

BOOK REVIEWS

Brandao, José Antonio: *Your Fyre Shall Burn No More: Iroquois Policy toward New France and its Native Allies to 1701*, 1997, University of Nebraska Press: Lincoln and Nebraska, ISBN 0-8032-1274-7 Cloth US\$ 70.00, ISBN 0-8032-6177-2 Paper US\$ 19.99.

In this intriguing study of Iroquois policy, José Brandao approaches the topic of Iroquois policy toward New France through historical sources, quantitative methods and an assessment of the Iroquois point of view. His study does not attempt to cover all aspects of Iroquois society, but rather emphasizes those aspects of Iroquois life and culture which help to demonstrate Iroquois relations with the French and their allies to 1701. The focus is the nature of Iroquois-French relations as seen from the perspective of the Iroquois, including where applicable, their relations with other European and Aboriginal groups.

Brandao eschews the "Beaver Wars" interpretation to explain the Iroquois' relations with their neighbours, although he does devote considerable space to demolishing this economic scenario which has played its part throughout the years as a principle explanation for Iroquois actions. He replaces it with his own explanation based on Iroquois actions as they themselves understood them. This view is key to his re-interpretation of an Iroquois society which had undergone significant cultural change, including relations with neighbouring groups.

Brandao employs a quantitative approach in his study, including numerical data housed in appendices to bolster his interpretations of Iroquois actions and behaviour. Up to now other interpretations have been based, as he sees it, on impressions or a partial account of what the documents reveal. Brandao in contrast uses quantified data from the documents to make assertions about the probable reason for Iroquois actions and behaviour. He thus supports his case by not only a close reading of the documents, but by trying to quantify what they say. He does away with what he feels are unwarranted assumptions, such as the thinking that says all activities undertaken by the Iroquois were purely economic in nature, in line with the "Beaver Wars" interpretation of history. A good example is the Iroquois raids on fur brigades or smaller trading parties, which most interpreters have assumed were undertaken out of economic intent. Theft

raids were not exclusively the object of Iroquois warfare (p.53), at least according to the statistical analysis he performs in his interpretation of the outcomes of the many raids undertaken by the Iroquois. Ethno-historians who have employed the terms "economic motive" and "economic warfare" to explain Iroquois actions, have according to Brandao not really been adding anything useful to Iroquois studies. These inexact terms have no explanatory value nor descriptive value beyond encompassing a wide range of Iroquois actions. To Brandao,

A description of an action cannot serve as a substitute for explaining why the action occurred. In this sense, then, to reject the notion of economic warfare is merely to abandon a label that has served more to obscure than to clarify explanations of Iroquois actions (p.59).

Theft did not represent a primary goal of many of the Iroquois raids; to the contrary, theft of furs or goods was the least important of all the goals of Iroquois warfare (p.61).

There is little evidence that by the year 1600 the fur trade was of such a volume that it completely transformed Iroquois culture to provide furs to the Europeans to obtain trade goods (p.69). The Iroquois did indeed conduct many raids on Aboriginal groups near and far, but these were related to the capture of people to replace losses from warfare and disease, and not directly from a desire to control the fur trade. This pattern of warfare became so widespread and pervasive, that it resulted in, at times, whole groups voluntarily going over to the Iroquois as "captives." According to Brandao, the operative causes of raiding other groups were revenge, honour and the need to capture people, concepts which help explain warfare against specific groups. He then reasons that raiding other groups for captives took place after epidemics and that individuals may have "sought to assuage their grief by capturing the people for torture or to replace those recently deceased" (pp.75-77).

Did the Iroquois fight to obtain fur-bearing lands to trap furs to trade in for European goods as the Beaver Wars interpretation would have it? The French assumed that the Iroquois hunted for furs. This is a nice fit for the Beaver Wars interpretation, but against the facts when Iroquois society is looked at from the broader perspective of land use patterns and their need for a large land base to secure food. There is scanty evidence that the Iroquois had over-trapped and run out of furs, at least before 1670.

Furs were needed to purchase the weapons—from the Dutch or later the English—for the Iroquois to be able to carry on their warfare. Weapons affected the raid, whatever the initial motivation. The case of the Mohawks is instructive. The French refused to arm the Mohawks with weapons,

although they traded with the Hurons and Algonquins. French policy coupled with other perceived threats, such as building a military fortification on Mohawk land, finally convinced the Mohawks that France intended to be hostile toward them (pp.100-1).

There is a very interesting chapter on the efforts of some members of the Iroquois Confederacy to make peace with the French around 1653, the same year the Onondagas asked for a French post to be built and for Jesuits to come among them. The attempts to coordinate a coherent policy between the Mohawks and Onondagas toward the French makes for interesting reading. A great deal of mistrust existed between the Onondagas, the Mohawks, and other member groups of the Iroquois Confederacy to the extent that a Seneca negotiator and an Onondaga Chief were killed. To add to the confused state, not only were the Hurons still pursued, but factions within the various groups further stymied peace efforts with the French in the mid-1650s. By the early to mid-1660s peace with the French became imperative as losses from disease and warfare, and the influence of the Jesuits, made themselves keenly felt among the Mohawks and Senecas. The Confederacy as a whole sought peace with New France. Yet by the 1680s and 1690s "the Iroquois were united in their determination to extinguish the French "fyres" in North America" (p.116).

The early 1680s marked the beginning of Anglo-French commercial and imperial struggles. Iroquois hostility can in fact be traced to the expansionist policy of New France. During this period, the French continued to expand their network of Indian allies to the dismay of the Five Nations, especially when their enemies attacked them with guns liberally obtained from the French, and encroached on Iroquois lands in an effort to control their hunting areas. As Brandao reasons, "in short, the Iroquois saw French expansion for what it was: an attempt to encircle them and to circumscribe their hunting and military endeavours" (p.120). The Iroquois, Brandao asserts, went to war against New France because they had been provoked beyond endurance (p.122). Certainly, their enemies—the Illinois and Miamis—were encroaching on their lands. The French policy of building their forts in Iroquois hunting areas did not help matters any, Fort Frontenac being a prime example.

There follows a good discussion of the Iroquois attempts to enlist the English in their war against the French, even going so far as to suggest various ways that the French might be vulnerable. However, by 1701 the Iroquois had concluded a truce with the French mainly due to heavy losses of warriors, the inconstant help of the English and the fact that the English themselves had made peace with the French (p.127).

After the English made this peace with the French, the Iroquois had little choice but to come to terms with their old foes as well. Weakened by war and disease, they could not hope to defeat New France and her allies unaided. The Iroquois were even in danger of losing their hunting lands to the French and their allies. It was the Iroquois fear that they could no longer hold their lands by force that induced them to cede their hunting lands to the English.

In the end the Iroquois government was not cohesive enough to maintain unity of purpose toward the French, although the loose form of government was adequate to deal with Native groups. Brandao's thesis explains why the Iroquois made peace with New France in 1701, for if the Iroquois could not extinguish the French "fyres" they had to find a way to keep their own fires from being smothered (p. 129).

This book goes a long way to adding clarity to our understanding of the interactions between the Iroquois and New France up to the year 1701. Readers interested in the story after 1701 might wish to consult Richard Aquila's book, *The Iroquois Restoration: Iroquois Diplomacy and the Colonial Frontier, 1701-54* (originally 1983, recently reprinted).

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Morrisseau, Calvin: *Into the Daylight: A Wholistic Approach to Healing*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998, ISBN 0-8020-4341-0 Cloth CDN\$ 40.00, ISBN 0-8020-8162-2 Paper CDN\$ 14.95.

Aboriginal people will find hope within Morrisseau's reflections on his own struggles with addictions and his healing journey as an Aboriginal male. Counsellors and people on their own healing paths can benefit from his well-grounded practical advice laced with a deep commitment to traditional Native beliefs and practices. "Healing is a matter of the heart not just the 'head' (p.6)", he says, reaffirming that the deepest healing takes place on the spiritual level. *Into the Daylight* inspires the reader to recover, to

cooperate, to share, to find balance in spite of, or more rightly because of, the lessons placed in the paths of Aboriginal peoples.

Within a Native worldview, healing requires the acceptance of responsibility for who we are, where we belong, and what we are required to do. Morrisseau emphasizes not only an individual's responsibilities that families and communities have towards individuals. Using the sacred number four, he identifies quadrants of responsibility at each level and illustrates both how one can achieve this and what blocks one may encounter. Individuals are responsible for their feelings, bodies, sexuality and breath of life. Families are responsible for ensuring that children learn communication with others, the sacredness of sharing food, clear boundaries around intimacy, and respect for all members. The responsibilities of the community include ensuring a vision of healing for every member, providing opportunities for play and laughter and for individuals to come to know their purpose. Communities are the places where individuals and families are taught and traditional values are reinforced. Morrisseau gives detailed examples from his own life of how addictions interfere with responsibilities.

The need to recover a sense of identity to enable healing to occur for Aboriginal individuals, families and communities is a message that is reinforced consistently throughout this text. Morrisseau concludes with a chapter on wholism—the process of creating one's spirituality. Spiritual gifts are seen to be developed through proper understanding of adversity and through the power of reversal, another traditional teaching tool. Through acceptance of help from Creator and our brothers, sisters and Elders we receive the gift of humility. In order to ask for help, we must overcome our fears of inadequacy and become brave. "Courage is not the absence of fear but the overcoming of fear (p.91)". Honesty requires confronting denial, the biggest challenge of recovery. Through our ignorance and our mistakes and the mistakes of others we learn wisdom. Developing our ability to trust and share ourselves with others is a sacred experience that needs to take place without coercion for healing to occur. As we recover and heal we learn to care about others, taking the time necessary to create healthy relationships. "If we don't pass through these stages (acquaintance, companion, friend and finally lover), we often do not really get to know the person we are involved with (p.103)". Equality in our relationships is a co-requisite to health. "When equality exists, abuse cannot (p.104)" he says.

Morrisseau's message is accessible, strong and insightful. Rather than denying suffering, he bravely and honestly offers his own pain and recovery for the reader's scrutiny. Morrisseau acts as a wise and experienced role model, one who is on a hopeful path forward. He is someone that we can

all learn from as we engage in healing ourselves, our families and our communities.

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Murray, Laura J. and Keren Rice: *Talking on the Page: Editing Aboriginal Oral Texts*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999, ISBN 0802044336 Cloth CDN\$ 40.00, ISBN 0802082300 Paper CDN\$ 14.95.

Talking On The Page: Editing Aboriginal Oral Texts explores the relationship between orality and literacy, and tackles some of the thorny issues, both ethical and technical, involved in reducing oral discourse to written form. The book goes well beyond what is currently available in the literature on this contentious topic. It addresses the key questions raised when one takes what many Elders in the Algonquian tradition refer to as "living entities" (stories, legends, myths, teachings) and writes them down. As such, the book lays the foundation for ongoing dialogue and further exploration of the oral/literacy debate.

This book will appeal to a relatively wide audience, and not to a strictly academic one. The whole issue of reducing legends, stories, and teachings to written form is a lively topic in many of the Algonquin, Attikamekh, Ojibwe, and Cree communities where I have lived and worked over the years. The study of discourse, as well as the preparation of Aboriginal language teaching materials, most often relies on written transcriptions of naturally-occurring teachings, legends, stories and the like, and some argue that reducing actual talk to written form takes away the power of what is being spoken. Even written transcriptions, however, carry a power of their own, and this book does an excellent job of telling the interested reader exactly what that power is and how it might be important to the survival and preservation of First Nations cultures, histories and oral traditions. As the authors suggest in their respective ways, texts in the Amerindian tradition help to make what is said accessible to anyone interested in coming to a deeper understanding of culture-specific ways of thinking and perceiving, and provide evidence which cannot be easily dismissed by the preconcep-

tions of the reader. One of the recurrent themes in the collected papers in this volume is that legends, stories, life histories, and tribal teachings can be made accessible to all as documentaries of the knowledge systems of their cultures. This distillation process receives the bulk of attention in this collection, and rightfully so.

Discussion of the differing perspectives on the value of reducing oral traditions and life histories to written form is crucial. In the First Nation community where I lived for many years, for example, there was ongoing discussion about whether or not the legends, stories, life histories, and teachings should ever be written down. One group of Elders was intent on preserving themselves on cassette and videotape so that their stories and teachings could be "heard" for generations to come. Another group of Elders refused to be recorded or to have their stories and teachings written down. Their rationale was, in essence, that these legends, stories, and teachings are living persons, other-than-human persons, and ought to be preserved in the language given by the Creator. If the next generation doesn't understand them in Native language, then let them die. It's an ongoing, passionate debate, and the papers by Julie Cruikshank (Chapter 6) and Nora and Richard Dauenhauers (Chapter 1) make a dynamic and passionate contribution of their own to the question.

The paper by Kimberly Blaeser (Chapter 3) on translation as power/domination addresses one of the greatest dilemmas facing Native people today. Whether it is between Native persons, communities or entire nations, the basis of understanding in the fullest, culturally-specific sense is a question which touches directly on the nature of translation, from treaty interpretation and renegotiation to Native education, land claims, cultural identity and beyond. As well, the "subversive stance" (p.10 of Kimberly Blaeser's paper) taken by many Native writers is well worth exploring in a public forum. As Blaeser suggests, Native writers "... often find themselves negotiating against the authority of the very written tradition in which they are engaged" (p.59). This is an important issue and one which Blaeser brings to the forefront in lively fashion.

I particularly liked the Dauenhauers' discussion (Chapter 1) of some discourse-related features: the use of "narrative frame," including prefaces and closing of the telling setting, and a typical closing feature which I refer to as an appeal to authority (e.g. "This isn't just me telling this story [or teaching]. This [story or teaching] goes back a long way in our tradition."). The discussion of orthography is equally important. The orthography issue (and intra/inter-community arguments about it!) is regularly discussed and

revisited at community meetings in the Algonquin First Nation, and has been going on for a good fifteen years or more with no shared agreement to date.

A paper by Basil Johnston, "How Do We Learn Language? What Do We Learn?" (Chapter 2), fills out the volume.

This book fills a gap in the areas of Aboriginal discourse studies, the ethnography of writing, and the ethics of text. It should be accessible and informative not only to linguists and technolinguists working in Aboriginal contexts, but to lay readers, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, interested in coming to a better understanding of matters both linguistic and cultural. What is most impressive here is the bringing together of scholarly yet accessible work by a variety of voices exploring important and oft-neglected issues related to discourse analysis, the transcription and translation of oral tradition materials, and the ethical, practical, and technical aspects related to reducing what comes out of the mouth onto the written page. I most certainly recommend it to other interested readers.

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Pryce, Paula: *"Keeping the Lakes' Way:" Reburial and the Re-creation of a Moral World Among an Invisible People*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999, ISBN 0-802044190 Cloth CDN\$ 45.00, ISBN 0-802008223-8 Paper CDN\$ 17.95

Keeping the Lakes' Way tells a remarkable and important story but also resonates with theoretical insight and a transdimensional understanding of place, time, and, "a People." In six tightly organized chapters enriched with very useful endnotes, two appendices, maps and photos, Pryce writes the history, ethnography and current political circumstance of the Interior Salish (Sinixt) who are also known as the "Lakes" people. Declared officially extinct by the Canadian government in 1956, the Lakes have, since 1989, regularly crossed the international boundary from Washington on pilgrimage to their ancestral territory in the Slocan Valley of British Columbia. They have established a camp at Vallican from whence they have reconfirmed their integrity as a People with an unbroken and defining connection to the land from which they have been largely alienated for about 100 years. Without legal claim to the land or official recognition as an Aboriginal group by the

government of Canada, they have returned home. But Pryce's argument, rooted in the Bahktinian concept of the chronotope, makes clear that in ways that are as fundamental in the Sinixt world as they are elusive within the White, they have never been absent. They have returned not simply to claim land, but to possess themselves, to possess their history, and to make manifest in their own lives the essential bond that makes them not vanished, not imagined, not remembered, but ontologically real to and for themselves.

The centre of this process of consolidation is reburial. At Vallican, the Lakes have reburied ancestors whose peace was threatened by development. They have, as well, reclaimed and reburied remains held by museums and universities. Homeland is returned to spiritual vigour and function through reburial. The integrity of the present is attached to the power of the past, and time in its unseamed wholeness grafted to the power of land and its complex of social memory through reburial. It is again possible for a People to own itself through ownership of its dead. It is again possible for the land to possess the People through reburial. Seeded by reburial, the promise of a renewed, comprehensible, moral world—the world of the ancestors—can again be imagined. The renewal theme of the Lakes is held in a sustaining historical and political nexus that includes the Prophet Dance (Ghost Dance amongst Plains Aboriginal groups), the Native American Church, and the wilderness preservation ethic of the Valhalla Wilderness Society and Slovan Valley Watershed Alliance amongst others.

As a person raised in the West Kootenays, a region without a local Indigenous population in her childhood, the saga of the Lakes has obviously struck a personal note for Pryce. The work has a dimension of controlled passion in tone and in razor sharp argumentation that makes it not only a fine work of scholarship but also a compelling read.

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Snell, Alma Hogan (Becky Matthews Editor): *Grandmother's Grandchild: My Crow Indian Life*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000, ISBN 0-8032-4277-8 Cloth US\$ 30.00, ISBN 0-8032-9291-0 Paper US\$ 12.95.

A valuable addition to Nebraska's American Lives Series, Alma Snell's autobiography provides an informative and often moving account of the life of a Crow woman whose rootedness in the Crow way but openness to change has filled her seventy-eight years with richness and resolve. Having lost her mother while still an infant, Alma was raised a *kaalisbapite*, a "grandmother's grandchild." Pretty Shield, born in 1856 was a youngster at the time of the signing of the Fort Laramie Treaty (1868) that formalized the reservation system. Her long life encompassed the painful, open-ended transition from a communal hunting culture to the captivity and alienation of reservation life. Alma recalls a childhood passed within the embrace of a world of prescribed work, integrity, and value for all individuals, female and male.

But function and usefulness were held within an unbounded space of mystery and wonder; a world that encouraged spiritual engagement and rewarded competency and imagination. Pretty Shield, by her own example, was not only able to pass on traditional skills such as tanning, sewing, root gathering and food preparation, but also a spiritual geography in which humankind acted within a god-centered, god-accessible world. Her husband, Goes Ahead, may have cast his medicine bag in the river at baptism, but two complementary systems of faith remained vital: the one that identified the centre as *lichiihkbaalia* ("First Maker") through the agency of *baaxpee* ("medicine"), and the other that identified it as *Akbaatashee* ("One Who Made Everything") through the agency of *Ischawuuan-nakkaasua* ("The One Pierced in the Hand). It remains vital for Alma, a committed Christian, for whom the spiritual world of the Crow continues to provide meaning.

Alma Snell protects memory by its cultivation. Still the master of traditional life skills, she has become a teacher, a lecturer and a keeper of memory. Her story is spontaneously recalled and recorded in lightly edited conversation with editor, Becky Matthews. Of particular note is the fact that Alma's story intersects and advances that of Pretty Shield, recorded and published by Linderman (1932). Vivid in its description of the mood and tenor of reservation life, the closeness and trust of personal relationships, Alma's recollections are not uniformly detailed but neither are they obviously selective. She has had to come to grips with elemental cultural conflict, bureaucracies and personal struggle. Generous in charity, her

strength is self-knowledge and spiritual competency—the gift of the *kaal-
isbaapite* that preserves vision in a field choked in contradiction.

Grandmother's Grandchild is a beautifully told story and a useful new resource for both the general reader and scholar.

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Womack, Craig S.: *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism*.
Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999. viii + 336 pp.,
bibliography, index. ISBN 0-8166-3023-2. Paper US\$ 18.95.

Little did N. Scott Momaday realize upon publishing *House Made of Dawn* in 1969 that a Native American literary renaissance would materialize. During the next thirty years large numbers of Native writers, including the first wave of Louise Erdrich, Gerald Vizenor, Leslie Silko and later the like of Adrian C. Louis, Thomas King and Ray A. Young Bear, would produce hundreds of books of imaginative work built on a literary tradition that *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism* author Craig Womack (Muskogee Creek) states was well established prior to European occupation in North America. Womack also contends that the intellectual and cultural traditions required for literary analysis of Native literature were firmly in place.

Arguing that the meaning of these works changes upon evaluation by the dominant culture, Womack is keenly aware of the pitfalls inherent in analyzing Native authors' contributions according to the western literary tradition, where cultural meanings and subtle motifs are oftentimes ignored, overlooked, or simply misunderstood. *Red on Red* is an important book, a bridge to a better understanding of Native literatures, which according to the author deserve to be recognized as "not some branch waiting to be grafted onto the main trunk. Tribal literatures are the *tree*, the oldest literatures in the Americas, the most American of American literatures. We are the canon" (pp.6-7).

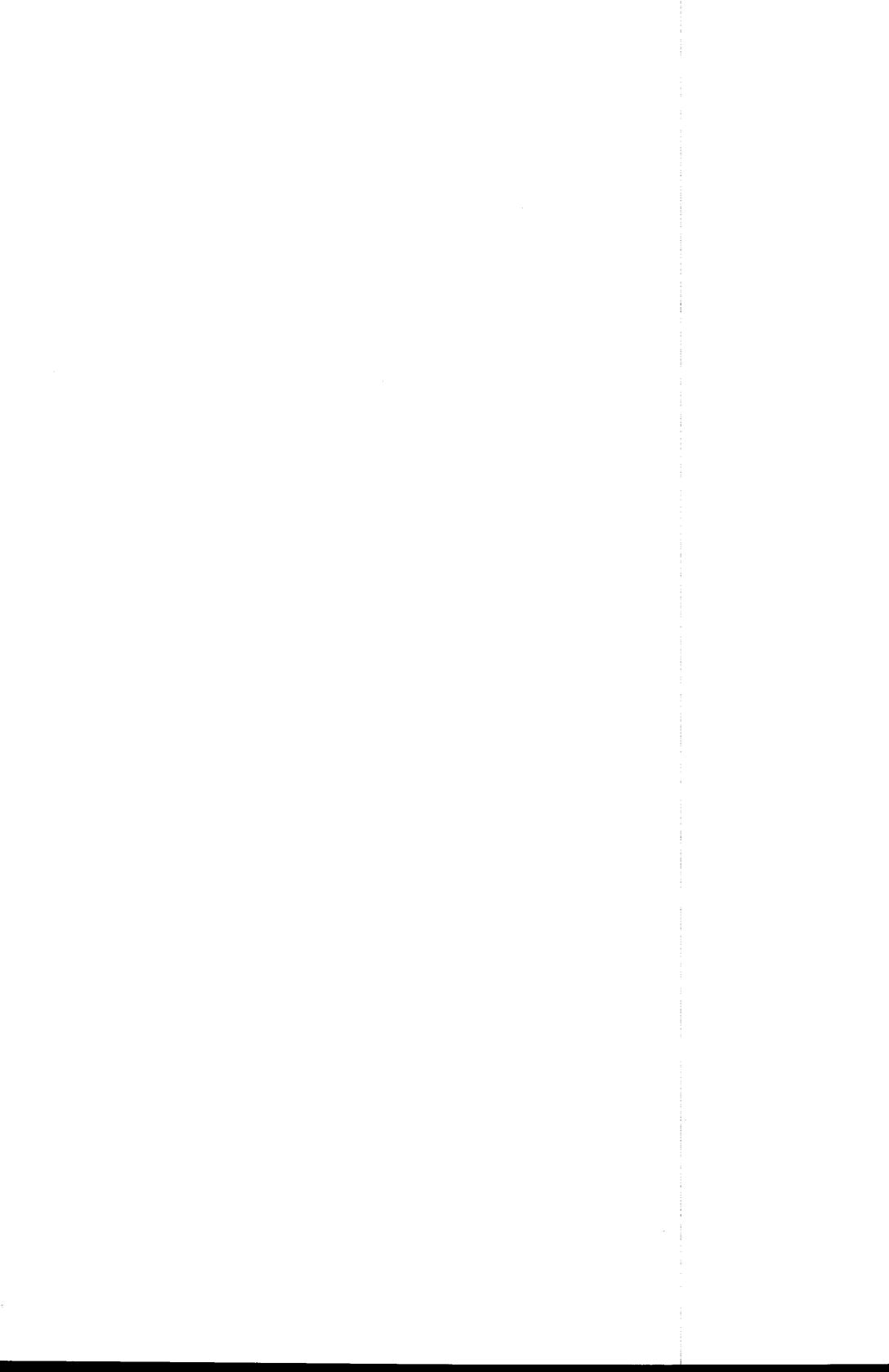
Womack's text is an engaging book imbued with humor and personal insight. He opens by providing a general history of the Creek nation, the purpose being to illustrate that "Native literature, and Native literary criticism, written by Native authors, is part of sovereignty: Indian people

exercising the right to present images of themselves and to discuss those images" (p.14). This introduction to Creek culture also provides the foundation required to better understand the author's discussion of Creek writers Alice Callaghan, Alexander Posey, Louis Oliver and Joy Harjo as well as the evolution of Creek tribal literature and nation sovereignty. Womack argues convincingly that traditional literary techniques such as minimalism and biculturalism are not adequate for properly understanding the particulars of Native literature and the stories that are born out of geographically specific landscapes.

Also of this landscape are the fictional characters created by Creek writers Alexander Posey early in the 1900s, a variety of personas Posey developed in order to comment in newspapers on local events in Creek country. Womack utilizes Posey's characters effectively, resulting in some of *Red on Red's* more humorous moments. This 'Creek chorus' summarizes the chapters through humorous interplay designed to provide a "down home on the rez" insight to the questions Womack raises in the essays. If there is any limitation to *Red on Red*, it is that it takes time to get accustomed to these characters' dialogue, as highlighted in the character Stijaati's concerns regarding the role Native and non-Native literary critics play in Creek country: "How can these here what you call literary criticizers, mebeso, Native Lit Critters, include that feedback in their discussions of Creek literature? How can Native Lit Critters carry on a discussion of Creek culture as a conversation *with* Creek people rather than speaking *for* Creek people? How can white Lit Critters become helpers, rather than Indian experts? How can they promote the work of Native people over their own, and still keep up their own good efforts at contributing to Native literary development?" (p.127). Womack's 'Creek chorus' is a unique and entertaining way to summarize the chapters from a distinctly Creek perspective.

Womack has produced a significant book that will have a direct impact on how Native literature is analyzed. By simply learning more about an author's culture, new life can be breathed into already powerful books such as Jeannette Armstrong's *Slash* or Maria Campbell's *Half-breed*. Native works by writers of whatever Nation will be recognized as studies of the community from which they came. Simply put, a better understanding of the community and its history from which these works are born can only improve our appreciation and make the reading of Native literature a more satisfying experience.

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“When the Rations Ran Out” - Elaine Russell

When I was growing up on Murrin Bridge Mission NSW in the 1950s the government would give each Aboriginal family rations according to how many people were in that family. Rations included such things as flour, tea leaves, sugar, powdered milk, tin jam and baking powder. And when the food sometimes ran out before the next ration day, some families would go out into the bush and camp, just like my family did one day.

In my painting you can see Mum getting the campfire ready to cook our supper. Dad went fishing and my brother and I went gathering firewood for the campfire while my other brother set rabbit traps, (not to catch rabbits, but possums). That's right, I know it sounds strange but that's exactly what he did. Just before sundown he would take the traps out and set them at the base of the gumtrees and sprinkle flour onto the traps, then at night the possums saw the flour and would come down to eat it and that's when the traps would go off.

If we didn't catch any possums, just across the Lachian River there were plenty to sheep and kangaroos and plenty of other wildlife out there in the bush and Dad knew where to go for wild berries and yams.

We enjoyed ourselves when we went camping. It didn't happen all that often but when it did it was great! We also left our old corrugated tin canoe on the river bank which was always there when we came back.

I have incorporated traditional art symbols in with the contemporary style painting that I do.

Without a past, we have no future. We draw strength in different ways from our past.



This symbol means that it is a “Meeting Place” or a “Waterhole”. But to me it is a Place where The People met.



These are the tracks of a sand Goanna (or Lizard). And to the Aboriginal People it is a delicacy.



Hunting Weapons (Spears) - The first spear is used only when the Hunter want to wound and not kill, because it was meant to go right through whoever, or whatever they threw it at because they were able to pull it out. But, Number 2 spear is meant to kill only because when they speared you, it couldn't come out because of the jagged edge.



Boomerang - This also is a weapon that they hunted with. Some boomerangs came back to you when you threw them, and some were made just to kill. Whoever or whatever they were thrown at.