

Rebecca Matheson
Sue Matheson
Tyler Turcotte
Jacob A. Bruggeman
Daniel Lewis
Chingshun J. Sheu

John G. Hansen
Rupert M. Loydell
Karen Wall
Ifeoma Ezinne Odinye
Johnson A. Odeyemi
Ayokunmi O. Ojebode
Aaron Duplantier
Adjeketa Blessing

September 2019

the quint 11.4

the quint

volume eleven issue four

an interdisciplinary quarterly from
the north

ISSN 1920-1028

editor

Sue Matheson

film review editor

Antonio Sanna

the quint welcomes submissions. See our guidelines
or contact us at:

the quint
University College of the North
P.O. Box 3000
The Pas, Manitoba
Canada R9A 1K7

We cannot be held responsible for unsolicited
material

production

Sue Matheson

cover photo: Rebecca Matheson

A quarterly journal, *the quint* is housed by the Faculty of Arts, Business and Science at the University of the North. The encouragement and support of this project by the Vice President Academic of the University College of the North is deeply appreciated.

Copyright 2019© *the quint* for the contributors. No part of this publication may be reproduced.

Editorial Advisory Board

Moshen Ashtiany, *Columbia University*

Brenda Austin-Smith, *University of Manitoba*

Keith Batterbe, *University of Turku*

Donald Beecher, *Carleton University*

Melanie Belmore, *University College of the North*

Gerald Bowler, *Independent Scholar*

Robert Budde, *University Northern British Columbia*

John Butler, *Independent Scholar*

David Carpenter, Professor Emeritus, *University of Saskatchewan*

Terrence Craig, *Mount Allison University*

Lynn Echevarria, *Yukon College*

Erwin Erdhardt, III, *University of Cincinnati*

Peter Falconer, *University of Bristol*

Peter Geller, *University of the Fraser Valley*

Susan Gold, *University of Windsor*

Peter Gordon, *Independent Scholar*

Jim Gough, *Athabasca University*

John George Hansen, *University of Saskatchewan*

Richard Harris, *University of Saskatchewan*

Stella Hockenull, *University of Wolverhampton*

Didi Hutchins, *University of Alaska (Anchorage)*

Deborah Lynn Kitchen Døderlein, *University of Oslo*

Ying Kong, *University College of the North*

Martin Kuester, *University of Marburg*

Ronald Marken, Professor Emeritus, *University of Saskatchewan*

Camille McCutcheon, *University of South Carolina Upstate*

Lorraine Meyer, *Brandon University*

Ray Merlock, *University of South Carolina Upstate*
 Antonia Mills, Professor Emeritus, *University of Northern British Columbia*
 Ikuko Mizunoe, Professor Emeritus, *Kyoritsu Women's University*
 Avis Mysyk, *Cape Breton University*
 Hisam Nakamura, *Tenri University*
 Andrew Patrick Nelson, *University of Montana*
 Julie Pelletier, *University of Winnipeg*
 Vincent Pitturo, *Denver University*
 Frances Pheasant-Kelly, *University of Wolverhampton*
 Christian Riegel, *University of Regina*
 Steve Roe, *Northern Lights College*
 Dan Smith, *University College of the North*
 Robert Spindler, *University of Innsbruck*
 Nicholas Tyrras, Independent Scholar
 Darrell Varga, *NSCAD*
 Gene Walz, *University of Manitoba*
 Robin Waugh, *Wilfred Laurier University*
 David Williams, *University of Manitoba*

contents

Summer Memory by Rebecca Matheson.....	8
EDITORIAL	9
Hard Rain by Rebecca Matheson.....	11
Cree Spiritual Teachings: Indigenous Stories of the Sky People by John G. Hansen.....	12
BROKEN DAYS: SLEEPWALKING by Rupert Loydell.....	22
SORRY FOR YOUR LOSS by Rupert Loydell.....	23
Fall Collage by Rebecca Matheson.....	24
Marked and unremarkable bones: Sacred sites and second comings by Karen Wall.....	25
DEAR FATHER by Rupert Loydell.....	66
Another Fall Collage by Rebecca Matheson.....	67
Fleshing Out Memory through Feminist Consciousness: Psychoanalyzing Violent Girlhood Experiences in Buchi Emecheta's <i>The Bride Price</i> by Ifeoma Ezinne Odinye.....	68
ANOTHER SIDE OF THE SKY by Rupert Loydell.....	98
Dock at Devon by Rebecca Matheson.....	99
Toponymie: Etude littéraire de cinq villes sélectionnées dans les surnoms d'Alaafin d'Oyo by Johnson A. Odeyemi and Ayokunmi O. Ojebode.....	100
BEFORE YOU GO by Rupert Loydell.....	119
Caged by Rebecca Matheson.....	120

contents

Understanding and Historicizing the Reactionary Rhetoric around Digital Consumer Tech by Aaron Duplantier.....	121
ELUSIVE by Rupert Loydell.....	144
Fall Collage #3 by Rebecca Matheson.....	145
The Relevance of a Cultural Policy in Sustenance of Traditional Festival Performances in Contemporary Nigeria by Adjeketa Blessing.....	146
SUNSHINE BOY by Rupert M. Loydell.....	160
Something Wicked by Rebecca Matheson.....	161
Residential school experience and conciliation: laughter and the healing of Gabriel Oskimasis in Tomson Highway's <i>The Kiss of the Fur Queen</i> by Sue Matheson.....	162
TROUBLED CHILD by Rupert M. Loydell.....	182
The Edge at Five by Rebecca Matheson.....	183
Dead End Rez by Tyler Turcotte.....	184
ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW by Rupert M. Loydell.....	191
Ground Zero by Rebecca Matheson.....	192
Film Review: <i>The Ballad of Buster Scruggs: And Other Tales of the American Frontier</i>—with color plates by Jacob A. Bruggeman.....	193

contents

BEWILDERED by Rupert M. Loydell.....	200
Winter's Premonition by Rebecca Matheson.....	201
Film Review: Confronting Toxic Masculinity in <i>Minding the Gap</i> by Daniel Lewis.....	202
LOVELESS PRAYERS by Rupert M. Loydell.....	208
Devon Rocks by Rebecca Matheson.....	209
A Tale of One City: <i>Widows (2018)</i> by Chingshun J. Sheu.....	210
Hold On Tight! by Rebecca Matheson.....	217
OUTGOING by Rupert M. Loydell.....	218
GOLEM by Rupert M. Loydell.....	219
SUPPORTING STATEMENT by Rupert M. Loydell.....	220
Old Timer by Rebecca Matheson.....	221
CONTRIBUTORS	222
Northern Lava by Rebecca Matheson.....	225
CFPMOSAIC	226
SUBMISSION	226
GUIDELINES	226
CALL FOR PAPERS	226



EDITORIAL

Once again, it is September. The leaves are slow to turn color this year. The weather is unseasonably warm and wet. This, the quint's forty fourth issue, begins with John G. Hansen's meditation on the intersection of spirituality and Cree philosophy in "Cree Spiritual Teachings: Indigenous Stories of the Sky People." Karen Wall's fascinating discussion of the agency that the dead continue to have to influence everyday environments, actions, and bodies of knowledge in "Marked and unremarkable bones: Sacred sites and second comings" follows, introducing a new perspective on the ideological constructions of Indigenous peoples. Next, in "Fleshing Out Memory through Feminist Consciousness: Psychoanalyzing Violent Girlhood Experiences in Buchi Emecheta's *The Bride Price*," Ifeoma Ezinne Odinye examines the effects of psychosocial trauma affecting Emecheta's girl-child. Johnson A. Odeyemi and Ayokunmi O. Ojebode use the names of five ancient Yoruba cities to offer a compelling argument that Alaafin (the emperor of the medieval Oyo empire in West Africa) should be considered an arbitrator, promoter and curator of Yoruba culture and traditions.

Then, in a challenging examination, Aaron Duplantier's "Understanding and Historicizing the Reactionary Rhetoric around Digital Consumer Tech" considers how technological advancement destabilizes society's axioms swiftly and overtly, creating collective traumatic moments that are followed by reaction. Following, Adjeketa Blessing's "The Relevance of a Cultural Policy in Sustenance of Traditional Festival Performances in Contemporary Nigeria" interrogates the root cause of the decline of Edegborode annual youth festival as one among the many Nigerian traditional festivals that are on the verge of falling and finds the biggest factor responsible for this decline hangs on the failure of implementation of the nation's cultural policy. Sue Matheson's "Residential school experience and conciliation: laughter and the healing of Gabriel Oskimasis in Tomson Highway's *The Kiss of the Fur Queen*" considers the importance of Native American clowning and laughter during healing journey of Gabriel Oskimasis. Following, by Jacob A. Bruggeman's film review, "The Ballad of Buster Scruggs: And Other Tales of

the American Frontier—with color plates” considers Joel and Ethan Coen’s nihilism in their latest Western. Daniel Lewis’ “Confronting Toxic Masculinity in Minding the Gap” examines the complexities and awkward questions that accompany modern day manhood. Finally, Chingshun J. Sheu is a thoughtful examination of an unusual heist film, *A Tale of One City: Widows* (2018), brilliantly expresses the interconnectedness across genders, races, ethnicities, income levels, religious denominations of Chicago.

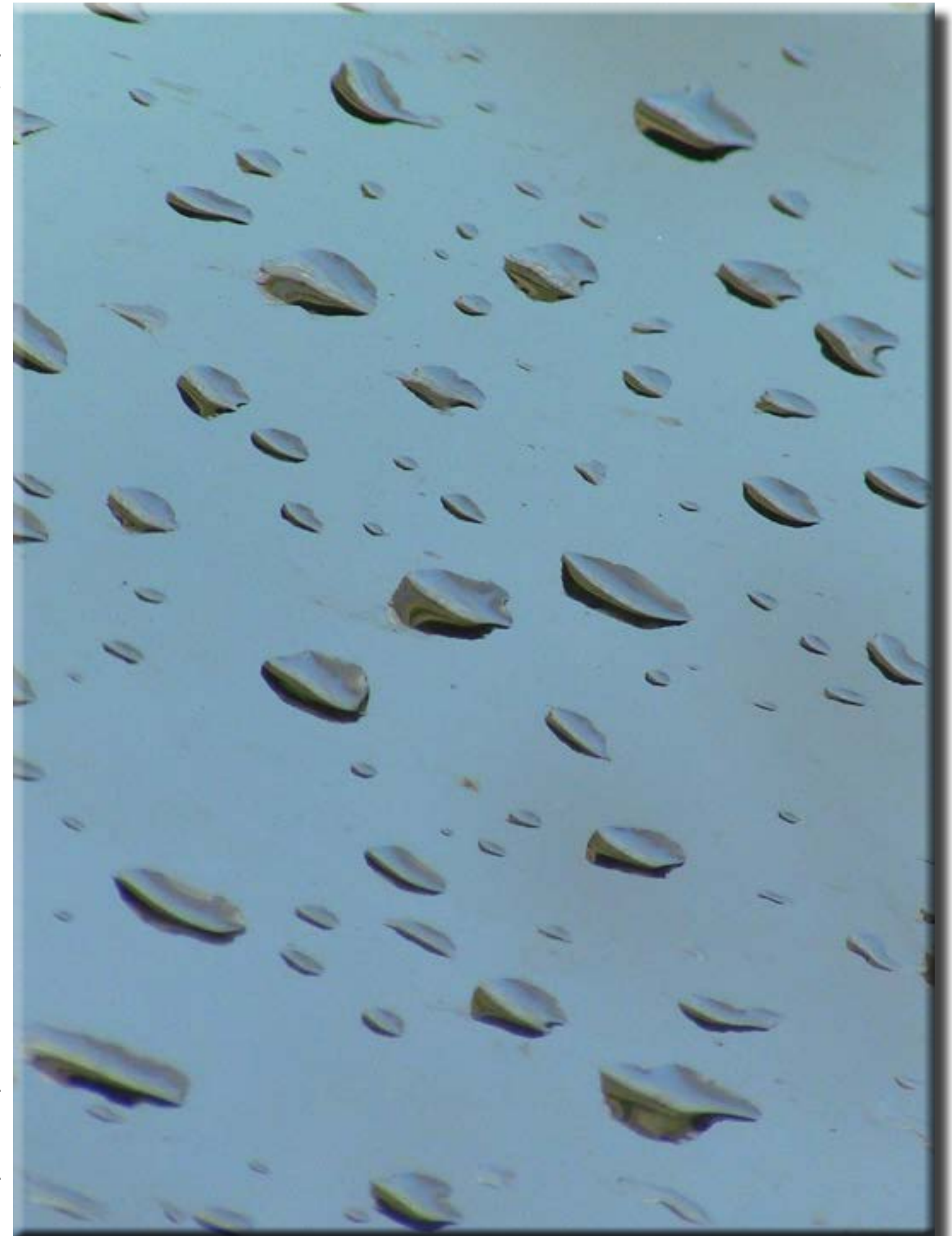
No quint is complete without its creative component. This issue is honored to house Rupert M. Loydell’s sequence, *Broken Days*. Loydell’s poems are stunningly taut and excruciatingly honest. Tyler Turcotte’s short story, *Dead End Rez* is equally uncompromising in its examination of life and loss. Both are accompanied by the unusual visual offerings of the North in Rebecca Matheson’s study of Devon Park, located on the edge of the Red Deer River in *The Pas*, Manitoba.

Here’s to warm drinks and wood stove fires as the weather continues to cool. There are few birds this year stopping in the fields. One young goose, however, stopped to visit my domestic flock until his encounter with hunters healed. He continued South a few days ago, his damaged remiges slowly lifting him above the ground. With luck, he will return when the weather warms. quint will return before him, bringing more interesting and insightful reading just in time for Christmas.

Sue Matheson

Editor

Hard Rain



Rebecca Matheson

Cree Spiritual Teachings: Indigenous Stories of the Sky People

John G. Hansen

University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Abstract

This paper provides discussion of the Star People in relation to Indigenous memories of the past. The stories that guide the information determines the ways of knowing. Second, the article considers the premise that Indigenous peoples have stories that teach us important lessons for living. What Indigenous peoples saw in their observations of the skies became the basis of our understanding of the Sky People and speaks of Indigenous teachings. This article's fundamental assumption is that Indigenous stories hold important lessons that can help colonized Indigenous people heal by identifying teaching processes based on Indigenous spiritual teachings and culture. Since Indigenous perspectives have long been ignored by Western colonizing research this article will focus on Indigenous accounts. Since the author is a member of the Opaskwayak Cree Nation located in northern Manitoba, the article focuses on Cree spiritual teachings, which may resonate with other Indigenous groups.

Introduction

Stories of Sky People and other spiritual beings have been around the Indigenous world for as long Indigenous people can remember. Such stories of Sky People coming to earth to teach lessons in Indigenous societies go back to unrecorded time. For many Indigenous peoples, the history of the Star People emerged not from myths, but from real events that they saw, passed down through oral tradition primarily by Elders and knowledge keepers who passed down this spiritual and cultural information to the next generations. At the beginning of the colonial period, the non-Western World, that is the Indigenous world, were observing and recording what they saw in the sky. By the end of the twentieth century those teachings of the Sky People had shifted to the realm of fiction or fantasy, with new Unidentified Flying Objects (UFO) accounts in Western culture. The formation of Indigenous stories of the Sky People took place before 1492, and this development is reflected in Indigenous oral histories.

The Marginalization of Indigenous Stories

One way popularized Western culture functions to marginalize Indigenous people and silence their voices. The anthropologist Saethre (2007) notes that "On 24 June 1947 while flying his private plane near Mt Rainier, Washington, Kenneth Arnold saw nine shining discs which he described as flying 'like a saucer would if you skipped it across the water'...Arnold's statement was misquoted in the press and flying saucers were born (2007:219). Saethre maintains that research on UFO's has been conducted " almost exclusively on the perceptions and experiences of 'Western' 'white' people, ignoring

interpretations of indigenous minority groups who inhabit first world nation states” (Saurthre, 2007:218). As a result, Indigenous narratives of the sky people have been largely ignored.

Perhaps the most crucial issues about Indigenous people’s social exclusion is the lack of inclusion in societies institutions. For example, Indigenous peoples in Western societies experience higher levels of exclusion in institutions such as employment, education, housing, and so on (Adams, 2000; Hansen & Antsanen, 2015; Hansen & Antsanen, 2016; Hansen, & Hetzel, 2018; Wotherspoon & Hansen, 2013).

Popular Western interpretations of unidentified flying objects are rooted in mainstream accounts. As a result, Indigenous accounts of the Sky People have been largely ignored. Since the colonization of Turtle Island the Western world’s ethnocentric interpretation has dominated research, including the existence of life from out of this world. It has shaped the way the population perceive and interpret the unknown. However, recently a few avenues have produced favorable interpretations of Indigenous knowledge of the Sky People that are non-Western. Saurthre, 2007, notes that, “In 1996, Sioux, Hopi, Iroquois, Choctaw, Oneida, Seneca, Yaqui, Mayan, Maori, and Saami individuals participated in the Star Knowledge Conference, a forum in which indigenous knowledge of extraterrestrials was shared with non-indigenous UFO enthusiasts” (2007:218). Many Indigenous peoples believe that spiritual beings such as the Sky People have visited their communities in order to teach lessons for living, and this development is reflected in their narratives and oral histories (Childress, 1992; Hansen, 1942; Oge-Make, 1949; Saurthre, 2007; Von Daniken, 1968; Hansen, 2019).

Within Indigenous societies, spiritual theories are often accepted to determine the real situation. As with many Indigenous cultures, the Cree used stories for teaching values, ethics, histories and culture to the next generation. Waziyatawin (2005) has said of Indigenous narratives.

Our stories have served and continue to serve very important functions: both the historical and mythical stories provide moral guidelines by which one should live; they teach the young and remind the old what appropriate and inappropriate behavior consists of in our cultures; they provide a sense of identity and belonging, situating community members within their lineage and establishing their relationship to the natural world (14).

While Indigenous communities have their own particular narratives they share some common references to the Sky People. Indigenous narratives teach us to have respect for all living things and provides a sense of identity that led the people to develop a reciprocal relationship with nature. Richard Wagamese a respected member of the Wabaseemoong nation claims that the sky people came to teach his people lessons for living a long time ago. He states the: “star people had brought with them teachings and stories that were spiritual along with maps of the cosmos and these had been freely offered. He went on to say that the stories tell of them being loving and kind and that they set a good example. When they had left Earth, his people said that they felt loneliness like no other.” (Aliens and UFO’s , 2017). This passage demonstrates that the Star People were very kind and not at all hostile. They had kindness and sense of compassion that led them to be remembered and revered by the Wabaseemoong people. Long after the star

people returned to the cosmos the Indigenous peoples continue to speak of them in their oral histories, education systems and culture.

The notion that the Sky People came to visit human societies in ancient times brings us to contemplate a theory about the world. Since there are countless billions of stars in the universe and Indigenous cultures teach us the sky people came to visit a long time ago. The visitors taught lessons for living. This the cultural, sensible, reasonable, and likely theory for cultural development, of emotional development, of human development. In some Indigenous cultures, the beings came down to earth on a thunderbird and thus became a human being. “The Cree believed that in a time before history, their ancestors arrived from the stars in spirit form, only to become humans on Earth” (Ufoholic, 2007:1). Stella Neff, a Cree Elder from Northern Manitoba received spiritual teachings from her Elders.

My personal development was given to me in a very deep sense as I was growing up because it was connected with my spirituality. And it was the stories that were told that developed us into who we are because when you think of these stories that were told there is so much about me that I know is spiritual (Cited in Hansen, 2019:163). The more Cree teachings are examined, the more they are seen as spiritual. Indigenous teachings are powerful because they become an integral part of the thought processes of the Indigenous people in their communities and shape their reality and identity. The Cree scholar Ermine notes that, “ the being in relation to the cosmos possessed intriguing and mysterious insights that provided insights into existence. Western knowledge was being used for dominance and in effect produced a state of false consciousness” (1995:102). This

statement by Ermine demonstrates the dual relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. Understood this way, the Western colonizer suffers from false consciousness. Within Indigenous ways of knowing Ermine teaches us that the Cree community were searching within themselves in order to find themselves. He writes, “In their quest to find meaning in the outer space, Aboriginal people turned to the inner space. This inner space is that universe of being that I within each person that is synonymous with the soul, the spirit, the self, or the being” (Ermine, 1995: 103). The rituals and ceremonies that continue to be practiced have withstood generations of residential schools, colonization and imperialism.

Indigenous peoples such as the Cree are part of a larger Indigenous narrative, and will continue to be part of the cultural narratives that speak of the supernatural beings from the stars. However, Indigenous narratives have been dismissed as legends and myths. There is much significance about the spiritual, and the star people have taught the people lessons for living for thousands of years, which are only partially being taken seriously today. However, accounts of UFO’s have been found all over the world, independently of each other, and for thousands of years. Von Daniken argues that the existence of life not of this world is mathematically probable:

Without quoting fantastic figures or taking unknown galaxies into account, we may surmise that there are 18,000 planets comparatively close to the earth with conditions essential to life similar to those of our own planet. Yet we can go even further and speculate that if only 1 percent of these 18,000 planets were actually inhabited, there would still be 180 left! (Von

Daniken, 1969: 1).

Some scholars argue that ancient cultures suggest that life came from outer space (Childress, 1992; Däniken, 1969). Western science teaches us that we have asteroids which crashed on earth that contain amino acids, which are the building blocks of life. These essential amino acids have been acknowledged as fostering life in Western science. Referring back to the Indigenous stories of the Wabaseemoong, the star people were very kind and taught them a great deal about life a long time ago. For many Indigenous cultures, such as the Swampy Cree the accounts of interacting and receiving teachings from spiritual beings are not fiction, they are considered real events. Our ancestors viewed the world with an open mind and this is what we should continue to do.

Conclusion

This article provided considerable discussion on Indigenous stories of the Sky People, which have been undermined by a Western interpretation that has dominated the Indigenous world for so long. Such marginalization has served to colonize or silence Indigenous voices. Because Indigenous peoples have had their voices silenced in colonizing research this paper provides a contribution to the literature on the Sky People. Many Indigenous people around the world will continue to share their stories about life on Earth and in the outer space because they never completely lost their cultural practices in who they are, and they never lost their spiritual teachings and memories of the Sky People.

References

- Adams, H. (2000). Challenging Eurocentric history. *Expressions in Canadian Native studies*, 40-53.
- Aliens and UFO's (2017) Available online. <https://www.disclose.tv/heres-why-native-americans-have-no-fear-of-aliens-315518>.
- Childress, D. H. (1992). *Lost Cities of North & Central America*. Adventures Unlimited Press.
- Däniken, E. V. (1969). *Chariots of the Gods*. Bantam, New York.
- Ermine, W. (1995), Aboriginal epistemology. In Battiste, M., & Barman, J. (Eds) *First Nations education in Canada: The circle unfolds.* 101-12.
- Hansen, J. G. , Dim, E. E. (2019). Canada's Missing and Murdered Indigenous People and the Imperative for a More Inclusive Perspective. *The International Indigenous Policy Journal*, 10(1). Retrieved from: <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/iipj/vol10/iss1/2> DOI: 10.18584/iipj.2019.10.1.2.
- Hansen, J. G. (2018). Cree Elders' Perspectives on Land-Based Education: A Case Study". *Brock Education: A Journal of Educational Research and Practice*. pp 74-91. Vol 28, No 1. <https://journals.library.brocku.ca/brocked/index.php/home/article/view/783>.
- Hansen, J. G., & Antsanen, R. (2018). What Can Traditional Indigenous Knowledge Teach Us About Changing Our Approach to Human Activity and Environmental

- Stewardship in Order to Reduce the Severity of Climate Change?. The International Indigenous Policy Journal, 9(3). Retrieved from: <https://ir.lib.wo.ca/iipj/vol9/iss3/6> DOI: 10.18584/iipj.2018.9.3.6.
- Hansen, J. G. (2019). *Swampy Cree justice: Researching the ways of the people*. JCharlton Publishing Ltd. Vernon, British Columbia
- Hansen, J. G, and Antsanen, R. (2015). *Urban Indigenous people: Stories of healing in the city*. JCharlton Publishing Ltd. Vernon, British Columbia.
- Hansen, J. G. & Hetzel, C..C. (2018). Exploring the Addiction Recovery Experiences of Urban Indigenous Youth and Non-Indigenous Youth Who Utilize the Services of The Saskatoon Community Arts Program. *aboriginal policy studies*. Vol. 7, no. 1, 2018, pp. 84-102.
- Hansen, J.G. & Antsanen, R (2016). "Elders' Teachings about Resilience and its Implications for Education in Dene and Cree Communities. *The International Indigenous Policy Journal* volume 7, issue 1. Retrieved from: <http://ir.lib.uwo.ca/iipj/vol7/iss1/2>.
- Hansen, L. Taylor. (1942). "The White Race—Does It Exist?", *Amazing Stories*, July 1942. p. 211.
- Oge-Make. (1949) *Tribal Memories of Flying Saucers*. *FATE* 2 (September):17-21.
- Saethre, E. (2007). *UFOs, otherness, and belonging: Identity in remote Aboriginal Australia*. *Social Identities*, 13(2), 217-233.
- Ufoholic (2017) *Native Americans have no fear of aliens. Here's why*. Available Online. <https://ufoholic.com/forbidden-history/native-americans-have-no-fear-of-aliens-heres-why/>.
- Waziyatawin, A.W. (2005). *Remember this! Dakota decolonization and the Eli Taylor narratives*. Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press.
- Wotherspoon, T. & Hansen, J.G. (2013). *The "Idle No More" Movement: Paradoxes of First Nations Inclusion in the Canadian Context*. *Social Inclusion*. Volume 1: Issue 1. Pages 21–36. Librello Publishing House 4000 Basel, Switzerland. <http://www.librelloph.com/socialinclusion/article/view/SI-1.1.21>

BROKEN DAYS

‘My voice repels death; my death; your death; my voice is my other. I write and you are not dead. The other is safe if I write.’

– Hélène Cixous, *Coming to Writing and Other Essays*

SLEEPWALKING

We’d like to peek at what’s beyond, but nothing’s there, so we dance our way to the back of the queue and hope our names will not be called. I didn’t get where I am today by being dead, but I will be dead when I get to wherever I am going. A time machine might take us back to where we came from but in the future we’ll be forgotten saints turned to dust. All that was yesterday, now there are new liturgies of shouts, hollers and howls, and a makeshift lean-to heaven.

Invisible connections, white starline song, sounds from another world

—*Rupert M. Loydell*

SORRY FOR YOUR LOSS

Ask your mother and see what she says, ask your father and find out if he agrees. There will always be a shadow in the house where others used to live. The cat avoids these places, and dust is settled there; time stands still or moves more slowly and it is hard to work out why. Your name is nearly all that’s left apart from an awkward portrait on the wall and some poems I wrote at the time. Death is out of reach of explanation when it comes to worry and acceptance, rarely at the forefront of our minds unless we’re ill. We second guess ourselves and ignore sensible advice, march on towards our end.

Dirty fingernails, over-ripe fruit, dreams we used to share

—*Rupert M. Loydell*



Fall Collage

Rebecca Matheson

Marked and unremarkable bones: Sacred sites and second comings

**Karen Wall,
Athabasca University, Alberta, Canada**

Abstract

Cemeteries and burial grounds reflect cultural meanings and practices that order broad notions of biopower, land use, and social relations. The dead through their invited or unexpected bones continue to have agency to influence everyday environments, actions, and bodies of knowledge. Colonial histories have both produced and obscured Indigenous human remains, whose later loss or discovery raise issues of land ownership and access as well as the designation of meaning and protected status. Indigenous leaders today link mutual cooperation in treatment of remains and sacred sites to processes of reconciliation, which are complicated by current regulatory frameworks around heritage and property. Progress means recognizing the agency of bones as vital signs of community presence, linked to sustainable ways of dealing with what is both metaphorically and literally common ground. It means listening to bones that do not remain silent but trouble the present, disrupting the long ideological construction of Indigenous peoples as vanishing, vanished or superfluous to settler society.

Introduction

To begin, consider a tale of two cemeteries in Edmonton, Alberta, dating back to the fur trade and early urban settlement eras. The latter, Mount Pleasant Cemetery, once situated on a traditional Indigenous lookout point and now in a residential district, harbours prominent settler citizens including city founders, builders, business and political leaders. Present is politician Frank Oliver, who was instrumental in dispossessing Indigenous peoples in the 1880s from city lands near an abandoned Hudson's Bay Company fort and burial ground now in the central area of Rossdale. Over the twentieth century, builders continually unearthed bones to be relegated to archaeological collections or reburied and eventually covered by a freeway. Following a powerful campaign by descendants and others, the city finally raised a memorial in 2005 intended to "bring healing..." (Manasc Isaacs, 2019; see Kalman et.al. 2004). Few of the graves are marked or named; Mount Pleasant offers heritage tours of its most remarkable graves.

In a variety of urban and rural settings, colonial histories have both produced and obscured Indigenous human remains; both settlement-era cemeteries and traditional sites are often unmarked or lost to view, ploughed or built over. Indigenous leaders have linked mutual cooperation in treatment of remains and sacred sites to processes of reconciliation, but current regulatory frameworks around heritage and property complicate matters. In this paper I argue that progress means rethinking bones as vital agents of community presence, linked to sustainable ways of dealing with what is both metaphorically and literally common ground. It means listening to bones that do not remain silent but trouble the present, disrupting the long ideological construction of Indigenous peoples as vanishing, vanished or superfluous to settler society.

Recent conflicts and resolutions to varying extents hinge, not only on recovery of stolen or dishonoured bones, but on rights of Indigenous access for ceremony and care to gravesites. Here I wish to contextualize recent incidents of discovery, repatriation and commemoration of bones and sites within notions of connection to the land and reconciliation. The concept of the "right to the ground" suggests that these matters exceed current legislation and politics that enmeshes notions of heritage within those of land as private property. We begin with a review of literature around concepts the human relationship to the land in life and in death; the social and political power of human remains and burial grounds; and the positioning of these issues and incidents within political and economic constraints. This is followed by closer look at selected cases in western Canada, primarily the prairie provinces, with a focus on recent Indian Residential (or Industrial) School events.

Settler colonialism, the agency of bones and the right to the ground

Indigenous analysts, among others, cite the land as primary object of settler colonialism, historically enabling dispossession through new legal orders of property distribution legitimating the amalgamation of peoples, cultures and lands into the capitalist nation (Wolfe 2006; Coulthard 2014). Land rationalized and arranged in the interests of capital defines certain spatial meanings and functions, and imbricated biopower ultimately exceeds the accumulation of land with levels of social control and exclusion (Fullenweider 2018). Looking further to modes of knowledge or relationship outside western legal discourses of ownership and conflict, we may develop an ethos of the "right to the ground." For Lefebvre (1996) and Harvey (2008), the concept of the "right to the city" privileges a collective sense of responsibility and participation in

shaping shared space, governance that moves beyond capitalism and state bureaucracy and that prioritizes use value over exchange value and property rights. A collective social experience draws on traditional and tacit types of knowledge, wisdom and experiences. This perspective helps to contextualize unfolding approaches to recognition of Indigenous gravesites and human remains within them, and knowledge about them, as significant to establishing equitable relationships in settler society, particularly as they are increasingly enfolded in present discourses of reconciliation.

Both informal and formal territories of the dead impart meaning to place through memory, ritual and performance, as well as through formal planning and legitimating practices. In westernized societies, “deathscapes” such as cemeteries and monuments are generally peripheral to everyday space and awareness (Maddrell & Sidaway 2010). Nevertheless, according to Foucault’s (1984) concept of heterotopia, the cemetery is simultaneously embedded in as well as marginal to a prevailing order: a microcosm of social relations and spaces around it. Reflecting in form the urban grid and systems of biopower, founding settler cemetery texts and spaces materialize social and cultural capital, like the city physically evolving outward from a founding centre and bordered by marginal or forgotten names, and absences (Johnson 2012). In other words, the dead claim territory in ways extending the realm and social order of the living.

While specific details of practice and belief vary, traditional mortuary practices of cultures around the world involve many similar principles of continuity of presence, sacrality of place, and agency of the dead over time. While the present discussion does not focus primarily on religious or spiritual belief systems, in discussing the agency of human bones in political contexts it is important to recognize the link between spirit, land,

culture and identity. Rebecca Tsosie (1997) links movements to protect ancestral burial sites to the recognition of basic human rights to religion. Without internal expertise in Indigenous spiritual practices, including traditional, Christian and hybrid forms across diverse nations, I draw here on documents including teaching materials, media statements, public inquiries and Indigenous scholarship, which broadly align several themes.

As suggested above, for Euro-Canadian society the land is an economic resource whereas for Indigenous people it is held in spiritual relationship over time (Ontario Human Rights Commission n.d.; see also Johnston 2004; Jaine & Halfe 1989; Longboat 2002; Watkins 2005; Cadieux-Shaw 2015.) Spirituality is integrated holistically in the land in ways that are not often translatable in terms of westernized religion (Ontario Human Rights Commission, n.d.; Bakht and Collins 2017; Fonda, 2011.) For most Indigenous cultures, there is not a firm distinction between the past, present and future in terms of connections across time; some consider spirit to be attached to bones and ancestors present during ceremony. In terms of traditional observation, the remains, objects and soil all are sacred to descendants as are material Western church buildings and monuments and the duty of protection is important not only for ancestors but the wellbeing of their descendants (Tsosie, 1997).

But the dead are not always under our control, particularly when disturbed graves stand as signs of uncovered or discovered social disruption. In folklore, literature and cinema, we encounter the trope of the “ancient Indian burial ground” cursing home owners, carrying historical truths of desecration (Dickey 2016; Smith 2014). Hallam and Hockey (2001) view the dead as nodes in networks of relations constituting social and mnemonic agency. Bones, in particular, carry powerful symbolic weight as residue of

historical social relations, animating a myriad of personal, kin, class and political loyalties and struggles (Krmpotich & Fontein 2010; Verdery 1999; Stepputat 2014).

But this agency is always constrained by operations of biopower, processes that reproduce and discipline human populations in ways amenable to normative social regulation and knowledge systems. The archiving of information about the dead in designated cemeteries represents social control over death, stabilizing disorder and decay within regimes of law and sanitation (Foucault 1990). Volume 38, Issue 1 As Julia Kristeva (1982; see Douglas 1966) explained, certain humans are also rendered abject, out of place and effectively considered as waste of resources, or somehow a threat to social order. Exercised over Indigenous populations, governmental instruments such as the Indian Act determine identity or social existence, just as archaeological practices have defined their bones as scientific resources. Sunera Thobani (2007) notes that the state reserve system excluded indigenous peoples from both the landscape and autonomous human status. In other words, the same system that removed the living made it legitimate to remove the dead.

Writers including Mbembe (2003) and Gordon (2008, 2011) have explored dimensions of necropolitics including not only rights of historical interpretation of the arising meanings of the dead but the right to expose certain people to death in the present. In a state of exception, they become what Park (2015) calls “ungrievable,” seen as undeserving of human or bodily integrity in death as in life. Concomitant phenomena are missing and murdered women, sexual violence, suicided and disappeared youth as well as the normalization of starvation, disease and marginalisation (see Jiwani and Young 2006). Decolonization, then, involves honouring Indigenous peoples in both life and in

death (Rosenberg et.al. 2010). Recognition of and respect for bones and burial sites, commonly linked to processes of healing post-Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), has potential to transcend fossilized boundaries of social division by defining new ideas of land rights or claims based in reciprocity and common values.

This potential does not obviate the need for ongoing change in political as well as epistemological spheres. Gordon’s concept of “reckoning” involves first acknowledging the “seething presence” of past injustice or unresolved social violence, immediately unsettling familiar conditions or boundaries of fear, purity or danger and leading to an effective response. For Derrida (1994), the spectre or revenant of past social relations arises from the ruins of failed social projects to unsettle or displace linear narratives of progress. Daniel Coleman (2013) calls for not simply making room for “others” in a newly discovered common ground, but valuing uncommon ground, or risky, unsettling, transformative spaces that cannot be simply translated or fixed into existing legal frameworks.

If we expand the common idea of the burial ground from a neutral repository under some land title document to a medium of communication and biopower, we may also generate more fluid notions of heritage, connected to presence and identity over time. Settler cemeteries themselves were one mode of consolidating and normalizing presence, material evidence of established occupation over time, granting effective indigeneity Colonial occupation as necro-settlement strengthens “colonial claims to land based on the development of complex, meaning-laden landscapes of dead and memory” (Barker 2018, 1). Emerging from landscapes, Indigenous bones challenge some of our stories about settler belonging and the stability of history as material structure. We turn now to some of those stories as represented in legislation and conflicts around heritage, death,

and property, focusing on western Canada.

Legislation and conflict

Indigenous religious rights in land are widely recognized internationally. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) includes the right to “maintain, protect, and have access in privacy to their religious and cultural sites” (United Nations 2007; McManamon 2005). The World Conservation Union is also concerned with the protection of sacred natural sites. These values are often exacerbated by the presence of ancestral remains within the ground, and given voice in events that unearth them. The first World Archaeological Congress in 1986 called for respect for all mortal remains, leading to the United States’ Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) to protect burial grounds and transfer ownership rights to tribes, with mixed success (Fear-Segal 2010; Ritchie 2004). Reconciliation processes in Africa and Australia have reckoned with the political lives of dead bodies recovered from the impacts of colonial violence and science, completing lost or buried histories (Anstett & Dreyfus 2015; Verdery 1999).

Court cases addressing spiritual or religious rights to land in Canada have regularly lost to competing commercial or political interests. Incidents such as those at Oka and Ipperwash in the 1990s foreshadowed increasing confrontations between values of private property and of access to and protection of sacred sites (Ontario 2004). Subsequent conflicts have involved confrontation with human remains; Indigenous spirituality is not recognized under the Charter, and federal and provincial law has been consistent with the definition of bones as scientific resources and property (Bakht and Collins 2017; Fonda 2011). Federal task forces in 1992 and 2996 recommended, respectively, improved

interpretation, repatriation and access to museum collections, and protecting sacred sites as the collective property of Aboriginal people (Canada 1994, 1996; Logan 2003.)

However, no federal legislation has followed regarding the repatriation of uncovered remains, or limiting federal action relative to sacred or burial sites on Crown lands. The Indian Act offers limited protection for reserves. The proposed Bill C-319 describing a national strategy for implementing more effective mechanisms of negotiation was still in process as of late 2018 (Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage 2018; House of Commons Canada 2018). The Canadian Archaeological Association (2019) now requires informed consent of communities before research, protection, or presentation of remains but, in practice, a patchwork of heritage and cemetery legislation, development priorities, negotiation and protocol continues to complicate process. In sum, a 2014 First Nations Working Group on Heritage Preservation found Canadian legislation in this area a “colossal failure” (Sayers et.al. 2014).

While the federal government has jurisdiction over “Indians, and Lands reserved for the Indians” (Canada 1982), only the provinces and territories, and in some cases municipalities, have jurisdiction over other burial or sacred sites. Provincial heritage legislation does not protect all human remains; most provinces have legislation protecting designated settler cemeteries, headstones, and monuments based in standards of civil rights and property. But traditional Indigenous burial grounds typically lack such features or documents, and identification often depends on oral histories. European settlement was in part predicated on the absence of permanent monuments and relics of a people whose relationships to ancestral land were more a lived continuum (see Young 2013; Byrd 2011). In general, on Crown land the right to claim ownership of remains is recognized legally,

but excludes total control of the process including protocols of access. On private land, this typically depends on heritage designation or the will of the landowner or both (Blair 2005).

Over the past two decades, Ontario and British Columbia have been particularly marked by conflict amid an unwieldy mix of heritage, environmental and development policies. For example, Ontario's Heritage Act does not address human remains but applies to artifacts in Indigenous graves; under the Cemeteries Act, First Nations have access to sites but only if they can prove identity and connection, and removal of remains depends upon the approval of the owner (Government of Ontario 2004; Jackson 2016; Ormsby 2011; Moran 2012; McCormick 2013; Nicholas et.al. 2015; DGW Law Corporation 2017; Union of Ontario Indians 2015). In B.C., no government laws prohibit or impede development on private property, though the Heritage Conservation Act (HCA) offers limited protection of Indigenous sites dating after 1867 (Eden 2005.) The Cremation, Interment and Funeral Services Act offers greater protection but does not apply to First Nations burial grounds (Nicholas et.al. 2015). Landowners purchase properties whose land title documents do not reflect the presence of known Indigenous gravesites, and heritage conservation laws pit their interests against those of local First Nations when they are discovered (McCue 2019).

The resolution of the 2015 Grace Islet case of development on a burial site marked the twelfth time the province has bought land, often designating it as a nature conservancy though not a sacred site, to resolve conflicts over sacred lands (Hunter 2015; Cole 2015). However, neither city nor province have implemented significant changes in policy for sites currently on private lands. Proposed amendments to the HCA strengthen

the protection of archeological sites but with caveats of investment and development uncertainty, making it more likely that such finds will not be reported if uncompensated (McCue 2019). In the successful 1914 campaign for preservation from commercial development of the Musqueam Marpole midden in Vancouver, both First Nations and other interests ensured what Koehn (2017) calls the reframing of public attitudes toward the site as a living artifact and part of national heritage. Bob Chamberlin of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs suggested that First Nations control over territories does not exclude other community interests (Nelms 2019).

Most major prairie Canadian cities evolved over Indigenous gathering places often also used as burial grounds; downtown Winnipeg was built over a dozen gravesites including 1200 unnamed smallpox victims (Sinclair 2017.) The original name of Saskatchewan's capital, Regina was Pile o' Bones, a translation of the Cree name for railway depots of bison bones for fertilizer and china factories. However, a 1916 document also indicated the presence of human bones, piled there by survivors of a recent smallpox epidemic (Lafayette 2006.) The provincial government consults with the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural College Elders Advisory Council on culturally sensitive sites. The Ministry of Agriculture is responsible for preservation of rural archeological and historical sites, which have for the most part been undisturbed (Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Indians, n.d.) Saskatchewan's Heritage Property Act permits removal of material not found in designated cemeteries, and pre-1700 remains are made available to the nearest First Nation.

Some burial sites have attained heritage status, or at least commemoration, often over local objections to the presence of remains or community access to the land. The

Gray Burial Site, discovered in a farmer's field in 1963 and containing the remains of more than 500 people, is now a National Historic Site and provincial protected place. However, in 2018, following the murder of Cree youth Coulton Boushie on a farmer's land, provincial trespassing laws were amended to require owners' permission to enter private property, effectively constraining access to some ancestral gravesites (Millar 2012; Purdy 2011; *Nation Talk* 2007).

In Alberta, recent database projects target the conservation, protection, and/or commemoration of rural burial places (Boers et.al. 2014; Lovell 2012.) Many of the over 2,000 burial grounds in the province, Indigenous and other, are unregistered and poorly maintained or recorded; many traditional grounds have been flooded by hydropower projects, as has occurred across the country (e.g. Big Horn Reserve n.d.) The Cemeteries Act forbids exhumation of marked graves, but not unmarked burial sites, and the Funeral Services Act does not protect unincorporated cemeteries, despite a 2007 promise to do so. Landowners are thus still able to remove, plow under or build over First Nations burial sites (Loome 2013; Province of Alberta Cemeteries Act 2014). Several sites have been recognized or established since 2000, though access restrictions remain for many either due to property owners' wishes or government parks regulations (Campbell n.d.; Government of Alberta 2014). In one exception a single skeleton of a young woman found on a farmer's land in 2016 was reburied with appropriate ceremony, the owner permitting ongoing access (Reith and Stewart 2016).

In Edmonton since the 1880s, urban development has turned up unmarked graves and burial grounds of Indigenous peoples, settlers and travelers along the river valley and in the city's core. Oral histories and reports of supernatural activity cite various "Indian

grave yards", but there have been recent turns to serious research and recognition by combining such stories with maps, aerial photos and other documents including sketched maps. In 2000 a traditional Enoch Cree burial site dating to the 1800s was marked with a new monument, rededicated and fenced (*Alberta Sweetgrass* 2000). Papaschase Chief Calvin Bruneau, instrumental in the Rosedale case, has called on Edmonton to develop comprehensive policy approach to uncovered sites, but only the province has final jurisdiction over archeological sites and human remains (Narine 2013.)

Calgary's post-TRC reconciliation efforts commemorated Jack White Goose Flying, a student buried at the local St. Dunstan's residential school and almost a century later reinterred in a new cemetery (CBC News 2016). The city subsequently attracted criticism for a new piece of public art resembling Blackfoot burial structures near a freeway (Narine, 2017) recalling the situation of the Rosedale site in central Edmonton. What stories do local people tell their children now as they drive by these places? How might new stories evolve? Zwicker (2004) calls the Rosedale memorial's proximity to the (slightly rerouted) freeway "productively shocking, a sudden flash of slowness" in traffic and in collective civic memory and place. For Lowenstein (2005), similarly, such burial grounds situated in everyday, secular space represent an "allegorical moment...an instant in which an image of the past sparks a flash of unexpected recognition in the present...where registers of bodily space and historical time are disruptive, confronted and intertwined..." (cited Smith 2014.) This is perhaps most obvious since the 2015 TRC report's call for action in respecting residential school graves, a focus which has been particularly associated with reconciliation processes and discourses of healing.

Places apart: residential schools and hospitals

A chilling 1940s drawing by a student at the Inkameep Day School on a BC First Nations reserve shows children's skeletons in hooded robes dancing in a graveyard near the school (McCarty 2019). Like the cemetery, residential or other colonialist schools are an instance of Foucault's (1984) heterotopia, embodying scripted order as sites of total power over behaviours, souls, bodies and minds. Though regimes apart from mainstream society, they also have the capacity to both mirror and unsettle political pressures and discourses. The IRS cemetery, then, represents a kind of doubling of heterotopic forces that may open new paths toward respect for both dead and living bodies. Enforced state residential schooling of Indigenous children from the 1880s to the mid-1990s commonly featured crowded conditions, poor nutrition and disease, leading to high death rates, estimated at between 3200 to 6000 (Nicholls 2015). Cemetery or burial records are incomplete or vanished; 40 per cent of named and unnamed student bodies have no known location (TRC Report 2015; Curry and Howlett 2007; Coletta 2018).

Justice Murray Sinclair, TRC chair, warns "there can be no peace until there are some answers" (Paul 2011). The 2007 Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (IRSSA) currently funds 144 Indigenous-led commemoration projects and the TRC proposed a national strategy to determine how many children died at residential schools and the sites of their graves, but the project suffers for lack of funding, resources and jurisdictional cooperation (White Bison 2008; APTN News 2013.) In 2008, several hereditary chiefs formed the International Human Rights Tribunal into Genocide in Canada (IHRTGC) which requested heritage site status for 28 mass graves including 13 in B.C., four in Alberta and three in Manitoba, including bones and skulls found in

some school furnaces (Manataka American Indian Council 2008). Recent events on the prairies, many stemming from years or decades of concern, reflect similar actions in other parts of the country.

The Regina Indian Industrial School cemetery attained municipal heritage status in 2016 and a year later was designated a provincial heritage site. The community association leading the campaign for designation hailed it as an important step toward reconciliation "because people are coming here and interacting with the land..." Work continues to locate and identify approximately another 40 children buried in unmarked graves (Baxter 2017). Elsewhere in Saskatchewan, various Indigenous and settler groups have cared for the Battleford Residential School cemetery over the years, with formal long-term protection through municipal heritage designation in 2019 (Lindsay et.al. 2015.) However, the site is now on private property, surrounded by barbed wire; the owner, who objected to the designation, citing dangers of partying and litter, has granted only one-time access to visitors who called it a "walk for reconciliation" (CBC 2018; Yard 2017, 2018.) In Manitoba, the Brandon IRS was named a provincial heritage site in 2018; that year, a second burial site was found under an RV park near the town, where the owner is cooperating with a local First Nation to uncover the remains (CTV 2018).

Designated provincial heritage sites in Alberta include St Joseph's Industrial School at Dunbow and the Edmonton Residential School. Seventy-three children died at St Joseph's, many buried in an informal cemetery on the river bank which collapsed in a 1996 flood. First Nation and Metis elders, Christian leaders, and the provincial government collaborated on reinterment in 2001 and in 2013, Calgary school children visited to pay tribute as a reconciliation gesture (Ferguson 2013.) In Red Deer, the Remembering the

Children Society, a First Nations, Metis, and church partnership, received a provincial heritage award in 2018 for its memorial for four students of the Red Deer Industrial School raised in the city cemetery (Alberta 2019). It should be noted that Christian beliefs, not only traditional Indigenous protocols, play a part in healing and ritual for many. Rose Prince, a former student at the Lejac Residential School who stayed on to live and work, died in 1949 leaving what became an uncorrupted corpse, and as a *de facto* saint her grave is now the site of an annual pilgrimage (Canadian Press 2013). The grave and pilgrimage, like others, serve multiple participants in a variety of capacities and has become a place of dialogue between First Nations and the Catholic Church (De Leeuw 2007; see Wall 2009).

Hospitals have also produced unmarked bodies. From 1946 to 1966, the Charles Camsell Indian Hospital in Edmonton received Inuit and other northern Indigenous patients during tuberculosis epidemics, burying many who died in unmarked graves at an IRS cemetery in nearby St Albert. In the late 1980s, former employees of the hospital and school placed a memorial boulder, and the city later restored the grounds. A subsequent NWT government program dedicated to finding missing relatives and graves in southern Canada was supported in 2019 by federal support for database along with a reconciliation-targeted apology for its role in this history (CBC 2019; Common 2019.) Several unmarked IRS and hospital dead, according to oral tradition, are also buried at Edmonton's Beechmount Cemetery, established by the city around 1914 for working class immigrants, labour organizers, homeless and ethnic groups. In part as an answer to TRC calls for education, the Camsell, long associated with ghost stories, has become the focus of community research supplementing rumours and ghost stories with real histories and knowledge produced by Elders, former patients and staff, community

organizations, and academics (Metcalf-Chenail 2015; Barrera 2014.)

Park (2015, 2016) finds that community-based restorative justice (CBRJ), replacing or complementing state-sponsored processes, can work powerful transformation of official narratives around IRS. Such engagement prioritizes Indigenous cultures spirits in collaborative efforts toward decolonization. To date, successful commemoration and protection of IRS, like other burial sites, has typically depended on community organization and campaigns by both Indigenous and settler peoples (TRC 2015; Looe 2013; Watkins 2005). Western archaeology also increasingly moves toward community-based, dynamic systems and knowledge practices that potentially affirm land rights and use (Buikstra 2017; Piecing and Schaepe 2014.) University of Alberta archaeologists have worked with the Muskowekwan band in Saskatchewan to find graves of 35 missing children, supported by the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (Paul 2011). The community has mainly relied on memories, testimonies, or just “bones washing out of different areas” to begin searches supplemented with ground-penetrating radar (GPR) (Cook 2019; Snowdon 2019).

In practice across the country, the application of reclamation, protection and access rights remains idiosyncratic and primarily dependent on response to community action. Recently, for example, Newfoundland and Labrador Indigenous people, with the support of the premier, successfully lobbied the federal government to repatriate remains of two of the last Beothuks from Scotland (*Indian Country Today* 2019.) These efforts are directed to cultural continuity as well as respect for a legacy. Community initiatives such as the Haida Repatriation Committee have demonstrated the value of repatriation under traditional ceremony and protocols, in part due to in the interests of cultural knowledge

transfer to youth (Nicholls 2014; Hubert and Fforde 2001.)

The St Eugene Residential School site in B.C. has been converted by Ktunaxa First Nations as a luxury resort and casino combined with a reconciliation-oriented learning centre and workshops; the school cemetery is situated beside a golf course (St Eugene, n.d.) But Carr (2009) notes that spaces of reconciliation, like those of repression, always come with ambiguity and fractures. Another IRS in Birtle, west of Winnipeg, has had several private owners, the most recent of which has begun restoration allowing access by appointment. This man (who is of Indigenous ancestry) has received threats and condemnation from local people seeing at either a sacred site that should be left alone or torn down, or as subject to their own group decisions; no evidence of graves has been found, but clearly emotions are still raw as the symbolic value and presence of these institutions is contested (Paul 2015; Birtle Residential School 2018).

Common and uncommon ground

In sum, shared material landscapes actively constrain and generate entangled discourses. Settler occupation and use of the land inevitably coexist with Indigenous ancestral territories. Bones and graves, as remains of complex histories, are implicated in affective configurations of individual belonging and state authority (Fontein 2011). The politics of discovery, reburial and commemoration substantiate new kinds of claims to land, resources, and authority, potentially disrupting or expanding Western technocratic concepts of property. This has implications beyond the concerns of descendants and communities. Richard Hill Sr (2001) of the Haudenosaunee Nation sees uncovered bones as reminding us of a lost connection to nature. As issues of ecological sustainability become more urgent, there is common interest in respect and recognition of land in

broadened terms of the duty of care.

The recognition of the “right to the ground” in terms of access to sacred sites and ancestral remains there, as well as the preservation of collective knowledge and ritual connected to them could, as well as opening new kinds of relationships, help to foster mutually sustaining ecologies of interdependence. This would align, for instance, with an international recognition of sacred sites, long conserved, as biodiversity reservoirs benefiting all (Lucaks; Oviedo et.al. 2005). Booth and Skelton (2011, 685) note that if there is no room for Indigenous peoples amid activities of resource accumulation and extraction, including development, industry and agriculture, “there is also no room for other environmentally critical values such as healthy ecosystems” (Booth and Skelton 2011, 685). Kerber (2010, 136) suggests a new kind of environmental relationship that names and honours Indigenous bones as “seeds of knowledge about how to construct more sustainable relations between prairie people and prairie place.”

Gravesites as foci of collaborative care and conservation, in short, can bring counter-publics in contact and confrontation with each other and with systems of knowledge. Morgensen (2011, 227) states that “in the space that opens up when non-Natives release attachment to place, while Native people contest how place might be known or controlled, a possibility for allied work for decolonization grows.” But as the governance of the dead is entwined with that of the living, we must ask how we sustain conditions that have shaped spatial inequalities, lost histories and identities. Rosenberg et.al. (2010) recognize efforts to protect and respect the dead but ask us to consider how and why it was possible to develop infrastructure over graves in the first place and to understand how the same conditions are still present in society.

As many critics argue, institutionalized conciliatory policies and practices can, rather than ameliorating or equalizing Indigenous experiences, actually contextualize them within settler narratives of recognition, closure, and the rhetoric of healing (Fullenweider 2018; Wrightson 2017; Blackstock et.al. 2018). What Coulthard (2014) calls the politics of recognition may actually forestall the renewal of Indigenous governance operating in excess of settler colonial governmentality. Unnamed and displaced bones can readily signify the residual trauma of colonial and apartheid dispossession, but Indigenous subjectivities and ways of being still exceed settler biopower. The connection by Indigenous leaders between mutual cooperation in treatment of the dead, and sacred sites, to potential reconciliation, points to the fact that recovery, reburial and commemoration projects can be more than another act of symbolic reparation but that they must allow for meeting on uncommon ground.

Conclusion

Rather than repositories of the lost, Indigenous cemeteries or burial places can become hubs to rally communities and articulate broader political interests. The manifestation of bones in socio-political contexts offers a metaphor for ways that hegemonic social structures, usually invisible, become apparent when surfaces are eroded, barren or disrupted. The concept of the “right to the ground” recognizes that gravesites and human remains exist in excess and in challenge to formal contexts of heritage and property legislation and policy frameworks. Nevertheless, the latter complex in in urgent need of evaluation and revision, particularly where it has failed the interests of Indigenous peoples in development and property conflicts.

oral histories and cultural memory in locating bones both by traditional knowledge of the land and individual memories, as well as by technologies such as GPR and aerial photography. Responses to demand for respect, to be valid, must take into account both legal systems of land usage and affective or spiritual claims that go beyond simple ownership.

Derrida described “what we know without knowing”, that “the dead can often be more powerful than the living” (1994, 48). They come bearing messages to us, as we, the future dead, by our actions and traces send messages to the future unborn. To end with another tale, a widely-told folk story of “the grateful dead,” a traveler pays for the proper burial of an abandoned corpse who later joins his journey as a spirit helper. It reflects the sense of ongoing relationship with the dead, often eroded in westernized modern cultures but still present in uncommon ground and unsettled bones.

References

- Alberta. (2019). Heritage Awards Recipients. Retrieved from <https://www.alberta.ca/heritage-awards-recipients.aspx>.
- Anderson, R. B, Schneider, B, and Kayseas, B. (2008, May). Indigenous peoples' land and resource rights. Research Paper for the National Centre for First Nations Governance. Retrieved from http://fngovernance.org/ncfng_research/robert_anderson.pdf.
- Anstett, E. & Dreyfus, J. (Eds.). (2015). *Human remains and identification: Mass violence, genocide, and the "forensic turn"*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- APTN News. (2013, Apr 30). Indian residential school historical record threatened by TRC, Aboriginal Affairs bumbling: Auditor General. Retrieved from <https://aptnnews.ca/2013/04/30/indian-residential-school-historical-record-threatened-by-trc-aboriginal-affairs-bumbling-ag/>
- Bakht, N. and Collins, L.M. (2017). The earth is our mother: Freedom of religion and the preservation of Aboriginal sacred sites in Canada, *McGill Law Journal* 62 (3).
- Barker, Adam J. (2018). Deathscapes of settler colonialism: The necro-settlement of Stoney Creek, Ontario, Canada. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 108 (4), 1134-1149.
- Barrera, J. (2014, March 30). Fading memory, fragmented records and the passage of time keep some residential school truths hidden forever. *APTN National News*. Retrieved from <https://aptnnews.ca/2014/03/30/fading-memory-fragmented-records-passage-time-keep-residential-school-truths-hidden-forever/>.
- Baxter, D. (2017, Jul 26). Regina Indian Industrial School cemetery designated a provincial heritage property. *Global News*. Retrieved from <https://globalnews.ca/news/3626253/regina-indian-industrial-school-cemetery-to-be-designated-a-provincial-heritage-property/>.
- Big Horn Reserve to Premier H. Strom, Alberta. (n.d., c. 1970) Why the Big Horn Dam Should Not Be Built [Provincial Archives of Alberta Acc. 79.152 Box 13 Item 93].
- Birtle Residential School. 2019. Private message. Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/Birtle-Residential-School-448248355611733/>.
- Blackstock, C., Bianchi, E.D., and Smith, S. (2018). Reconciling history: How a cemetery breathed life into reconciliation. *History Magazine* 20 (1), 44-47.
- Blair, P.J. (2005). *The Non-Protection of Canadian Aboriginal Heritage (Burial Sites and Artifacts)*. Scow Institute, <http://scow-archive.libraries.coop/library/documents/heritagesitesfacts.pdf>.
- Boers, N. M., McKenzie, H., and Gold, D. (2014). Towards a System for Visualizing Alberta's Cemeteries. 2014 IEEE International Conference on Systems, Man, and Cybernetics. San Diego. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Indratmo_Indratmo/publication/290364186_Towards_a_system_for_

- visualizing_Alberta's_cemeteries/links/579a49fb08ae7b940a8a9975.pdf. Booth, A.L. and Skelton, N.W. (2011). "You spoil everything!" Indigenous peoples and the consequences of industrial development in British Columbia. *Environment, Development and Sustainability* 13 (4), 685-702.
- Borrows, J. (2015). Aboriginal title and private property. *The Supreme Court Law Review: Osgoode's Annual Constitutional Cases Conference* 71. Retrieved from <http://digitalcommons.osgoode.yorku.ca/sclr/vol71/iss1/5>.
- Buikstra, J.E. (2017). Repatriation and bioarchaeology: Challenges and opportunities. In *Bioarchaeology: The Contextual Analysis of Human Remains*. J. Buikstra and L.A. Beck (Eds.) New York: Routledge, 389-412.
- Burial site dedicated. (2000). *Alberta Sweetgrass* 7 (10). Retrieved from <http://ammsa.com/publications/alberta-sweetgrass/burial-site-dedicated-0>.
- Byrd, Jodi A. (2011). *The Transit of Empire, Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Cadieux-Shaw, L. (2015, Dec 11). Ktunaxa Nation v BC: Bringing Aboriginal Spirituality into Section 2(a) of the Charter. The Court.ca. Retrieved from <http://www.thecourt.ca/ktunaxa-nation-v-bc-bringing-aboriginal-spirituality-into-section-2a-of-the-charter/>.
- Campbell, R.B. (n.d.). Amiskosis Sakigihan Burial Grounds. Retrieved from <http://www.angelfire.com/ab/camrosecountrychurch/Amiskosis.htm>.
- Canada. (1994). *Turning the page: Forging new partnerships between museums and First Peoples* (3rd ed.) Task Force Report on Museums and First Peoples. Ottawa: The Commission.
- Canada. (1996). *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: Gathering Strength*, vol. 3. Ottawa: The Commission.
- Canada. Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. (November 6 2018). First Session, Forty-second Parliament, 64-65-66-67 Elizabeth II, 2015-2016-2017-2018.
- Canadian Archaeological Association (2019). Statement of principles for ethical conduct pertaining to aboriginal peoples. Retrieved from <https://canadianarchaeology.com/caa/about/ethics>.
- Canadian Press. (2013, July 2). Pilgrims flock to the grave of Rose Prince in British Columbia. Retrieved from https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2013/07/07/pilgrims_flock_to_the_grave_of_rose_prince_in_british_columbia.html.
- Carr, G. (2009). *Atopoi of the Modern: Revisiting the Place of the Indian Residential School*. *English Studies in Canada*, 35 (1), 109-135.
- CBC News (2016, December 16). Calgary reconciliation efforts guided by White Goose Flying <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/calgary-reconciliation-efforts-guided-by-white-goose-flying-1.3909107>.
- CBC News. (2018, May 18). Newly granted access to residential school cemetery

- holds deep meaning for Battleford event organizers. Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/residential-school-cemetery-reconciliation-1.4668811> .
- CBC News. (2019, Mar 8). Trudeau apologizes for “colonial,” “purposeful” mistreatment of Inuit with tuberculosis. Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/trudeau-apology-tuberculosis-iqaluit-1.5047805>.
- Cenzatti, M. (2008). Heterotopias of Difference. In M. Dehaene and L. De Caeter (Eds.) *Heterotopia and the City – Urban Theory and the Transformations of Public Space*. Oxford, UK and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 75-85.
- Cole, Y. (2015, Jan 20). Dozens of researchers call for protection of First Nations burial grounds in B.C. *Georgia Straight*. Retrieved from <https://www.straight.com/news/803036/dozens-researchers-call-protection-first-nations-burial-grounds-bc>.
- Coleman, D. (2013). Beyond the Book: Reading as Public Intellectual Activity. *The Public Intellectual and the Culture of Hope*. J. Faflak and J. Haslam (Eds.). Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 205-225.
- Coletta, A. (2018, Oct 21). Thousands of Canada’s Indigenous children died in church-run boarding schools — where are they buried? *Washington Post*. Retrieved from <https://www.thespec.com/news-story/8978204-thousands-of-canada-s-indigenous-children-died-in-church-run-boarding-schools-where-are-they-buried-/>.
- Common, D. (2019, March 7). Trudeau to apologize for mistreatment of Inuit with tuberculosis. CBC News. Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/inuit-tb-tuberculosis-justin-trudeau-apology-1.5044475>.
- Cook, J.M. (2019, Feb 5). First Nation teams with researchers to find graves of missing children from former residential school. *Folio*. Retrieved from https://www.folio.ca/first-nation-teams-with-researchers-to-find-graves-of-missing-children-from-former-residential-school/?fbclid=IwAR0G2ce_25i47l7N9ZUsmHghRM2OhZAwF-A8t7GhEHtajv1iL0pwHKD9Duo.
- Coulthard, G. S. (2014). *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- CTV News (2018, Aug 21). Unmarked graves of children from residential school found beneath RV park. Retrieved from <https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/unmarked-graves-of-children-from-residential-school-found-beneath-rv-park-1.4076698>.
- Curry, B. & Howlett, K. (2007, Apr 24). Natives died in droves as Ottawa ignored warnings: Tuberculosis took the lives of students for at least 40 years. *The [Toronto] Globe and Mail*, A1.
- De Leeuw, S. (2007). Intimate colonialisms: the material and experienced places of British Columbia’s residential schools. *The Canadian Geographer / Le Géographe canadien*, 51 (3), 339-359.

- Derrida, J. (1994). *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*. Trans. Peggy Kamuf. London: Routledge.
- DGW Law Corporation. (2017). *Case Brief: Ktunaxa Nation v. British Columbia (Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations)*. SCC 54. Retrieved from <http://dgwlaw.ca/case-brief-tunaxa-nation-v-british-columbia-forests-lands-and-natural-resource-operations-2017-scc-54/>.
- Dickey, C. (2016, October 19). The suburban horror of the Indian burial ground. *The New Republic*. Retrieved from <https://newrepublic.com/article/137856/suburban-horror-indian-burial-ground>.
- Douglas, M. 2002. *Purity and danger: An analysis of concepts of pollution and taboo*. London: Routledge, Psychology Press.
- Eden, K. (2005). Where do the dead go: A discussion of the need to enact more specific legislation in North America to better serve Native Americans' rights to Indigenous skeletal remains. *Southwest Journal of Law and Trade in the Americas* 12, 119-135.
- Fear-Segal, J. (2010). Institutional death and ceremonial healing far from home: The Carlisle Indian School cemetery. *Museum Anthropology*, 33 (2), 157–171.
- Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations. n.d. *Sacred Sites and Archaeology*. Retrieved from <https://www.fsin.com/overview/sacred-sites-and-archaeology/>.
- Ferguson, E. (2013, May 23). Youngsters pay tribute to residential school students. *Calgary Herald*. Retrieved from <http://www.calgaryherald.com/news/alberta/Youngsters+tribute+residential+school+students/8421795/story.html>.
- Fonda, M. V. (2011). Are they like us, yet? Some thoughts on why religious freedom remains elusive for Aboriginals in North America. *The International Indigenous Policy Journal*, 2 (4), 1-14.
- Fontein, J. (2011). Graves, ruins, and belonging: towards an anthropology of proximity. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 17 (4). 706-727.
- Foucault, M. (1990). *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction*. New York: Random House.
- Foucault, M. (1984, October). Of other spaces: Utopias and heterotopias. Trans. Jay Miskowiec. *Architecture /Mouvement/ Continuité*, 1-9.
- Fullenwieder, L. (2018) Settler biopower: accumulation and dispossession in Canada's Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement. *Settler Colonial Studies*, 8 (4), 422-441.
- Gordon, A.F. (2008). *Ghostly matters: Haunting and the sociological imagination*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Gordon, A.F. (2011). Some Thoughts on Haunting and Futurity. *Borderlands* 10 (2), 1-21.
- Government of Alberta. Alberta Culture. Historic Resources Management Branch. (2014, June 12). *Final Report. Repatriation and Reburial of the Sharphead Remains*.

- Edmonton: Queen's Printer.
- Government of Ontario. Attorney General. (2004). Ipperwash Inquiry. Retrieved from https://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/inquiries/ipperwash/policy_part/meetings/pdf/Burial_and_sacred_sites_Feb_26.pdf.
- Harvey, D. (2008). The right to the city. *New Left Review* 53, 23–40.
- Hill, R. (2001). Regenerating identity: Repatriation and the Indian frame of mind. T.L. Bray (Ed.) *The future of the past: Archeologists, native Americans, and repatriation*. New York, NY: Garland Press, 127-138.
- House of Commons of Canada. Bill C-391. (2018). An Act respecting a national strategy for the repatriation of Indigenous human remains and cultural property. Retrieved from <https://www.parl.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/bill/C-391/second-reading>.
- Hubert, J. and Fforde, C. (2001). Introduction: the reburial issue in the twenty-first century. In C. Fforde, J. Hubert and P. Turnbull (Eds.). *The Dead and Their Possessions: repatriation in principle, policy and practice*. London: Routledge, 1-16.
- Hunter, J. (2015, January 15). B.C. to buy Grace Islet to protect First Nations burial ground. *Globe and Mail*. Retrieved from <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/bc-to-buy-private-island-to-protect-first-nations-burial-ground/article22470617/>.
- Indian Country Today*. (2019, Jan 23). Canadian government on the repatriation of Beothuk human remains. Retrieved from <https://newsmaven.io/indiancountrytoday/the-press-pool/canadian-government-on-the-repatriation-of-beothuk-human-remains-ivIDuRFNykanGHZWb3LoFA>.
- Jackson, K. (2016, Mar 9). Buried souls: How Ontario bulldozed through a rare Huron-Wendat burial site in Barrie. *APTN*. Retrieved from <http://aptnnews.ca/2016/03/09/buried-souls-how-ontario-bulldozed-through-a-rare-huron-wendat-burial-site-in-barrie/>.
- Jaine, Linda and Halfe, Louise. (1989, March). Traditional Cree philosophy: Death, bereavement and healing. *Saskatchewan Indian*. Retrieved from <http://www.sicc.sk.ca/archive/saskindian/a89mar11.htm>.
- Jiwani, Y and Young, M. Missing and murdered women: Reproducing marginality in news discourse. *Canadian Journal of Communication* 31 (4), 2006, <https://www.cjc-online.ca/index.php/journal/article/view/1825>.
- Johnson, P. (2007). The modern cemetery: A design for life. *Social and Cultural Geography*, 9 (7), 777-790.
- Johnston, Darlene. (2004) Respecting and Protecting the Sacred. *Report of the Ipperwash Inquiry*. Attorney General, Government of Ontario. Retrieved from https://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/inquiries/ipperwash/policy_part/research/pdf/Johnston_Respecting-and-Protecting-the-Sacred.pdf.
- Kalman, H., Stanley, M., Evans, C., Ronaghan, B., Cross, G. (2004). *Rossdale Historical Land Use Study*. Commonwealth Historic Resource Management Limited. Retrieved from <https://www.edmonton.ca/documents/PDF/>

- Kerber, J. (2010). *Writing in Dust: Reading the Prairie Environmentally*. Wilfred Laurier University Press.
- Koehn, A. (2017). Has there been a turning point in aboriginal burial site protection in British Columbia? *Critical Planning*, 23 (0), 155-172.
- Kristeva, J. (1982). *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Trans. Leon Roudiez. Columbia University Press.
- Krmpotich, C. and Fontein, J. (2010). The substance of bones: the emotive materiality and affective presence of human remains. *Journal of Material Culture* 15 (4), 371–384.
- Lafayette, G. (2006). Buffalo and Imperial Legacy. L. Beug, A. Campbell and J. Mah (Eds.). *Regina's Secret Spaces: Love and Lore of Local Geography*. University of Regina.
- Lefebvre, H. (1996). The right to the city. In *Writings on cities*. E. Kofman and E. Lebas (Eds.) Oxford: Blackwell, 147–159.
- Lindsay, A., Cook, C., and Cuthbert, D. (2015). A cup of cold water: Alfred Kirkness and the Brandon Residential School Cemeteries. *Manitoba History* 78. Retrieved from http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/mb_history/78/brandoncemeteries.shtml.
- Logan, M. (2003, February). Museum, Kitigan Zibi in tug of war over remains. *Windspeaker*, 24–25.

- Longboat, Diane. (2002). *Indigenous Perspectives On Death And Dying*. Toronto: University of Toronto.
- Loome, J. (2013, Jan 16). Gov't: Unregistered Alberta burial sites remain unprotected. GigCity [blog]. Retrieved from <http://www.gigcity.ca/2013/01/16/government-unregistered-alberta-burial-sites-remain-unprotected/>.
- Lovell, N.C. (n.d. [2012]). Historic Cemeteries Project. Edmonton: University of Alberta Faculty of Arts. Retrieved from <https://sites.ualberta.ca/~nlovell/cemetery.htm>.
- Maddrell, A., Sidaway, J.D. (2010). Introduction: Bringing a spatial lens to death, dying, mourning and remembrance. A, Maddrell, and J.D. Sidaway (Eds.). *Deathscapes: Spaces for Death, Dying, Mourning and Remembrance*. Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 1–16.
- Manasc Isaacs (2019). Traditional Burial Grounds and Fort Edmonton Cemetery. Retrieved from <https://www.manascisaac.com/work/traditional-burial-grounds-fort-edmonton-cemetery>.
- Manataka American Indian Council. (2008, April 10). Thirty locations of mass graves of residential school children discovered. Retrieved from <https://manataka.org/page1494.html>.
- Mbembé, A. & Meintjes, L. (2003). Necropolitics. *Public Culture* 15 (1). Duke University Press, 11-40.

- McCarty, E. (2019, April 4). There is truth here: the power of art from residential schools on display. *The Tyee*. Retrieved from https://thetyee.ca/Culture/2019/04/04/Power-Art-Residential-Schools-Students-Tribute/?fbclid=IwAR0hBDhS5cmOLlrXtv8gxJliG_BVSkH1_unDYKhqmekDZBjbK-Jo5HhKM.
- McCormick, R. (2013, July 9). First Nations: town should pay for desecration of burial ground. *Toronto Sun*. Retrieved from <http://torontosun.com/2013/07/09/first-nations-town-should-pay-for-desecration-of-burial-ground/wcm/1aa610a1-3f0a-423c-846d-f2c267f06df8l>.
- McCue, D. (2019, March 30). Discovery of ancient burial mounds traps landowners in bureaucratic “bottomless pit of hell.” CBC News. Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/national-burial-mounds-property-dispute-chilliwack-bc-1.4979118>.
- McManamon, F.P. (2004). Repatriation in the USA: a decade of federal agency activities under NAGPRA. C. Fforde, J. Hubert and P. Turnbull (Eds). *The dead and their possessions: Repatriation in principle, policy and practice*. London: Routledge.
- McNeil, K. (1997). Co - Existence of Indigenous and Non - Indigenous land rights: Australia and Canada compared in light of the Wik Decision. *Indigenous Law Bulletin* 4 (5). Retrieved from <http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/journals/ILB/1997/77.htm>.
- Metcalf-Chenail, D. (2015, April 4). The old Indian cemetery. Ghosts of Camsell [blog]. Retrieved from <https://ghostsofcamsell.ca/2015/04/04/the-old-indian-cemetery/>.
- Millar, J. F.V. (2012). Gray Burial Site. *The Canadian Encyclopedia*.
- Moran, A. (2012, Mar 6). Ontario KI Natives protest against mining sacred burial grounds, *Digital Journal*. Retrieved from <http://www.digitaljournal.com/article/320749#ixzz5O55EtKLa>.
- Morgensen, S. L. (2011). *Spaces Between Us: Queer Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Decolonization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. theft-of-culture-1.4247127.
- Narine, S. (2013). Push on for policy to protect unregistered burial sites. *Alberta Sweetgrass* 20 (4). Retrieved from <http://ammsa.com/publications/alberta-sweetgrass/push-policy-protect-unregistered-burial-sites>.
- Narine, S. (2017, August 8). Calgary’s Blackfoot “burial scaffolds” art piece falls well short of reconciliation. *Windspeaker*. Retrieved from <https://windspeaker.com/news/windspeaker-news/calgarys-blackfoot-burial-scaffolds-art-piece-falls-well-short-of-reconciliation/>.
- Nation Talk*. (2007, May 7). Manitoba Hydro desecrates Aboriginal burial ground near Gillam. Retrieved from <http://nationtalk.ca/story/manitoba-hydro-desecrates-aboriginal-burial-ground-near-gillam>.
- Nelms, B. (2019, March 6). B.C. strengthens protections of heritage, archeological

- sites with updated law. *Globe and Mail*. Retrieved from <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/british-columbia/article-bc-moves-to-strengthen-heritage-conservation-act-require-reporting/>.
- Nicholas, G., Egan, B., Bannister, K. and Benson, E. (2015). Intervention as a strategy in protecting Indigenous cultural heritage. *The SAA Archaeological Record* 41-47, http://www.academia.edu/16145977/Intervention_as_a_Strategy_in_Protecting_Indigenous_Cultural_Heritage.
- Nicholls, W. (2015, Dec 22). Bring them home. *The Nation*. Retrieved from <http://www.nationnews.ca/bring-them-home/>.
- Ontario Human Rights Commission (n.d.) Indigenous spiritual practice. Retrieved from <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/book/export/html/16411>.
- Ontario. Attorney General. (2004). Aboriginal burials and heritage sites. *Report of the Ipperwash Inquiry*. Vol 2. Retrieved from https://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/inquiries/ipperwash/report/vol_2/pdf/E_Vol_2_CH06.pdf.
- Ormsby, M. (2011, May 21). Sacred and Secret: The GTA's hidden burial sites. *The Star*. Retrieved from https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2011/05/21/sacred_and_secret_the_gtas_hidden_burial_sites.html.
- Oviedo, G., Jeanrenaud, S. and Bland, M.O. (June 2005). *Protecting Sacred Natural Sites of Indigenous and Traditional Peoples: an IUCN Perspective*. IUCN, Switzerland. Retrieved from https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/import/downloads/sp_protecting_sacred_natural_sites_indigenous.pdf.
- Park, A.S.J. (2015). Settler colonialism and the politics of grief: Theorising a decolonising transitional justice for Indian Residential Schools. *Human Rights Review*, 16, 273–293.
- Park, A. S. J. (2016). Remembering the children: decolonizing community-based restorative justice for Indian Residential Schools. *Contemporary Justice Review*, 19 (4), 424–444.
- Paul, A. (2011, Feb 19). Where are the children buried? *Winnipeg Free Press*. Retrieved from <https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/opinion/fyi/where-are-the-children-buried-116524718.html>.
- Piecing, A. and Schaepe, D.M. (2014). The messy business of archaeology as participatory local knowledge: A conversation between the Sto:lo Nation and Knowle West. *Canadian Journal of Archaeology/Journal Canadien d'Archeologie* 38, 466-495.
- Province of Alberta. (2014). Cemeteries Act. Cemeteries Exemption Regulation. Exemption to Cemeteries Act. Edmonton: Queen's Printer.
- Province of Alberta. (2016, December 13). First Nations Sacred Ceremonial Objects Repatriation Act. Revised Statutes of Alberta 2000, Chapter F-14. Edmonton: Alberta Queen's Printer. Retrieved from <http://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Acts/F14.pdf>
- Purdy, C. (2011, Aug 07). Secret Aboriginal burial ground in Saskatchewan for bones with no place to go. *Global News*. Retrieved from <https://globalnews.ca/news/142316/secret-aboriginal-burial-ground-in-saskatchewan-for-bones-with-no-place-to-go>.

Reith, T. and Stewart, B. (2016, Jan 04). Ancient grave in Alberta farmer's field unearths historical mystery. CBC News. Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/ancient-burial-site-viking-alberta-1.3368518>.

Ritchie, L. 2005. Indian burial sites unearthed: The misapplication of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. *Public Land and Resources Law Review* 26, 71-96.

Rosenberg, S., Dean, A. Granzow, K. 2010, Centennial hauntings: Reckoning with the 2005 celebration of Alberta's history. *Memory Studies* 3(4):395-412.

Santos, F.D. (2017). *Education and the Boarding School Novel*. SensePublishers, Rotterdam.

Sayers, J., Grant, M. Schaepe, D. Phillips, R., and Brown, M. (2014, Aug 18). When First Nations burial sites and development collide. *The Tyee*. Retrieved from <https://thetyee.ca/Opinion/2014/08/18/First-Nations-Burial-Developments/>.

Sinclair, N. (2017, Nov 2). Smallpox epidemic left massive Indigenous burial ground under Winnipeg's downtown. *Winnipeg Free Press*. Retrieved from <https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/smallpox-epidemic-left-massive-indigenous-burial-ground-under-winnipegs-downtown-494970141.html>.

Smith, A. (2014, August.) This essay was not built on an Indian burial ground. *Offscreen* 18 (8). Retrieved from <http://offscreen.com/view/horror-indigenous-cinema>.

Snelgrove, C, Dhamoon, R.K., and Corntassel, J. (2014). Unsettling settler colonialism: The discourse and politics of settlers, and solidarity with Indigenous nations, *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 3 (2), 1-32.

Snowdon, W. (2019, March 8). "There was a heaviness": Alberta anthropologists locate unmarked graves of residential schoolchildren. CBC News. Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/unmarked-graves-residential-school-alberta-saskatchewan-1.5045182>.

St Eugene, n.d., <https://www.steugene.ca/en/events-and-offers/>.

Stepputat, F. (2014). Governing the dead? Theoretical approaches. *Governing the dead: Sovereignty and the politics of dead bodies*. Stepputat, F. (Ed.). Manchester: Manchester University Press, 11-33.

Thobani, S. (2007). *Exalted Subjects: Studies in the Making of Race and Nation in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *The Final Report*. Vol. 4. Canada's Residential Schools: Missing Children and Unmarked Burials. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Tsosie, R. (1997). Indigenous Rights and Archaeology. In *Native Americans and Archaeologists: Stepping Stones to Common Ground*. N. Swidler, K. Dongoske, R. Anyon, and A. Downer (Eds.) Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 64-76.

- Union of Ontario Indians (2015). A toolkit for understanding: Aboriginal heritage and burial rights and issues. Retrieved from <http://www.anishinabek.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Anishinabek-Heritage-Burials-Toolkit.pdf>
- United Nations (2007). *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* GA Res 61/295 UNGAOR, 61st Sess, Supp No 49, UN Doc A/61/295 (2007) art 12.
- Verdery K. (1999) *The political lives of dead bodies: Reburial and post-socialist change*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Wall, K. (2009). "Across distances and differences": Aboriginal pilgrimage and social change. *Leisure/Loisir*, 33 (1), 291-315.
- Watkins, J. (2005). Through wary eyes: Indigenous perspectives on archaeology. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 34, 429–49.
- White Bison (2008, April 14). 28 Mass graves of Indian children in Canada, *Daily Kos*. Retrieved from <https://www.dailykos.com/stories/2008/4/15/496538/>.
- Wolfe, P. (2006). Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native. *Journal of Genocide Research*, 8 (4), 387-409.
- Wrightson, K. R. (2017). The limits of recognition: The Spirit Sings, Canadian museums and the colonial politics of recognition. *Museum Anthropology*, 40 (1), 36-51.
- Yard, B. (2017, Nov 3). Battle River council on board with residential school cemetery's heritage designation. Retrieved from CBC News, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/battleford-residential-school-heritage-designation-1.4384335>.
- Yard, B. (2018, June 12). Future access to Battlefords residential school cemetery uncertain. CBC News. Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/battle-river-industrial-school-cemetery-landowner-access-1.4701072>.
- Young, A.T. (2013). Settler sovereignty and the rhizomatic west, or, the significance of the frontier in postwestern studies. *Western American Literature*, 48 (1 & 2), 115—40.
- Zwicker, H. (2004), Dead Indians, power conglomerates and the upper middle class: Commemorating colonial conflict in Edmonton's Rossdale. J. Holland and L. Hunter (Eds.). *Culturepoles: City spaces, urban politics & metropolitan theory. Proceedings of the Second Annual Canadian Association of Cultural Studies Conference*. Edmonton. Retrieved from <http://www.culturalstudies.ca/proceedings04/pdfs/zwicker.pdf>.

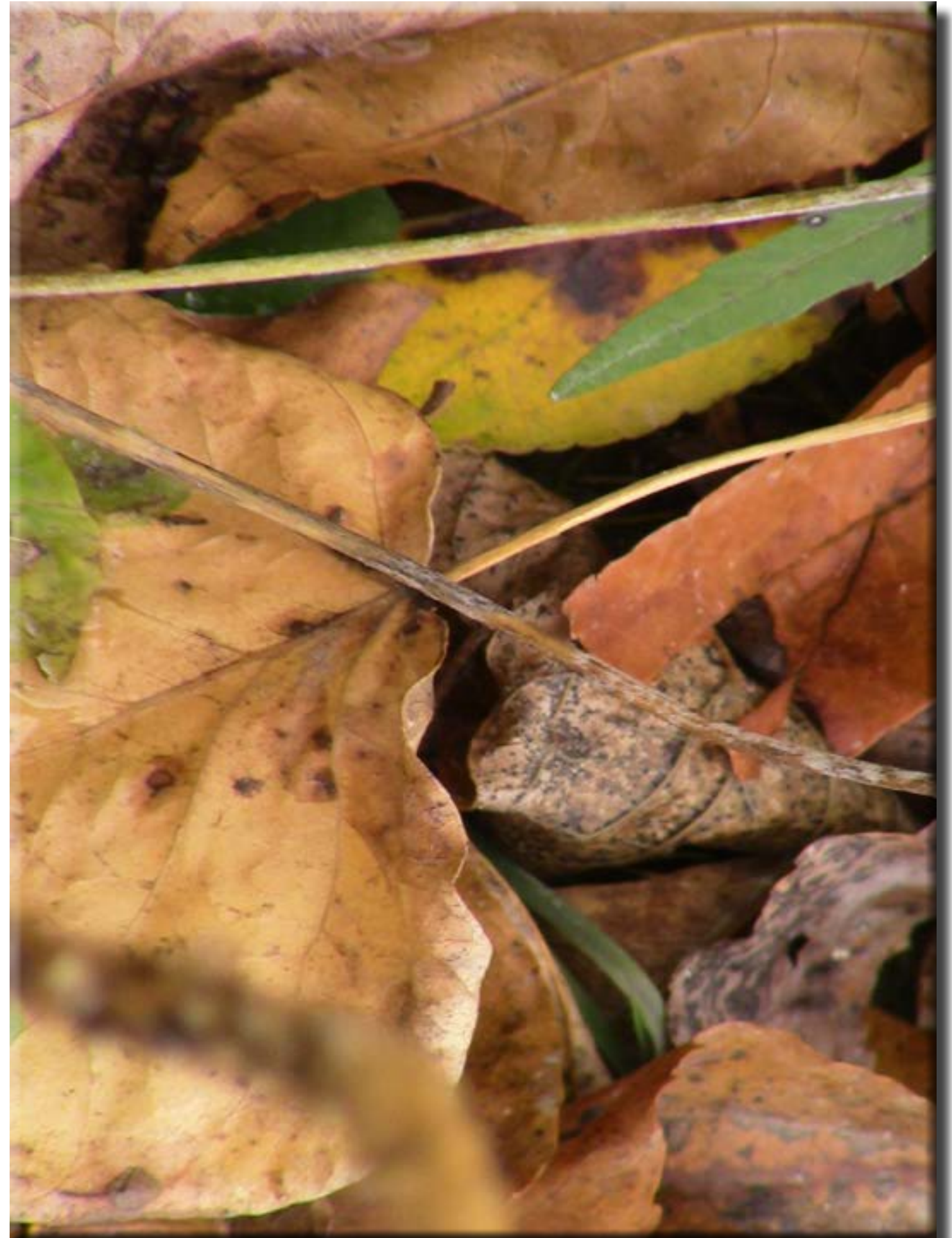
DEAR FATHER

All I have is what I can remember, and what I can remember isn't much at all. The years pass and my photo of you on the windowsill fades. The back garden at home is still small, but the apple tree has gone and the fence has been replaced, the alleyway is gated, and the neighbours have built a big extension. By the tube station there are new tower blocks for students, built where factories used to stand. We passed them on the way to school, which has also been demolished. No-one can take memories away but I have mislaid mine all on my own.

Yesterday, today, tomorrow, the spaces in between

—*Rupert M. Loydell*

Another Fall Collage



Rebecca Matheson

Fleshing Out Memory through Feminist Consciousness: Psychoanalyzing Violent Girlhood Experiences in Buchi

Emecheta's *The Bride Price*

Ifeoma Ezinne Odinye

Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria

Abstract

African feminist writing includes narratives primarily energized by oppressive female experiences. In *The Bride Price*, Emecheta is preoccupied with exposing culturally induced violence, consciously expressed in her reconstruction of gender roles in the Ibuza community. Examining Emecheta's portrayal of the girl-child who is discriminated against, abducted, stereotyped or forced into marriage and her efforts to escape not only from her oppressors but also from the psychosocial trauma of her violent experiences, this paper demonstrates how violent experiences inhibit the girl-child's physical and emotional growth by causing mental disturbances such as fear, anxiety, depression or neurosis. In *The Bride Price*, Aku-nna tries to reject oppressive cultural subjection to men through self-assertion, but becomes totally overwhelmed and unable to escape the neurotic consequences of her experiences. These experiences affect her physical and psychological development often leaving her frustrated, depressed, unfulfilled, and, finally, dead.

Keywords: Feminist Consciousness, Psychoanalysis, Girlhood, Violence.

Introduction

A significant feature of depicting female experiences by African writers is the call for change. This is expressed in fictional works in the form of protest against various sociocultural and traditional obstacles that hinder the growth and self-actualization of the girl-child (Shodipe, 174). Emecheta, as an African woman writer has the consciousness to situate the struggle of her girl protagonist within African cultural realities by depicting her struggle against patriarchy and cultural subjugation (Kolawole 1999, 34). However, Emecheta's efforts to create a female character with strong, positive and courageous disposition have created the problem of doubtful psychological state of mind. In fact, her female character ends up projecting a psychological disorientative behaviour driven by predilection to resist male chauvinism (Nweke, 197).

Significantly, *The Bride Price* as a novel that ends with a psychological disorientative behaviour or signs of neurosis in the female character is indicative of the unsureness of a steady life for the girl-child in patriarchal African society. But the fact remains that the plight of the female gender would have been more disastrous in many African cultural milieux without the efforts of feminists, critics and literary artists in exposing and condemning gender discrimination, stereotype and inequality (Ibid).

Emecheta, just like Adimora-Ezeigbo, explores and exposes the structural systems of sexual violation, oppression, harassment and rape inherent in societies (Chiluwa 2014, 129). This has led to diverse concepts that have been employed to capture African female experiences within African contexts. In this study, the principles of feminism and

psychoanalysis are employed in interpreting the girl character's actions to see the negative physical and psychological effects of cultural stereotype, inequality, discrimination, abduction and early marriage on her.

Significantly, Buchi Emecheta engages the past as the ridge to her creative effort in order to satisfy her psychological fulfillment. Emecheta's feminist consciousness enables the readers to contextualize authorial thoughts and feelings, while allowing them to see how the discourse of girlhood in African fiction is partially the product of a return to the author's childhood memory – a process that defines the selected novels' engagement with the ideas of time, space and past events. The ideational metafunction of this paper is hinged on gender-based violence to construct the consciousness, choices and responses of the girl characters in the selected novel. This is aimed at highlighting and analyzing the strategies employed by the girl characters to resist different patriarchal powers that inhibit their freedom and childhood. The analysis is thematically, stylistically and theoretically explored.

Psychoanalytical Focus in Buchi Emecheta's *The Bride Price*

In *The Bride Price*, Buchi Emecheta's semi-autobiographical novel, gender stereotype and the violation of girl-child's rights are investigated. In writing the novel, Emecheta juxtaposes her real life experiences with Aku-nna's fictional plight. To support the above statement, Marie Umeh observes that "art and reality collided in Buchi Emecheta's life" (3). This submits Emecheta's selected novel to psychoanalytical criticism. Psychoanalytical literary criticism is categorized into four broad types based on its object of study. It significantly

explores the author of the work; the contents of the work; its formal construction; or the reader of the work (Eagleton, 155).

Psychoanalytical criticism of Emecheta's *The Bride Price* is based on exploring the author and the contents of the author's work. Eagleton observes that, "it is the most limited and problematical because psychoanalyzing the author is a speculative business, and runs into the problem of discussing authorial intention to the work of literature" (155). In this study, the psychoanalysis of 'content' – commenting on the unconscious motivations of characters, or on the psychoanalytical significance of objects or events in the text is achieved through the complexity of reductive actions or relationships linked to the author's experiences in the real world (Ibid). Therefore, in this study, the researcher offers a psychoanalytical account of Emecheta as she reveals herself in her novel, or examines the symptoms of the unconscious in her text as seen in reality. In *The Bride Price*, there is a confrontation between the troubled mind of the girl protagonist and the consequences of her action; there is conflict between human agents (patriarchal figures) and her destiny. As a theory, psychoanalysis seeks to explain the complex relationships or conflicts between Aku-nna and others by giving insights to the role of traumatic experiences in heightening emotions (fear or anxiety).

In the novel, Emecheta seems to have been stimulated to raise burning questions about the condition of the girl-child – 'for was she not a girl? A girl belonged to you today as your daughter, and tomorrow, before your very eyes, would go to another man in marriage. To such creatures, one should be wary of showing too much love and care, otherwise people would ask, 'look, man, are you going to be your daughter's husband

as well?' (*The Bride Price*, 17). Psychoanalysis would interpret the above submissions by Emecheta as a form of castration. The girl-child is physically and emotionally castrated (Eagleton, 134) from birth. She has no real ownership of herself. This thus results to feelings of inadequacy and dependency on men for survival. We become intensely aware of Aku-nna's inner conflicts through the above rhetorical questions. Throughout the novel, Aku-nna becomes entangled in finding a solution to her inner conflicts and her all-pervasive feelings of powerlessness over her gender and cultural norms. This suggests that girls are trapped in a culturally instituted patriarchal ideology which limits their full rights as members of a given society.

Psychoanalytic criticism of *The Bride Price* adopts the methods of interpreting literary texts by Freud and other theorists. Freud asserts that fictional texts, like dreams, express the secret unconscious desires and anxieties of the author; hence, a given text is a manifestation of the author's own neuroses (Freud 1993, 26). This research therefore, psychoanalyzes Aku-nna as the projection of Emecheta's psyche.

Aku-nna's frustration in the novel has strong connection with authorial consciousness. In reality, Emecheta has struggled to train her children alone. Also, like Aku-nna, she fears a permanent castration from her children. In her autobiography, she confesses this fear of castration – "this was going to be my lot. I was going to give all I had to my children, only for them to spit in my face and tell me that I was a bad mother and then leave and run to a father who had never in all his life bought them a pair of pants" (*Head Above Water*, 238). In the novel, Aku-nna never recovers from her deep consciousness of physical and emotional castration – permanent castration from the support of her biological father and

dreams. As a result of her father's death, Aku-nna becomes depressed and disillusioned as she awaits fate to direct her life. The bond between Aku-nna and her father suggests Freud's account of the girl's process of Oedipalization which is not separable from sexism (Eagleton, 134). According to Eagleton,

The little girl, perceiving that she is inferior because 'castrated', turns in disillusionment from similarly 'castrated' mother to the project of seducing her father; but since this project is doomed, she must finally turn back reluctantly to the mother, effect an identification with her, assume feminine gender role, and unconsciously substitute for the penis which she envies but can never possess a baby, which she desires to receive from the father. (135)

Eagleton observes that for the girl-child to enter into Oedipus complex, she must change her 'love-object' from mother to father (Ibid). In this situation, the girl cannot be threatened with castration since she has been castrated already. Aku-nna, like other girls and women in Ibuza community is castrated by Ibuza patriarchal tradition and figureheads. She is relegated to the background and only valuable in the issues of bride price and marriage. This explains why Aku-nna turns her object of love, from her mother to her father and finally to her prospective husband. By this, she assumes the same role like her mother, doing house chores, giving birth and nurturing both the man and the children. The above process of Freud's Oedipalization stipulates the structure of relations by which we come to be men and women we are. It also signals transition from pleasure principle to reality principle; from the enclosure of the family to the society at large (Eagleton, 135). In fact, this process of Oedipalization is a deliberate way of subjugating

the female gender as well as creating a dominant class. The term, 'castration' is very important in understanding the process of Oedipalization. Castration denotes the act of removing power from a person. Freud's idea of castration places the girl-child as an inferior personality that has no rightful ownership to herself and others (Eagleton, 134).

The above thoughts capture the Oedipal family and cultural patriarchal figurehead that Emecheta wants to project about her Ibuza Igbo community. In her common knowledge about the Igbo worldview, she acknowledges that, 'when a child grows, he must return to his roots – his father. Aku-nna, like Emecheta has adopted this belief that she ends up desiring the repression of her dream of acquiring education after the death of her father. The bond between Aku-nna and her father is seen as a manifestation of cultural relation which is strongly tied to gender roles and marriage. This is seen in the choice of name given to the protagonist of the novel, Aku-nna. Emecheta in *The Bride Price* clearly depicts that the name, Aku-nna which literally means 'father's wealth' is given to the girl character as a treasure to be valued through bride price (*The Bride Price*, 10). Indeed, Emecheta's title, *The Bride Price* reflects just one phase in the condition and oppression of the girl-child in a patriarchal society. From the title, it is deduced that a girl's bride price is a valuable desired asset to Ibuza men. This explains why Ezekiel Odia trains Aku-nna in school with his little income. Aku-nna in return resolves to make a good marriage so that her bride price, that is, the money usually paid to the family of the bride by that of the groom will compensate her father's diligence in training her (*The Bride Price*, 10). Aku-nna's hard luck is subtly hinted amidst all her excitement to make her father happy through her bride price. A deep-down feeling of disappointment and

worthlessness that is the lot of a person whose father is dead quickly envelops Aku-nna.

Psychoanalysis as a theory that observes the mind and human behaviour captures Emecheta's thoughts through her girl protagonist, Aku-nna (Colby, vii). The psychological origin of Aku-nna's depression is traced to her father's death. In Emecheta's perspective, the Ibuza cultural milieu recognizes the patriarchal father, family and cultural norms as agents of fascism (Mezu, 133). Like her character, Aku-nna, Emecheta believes that her biological father is a shelter to her family. In the novel, we become aware of Aku-nna's inner thoughts and fears through her soliloquy, which externalizes and dramatizes her inner conflicts so powerfully – "Aku-nna said to herself. It is not that we have no father anymore, we have no parents anymore" (*The Bride Price*, 28).

In fact, Emecheta seems to suggest that the death of Aku-nna's father forcefully subjects her to the level of an orphan even though her mother lives. Aku-nna's contemplative thought evokes a feeling of pity as she laments: "father is the shelter". So not only have we lost a father, we have lost our life, our shelter" (*The Bride Price*, 28). Emecheta, in her autobiography, *Head Above Water* nostalgically recalls her private thoughts about the symbolic role of her biological father as the shelter of the family. She confesses and acknowledges the need for a father figure just like her girl protagonist, Aku-nna: "As a child, I was brought up thinking that a happy home must be headed by a man.... A home without him, "nna anyi, our father," at the top is incomplete, and all those from such a home should go about with a chip on their shoulders" (242). To denote these inner tensions, Emecheta seems to emphasize that in Ibuza Igbo community, a fatherless family is headless and porous.

Generally, this research analyzes other characters by assuming that all such characters are also part of the projections. The significance of this approach in analyzing the selected text is that – it validates the usefulness of literature in interpreting reality. The focus on the physical and psychological well-being of the girl protagonist helps to rediscover the relevance of psychoanalysis in the selected novel for study. In essence, this study seeks to find evidence of unresolved emotions, psychological conflicts, guilt and ambivalences in the text. Therefore, the behaviour and reactions of the girl protagonist or that of other characters are traceable to the author's childhood traumas, family life, sexual conflicts and fixations in the novel. Also, in this work, the evidence of psychoanalysis in the literary text is expressed indirectly as disguised or encoded in dreams or through psychological features such as symbolism (repressed objects), condensation (ideas, thought or persons represented using images), and displacement (fear or anxiety perceived and associated with an image) (Abrams 1999, 247).

In *The Bride Price*, Emecheta deals with the theme of girl-child oppression, forced early marriage, discrimination and sexual abuse. Psychoanalysis is thus employed to understand the mental functioning and the stages of growth, and development of Aku-nna as the protagonist of the novel. *The Bride Price* is an imaginative construction of Ibuza community (Delta region), in mid-west Nigeria. In the novel, the girl character, Aku-nna forms the focus of this research. The Ibuza community, Ma Blackie (Aku-nna's mother) and Okonkwo (Aku-nna's stepfather) represent the people who owe the girl-child (Aku-nna) support and protection during her stages of growth and development; but have failed woefully. Emecheta's characters serve as good models for the application

of psychoanalysis because they possess dominant symbols in Freud's principles. Aku-nna exhibits an internal conflict borne out of the loss of her father and oppressive patriarchal cultural mores.

In Emecheta's fictional world, Okonkwo and Okoboshi are metaphoric symbols of patriarchy, which bind the female gender to cultural myths and superstitions. The psychological origin of Aku-nna's rebellion is hinged on the concept of the superego which presents a conflict between her and her cultural agency. Aku-nna, as a rebellious non-conformist struggling with internal and external conflicts – loss of a father figure, oppressive patriarchal customs and *eros*, is trapped within a world of physical and emotional isolation. The Ibuza myths and superstition have secretly injected in her a feeling of guilt, fear and anxiety. The rejection of oppressive tradition by Aku-nna in the novel results in the release of superego aggression that consumes her, her family and the Ibuza community. Significantly, Aku-nna ends up as a neurotic before her death. In fact, the concept of superego, both at individual and cultural level, is vital in understanding the dynamics of Aku-nna's rebellion against cultural mores. Freudian superego is perceived as a successor to Oedipus complex, the internalization of parental and cultural values, or the source for inflicting punishment towards the self.

Male Child Syndrome: A Precursor to Girl-Child's Psychological Problems in Ibuza Community

In Ibuza cultural milieu an unusually high value is placed on male children. Emecheta in *The Bride Price* shows that sons are the most valued possession than daughters. Grace

Eche Okereke and Itang Ede Egbung observe that “in Africa, especially the traditional context, children are of great value and constitute the primary reason for marriage. But male children are valued more highly than female children because they secure the lineage through procreation, while the female children marry and leave their natal homes and are, therefore, seen as a loss to their families” (2059). For Ezekiel Odiá’s, Nna-nndo his son, is the child recognized in the family. This is seen in Ezekiel’s quarrelling attitude towards his wife, Ma Blackie. He often reminds his wife that after “paying heavy bride price on her head; he has only a son to show for it (*The Bride Price*, 9). Aku-nna on her own knows that she is “too insignificant to be regarded as a blessing to her parents’ marriage. Not only that she is a girl, but she is much too thin for the approval of her parents” (*The Bride Price*, 9). The above statement by Ezekiel is discriminative and demeaning to Aku-nna. This is indeed gender stereotype. In the novel, the psychological and emotional torture that Aku-nna experiences are based on her sexuality – she is not valued because she is a girl. Therefore, in exploring the above quotation from the angle of feminism, feminists must insist on equal regard and treatment for both sexes.

The distorted image of Aku-nna painted by Auntie Matilda is indeed a stereotyped image of the girl-child in African society. Auntie Matilda, a relative to Aku-nna’s father represents one of the agents that suppresses the girl-child. During her condolence visit to Aku-nna in their one-room apartment in Lagos after the death of their, Auntie Matilda articulates her feelings to Aku-nna:

Can’t you see that you have no father anymore? You are an orphan now, and you have to learn to take care of whatever clothes you have. Nobody

is going to take care of whatever clothes you have. Nobody is going to buy you any more, until you marry. Then your husband will take care of you. “The pity of it all,” put in Auntie Matilda, “is that they will marry her off very quickly in order to get enough money to pay Nna-nndo’s school fees.” (*The Bride Price*, 38)

The quotation above depicts the oppression and discrimination of the girl-child in the hands of relatives as a result of her sexuality. Walking in line with Auntie Matilda’s ideological stance, Aku-nna cannot enjoy a certain degree of freedom after her father’s death because, she is a girl who must rely on a man for survival. The above ideological stance indeed includes the existence of patriarchal realities which is psychologically oppressive to Aku-nna. Mohammed rightly points out that Aku-nna’s emotional plight is “not self-imposed psychological torture rather, the activities of other women have been examined as the root causes of such mental pains” (465).

As a feminist, Emecheta exposes and repudiates the traditional conventional practice of female subjugation in the novel. During Ezekiel Odiá’s burial ceremony in Lagos, Aku-nna and Nna-nndo are the chief mourners. Their cries of grief are expected to be more than the other mourners, but Nna-nndo as a male child is singled out for special treatment. Grown-up men hold him to discourage him from crying to avoid hurting himself. Aku-nna is encouraged to continue crying because, culturally women are supposed to exhibit more emotions (*The Bride Price*, 30). The above treatment indicates favouritism. Boys are culturally superior to girls regardless of their age.

This treatment by Aku-nna's relatives and Ibuza kinsmen imposes on Aku-nna a feeling of being oppressed as a girl-child. The above act inflicts psychological pain on Aku-nna and it is called gender-based violence.

Also in the novel, Aku-nna's right to education is challenged because she is a girl. After the marriage between Aku-nna's mother and Okonkwo (her step-father), Aku-nna's education is not considered a priority anymore by Okonkwo's children and wives. Emecheta in depicting the above scene suggests that denying the girl-child rights to education because of her gender is psychologically harmful. Even though, the Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (qtd in Offorma, 4), which is adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December, 1949 stipulates that "everyone has the right to education", yet "parents tend to treat boys specially and care-givers tend to prefer that the girls take up routine environmental sanitation activities more than the boys who often are left to play as the girls work" (Amadi, 151). Okereke et al further observe that "there is a tacit cultural assumption in Africa that, in the face of lean resources, the girl child's education is sacrificed on the altar of her brother's" (2060).

This is exactly what happens when Aku-nna's father dies leaving his family with no source of income. Auntie Matilda knows that Ma Blackie has no job in Lagos and cannot pay Aku-nna's school fees; therefore, she quickly adopts the Ibuza cultural mentality of using marriage as an escape route for the girl-child in difficult situations. Iloba, Okonkwo's first son also refuses to see the need of educating the girl-child. Iloba does not support Ma Blackie's decision of sending Aku-nna to school. This is evident in his statement: "why waste money on her? Thundered Iloba. I would never do such a foolish thing as to

pay for her schooling" (*The Bride Price*, 74). This depicts the neglect of the girl-child and consequent abuse of her rights to education and overall development during childhood. Iloba, Okonkwo's first son also refuses to see the need of educating the girl-child.

The categorization between boys and girls creates social differences in society which results in inequalities. Showalter vividly points out that in patriarchal societies low premium is placed on women and female children, whereas to sell a son would constitute a drastic violation of patriarchal culture (146). Showalter's view reflects in Auntie Uzo's statement concerning Aku-nna's marriage: "she will gladden the heart of an educated man, you mark my words. Most girls from Lagos are very quickly married away to rich and educated men because of their smooth bodies and their schooling" (*The Bride Price*, 38). Indeed, Aku-nna's mind has been prepared to accept her fate as a girl. Rose Ure Mezu notes that as "a child, Aku-nna does not mind belonging to the father to whom she feels bound by, a kind of closeness to which she could not give name" (134). Mezu goes further to suggest that "in Emecheta's worldview, all men — husbands, fathers, and brothers — are slave masters and tyrannical oppressors; the only option open to women is to choose the lesser of all these evils" (143). The above stipulated views are indeed a true reflection of Aku-nna's situation. After her father's death, "Aku-nna knows that she has to marry, and that her bride price will help in settling Nna-nndo's school fees. According to the narrator, "Aku-nna did not mind that: at least it would mean that she would be well fed. What she fears is the type of man who would be chosen for her" (*The Bride Price*, 52).

Psychoanalysis would interpret Aku-nna's feelings of inadequacy and dependency on men as emotional castration from personal ambition to be educated. Aku-nna

discovers that marriage would rob her of her dreams; she also knows that the oppressive forces from her new household (Okonkwo's family) have contributed to her lack of mental stability. Marriage therefore becomes an escape route injected into Aku-nna's unconscious so powerfully that she ends up desiring her own repression of her father's dream to train her in school.

Violent Cultural Experiences of Girls in Ibuza Community: A Psychoanalytical Perspective

To Emecheta, culture and tradition are oftentimes agencies of gender inequality. Instances of female subordination as a result of tradition and culture feature prominently in *The Bride Price*. This concern is buttressed by Omolara Ogundipe Leslie (1994) who identifies "traditional structures as one of the mountains on the back of the African girl-child" (11). In the novel, the girl-child is helpless in the face of cultural subjugation. Girls experience a great deal of oppression under tradition. They are subjected to situations that have emotional and psychological implications. Indeed, these oppressive principles are insulting to the female gender and hang on their necks like an albatross. Aku-nna like other Ibuza girls is a victim of early forced marriage and sexual exploitation. Charles C. Fonchingong in analyzing Aku-nna's fictional plight observes that Emecheta "traces gender inequality in the Igbo society as hinging on the tenets of gender socialization process, customary and traditional practices" (139). This explains why Emecheta imbues her major character with radical rebellious traits to confront and rebel Ibuza taboos, norms and superstitious beliefs that bind the female gender in chains.

There is the inability of the Ibuza traditional society to treat all the citizens equally. Girls are forced into marriage, while boys are given the freedom to live their lives. Worguji rightly points out that "one cannot expect any remarkable improvement if relations of gender in the family remain unchanged" (142). In *The Bride Price*, the culture of allowing boys to fiddle with, romance and squeeze a girl's breast once she starts experiencing her monthly menstrual cycle whether she approves it or not is indeed an act of violence which violates her human rights. According to the omniscient narrator, "their custom allowed this. Boys would come into your mother's hut and play at squeezing a girl's breasts until they hurt; the girl was supposed to try as much as possible to ward them off and not be bad tempered about it. So long as it was done inside the hut where an adult was near, and so long as the girl did not let the boy go too far, it was not frowned on" (*The Bride Price*, 97). Okoboshi's dehumanizing behaviour towards Aku-nna offers a good example to cultural oppression of the girl-child. The narrator explains that Ma Blackie waved aside her pleas and cautions: "You mean you have nice breasts and don't want men to touch? Girls like you tend to end up having babies in their father's houses, because they cannot endure open play, so they go to secret places and have themselves disvirgined" (*The Bride Price*, 121).

The story of Aku-nna in no way depicts an ideal childhood. Childhood is that stage in life where freedom exists under the guidance of adults; yet in Aku-nna's situation, childhood experiences become a tunnel which channels emotional and psychological pain, especially the pain of being forced into early marriage that will impinge on her development. Thus, in depicting Aku-nna's experiences, a strong tension exists between

childhood and forced adulthood; the abrupt changes that Aku-nna experiences, obscure the reality of her childhood to the extent that she cannot maintain a critical stance in her life. For Aku-nna, childhood harbours a painful memory of exploitation and abuse that could follow her in adulthood. In depicting the assertive nature of Aku-nna's struggle, Emecheta suggests that some cultural societies prey on childhood innocence as they prey on the unsuspecting innocence of girl-children. Hence, girls become unprotected and vulnerable under the care of those who should have protected them. Chunga resents girls' "oppression and maintains that the notion of childhood and protection stems out the belief that children are vulnerable" (79-80).

The girl-child experiences a great deal of oppression in society; if she is not asked to go through the tradition of forced marriage, she is kidnapped or subjected to the obnoxious tradition of 'isi muo', a tradition which supports young men "who have no money to pay for a bride to sneak out of the bush to cut a curl from a girl's head so that she would belong to him for life" (*The Bride Price*, 103). Chitando (2008) quoted in Timothy Chunga maintains that "patriarchal oppression results in the suffering of the girl-child"(26). T. Ngoshi (2010) goes further to observe that "girls are married off too early in their lives such that they are robbed of the pleasures of youthful femininity" (245).

In the novel, Aku-nna is kidnapped one night during a dance rehearsal by the Okoboshi Obidi family. Twelve men rush into the room where her sisters and cousins are practicing for a community festival; after finding Aku-nna, the Obidi men throw her over their shoulders and take her into the forest. According to the narrator, "What was

a girl to do in a predicament of this sort? There was no use in struggling. There must be at least twelve of these men, all running, running and breathing hard. So this was to be the end of her dreams. After everything, she was nothing but a common native girl kidnapped into being a bride. The realization was so painful..." (*The Bride Price*, 126)

In the novel, Emecheta cannot deny the encroachment of traditional culture into the freedom of the girl-child. Her visionary perception in exposing the problem of abduction or early forced marriage shows that she is not silent on the issue. Through the character of Iloba, Emecheta stresses that the structural system of female harassment underpinned by patriarchy should be abolished because it is outmoded. Iloba confesses: "One would have believed that we were all civilized now, and that this kind of thing had stopped happening" (*The Bride Price*, 132). Disagreement and hostility are the result of this kind of man's inhumanity against the girl-child since minimal bride price is offered to the parents of the girl after abduction (*The Bride Price*, 133). Anger swells up in the raging hearts of Okonkwo's family that Okonkwo's sons plan to kidnap and cut the locks of hair from the heads of all the girls in the family that is responsible for this outrage against their half-sister.

Rape or forced sexual intercourse is one of the observed cultural practices Emecheta explores in the novel. According to the Ibuza tradition, once a girl is disvirgined by any man, the girl automatically becomes a bride to the man without punishing the man who commits the crime of rape. The family of the girl has no power over what has befallen their daughter and is compelled to accept her fate without agitating. When Aku-nna is kidnapped by the Okoboshi's family, her family searches for her and bemoans her fate.

The narrator explains that “even as they were doing all this, they knew it was useless. Aku-nna had gone. All the man responsible had to do was cut a curl of her hair-“isi nmo” – and she would belong to him for life. Or he could force her into sleeping with him, and if she refused his people would assist him by holding her down until she was disvirgined. And when that had been done, no other person would want her anymore. It was a shame...” (*The Bride Price*, 132).

Okoboshi’s sister also confirms the above cultural practice by warning Aku-nna to willingly sleep with her brother without being stubborn, because “Okoboshi would only have to call for help and all those drunken men would come in and help him hold her legs apart so that he could enter her with no further trouble. The men would not be blamed at all, because it was their custom and also because Okoboshi had a bad foot” (*The Bride Price*, 135).

The Bride Price: A Projection of Radical Feminism and Reality

Emecheta brings Aku-nna’s assertive nature to the fore as she fights against patriarchal Ibuza tenets which support rape as a way of forcefully having the consent of the girl-child. The protagonist, Aku-nna devices a new plan to free herself from the humiliating experience that is capable of giving her perpetual trauma. She is a girl pushed to the wall and on the slippery path of revolution against her oppressors. She is thus forced to assume a feminist fight since her fundamental rights have been violated. Aku-nna is not ready to face frustration, debasement, physical and emotional pain arising from forced sexual intercourse as Okoboshi violently pushes her on the bed. According to the

narrator, “She kicked him in the chest, he slapped her very hard, and she could smell the gin on his breath” (*The Bride Price*, 138).

Emecheta equips her protagonist with oratorical skills. These skills are feminist tools that give Aku-nna the freedom to decide her destiny and obtain freedom from society’s oppressive restrictions. To stop Okoboshi from committing the inhuman act of rape, Aku-nna lies that she has been disvirgined by her teacher and best friend, Chike Ofulue. Aku-nna insults Okoboshi: “look at you, and shame on you. Okoboshi the son of Obidi! You say your father is a chief--dog chief, that is what he is, if the best he can manage to steal for his son is a girl who has been taught what men taste like by a slave”(*The Bride Price*, 138). Aku-nna’s confession however infuriates Okoboshi who refuses to touch her calling her names. Aku-nna’s feminist oratorical skill achieves a desired result because, it helps to ignite Okoboshi’s hatred for her. Aku-nna is further humiliated when Okoboshi spreads lies that she had been defiled by a common slave, Chike Ofulue. This further demoralizes Aku-nna and her family. In Okoboshi’s family, Aku-nna is humiliated and ostracized as if she has committed a sacrilege. Amidst the raging rumour, Aku-nna is given an old lappa like a young widow by Okoboshi’s family to scorn and humiliate her before the villagers. The above act by Okoboshi’s family appears to be a strategy to oppress the girl-child and frustrate her emotionally.

The utopian romanticizing of emancipation pushes Aku-nna to take a drastic action. She escapes from Okoboshi’s house and elopes with the love of her life, Chike to Asaba and marries him without the official bride price on her head. Aku-nna chooses total rebellion because she has been so oppressed. She rebels against Okoboshi and the

Ibuza cultural mores because she wants to fight for her honour. In psychoanalysis, the *ego* is the most central part of the mind that mediates with one's environment. The *ego* is ever under the control of the *id* in order to expose the reality of human experiences. Aku-nna's *ego* operates according to the pleasure principle which focuses on her instinctual drive and desire for *eros*. In this act of rebellion, *eros* signifies the life instinct that pushes Aku-nna to engage in life sustaining decisions. This also explains why Aku-nna adopts revolutionary superego aggressiveness as the only way to escape Oedipal tyrannical powers and achieve her freedom. This superego is what Eagleton calls 'the unruly, insubordinate unconscious' (Eagleton, 136).

Aku-nna's rebellion points to a respectable road where feminist ideology must be allowed to fuel her struggle for freedom. Emecheta's concept of feminism is radical and very necessary in achieving total freedom for the girl-child. The reason for the fight points to the fact that Emecheta understands that African girls and women enjoy a low degree of freedom in the pre-colonial Igbo society. Indeed, Emecheta projects a feminist stance which spurns compromise and complementarity between sexes. In essence, Aku-nna's refusal to remain caged by the patriarchal traits spells true radicalism. To Emecheta, it is very difficult not to become hostile in the face of oppressive situation.

Consequently, Aku-nna uses all the aggressiveness in her psyche to fight against patriarchal oppression, thus moving beyond the level of *ego* and superego. In fact, her hatred for patriarchal oppression does not allow the guilt-producing superego to deliberate on the consequences of her quest for self-pleasure; but one thing is clear – the unconsciousness can always return to plague her (Ibid). Eagleton observes that in the

midst of patriarchal laws, the girl-child begins to form what Freud calls 'superego', the awesome, punitive voice of conscience... (136). Aku-nna consciously rebels Oedipal guilt (depression), patriarchal tradition and castrations to escape from family and traditional forces that hinder her happiness. She decides to follow her heart in direct opposition to the Ibuza social and cultural norms. Aku-nna aggressively challenges the Oedipal guilt, Ibuza cultural norms, and the constant castration of her dreams that she is left with the option of making a total disconnection from her family and Ibuza tyrannical customs.

Emecheta represents Aku-nna's rebellion as an inward tragic event, reinforced by her family's hostility towards her choice of man and the oppressive patriarchal norms of Ibuza community. In fact, the psychic energies of Ibuza superstitious norms violate and destroy Aku-nna's psychic wholeness, fragmenting and ultimately dissolving her personality that she dies while giving birth to her daughter. Towards the end of the novel, there is a deathly instinct in Aku-nna in which her aggression is resolved and guilt displayed. This assertion proves Aku-nna's plight; ultimately, she lacks the needed courage to resist the mythical cultural beliefs or taboos of the Ibuza community. Therefore, emotional torture as a result of unpaid bride price and Okonkwo's fetish behaviour towards her heighten the Oedipal guilt that makes Aku-nna psychologically depressed.

The authorial third-person point of view links the protagonist's neurotic state to the societal pressure which revolves around the negative consequences of unpaid bride price during childbirth. According to the narrator, 'anyone who contravened was better dead. If you tried to hang on to life, you would gradually be helped towards death by psychological pressures' (*The Bride Price*, 141). But then, Aku-nna's fears, unfortunately,

come to be realized – especially her fear of dying during childbirth. Aku-nna suffers a lot of mental anguish and dies in her knowledge of the patriarchal myth that punishes female offenders for flouting traditional custom.

Aku-nna's rebellion is radical and western in ideology. This act of rebellion is directly linked to Emecheta's real life experience when she defied her family tradition and rejected the man chosen for her by elders in her family (Umeh, 2). Like Aku-nna, Emecheta too eloped with her classmate, Nduka Onwordi and did not have a traditional Igbo marriage ceremony with all the blessings from family members and friends in their village (Ibid).

The Bride Price has an unhappy ending like Emecheta's love story. Emecheta's bride price was not paid because her husband could not afford the money her family demanded. Her husband, Sylvester, felt humiliated that she likened him to an outcast because he had been unable to pay her family bride price. Marie Umeh explains that 'Sylvester destroyed the only copy of Emecheta's novel to prevent public exposure of their marital affair' (3). Her husband's mean act forces her to give the novel an unhappy ending. Umeh further explains that "Aku-nna's guilty conscience, poor health, and anxiety from traumatic village experiences precipitate a nervous breakdown which ultimately leads to her premature death" (Ibid). Aku-nna's mental breakdown also mirrors Emecheta's depression caused by her failed marriage, which ends in divorce (Umeh, 3). Despite life challenges, Emecheta has remained courageous and more mature in handling her problems, but in *The Bride Price*, Aku-nna's immaturity exposes her to Oedipal destructive powers of guilt (*Head Above Water*, 4). Emecheta accepts that the tragic ending of the novel is a result of her failed marriage and rebellion against the patriarchal figureheads in her family. Emecheta

seems to have noticed the huge consequences of the Oedipal guilt she has imbued her protagonist with. In her auto biography, *Head Above Waters*, she emphatically states her opinion about her stance on cultural norms, feminist radicalism and consciousness. She confesses:

I had grown wiser since that manuscript. I had realized that what makes all of us human is belonging to a group. And if one belongs to a group, one should try and abide by its laws. If one could not abide by the group's law, then one is an outsider, a radical, someone different who had found a way of living and being happy outside the group. Aku-nna was too young to do all that. She had to die. (166)

Conclusion

In concluding this paper, it would be apt to buttress that hate for oppressive cultural norms and forces are consuming passions that fuelled Aku-nna's rebellion. Her choice of a man is indeed a challenge to the Oedipal figure heads; an attempt to defy Oedipal norms that militate against her pleasure principles. In fact, Aku-nna's mission of rebelling against 'Oedipus figureheads and symbols— Okonkwo, Okoboshi, the Ibuza customs or belief leads to a total breakdown of her psyche and body. Aku-nna's rebellion fails because she is incapable of completing her struggle for life instinct. She succumbs to Oedipal guilt and becomes subjugated. She moves into the level of preconscious and is unable to fight her death instinct. Indeed, the desire to resist patriarchal forces completely eludes her. Deleuze et al see Aku-nna's pathologic condition as a process of deterritorialization (363)

because she cannot control her mind and actions again. She dies as a psychological victim of Ibuza cultural myths and superstitious beliefs. The omniscient narrator acknowledges the fact that “every girl in Ibuza after Aku-nna’s death was told her story, to reinforce the old taboos of the land” (*The Bride Price*, 168). This is indeed, the way patriarchal hegemony has psychological hold on the girl-child to perpetually oppress and subjugate her.

Works Cited

- Abrams, M. H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1971.
- ... “Psychological and Psychoanalytic Criticism”. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. 7th ed. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1999. 247-253.
- Amadi, Felicia Ngozi .C. “Challenges of Early Childhood Care Education in Sustaining Girl-Child Development in Nigeria”. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*. 2013; 5(4): 151-156.
- Chiluwa, Molly. “Patriarchy versus Womanism in Nigeria: Rethinking Womanist Theorization.”
- Emmanuel A. Adedun and Onuora Benedict Nweke (eds.) *New Perspectives on a Literary Enigma. A Festschrift in Honour of Professor Theodora Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo*. Ibadan: University Press PLC, 2014. 102-135.
- ...“Reconciling Opposites: An Evolution of a Hybrid Culture in Ezigbo’s *Children of the Eagle* and *House of Symbols*.” Unpublished M.A. Dissertation, Department of English, University of Lagos, 2005.
- Chitando, A. *Imagining a Peaceful Society: A Vision of Children’s Literature in Post-Conflict Zimbabwe*. Uppsala, Sweden: The Nordic Africa Institute, 2008.

- Chunga Timothy Mwilima. "An Exploration of the Portrayal of the Girl-Child in Erna Muller's *It All Goes Wrong* and *When you Dance With The Crocodile*." A Master of Arts Thesis Submitted in the Department of English Studies, University of Namibia, January 2015.
- Colby, Kenneth Mark. *Introduction to Psychoanalytic Research*. New York: Basic Books, 1960.
- Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1983.
- Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008.
- Emecheta, Buchi. *The Bride Price*. New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1976.
- ... *Head Above Water*. London: Fontana, 1986.
- Fongchingong, Charles. "Unbending Gender Narratives in African Literature". *Journal of International Women's Studies*. 2006; 8(1):135-147.
- Foucault, Michel. "Introduction". Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1983. xi-xxiv.
- Freud, Sigmund. *An Outline of Psychoanalysis*. New York: Norton, 1949.
- Kolawole, Mary E.M. *Womanism and African Consciousness*. Trenton: African World Press, Inc., 1999.
- Mezu, Rose Ure. "Buchi Emecheta's *The Bride Price* and *The Slave Girl*: A Schizoanalytic Perspective". *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature*. 1997; 28(1): 131-146.
- Mohammed, Razinatu T. "Maternal Oppression of the Girl-Child in Selected Novels by Buchi Emecheta". *An International Multi-Disciplinary Journal, Ethiopia*. 2010; 4(3): 462-470.
- Ngoshi, T. "Erasure of girlhoods, inscriptions of womanhood: A study of erased girlhoods in Selected Zimbabwean fiction." *NAWA Journal of Languages and Communication*. 2010; 4(2): 241-249.
- Nweke, Onuora Benedict. "Deconstructing Womanism and Denigrating the Male Sex in AkachiAdimora-Ezeigbo's *Children of the Eagle*". Emmanuel A. Adedun and Onuora Benedict Nweke (eds.) *New Perspectives on a Literary Enigma. A Festschrift in Honour of Professor Theodora Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo*. Ibadan: University Press PLC, 2014. 196-211.
- Offorma, Grace Chibiko. "Girl-Child Education in Africa". Keynote Address presented at the Conference of the Federation of the University Women of Africa in Lagos, Nigeria. 16th -19th July, 2009. Web. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/280554452>
- Ogundipe-leslie, Molar. *Re-Creating Ourselves: African Women and Critical Transformations*. Trenton: NJ: Africa World Press, 1994.
- ... "Stiwaniism: Feminism in African Context". *African Literature: An Anthology of*

- Criticism and Theory*. Eds. Tejumola Olaniyan and Ato Quayson. USA: Blackwell Publishing. 2009. 542-550.
- Okereke, Grace Eche. "Patriarchal Reading of Selected African Novels". *Gender Perceptions and Gender Development in Africa: A Socio-cultural Approach*. (Ed) M.E.M Kolawole. Lagos: Arrabon Academic Publishers, 1998. 112-120.
- Okereke, Grace Eche and Egbung, Itang Ede. "Significant Others, Family Responsibility and the Freedom of the African Child in Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*". *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*. 2014; 20(5): 2059-2066.
- Schmid, Michael. "Narrative Memory and the Impact of Trauma on Individuals with Reference to One Short Sequence from *Memento*". *Abgabetermin*. 2004; 28(5):1-11. <https://www.grin.com/document/66502>
- Shodipe, Mojisola. "Language, Gender and the Negotiation of Meaning in Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's *The Last of the Strong Ones*". Emmanuel A. Adedun and Onuora Benedict Nweke (eds.) *New Perspectives on a Literary Enigma. A Festschrift in Honour of Professor Theodora Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo*. Ibadan: University Press PLC, 2014. 173-195.
- Showalter, Elaine. "The Unmanning of the Mayor of Casterbridge." *Thomas Hardy: The Tragic Novels*. Ed. R. P. Draper. London: MacMillan, 1991. 144-57.
- ... "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness." *Writing and Sexual Difference*. 8.2. 1981; 8(2): 260-72.
- Umeh, Marie. "Introduction". *The Bride Price*. New York: George Braziller, Inc., 2013. Print.
- Worguji, Gloria Eme. "Male Child Syndrome in Selected Fiction of Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo". Emmanuel A. Adedun and Onuora Benedict Nweke (eds.) *New Perspectives on a Literary Enigma. A Festschrift in Honour of Professor Theodora Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo*. Ibadan: University Press PLC, 2014. 136-146.

ANOTHER SIDE OF THE SKY

I am the moments you never had, the time after you died, and you are still wherever you are, shimmering in imagined light. It has been a while, body and shadow no longer adhere to the rules of our abandoned world and we have tried to mend the broken days without you. When there is no sun it is often dark and night is here to stay: it is all too clear no-one is home. Backyard memories are all I have, cycling round the park and playing on the swings. Recent photographs of you and me are empty, each one blurred, underexposed.

Silence is twice as long backwards, singing makes it even worse

—*Rupert M. Loydell*

Dock at Devon



Rebecca Matheson

Toponymie:

Etude littéraire de cinq villes sélectionnées dans les surnoms d'Alaafin d'Oyo

Johnson A. Odeyemi

Redeemer's University, Ede, Osun State, Nigeria

Ayokunmi O. Ojebode

Redeemer's University, Ede, Osun State, Nigeria

Résumé

Les arts oraux africains ont toujours été une merveille pour les occidentaux. C'est un monde de l'impossible, et une plateforme où les mystères sont démystifiés. Dans cette recherche, comme une carte du trésor, le surnom d'Alaafin sera examiné comme un domaine où cinq villes anciennes sélectionnées de Yoruba sont incorporées. Par conséquent, le chercheur explorera les villes en faisant une analyse littéraire de leurs significations afin d'expliquer leurs liens avec l'histoire de la ville d'Oyo au Nigéria en Afrique, où les règles Alaafin. L'Alaafin, un chef primordial dans la ville d'Oyo a un surnom spécial qui trace ses noms d'ancêtres et de ville qui ont la pertinence à son passé. Les surnoms sont des noms densément métaphoriques qui décrivent la personnalité d'un individu, et ils peuvent être chantés, récités et chantés pour faire l'éloge du porteur d'un nom. Dans cette

recherche, au-delà d'être un leader, l'Alaafin sera examiné en tant qu'arbitre, promoteur et conservateur de la culture et des traditions de la race yoruba. Les cinq noms de ville sélectionnés qui seront extraits du corps du surnom d'Alaafin et translittérés en anglais sont: Koso, Bara, Iseke, Owinni et Apaara.

Mots clés: Alaafin, Yoruba, Oyo, Toponymie et Cognomen

Introduction

De nombreux savants comme: (Barber, 1991) (Olátúnjí, 1984), (Finnegan, 1970), (Johnson, 2001) et (Abimbola, 1975) ont écrit sur Oyo et la tradition orale des Yoruba. Une revue décisive de ces matériaux révélera comment tous ces auteurs ont apporté diverses contributions à l'histoire générale et à l'exposition sur le mode de vie culturel des Yoruba, mais aucun d'eux n'a fait une étude approfondie sur les toponymes qui existent dans le surnom d'Alaafin d'Oyo. C'est donc la pertinence et l'importance de cette recherche.

Pour commencer, la toponymie au sens large implique l'étude de l'origine et de la signification des noms de lieux (Cano, 2008). Les toponymes, tels qu'utilisés dans cet article, impliquent des noms de villes rapportés dans le surnom d'Alaafin avec les analyses qui fournissent un sens significatif et des informations historiques. Selon Radding et Western (2010), les toponymes sont donnés intentionnellement pour donner une certaine signification; Ils ne sont pas arbitraires et sont mieux considérés comme des «signes» parce qu'ils ont des couches de significations qui vont au-delà des mots ordinaires. Les toponymes sont essentiellement des outils de préservation de l'histoire

pour des groupes de personnes; Donc étudier les toponymes implique des tentatives de répondre aux questions telles que ce qui est nommé? Où est-il situé? Qui l'a nommé? Quand a-t-elle été nommée? Et pourquoi lui a-t-on donné un tel nom?

Le nom est la connectivité entre la toponymie et surnom dans cette recherche, et est obtenu par les motifs similaires que les deux partagent dans la littérature orale de l'Afrique. En Afrique et au Nigéria, surtout dans la région du Sud-ouest parmi les Yorubas, on donne des surnoms à différentes familles et lignages, et la plupart du temps la récitation du surnom est effectuée par une personne âgée dans un ménage, soit un homme ou une femme, souvent les femmes âgées récitent généralement le surnom de leurs enfants quand ils effectuent de façon excellente ou faire quelque chose de spectaculaire qui est digne de louange ou d'évaluation. Cette tradition est accomplie, car la mère attire l'enfant à elle-même et l'évalue en récitant les surnoms de leur ascendance. Elle commence à réciter les noms de famille de la mère chez le père. Parfois, la mère fonde le surnom de l'ancêtre du garçon ou de la fille. Quand cela est fait, il excite, excite et excite la personne qui est louée, et il encourage le porteur du nom à faire plus.

En dehors de cela, les Yorubas ont des surnoms pour certaines lignées particulières, les ménages ou certaines personnes importantes ou un groupe de personnes dans la société. La plupart de ces surnoms sont inventés à partir de différentes histoires anciennes, profondément enracinées, longtemps oubliées et anciennes de certaines familles, individus, ascendance ou lignage qui sont tous réunis pour former un surnom entiers. Et elle varie en longueur selon que c'est le nom donné à un enfant pour décrire les porteurs futurs de la vie de l'enfant ou comme un récital des accomplissements d'un clan. Il est invoqué

lorsqu'on loue un enfant pour avoir porté fierté aux parents ou au clan ou lorsqu'il tente d'évoquer des traits de caractère vertueux de bravoure, de courage, de persévérance qu'on croit innés chez une personne en raison de son ascendance. Il comprend aussi des mots de dévoilement ou de vérités révélatrices qui sont utilisées parmi les Yoruba pour louer, féliciter, applaudir ou utiliser comme une expression d'admiration pour une personne. Quand quelqu'un travaille ou danse et qu'il entend son surnom, il ou elle éclaire et fait le travail mieux (Johnson, 2001).

Et il existe différentes formes et façons de louer quelqu'un avec son surnom, comme il ya des surnoms pour les personnes importantes dans la société comme, les rois, les reines et les gens royaux, ainsi sont aussi des surnoms pour les roturiers. Dans *Awon Oriki Borokinni* par Adeboye (1975) met en évidence le surnom de quelques individus dans la terre Yoruba. Par exemple, les surnoms de Babalola Balogun Ibadan, surnom de Baale Orowusi, surnom d'Okunola Abasi, surnom d'Olubadan, et beaucoup plus.

La personnalité importante discutée dans cet article est Alaafin d'Oyo, c'est à partir de son surnom que les toponymes focalisés sont fouillés. Il est un monarque vénéré, et un chef primordial parmi les Yoruba, une tribu sud-occidentale située au Nigéria. L'Alaafin est une descendant d'Oduduwa, le progéniteur de la race yoruba, qui a commencé son royaume à Ile-Ife, la ville berceau pour les Yoruba. Oranmiyan, le fils le plus jeune d'Oduduwa a fondé l'empire d'Oyo, le premier royaume caractérisé avec une structure politique organisée, où *Alaafin Sango* a été installé en tant que premier roi. Le titre Alaafin est la marque de monarque d'Oyo, et il supervise les affaires administratives des six autres royaumes yoruba. À travers l'analyse littéraire du cognac translitéré d'Alaafin

d'Oyo, je vais illustrer comment l'oralité africaine dans la forme de la littérature orale a été utilisée comme un «GPS» traditionnel (semblable au système de navigation mondial) pour suivre certains noms de villes anciennes qui ont longtemps été oubliées dans Oyo.

En outre, il est important de prouver par des faits de l'histoire la position, l'importance et le rôle que la ville d'Oyo joue parmi d'autres villes dans la terre Yoruba. *Ajise bi Oyo laari*, une citation populaire parmi les Oyo, et aussi dans toutes les villes Yoruba. L'éloge signifie bien «Oyo d'abord, tandis que d'autres suivent». Les gens d'Oyo se prétendent eux-mêmes comme des catalyseurs dans la culture, la créativité, la politique et le leadership parce que, l'empire d'Oyo leur avait donné la même importance historique et politique parmi d'autres tribus de Yoruba. À un moment donné, l'histoire du royaume Oyo encapsulait celle de l'ensemble de la race yoruba.

Puis l'Alaafin, la puissance impériale du royaume d'Oyo était *Primus inter Pares* (d'importance primordiale) n'était pas dans le doute. Le pouvoir, la dignité et la prééminence de l'Alaafin en tant que reflet du statut de dirigeant de l'Oyo ne sont pas une concession d'autres groupes ethniques yoruba, pas plus qu'un héritage d'Oranyan, leur progéniteur, mais un privilège incontestable droite. C'était un statut dûment gagné par le travail acharné, la bravoure, la sagacité politique et les diplomates nourris par la vision, l'unité et la solidarité parmi les Oyo (Saka, 2004: 1). La déclaration de (Saka, 2004) décrit l'héritage prolifique d'Oyo Yoruba en raison du point de repère qu'elle a fait dans l'histoire des Yoruba comme un Empire renommé, par conséquent, il est devenu la citadelle de la culture Yoruba, comme complété par (Adesokan, 2004: 7) qui retrace avec l'histoire la force, la suprématie et l'influence du royaume Oyo parmi les autres

royaumes yoruba.

Le royaume d'Oyo a été fondé par Oranyan, le plus jeune et le fils le plus courageux d'Oduduwa. D'autres royaumes comme le Royaume d'Egba, le Royaume d'Ijebu, le Royaume d'Ife, le royaume d'Ondo, le royaume d'Ijesha, le Royaume d'Ekiti, le Royaume d'Owo, le Royaume de Bénin, le Royaume d'Ila et le royaume d'Egbado pour mentionner quelques-uns existaient aussi comme fondé par les fils d'Oduduwa. Parmi tous les royaumes mentionnés, le royaume d'Oyo était non seulement le royaume le plus grand, mais aussi le plus puissant jamais établi en terre Yoruba. Peu étonnant, le Royaume était généralement appelé *Oyo Empire*. L'ancien empire d'Oyo s'étendait au-delà de la frontière nigériane dans un autre pays connu sous le nom de Dahomey. Oyo-Ile était la capitale de l'empire d'alors Oyo. Au début du 16ème siècle, la capitale a été déplacée à Oyo Igboho à la suite de guerres intertribales. Plus tard, la capitale a été déplacée à «Oyo Ajaka» et finalement au site actuel connu comme «Oyo Oro» par Alaafin Abiodun Atiba.

Méthodologie

Les sources orales constituent les sources primaires tandis que les sources secondaires sont la recherche bibliographique comme les livres, les revues, les journaux, les brochures, les diagrammes, les photographies, les documents audiovisuels et la production sonore du Dr Ayilara Ajobiewe, chef d'orchestre sur *Oriki Ile wa* 'surnom. Des entrevues orales ont été menées avec deux personnes, à savoir: Adesina Adejare, un présentateur de premier plan à l'Autorité de télévision nigériane (NTA) Oyo, qualifiée pour réciter le surnom de l'Alaafin d'Oyo sur son émission à la station, ainsi que Mayowa Ayolo, le chanter (Akewi)

pour le titulaire Alaafin d'Oyo, qui vient de la lignée de chantres royaux de la première Alaafin. L'aspect capital de cet article est l'emplacement de cette dernière interview réalisée dans le célèbre palais historique de l'Alaafin d'Oyo, situé sur le marché Akeesan.

En outre, le chercheur a translitéré l'interview enregistrée de la langue yoruba en langue anglaise dans un format écrit, un chef-d'œuvre qui a contribué énormément à la méthodologie de cet article, puisque la langue acceptable pour l'écriture dans les universitaires doit être la langue anglaise. Le chercheur a également généré un disque compact audio à partir des interviews enregistrées, accompagné de photos différentes prises au palais du monarque Oyo ainsi que des cartes et des diagrammes de l'ancien empire.

Discussion

Analyse littéraire des cinq toponymes.

Koso

Oba aborí esin bààbà lonà Kòso, Il chevauche son cheval honorablement à Koso

Le nom signifie littéralement «il n'est pas mort par suicide». Pour comprendre le contexte de cette déclaration, il est impératif de l'associer au mythe qui entoure la mort d'Alaafin Sango à Oyo. Koso était à la fois, une des capitales de l'Empire. Outre Koso, Oyo avait aussi d'autres centres de capitaux tels qu'Oyo-Ile et Igboho. Les traditions orales yorubas identifient souvent Sango comme l'un des premiers rois (Alaafin) d'Oyo-

Ile. Il était un grand guerrier et avait beaucoup de charmes, il a été prétendu qu'il avait le pouvoir d'appeler la foudre et le tonnerre à travers son Ose («une baguette charmée comme une hache»), avec lequel il aurait vaincu ses ennemis sur le champ de bataille pendant son Campagnes militaires. Les circonstances qui entourent la mort et la déification de Sango ne sont pas claires, mais comme la tradition l'a, ses sujets ont été ceux qui l'ont forcé à abdiquer le trône quand ils ont obtenu mécontents de ses intrigues politiques et escapades militaires.

Un côté plus positif du mythe est qu'il a été envoyé en exil par Gbonka et Timi (rois d'autres villes yorouba) dans une rancœur entre le trio. Il a été forcé hors du palais avec toutes ses femmes et ses dévots qui ont quitté la ville avec lui. En raison de cette humiliation, Sango en colère s'est suicidé et beaucoup de ses dévots sont retournés à Oyo. À leur retour, ils ont commencé le culte Sango, par conséquent, il est devenu le seul Alaafin déifié d'Oyo, (le dieu du tonnerre et de la foudre) en raison de la magnitude de ses pouvoirs surnaturels de sa vie.

Après sa déification, ses dévots à travers les pouvoirs magiques ont également commencé à invoquer des «foudres» pour effrayer les gens dans l'incrédulité et contre la notion que leur maître est mort par le suicide, et de renforcer également la vivacité et la puissance de ses pouvoirs. Ainsi, chaque fois qu'il y avait des foudres, le Yoruba croit que Sango est celui qui exprime sa colère. En dehors de cela, ses disciples allaient encore répandre ce dire que, «Oba Koso» signifiant, «Le roi ne s'est pas accroché», tandis que d'autres professaient que, Oba ainsi (le roi s'est accroché). Ainsi, le nom «Koso» est devenu une version abrégée de «Oba Koso». Et enfin, le cognomen ci-dessus expose la

connaissance de l'Alaafin avec la ville discutée car, c'est le site ancestral de l'endroit où le premier Alaafin (Sango, dieu du tonnerre et de la foudre) a été divinisé.

Bara

Bìrìn esin tìkò tìkò lona Bàrà, et monte son cheval prestigieusement à Bara

Dans la tradition orale d'Oyo Yoruba, Koso était une ancienne capitale de l'Empire Oyo. Les gens se sont installés à Koso pour des raisons de sécurité et se sont installés sur la colline de Koso et au-dessous de la montagne de Bara. Ils se sont ensuite déplacés vers le sud jusqu'à Oyo-Ile, puis vers Ipapo Ile, Igboho et retour à Oyo-Ile avant de s'installer définitivement à l'actuelle Oyo, à 52 km au nord-est d'Ibadan (Abimbola 1964, Agbaje Williams 1989, Aremu 1997, Morton-Williams 1967). Bara est à environ trois kilomètres au nord-ouest de Koso. C'était un site montagneux où les Alaafins décédés ont été enterrés, semblable à la pyramide égyptienne, et n'importe quel d'entre eux qui n'a pas été enterré dans le site ne serait pas célébré, ou donné une sépulture appropriée signifiée pour un monarque passé.

Iseke

O gbenà kale ni Iseke omo isin, il a apporté diverses calamités sur Iseke,

Omo ira, oju le kan soso Iseke, celui qui craint à Iseke

Le nom de ville, 'Iseke' a été inventé d'une appellation donnée au progéniteur de la ville. Il était renommé comme un homme de personnalité drôle et joviale, et un de

son dicton populaire qui lui a apporté l'importance évidente était, *Seke ni mo yo* ('je me suis réjoui exubérante'). Cette phrase au fur et à mesure du temps se métamorphose au nom de la ville, car il est connu comme «Baba seke ni moyo» («l'homme qui se réjouit exubérante»). Beaucoup d'années plus tard, l'histoire de l'homme s'était répandue et différentes torsions et variétés à sa déclaration ont été créées, d'où le nom réel de l'homme et de la ville qu'il a mené par perte de pertinence, et a été remplacé par son surnom, '.

La prééminence de la déclaration de l'homme peut être tracée à l'office d'un chef primordial qu'il a tenu au cours de sa vie, *Elepe* est le nom titulaire pour le Baale (chef de ville) d'Iseke. Lorsque le nom du titulaire est segmenté en syllabes, *Pe* signifierait «appeler, appeler ou appeler un rassemblement d'un groupe de personnes». En réalité aussi, le chef primé discuté a également été libéré avec la responsabilité de convoquer des chefs de ville de camarade pour les réunions dans les premiers jours d'Oyo. Les chefs de petites villes comme: Idode, Ojongbodu, Gudugbu, Apaara, Ajagba, Molete, et beaucoup plus. Notez, pour la digression, la plupart des noms de ville énumérés dans le vieux empire d'Oyo ont survécu jusqu'à aujourd'hui en tant que noms de villes contemporaines à Oyo. Ainsi, chaque fois que les chefs veulent payer leurs hommages ou leurs cotisations à l'Alaafin d'Oyo, c'est par *l'Elepe d'Iseke*, ou plutôt mis, *Onipe d'Iseke* qu'ils paieront les cotisations.

Après avoir discuté du pourcentage de leurs cotisations et les avoir recueillies, il donnera alors l'Onikoyi (le chef sur la ville d'Ikoyi), qui était le chef le plus proche d'Iku Baba Yeye (le surnom pour l'Alaafin d'Oyo, signifiant «la mort incarnée'). Aussi, notez, la ville, Iseke avait existé dans la colonie qui devait plus tard être connue comme le vieux empire Oyo, ce n'était pas parmi les villes relocalisées que Alaafin Abiodun Atiba

a transféré à l'emplacement actuel de la ville d'Oyo. Iseke est après la ville Akinmoorin, près de la route qui mène à Imeleke, là l'Elepe, leur chef choisit habituellement sa prime et ses collègues pour l'année, et c'était de leur part qu'ils ont séparé la «coupe» signifiée pour l'impériale Souverain de la ville d'Oyo, Alaafin.

Mais plus tard, quand l'Alaafin Abiodun se relocalisa plus près d'eux sur le site actuel, Ago d'Iô d'Oyo Igboho, il força l'Élépe d'Iseke et ses autres chefs à déplacer leurs villes plus près de l'endroit où il pouvait surveiller leurs activités. L'Elepe, outre les devoirs politiques, était également responsable de l'approvisionnement en huile de palme de l'Alaafin d'Oyo. Si l'on devait visiter le site actuel d'Iseke, on y verrait encore des traces de sites de raffinage locaux où le raffinage a été fait, avec des fragments partout sur le site. Enfin, il est essentiel de noter qu'Iseke avait une carte qui était parmi les premières cartes survivantes qui a été utilisé comme un outil de référence primaire par l'Alaafin pour annuler les revendications de la propriété par d'autres rois chaque fois qu'il y avait des différends fonciers entre lui et les villes suivantes: Awe, Akinmorin, et Iware qui partageaient toutes les frontières avec Iseke.

Apaara

Gagné ko apata leri apata, bemebe à gudu, ils ont sorti des tambours de guerre, et même déplacé pour se cacher dans les parties rocheuses,

Lona Apaara, ojo akanlu à dele, le long du chemin qui mène à Apaara, le jour où la guerre a commencé.

Le nom de la ville provient de la personnalité du progéniteur de la ville qui était un Abiku (un enfant spirituel qui meurt et qui renaît à plusieurs reprises), chaque fois que l'enfant est déclaré mort, il revient à la vie, donc il peut être syllabiquement expliqué comme *Apa* («quelqu'un qui est assassiné / mort») et *paara* (aller et retour). Ce nom, lorsqu'il est fusionné, serait alors lire «quelqu'un qui meurt, et revient sans cesse». C'est au Xème siècle que la ville a déménagé d'Oyo-Ile, à la colonie actuelle appelée Ahoro-Apaara, qui est proche de la ville d'Awe, le long de la route Ife-Odan dans le gouvernement local d'Oyo aujourd'hui. Ils ont été relogés d'Oyo-Ile (où l'Empire d'Oyo a été localisé pour la première fois) était une nécessité en raison de la guerre inter-tribale qui s'est produite là.

Mais, quand l'Alaafin Abiodun s'est déplacé au présent Oyo, il a demandé que le chef d'Apaara déplacent la ville plus près de où était son palais. Le progéniteur d'Apaara, est passé d'un enfant Abiku à un chasseur courageux et renommé. Et c'était sa prouesse de chasse qui a qualifié sa sélection comme quelque chose comme le chef de la sécurité et protecteur de l'Alaafin contre les intrus et les ennemis imminents, par conséquent, ses habitants ont été alloués une partie de terres par Alaafin entre Awe et Akinmoorin, qui est l'entrée Au palais de l'Alaafin. C'était même cet ancêtre du peuple Apaara qui partageait sa portion de terre avec le progéniteur de la crainte, qui était connu sous le nom d'Awonibon, un co-chasseur.

C'est la raison pour laquelle de nombreux Yoruba classent *Awe* comme une extension de la ville d'Apaara. Le surnom ci-dessus de l'Alaafin décrit un scénario de guerre, avec des images de «tambours de guerre» et des soldats qui «caché dans les parties rocheuses» le long de la partie qui mène à Apaara. C'est un plus pour les informations données sur

la nature offensive des gens de la ville, et pour compléter leur occupation précitée en tant que chasseurs, qui ont été employés par les Alaafin pour défendre son territoire. La référence aux soldats cachés dans les «endroits rocheux» est un mécanisme défensif adopté par les militaires traditionnels pendant la guerre pour combattre leurs ennemis, puisqu'il était plus facile de voir à distance les ennemis entrants et d'obtenir un but parfait pour eux. La ville discutée doit avoir été un bon poste militaire pour dépister les ennemis du royaume. Et enfin, l'imagerie des «roches» est une description géographique précise du paysage de l'ancienne ville, et ce qu'il doit avoir ressemblé à ses débuts.

Owinni

Il prétend que la totalité d'*Owinni* avec ses fleuves comme la sienne,

Eeyan, ti o gbagba Owinni, personne n'ose contester sa souveraineté sur Owinni.

Après avoir établi la pertinence des quatre villes ci-dessus mentionnées à l'histoire d'Oyo, et son monarque, le dernier sur la liste à discuter est *Owinni*. La ville à ses débuts a été géographiquement bénie avec une végétation luxuriante, des rivières, des collines et des vallées. Il a été un lieu de récréation recherché pour l'Alaafin où il va se détendre, et profiter de la sérénité de l'environnement. Il est populairement connu comme Oke Owinni, (colline Owinni) en raison de son paysage vallonné, son paysage fluvial est également un objet d'allusion dans la ligne ci-dessus de cognomen de l'Alaafin. La mention du nom de la ville et de la rivière dans le surnom de l'Alaafin révèle indirectement la valeur que le passé Alaafin a dû mettre sur le site. De plus, il ressort de la ligne ci-dessus

du surnom qu'il est probable que la ville était parmi les villes que l'Alaafin Abiodun Atiba a colonisées pendant sa campagne militaire quand il a relocalisé à l'emplacement actuel d'Oyo, d'Oyo-Ile pendant le sommet de l'empire Oyo.

Le surnom donne à entendre qu'aucune partie de la ville n'a été exonérée de sa propriété, «il a réclamé la totalité de la ville avec sa rivière». Le peuple d'Oyo a développé un système militaire qui lui a permis de développer des armements et d'élargir l'empire, tandis que pour la direction de la communauté gère un gouvernement démocratique, on peut donc conclure que le système démocratique et militaire du gouvernement était en place pendant l'empire. En outre, certains des attributs ont cherché, avant qu'un Alaafin soit couronné sont: bravoure, courage et audace. La structure de commandement militaire d'Oyo est si unique que *l'Aare Ona Kankanfo* comme le généralissime des militaires a mené les seigneurs de guerre d'Oyo avec succès à beaucoup de batailles entre le 13ème et 16ème siècle qui ont préservé l'intégrité territoriale de la course de Yoruba et pendant ce temps Oyo A étendu ses limites territoriales à Nupe, Dahomey, Abome, Weme et d'autres parties de la terre du Togo, et aujourd'hui, ces personnes partagent une affinité culturelle avec le royaume yoruba.

Conclusion

Après avoir examiné les cinq toponymes choisis dans le surnom de l'Alaafin d'Oyo, il est essentiel de souligner ici que la recherche a prouvé le fait que les Africains, en particulier les Yorubas avaient leur propre façon distincte de suivre leurs lieux géographiques oralement dans un nom avant l'avènement de la technologie. Deuxièmement, le surnom

translittéré complète l'histoire d'Oyo, et chaque aspect des gens qui ont été capturés dans l'écriture par des savants érudits qui s'intéressaient à la recherche sur eux. Bien que certaines des découvertes faites dans cet article n'aient pas pu être incluses parce qu'elles sont des informations pures et non codifiées encodées dans le surnom de l'Alaafin qui a été transmis oralement d'une génération du monarque à l'autre et confié aux mains de la famille des chanteurs royaux d'Akewis (la personne qui récitait, chantait et chantait le surnom du monarque, ils servaient aussi de registres et d'historiens de l'ascendance royale à travers les représentations orales), d'où ce chef-d'œuvre est vide de public Accès parce que, il est seulement destiné à être effectuée pour le monarque, sauf quelques chercheurs privilégiés comme l'auteur de ce document académique. Enfin, grâce à cette recherche, les chercheurs ont pu combler un vide dans la recherche sur les toponymes intégrés dans le surnom de l'Alaafin d'Oyo et aussi été en mesure de combler le fossé entre les domaines de la littérature orale et la toponymie. En conclusion, cette recherche permettra également de créer une «chasse au trésor» pour les chercheurs qui sont intéressés à effectuer des recherches sur les villes Yoruba au Nigeria, et en Afrique.

Bibliographie

- Abimbola, W. (1964). Les ruines de la division Oyo. *Notes africaines* 2, 1, 16-19.
- Adeboye B. (1975). *Awon Oriki Borokinni*. Londres: Maison Saint-Paul, Warwick Lane.
- Adejare, A. *Oriki Chants d'Alaafin de Òyó*. (CD audio enregistré par Ojebode Ayokunmi, Òyó town, mars 2011). 2
- Adesokan, N. (2004). Oyo comme une citadelle de la culture Yoruba. Dans Onike, R. et Afolabi, A. (eds).
- Oyo au 21ème siècle. Oyo; Odumatt Press & Publishers. 8-9.
- Agbaje-Williams B. (1989). La découverte de Koso, ancienne colonie d'Oyo. *Le Nigerian Field* 54, 123-127.
- Agiri, B. (1975). *Historique précoce de l'Oyo reconsidéré* [Version électronique]. *African Studies Association*, 16, 1-16.
- Awé, B. (1975). Notes sur Oriki et guerre en Yorubaland. Dans la tradition orale yoruba. (Ed.) Wande Abimbola, Département des Langues Africaines, Ile-Ife: Université d'Ife Press.
- Aremu, D.A. (1979). «Préservation des ressources archéologiques dans le parc national du Vieux-Oyo: un moyen de promouvoir le patrimoine culturel et le tourisme dans le parc». Rapport soumis à Old Oyo National Park, Nigeria.
- Babayemi, S.O. (1980)). *L'automne et la montée d'Oyo, C.1760-1905: Une étude sur*

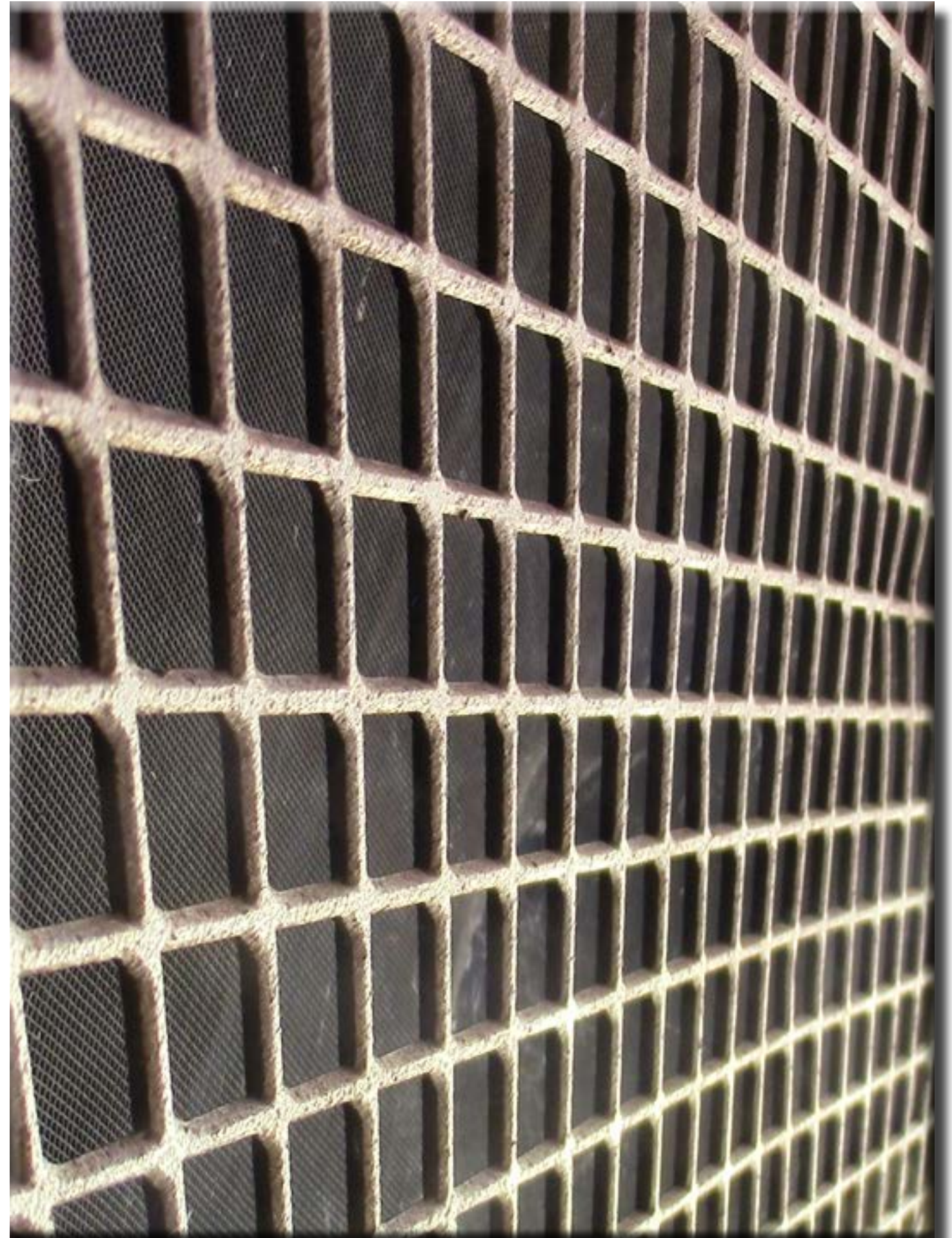
- la culture traditionnelle d'une politique africaine. doctorat thèse. Université de Birmingham. ROYAUME-UNI.
- Barber, K. (1991): Je pourrais parler jusqu'à demain: Oriki, les femmes et le passé dans une ville de Yoruba. Édinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Cano, L. (2008). Analyse toponymique des Lienzos des plaines mixtèques. Oaxaca.
- Faleti, A. (1972). Basorun Gaa. Ibadan: Oniboje Press, 1, 108-138.
- Finnegan, R. (1970). Littérature orale en Afrique. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ladipo, D. (1970). Oba Koso. Macmillan Ltd. 8, 43.
- Morton-Williams, P. (1967). «Le Royaume Yoruba d'Oyo». Dans Forde, D. et Kabemy, eds. Royaume d'Afrique de l'Ouest au 19ème siècle. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ogunbowale, P. (1980). Awon Irunmole Ile Yoruba. Evans Brothers, 7-8, 14-16, 22-23, 48-50.
- Ogunrinde, S. (1982). Iwe Apileko Asekagba Eko NCE ni Eka Yoruba. Collège d'éducation Ikere-Ekiti, 2-5.
- Olatunji, O. (1984). Caractéristiques de la poésie orale yoruba. Ibadan: University Press Limited.
- Oludare, O. (1978). Iwe Asa Ibile Yoruba. Longman Nigeria Limited.
- Odunjo, J. (1969). Eko Ijinle Yoruba Alawiye Apa Keji. Longman. 38-40.
- Johnson, S. (1976). Histoire des Yoruba. Bretagne: Lowe et Brydon, 12-13, 161-164.
- Johnson, S. (2001). L'histoire des Yorubas. Lagos: CSS Limited Press.
- Ibikunle, S. (1969). Iwe Ijinle Yoruba, Apa Kinni. Ibadan: Oxford University Press, 26-28.
- Mayowa Ayolo: Oriki Chants d'Alaafin de Òyó. (CD audio enregistré par Ojebode Ayokunmi, Òyó town, mars 2011).
- Radding, L. & Western, J. (2010). Qu'est-ce qu'il y a dans un nom? Linguistique, géographie et toponymes. Dans *The Geographical Review*, Vol. 3, New York: Société géographique américaine, 394-412.
- Saka, A. (2004). «Une puissance dans l'histoire». Dans Onike, R. et Afolabi, A. eds. Oyo au 21ème siècle. Oyo; Odumatt Press & Publishers. 1.

BEFORE YOU GO

Before you go, turn out the light and reassure us we will be okay. Please explain how it feels to die and what you hope we can achieve. Tell us how to remember you, whether you want celebratory fireworks or distressed cries and tears. Hold our hands and help us understand, direct us in our loss and grief. Would you like fresh flowers on your grave or prefer us to live with ashes in a dusty urn? Should we mention your name out loud or pretend you never were? Stop going out and shrivel up or make new friends out there? Here comes our future now, just as you turn into the past.

Sky dance, dark forest echoes, aftertaste of old

—*Rupert M. Loydell*



Understanding and Historicizing

the Reactionary Rhetoric

around

Digital Consumer Tech

Aaron Duplantier

Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York

Media, and the technological means of its production, inform the parameters of twenty-first century life in ways both available and unavailable to us. Available to us because technological advancement destabilizes society's axioms so swiftly and overtly there often leads to a collective traumatic moment followed by reaction. Social media, for instance, has reimagined the American political system as an immediate zone of fragmentation and tumult wherein fledgling discourses of extremity are shoved to the forefront and normalized, conveyed by the emergence of the Alt-Right in 2016. Who would've imagined a political discourse chiefly proliferated via message boards such as

Reddit, Facebook, and Twitter ought to carry distinction for partially determining an entire election? On the consumer technology front, DVD disrupted VHS; Windows 98 disrupted 95; each new Apple iPhone iteration does the same to its predecessors. But media's machinations are unavailable to us because the tools that inform and perpetuate modern living have irrevocably modified and determined our subjectivity, by which I mean how we think, feel, and believe. The consumer automobile gives a sense of geography not known centuries prior; the internet and television propagate a global imagination we cannot erase. Establishing fatalism here is not to argue for technological agnosticism, as if passive acceptance was somehow acceptable. If media commentators and theorists want to ask enduring questions, then often these questions may not have correct answers. Conclusions should be drawn that raise the hairs on certain people's necks and induce explicable contradiction. Radicalism has its place alongside neutrality, even if it can be blinding. For if we lose our fervor, then complacency will dominate, and complacent people are easy to sell things to, rule over, kill.

Plato decried the technology of writing through, yes, the written word, though the idea of calling writing a "technology" feels generous in today's world. For instance, Japanese youth worship Hatsune Miku, a holographic virtual idol whose pop hits top the charts and whose concerts feature no physical human person on stage singing. At her concerts, with expensive tickets torn and catalogued via stylish Instagram pics, the sophistication of the hologram itself serves as the basis of adulation. Surely this is science fiction made science fact, or just the Japanese showing Americans how Capitalism truly works; no physical presence needed, only the digital specters of humanity can effectively

fill the coffers of media moguls.¹ Hypocrisy and technology go hand-in-hand, then, and this is appropriate because of the duality of knowable technological intervention and its unknowable, deeper invasion. One of the premier thinkers on technology in the last century, French theorist Jean Baudrillard had a contestable relationship with his self-contradiction. In the 1980s, when his translated works started to gain appreciation in literate American circles, the Manhattan postmodern art scene adopted his theory of the simulation, calling themselves “Simulationists,” by creating works that supposedly replicated it. Upon hearing about this collective of artists, Baudrillard, who passed in 2007, remarked on the futility of their attempt. In his view, there was nothing outside simulation, no simulating simulation, so no art could effectively “simulate” what it was already doing. Two decades later, the influential sci-fi film *The Matrix* (1999) famously inserted his theory of the hyperreal into its narrative, even including a physical copy of Baudrillard’s most celebrated text, *Simulation and Simulacra* (1981), in one of the earlier scenes. The main character Neo, played by Keanu Reeves, reaches for a book on his apartment shelf, Baudrillard’s opus, and the text is revealed to be hollowed out and containing illicit hacker disks. Unsurprisingly, Baudrillard denounced the film, despite its obvious appreciation for the French theorist, saying the creators misread his theories as straightforwardly Platonic, in that the directors embraced distinct relational worlds, one virtual and the other physical.² Baudrillard’s theory, as he contended, holds that

1. Yet Americans attempted to do the same, projecting holograms on stage first with Frank Sinatra in 2003, and most infamously a version of Tupac at the 2012 Coachella Music Festival. Both were not received kindly. The problem: resurrecting dead musicians, which of course resulted in problems with canniness. Hatsune Miku, alternatively, is a perpetually new presence.

2. Equivalent to disparate realities in Plato’s “Allegory of the Cave.”

there is no disparity between one and the other. He damned *The Matrix* as the “kind of film about the Matrix that the Matrix could have produced.”³ The film grossed nearly half a billion dollars in the global box office.

Technological polemicists often tend to hold on fiercely to their position, even to their detriment, as was the case with Baudrillard who ultimately rejected technology rather than fully understand it. He never used a computer despite musing on its significance, favoring the type writer till his death. Because of his dogmatic stance, his later work was marred by his ignorance of computing technology. After 9/11 in the October issue of *Le Monde*, he talked about the attack in a televisual/filmic context (reductively, “It’s like something out of movie!”), despite it being very much a problematic of the information age. Further, he took on globalization as a deity of the virtual. In 2002’s essay “The Violence of the Global,” he adopted his typical philosophical esoterica, saying, “The virtual space of the global is the space of the screen and the network, of immanence and the digital, of a dimensionless space-time.”⁴ There is some lack of foresight here in Baudrillard’s thinking and the oncoming of the globalizing force that would be social networking. As he communicated in other writing, his main issue with globalization had to do with the spread of consumer capitalism and the homogeneity that it brought to its surrounding culture(s); this has already happened, as he envisioned. It’s worth noting, though, that he was a proponent of globalization as a force for spreading democratic values, but “a dimensionless space-time” was and still is nowhere to be seen.⁵

Cyber culture and the internet have exasperated geography, people’s sense of place. The

3. Baudrillard, Jean. *The Conspiracy of Art*. Trans. Ames Hodges. (MIT Press, 2005), p. 202.

4. Ibid. *The Spirit of Terrorism*. Trans. Chris Turner. (Verso Books, 2003), p. 92.

5. Ibid.

Iranian Revolution of 2009, dubbed the “Twitter Revolution” by CNN, and the Egyptian Revolution of 2011 explicated the immediacy of place that social media engineers. In both cases, smart phones and social media were targeted by the media as the focal point for insurrection. Used as a tool for ideological mobilization, nationalism or, better, anti-nationalism has seemingly surged. The argument for geographical reality, looking posh through your favorite Snapchat filter, is all the more palpable. After 9/11 Baudrillard saw what could be the end of ideology through the actions of the 9/11 pilots, except that was instead its natural evolution where digital spaces have engendered greater tension on ideas, places, and, paradoxically, reality.

Neil Postman, whose famous claim that we are all *amusing ourselves to death*, characterized America as the land of TV automatons. That particular book, *Amusing Ourselves to Death* (1985), has been re-published numerous times and is considered essential, nay, required reading by many media studies scholars. Without provocation, I even had student of mine ask if she could write a rhetorical analysis on one of its chapters for an assignment; she told me she had already been required to read the book in high school. Practically a Luddite in his positioning, Postman’s complete dismissal of popular consumer technology proves difficult to swallow nowadays, so I can’t imagine what those high schoolers thought when they were reading about the “dangers” of PBS’s *Sesame Street* (1969-ongoing). Somehow TV made the classroom a “stale and flat environment for learning,” as if the inventors of TV had something to do with the nature of children’s interest in education.⁶ While reading that chapter, I imagine those high schoolers might’ve

6. Postman, Neil. *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of How Business*. (Penguin, 1986), p. 143.

laughed at how innocent those days were; maybe it enflamed a chimeric nostalgia for a pre-social media era, when their human interactions weren’t each other’s primary content for consumption and entertainment. Postman believes that technology and ideology are married to one another, asserting in his digital tech polemic, *Technopoly: the Surrender of Culture to Technology* (1992), that “embedded in every tool is an ideological bias, a predisposition to construct the world as one thing rather than another, to value one thing over another, to amplify one sense or skill or attitude more loudly than another.”⁷ This trend is apparent in modern computing. Originally, interactive virtual environments were believed best executed, or most efficient, as contained within the bounds of an operating system; interfaces were designed within that conceptual frame, and PCs were consequently produced with mice and keyboard or some other interactive virtual pointer device. Now Oses are designed for touch screens, tactility, and with an interface that is not so much contained within a digital virtual environment but indicative of the exterior, physical world. This is conveyed through Microsoft Windows’ transition from PC to cell phone and tablet—its interface is less technical (generative but rarefied) and more general (accessible but a closed-system). Granted, it has not been a smooth transition, as Windows 8 and 10 are developmental leaps from each other and the initial consumer hysterics over 8’s “easy-to-touch” tiles were a thing of historical note. Apple never bothered with open systems in the first place, so their market lead in cell phones wasn’t a shock. Windows’ change in design is no doubt an ideological one, and in exactly the way Postman surmised. It allows less technical knowledge, yet the informed user is given less freedom to play—so the “newbie” user is favored, as that will inevitably result

7. Ibid. *Technopoly: the Surrender of Culture to Technology*. (New York: Knopf Press, 1992), p. 11.

in greater monetary gain.

In the early 1990s, when Postman's *Technopoly* was published, his impression of technological change on into the digital was that it would give greater credence to a younger generation retaining an unfairly advanced specialized knowledge of computing, what he called a "knowledge monopoly."⁸ What Postman could not have known at the time was individual accessibility would produce larger returns for computer manufacturers and software developers. A specialized knowledge of the digital regime would not and has not penetrated the mainstream, though that also re-emphasizes his point as monopolists "form a conspiracy against those who have no access to the specialized knowledge made available by [that] technology" (9). Think of the elderly and the "out-of-touch" who simply cannot learn new tech, today's societal outcasts. To be sure, specialization is the enemy of consumer capitalism. Code is not uniformly taught in American education, for one thing, and "mystifying the computer's actual operation," as N. Katherine Hayles puts it, results in a mass consumer base that will feverishly wait in lines for each and every new iteration of a particular product, a la the dogged fascination with the iPhone as Apple's user-friendly products are imbued with an irrepressible cult value.⁹ Deeply ironic in relation to this fact is *how many* people use computers and computing technology today, something we take for granted. A similar correlation is the automobile: Lots of people drive them, not so many know how they work or how to fix them. At the outset, personal computing was, yes, more closely tied to an insular knowledge monopoly. To even own an early personal computer implicitly meant its owner had to have some knowledge of its

8. Ibid., p. 9.

9. Hayles, N. Katherine. *My Mother was a Computer: Digital Subjects and Literary Texts*. (U of Chicago Press, 2005), pp. 60-61.

internal processes because the technology had yet to be closed off by Capitalists; **software and graphical** user interfaces had not been developed to the extent that computers could even be moderated in that way. Juxtaposed to this was business computing which came before the PC, of which IBM almost exclusively serviced simply because the business world had no clue what to do with the hulking behemoths that predated personal computers. IBM monopolized IT in those days, but the PC's emergence stratified technical business solutions. Knowledgeable people outside IBM could be individually hired by businesses because they had learned the PC either on their own or in an institution. Twenty-first century monopolies have not troubled this—those "Apple Geniuses" at the local mall, for one—but what is apparent is a cyclical activity: burgeoning technology always meets its eventual monetization. The thing being valued in this schema does not belong to the superstructure, all of these supposed institutions at risk with each new technological change, but rather the base, and Postman is no Marxist.

Ostensibly, the determining ideological instance of the internet age and its associated technologies is that of consumer capital, which keeps advanced technical knowledge out of the hands of consumers for the benefit of the knowledge monopolizer. When we don't understand a thing, assuredly, our reaction to it and the rhetoric it generates will be elevated. From there, scape goats and hysterics can abound. Bill Gates' anti-trust hearings in 1998 spoke to this condition. For the digital age, he is monopolizer *par excellence*, though his actions were more endemic of the late 90s cultural milieu than damning in their own right, something most people failed to see at the time or even today

as his scapegoating continues.¹⁰ And the current shift in technology, from generative to closed-system, is an outgrowth of this trend but will never come under fire like Gates and Microsoft did. Cell phones and tablets, these “sterile, tethered-appliances” which are almost completely non-generative, as Jonathon Zittrain maintains, have become deeply and unconsciously ideological at the behest of *fashion*—**and there is no triumphing over fashion; all good Capitalists know this.**¹¹ Postman’s reactionism in the face of technological change is apparent as he espouses that today “information is metaphysical” and all modern life is structured exclusively around efficiency.¹² These points presuppose a certain socioeconomic or educational status that actually values efficiency or information at all. Postman claims that penicillin is the technological alternative to prayer, an unquantifiable correlation anyway.¹³ I would point back to social media on matters of efficiency. What any young person ought to be able to tell you is that the intrusion of Snapchat in matters of the personal has vastly complicated the world, making it all the less efficient and practical, though they wouldn’t know better.

But Postman is not alone in his positioning, in his rejection of consumer tech. Many reactionary commentators who specialize in anti-technology polemics situate their arguments atop a “superior” past, or at least a more ontologically-sound, humanistic one.¹⁴ Sherry Turkle, an MIT psychologist and one of the top commentators on virtual identity, underscores her post-2000s thinking with this very nostalgia. Fascinatingly, Turkle

10. His post-90s characterizations are proof of this. Lee Siegel’s approximation, for instance, sees Gates as an Anti-Christ. His work is discussed late in this essay.

11. Zittrain, Jonathon. *The Future of the Internet—And How to Stop It*. (Yale University Press, 2009), p. 63.

12. Postman, *Technopoly* (above, n.7), pp. 74 and 51.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 13

14. Postman, for instance, went on to write a book called *Building a Bridge to the 18th Century: How the Past Can Improve Our Future*.

took a hard turn on technology as consumer, broadband internet spread into the new millennium. Her early writing, such as 1995’s *Life on the Screen*, wasn’t quite as resistant to the internet as a social space. Though she is never one to operate in totalizing binaries (good/bad), she once thought the internet could be a place where people could find their “inner diversity” via anonymous identity play.¹⁵ Nowadays, she asserts that digital culture has become paradoxically fixated on truth and authenticity, and in complex and self-defeating ways, as they become “threat and obsession, taboo and fascination.”¹⁶ Opening a polemic against social networking—her 2010 book *Alone Together*—with warning of an impending “singularity,” when humans and the robotic “merge to achieve immortality,” feels particularly useful in weighing her mood toward current internet trends.¹⁷ After explicating her psychological analyses of a small girl’s relationship with her Tamagotchi virtual pet, who is enamored with the thing, Turkle draws the conclusion that “these days, computer and robots...ask us to feel for and with them...” (971-72).¹⁸ She decries social networking, saying we are more and more “alone together,” that we are together in virtual space but physically alone. Yet this statement does not take into account that social media is first and foremost founded in the physical, exterior world, and its endgame is unquestionably the eventual confluence resulting from and informed by the “virtual” back-and-forth, even describing social media as “virtual” seems archaic. Teenagers, the social media target audience, would never dream of their Instagram activity as something

15. Turkle, Sherry. *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet*. (Simon & Schuster, 1995), p. 261.

16. *Ibid.* *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other*. (Basic Books, 2011), pp. 335-336.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 698-700.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 971-971. Turkle published her book in 2010 and devotes a quarter of its contents to Tamagotchi and virtual pets, which signify *cultural moments* more than anything—cultural moments that have long since passed. Tamagotchi was popular at the tail end of the 1990s and has since been replaced by any number of toy fad.

“virtual” or somehow “unreal,” as that designation implies. The popularity of Facebook has nothing to do with the virtual reality it is situated within, and its “zeros and ones” are merely ancillary to the real, material consequences of the service that lead to exterior romance, substantial friendship, less invasive ways to deal with in-laws, etc. The specter of computing technology and the digital regime as an apocalyptic force has been left by the wayside in the popular imagination. Though given its present-day prominence, it’s certainly distressing that intellectuals see the end of humanity *as we know it* written all over our digital products.

Consider, again, Turkle’s supposition regarding the little girl’s ostensibly innocuous fascination with her Tamagotchi virtual pet. Here, the medium’s message falls victim to the ideological. Turkle does not read the little girl’s emotional attachment with her Tamagotchi as figured within a loss of materiality in lieu of its superimposition, focusing instead on the virtual pet’s simulated death as a potential traumatic moment. The argument that a person can destructively confuse a computational object for reality is too easy; it’s obvious and thusly fallacious by virtue of that ease. Too commonly, discursive strategies for technology and media criticism rely on unnuanced polarities which create amnesiacs out of even the most informed. Whatever the piece of technology or media under attack in a polemic becomes a catch-all, demonized, and retains mythic qualities that seem more in step with religious texts than academic ones—meaning, they retain an unrealistic cult value not even technology can bear. Postman, too, attributes information technology with metaphysical qualities. In the same vein, Lee Siegel writes his polemic *Against the Machine* (2009) for, supposedly, the enlightenment of his readership, but the

medium is warped into ideological effigy.

While Turkle ostensibly engages her principal preoccupation, social networking and robotics, with a semblance of technical knowledge for computing discourse, Siegel glosses the surface of the internet age with generalizations on the zeitgeist, seeing more in the social associated with the medium than the medium itself. His principal critical method is nostalgia; he waxes on about the coffee houses of yore where social possibility was limited only by the imagination of the customer, who vacillated joyously between states of union and isolation. In the age of the laptop, Siegel contends, coffee houses have a serious Turkle-esque problem; latte sippers are “alone together,” trapped in various “screen worlds” and not concerned with relating to surrounding physical subjectivity as they instead have an infinite world of digitally-mediated community to relate to. “Ten years ago, the space in a coffee house abounded in experience,” Siegel achingly writes. “Now that social space has been contracted into isolated points of wanting, all locked into separate phases of inwardness.”¹⁹ Poeticism no doubt configures the past within a neat tableau, but Siegel’s elevation of the coffee house to ontological space feeds into a rhetorical mode and not an accurate historical recounting. Siegel builds the foundations of his technological narrative with some very clear antagonists. Chief among these “utopian technophiles” of Silicon Valley is—yet again—Bill Gates, playing CEO usurper of the *good old days*, **whose declarations regarding the internet are apparently based on red-herrings.**²⁰ But establishing Gates as the fall guy for the internet says more about Siegel’s

19. Siegel, Lee. *Against the Machine: How the Web is Reshaping Culture and Commerce—and Why It Matters*. (Spiegel & Grau, 2009), p. 16.

20. Ibid., p. 26. One of these supposed red-herrings: When talking up the internet to eager audiences, Gates asks, “...how will we protect our children from negative and predatory influences?” which can only be answered with the development of new technologies, really a self-promoting proposition, if we are buying into Siegel’s line of reasoning.

argument than it does about the billionaire techno-Capitalist. The internet never needed a spokesman, and Siegel would do well to avoid effigies because they call for a practically Biblical rhetorical binary. Laptops, as permanent part of the coffee drinking landscape, do not signify the end of human interaction as we know it, and Gates is no devil in nerdy disguise. To further complicate Siegel's position, like many anti-technology polemicists (Postman included), he lampoons technophobes in order to save face, saying, "...anyone who thinks technological innovation is bad in and of itself is an unimaginative crank," which means, essentially, that Siegel works from the "guns don't kill people, people kill people" school of technology, an erroneous position.²¹ All tools, including the internet, are embedded with Postman's "ideological bias," not later on in their material existence, though disparate ideologies do historically appropriate tools for their own ends, but at their point of conception.

In all these aforementioned anti-techno polemics, the ideological culprit—Postman, Turkle, and Siegel included—is *nostalgia for ontological truths*. Postman remarks on today's technocentric world by asserting that it undermines the old powers of the American family to "control information" and that it offers no "guidance about what is acceptable information in the moral domain," some eerily conservative points to make.²² He says "thinking machines" (see: computers) undermine human "spirituality," through their emphasis on unnatural efficiency.²³ Turkle's points about authenticity and truth speak to the same anxiety: She paints technology as a phantom, the perpetrator of twentieth century destabilization (decentering) of the material and the spiritual, superimposing

21. Ibid., p. 18.

22. Postman, *Technopoly* (above, n.7), pp. 76 and 79.

23. Ibid., p. 23.

technology over conventionally religious values. The singularity, as Turkle contends, is "technological *rapture*."²⁴ When Siegel tells the reader that the internet accelerates the "blur of truth and falsity," he circles the same notions.²⁵ And while Siegel rightfully posits these ontology-denying trends as a social milieu rather than one solely entrenched in a lexicon of technology, the ultimate determiner for these supposed societal ills is not, as these critics demand, technology. Rather, it is the culmination of several processes that began historically far before the onset of the digital age, on which these texts are myopically focused. Baudrillard, in lieu of waxing nostalgic for ontological values from a bygone religious era—Nietzsche proved more useful to Baudrillard as an essentializing text—instead favored anti-modern tribal culture. In 1970's *The Consumer Society*, when Baudrillard was still self-consciously working within Marxist discourse, he establishes an ontology where industrial consumerism, signified by Western cargo planes, stands in opposition to superior (see: prelapsarian) tribal culture, the Melanesians.²⁶ Though the semantics differ, that deep need for a "return to the past" persists, and whipping boys abound: for Baudrillard, it was America and Disney and pornography, among many others, which became the scapegoats for his musings. But Baudrillard at least understood that social and political movements—Capitalist consumerism, deconstructionism, military industrial complex—served as foregrounding ideologies/mechanisms which *informed* technology. Virtual pets do not coerce children into loving them; an environment which facilitates that conceivable perversion does.

Marshall McLuhan, the ur-media critic, took on television in *Understanding*

24. Turkle, *Alone Together* (above, n. 16), pp. 698-700 (emphasis added).

25. Siegel, *Against the Machine* (above, n.19), p. 25.

26. Baudrillard, Jean. *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures*. Trans. Chris Turner. (Sage Publications, 1998), p. 31.

Media: The Extensions of Man from a supposedly technical position, and his writing does reflect this: “The TV image offers some three million dots per second to the receiver,” he espouses with the authority of a Sony engineer.²⁷ And McLuhan’s critical tactics do seem at pace with a more measured stance on media technology, something more interested in technological function than the juicy pieces of meat they disseminate. Identifying technological axioms in our society, after all, is a media critic’s big sell (“the medium is the message”). He fortuitously predicted that analog, low-definition television would no longer be strictly “television” once it was improved. High-definition, smart TVs and tablets have troubled the movie industry more than the medium of television itself. Hollywood’s attempts to get twenty-first century consumers off their couches and away from Netflix and other streaming services is ample proof of this. No longer is TV the low-def, “mosaic mesh of light and dark spots” of McLuhan’s era, though, and many of his suppositions associated with television viewer participation seem problematic today, even if incidentally prophetic—McLuhan has that bizarre, soothsayer quality about his writing.²⁸ Referencing those “three million dots per second,” McLuhan figures the viewer accepts only some of the projected dots rather than the whole, producing a cool iconographic image unlike one on a hot movie screen.²⁹ Nowhere is this claim backed up by scientific processes of the brain, or the eye, appearing more like a metaphysical presence; the technical and the metaphysical are continuously merged in McLuhan’s

27. McLuhan, Marshall. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. (MIT Press, 1994), p. 313.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 313.

29. McLuhan’s overarching thematic, Media Hot and Cold. If Hot, then the media fills the consumer up with information, requiring less active participation (Film and Radio). If Cold, then it demands the consumer mentally compensate for the gaps in information (Iconographic Cartoons and Telephones). Neither is damning in and of themselves, as McLuhan deploys the terms sometimes for media he favors, other times for media he is trying to criticize.

theories. Yet, as a postmodern device, the television has always preferred the part for the whole, mostly in relation to content. A twenty-two minute episode of TV is sold to the viewing public as a thirty minute one with the addition of ads, of course. Nowadays, original streaming content manages to give us the “complete” thirty minutes we were always promised by network TV, except the length feels off-putting for brains trained for shorter entertainment.

McLuhan contends that television demands a depth model of participation, antithetical to its more common characterization as a device designed for passive reception. Postman is not alone in describing American couch potatoes as zombies, not if the “MTV Generation” has anything to say about it. McLuhan tackles the TV medium as if it were first and foremost a mental or spiritual exercise, requiring the “whole being” of its viewership in order to complete the delivered image/message.³⁰ He goes on to say in *Understanding Media* that “young people who have experienced a decade of TV have naturally imbibed an urge toward involvement in depth that makes all the remote visualized goals of usual culture seem not only unreal but irrelevant... the TV child cannot see ahead because he wants involvement.”³¹ However, this is a *reading* of the televisual medium, not something matter-of-fact. TV would be later blamed—both by scientists and commentators—for a generation of indecisive, passive youth coming out of the 1980s and 90s, which is not exterior to McLuhan’s schema, but he gets this detailed technical component of his argument wrong. TV is not cool but hot, possibly in a way McLuhan could not figure, which is why TV became the pioneering outpost for socially-

30. *Ibid.*, p.334.

31. *Ibid.*, p.336.

acceptable product placement and subliminal advertising. McLuhan gets sidetracked by these mental processes of “completing ideas” and reception in what would otherwise be ground-breaking points, especially for their time of publication (1964). Yet McLuhan’s rhetorical “TV child,” one who demands constant participation and cannot see ahead, seems uncannily familiar, possibly because “Web 2.0 generation” or “Snapchat tween” could be subbed for his TV child assignment. McLuhan was ascribing media participation levels that had yet to be achieved onto television audiences, but that would later come into prominence at the turn of the millennium with the onset of social media. Critics such as Siegel who insist that today “the me is the message” and who cry foul on “participatory culture” are closer to commenting on this hypothetical young, myopic consumer than McLuhan.³² However, McLuhan and the other anti-techno polemicists who followed in his footsteps (Baudrillard was greatly influenced by his work), are cultural critics in the most *literal* sense of the term, pointing out societal ills, which easily upsets clarity of critical vision.

Is it fair to call N. Katherine Hayles a cultural critic? Her theories speak to endemic issues, such as the powerful and disruptive machinations of simulation logic, but polemical warnings about “TV children” and “the singularity” are few and far between. She uses as her base the raw, technical understanding of a technology—in her 2005 book *My Mother Was a Computer*, for instance, it is computational code—and builds a superstructure that leads to approximations regarding larger societal issues, though these are usually downplayed and avoid any kind of totalizing impulse as such. So grouping her in with critics such as Siegel and Postman here is a bit of a misnomer—instead,

32. Ibid., p. 334. McLuhan: “TV makes for myopia.”

rather than correlation, Hayles should stand as a kind of solution to ontological nostalgia, though not an absolute one. She reaches deep into the processes of technological denial of ontology, asserting that, due to computational code’s mass dissemination in the twenty-first century lexicon, we now privilege “the emergence of complexity from simple elements and rules,” instead of from something infinitely complex (i.e. God).³³ While the privileging of simple elements as originary is more appropriately designated within a historical frame, emanating from a number of different movements, Hayles’ argument is hard to resist—her level of nuance sells these points in deliciously lucid, intellectual ways. Postman, Siegel, Turkle, and the like project their polemics in a way that demand technology produce rhetorical and literal dead ends—for humanity, art, and otherwise—lending their work that *sanctimoniously validating* sense of fatalism. Hayles does not color advancements in technology as particularly productive or destructive. As example, Turkle rails against Tamagotchi as fundamentally bad for children because it teaches them to feel for robots *as opposed* to feeling for human beings. Hayles sees virtual pets in a different light. She believes virtual creatures “suture together the analog subjects we still are...with the digital subjects we are becoming.”³⁴ The real beauty of this claim is that Hayles is so carefully avoiding fatalism or finality; she engages the attendant technology as a process, neither beginning nor ending, or ushering in either. Now, Hayles does say we are becoming digital subjects, without equivocation, which might suggest she is a cyberfuturist, but she takes care in pointing out that the digital would have no meaning without the analog, that our future selves will be more advanced “hybrid entities” (digital/

33. Hayles, N. Katherine. *My Mother was a Computer: Digital Subjects and Literary Texts*. (U of Chicago Press, 2005), p. 23.

34. Ibid., p. 204.

analog) and not androids.³⁵

Hayles brings the media and technology conversation into communication with itself. Her theoretical model dictates a kind of functional recursivity, what she calls a “coevolutionary dynamic,” between humans and the machines they use, with neither exclusively determining the other.³⁶ We humanize computers while they computationalize us. Ideologies inform new technologies, which in turn inform their users, who then go on to make new technologies that can defy disseminated ideologies or uphold them in a long process of coadaptation. In his day, if Postman believed humanity was becoming unduly focused on efficiency due to computers, then surely computers now reflect us more and more. Thus, the shift in computing technology which replicates the exterior, physical world, utilizing tactility and the visceral to engage its users. And though this shift may be merely a matter of economics, these processes are happening nevertheless. Hayles does not need to bemoan the death of God, the abandonment of ontological truths, because in her schema twenty-first century god is *becoming digital along with all the rest of us*.

And some critics and commentators are happy to pray to this god, such as Kevin Kelly, whose pro-technology polemic *What Technology Wants* (2010) kneels at this very altar. He makes his pitch for technology, like Siegel, by juxtaposing himself with a discursive community that would dismiss his position outright.³⁷ His book’s introduction, for instance, opens with Kelly’s recounting of the time he spent with the Amish, biking

across the U.S., living nobly without the taint of digital technology.³⁸ Immediately after, in the introduction, Kelly explains inexplicably why advanced technology is the grand determiner for the propagation and continuation of our species. Deploying this term “technium” to ascribe a degree of subjectivity to technological change, he maintains that twenty-first century technology is “a self-reinforcing process” with a “noticeable measure of autonomy.”³⁹ And this does not scare him—it is not a preview of the oncoming singularity—instead it serves as the very reason why technology cannot and should not be rejected by Luddites such as Postman or Siegel. Kelly emphatically writes, “When we reject technology as a whole, it is a brand of self-hatred.”⁴⁰ Nevermind that in his schema the technium has become selfish, following “its own urges,” sometimes even disrupting humanity.⁴¹ To Kelly, arguing that a person could possibly reject technology *as a whole* is unsound, too. And, to back this point up, Kelly uses Ted Kaczynski as the ur-technophobe. While Hayles establishes a coevolutionary dynamic, Kelly imagines a symbiosis between humanity and machine where the machine is today selfishly leading the way, antithetical to emerging digital technologies that are informed by human biological realities. And while technology has blossomed into a much stronger adaptive force in the twenty-first century, often these adaptations are not first and foremost the consequence of technology itself but a slew of ideologies and grander operations that inform it, including and especially Capitalism. Kelly’s notes on economics seem to downplay the fact that consumer-oriented technology is becoming the *only* known technology.

35. Ibid., p. 210.

36. Ibid., p. 201.

37. Not coincidentally, Siegel writes extensively about Kevin Kelly.

38. At speeches and other venues, Kelly has even been seen sporting an Amish-style beard. Refer to his Wikipedia page.

39. Kelly, Kevin. *What Technology Wants*. (Viking, 2010), pp. 11-12, 13.

40. Ibid., p. 187.

41. Ibid., p. 13.

Often, these salespeople of technology (cyberfuturists, such as Kelly) fail to see, or at least erroneously view, technology within a Capitalistic/consumer mode. Working from the Feminist vantage point in 1991's *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, Donna J. Haraway encourages the transition of humanity into full cyborgs, as these cyborgian bodies "skip the step of original unity, of identification with nature in the Western sense," resulting in unessentialized physical selves which defy gender binaries.⁴² But Haraway complicates that revelation: "The main trouble with cyborgs," she says, "is that they are the illegitimate offspring of militarism and patriarchal capitalism, not to mention socialism," an accurate assessment of the primary problematic for a cyborg body, though citing them as "illegitimate" might be a misinterpretation. She then goes on to say, "But illegitimate offspring are often exceedingly unfaithful to their origins [see: Capitalism]," which troubles her position, and not for the better.⁴³ Haraway assumes here that cyborgs will even be given the option to be unfaithful to their economic progenitors. In truth, cyborgs are just as effectively and irrevocably arrested to their material conditions as everyone else in the Western world, even if they are unnatural. Remember, too, in the age of digital tech what constitutes natural, metaphysical, and even "worthy" no longer needs to be relational to biology *as an axiom*. Haraway wants us to believe that an unnatural, cyborg world "transcends the universal translation effected by capitalist markets," but the role socioeconomics plays in who gets the option of cyborgian modifications is unacknowledged in her thinking.⁴⁴ Her picture of our technological future is no less clouded by her determination to uphold technological advancement

42. Haraway, Donna Jeanne. *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. (Routledge, 1991), p. 151.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 151.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 161.

than an anti-technology polemicist's oppositional desire. After all, Haraway famously wrote, "Though both are bound in the spiral dance, I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess."⁴⁵

To champion or decry technology means to deal in polarity and contradiction; technology demands that kind of response because of its pervasive presence in our lives. This is the knee-jerk explanation for why technology incurs these sorts of reactionary responses from us, and a simplistic one at that. Even the level-headed Hayles cannot help but extol the wonders of electronic literature in her book *Electronic Literature: New Horizons for the Literary* (2008), an uncharacteristically ideological move on her part. However, to communicate a message on technology, even if doomed to be a failure from the outset, is to inherently do something moral and forthright, especially as twenty-first century consumers more passively accept the presence of advanced digital media technology into their homes, pockets, automobiles. Paradoxically, technological cognizance is on the rise when diminishing in equal measure. If critical observation feels like a failure of hyperbole, then failure might be the best recourse for ignorance—polemicists and extremists are good in that, facing their cries, we are challenged to find the median that anchors them, and, at the very least, this serves as an effective hermeneutical exercise. And if something is easy to dismiss, is it just as easy to ignore?

45. *Ibid.*, p. 181.

Works Cited

- Baudrillard, Jean. *The Conspiracy of Art*. Trans. Ames Hodges. MIT Press, 2005.
- . *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures*. Trans. Chris Turner. Sage Publications, 1998.
- . *The Spirit of Terrorism*. Trans. Chris Turner. Verso, 2003.
- Haraway, Donna Jeanne. *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. Routledge, 1991.
- Hayles, N. Katherine. *My Mother was a Computer: Digital Subjects and Literary Texts*. U of Chicago P, 2005.
- Kelly, Kevin. *What Technology Wants*. Viking, 2010.
- McLuhan, Marshall. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. MIT Press, 1994.
- Postman, Neil. *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of How Business*. Penguin, 1986.
- . *Technopoly: the Surrender of Culture to Technology*. New York: Knopf, 1992.
- Siegel, Lee. *Against the Machine: How the Web is Reshaping Culture and Commerce—and Why It Matters*. Spiegel & Grau, 2009.
- Turkle, Sherry. *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other*. Basic Books, 2011.
- . *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet*. New York: Simon & Schuster,

1995.

Zittrain, Jonathon. *The Future of the Internet--And How to Stop It*. Yale UP, 2009.

ELUSIVE

You are building your own coffin and mapping out the future, the way the whole thing ends, and what wonderland will be. Are you ready for another country, to stop facing your tomorrows? Do you have questions for the angels and a back-up plan if not? It feels as if you might be vanishing. Where the sun touches the water and the sky turns darker blue is as likely to be home as here. The clouds went that way, the sun another; high winds are forecast for tomorrow. All my spells are broken and you are nowhere to be found.

Agnostic bliss, nothing but words, no time after meaning

—*Rupert M. Loydell*



The Relevance of a Cultural Policy in Sustenance of Traditional Festival Performances in Contemporary Nigeria

Adjeketa Blessing

Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State

Abstract

Drumming, dancing, art, songs, belief systems, values, norms and practices are vital components of culture that need to be preserved and maintained for posterity. Traditional festival celebrations, help in the preservation and maintenance of cultures. However, many traditional festivals in Africa and Nigeria especially, are in a state of coma. One reason behind this is that, they are disliked by many as they have their root in traditional religion. Because of the impossible unbroken ties between traditional religion and festivities, most people see the practice as fetish. This paper therefore examines the root cause of the decline of *Edegborode annual youth festival* as one among the many Nigerian traditional festivals that are on the verge of falling. The paper finds that the biggest factor responsible for this decline hangs on the failure of implementation of the nation's cultural policy.

Key words: Nigerian culture, Nigerian cultural policy, traditional festival, festival performances, modern Nigerian communities, implementation.

Introduction

Traditional festivals are cultural entertainment through which a community showcases its diverse cultural endowment to visitors. It marks time and season of mass return of sons, daughters and visitors to celebrate and preserve the traditions of the land (Ngozi and Tabitha, 2014, p.54). Traditional festivals are partly manifestations of the practices and beliefs of a people which help in promoting the peoples culture and building their identity (Gbadegbe, 2013, p.65). For example, Drumming, dancing, art, songs, belief systems, values, norms and practices are vital components of culture that need to be preserved and maintained for posterity, and traditional festivals celebrations, help in the preservation and maintenance of the aforementioned cultural practices. Hence, community elders and leaders use this avenue to enhance the perpetuation of values and belief systems and also pass on folklores to the younger generations (Bonya, 2011 in Gbadegbe, 2013, p.69).

Further, on an economic ground, economic development of developing nations is a matter of great concern to its citizens, and over the years, various economic policies have been adopted by governments of these nations to change the financial woes of the people for the better (Gbadegbe, 2013, p.65). However, in Nigeria for example, little has been done by past governments and even the present to explore avenues such as festival celebration to help curb her financial afflictions. It seems that the government forgets the fact that such cultural performances possess rich economic values to a nation hence worth promoting (p.65).

Many festivals in Africa and Nigeria especially, are in a state of coma. One reason behind this is that, they are disliked by many as they have their root in traditional religion. And because of the impossible unbroken ties between traditional religion and festivities, most people termed the exercise as fetish. The idea of traditional festivals being fetish has become more popular for two possible reasons: 1). Lack of value that the people and the government in particular have for festival activity and 2). The Christianization of modern Nigerian society. These have cause serious injury needing treatment and possibly healing to African traditional festivals in communities within developing countries. Therefore, this paper looked at the importance of traditional festival performances to developing nations and. presents reasons why communities in Nigeria which are supposed to be benefiting from such yearly performances has loosed out because of failed implementation of the Nigerian cultural policy which has led to the decline of some festivals in the country especially the *Edegborode annual youth festival* of the Okpe people which this study uses as premise.

Ngozi and Tabitha (2014, p.44) believe that “these damages inflicted on African festivities calls for cultural revival, reincarnation of traditional art and revolution of our cultural festivals”. And it will be good to note that the possibility of the revival greatly depends on the implementation of the cultural policy of Nigeria.

Literature Review

Performances cannot be separated from man. It is a central part of everyday life in Africa. It is present in all cultures, languages and families. There are elements of performance

in every social activities taking place around the world; in the churches, schools and even in the market places. Performances can be engaged in by a single individual, and can also be engaged in as a group, “to derive entertainment” (Omoko, 2016, p.95). Omoko further noted that these performances take place at the village squares, under the moonlight nights, around the fire place, during intercommunity wrestling contests, at annual festivals and different religious observances, various cultural pieces such as dance, songs, tales, and ritual performances are re-enacted to initiate efforts at relating to their ancestors and events of time past. (p.95).

Festival performance is one among the many performances engaged in as group in almost all African communities. Ruxandra and Razvan, agrees that every year, various festivals and events are held in Africa and other part of the world, and that, they are of great advantage especially to host communities (2012, p.19). These performances are culture base. They become “distinctive body of beliefs and traditional institutions which distinguishes one community from the other. Within a community’s tradition lie its beliefs, norms, values and their general ways of life all of which reflect their cultural existence. A manifestation of this is reflected inside many festivals that are part and parcel of the African people” (Ngozi and Tabitha (2014, 43).

“Festival is one sure means through which the people relate to their past and interact with the present as well as the future” (Omoko, 2016, p.93), which help in “maintaining and promoting traditional life” (Asogwa, Umeh and Okwoche, 2012: p.243, 244). It also helps to preserve and maintain tradition through songs, drumming, dancing and art (Dubnick, 2003). Talking more on the role festivals play in the life of the African, Omoko

write that, through the various rites, rituals and other dramatic and poetic performances present in festival performances, the people are able to connect with their history as well as engage in different forms of cultural artistry with which they distinguish themselves as a people. Songs, mine, dance, and impersonation which occupy significant aspects of the festival, are what helps the people connect significantly to their past (Omoko, 2016, p.93), and help improve firstly, the way the community faces challenges and secondly improve the way the way people live together with their neighbors through exchange of knowledge (Ruxandra and Razvan, 2012, p19, 20). This is also a time “quarrels and misunderstanding are settled,” and an avenue of “honoring the ancestor” (Gbadegbe, 2013, p.65 citing Bonya, 2011). “In effect festivals serve as reunion of family members, relatives and loved ones (Ngozi and Tabitha, 2014, p.53).

Ngozi and Tabitha also mention that, festivals are not only entertaining events which offers opportunities for celebrating and learning age long traditions, but are also manifestation of the peoples culture in any traditional society. It makes a people a homogeneous community and provides an avenue by which the people can be identified. They represent an invaluable and priceless heritage by which the image of the people can be reflected (2014, p.44). Turaki (2001) commented that festivals serves as a social control mechanism in society by establishing patterns of loyalty and prescribing parameters of acceptable conduct integrating people into the religious system, and those festivals are frame work of socio-cultural customs. They also meet the socio-psychological needs of man” (p. 149). The implication of this is that festival meets the diverse needs of man in society be it social, religious and cultural (Ngozi and Tabitha, 2014, p.47), as they

involve re-creation of the past, and providing occasions for transmission of traditional cultures and values from one generation to the other. (Gbadegbe, 2013, p.65).

Traditional festival celebration helps in national development. For Bonya 2011 cited in Gbadegbe (2013, p.69) mention that activities like drumming, dancing, art, songs, belief systems, values, and norm are vital components of culture that need to be preserved and maintained for posterity and development. They are avenues for host communities to gaining popularity. Corboş (2012, p.20) in D. Getz, (1997) note that besides gaining popularity around neighboring community, host communities benefiting from an intense promotion in the mass-media. Job opportunities are also open to members of host community. Citing Yusuf (1982), Asogwa, Umeh and Okwoche, (2012, p.243, 244) corroborate by stating that indigenes benefits by wining contracts connected with staging the festival which help in improving the people's standard of living.

Traditional festival celebrations also improve tourism potentials. Traditional festival attracts visitors to a destination who spends money within the community, enhancing the local economy and supporting the local economy through restaurants, hotels, and other tourism selected businesses. The high inflow of tourist and day visitors into the community during such occasions contributes immensely to economic empowerment of people through the injection of tourist expenditure into the community. Tourist expenditure is felt in the community from the boarding of taxi to lounging in hotels to visiting tourist sites (Ngozi and Tabitha, 2014, p.54). It is also in their opinion that, tourism is instrumental to preserving local culture and tradition of the community. During cultural festivals tourists/visitors have a unique chance to interact with the local

community, thereby gaining a deeper experience of the ambience, customs and local cultures. This enhances the resident's pride and promotes the preservation and cultivation of the local culture. Through this medium visitors get acquainted with the local traditions and customs thereby leading to its preservation. In this vein festivals act as a medium through which a destination's image can be improved by offering prime opportunity for tourists/visitors to get to know the local culture and experience the essence of the place (54).

Gadzekpo (1978, p.94) writing on economic implication of festival, admits that, festivals are seasons of gainful economic activities for local craftsmen and food sellers, promote tourism; as foreigners who come to catch a glimpse of the artistic development and the rich culture of the society make purchases giving the dual advantage of income for the society and the boosting of the African's image abroad. Further, because people return to their homes to strengthen their family ties and reinforce the customs and values of the community, infrastructure in various households such as painting of houses and general renovations is improved upon (Gbadegbe, 2013, p.65, 69).

While explaining the economic importance of festivals to host communities, Ruxandra-Irina and Corboş (2012), made references to two big and famous festivals in the world, the *Oktoberfest* (Munich, Germany) and *The Las Fallas festival* (Valencia) when celebrating the *Oktoberfest*, more than 6 million people are said to take part each year most of whom are visitors from Europe, USA, Australia and New Zealand. These tourists are said to spend approximately 830 million of Euros: 324 million from the food carts, drinks and entertainment, 205 million from shopping in Munich and using the

public transportation, while 301 million are the profit of hotels and other accommodation spaces (p.20). During the celebration of *The Las Fallas festival*, Ruxandra-Irina and Corboş mentioned that, more than 1 million tourists are attracted to Valencia every year, and that in 2011, the degree of occupancy of hotels during the festival has reached almost 100% which means that every room in every hotel were occupied (2012, p.20)..

In Nigeria, Asogwa and Okwoche (2012) citing Dantata (2007), write about the benefit of Argungu Fishing and Cultural Festival to Argungu community in Kebbi State. They mention that the annual event, gradually included sporting activities, attracts about 500,000 spectators from all over Nigeria, and all over the world. It also attracts local and international media coverage, including the CNN and BBC (Asogwa and Okwoche, 2012, p.243, 244).

The Argungu Fishing and Cultural Festival is one of the few among the many hundreds of festivals in Nigeria that receive such popularity. The *Edegborode* community is one among the many communities that has festivals attached to their roots and culture who are not benefiting from what they have. The reason is discoursed bellow.

Edegbrode community is one among the over 70 villages in Okpe kingdom, Delta state. With a population of little more than 2000 people living in the community (excluding sons and daughters of the community living in far and near villages and cities). The main occupation of the Edegbrode people like other Okpe people is farming, fishing, craftsmanship and petty trading. The Edegborode people are opportune to have electricity, good roads and portable water for drinking. The main social activity that brings the communities indigene home together is their annual festival which is purely

a youth play celebrated every 25th of December. Songs, dance, miming, masquerades are all prominent features of the festival. The most prominent theme of the festival is the struggle for ownership and dominance as exemplified in the struggle of two masquerades- the Oloda and the Agbakara. The second theme hangs on the effectiveness of traditional medicine as exemplified by the Obo who step and lye on broken bottles. The third theme deals with the theme of wickedness and the consequences of being wicked as shown in the character of the village chiefs who deceived and collected money from an old stranger who seeks permission to cut down a tree which he wants to use to carve canoe for his palm oil business. Unknowing to him, a dreaded spirit lives in the said tree. Because the village elders knew and refuse to return his money after series of complain by the old man, the evil spirit started to beat up their wives and children preventing them from entering into the forest to carry out their farm activities, leading to the entire community relocating.

Sadly, the Edegborode youth festival is gradually dying off because it has receives little or no attention from the government. One important thing to note is that the festival is a unique activity that differentiates the Edegborode people from their neighbors. Few if any among the younger generation, can fully tell the festival, stories because the festival season which is the means through which elders tell younger ones everything about their history is gradually going out of existence. Interest in Agriculture is also dying gradually in the area since purchase rate is low all through the year. While older men waiting for their chair of oil money, younger men (youths) are forming restive groups to get their percentage of the oil money from the government.

As the festival goes down each year, parents who lives in the cities with their children have also stop coming home during holidays, few indigenes now visit home to spend their holidays and off from work in the village. Because of this, unsettled family disputes especially land disputes have become more, hence, the Edegborode people are gradually losing their social and cultural value. Since no other means of preservation, the Edegborode people are losing their history and culture. The researcher pleads for revival as it will be of great benefit to the local people and Nigeria as a developing nation.

The Role of the Government in the Decline of the *Edegborode Traditional Youth Festival*

The decline of most festival performances today in Nigeria especially the Edegborode youth play, hangs on poor or failure of the implementation of the policy. For example, while the policy said that the media will be a tool to promote the nations culture, the traditional media which is closer to the indigenous people through whom songs, dances and music are articulated is overlooked.

The cultural policy which ought to help in putting together relevant aspects of festivals and communities history into the day to day affairs of the nation for social and economic and political development, has failed to do so for the Edegborode people. In the area of promotion of creativity in the field of art as outlined in objectives 3.4, no Edegborode singer, dancer, performer or craft man has been empowered or encouraged in any form to contribute to the nation's growth in the area of culture and cultural identity. The state has in no way takes any step to encourage the integration of Okpe traditional

values into the fabric of daily life especially in the area of circular education. The state has failed in making sure indigenous songs, music, dances, moral values, art, crafts and other areas of local art are featured circular education. Both at the federal and local government level, the government has done nothing to help discover young talents and promote creativity in the art, among youths in Edegborode. In the area of preservation, the ministry of art and culture and tourism, have no any form of documentation of the Edegborode youth festival either on film, video or audio tapes. Therefore, As posited in the 1999 cultural policy of Nigeria, the ministry of primary and secondary education should include as part of its curriculum stories of traditional festivals to enable children understand their cultural history, familiar with their dance, music and songs. This will go a long way in preserving the local culture in the minds of the younger generation. The ministry of arts, culture and tourism should live up to their responsibilities by locating every festival performances in communities across the country, identify their strength and weaknesses, and help to reform and repackaged them if need be to sell to international community.

The Way Forward

Since the major occupation of the Edegborode people is fishing and farming, winners may be interested in using the money they won to buy farm and fishing implements, this will to large extent boost the economy of the nation every year. Also, with the increased in the number of visitors, to the community, the demand for fish, garri, palm oil and other handmade craft like fishing basket will be high. Some of the visitors may buy directly from the local producers in small quantity for personal consumption, but there may be

some who will buy in larger quantity and do business with it. Among the visitors who come to see the performance, there may be some who may be interested in relocating to the village after seeing the fruitfulness in fishing and how fertile the community's soil is as portrayed in the performance; this will help increase the population of people living in the community.

Revival of the festival will also increase the rate of employment in the community. Because large number of visitors are expected, house owners will see the need to employ skilled and unskilled laborers-those who will do simple clearing and weeding around the compound, and those who will do major repairs and painting of the buildings to get paid. The need to employ securities to take care of lives and properties during the festival will also arise and the best persons for such job are people living in the community. This will help reduce the number gangsters, youth restiveness presently noticed in the area. Therefore the attention of local and international tourists is urgently needed, individuals and non-governmental organizations in the country, should also take it as a challenge to include gifts and prizes to participants who did well during the performances. Such monetary prizes attached to best dancers and singer of the year will spur participants to prepare very well and even invite friends from cities and nearby villages to come witness and observe them perform the following year thereby increasing the awareness for the festival, and increasing the audience attendance rate to the festival.

References

- Bame, K.N. (1991), *Profiles In African Traditional Popular Culture*. Clear Type Press Inc.
- Chachah Yaw (1999), Ghana, Understanding the People and their Culture, Woeli Publishing Services, pp. 82-83.
- Gadzekpo, S.K (1978). *History of Ghana since Prehistory*. Royal Gold Publishers Ltd.
- Gbadegbe, R. (2013).The socio-economic benefits derived from festivals. A case study of asogli yam festival in ghana . *Journal of Arts, Science & Commerce* Vol. IV, Issue 4, pp. 63-72.
- Dubnick, M. (2003). *Clarifying accountability: An Ethical Theory Frame Work*. Rutgers University: Network.
- Ezenagu, N. and Olatunji, T. (2014).Harnessing Awka Traditional Festival for Tourism Promotion. *Global Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences* Vol.2, No.5, pp. 43-56.
- Benjamin, C. Asogwa, J, Chinedu, U.Victoria, A. (2012). The Sociological and Cultural Significance of the Argungu International Fishing and Cultural Festival in Nigeria. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*. Vol. 2 No. 11.
- Omoko, P.E. (2016).The Dramatic and Poetic Contents of the Idju Festival of the AgbarhaAme People of Warri *Nokoko* 5.
- Getz, D. (1997). *Management & Event Tourism*. New York: Cognizant Communication Corporation,.
- Derrett, R. (2008).*Regional festivals: Nourishing community resilience: the nature and role of cultural festivals in Northern Rivers NSW communities*, PhD thesis, Southern Cross University, Lismore.
- Ruxandra-Irina P, and Corboş, p. (2012). The Role of Festivals and Cultural Events in the Strategic Development of Cities. Recommendations for Urban Areas. *Romania Informatica Economică* vol. 16, no. 4. Pp. 19-28
- Academia, R. (2009). *Dictionarul explicativ al limbii romane*. Bucharest: Univers Enciclopedic Publishing House.
- Liu, Y. and Chen, C.(2007). The effects of festivals and special events on city image design. *Frontiers of Architecture and Civil Engineering in China*, Volume 1, Issue 2, pp . 255, 259.

SUNSHINE BOY

There are moments I forget you aren't and start to write a letter or to call. You're still in my address book and smiling at the end of that concert video, but there is always rain and thunder to remind me you will not be arriving any time soon. Our friendship was tried and tested, there were no reasons left to give: we just turned up, turned out, as and when required. Now, I know that no-one's there, and we are both always alone. In your absence I try and measure the length of wind, count the stars and watch the prescribed burn.

Summer tears, fever shot, anger too far gone

—*Rupert M. Loydell*



**Residential school experience and conciliation:
laughter and the healing of Gabriel Oskimasis in
Tomson Highway's *The Kiss of the Fur Queen***

Sue Matheson

University College of the North, The Pas, Manitoba

In "Claiming Native Narrative Control: Tomson Highway on Residential School," Sam McKegney finds 1998 was a watershed year for the Canadian Residential School debate, because discussions of the Residential School experience in Canada moved outside the historical-scholarly discussion that had been taking place to the Residential School survivors themselves.¹ Written by a Residential School survivor, *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, was also published in 1998, initiating "a new stage for discussion": in this book, Tomson Highway explored the "meaning" of the Residential School experience "not

1. Prior to 1998, native activists, historians, and scholars had been speaking out against the Canadian government's institutionalization of "coercive acculturation of indigenous youth in the Residential Schools system, via familial separation, force speaking of non-Native languages, and propagandist derogation of pre-contact modes of existence and Native Spiritual systems, endeavoured to destroy Native cultures by altering Native identity among the young" (McKegney 66). Employing a psychoanalytic rubric, the government of Canada then attempted to isolate public attention "on a discourse of healing, which situated Aboriginal people, in whom the problems of Residential School would be supposedly manifest, as the primary objects of study, rather than the system of acculturative violence itself" (McKegney 67).

through factual regurgitation, cathartic though that may be, but through *storytelling*" (McKegney 68). Entertaining and educational, storytelling in Aboriginal cultures imparts cultural beliefs, values, customs, rituals, and history. Rooted in the practice of Aboriginal spirituality, teaching stories also make everyday actions intelligible. Each listener is expected to extract what he or she deems to be important in the story. An important element of traditional storytelling, the lack of closure at the conclusion of *Kiss of the Fur Queen* encourages its readers or listeners, as Rupert Ross would say, "to take whatever meaning they wish to find in what they have heard" (x-xi). As Rupert Ross points out in *Returning To The Teachings: Exploring Aboriginal Justice*, the widespread Aboriginal understanding that information must be shared in ways that leave [understanding] open to the listeners ...is the premise of storytelling" (1996: xii). After all, "[y]ou cannot pass along what another person 'really' told you; you can only pass along what you heard" (Ross, 1996 x). As an old Ojibway man once remarked to Ross, the story is really about the speaker and his or her perceptions of the world: "All I can tell you about...is me. All the rest is guesswork" (1996: xi).

Many commentators have recognized the power and healing nature of storytelling in Aboriginal cultures. In "Trickster Discourse," for example, Gerald Vizenor considers "the imagination of tribal stories, and the power of tribal stories to heal" (67). Such stories, Vizenor says, "enlighten and relieve and relive": they are stories that "create as they're being told...[and] overturn the burdens of our existence" (67). Generally, critical commentary generated by *Kiss of the Fur Queen* focuses on the eldest brother's attempts to heal from his Residential School experiences. Reading *Kiss of the Fur Queen* as Highway's endeavor to reconnect to Aboriginal traditions and to bridge the gap between North American Indian cultures and contemporary society, Verena Klein argues that the public

healing process initiated in Canada in the 1990s with the creation of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation that caters to the healing needs of Indians Metis and Inuit, focusing especially on the legacy of the Indian residential schools, is paralleled in Tomson's 1998 novel. Jeremiah Oskimasis, she notes, is painfully separated and alienated from his Cree culture (first by his residential schooling and then by his training in classical music in Winnipeg); he undergoes a period of intense suffering before he heals, physically and psychically enabled by the role of tribal mentors who foster his inner and outer growth (35-36).

In "Weesageechak Meets the Weetigo: Storytelling, Humour, and Trauma in the Fiction of Richard Van Camp, Tomson Highway, and Eden Robinson," Kristina Fagan remarks that "stories, told and retold over generations contain complex teaching about Aboriginal history, science, ethics, spirituality, and methods of spirituality": while they provide the means to articulate and understand traumatic events, she notes that these stories "rarely express their embedded knowledge explicitly or directly" (207), employing what Kimberley Roppolo, in "Samuel Occom as Writing Instructor: The Search for an Intertribal Rhetoric," refers as a "common Aboriginal American speech phenomenon in which the speaker avoids directly stating something to the listener or listeners, instead implying meaning and expecting those hearing to make meaning for themselves" (513; in Fagan 207). Throughout *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, it is generally agreed that the central question of identity and the act of healing are linked. Observing that Jerimiah Okimasis, heals by acknowledging (and actualizing) his Cree spiritual traditions via storytelling and other indigenous cultural implements, McKegney, for instance, argues that healing takes place because of competing spiritual systems, claiming this competition to be essential to Jerimiah's ultimate self-definition: symbolically couched in broad oppositions, the

Cree and Christian spiritual systems, represented as matriarchal and patriarchal systems of authority, support Jeremiah's search for selfhood on a mythical level in the battle that takes place between the Son of Ayash and the Weetigo.

McKegney, Klein, and other commentators hear the story of Jeremiah Oskimasis' emotional and spiritual recovery in *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, but little critical attention has been paid to the story of his brother's healing, even though Gabriel, who exits this world, does so on the arm of the Fur Queen. Gabriel, who is two-spirited, is generally perceived to be first a victim, and then a casualty of the residential school experience. In part, this perception may be attributed to commentators' responses to Gabriel's unwillingness to restrain his sexual appetites in the South and his identification with the Weetigo—his desire to eat "human flesh" (227). In "Compromising Postcolonialisms: Tomson Highway's *Kiss of the Fur Queen* and Contemporary Postcolonial Debates, Diana Brydon, for example, identifies Gabriel having contracted what Jack Forbes terms "the wetiko psychosis" (22; in Forbes 55), and focuses on the problem of Jeremiah's "survivor's guilt" (23). As McKegney points out, in traditional Cree thought, the most terrifying of creatures is the Weetigo; referred to by some as a cannibalistic human, by others as a monster or spirit (70). He and Craig Womack argue that the association of the Weetigo with the Catholic Church in *Kiss of the Fur Queen* illustrates the capacity for traditional tales to "function as post-colonial critique" (70; Womack 61). Jeremiah remembers Father Lafleur molesting his little brother after lights out in their dormitory as "the Weetigo feasting on human flesh" (79): equating Christianity with the rape of Native culture, the "motion of the priest's upper body [makes] the naked Jesus Christ—this sliver of silver light, this fleshly Son of God so achingly beautiful—rub his body against the child's lips, over and over and over again" (78). Deeply traumatized by his brother's rape, Jeremiah buries his memory

of Gabriel's molestation so deeply within his psyche that the memory of his own rape at the Residential School emerges only when he himself is an adult. McKegney's reading of Jeremiah's healing assumes that the curative action of his storytelling is cathartic: it is "an individual's purgative account of individuation" and "the crystallization of a fertile process of empowerment with potent extra-literary consequences for Native and non-Native Canada" (74;75). Cree cosmology, however, teaches that "everything is in balance, everything connects to something, and nothing is without value" (*The Universe*). As John George Hansen points out in "The Autonomous Mind of Wasekechak," the Cree way of life and world view is not purgative, being centered instead on "caring, healing, and balance in life" (27) "Part of a rich tradition for teaching ethics, decision making, values, critical thinking, and how to overcome adversity" (Hansen 27), Cree stories in *Kiss of the Fur Queen* reveal the healing at work in Gabriel's life as well as Jeremiah's.

Paradoxically, Gabriel's journey to emotional and spiritual fulfillment in the South begins in the Residential School where the program of cultural genocide begins. There, like the Athenian youths sent one after another the Minotaur to be devoured "body and soul" (*Ovidus Moralizatus* 304), the brothers find themselves sacrificed by their parents to a monster waiting for the unwary in a place made of tunnels, staircases, and dormitories. Each night, Father LaFleur, the monster in this labyrinth, transforms into the demonic, nightmarish shape of a black otter and devours one of his students.

As H. David Brumble points out in *Classical Myths and Legends in the Middle Ages and Renaissance: A Dictionary*, the labyrinth, "defined by Virgil as an undiscoverable and irretraceable maze" (*Aeneid*, 5.588-591), signifies the World as being a hellish place in which men became trapped and cannot find their way out. First seen by Christians

as a metaphor for sin, the labyrinth became a widely recognized symbol of Hell itself. Aptly, it is Father LaFleur, the Weetigo-figure lurking in the labyrinth, who defines Hell to Jeremiah as "the place you will go if you are bad" (60). According to LaFleur, Hell is a complicated maze of tunnels: his chart of Hell shows the students "[a] main tunnel snaked from just below the surface of the earth to its very bottom and others ran off to each side in twists and knots and turns, not unlike the Wuchusk Oochisk River and its unruly tributaries" (60). In Hell's "dank-looking, flame-lined caves," there are dark-skinned people, whom Jeremiah identifies as Indians, revelling "shamelessly in various fun-looking activities" (60). One cave features "men sitting at a table feasting lustily on gigantic piles of food: meats and cakes and breads and cheeses"; "in another one finds women smok[ing] cigarettes and sashay[ing] about in fancy clothing," in another, "men and women [are found laying] in bed together in various states of undress," in another, there are people laying "around completely idle, sleeping, doing absolutely nothing" (60-61). Ironically, what looks to the young boy as people having "a good time," LaFleur explains, is actually "permanent punishment" (60-61).

Tellingly, LaFleur's hell anticipates Southern Canada in which the boys later live. In the world below the 53rd Parallel, the Oskimasis brothers partake of all the "good times" that the Residential School's chart promises will send Jeremiah to hell: pride, envy, gluttony, sloth, covetousness, anger, and lust. In Winnipeg, they first feast on gigantic piles of food in Polo Park Mall. They then fight with one another and frequent bars, parties, dives, and concert halls (surrounded by women who smoke and often wear fancy clothing). It is tempting to think that Highway, when writing this novel, may have been recalling Berchorius's reflection—"it often happens that when someone thinks to escape from the labyrinth of the world...he puts himself in there more strongly..."(*Ovidius*

Moralizatus 307). **Having escaped Residential school, the** boys still find themselves deeply entrenched in activities that they associate with it. Jeremiah continues to study classical music; Gabriel continues to devour and be devoured by his lovers.

Those who enter an Inferno cannot escape without help. In the classical tradition, Theseus used Ariadne's thread to escape Hell; in the Christian tradition, Mary's guidance is needed to navigate a labyrinth successfully. Shaped by the Cree tradition, Gabriel's harrowing of hell in Canada's South is enabled by the Fur Queen, a Cree trickster who tellingly appears in various guises: as Miss Julie Pembroke, Fur Queen 1951, an icy Madonna "chiselled out of arctic frost" (10), a "goddess" (11), and "a fairy-tale godmother glimmering in the vastness of the universe" (12). In "A Note on the Trickster," Highway remarks that Weesageechak, the trickster in the Cree tradition,² "the central hero from our mythology—theology, if you will--...[not only]goes by many names and many guises," but also is "neither exclusively male or exclusively female, or is both simultaneously"—and thus, "he can assume any guise he chooses" (n.p.). Modelling his behaviour on that of the Fur Queen, Gabriel assumes many identities (onstage and off) while in the South, including Adonis', the Son of Ayash's, Ulysses Thunderchild's, a priest's, and Misigoo's. Like the white goddess who kisses the mortal Abraham Oskimasis in *The Pas* when he becomes "king of all the legions of dog-mushers, the champion of the world" (11), Gabriel's behavior is also transgressive, his sexual preferences violating what are deemed in this text to be social and natural boundaries.

As well, the Fur Queen also violates the boundary between the living and the dead, acting as the spiritual guide of a living person's soul as well as being a guide of souls

2. This paper uses the names Weesageechak and Wasekechak interchangeably to acknowledge that the Trickster in the Cree tradition, who has many identities and forms, is known by more than one name.

to the world of the dead. She is, in short, a psychopomp, the trickster Weesageechak who met the boys' on "the other side as [t]he clown who bridges humanity and God." Gabriel tells Jeremiah, "[A] God who laughs, a God who's here, not for guilt, not for suffering, but for a good time...the Trickster representing God as a woman, a goddess in fur" (298). A symbol of resistance and power in Cree culture, Weesageechak, also known as Wesekechak, is distinguished by his (or her) extreme appetites and ability to fool others, break the law, and beat the system. Maintaining agency in a difficult situation is undoubtedly his most salient characteristic. In general, a trickster's overturning of a system is meant to address and correct social imbalance, but being neither tragic nor romantic, he is often an ambiguous figure. Released from the School, both brothers lead socially unbalanced lives in Winnipeg. Jeremiah concerns himself with only matters of intellect and spirit in pursuit of music to escape his Residential School experiences which have isolated him and rendered him impotent; Gabriel, on the other hand, immerses himself immediately, wholeheartedly, and exclusively in matters of the flesh. He suffers from satyriasis, indulging his sexual appetites at an alarming pace with an even more alarming number of partners. With this in mind, it is not surprising that the Fur Queen, whose role is to create balance in the lives of individuals and communities, appears to care for them.

In the Cree tradition, the trickster functions as a compensatory figure, reminding the viewer of the importance of balance in life and culture. As John G. Hansen insists, in "The Autonomous Mind of Wasekechak," in teaching life lessons, "Wasekechak is still relevant in contemporary times" (25). When Wesekechak appears to disrupt the lives of individuals and the community, he does so as the catalyst for positive change, for his actions address social and spiritual imbalance and set in motion events that restore

equilibrium to the lives of individuals and to their communities' lives. The changes which this figure introduces are necessary, are not always a pleasant, and often are humorous.

Wesekechak's relevance in *Kiss of the Fur Queen* is evident in Highway's use of Aunt Black-Eyed Susan's Rocky Cree story about "the weasel's new fur coat" (118). In this story, Weesageechak disguises himself as a weasel and crawls up the Weetigo's "bumhole" to destroy him. After chewing up the Weetigo's entrails, and killing the monster, the trickster escapes covered in feces. Taking pity on Weesageechak, the Creator dips him in the water by his tail, and, as Gabriel concludes, "to this day,...the weasel's coat is white but for the black tip of the tail" (121). Painstakingly aligned with Wesekechak's experience as a weasel, Jeremiah and Gabriel in Polo Park Mall demonstrate their understanding of how to interact with the world in order to overcome adversity—they act like the Trickster. Like Weesageechak, the brothers Oskimasis feast the mall's food court described by Highway as "the belly of the beast" (119). Like the other shoppers who are "shovelling food in and chewing and swallowing and burping and shovelling and chewing and swallowing and burping, as at some apocalyptic communion," Jeremiah and Gabriel eat so much that "their bellies c[o]me near to bursting" and their bladders become "pendulous" (120). As they eat, the world is transformed into "one great, gaping mouth, devouring ketchup-dripping hamburgers, French fries glistening with grease, hot dogs, chicken chop suey, spaghetti with meatballs, Cheezies, Coca-cola, root beer, 7-Up, ice cream, roast beef, mashed potatoes, and more hamburgers, French fries" (120). When they finally depart, the mall becomes "the rear end of a beast that, having gorged itself, expels its detritus" (121).

As McKegney remarks, the boys' shopping adventure is a re-enactment the journey

of Weesageechak to the Weetigo's belly and back (71). Equated with the geography of the body, Polo Park Mall becomes a labyrinth of consumption—at its center, one finds the food court, "one hundred restaurants in a monstrous, seething clump" (119). Underpinning her nephews' escapade, Aunt Black-Eyed Susan's Rocky Cree story instructs the reader what one must do while in the belly of the beast. Like the weasel, the boys emerge from their undertaking like detritus. Metaphorically coated in feces, the boys emerging from the mall "covered with shit" like "the hapless trickster" not only reminds the reader what they have been up to, but also suggests that they have polluted themselves while "gnawing with the mob" (121, 121, 120). In "Weesageechak Meets the Weetigo: Storytelling, Humor and Trauma in the Fiction of Richard Van Camp, Tomson Highway and Eden Robinson," Kristina Fagin argues that the tale of the Weetigo and the weasel teaches the Okimasis brothers to try to deal with their abuse by diving into it, because "like the black tip of the weasel's tail, part of them is permanently stained by their abuse" (218).

However, Gabriel himself provides another reading of the black tip on the weasel's tail for his brother and the reader towards the end of his life. Gabriel tells Jeremiah, who is blaming himself for his brother's approaching death from AIDS: "I'm not a child any more, Jeremiah. Haven't been for a long time. There is nothing you could have done about this. What I did, I did on my own" (301). Clearly, Gabriel choose his path in life: positioned between two extremes, he choose to be, on the one hand, "beautiful, in his prime, poetry in motion, a choreographer with promise" and, on the other, a "piece of dirt, a slut, a whore, a slab of meat fucked through every orifice, from Tokyo to Toronto, from Rome to Buenos Aires" (266). Paradoxically, Gabriel understands what Jeremiah who isolates himself in the world of music to heal does not—imbalance first is necessary

for balancing and healing of the individual to happen. As he points out, his voracious appetites have been life affirming in the end. While satisfying his libido, he therefore not only displays personal agency, but also, by doing so, overturns his victimization. It was Gabriel, not his parents, who decided that he belonged with Jeremiah in the South. Leaving the paradisaical natural world of Eemanapiteepitat, he then willingly becomes the agent of the Weetigo's destruction, and, like the Weetigo, is himself destroyed from within—by the AIDS-induced cancer that eats his own flesh. Gabriel's death may be considered a tragedy, but while dying, he becomes "the champion of the world" like his father, mashing Tiger-Tiger to the finish line, where he finds the Fur Queen 1987 waiting for him. After the Fur Queen kisses him and takes him by the hand, Gabriel rises from his body, triumphantly floating "off into the swirling mist," escaping the Weetigo, the Catholic priest outside his hospital door, and a future in Hell (306). On the other hand, Jeremiah, who sought to heal himself by becoming "pure, undiluted, precise" intellect (205), is left behind in the Inferno. This overturning of the reader's expectations is typical of the trickster. And, as Gerald Vizenor would note, like the trickster of the oral tradition, it is entirely appropriate that the little white fox on the collar of the Fur Queen's cape turns to Jeremiah, "And wink[s]" (306), overturning "the very printed page" on which the Fur Queen's name has been printed (68).

Rubelise da Cunha in "The Trickster Wink: Storytelling and Resistance in Tomson Highway's *Kiss of the Fur Queen*" agrees with Diana Brydon that Highway's treatment of the Trickster in *Kiss of the Fur Queen* balances the pain of colonialism with humor and promotes healing and redemption for Residential school survivors as well as the recovery of Cree culture. As Fagan points out, the fox's wink is what Kimberly Roppolo, in "'Samuel Occom as Writing Instructor: The Search for an Intertribal Rhetoric,'" recognizes as "the

gesture of the trickster, the compromised compromiser" (207). This "wink" humorously reminds the reader that Gabriel's lifestyle has always been a conciliation, a process of negotiation, concession, and compromise—that life in this world is and will always be a matter of compromise or give and take. At the end of his life, Gabriel, understanding this, remains conciliatory, willing to allow his mother the comfort of her "Catholic mumbo-jumbo" but unwilling to allow priests anywhere near his bed (299).

In "IO STER IS (It's funny): Humor as medicine in Kaneinkahaka society," Kahente Horn-Miller remarks that humor is used as a self-referencing and "balancing mechanism" by First Nations cultures (22-23). Highway's use of humor in *Kiss of the Fur Queen* proves to be no exception to this rule. And as Mark Shackelton points out, all native Tricksters are comic, clownish, mischievous, and fallible, inhabiting a world which is chaotic, gross, and physical; because of this they are also optimistic and life affirming (48). For instance, at the Polo Park Mall, Highway's humor is self-referencing, balancing, and conciliatory. Here the brothers Okimasis, carefully aligned with the weasel in their aunt's story, "burst into the bronze light of late afternoon" dancing on the sidewalk and exulting that they can "still recall their wicked Aunt Black-eyed Susan's censored Creed legends" (121): playfully upending racial and social stereotypes, Gabriel, who could be "mistaken for a rock star with a tan" as he continues the story of Weesageechak, announces, 'My nice white coat is covered with shit!' (121).

In *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, the Aboriginal Trickster not only heals with humor—this figure also plays an important role by violating tribal codes, for it is only by violating norms and taboos that guidelines for ethical and moral behavior are recognized and accepted so that the conciliation that establishes and confirms social and psychic balance

can take place. At Wasaychigan Hill, for example, Jeremiah, aware of the reservation's norms, also becomes self-aware, realizing that "[o]n an Indian reserve, a Catholic reserve," he remains a product of his upbringing, embarrassed to be seen with Gabriel, because he is "caught in cahoots with a pervert, a man who fucked other men" (250). Gabriel's unfaithfulness to his lover and partner Gregory Newman is another case in point. Consistently untrue, Gabriel prompts Gregory (who is consistently faithful) to define the nature of their relationship, remarking, "Where did you go after the preview last night? Come on Gabriel. Production meetings don't go to 3:00 A.M. Where do you go after the show—in New York, Amsterdam, Vancouver? How many people come by the house whenever I'm out for even half an hour? Do you think I have no nose? That I can't smell bedsheets, sweat?" (275).

As Robert Kroetsch would say, world-recognizing and world-shaping impulses are created out of Gabriel's extreme contradictions and desires. By violating social norms and taboos Gabriel further establishes his reality as a Cree person in the world. The intersection of the physical world with the sensual space which Gabriel inhabits is not unique but a commonplace feature of Cree social and cultural topography. In Eemanapiteepitat, when the boys return to their home reserve after their schooling, Abraham jokes that Jeremiah's return to the community will result in throwing the priest's "tired old organ smack in the lake" (190). Abraham's joke falls flat, because conciliation between the Cree and Christian ways of thinking is not possible. The priest's world view does not allow him to understand the pun that is proffered: "on matters sensual, sexual, and therefore fun, a chasm as unbridgeable as hell separates Cree from English" (190). Thus it cannot be the priest but "[t]he clown who bridges humanity and God" in *Kiss of the Fur Queen* (298). At the end of his life, Gabriel, as a Cree thinker, therefore must establish his own social

and cultural space seeking balance when directing the manner of his own death": "When I die,' he says, 'I want Mom to be allowed her Catholic mumbo-jumbo. But I do not want priests anywhere near my bed" (299).

In the Native American clowning tradition, clowns present important and difficult questions. In Native American cultures, the Trickster is a Sacred Clown essential to contact with the Sacred, to the creative act and to birth. When clowning, Native American tricksters say things that others are afraid to speak, and act as mirrors and teachers—their extreme behavior causes others to examine their own doubts, fears, and weaknesses. The unbalanced lives of the Oskimasis brothers free others from rigid preconceptions of how to live. While they "clown" around, they affirm life by overturning serious matters with laughter. Gabriel, for example, jests as Jesus in "The Okimasis Brothers present 'The Stations of the Cross,' with a scene from the Wedding at Cana' thrown in" creating "explosive" laughter in the residential school's dining room (86). Jeremiah entertains his grade twelve history class when he cuts off Marie Antoinette's head in a "laughter-provoking spectacle" (147). Atop a picnic table with a bottle of rye, Jeremiah is astonished to find Amanda Clear Sky can't stop laughing at him: "does your bum hum when you come?" she asks (253). Gabriel, after contracting AIDS, continues to clown when prostituting himself to businessmen, outrageously carrying his "respirator in hand like a briefcase" (295).

Notably, Native American clowns also heal emotional pain via the experience of shame: the heykoya of the Lakota, for example, sing of "shameful events in their lives, beg for food, and live as clowns," provoking healing laughter in situations of hopelessness (*Heykoya*). In *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, Jeremiah is deeply ashamed of his

brother's homosexuality. When Gabriel asks Jeremiah if he is jealous of his dancer's body in front of their parents, Jeremiah's cheeks turn "a brilliant red" and he has no answer for his brother's question (196). Feeling responsible for his younger brother, Jeremiah berates him for taking ballet lessons, for staying over [at Greg's] (206), and for being what their father would consider to be "sick" (208). It is Gabriel's transgressive behavior that forces Jeremiah to examine his own doubts, fears, and weaknesses. The gay bashing of his brother at Wasaychigan Hill, is a healing experience for Jeremiah—he realizes the humor in his own situation. After drunkenly falling off a picnic table, he finds that the fearsome Cachagathoo, a female Weetigo, who has been tormenting him since childhood is only Amanda Clear Sky laughing at him.

Associating cannibalism and sexual abuse with the consumption of Christ's body, Jeremiah, physically and spiritually damaged by LaFleur, believes that the Weetigo attacks him not only "to feast on his flesh" but also "devour his soul" (252). If repressed pain does lead to an imbalance among mind, body, and spirit is displayed in neurosis and sickness as Freud suggests, then Jeremiah throughout *Kiss of the Fur Queen* is sick indeed, more unwell even than Gabriel, whose inner torments are manifested in the eruption of AIDS-related diseases. It is only when finally confronted with the question of a reviewer who cannot understand Gabriel clowning onstage as "the cannibal spirit shedding his costume at death, revealing a priest's cassock" (285) that Jeremiah's memory finally opens "the padlocked doors" to the experience of his own rape, and he is able to begin to heal (287).

The rate at which an individual heals depends on the severity of the trauma that has been experienced. As Mary Beth Faimon points out in "Ties That Bind: Remembering,

Mourning, Healing Historical Trauma," trauma is a complicated and conflicted phenomenon. The nature of the Residential School trauma experienced by Jeremiah and Gabriel, is compounded because they were not only traumatized by the policies of the Canadian government and its employees, but by their own relatives as well. "The damage to the survivor's faith and sense of community is particularly severe," Faimon says, "When the traumatic events themselves involve the betrayal of their own people" (240). Jeremiah and Gabriel's trauma is compounded by their parents' complicity in the abuse that takes place at the Residential School. When Gabriel suggests telling their parents about their sexual abuse to solve their problem, Jeremiah replies, "Even if we told them, they would side with Father LaFleur" (92). Unable to speak to his mother about the sexual, emotional, and physical torture that he and his brother experienced as children, Jeremiah is absolutely sure that Gabriel's silence about his experiences with Father LaFleur "would remain until the day they died": when his mother asks him what he and his brother are discussing in English, Jeremiah too chooses to remain silent about the subject, replying, "his voice flat, 'Maw Keegway.' Nothing" (92).

Balancing comedy, tragedy and melodrama in this narrative, the Cree way of mingling laughter with serious matters in *Kiss of the Fur Queen* makes Highway's vision so absorbing and life-affirming. Because storytelling is the first step to healing, *Kiss of the Fur Queen* is an important literary stride for every reader to take—as Highway himself attests: "I didn't have a choice," Highway says. "I *had* to write this book. It came screaming out because this story needed desperately to be told. Writing it hit me hard in terms of my health. So I went to a medicine man, who helped me defeat the monster.

We lanced the boil and cured the illness” (In conversation). Highway discovered after writing *Kiss of the Fur Queen* that its story was “incredibly therapeutic,” for himself and “for all the people who went through residential school, who had the same experience, and whose lives were almost destroyed” (*In conversation*), because the conciliation with the world as it is which laughter promotes not only healing but also happiness. “I like to convey joy,” Highway says, “I want to convey that our primary responsibility on planet Earth is to be joyful: to laugh, and to laugh, and to laugh. I do not believe what I was taught as a child by Roman Catholic missionaries that the reason to exist is to suffer and repent and that the more of that we did, the more deserving we became of happiness in the afterlife...I’m of the opposite opinion: the way that my native culture works is that it teaches that we’re here to laugh, that heaven and hell are both here on Earth” (*In conversation*).

Works Cited

- Brydon, Diana. “Compromising post/colonialisms: Tomson Highway’s *Kiss of the Fur Queen* and contemporary Postcolonial Debates.” *Compromising post/colonialism(s): Challenging Narratives and Practices*. Ed. Greg Ratcliffe and Gerry Turcotte. Sydney: Dangaroo, 2001: 15-29.
- Fagan, Kristina. “Weesageechak Meets the Weetigo: Storytelling, Humour, and Trauma in the Fiction of Richard Van Camp, Tomson Highway, and Eden Robinson.” *SCL/ÉLC* 34.1 (2009): 204-26.
- Faimon, Mary Beth. “Ties That Bind: Remembering, Mourning, Healing Historical Trauma.” *American Indian Quarterly*, 28.1-2 (January 2004): 238-51.
- Forbes, Jack. *Columbus and Other Cannibals: The “Wetiko” Disease of Exploitation, Imperialism and Terrorism*. New York: Autonomedia, 1992.
- Hansen, John George. “The Autonomous Mind of Wasekechak.” *the quint: an interdisciplinary quarterly from the north* 7.2 (March 2015): 25-43.
- “Heykoya.” *Come Together Community Articles*. Accessed 15 August 2015.
<<http://cometogetherarticles.yolasite.com/heyoka-clowns.php>>.
- Cited parenthetically as *Heykoya*.
- Highway, Tomson. *Kiss of the Fur Queen*. Toronto: Anchor Canada, 2005.
- Johnson, Julia. “In conversation with Tomson Highway: the acclaimed playwright on being politically correct and his trust in the magical process.” September 30,

2013. *Macleans*. Accessed 10 July 2015. <<http://www.macleans.ca/culture/in-conversation-with-tomson-highway/>>.

Klein, Verena. "Healing the Native Canadian Soul: Three Accounts of Spiritual Homecoming." *Litteraria Pragensia: Studies in Literature and Culture* 15.30 (2005): 35-50.

McKegney, Sam. "Claiming Native Narrative Control: Tomson Highway on Residential Schooling." *Disability Studies & Indigenous Studies*. Eds. James Gifford and Gabrielle Zezulka-Mailloux. Edmonton, AB: CRC Humanities Studio, 2003: 66-74.

Roppolo, Kimberley. "Samuel Occom as Writing Instructor: The Search for an Intertribal Rhetoric." *Reasoning Together: The Native Critics' Collective*: 303-24.

Ross, Rupert. *Returning to the teachings: Exploring aboriginal justice*. Toronto, ON: Penguin Books, 1996.

"The Universe of Tomson Highway." Accessed 5 July 2015. <http://www.quillandquire.com/authors/the-universe-of-tomson-highway/>. Cited parenthetically as *The Universe*.

Vizenor, Gerald. "Trickster Discourse: Comic and Tragic Themes in Native American Literature." *Buried Roots and Indestructible Seeds: The Survival of American Indian Life in Story, History, and Spirit*. Eds. Mark A. Linqvist and Martin Zanger, Martin. Madison: U of Wisconsin P; 1995:67-83.

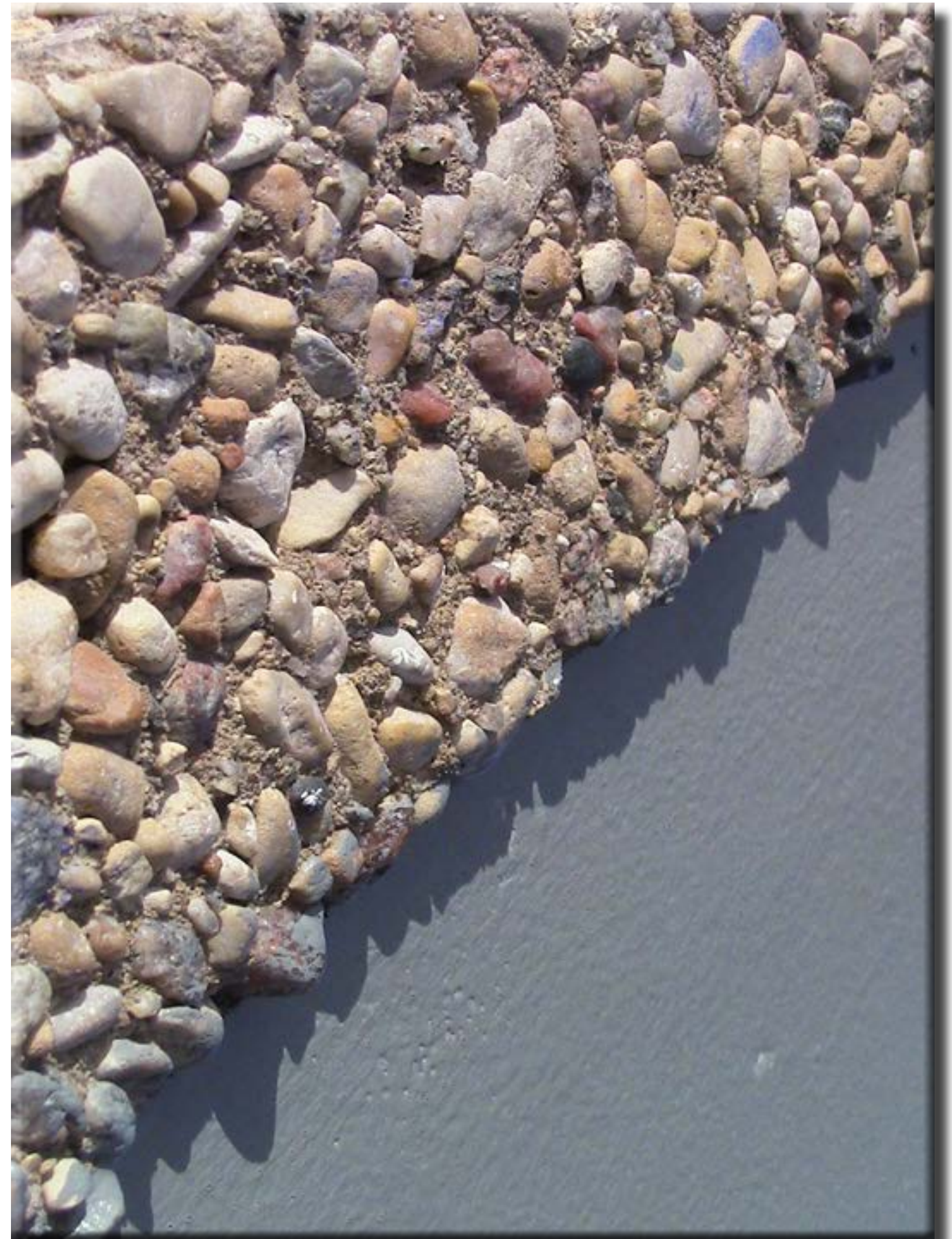
Womack, Craig. *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism*. Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1999.

TROUBLED CHILD

Strangers beside me, every step of the way; I am going nowhere and so, it seems, are they. Over my shoulder, the eternal present echoes through the canyon. I was a photograph but my smile isn't needed any more. I hope tomorrow is like today, do come downstairs and say hello. This is no way to get to heaven, is how it feels to have a broken heart before I wake up dead. I know this is my fade out but I am turning it right up loud. Listen out for me: silence will do the rest.

Ancestral meditation, groove machine, the beginning of the end

—*Rupert M. Loydell*



Dead End Rez

Tyler Turcotte

Garden River, Alberta

Woodland Cree territory, Alberta, Canada.

Highway 58 will take you to a Woodland Cree reservation. You go all the way to the end of the highway and keep going. Two hundred kilometers of dirt road through the bush. Whether you can use this god forsaken dirt stretch to get out to the Woodland reservation depends entirely on the weather. Even Dylan could not have done this stretch of dirt justice with a song. The end of the highway opens onto a small airstrip and dirt roads linking rotting shacks taken by black mold and neglect. Shacks with drunken structure, slanting and leaning walls that have housed generations of families. The Cree of this community call it all home. It is possible that some of the people living here today are directly related to the first nomads to cross over from Asia into North America by way of the Bering land bridge. They, like their contemporary relatives, have found no reason to leave. There is no incentive to leave, and if they do leave, they find only reasons to come back.

The past winter of work seemed different for the *mooniow* couple. There was tension

added to the dryness of the air. Arthur tried to leave his work at the school even when it found him at home. Sometimes it came as little children's hands knocking at the door asking for food, other times it came kicking in the door for whiskey because of whiskey and residential school trauma. There were days when it felt like an honorable service and others when he wanted to wake up somewhere else. Unlike when he first started into this line of work, when it was a great matter, he was now thinking of alternative career paths. New work prospects were the product of idle thinking. Today was one of those days where he wished he had woken up somewhere else. His wife was up and had already left for the school. Arthur rolled around in his bed trying through the hangover to remember how many sick days he had remaining. There was just enough time to get up and go through the morning ritual.

He made his coffee and drank it quickly before dressing and getting ready to go outdoors. As he stood fidgeting the key into place it slipped from his fingers. It passed through the holes in the floor boards and fell into the snow underneath the porch. It was a risk leaving the door unlocked, but he hadn't the time to find the key in the snow before the bell. It would have to wait until the end of the school day. He stepped back into the house for a moment, paused, then exited again. He motioned as though he were locking the door with a key in case any of the Cree were watching him in the storm. He pulled the door tight and started his walk to the school.

The month of January seemed to be perpetually without color. Only the pale light of the moon that gave everything a dreadful air helped him see on his walk to work. After the school bell he would return home through the beaten trail the same way. Shadows and shapes of faceless figures and forms swirled in blowing snow. Arthur trembled at

the sight of a frozen puppy. He stepped over the mutt and could see its eyes had glazed over with frosty death. This was all normal to him now. The problem was that normal was getting worse. He knew from habit which way went the rabbit. One trail that led to another intertwining to all ends of the reserve: this one to Loonskin's camp, that one to Wapoose's trap line, there to John Dor's memorial band hall. In front of him was the outline of snow shoe tracks freshly blown over with snow. Whoever was walking in front must have just missed him at the start of the trails.

Past the clearing the snowshoe tracks were hardly covered. He might have caught up to the better equipped early riser who was walking the same trails if he walked faster in his boots. A wavering figure outlined itself in the blowing snow before him in the distance entering the school. Perhaps symbolically enough Arthur first saw his face reflected in the window of the main doors. Our hero entered the school and removed his pigmentation of winter. He stepped into a puddle of water soaking his sock feet. He went into the office to punch his time card, "*Tansi*," he said to the receptionist. Down the high school wing of the building was his class room. There were no students in the building due to the cold weather.

As he passed the classroom of one of his colleagues there was an outburst of laughter. He looked in as he passed and saw his colleague talking to a stranger, the very stranger he saw reflected in the window moments before. He had his back to the doorway and his snowshoes were leaning against the door dripping water onto the hallway floor. To Arthur they represented the stranger's preparedness for the northern interface.

Arthur kept himself occupied when the students did not come in. It was only the outside staff that came into the school on snow days. The locals were home in their beds

while the school froze over and the *mooniows* froze with it. The headlines on the national broadcast blurred fact and fiction. There was time to plan the rest of the year in these eight hours. Most of it was entertainment, managing behavior and what not. His wife came into his doorway. Yes, he had met the new teacher, he lied. The optimism? Yes, he noticed. Yes, he did have lots of ideas, big Ideas. Yes, he spoke Cree. Yes, it was funny that his name was Arthur as well. What were the odds. She told him there was going to be a staff meeting before everyone went to lunch then she left his class.

Arthur went to the office to make copies for the next week. It was a Thursday and there wasn't much else to do. In the office one could pick up on bits and fragments of all sorts of conversations in Cree and English. Arthur heard a colleague say there was a substantial number of methamphetamines in the community. "*One dealer brought in pounds of some powder that's getting them all high. Someone needs to get killed before the band invites the RCMP to fly the flag, and it will take one of us dying before things change. There is just nothing for these young people to do but think about killing the outsiders that are here to help. Time for me to get out, time for me to go...*"

In another fragment by the coffee machine Arthur heard the new teacher say he was a lifer. The people here would be his life sentence. He was fully committed to the Cree. He did not struggle with the appropriate emotions fitting the reserve, new colleagues, and a new home. He would work for the kids and their parents. Arthur poured his second glass of coffee and chewed away at a cherry turnover taking it all in. He listened to the idealism of the new teacher and his plan to speak to the kids about Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont. He overheard some of his radical ideas like the use of canoes to blow up hydro-electric dams. The new Arthur wanted to speak to them of revolutionaries and

domestic terrorism. He wanted to preach about educated action, he wanted to create big change while being the big change. He fancied himself a visionary who could create a new Jerusalem for the Cree people over the prairies somewhere. Foolishness, Arthur thought as he stood sipping his coffee. *Who do you think you are?* The locals were eating it all up. It's absurd, Arthur thought, the Cree needed to change themselves, they did not need a new Jerusalem, they needed to sober up. Enough culture, culture took them here, culture was normal and the problem with normal is that it gets worse.

His wife would stay to volunteer extra time coaching at the school whereas Arthur left with the bell. He knew leaving the keys underneath his door to freeze or be found was foolish. He hoped the recent snowfall deterred anyone from a search for them. In the network of paths and trails that made up the difference between the school and their shack the snow was heavy and deep. Arthur was wading through the darkness when he saw fresh snowshoe tracks for the second time that day. He made his way over and followed trail. When he reached his house, he found the door open with snow drifting into the entryway. In the chair sat his namesake.

The door had not been kicked in, it was opened by key or was never closed when he left. Now Arthur wasn't sure. He put his bag down on the floor, and heard *"How she going? Door was open, I let myself in and had a lil' sit down. Tired. Real tired, let's have a say, boy"*. He stood up from the chair and extended a hand.

After a while they looked like perfect twins of each other sitting there communicating experiences about the reserves across the north, experiences foreign to ordinary Canadians. Our hero insisted that he was not interested in doing more than he already was. It was a small group that played in no league but their own. What more

could he do? He showed up. Anyone could throw the Cree a ball. They will spend the whole practice shooting the ball around. Unless someone steps in and says you five are on one team and you five are on the other, well the game is just not going to happen. Parents should take responsibility for their children and take control of the community's direction for education. Right now, the government is just throwing the people the ball. They are shooting around, but no one up here has stepped in and shown them how to organize a game.

"The key is to talk to them in their language. To make them laugh, say the swears, there is nothing funnier to them than a mooniow talking Cree. Speak a bit of Cree?"

"That's all good for the short term, yes, but I'm tired of being blamed for some colonial mentality. I had nothing to do with this mess, neither did my parents or my parent's parents. Their women are being killed by their own men, most cases, by men known to them. Record high incarceration rates, record high poverty, and the violence is only getting worse. The Agricultural Benefit Agreement cash will be the end of this community. Throw the meth on top of the gangs, out the east and west window peddling drugs and booze already, this place will blow up. It will be over".

"You need to take responsibility, all Canadians do, intergenerational trauma from residential schools..."

"I was born in the 1980's, I had nothing to do with that shit".

His namesake saw the men not as perpetrators of violence but as victims of their childhood, victims of colonialism and the colonial mentality. After an apology for the intrusion he left and was never seen again. Arthur fastened the door and returned to the

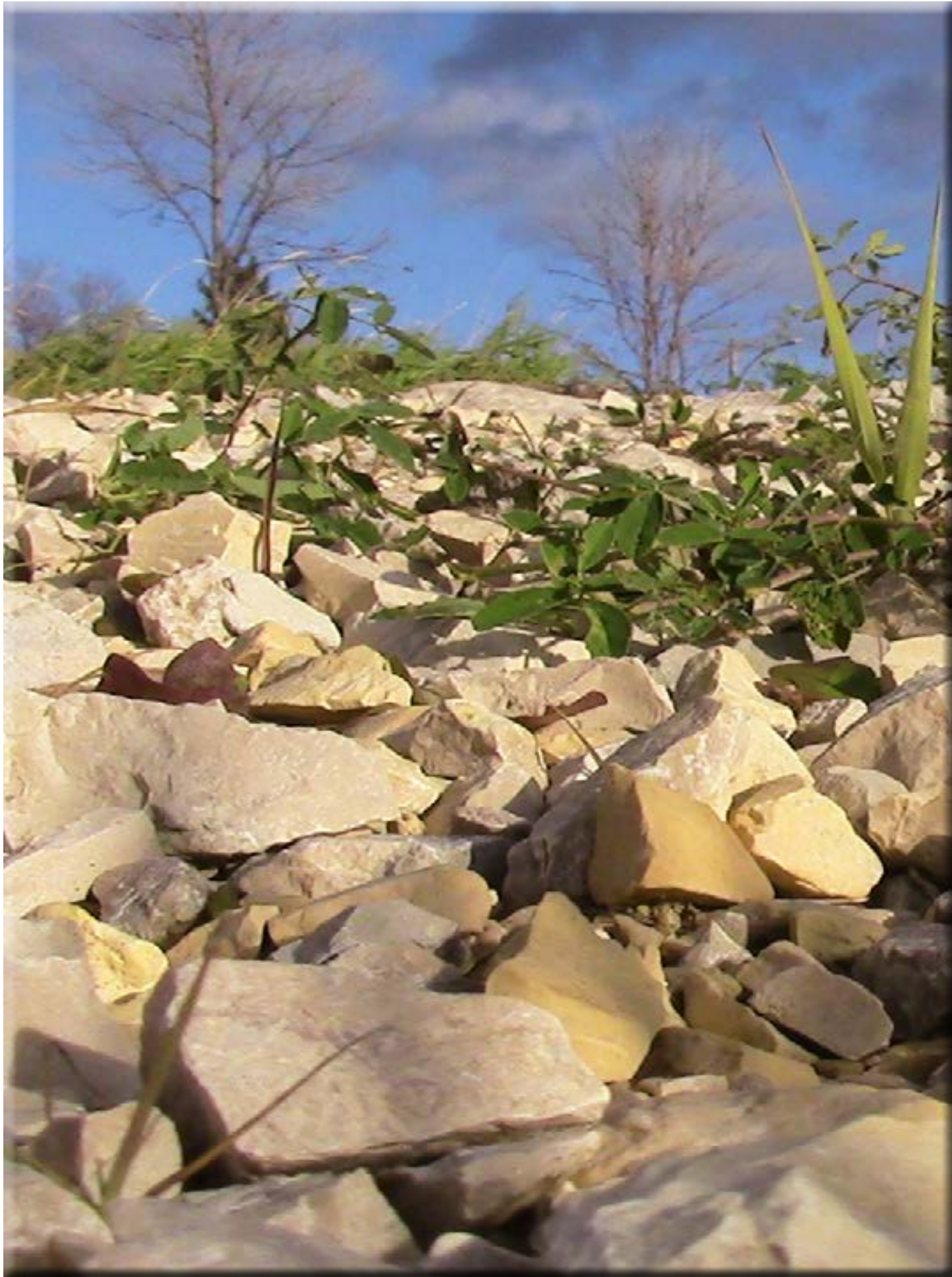
kitchenette to fix himself a drink and wait for his wife to come home. There beside the mixing glass on the counter was his key to the front door.

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

I was with you all summer, but will not be now. I have moved into the house of shadows and whirlwinds, ready to take my place in the dancing mist. I have someone else's blues and an adventure I do not want. Let my grave be a frozen field where I can listen to songs made by birds and trees. It is the lonely time: someone here is missing and I suspect it's me.

Open door, moss houses, forgotten estuary

—*Rupert M. Loydell*



FILM REVIEW:

***The Ballad of Buster Scruggs: And Other Tales of the
American Frontier—with color plates***

Jacob A. Bruggeman

Cambridge University, Cambridge, United Kingdom

The Ballad of Buster Scruggs (2018) is a storybook set in an unpredictable and violent universe—the western frontier. Recreated by Joel and Ethan Coen in six short, separate stories bound only by a brutal reality and imagined hardback cover (the stories literally unfold chapter by chapter therein), the western frontier in this new Netflix original is unforgiving. Yet within this universe viewers witness beauty and love—both of which, though, are fleeting—and enigmatic interaction set against the stupefying course of human life. Chance and cruelty rule the day, but as the stranger states at the end of *The Big Lebowski* (1998), the “darned human comedy” nevertheless “keeps perpetuat[ing] itself, down through the generations, westward the

wagons, across the sands of time until we” meet our individual or collective end. The six stories in the Coen Brothers’ *Ballad* are about the indignities, ironies, and inconsistencies we all face on our journey to that end.

Opening the Coens’ new film as the first of the six stories, or shorts, is the film’s namesake, “The Ballad of Buster Scruggs.” A page in the story book, fading away to reveal Buster Scruggs (Tim Blake Nelson), a famed gunslinger and song-singer, riding through an empty southwest terrain, reads “no one heard it, but the lone rider’s song carried far through crisp morning air. He was half day’s ride from Medicine Hat, a town of many saloons and no churches, many bad men, no sheriff.” As a city, Medicine Hat is no home of “civilization,” as America’s frontier mythology often claimed urban communities to be, but is merely a midpoint in open, vast territory; a fueling station, a saloon town, a muddy street flanked by modest storefronts. Medicine Hat’s saloon is exactly what those on the frontier expected of it: a place wherein one could find food, beds, whiskey, and more salacious offerings. Buster is bested by a younger gunslinger (Willie Watson)—another singer, too, but one dressed in black, a purposeful contrast to Buster’s white wardrobe—and exits the world wondering whether Heaven awaits him up above.¹

In the second story, “Near Algodones,” a cowboy turned bank robber (James Franco) tumbles through an unpredictable and absurd world. The cowboy’s robbery attempt is thwarted by a crazed bank teller (Stephen Root) armored by cooking pans which deflect bullets, prompting the teller to repeatedly scream “pan shot.” Absurdity

1. For more on the symbolism of this contrast, see Jeremy Agnew’s *The Old West in Fact and Film: History Versus Hollywood* (2012) and Ricard Etulain’s *Re-imagining the Modern American West: A Century of Fiction, History, and Art* (1996).

follows absurdity after the cowboy is thwarted: neck-in-noose, hanging from a tree branch in the desert, his would-be executors (led by Ralph Ineson) are slaughtered by a Native American war party, the ranch hand (Jesse Luken) who saves the cowboy from choking (the Native Americans did not cut him free) turns out to be a “stock rustler,” a crime that sends the failed bank robber back to the gallows. Moments before they swing, a man to the cowboy’s side cries, prompting the protagonist to grin and ask, “First time?”

Next, in “Meal Ticket” a burly impresario (Liam Neeson) hauls “the professor,” Harrison (Harry Melling), who has no arms or legs of his own, from town to town in a wagon that converts into a stage. Harrison is possessed of a powerful capacity for oration, a capacity used to collect coin upon the traveling stage. ‘Meal Ticket’ is what Harrison is for his companion. In the end, the impresario casts Harrison into a wintry and mountainous river—a death sentence for a man with no arms and legs—and replaces him with a chicken that can supposedly add and subtract. Next is “All Gold Canyon,” based on a story by Jack London first published in 1906, a name describing a mountainous crevasse in which, when the sun rises, all that lives therein is cast in a golden glow. The canyon is pristine, untouched, and its sight evokes the sense of a complete yet boundless natural beauty. But man in his ignorance ruins the canyon, soils it with his greed and the violence that follows it. Natural beauty is not valued there, as it should be, but cast aside in pursuit of the minerals beneath the canyon’s topsoil.

The fifth story, “The Gal who Got Rattled,” an on-screen adaptation of the 1901

short story by Stewart Edward White, begins with the journey of Alice Longabaugh (Zoe Kazan) and her older brother Gilbert (Jefferson Mays) to Oregon, where Gilbert believes there is a marriage prospect for Alice. Shortly after embarking, Gilbert dies of cholera, resulting in Mr. Billy Knapp (Bill Heck) and Mr. Arthur (Grainger Hines), the wagon train's guides, helping Alice to survive. The latter is faced with a dilemma: a choice between heading home, returning to the East, and forging on Westward, where she has no definite prospects. Billy eventually proposes to marry Alice at a pitstop in Fort Laramie in present-day Wyoming, but Alice does not make it off the prairie. Resulting from a tragic blend of happenstance and naivete, a 'rattling,' Alice kills herself.

The final chapter, "The Mortal Remains," begins in a stagecoach headed to Fort Morgan, Colorado, in which five passengers pass through the night: a trapper (Chelcie Ross), a lady (Tyne Daly), a Frenchman (Saul Rubinek), an Irishman (Brendan Gleeson), and an Englishman (Jonjo O'Neill). Along their night ride to Fort Morgan the group grapples with a myriad of questions about human nature. Questions of basic human needs, moral character, and marriage are broached. Before arriving at a hotel in Fort Morgan, it is revealed that the Englishman and Irishman are bounty hunters, and the Englishman describes with delight watching bounties "negotiate the passage" and "try to make sense of it."

The sixth and final story does something the Cohen brothers are known to do quite well: to give viewers pause for reflection on their own mortality. After watching the Coens' latest film, however, such reflection may be dark. Indeed, the Coens' works

are identifiable for the "streak of pitch-black nihilism," as one reviewer has noted, in their filmography (Stevens, 2018). *The Ballad of Buster Scruggs* is certainly no exception. Reminiscent of the brothers' *Fargo* (1996), their adaptation of Cormac McCarthy's *No Country for Old Men* (2007), and most recently *True Grit* (2010), *The Ballad of Buster Scruggs* is defined not only by the chaos inherent on the evolving frontier, but with contemporary society's consumption of cruelty. In this way, as critic Richard Brody has noted, "the Coen's send viewers home to consider the nihilism at the core of civilization, the confrontation with death that defines life" (Brody, 2018).

Philosophically-minded and meta-oriented viewers who consistently contemplate death and cruelty will finish the Coens' *Ballad* ready to comment on our fleeting lives. Viewers who tend to think that the cosmos can be—and is—beautiful and meaningful might finish the movie and think, as *The Atlantic's* Adam Serwer did, "I like the Coen brothers as much as anyone but they sure have made a lot of movies about how life is pointless and death is random and awkward." Serwer's half-baked criticism fails to capture the complexity of human interaction captured in the *Ballad* (the form of his tweet is likely to blame), but his critique about the Coens' nihilism is worth considering. Nihilism attempts to answer life's mysteries, the dilemmas and questions familiar to us all, with a simple and universal truth: life is random and pointless. Nihilism is an undoubtedly unsatisfying takeaway for most viewers, but a softer alternative exists within the film. In the first episode, Scruggs states that he does not "hate [his] fellow man," even though men deserve hate in the wild west, a place where men are "tiresome, surely" and try to "cheat at poker." Scruggs confides to the camera,

to viewers, that these men are just “human material,” simply and finally flawed, and “him that finds in it cause for anger and dismay is just a fool for expecting better.” Rather than Nihilism, stoicism defines Scruggs’s philosophy: humanity is imperfect, our species is one pockmarked by inborn tendencies to violence and ignorance; to expect ‘better’ is a fool’s errand, but to live one must expect something, however deficient. Living, however deficiently, is all we can go on doing.

Works Cited

The Big Lebowski. Dir. Joel Cohen. United States: Universal Studios Home Entertainment, 2005.

The Ballad of Buster Scruggs. Dir. Ethan Coen and Joel Coen. United States: Netflix, 2018.

Richard Brody. “The Coen Brothers’ ‘The Ballad of Buster Scruggs’ Is Six Giddy, Cruel Twists on the Western.” Rev. of *The Ballad of Buster Scruggs*, by Ethan and Joel Coen. *The New Yorker*. November 14, 2018. <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/the-front-row/review-the-coen-brothers-the-ballad-of-buster-scruggs-is-six-giddy-cruel-twists-on-the-western>. Accessed on February 13, 2019.

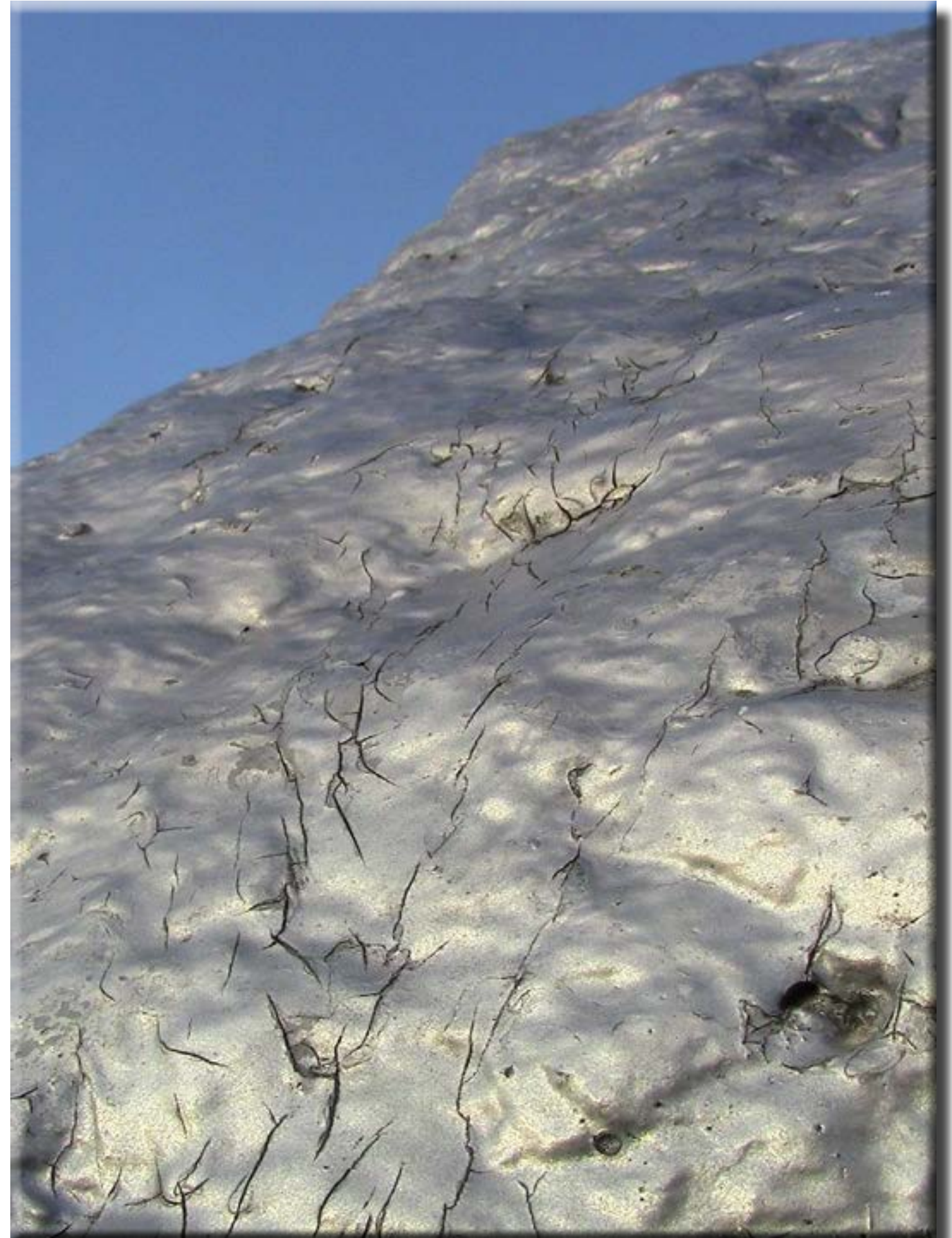
Dana Stevens. “The Coen Brothers’ New Netflix Movie Is a Western Out to Break All the Rules.” Rev. of *The Ballad of Buster Scruggs*, by Ethan and Joel Coen. *Slate*. November 8, 2018. <https://slate.com/culture/2018/11/ballad-of-buster-scruggs-review-coen-bros-netflix-movie.html>. Accessed on February 13, 2019.

BEWILDERED

It should have happened a long time ago, but I was busy cheating myself out of the end game. I dream all morning and dance all night, sleep to avoid the strange perfume of day. What have I to lose? An ocean of fear, shipwrecked songs, and yesterday's desire. I can't bear to think about how I must be my own understudy for the rest of the beautiful now.

Burning bridges, final score, the way you look tonight

—*Rupert M. Loydell*



FILM REVIEW:

Confronting Toxic Masculinity

in

Minding the Gap

Daniel Lewis

Marshall University, Huntington, West Virginia

Filmed mostly in Rockford, Illinois, and featuring footage shot over twelve years, *Minding the Gap* (2018) is a documentary from American director Bing Liu. Liu has worked extensively as a cameraperson on several television shows, such as *Shameless* (2014-2019) and *The Girlfriend Experience* (2016-17). This is his first full-length film. *Minding the Gap* focuses on, in the words of the film's press kit, the "connections between two of [Liu's] skateboarder friends' volatile upbringings and the complexities of modern-day masculinity" (*Minding the Gap* Press Kit). The film follows Liu as he examines his own

violent upbringing, along with 23-year-old Zack Mulligan's troubled, abusive relationship with his girlfriend Nina (no surname given), and 17-year-old Keire Johnson as he deals with the death of his father and what it means for him to be a black man in a largely white group of friends (a point that is sadly underdeveloped in the film). As these three friends navigate the transition from childhood to adulthood, the film explores issues pertaining to masculine gender identity, including a specific and detailed investigation of masculine violence, namely how abuse and controlling, patriarchal attitudes and behaviors are learned and passed on from fathers to sons.

Johnson's understanding of masculinity, or what it means to be an adult man/father, is shown to be shaped by the domineering/abusive father who died when Johnson was young, although the audience never gets any details about the exact nature and extent of this abuse. When Liu asks Johnson about being regularly disciplined by his father, Johnson only says, "they'd call it child abuse now." However little we learn about the specifics of this abuse, the film attempts to draw a straight line between Johnson's father and his understanding of being a black man in America. He expresses sadness and obvious trauma as a result of this abuse, but also attempts, late in the film, to show sympathy towards his deceased father, wondering if the latter was abusive to him because it was the only way he knew how to raise his son. As with many of the important issues raised by the film pertaining to masculinity and physical/emotional abuse, this issue is presented with no clear answers or solutions.

Of the three men, we learn the least about Liu. In an interview with *Filmmaker Magazine*, the director explains that he initially resisted putting himself and his story

in the film, but eventually decided that it was important. The film shows him to be a soft-spoken, introverted, shy type. This introversion makes a childhood friend speculate whether Liu is gay. To the film's credit, this point is not addressed as it is irrelevant to the story being told, but it is a fascinating example of how heterosexual masculinity can be so narrowly defined and tightly regulated that mere shyness can be associated with homosexuality. Liu's trauma reveals itself, not in repeating the violence inflicted upon him onto others, or indulging in anger and self-sabotaging behavior, but in anxiety. His mother asks if he gets angry when he thinks about his stepfather, to which Liu says that he rarely thinks about him. When he does, Liu says "I get shaky and anxious. I don't ... I don't think about him too much." The shot continues, without any music or narration, as Liu's visible trauma seemingly supports his mother's suggestion that he is choosing not to confront the issue.

Mulligan is the most problematic of the three men, notably for the accusations of domestic violence leveled against him by his former girlfriend Nina, with whom he shares a child. For most of the film, Liu's role is largely one of participant and interviewer. As the issue of domestic violence arises, which is when the film confronts toxic masculinity¹ most directly, Liu becomes more of a central focus, more of a moral arbiter. In the *Filmmaker* interview, Liu comments on Nina's request that he should not ask Mulligan about the assault, and how he ended up indirectly doing so anyway. Liu says, "I had a moral crisis, not just as a filmmaker, but as a person. Like, what am I doing to this relationship? Am I endangering Nina? So, I had to consider power relationships: who has

the power in this situation, what effect is all this going to have on her safety but also on the future of this child that they're raising together?" (*Filmmaker*).

Liu indirectly confronts Mulligan about the abuse twice in the film. First, while discussing Mulligan's role as absentee father, Liu tells him that he only met his father a few times, and that in his biological father's place came the abusive step-father that his mother married. This brings about one of the most fascinating questions asked by the film: how do we explain the difference between Liu and Mulligan, who are both young adult men who suffered abuse by father figures when they were younger, but who have taken very different paths as a result? Liu is adamantly against violence and believes strongly in the importance of being a good father, while Mulligan seems to believe that his son might be better off without him and excuses his abuse of Nina as something that was necessary in the moment. The second time that Liu indirectly confronts Mulligan about abuse is in a lengthy scene late in the film. Here Mulligan admits to abusing her and justifies the idea of domestic abuse by claiming that there is no other choice sometimes than to hit your partner. Mulligan's deeply problematic philosophy on this is shown best when he tells Liu that "You can't beat up women. But bitches need to get slapped sometimes, does that make sense?" The film cuts directly from this line to Liu interviewing his mother about leaving her abusive husband. It is too much to ask a film to attempt an answer to a question as complex as why Liu and Mulligan developed in such dramatically different ways when both had mostly similar upbringings, but the fact that the film explores this difference between them as much as it does is to be commended.

1. Maya Salam defines toxic masculinity as, "Suppressing emotions or masking distress/Maintaining an appearance of hardness/Violence as an indicator of power."

In multiple instances, the participants comment on the making of the film. Mulligan asks Liu, “what kind of filming are we doing? The kind where I pretend you’re not there?” When Liu is interviewing his half-brother in another scene, he interrupts and tells his half-brother that he agrees with saying Liu’s name rather than pretending that he is not the one filming the interview. This approach makes for occasionally awkward interviews, but perhaps that is unavoidable due to the personal stance Liu takes as filmmaker. This type of meta commentary mirrors the uncertain stance Liu takes in addressing the toxic masculinity displayed by Mulligan. In other words, is Liu a personal participant or neutral outside observer? How can he be both? Does the awareness of this behavior necessitate taking a moral stance and attempting to intervene?

Ultimately, those are questions that the film does not resolve. What should be applauded here is how adamantly the film endorses a form of masculinity that rejects the abuse of the fathers and step-fathers shared by all three men. In its place is a form of masculine gender identity that is far more sensitive to trauma. The film reaches an emotional crescendo when Johnson finds his father’s gravestone and sits and cries for a lengthy amount of time. Similarly, Liu’s mother suggests that her son is avoiding dealing with the trauma inflicted upon him by his step-father, and that he would be better off by confronting his own feelings and emotions. Even here, the film avoids a tidy ending and embraces complexity by including a brief conversation between Johnson and Liu where the former mentions his love for skateboarding. Liu questions him about this love and says, “but it hurts you.” Johnson replies, “so did my dad, but I love him to death”.

Works Cited

- Liu, Bing. *Minding the Gap*. Keire Johnson, Bing Liu, Zack Mulligan, ITVS and Kartemquin Films, 17 August 2018, *Hulu*, <https://www.hulu.com/movie/minding-the-gap-efcd9be9-9541-46b4-abbcd8b0606b304>. Accessed April 10, 2019.
- Rizov, Vadim. “‘I Had a Moral Crisis’: Bing Liu on Minding the Gap, Personal Doc Voiceovers and Cycles of Abuse.” *Filmmaker Magazine*, 15 Aug. 2018, <https://filmmakermagazine.com/105737-i-had-a-moral-crisis-bing-liu-on-minding-the-gap-personal-doc-voiceovers-and-cycles-of-abuse/#.XLOvjOhKjIV>. Accessed April 10, 2019.
- Salam, Maya. “What Is Toxic Masculinity?” *The New York Times*, 22 Jan. 2019, www.nytimes.com/2019/01/22/us/toxic-masculinity.html. Accessed April 26, 2019.

LOVELESS PRAYERS

I spit into the river and listen to the silence of the muddy bank. I am trapped in three dimensions, an early morning sweat before the sun arrives, have forgotten what living is for and how to find my own way home. All the answers have gone and I have said my goodbye; I am stranded in sunrise and the tide is going out. Days like these, nothing matters. The charred fragments of later flutter in the breeze.

Field report, four minute warning, a silver-grey reprise

—*Rupert M. Loydell*

Devon Rocks



Rebecca Matheson

FILM REVIEW:

A Tale of One City: *Widows* (2018)

Chingshun J. Sheu

Taipei City, Taiwan

A heist film is usually focused on the heist: who is the mark, what is the take, who brings what skills to the table, what goes wrong, and how do they get away with it? Steve McQueen's *Widows* turns all of that on its head, giving us a heist film about a band of unskilled reluctant criminals stealing for someone else from a place they have to determine for themselves. The plan of this particular heist is pretty straightforward; everything else, though, is an obstacle course. And that "everything else" encompasses the very idea of the city of Chicago: its people, social divisions, religion, and politics.

The film opens on a quartet of male heisters mid-getaway, led by Harry Rawlings (Liam Neeson), getting chased and shot at by the cops. In a marvel of economical storytelling (the script is written by McQueen and Gillian Flynn, screenwriter of *Gone*

Girl [2014] and author of its source novel), this is intercut with flashbacks of three of them starting the day and greeting their wives. The thieves and their stolen two million go out in a ball of fire, and the women are left to pick up the pieces. Turns out Rawlings was stealing from drug lord Jamal Manning (Brian Tyree Henry), who needed the money to run for city alderman and go legit. He gives Rawlings's widow, Veronica (Viola Davis), thirty days to pay him back. A message from Harry arrives from beyond the grave that leads her to his heist diary, containing plans for his next job, and she shanghai's two of the other widows into the scheme.

Davis is predictably powerful as a grieving widow who takes up her husband's mantle, not to carry on his legacy but to bury it for good. The Rawlings' bond was physical as well as emotional, and throughout the film, in moments of quiet, Veronica sinks into reveries of Harry's touch, smell, and presence. At one point, she has to go to the bathroom to check that it really is not Harry taking his morning shower (this sets her up for the twist at the end, in which Harry, who we learn earlier is alive, shows up after the heist to try to take the loot from her). The sight of her compartmentalizing these memories away before leaving the house is a mini masterclass in projecting interiority. Like many of Davis's characters, Veronica is tough because she is raw inside, and the film is confident enough to give us equal amounts of both. As *The Young Folks* critic Allyson Johnson observes, "Davis is tremendous, . . . allowing the fatigue of Veronica to show only in hunched shoulders and stalled steps but also [presenting] her steely eyed resolve in clipped words and pointed looks."

All of the actors in this film are good; apart from Davis, three other leads stand out.

Elizabeth Debicki, a long-overlooked actress of real ability, plays widow Alice, who used to be subservient to the important people in her life but is pushed by this heist situation to learn to leverage her wits, beauty, and even heritage in pursuit of a better life—one that belongs to her alone. It is hard to imagine anyone else in this role, the casting is so perfect; even better, it is a break from Debicki's usual typecasting as a suave and glamorous *femme fatale*, such as in *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* (2015) and *The Tale* (2018). We get to see her mature into herself as the film progresses, and the transformation is empowering, for her and for us.

Four people are needed to pull off the heist, but only three of the four widows take part. Rounding out the crew is Cynthia Erivo's Belle, babysitter for Linda, another widow and heister (Michelle Rodriguez). The only strictly voluntary member of the crew, she joins as the getaway driver when their first choice gets done in by Manning's enforcer (Daniel Kaluuya, cold as death). Her spectacular sprinting ability also comes in handy. Erivo has only recently been making the jump from stage to screen acting, and her stage presence props up her character, the least rounded of the four. As a late addition and not one of the widows, her backstory is told from a tangential angle, and it is only about ten minutes into the subplot of her life that we see her story link up with Linda's. Her motivation, too, is a bit lacking: all four of them need money, but only three of them are being threatened by Manning. Nevertheless, her contributions to the heist, buttressed by Erivo's acting and Flynn's streetsmart lines, carry her through.

The last notable performance we could mention is by Colin Farrell, who plays Manning's electoral opponent, Jack Mulligan, scion of a political dynasty. Mulligan, it

transpires, is sick of politics but sees no way out. Farrell has always succeeded at playing people who are caged in and feel uncomfortable in their own skin, like in *Phone Booth* (2002) and *In Bruges* (2008). In this film, he is kept in his lane by both his cranky, bigoted, racist, and power-mad father (Robert Duvall) and his assistant (Molly Kunz), who lurks in the background until he starts whining and then unleashes her inner Amy Dunne. This latter event takes place in what will probably become the most famous sequence in the film: leaving by car a vacant lot in a run-down neighborhood, the two argue while the hood-mounted camera, in one unbroken and all-too-brief shot, records in real time the socioeconomic improvement of each passing house, before they arrive at the townhouse mansion that serves as Mulligan's campaign HQ just a couple blocks away.

Mulligan's political apathy does not mean, however, that he refrains from reaping the financial rewards of graft and corruption, and the morality of the widows' heist is justified by making their target Mulligan's millions in illegal kickbacks. In this way, he is diametrically opposite the widows: whereas they want their lives back from the unlawful parties threatening them, he desires a new life made possible by unlawfully gained money. His dirty fingers even extend down to the barbershop where Belle works part-time. The matrix of Manning, Mulligan, the widows, and Belle forms a microcosm of the city in its interconnectedness across genders, races, ethnicities, income levels, religious denominations (Manning's HQ is a small church while Mulligan is endorsed by a mega-church pastor played by Jon Michael Hill)—and even across both sides of the law. The gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic, religious, and judicial critiques have all been done before individually, but putting it all together and in such close proximity,

sometimes connected by a single shot, is a breathtakingly visionary act.

The weakest parts of the film, ironically, have to do with the heist. There is Belle's underwritten backstory. There are the two not exactly logical twists involving Liam Neeson. And the heist itself is underlit by cinematographer Sean Bobbitt, with people and objects being hard to distinguish even in a blacked-out screening room. But even at its weak points, the film compensates with tension and melodrama. *RogerEbert.com* critic Brian Tallerico writes: "McQueen's masterful film is the kind that works on multiple levels simultaneously—as pure pulp entertainment but also as a commentary on how often it feels like we have to take what we are owed or risk never getting it at all." *IndieWire* critic Eric Kohn argues that "McQueen has made a first-rate genre exercise that doubles as a treatise on race and gender, juggling dramatic payoff with heavier themes." Finally, *The New Republic* critic Josephine Livingstone calls the film "a truly sophisticated action film, and by far the best crime movie of 2018 so far." Writing at the end of 2018, this reviewer fully agrees in calling *Widows* the best heist film of the year.

Works Cited

Flynn, Gillian. *Gone Girl*. New York: Crown, 2012.

Gone Girl. Directed by David Fincher, Twentieth Century Fox, 2014.

In Bruges. Directed by Martin McDonagh, Focus Features, 2008.

Johnson, Allyson. "Widows Review: Viola Davis Shines in this Reinvigorating Take on the Heist Thriller." *The Young Folks*, November 14, 2018, theyoungfolks.com/film/127258/widows-movie-review/. Accessed on Dec. 18, 2018.

Kohn, Eric. "'Widows' Review: Steve McQueen's Riveting Heist Movie Is 'Ocean's Eight' With a Dragon Tattoo." *IndieWire*, September 8, 2018, indiewire.com/2018/09/widows-review-viola-davis-steve-mcqueen-tiff-2018-1202000529/. Accessed on 18 Dec. 2018.

Livingstone, Josephine. "Why *Widows* Is the Best Crime Movie of the Year." *The New Republic*, December 1, 2018, newrepublic.com/article/152475/widows-best-crime-movie-year. Accessed on Dec. 18, 2018.

The Man from U.N.C.L.E. Directed by Guy Ritchie, Warner Bros., 2015.

Phone Booth. Directed by Joel Schumacher, Fox 2000 Pictures, 2002.

The Tale. Directed by Jennifer Fox, Gamechanger Films, 2018.

Tallerico, Brian. "Review of *Widows*." November 16, 2018, rogerebert.com/reviews/widows-2018. Accessed on Dec. 18, 2018.

Widows. Directed by Steve McQueen, Regency Enterprises, 2018.

Hold On Tight!



Rebecca Matheson

OUTGOING

The spirit of death is a serpent's kiss: so many tired old people waiting to rest. When he came home from the funeral he had had enough, was ready to move out. He abandoned a house full of memories and possessions and moved into a room. Mourning is a broken record, repeating over and over. He never went home again, simply rehearsed life in the dark while he was supposed to be asleep.

Pale electric light, house of cards, pray the soul away

—*Rupert M. Loydell*

GOLEM

Night fades softly and then it is dark. Tools of the imagination are put away and the cabinet safely locked. The stranger at the table speaks under my breath, puts music through the silence. I am waiting for the morning to see what I have made. The full version is only just coming to light, the creature wants to be found. Where you are is always your world; where I am is known as despair. Dying is a continuous process, there may be no end to this.

Story book, mud monster, many moons ago

—*Rupert M. Loydell*

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

I have known myself for many years now, don't like what I see. But in the past I played team sports and used public transport, have first-hand knowledge of love and pain. It's a mixed blessing, being wide awake in winter when the nights close in, but better than forever waiting. I have made music for the future and become nostalgic for the past. I have current or recent experience, and nothing more to say. Don't hesitate to contact me if you need to know anything more. In the meantime, I commend myself to you, I'm sure I'll fit in fine.

Last words, surrogate pleading, discontinued line

—*Rupert M. Loydell*



CONTRIBUTORS

Adjeketa Blessing earned his Ph.D. in Theatre Arts at Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State, Nigeria, where he teaches radio and television production (theory and practice) and specializes in the sociology and psychology of children's animation films. Currently, he is researching the causes of and choices of treatment for mental illness in Nigerian home video films.

Jacob Bruggeman is beginning coursework this fall for a MPhil in Economic and Social History at Cambridge University. Outside of the classroom, Jacob is a Graduate Assistant at Miami University's Center for Public Management and Regional Affairs, an Associate Editor of the Cleveland Review of Books, a co-Book Review Editor of *The Metropole*, and the Editor-in-Chief of *The New Herald*.

Aaron Duplantier is an Assistant Teaching Professor in the Syracuse University Writing Studies Department. He received his PhD in English with an emphasis in Writing and Culture from Louisiana State University in May 2015. His primary research is conducted in New Media Studies and Popular Culture. His peer-reviewed articles have appeared in *Ethos* and *Louisiana Folklore Miscellany*, among others. His scholarly book *Authenticity and How We Fake It: Belief and Subjectivity in Reality TV, Facebook and YouTube* was published by McFarland Press in July 2016.

John G. Hansen is an Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Saskatchewan. He is a member of the Opaskwayak Cree Nation and has been an Associate Professor in the Aboriginal and Northern Studies Department at the University College of the North. He now lives in Saskatoon and writes on Indigenous topics.

Daniel Lewis is currently a visiting assistant professor at Marshall University where he teaches courses focusing on representations of masculinity in film and literature. His current project looks at the role of second-wave feminist ideology in the work of David Lynch. His article, "Sleep Disorders and Dual Masculine Desires in Charles Dickens' 'Lying Awake' and 'Night Walks'" will be published next winter in *The Journal of Bodies, Sexualities, and Masculinities*.

Sue Matheson is an Associate Professor of English at the University College of the North where she teaches literature and film studies. Her interests in cultural failure underpin her research: currently, she specializes in American Horror, Children's Literature, Indigenous Literature, and the Western.

Ayokunmi O. Ojebode a doctoral candidate in Department of English, Redeemer's University, Ede, Nigeria. His areas of research include Literary Onomastics and African literature.

Johnson A. Odeyem is a doctoral candidate in the Department of English, at Redeemer's University, Ede, Nigeria. His interest in African literature lies in the field of sociolinguistics.

Ifeoma Ezinne Odinye is a lecturer in the Department of English Language and Literature Nnamdi Azikiwe University in Awaka, Nigeria. She studied at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awaka, Nigeria; Renmin University, China; and Xiamen University, China. She is the author of *At Sunset* (2018) and *Pain in the Neck* (2018).

Antonio Sanna completed his Ph.D. at the University of Westminster in London in 2008. His main research areas are: English literature, Gothic literature, horror films and TV, epic and historical films, superhero films and cinematic adaptations. In the past ten years he has published over seventy articles and reviews in international journals. He is the co-editor of the Lexington Books' *Critical Companion to Tim Burton* (2017) and *Critical Companion to James Cameron* (2018). He has also edited the volumes *Pirates in History and Popular Culture* (McFarland, 2018) and *Critical Essays on Twin Peaks: The Return* (Palgrave, 2019).

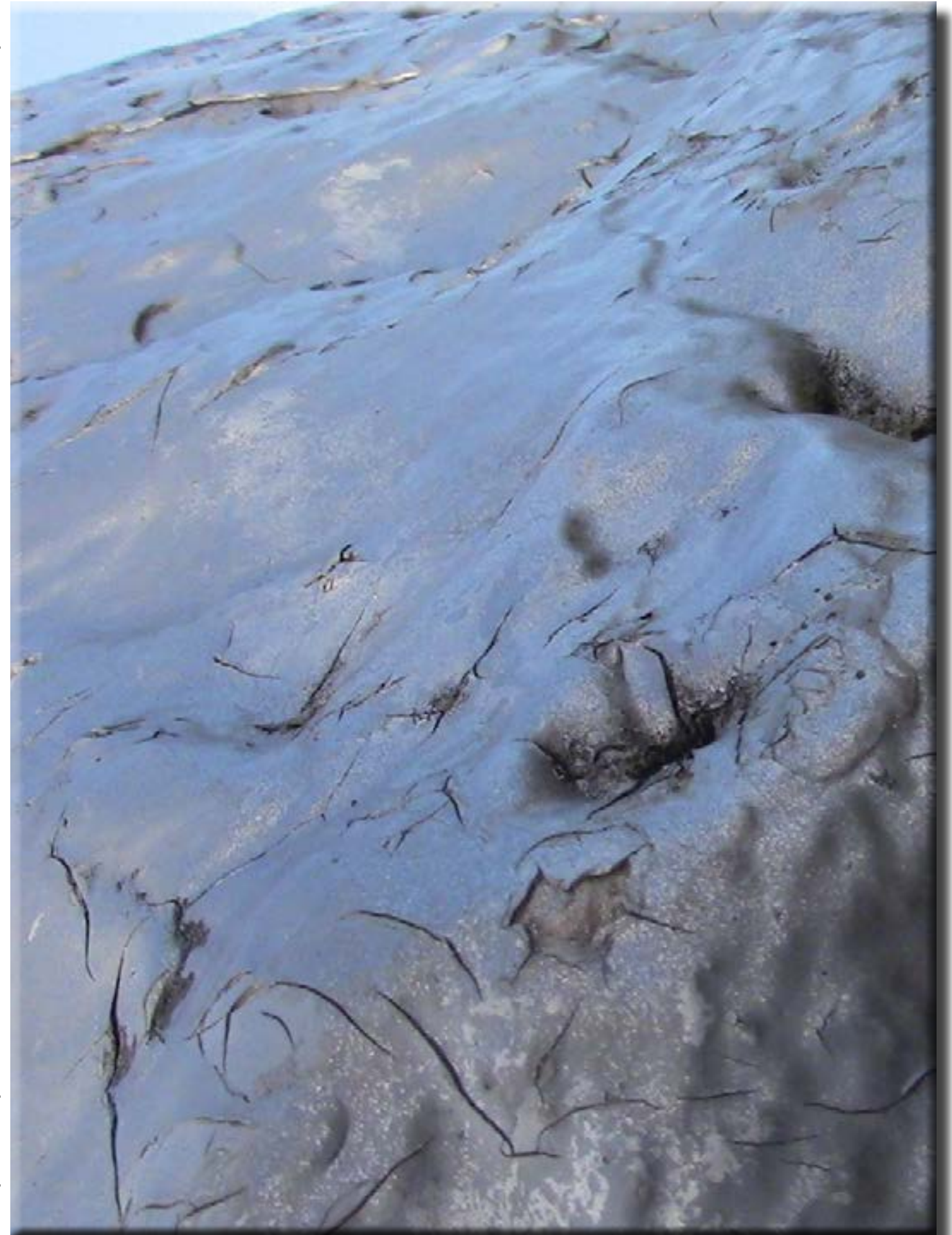
Chingshun J. Sheu is a Taipei-based freelance film critic published in *The News Lens International*, *Bright Wall/Dark Room*, *Critics at Large*, *LeonardMaltin.com*, and *Funscreen* (in traditional Chinese). She is also a PhD student and adjunct lecturer in English at National Taiwan Normal University, where she studies contemporary American fiction. She has published work on William Gaddis, Joshua Ferris, and the Taiwanese author Chang Hsiu-ya.

Tyler Turcotte is a hunting enthusiast and educator from Miramichi, New Brunswick. He has lived on and traveled to several treaty territories in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and

Alberta. He is currently teaching in Garden River, Alberta, where he continues to write short fiction and hunt with the Woodland Cree.

Karen Wall is Associate Professor at Athabasca University in the Communication Studies and the Heritage Resource Management programs. Her research is interdisciplinary, drawing mainly on history, cultural geography, media and urban studies. She has combined academic research with arts practices in museum, theatre, street and gallery settings and is currently developing a project broadly examining phenomena of analog and residual visual media in the contemporary imagination of space, communities and memory.

Northern Lava



Rebecca Matheson

call for papers

The *quint's* forty sixth issue is issuing a call for theoretically informed and historically grounded submissions of scholarly interest—as well as creative writing, original art, interviews, and reviews of books and films. The deadline for this call is the 15th of February 2020—but please note that we accept manu/digi-scripts at any time.

quint guidelines

All contributions accompanied by a short biography will be forwarded to a member of the editorial board. Manuscripts must not be previously published or submitted for publication elsewhere while being reviewed by *the quint's* editors or outside readers.

Hard copies of manuscripts should be sent to Sue Matheson at *the quint*, University College of the North, P.O. Box 3000, The Pas, Manitoba, Canada, R9A 1M7. We are happy to receive your artwork in digital format, PDF preferred. Email copies of manuscripts, Word or RTF preferred, should be sent to thequint@ucn.ca.

Essays should range between 15 and 25 pages of double-spaced text in Word, and all images (JPEG) and source citations. Longer and shorter submissions also will be considered. Bibliographic citation should be the standard disciplinary format.

Copyright is retained by the individual authors of manuscripts and artists of works accepted for publication in *the quint*.

the quint thanks Dan Smith, Harvey Briggs, and Rebecca and Stuart Matheson for their generous support of this project.