

Introduction

GORDON HENRY JR., MARGARET NOODIN,
AND DAVID STIRRUP

Naanaagadawendam Anishinaabe: Critical Poses of the Anishinaabe

Duration and endurance is Bergson's series of conscious states, Vizenor's trickster stories remembered, Cruikshank's subversion, and Rilke's trembling love. Anishinaabe storyteller Basil Johnston connected these characteristics, these enduring poses, to four brothers who represent ways of knowing honed by centuries of practice. The brothers were travelers and seekers of knowledge. Majikawiz, the eldest, became a historian who preserved events as history across time through sashes, scrolls, and teaching rocks; he was a leader and a warrior. Bakaawiz, who followed, created dances and dramas to transform memory into art through trickster transformations. The third brother, Jiibayaaboozo, continually asked questions, challenging and defining ways of thinking and being in the world. Nanabozho, the youngest, became a trickster. He once confronted his father and was met with a stream of arrows and a lesson in persistence and humility. He was rewarded with a pipe and went on to teach the Anishinaabeg by example, constantly making mistakes to be interpreted as guideposts by those paying attention.

This collection of critical thinking echoes the lessons of these brothers and focuses on Anishinaabe words, stories, and representations of endurance. Centered in the Great Lakes region of North America, the Anishinaabeg live in a space Johnston referred to as Maazikamikwe, a maternal source of sustainable life. They are a confederacy of communities

organized across space and time by shared practices and entwined dialects. In this space, they have endured cultural distress and colonial oppression. What they were taught by the brothers of Johnston's living histories has been disrupted. Storytellers of the present must work to stabilize belief systems, ways of life, concepts of ethics, and practices of intercultural relations. The authors who write and are written about in this volume are a part of a network being revitalized. They are the Anishinaabeg who endure interpretive interventions, the critical imposition of external readings of their work, lives, cultures, and communities. Over the course of a long history of engagement with what is known to Euro-American literary and cultural studies as the "West," certain critical impositions from "outside" Anishinaabe culture have compromised but never fully suppressed the artistic and interpretive agency of Anishinaabe authors.

It is time for Anishinaabe creative and critical leanings, often transposed through the technics of Western letters and media, to re-mark the larger intellectual topography with Anishinaabe perspectives. In this space the "West" is the territory of the *manidoog*, the existential, spiritual, and philosophical, the home of Nanabozho's father, Epangishimog, and his brother, Jibayaaboozo. The "East" is the place of dawn, a continually rotating point on the horizon, connected to the energy of the sun and the ability to endure and continue teaching. It is *gaagige-aadizooke*, a place of infinitely renewed stories. A legacy of critical engagement is being reframed as an advantage that speaks to the adaptive ability of the Anishinaabe.

Basil Johnston's life and literature provide us with important ways of discerning and extending the enduring elements of Anishinaabe culture that continue to inspire and influence Anishinaabe writers who remain connected to Anishinaabe communities, carrying on with work as scholars and tribal leaders. His book *The Manitous* imparts an understanding of life as an ongoing journey, of the multidimensional "spirit" of Anishinaabe culture. His work imparts a life and legacy that will continue as the *manitous* remain with us in his stories and writing. As you read these enduring poses in literary form, look for traces of the brothers and the spaces their memories still inhabit.

Baatayinadoon Gaa-ezhi-zhiibendamaang Anishinaabeg:
The Many Ways the Anishinaabe People Have Endured

Anishinaabe connection to place and community values and ethics have endured through the storytelling and maintaining collective memory.

According to traditional beliefs, Gizhemanidoo created the universe by activating perception, and creation infinitely recurs through cycles of vision and narration. The four Anishinaabe brothers are extensions of this belief as they represent various ways of knowing, branches of learning, and mediums for expression. *Baatayiinadoon Gaa-ezhi-zhiibendamaang Anishinaabeg*. There are many ways the Anishinaabe have endured.

The first teller was a stone, and the first story was of telling. As time passed, two branches of storytelling developed. The *dibaaajimowinan*, classified as inanimate, are forms of accounting and communicating critical information through narration. Comedies, tragedies, poetry, novels, history, reports, legal treatises, ancient recipes, and digital game narratives are *dibaaajimowinan*. They are not *aadizookanag*, which are classified as the animate branch of narration, simultaneously mutable and stable. Like a cell with a permeable but identifiable membrane and a central nucleus, *aadizookanag* are energy-based and evolving. These stories change and adapt to the needs of the teller, the audience, and the community. They are defined by language and collective memory, often merging with song and ceremony.

The Anishinaabe literary universe is vast and connects the past to the present. Stories of the four brothers are still widely exchanged and examined. In some ways they have remained the same, and in other ways they have developed distinct characteristics. In performance, practice, fiction, and nonfiction scholarship, the Anishinaabe voice has endured, not just as a tribally centric entity but as a mature voice in a global conversation.

Anishinaabe Writing in the Wider Native World

Since Simon Ortiz's (1981) claims for a nascent literary nationalism and Kimberly Blaeser's (1993) observation of the continued marginalization of Native literatures through the "colonizing" modes of Euro-Western discourses, discussions about the ethical response to Native literatures and literary criticism have proliferated. These considerations are crucial to the ethical response of literary criticism "after theory." Although there is still much heated debate about the means of defining an approach that is both tribally specific and capable of speaking to the broader common concerns of Native literatures, there is relatively clear consensus that these questions of ethics and responsibility shape the continued development of the field. Key considerations, beyond the larger questions of precisely what form such a criticism will take, include the sociopolitical

relationship between a text and the world(s) in which it circulates and the ability of any tribal-centered criticism to take full account of the overlaps and border zones of the literary product and its markets. Tribal-centric approaches are establishing dialogues between various forms of criticism and modes of appreciation. These dialogues aid in the understanding of indigenous literatures and their relationships to the multiple contexts in which they circulate.

This volume of essays aims to explore the dimensions of this dialogue in the specific framework of writers of Anishinaabe (Ojibwe, Odawa, or Potawatomi) heritage. The contributors seek not to contain such writing but to use that framework as a form of methodology to encourage analysis of Anishinaabe-specific texts and contexts. We hope this tribal-centric framework will become a connection to the concerns of Native American literary studies and literary studies more widely—a means of ordering a set of questions rather than boxing up a set of assumptions. In “Splitting the Earth: First Utterances and Pluralist Separatism,” Jace Weaver responds to Alan Velié’s accusations of a pluralist separatism in conceptualizing American Indian literary nationalisms by embracing the term (46). He speaks to the distinctiveness and the diversity of Native American nationhood and Native American experience and to the acknowledgment of a common ground and core set of values that is not uniform but kaleidoscopic. To say simply that manifestations of culture, language, and religion; forms of survivance; and experiences of colonialism differ from nation to nation, however, is to utter a truism that should not need echoing. What is more significant—implicit in, yet occasionally submerged by responses to the literary nationalist project—is the range of diversity within tribal nations, which makes recognition of their heterogeneity an easier task than generating that type of homogeneous cultural and political community that Western historical forms of nationalism have tended to connote. That heterogeneity is writ large in the metaphorical fabric of Anishinaabewaking, in Anishinaabe writing, and in the wide range of critical responses to Anishinaabe cultural production. As Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiik Stark explains:

Beyond recognizing a collective identity, the Anishinaabeg comprise distinct, separate nations (frequently referred to as bands) that span a vast geographic region from the Plains to the Great Lakes. They are historically and today a people who cross many political and geographical borders. Anishinaabe people share many beliefs and practices, yet individual nations

are influenced by their particular histories, geographic locations, political relations, and internal conflicts. (2012, 124)

In the most recent iteration of sustained Anishinaabe literary criticism—at least at the time of this writing—White Earth enrollee Adam Spry argues that earlier attempts to approach Ojibwe literature as manifestations of culture intrinsically fails to account for that diversity, imagining an homogeneous project rather than acknowledging the politically nimble, formally various purposes to which Anishinaabeg writers have put their literary outputs. Spry's *Our War-Paint Is Writer's Ink* is the first serious transnational-comparative work of Anishinaabeg and American literature, and it joins a significant and fast-growing body of literature and literary criticism by and about Anishinaabe writing. Margaret Noodin's *Bawaajimo*, the first monograph dedicated solely and explicitly to Anishinaabeg writing, addressed complex linguistic residues and crossovers between English and Anishinaabemowin, poetics, and more to work toward Anishinaabe-specific reading strategies in the work of four key Ojibwe authors. It appeared shortly after *Centering Anishinaabeg Studies*, a volume of essays edited by Jill Doerfler, Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair, and Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiik Stark, dedicated to the "cultural, political, and historical foundation" that stories and storytellers provide Anishinaabeg studies. We can add to these the range of monographs dedicated to individual Anishinaabeg writers, from the first, Kim Blaeser's *Gerald Vizenor: Writing in the Oral Tradition*, which sits alongside books on Vizenor by A. Robert Lee, Deborah L. Madsen, and Simone Pellerin; to the range of monographs and essay collections on Louise Erdrich's work by Frances Washburn, Connie A. Jacobs, P. Jane Hafen, Lorena Stookey, Hertha Dawn Wong, David Stirrup, Seema Kurup, Peter Beidler and Gay Barton, Deborah L. Madsen, and Allan Chavkin.

Just as Spry's dissertation lead to *Our War-Paint*, Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair's (St. Peter's/Little Peguis) dissertation *Nindoodemag Bagi-jiganan: a History of Anishinaabeg Narrative*, is eagerly anticipated in book form. Jill Doerfler's dissertation laid the basis for her book *Those Who Belong: Identity, Family, Blood, and Citizenship among the White Earth Anishinaabeg*, which followed publication of *White Earth Nation: Ratification of a Native Democratic Constitution* (coauthored with Gerald Vizenor). Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiik Stark's (Turtle Mountain) dissertation-based manuscript *Unsettled: Anishinaabe Treaty-Relations and U.S./Canada State-Formation* is slated for publication with the University of Minnesota

Press's First Peoples Series. We mention these as only a few of the Ojibwe scholars in Anishinaabeg studies, but we acknowledge there are now and will be other Anishinaabeg doctorates telling new critical stories and Anishinaabe scholarship continues to endure.

These scholars emerged in the “postnationalist” moment—by which we mean not the intellectual paradigm framed by transnationalism and globalization but the defining of the previously loose conversation around tribal nationhood and nation-specific literary studies by the “three W’s”—Robert Warrior, Jace Weaver, and Craig S. Womack.¹ The story of Native literary studies’ epic battle over the terms of the discourse have been much rehearsed elsewhere. It is a tale of good versus evil, of liberal multicultural values warding off the terrors of nationalist essentialism, of the rigor (and distance) of high theory versus the ethics of community-embedded attention to detail (lacking the authority of objectivity). In other words, it is much overblown. Marking a shift in Native literary studies from terms defined largely by non-Native scholars and approaches that combined an anthropological model of culture with a high-theoretical toolkit to the rise to prominence of a rank of largely Native (and Native-trained) field leaders armed with the tools of ideological and epistemological resistance, that moment—sometime around the turn of the millennium—saw a brief but perhaps necessary methodological tussle. In refusing to rehearse the minutiae of the debate again, it is perhaps best to turn to one of its archproponents/combatants (depending on which side of the canyon one chooses to stand): “Just as there are a number of realities that constitute Indian identity . . . there are also a number of legitimate approaches to analyzing Native literary production” (Womack 2). Ironically, perhaps, Craig Womack made that point on the second page of his book *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism*. *Red on Red* ended up at the center of that controversy as an example of what Kenneth Lincoln in “Red Stick Criticism” characterized as an “insider-only ‘purge’” (quoted in Mackay 49), wherein Womack’s next contestation—that some “I will argue . . . are more effective than others” represented, for some, the first in a chain of exclusionary pronouncements.

To return to the point, these scholars emerged in a changed environment, one where their Anishinaabeg-specific intellectual framing, while still needing explanation, required little justification. They added their voices to the exceptional scholarship of an older generation of Anishinaabeg scholars whose work, though still largely Ojibwe-focused, tended to break ground in a pan-Indian setting. In total, they demonstrate both

the incredible value of this nation-specific work and the ways one can contribute regardless of whether one takes up “nationalist” or “Native cosmopolitanist” lenses.

In all cases, they and the many non-Native scholars who contribute to the conversation around Anishinaabe literary production respond to a rich and very diverse literary landscape. As Vizenor has long claimed, the Anishinaabeg have boasted the most authors—certainly literary authors—of any tribal nation.² In Jane Johnston Schoolcraft, or Bamewawagezhikaquay, they also boast the first Native poet to publish in her own language in North America. Early newspapers the *Progress* (1886–89) and later the *Tomahawk* (1903–26),³ both published at White Earth by Gus and Theodor Beaulieu, provided syndicated national and then original local news for the White Earth population, with the latter in particular carrying a strong political focus. That journalistic tradition was later maintained by a Beaulieu descendant, Gerald Vizenor, who worked for the *Minneapolis Tribune* in the 1960s. As a teacher and editor, Vizenor has also long been a proponent of Anishinaabe-specific literary endeavors. His edited volume *Touchwood: A Collection of Ojibway Prose* drew together the work of four key Anishinaabe writers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, foregrounding the historical and formal depth of Anishinaabeg literature. His interviews, essays, criticism, and historical work (including *Everlasting Sky*, *Manifest Manners*, *The People Named the Chippewa*, to name just three of his most significant interventions) elaborate two clear strands: the broader, pan-Indian discussions of Native identity, particularly through lenses offered by poststructuralist theory as it intersects with Indigenous ways of seeing and knowing, and a more Anishinaabe-centric documentation of contemporary experience and endurance.

Vizenor’s own creative work began in a mode of reclamation, working with older Anishinaabe forms and stories to recenter the relationship between voice and text. Among his earliest nonjournalistic works, *South of the Painted Stones* and *Summer in the Spring* delve into traditional stories published in locations like the *Tomahawk* and the dreamsongs recorded by Frances Densmore, retranslating and reinterpreting Anishinaabe narrative forms. Echoing a similar endeavor, the voluminous works of Basil Johnston take account of the Anishinaabe cosmological record, ceremonies and customs and of course the author’s own story. Eddie Benton Banai, by no means as prolific, also embraced the task of putting Anishinaabe narrative in printed form, his children’s book *The Mishomis Book* becoming a vital learning tool for children and adults alike.

The first novel-length story published in English by an Anishinaabe writer comes relatively late in this arc. Ignatia Broker's *Night Flying Woman: An Ojibway Narrative*, which recounted the life of Broker's great-great-grandmother, appeared in print only a year before Louise Erdrich's first edition of *Love Medicine*, but it tells of a world that is only just beginning to experience the ruptures that the nineteenth century wrought on the Anishinaabeg, the legacies of which are severely felt in the latter novel. Erdrich, as novelist, short story writer, poet, and memoirist, also embodies a key characteristic of the Anishinaabe (indeed, Native American more broadly) literati—the ability to inhabit form like a shapeshifter, refusing its constraints and adapting the container to fit the contents. Louise's sisters Heid and Lise, poets and prose writers both; Anton and David Treuer, linguists, historians, essayists, and the latter a novelist and memoirist; Gordon Henry Jr., novelist, poet, musician; Margaret Noodin, linguist, poet, translator, curriculum writer; Kimberly Blaeser, poet, short story writer, photographer; Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, poet, short story writer, essayist; Armand Garnet Ruffo, poet, biographer; Drew Hayden Taylor, playwright and essayist; Kateri Akiwenzi-Damm, poet, short story writer, editor; Jim Northrup, poet, essayist, reporter, basket maker; Winona LaDuke, novelist, essayist, politician; not to mention those who also impress as visual artists, such as poet and painter Leo Yerxa and playwright and painter Ruby Slipperjack—among many others, these creators exemplify the relative ease with which Anishinaabe writers cross genres and registers in pursuit of the story. This is by no means to belittle the achievements of those more commonly known in single genres, such as young adult novelists Lenore Keeshig-Tobias and Richard Wagamese, mystery author Carole LaFavor, or playwrights Alanis King and E. Donald Two-Rivers.

A brief glance at any and all of these is enough to confirm the highly selective nature of this volume. Some significant names are left out. In the nineteenth century, for instance, we have not covered Maungwudaus's fellow commentators, missionaries, speakers George Copway (Gaagigegeabaw), Peter Jones (Kahkewaquonaby), Joseph Sawyer (Nawahjegeshewgabe), Catherine Sutton (Nahnebahnwequay), Peter Jacobs (Pahtahsega), John Sunday (Shawundais), and Henry Bird Steinhauer (Shahwahnegezhik), Egerton Ryerson, and Robert Steinhauer (see Smith). Similarly, we neglect the wider array of non-Ojibwe Anishinaabe writers, such as Simon Pokagan (Bodéwadmi) or Andrew Blackbird (Odawa); writers of traditional stories such as Eliza Morrin Morrison and John Couchois Wright; autobiographers, advocates, sharers of Anishinaabeg environmental knowledge, such as John

Rogers, Keewaydinoquay Peschel, and Wub-e-ki-niew; other journalists like Waubgeshig Rice, Donna Smith, or Tanya Talage, to name a precious few; and the many other published poets, dramatists, short story writers, and scholars who do not feature in these pages.

When we began this project, we were interested in exploring how Anishinaabe literatures explore and assert the need for proactive rather than reactive agency, an issue central to the work of many indigenous writers. If Vizenor's concept of survivance is one such strategy, in what other ways do Anishinaabe writers explore this issue? How does Anishinaabe literature itself respond and contribute to this need? Scholars of Native literatures have long emphasized key ethical concerns, such as responsibility, community, and the relationship of praxis to theory. Anishinaabe writing does not merely represent but engages with and participates in critical cultural conversations. The "ethnocritical" demands of Western discourses have tended to divorce politics from aesthetics, for instance. How have the two been reimaged by Anishinaabe writers? How do Anishinaabe writers explore or assert the interrelationship of culture and aesthetics with sovereignty? The essays collected herein address these questions in various ways; in doing so, they raise myriad more.

Aadisookanan Onaagadawenimaawaan: Critical Commentary

This volume contains a mixture of Native and non-Native voices writing about Anishinaabe literary production. It is a celebration of Anishinaabeg diversity, not an attempt to limit or define a community. Through these essays run threads of continuity and endurance, often refracted in contrasting colors. Like Nanabozho and his brothers, the authors search for truth in many directions and find many different answers. This multilayered map of Anishinaabe storytelling, poem construction, visioning and revisioning of history reflects a landscape of survivance. The essays are gathered loosely around a structure based on the four brothers, reflecting a focus on the categories of history, transformation, critique, and challenge. These arrangements are not all-defining; the overlaps are considerable.

Majikawiz

As Chris LaLonde notes in chapter 1, "Louise Erdrich's *Books and Islands in Ojibwe Country: Writing, Being, Healing, Place*," Erdrich's second memoir confronts and navigates apprehensions of loss, in turn ruminating on the

means of countering loss. At the heart, he notes, are writing and place. Exploring the journey with her daughter and the writing journey of the memoir, LaLonde explores how Erdrich rearticulates an Anishinaabe sense of place and “tacitly critiques” Euro-American and Euro-Canadian authority. “The island-books articulate the story of the island that is the Earth on Turtle’s back,” he explains while pointing to their enduring legacy: “With *Books and Islands in Ojibwe Country*, Louise Erdrich rearticulates that story.”

Nichole Biber, meanwhile, writes about “The Old World Display and the New World Displaced” in a chapter focused on nineteenth-century Anishinaabe author Maungwudaus and his self-published account of travels intended to situate a cosmopolitan Anishinaabe perspective in the American public sphere. Her analysis with comparative commentary explains how Maungwudaus “favors adaptability over assimilation and the strategic intelligence of the realist over the default acquiescence of the victimized.”

The last chapter in this first section, frankly appraising David Treuer’s reception of both “great critical praise and pronounced censure,” Pdraig Kirwan’s “An Indian’s Journey and Tribal Memory” situates that critical rendering and Treuer’s praxis as requisite context for a full reading of *Rez Life*. That memoir, he argues, “sets Treuer’s literary production, and some of his more contrarian stances, in a wider and more fathomable context.” Treuer’s preoccupation with the power of the literary imagination certainly endures throughout those pages, but so do the social realities and historic legacies that give rise to “a direct consideration of many of the most pressing issues facing the communities [of Leech Lake and Red Lake].”

Bakaawiz

In “The Anishinaabe Eco-Poetics of Language, Life, and Place in the Poetry of Schoolcraft, Noodin, Blaeser, and Henry,” Susan Berry Brill de Ramirez explores the ethics of language and place through the work of four Anishinaabe poets who connect various points of time and place. She finds in the poems of Jane Schoolcraft, Margaret Noodin, Kimberly Blaeser, and Gordon Henry “a language and grammar of connection that opens itself up across poetic worlds” as they co-creatively explore the possibilities of language and story.⁴

Focusing on just one poet—Gordon Henry Jr.—Stuart Rieke homes in on the motif of sight as a shorthand for perception in more nuanced and complex terms. “Ambiguity and Empathy in the Poetry of Gordon

Henry Jr.” elaborates an ethical framework for reading a single poem by Henry. Rieke explores the significance of ambiguity and the openness to multiplicity of meaning in the poem that allow the reader to intuit specifically Anishinaabe ways of seeing.

Sharon Holm’s chapter, “Justice *in absentia*: The Re-stor(y)ing of Native Legal Presence through Narratives of Survivance in Gerald Vizenor’s ‘Genocide Tribunals,’” shines light on the enduring qualities of ethics and justice in Vizenor’s writing. Exploring the “intergenerational legacy of pain and loss” encapsulated by the suicide of Dane Michael White in the early 1970s, Holm’s chapter navigates the multiple myopias in institutional and colonial discourses that are the stuff and substance of Vizenor’s examination of how these Anishinaabe values endure and animate his post-Indian poetics, offering “counterstrategies and alternative interpretative vision(s) to the asymmetrical hierarchies of power enshrined in neoliberal settler-state legal regimes.”

Jiibayaaboozo

In “The Exceptional Power of the Dead in Heid E. Erdrich’s *National Monuments*,” Deborah L. Madsen examines how Erdrich “deconstructs the settler narrative of American exceptionalism” through the poetic recontextualization of human remains and other artefacts removed from the landscape in the process of settler colonization. “Throughout [Erdrich’s] volume,” she asserts, “the settler claim to a national identity that arises from occupation of the land” and the erasure of Native presence is subverted. The poems, in a sense, become monuments to endurance.

In “Anishinaabe Being and the Fallen God of Sun-Worshipping Victorians” Carter Meland contemplates the complex critical and literary conception of Naanabozho “as an ever-shifting, never fully knowable but always known spirit who lives in stories as a means to teach Anishinaabe people how to live as Anishinaabe people.” He invites readers to see the trickster’s creative-destructive, subversive-transgressive life as enduring inspiration. Citing Gerald Vizenor, Paul Radin, Carl Jung, Daniel Brinton, and others, he reviews and revises critical trickster theory.

Nanabozho

This final section opens with Jill Doerfler’s important “Beyond Borders of Blood: An Anishinaabe Tribalography of Identity.” Doerfler practices

LeAnne Howe's method of tribalogy as a method for connecting Anishinaabe stories. Her objective is to examine and narrate the stories of a community where collective and individual identity has been invented and maintained for centuries. She focuses on the White Earth reservation but speaks broadly of the Anishinaabeg. Through stories of individuals, she unmasks the manifestations of the group and calls for an end to terminal dominance.

Mixing Anishinaabe with English to practice Anishinaabe literary theory, Margaret Noodin recounts how Jim Northrup imagined new questions, teased critical interpretations, and shook the expectations of his audience. "Enduring Critical Poses, Beyond Nation and History" begins with a description of the storiverse, or *dibaa'jimoo'akii*, and situates Northrup's work in Anishinaabe literary existentialism, irony, and comedy.

Finally, echoing the ambivalence toward monumentalization in Madsen's chapter, David Stirrup's chapter, "Enduring Cultural Poses: Memory, Resistance, and Symbolic Sculpture," turns to the monuments and memorialized spaces that settler colonialism sets aside for its relationship with Native peoples. Focusing on two plays—*Chili Corn* by E. Donald Two-Rivers and *Ishi and the Wood Ducks* by Gerald Vizenor—Stirrup examines the counterdiscursive strategies and straightforward protest these authors invoke in deconstructing and dismantling the enduring cultural poses through which the dominant society has rendered the image of the indigenous monolithic. In the course of this discussion, Stirrup examines recent artistic interventions into and for the removal of problematic sculptures that significantly complicate any too-easy narrative of resistance and subversion such removals suggest, pointing to the enduring effect of asymmetries of power that these removals ironically emphasize. A short afterword returns us to story and a rumination on the question of filiation and affiliation that runs throughout these discussions of Anishinaabe texts and contexts.

Giga-dibaa'jimomin apane: Always Storytelling

At the heart of Anishinaabe storytelling is endurance through the centering of creative, sustaining, healing energy. The first brother shaped that energy into history, and the second brother gave form to stories as dance. When the third brother added the gift of the drum, the fourth brother, the one most human, could express all the trials of life through story, song, and dance. As time has passed, the dances and stories have evolved. The chapters in this collection come from many directions but, like the Thirsty

Dance, are created to promote peace and unity. Individuals make their own offerings, in some cases sacrificing a bit of themselves in the process. To truly understand others, we sometimes need to give up a bit of ourselves and be willing to bear the scars of life. Our intent is not to leave readers confused or to reduce the power of ceremonies by comparing them to literary criticism. We hope you will let go of presumption, hierarchy, and the hold of the present to travel through various times and landscapes to better understand the stories of the Anishinaabeg and perhaps in the end better understand yourself.

Notes

1. The most prominent works in this debate were Womack's *Red on Red*, Robert Warrior's *Tribal Secrets: Recovering American Indian Intellectual Traditions*, Jace Weaver's *That the People Might Live: Native American Literatures and Native American Community*, the three W's of American Indian literary nationalism, and Elvira Pulitano's *Toward a Native American Critical Theory*. The debate broadly revolved around a theoretical tradition most closely associated with the likes of Vizenor, Louis Owens, and Arnold Krupat and a literary nationalism inspired and encapsulated by figures such as Simon Ortiz and Elizabeth Cook-Lynn.

2. Such claims are, of course, usually fairly nebulous. With the explosion in Native literary output in recent years, we are not sure how true this statement remains. This is not to detract from the continued healthy state of Anishinaabeg literary production.

3. The *Tomahawk* was sold, moved, and rebranded the *Callaway Tomahawk* in 1927, in which year it also folded.

4. In the process of putting this volume together, the very sad news arrived that Susan Berry Brill de Ramírez and her husband had been killed in October 2018.

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