakota name, Ohiyesa.

One of the final scenes in the film depicts Eastman, unable to sleep, crying and talking to himself in his den.

It is easy to critique the makers of the HBO film for over-simplifying the complex and brutal history of American Indian affairs, but doing so belittles the actual consequences of a bifurcated language of settler colonialism. As a settler population has attempted to mollify the threat of indigeneity through discursive practices, it has created paradoxes and paradigms that are not easily dismantled on the pages of scholarly volumes. The “nonsensical scholarly dribble,” as Vine Deloria called it, also influences the lived experiences of Native and non-Native people alike who inhabit the North American continent.

Paul Chaat Smith, writing forty years after Deloria, referred to the two worlds dichotomy as a “rusting, broken contraption held together with stubbornness, colonized thinking, and baling wire.”⁶ Smith, associate curator at the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of the American Indian, argued that the two-worlds trope was and is not simply something non-Native people impose upon Native persons; it is something American Indian people have internalized. In a humorous, yet insightful passage, he refers to the concept of “walking between two worlds” as Native peoples’ own “ideological Vicodin.”⁷ In other words, worlding exists beyond the lexicon of settler language. It has created a real world fraught with expectations that Native people are forced to navigate. For literary theorist Scott Lyons, “That is precisely the ‘problematic’ part of the peoplehood paradigm. If you do not conform to the model—land, religion, language, sacred history, ceremonial cycle, and so on—if you happen to live away from your homeland, speak English, practice Christianity, or know more songs by the Dave Matthews Band than by the ancestor, you effectively ‘cease to exist’ as one of the People.”⁸ This is precisely the reason we asked the scholars of this volume to engage in a larger conversation about the concept of worldedness—our own initial disdain soon led to larger questions about how the maintenance, consequences, and lived experiences of Native people are shaped by four-plus centuries of two-world language.

For American Indian Studies scholar Joanne Barker (Lenni-Lenape), two worldedness and expectations are not abstract notions. In her study of the confluence of popular notions of indigeneity, identity, and American jurisprudence, Barker reveals her own struggles with racialized perceptions and the bifurcated language of difference. In writing about her own personal experiences with American preconceptions of Indianness that are largely based on phenotype and cultural performance, she writes:

In these exchanges, people are looking to resolve preconceptions about Native peoples that my physical appearance and presumed blood degree contradicts. Often these efforts just make me tired, particularly of the disrespect to me and my family that I experience in these kinds of interactions. So much so that on occasions when I have gone out after work for drinks with colleagues, when I just want to relax and unwind, I have disguised the work that I do so that I do not have to deal with the questions about my identity that its disclosure too often solicits.⁹

All this is to say that the binaries underlying the two-worlds trope manifest themselves in real ways for Native people day in and day out. Moreover, these discursive practices of settler colonialism also breed legal, economic, and political boundaries that extend well beyond a critique of words. It leads young children, as you will read in George Ironstrack's chapter on Myaamia language reclamation and history, to ask "George, if you come from a couple of tribes, do you have to choose one?" And, perhaps more importantly, it requires a response couched in both the determination of courts and communities. "In one way, yes, you do have to choose," Ironstrack replied, "Our politics requires that you can only be a voting member of one tribe. But outside of that, no you don't have to choose. If you can learn the language, kinship networks, and the responsibilities of each group, then it is possible to belong to all of the communities that your family connects you to."

In *Indians in Unexpected Places* historian Phil Deloria called for a broader examination of how Native people's defiance of external expectations help us better understand the limits of language and identity in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Taken together, it seems to me, the cumulative experiences of such anomalous Indians point to new questions concerning the turn of the twentieth century—perhaps toward a reimagining of the contours of modernity itself. They suggest a secret history of the unexpected, of the complex lineaments of personal and cultural identity that can never be captured by dichotomies built around crude notions of difference and assimilation, white and Indian, primitive and advanced. Those secret histories of unexpectedness are, I believe, worth further pursuit, for they can change our sense of the past and lead us quietly, but directly, to the present moment.¹⁰

We hope that the examinations of the “crude” dichotomies involved with the identity, politics, and history of worlded expectations will help move forward the conversation that Deloria implored nearly a decade ago. While the work of the aforementioned scholars and activists, along with the horrible examples that we encountered in the archive and on the television screen, provoked us to question the two-worlds framework, we ultimately concluded that answering, or even attempting to answer those questions was the work of more than two scholars. In order to address these issues we assembled a group of really smart people to address its use in history, society, contemporary scholarship, and popular culture.

The genesis of this book began in 2009, when we asked scholars to question the role of the two-worlds framework in a historical context by presenting papers at the annual meeting of the American Society for Ethnohistory in New Orleans. Through a series of three linked panels that comprised more than a dozen scholars, we discovered many others had critical questions about the two-worlds trope and wanted to speak about it. Our conversation could have ended there, and this volume would have been little more than a collection of essays challenging the use of the two-worlds framework in a historical context. What we’ve discovered in conversations with scholars, activists, Native peoples, and non-Native allies is that the idea of walking between two worlds, a framework birthed from a colonial past and adapted over time to produce an institutionalized ethnocentrism, maintains a significant legacy in a settler present.¹¹ These essays promise to engage more deeply the foundations of this framework by exploring the historical, imagined, and real forms of the two-worlds framework both in the historical record and within contemporary society.

We hope that a quick perusal of this volume indicates a different kind of academic conversation than the traditional edited volume. Instead, we sought to provide a forum where a series of linked conversations might take place between individual scholars. The book is divided into four parts, each addressing a separate aspect of the two-worlds trope. An “interlude” follows each part. In these interludes, we asked prominent scholars to reflect generally upon the issues raised by the chapters within the preceding section. They could reference their own work, reference the chapters themselves, or simply raise additional suggestions for the questions asked of the original contributors. Ultimately, we felt that this latitude would produce some provocative thoughts for our readers. In the end, we believe they have done just that.

As editors, we encouraged individual contributors in each section to explore the two-worlds framework by asking broad questions that were structured around general themes. In that way, each author was permitted

to reflect upon the questions specific to their section, yet use their own research and personal experiences to address some or all of our queries. The authors in Part I were given the unenviable task of tracing the historical antecedents of the two-worlds framework in a North American context. We asked: Where did it come from? And, where do you see the language of worldedness in the historical literature? Our contributors responded by providing examples of how eighteenth-century Europeans and Native Americans employed the language of two worlds in three different geographical regions of North America. Katie Magee Labelle, examining French and Wendat experiences of the Upper Great Lakes, demonstrates intersections between corporal and spiritual worlds in the context of the colonial experience. As French missionaries attempted to describe the difference between Wendat and French worlds, their Indigenous counterparts reflected upon the division between the land of the living and the land of the dead. In Kristalyn Shefveland's essay we are exposed to the lexicon employed by early English settlers in colonial Virginia. Shefveland discovers that not all Englishmen thought alike. While some described their surroundings as a stark contrast between Native and non-Native worlds, other Englishmen chronicled a far more complex story in their private journals. Ian Chambers examines the two-worlds trope through both English and Cherokee eyes. By assessing the perspective of each, Chambers is able to illustrate how single events, like council meetings between English and Cherokee leaders, could be "read" so differently. Nancy Shoemaker offers our first interlude and reflects on the previous essays. She also offers a way to map and visualize the spaces occupied by the varying worlds described by our first three authors.

In Part II, we asked authors to discuss how the two-worlds discourse has functioned in a historical context. How has it been used to categorize individuals or communities? How has it historically functioned in literature, art, or other forms of cultural expression? James Joseph Buss demonstrates how the two-worlds framework has led historians and others to place judgment on historical actors of the past. In this way, the language employed by nineteenth-century Americans in the Great Lakes has continued to influence our understanding of those individuals today. C. Joseph Genetin-Pilawa focuses on the commemorative and lived Indigenous landscapes of nineteenth-century Washington, DC and suggests that the public discourse of the capital fixed spatially and therefore legitimated the two-worlds trope. More importantly perhaps, he suggests that in studying the ways Native people engaged with the built environment of conquest, we can see a much more complex and challenging local history in the capital city. Sakina Hughes returns this section to the Great Lakes by

examining the small Indiana community of Peru. Her study demonstrates that descriptors like Native and non-Native obscure a complicated regional history that includes Native Americans, African Americans, and other ethnic groups. Susan Gray's intriguing interlude suggests that postcolonial scholars and their recent emphasis on intimate encounters might provide a new, or renewed, lens through which to (re)envision the two-world framework.

Next, we asked how the two-worlds discourse functions in contemporary society? In Part III, authors discussed where they witnessed the manifestations of the two-worlds framework in political, artistic, and literary expressions. George Ironstrack retraces his own work in reconstructing the Miami language. By exploring the history of the Miami people of Indiana and Ohio in both historical and contemporary contexts, Ironstrack demonstrates the importance of looking beyond those restrictions to the importance of community and language. In her essay, Cathleen Cahill uses the micro-history of federal Indian Service employees to demonstrate how obfuscating the two-worlds trope can be, especially when considering multitribal experiences. Brian Hosmer's interlude explores the role of capitalism, wage-labor, and commercialism in influencing our understanding of "modern *tribal* nations as active participants in local and global marketplaces."

Finally, we asked authors: Where do we go from here? What new questions or frameworks might guide a new and meaningful discussion of the issues raised by scholars, artists, writers, activists, and others in this volume? Daniel Cobb, Kyle Fields, and Joseph Cheatle employ "ethnobiography" to provide an alternate retelling of D'Arcy McNickle's life, one that challenges the two-worlds trope and the way that biographies have traditionally been written in Indigenous studies. Ethnobiography, these authors submit, reject the occlusion of "two worlds" by allowing space for the unexpected, the improbable, even the impossible. Sandra Garner argues that to imagine Native futures, we have to attend to the layered and complex interactions so common in settler-colonialism as well as to the "complex personhood" of Native historical actors. To disrupt the two-worlds dichotomy, she asserts that scholars and others must take up multiple positionalities. Coll Thrush provides the final words of this collection, but hopefully not the last words on this issue. In his powerful Afterword, Thrush reminds us that these issues, and our suggestions for rethinking them, require a delicate dissection of the past and present.

Overall, the authors in this volume offer a range of views about how we might move forward—some outright reject the two-worlds framework, others attempt to explain how it has functioned in the past, still others attempt to problematize our very understanding of how it functions in

historical and contemporary settings. Nancy Shoemaker, perhaps picking up a cue from Gayatri Spivak—who argued, “it is not possible, within discourse to escape essentializing somewhere”—suggests that binaries might still have their place in the academy.¹² “I do not believe that a two-worlds perspective is in itself a problem,” she writes in this volume, “Instead, it seems a natural offshoot of a human predilection for binary thought, as in self and other, us and them. Moreover, for people in the past as well as for scholars, conceiving of two worlds in relationship could serve as a useful analytical tool for making sense of chaos. The problem with two worlds seems to rest mainly with our dependence on the construct of an Indian world juxtaposed against a European world.” Coll Thrush pushes us further as he suggests that perhaps thinking in terms of one or two worlds is not enough. As he writes in the Afterword, “All of this is to say that Indigenous history (like so many other kinds of history, when done well and honestly) is full of paradoxes. There is only one world, except for the occasions when two worlds are necessary, and two worlds are insufficient. Each of these things is true, just as so many other seeming paradoxes are also true of Indigenous-settler relations.”

Attempting to eliminate the two-worlds framework altogether is problematic, worldedness is, after all, more than just an abstract idea. For many Native people, it is a lived experience. For people of settler ancestry, it is the very language of settler colonialism. It is pervasive and imposes the conceptual map for understanding the terrestrial world upon which Native people and others are forced to engage. N. Scott Momaday’s Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *House Made of Dawn*—long credited with launching a Native American literary renaissance—exemplifies the ubiquitous nature of the idea. The tagline on a recent edition of the work explains that the main character, Abel, is “a young Native American” who finds himself “caught between two worlds.” Abel is a World War Two veteran, who after returning home to New Mexico, discovers that he no longer feels like he belongs—a stranger in his own house. When life’s circumstances take him to urban Los Angeles after serving time in prison, he again finds himself an outsider—an Indian in the city. But the quip on the dust jacket, and the author who penned it, miss the larger point of Momaday’s work. *House Made of Dawn* pushes its reader to reconceptualize the most entrenched binary of all: that of good and evil. In doing so, the book and its author provoke us to rethink the terms of worldedness. “How we love our binaries,” Thomas King explains, “But what Momaday and other Native writers suggest is that there are other ways of imagining the world, ways that do not depend so much on oppositions as they do on co-operations.”¹³

So, *where do we go from here?* Rethinking the two-worlds trope requires imagination and a critical evaluation of how language, politics, economics, and cultural all influence the expectations that we place on one another. This book does not seek to leave you with a concrete answer; rather, we hope that it inspires additional conversations and discussions about what it means to classify ourselves in terms of worlds. For Paul Chaat Smith a project of this type requires careful attention and great imagination. “The great project that awaits,” he explains, “is to acknowledge the awesome complexity and find new avenues of investigation. Simply reversing bogus binaries doesn’t get us anywhere. The project isn’t about the good guys being bad, and the bad guys being good, but about finding new ways of seeing and thinking about the history that is all around us . . . That isn’t only subversive, it’s really difficult. Few can do it at all; hardly anyone knows how to do it well.” In the end, we have tried to leave you with new ways of addressing the issue of worlding and, perhaps, a new understanding of the legacies of settler colonialism. In terms of this introduction, we leave you with a final example of how we might reimagine the confluence of the past and present.

Wabansi Lakeside Chicago-Beyond Swag

After looking through pictures of a family trip to Chicago, artist Jodi Webster (Ho-Chunk Nation/Prairie Band of Potawatomi) found herself wondering, “What if the Potawatomi or Indians in general, were never forcibly removed from their homelands or forced to assimilate?”¹⁴ Her response, “Wabansi Lakeside Chicago-Beyond Swag,” (the cover image of this book) defies expectations. Webster places her son in front of a familiar Chicago skyline wearing both a Chicago Bulls jersey and an intricately beaded bandolier bag (the only aspect of the drawing rendered in color). “He feels pride for the distinct nation he is representing,” Webster explains, “and is willing to defend his style of dress to onlookers.” Ultimately, Webster’s reinterpretation of the urban landscape and decision to place of her son at the center of the painting helps us reach beyond the limitations of worldedness, while simultaneously using that same language to mark significance. “My goal was to inspire my children and encourage them to be proud of their lineage.”¹⁵ Perhaps, trying to render *This World*, as Malinda Maynor Lowery suggests in the Preface and Webster does so beautifully in her artwork, requires us to think beyond a mathematical language of worlds. Perhaps, in the end, thinking in terms one or two or even three worlds is not enough.

Notes

1. Keith Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language among the Western Apache* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), 7.

2. Vine Deloria, Jr., *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (New York: Macmillan, 1969), 86.

3. Cataloguing examples of the two-worlds trope is a herculean task. We thought about providing a broad list of examples here, but even we were surprised to find how many times the two-worlds notion ends up in scholarly works. Go to your computer and open a search engine. Then type in the words “two worlds” and “Native American.” The number of results is mind-boggling. If you want to limit those examples to scholarly works, use Google scholar or (as we did) insert them into the academic database “America: History and Life.” The hundreds of results suggest that historians are particularly fond of binary thinking. If you limit the search with the subject terms “INDIANS” and “WHITES—Relations with Indians” you will still likely find dozens of results and these are only articles or book reviews that reference two worlds in their titles and abstracts. On March 9, 2012, our initial search on “America: History and Life” returned 309 results using the basic search terms “two worlds.” When we limited the results using the subject terms “INDIANS” and “WHITES—Relations with Indians,” we still found 69 references. A similar search using the “Worldcat” database revealed thousands of results.

4. Theodora Kroeber, *Isbi in Two Worlds: A Biography of the Last Wild Indian in North America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011, 50th anniversary edition).

5. Thomas King, *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 64.

6. Paul Chaat Smith, *Everything You Know About Indians is Wrong* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 34–35.

7. *Ibid.*, 36.

8. Scott Richard Lyons, *X-Marks: Native Signatures of Assent* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 139.

9. Joanne Barker, *Native Acts: Law, Recognition, and Cultural Authenticity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 3.

10. Philip Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 14.

11. Or what Edward Said labeled “positional superiority” and Michel Foucault called a society’s “regime of truth.” Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 7; and Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977* (New York: Pantheon, 1980), 131.

12. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in *The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*, ed. Sarah Harasym (New York: Routledge, 1990), 51.

13. King, 110.

14. Jodi Webster, artist statement for “Wabansi Lakeside Chicago-Beyond Swag,” 2012.

15. Facebook conversation between James Joseph Buss and Jodi Webster, June 26, 2013.