

SUNY College Cortland

Digital Commons @ Cortland

Master's Theses

5-2016

"Do not fashion the other": representing contemporary Haudenosaunee literature

Michael Patrick Brewster

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.cortland.edu/theses>



Part of the American Literature Commons, Critical and Cultural Studies Commons, Cultural History Commons, Indigenous Studies Commons, Literature in English, North America, Ethnic and Cultural Minority Commons, Other Languages, Societies, and Cultures Commons, Race and Ethnicity Commons, and the United States History Commons

Recommended Citation

Brewster, Michael Patrick, ""Do not fashion the other": representing contemporary Haudenosaunee literature" (2016). *Master's Theses*. 7.

<https://digitalcommons.cortland.edu/theses/7>

This Open Access Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ Cortland. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Cortland. For more information, please contact DigitalCommonsSubmissions@cortland.edu.

“Do Not Fashion The Other”:
Representing Contemporary Haudenosaunee Literature

by
Michael Patrick Brewster

A Thesis
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Master of Arts in English

Department of English, School of Arts and Sciences

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
COLLEGE AT CORTLAND

May 2016

Where are Pocahontas' writings? We know she could read and write in English; does it not seem likely that she kept a diary or journal of the events in which she was participating?

— Degonwadonti, Beth Brant, "Grandmothers of a New World"

Introduction

History without voice is pure academic knowledge.

— Aronhiótas, James Thomas Stevens, "The Breath and Skin of History"

Historically, the issue of representation in postcolonial studies is one of some contention. While scholarship might recognize the necessity for highlighting the plights and struggles attendant to postcolonial societies, the primary literature being studied is most often written by natives of those societies themselves. This gap is especially evident with Indigenous cultures, because there are relatively few Indigenous scholars working in the academy. We are at the point now when we have a multiplicity (but not a plurality) of Indigenous voices writing literature (poetry, memoir, fiction, film, etc.) and academic criticism. However, there is value in non-Natives reading and writing about Indigenous artworks, just as there is value in the communities from which these writers originate engaging with these creative expressions as well. Certainly, when Indigenous writing is being read, taught, and written about, the perspectives of Indigenous writers stand for themselves and are able to combat and decolonize settler perceptions of Indigenous life and culture. In North America, there are hundreds of distinct Indigenous tribes and nations, each with its own culture and language. No study of Indigenous literature can be so comprehensive as to do justice to these diverse cultures, so in this thesis I have chosen to focus upon one.

As a native of New York, I have been fascinated by the colonial history of my home. Part of this history involves the rise and fall of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, also known as the Six Nations of the Iroquois. There are units of Iroquois studies in primary schools in New York State, which may perhaps involve a field trip to an “Indian village” or to a museum where schoolchildren see replicas of the bark longhouses from which the name “Haudenosaunee” derives. Students learn about the agricultural practice of growing the “Three Sisters”— corn, beans, and squash— together in fields; they learn about wampum— shell beads threaded into strings and belts that as cultural tools; they might learn some Iroquois myths; but they do not read Haudenosaunee literature.

Daniel Heath Justice, a Cherokee¹ scholar and professor of English wrote a chapter called “Indigenous Writing” in a collection about North American Indian cultures. I wrote to him about my desire to study Haudenosaunee writers and he advised me to look at how these writers engage with their own cultures. His list of recommended writers was rather small, just seven individuals. Beginning with Emily Pauline Johnson, a Mohawk-Canadian writer of the Victorian era, and ranging through the contemporary writers Eric Gansworth and James Thomas Stevens, I took to reading their literary works and criticism. Except for E. Pauline Johnson and Maurice Kenny, there is not a lot of critical writing about Haudenosaunee literature. One reason for this is the relatively small size of the Six Nations: after the Revolutionary War about 2,000 individuals migrated to Upper Canada (Ontario), leaving approximately the same number on several reservations

¹ Justice represents himself as “Cherokee by citizenship, heritage, history & genealogy, but not culture, having lived outside the Nation for 3 generations” (Tweet April 17, 2016)

in New York State. Today, there are only an estimated 250,000 people of Haudenosaunee heritage in the United States and Canada.

Despite these small numbers and the attendant critical underrepresentation, the richness and diversity of Haudenosaunee literature requires that my thesis focus primarily on the work of two writers: Eric Gansworth, an Onondaga who grew up on the Tuscarora Reservation outside Niagara Falls, New York, and the poet James Thomas Stevens, a Mohawk who spent time as a child on the Tuscarora Reservation as well as on the Grand River Reserve in Ontario. That these two contemporaries, both born in 1966, had some congruencies in their youth provides me with the opportunity to address Daniel Heath Justice's question: "How do current Haudenosaunee writers engage with their history and culture in their work?" (Correspondence). In other words, what methods of self-representation do they exhibit? What postcolonial concerns do they engage? And what, if any, decolonizing strategies are apparent in their creative expressions?

In order to accomplish these goals, I will first discuss succinctly the question of representation— particularly self-representation— in Indigenous writing as it pertains to the construction of "the Other." I will then examine the wider Haudenosaunee literary community in order to identify, if possible, certain concerns particular to this culture based on how Haudenosaunee authors engage with their history and the colonizing endeavor. I will be suggesting that Gansworth and Stevens participate in decolonizing efforts through their creative expressions, which raises the possibility that there may well be certain Haudenosaunee-specific representations in their works. Finally, I will analyze three major works from these writers.

In this latter section, I will begin by examining two novels by Eric Gansworth. Gansworth has published nearly a dozen novels and poetry collections, and he stands as the foremost Haudenosaunee novelist. Both his 2004 novel *Smoke Dancing* and his 2013 young adult novel *If I Ever Get Out of Here* are set on the Tuscarora Reservation, the former in contemporary (mid-1990s to mid 2000s) time, the latter in the mid-1970s. Though both novels employ first-person narrators, *Smoke Dancing* does so with multiple narrators while *If I Ever Get Out of Here* has a single narrator throughout. These narratives provide ample material for investigating a multiplicity of Haudenosaunee self-representations. Next, I turn to James Thomas Stevens's "Tōkinish" (first published in 1994), a work that initiates a form of poetic collage that Stevens has been using in his poetry for two decades, and which employs the use of quotation from a variety of texts (primarily of colonial origin) that have affected Native American and Haudenosaunee cultures, that are then commingled with Stevens's own poetry. These hybrid writings foreground the complications of a colonized population dealing with assimilative pressures while attempting to assert its own identity. Stevens traffics in these global anxieties as they apply to Indigenous peoples while simultaneously focusing on the delicate politics of interpersonal relationships.

Critical Terrain

By far, most of the critical writings of the 1980s-2000s seek to situate Native American writing within the larger cultural context of orality and the oral tradition. As Christopher Teuton (Cherokee) writes, "Native American writers have been dialogically

engaging oral discourse in their literary works as a means of challenging Euro-American colonialism and its imposition of values through writing” (*Deep Waters* xix). Michael D. Wilson argues that “Indigenous writers of contemporary fiction are generally less concerned with assimilation than they are about the power of appropriating and revising nonindigenous forms to create a literature of resistance” (qtd in Teuton xix). Both scholars examine how, in the former’s words, “In subtle but important ways the relationship between the oral and the graphic is central to contemporary Native fiction” (*Deep Waters* xx), including the use of multiple first-person narrators. We will see this representational technique in *Smoke Dancing* by Eric Gansworth, and can contrast it with his use of a single narrator in his young adult novel *If I Ever Get Out of Here* in order to determine the characteristics of self-representation. I will argue that these characteristics are not traits of fiction, but can be found in Haudenosaunee poetry and memoir as well.

Daniel Heath Justice is a young, gay, Cherokee professor of English, and, in my estimation, one of the leading critical voices on Native American literature. Not only does his discussion of Indigenous writing widen the discourse, but he has written extensively on issues of indigenous peoples in academia, as well as on what college courses in Native American Literature can look like and achieve for non-Indian and Native students and communities. I employ his definition of “who counts” as Native American writers—those who “see themselves as members of distinct tribal communities, histories, and traditions” and who are accepted by those communities (Justice “Kemo Sabe” np). All of the Haudenosaunee writers I have included in my study both self-identify as a member of

one of the Six Nations and are accepted by those nations (at least half were born on reservations). In this way, the notion of “self-representation” includes components of accountability (toward and among a nation/community) and authenticity (“real” Native voices are acknowledged within a community, not measured by tribal membership or blood quantum).

Some critics, primarily non-Native writers like Arnold Krupat, have come under fire by Native scholars for disrespectful scholarship. In this paper, I am subscribing to Justice’s conception of respectful (non-Native) scholarship as he describes it here:

Indian scholars are held accountable for our work by many entities: our communities, our families, our friends and colleagues, and others in Indian Country. Such accountability can be painful at times, but on the whole it works to insure the quality, the respect, and the responsibility of the work being produced. We hold each other accountable, and we do the same for those who enter our world, our lives, and our minds, spirits, and hearts.

It has never been as simplistic as “only Indians should teach/write about/talk about Indian issues.” Considerate non-Indians have a place in our communities, and we hold enormous respect for those who are sincere and responsible, regardless of their ethnicity (Justice “Kemo Sabe” np).

Before I chose to study Haudenosaunee writers, I had not conceptualized the size of the Haudenosaunee population. In Canada and the United States, there are about 105,000 enrolled members of the Six Nations (George-Kanentiio), the vast majority of

whom live in Canada². Even assuming that twice that number of people with significant Haudenosaunee heritage exist, this population does not even comprise 1% of the population of New York State and the Province of Ontario combined. Essentially, we are talking about a population between one-quarter and one-half the size of Onondaga County, New York. Even considering the small population, there are not many critics writing about Haudenosaunee literature at all. Most of the critical literature that does exist focuses on E. Pauline Johnson, and almost all of that focuses upon her dual Mohawk/Canadian heritage as a woman writer in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. Perhaps the most prominent literary scholar is Penelope Kelsey, who published a collection of essays by various writers on Maurice Kenny that includes a chapter of her own tracing “tribal” theory in Kenny’s work, as well as a book on the Haudenosaunee “visual code,” which relates various literature to specific wampum belts. Kelsey argues that: “[...] select Hodinöhsö:ni³ writers [...] engage and conceptualize wampum—oral, visual, and otherwise— as a way of organizing narrative and theoretically undergirding the aesthetics and poetics of their creations” (Kelsey *Wampum* XI). While I do not disagree with her innovative readings, I will not emphasize the visual organizing form of wampum as she does. Instead, I focus on the centrality of historical wampum belts as embodiments of treaties representing important conceptual concerns for Haudenosaunee writers, and will discuss them in relation to the texts as relevant.

² The Kahnawake Branch of the Mohawk (Six Nations in Canada) state “The Haudenosaunee consist of a population of over 200,000 people, 100,000 of which inhabit the territory traditionally occupied by the Iroquois Confederacy” (“Government”).

³ Kelsey relies on Seneca orthography

Finally, I rely heavily upon Haudenosaunee authors writing about each other. Beth Brant's collection *Writing as Witness* becomes a foundational resource both in the ways an Indigenous writer sets about finding her voice but also how she situates herself within her Haudenosaunee culture. Though she is not a traditional academic, her collection is widely taught and bridges the gulf between nonfiction of the historical vein and fiction or poetry, so that it functions both as literary nonfiction and instruction in composition and rhetoric, albeit of a tightly-focused Indigenous bent. Maurice Kenny, Patricia Monture-Angus and Eric Gansworth have all written about their self-representations as Haudenosaunee people, and James Thomas Stevens and Beth Brant write extensively about their queer Mohawk identities. Through these writers' words I examine Haudenosaunee representation and self-representation.

Indigenous Writing: The Representational Burden

Contemporary readers trying to conceptualize the position of Haudenosaunee writers today may see them as linearly descending from a culture that extends backward in time. Western history is taught as a series of sequential events that shape today's societies. We can study the arrival of English colonists in the New World, for example, and trace the important events that led to the Revolutionary War and American Independence. But Indigenous cultures offer another perspective.

James Thomas Stevens (Aronhiótas) writes that for Natives, the metaphoric conceptualization of the flow of history is not that of a river, but of a lake: "Everything that has happened is there swirling around; it has not flowed past and been

forgotten” (“Twin Rails” 188). A slower passage of time heightens awareness, and in a lake’s more subtle current, contemplative swirls allow that which has passed to commingle with the present. Beth Brant (Degonwadonti), agrees: “When we are whole our voices sail into the lake of *all* human experience. The ripple-effect is inevitable, vast and transcendent” (original emphasis “Red Road” 13). This focus on the swirl, the ripple-effect of one’s voice as it harmonizes with others, is the human in history; and without it, as Stevens points out, what is left is not applicable beyond the academy. I suggest that reading and analyzing Haudenosaunee literature must rely on a continuous engagement between the contemporary and the historical as well as a re-engagement with how the present and past will come to fashion the future.

Both Brant and Stevens use the lake metaphor as a result of having written about canoes— Brant begins her essay with a discussion of Emily Pauline Johnson (Tekahionwake), the seminal Canadian-Mohawk poet whose most famous poem, “The Song My Paddle Sings,” Brant seeks to recover for its Mohawk perspective. Stevens himself wrote a canoe poem, “Burn Out,” after “reading about the dugout canoes unearthed in the British Isles” (“Twin Rails” 187), and the “surprise” of the British public at the “simple beauty” of these canoes. Though neither poet nor poem explicitly states that canoes were historically important to the Haudenosaunee, these writers have chosen to incorporate this historic object of travel as extended metaphors in their poems. Stevens is quick to point out the consonance of histories in “Burn Out,” where the ancient British peoples once used the same technology as the Natives of the Americas prior to developing shipmaking technologies:

In awe of our own mathematics,
 we fashion the other
 for smooth
 sailing, safe passage.
(Stevens "Twin Rails" 187)

Fashioning, as it works here in this poem, is a matter of constructing and manipulating the identity of "the other." Stevens represents himself, both as a gay man and as a Native American, as a fashioner and a fashioned. The concept of the fashioning of the other is a recurring motif for Stevens, a theme that he mines for multiple purposes to striking effect.

One of my goals is to integrate literary and cultural criticism from Haudenosaunee writers themselves into this thesis, to broaden my own critical horizons. I will support my readings of these writings primarily with the works of Indigenous critics, in order to foreground Indigenous intellectual engagement. In doing so, I am not seeking to support any preconceived notion of "Indianness" on my part. I come to this project with only the expectation to learn, and to recognize the historical circumstance which has prescribed a "Native American" identity in the minds of White America. Too often, these expectations have resulted in a simulation of Indigenous cultures, so much so that James Thomas Stevens questions the language of supposed Indigenous discourse: "When I see words like the Creator, Father Sky, Mother Earth, Four Leggeds, I almost feel like we are colonizing ourselves. These words, this is how we're supposed to talk—what it means to be Indian according to white America" (Stevens "Twin Rails" 185). To complete the critical bridge, as it were, I will examine a variety of non-Indigenous critics in order to flesh out the critical spectrum, though my focus will certainly be upon Indigenous writing.

Scholarly attention to Indigenous literatures has the potential to add value to those writers who are fashioned into subjects worthy of study, but on the other hand, there is the danger that scholars might delimit, thus to define, their subjects as well. This is why it is important to allow Indigenous writing to speak for itself. James Thomas Stevens completed a Master's in Fine Arts at Brown University, a school not known for the number of its Native faculty⁴. His education and writing career far from the Tuscarora and Grand River Reservations of his youth have coalesced to form a poetic identity of deep complexity. This nexus of identity construction, a kind of textual frontier, becomes an inviting site for critical attention. In his poetry Stevens masterfully shifts the focus of his perspective from that of the historical colonialist to personal and sexual relationships and back. Penelope Kelsey describes his grounding in queer sexuality as “a focal point of sameness between colonizer and colonized from which to assert Indigenous sovereignties” (*Wampum* 2). This sameness is not assumed in Stevens's poetry, but is a sort of fashioning of the partner, and when this fashioning is writ large, on more global/colonial terms, the “smoothing” process involves the same kinds of negotiations as we see in personal relationships.

This thesis will examine both kinds of fashioning, the global and personal, analyzing how Haudenosaunee writers navigate these frontiers, concentrating on the fiction of Eric Gansworth and the poetry of James Thomas Stevens. However, Stevens warns in his essay: “Do not ‘fashion the other’ to suit your own need” (Stevens “Twin

⁴ Dr. Adrienne Keene, writing on her personal blog, announced her hiring by Brown as an Assistant Professor of American Studies on February 9, 2016, saying “Brown has been open for over 250 years, and I'll only be the second Native person to be in a tenure-track position at the university” (“Next Chapter”)

Rails” 188), and throughout this paper, I will heed this warning and not perpetuate “the anachronistic signifiers of a European constructed identity” (Stevens “Twin Rails” 189). In examining Haudenosaunee literature, I seek to engage with and learn from it rather than impose upon it some preconceived notion of what it should be. Daniel Heath Justice offers an alternative to an externally-constructed identity: “Simply by existing,” he emphasizes, “Indigenous voices are a threat to the presumptions of settler supremacy, for they insist on other ways of abiding with the world” (Justice “Writing” 289). If, as Gerald Vizenor posits, Indigenous Americans possess “survivance,” which he defines as “an active sense of presence over historical absence, the dominance of cultural simulations, and manifest manners” (Vizenor 1), then Indigenous existence does indeed pose a problem for the continuation of a hegemonically-constructed identity. Furthering Vizenor’s assertion that “Native survivance is a continuance of stories,” Daniel Heath Justice points us to both the root of this problem and its solution, that Indigenous cultures “insist on other stories, other ways, other possibilities” (Justice “Writing” 289). Critics like Maureen Konkle question the motives of literary criticism directed at establishing an imaginary Native American consciousness, stating boldly that the “criticism of Native American literature takes for its principal object that literature’s expression of Indian identity, a ubiquitous term that generally assumes an inborn Indian consciousness” (Konkle 457). Approaching Haudenosaunee literature as an expression of contemporary Indigenous writers engaging with their own politics, histories, and cultures rather than some monolithic identity allows me to reconcile the concerns of Justice and Konkle.

Contemporary Native American writers insist upon defining and writing their own narratives, describing the truths of their own ways, despite the overwhelming odds against them. There is a tendency to label this as a form of “resistance,” but Patricia Monture-Angus sees it differently: “The characterization of Indigenous writing as resistance is too simplistic... our lives are never just resistance. To focus solely upon our resistance is to place colonialism at the centre of the discussion... It also operates to freeze our cultures and peoples in the time immediately before contact” (“Power” 157). The importance of this notion cannot be understated— that by representing themselves as they are today, Indigenous writers are not doing anything more than non-Indigenous writers, and suggesting otherwise robs them of equality. But the hesitance of non-Native editors and publishers to take a chance on something other than that Western Indian stereotype looms large. Beth Brant advocates a strategy to combat this: “When Natives have the opportunity to do our own editing and writing, a remarkable thing can happen. This thing is called telling the truth for ourselves— a novel idea to be sure and one that is essential to the nurturance of new voices in our communities” (“Red Road” 13). Brant seemingly undersells the importance of Native voices in the literary conversation when she stresses only new voices, but part of her concern in this essay is to legitimize Native writings in general, not only the few that are “accepted” into the canon. Writing in 1994, Brant asserts that the “few women of color who have broken through this racist system are held up as the spokespeople for our races” (“Red Road” 9), a sentiment that seems to pervade the conversations on Indigenous literature.

While I was conducting my initial research into contemporary Native American authors, I wrote to Professor Justice about my desire to read beyond the popular Sherman Alexies and Louise Erdriches. He responded: “Alexie and Erdrich are great writers, but they're not the only ones out there, and they and a handful of others are often brought out to carry the fully representational burden of Indigenous literary expression” (“Correspondence”). Echoing Brant, Justice’s phrase “representational burden” cogently describes a negative aspect of canonization, that the mere acceptance of a small, representative sample of writers from a particular culture necessarily marginalizes others. Indeed, this burden need not be carried by canonized writers only, as Haudenosaunee writers constitute a relatively small community, any critical attempt to generalize from individual representations can easily cross the line into fashioning the Other. Even Justice’s use of the passive voice “are often brought out” highlights agency having been stripped from canonized Others, who have been fashioned through critical acceptance for smooth sailing. They become prized specimens, as in a museum, worthy of display precisely because they have been sanitized through this acceptance.

When Professor Justice describes to me the burden of Indigenous representation carried by a few accepted spokespeople, this fatal desire implicates the canonization of writers like Sherman Alexie, who can be said to be reproducing a variety of literature “that white North America deems acceptable,” as Beth Brant characterizes it in “The Good Red Road” (8). Inherent in canonization is the notion of subsumption as, in Jace Weaver’s words, a “manifestation of this critical and theoretical domination” (Weaver *People* 22) in which he locates a continued colonialist attitude. Weaver uses Arnold

Krupat's argument from *The Voice in the Margin* to illustrate just how the academy colonizes Indigenous voices: "So far as the category of an Indian literature... may be useful, it would seem necessary to define it pretty exclusively by reference to the ongoing oral performances of Native peoples" (qtd. in Weaver 23). That Krupat published his study of Native American literature relatively recently cannot be gleaned from his dismissal of Indigenous literacy and writing. His antiquated insistence upon orality reflects the dominant cultural patrimony. Indeed, a reading of Pauline Wakeham's study of taxidermy provides a useful lens on the corpus of canonized Indigenous literature:

the semiotics of taxidermy are not ontologically static or ossified; rather, this sign system demonstrates an uncanny ability to reproduce itself in new eras, revivifying colonial and racist discourses through malleable semiotic codes that find fresh ways to reinforce fantasies of colonial mastery in the current era. (Wakeham 6)

At its best, taxidermy represents a facsimile or simulacrum of a real animal, and abstracted into a sign system, it can describe the problems with the impulses behind canonizing Indigenous literature by the Euro-western academy. I suggest that canonization of Indigenous literature (including orature), becomes a mode of restraint that enforces colonialist fantasies. Because of this, I step away from the Alexies and Erdriches and defy Krupat's notion that "if there is any chance at all for a traditional, local, Indian literary expression to influence the dominant culture," then it is in a "mixed breed" (Krupat 214) form of indigenous literature, which he defines as follows:

Indigenous literature is that type of writing produced when an author

of subaltern cultural identification manages successfully to merge forms internal to his cultural formation with forms external to it, but pressing upon, even seeking to delegitimize it. (Krupat 214)

This looks acceptable at first glance, except that Krupat's conception of "mixed breed" results from a false ideal of a true, local, "Indian" orature, that which is "internal" to an Indigenous culture, being cobbled onto the novel or poetry forms of the dominant culture. While reading and analyzing the fiction and poetry of Indigenous writers is a worthy endeavor, this is a prime example of Krupat fashioning the other. My own stance derives from the idea of creative expression, that the form of a poem or novel does not necessarily belong to a European or American culture, and that postcolonial writers working in such genres are not hybridizing some more pure indigenous form stemming from a pre-colonially "pure" culture. Obviously, the decolonialist move of expropriating English, one that can be seen in writers like Chinua Achebe and Salman Rushdie as well as the Haudenosaunee authors, is perhaps less of a choice than a necessity when discussing Indigenous American writers, given centuries of governmental attempts to extirpate Natives and their languages.

As a student of English, I am quite conflicted when it comes to this historical linguistic circumstance. Given that I cannot read Kanien'keha (Mohawk) or Sgarooreh' (Western New York Tuscarora), having the privilege to read Stevens and Gansworth in English has facilitated my research and shaped my thesis. But Beth Brant explains what it is like to be an Indigenous writer after having lost that part of her culture: "We labour with the English language, so unlike our own. The result of that labour has

produced a new kind of writing” (“Red Road” 8). For her, this is no less than a kind of weapon in a war: “I bend and shape this unlovely language in a way that will make truth. Because the language of the enemy was a weapon used to perpetrate racism and hate, I want to forge it in a new way, as a weapon of love” (“Inside” 51). Christopher Teuton spells out the “other” perspective as a writer and critic:

Native American communities and those involved in the struggle for Indigenous political sovereignty, cultural autonomy, and social justice have established critical spaces by mastering the literacies of colonialism and modernity. We engage these discourses in the hopes that we may change them, for writing is here to stay. (Teuton *Deep Waters* 7).

While I am most concerned with writing, Teuton does not ignore cultural autonomy in all its forms. By situating Native discourse alongside dominant literacies, Brant, Justice, and Teuton do more than seek to legitimize it— they presupposes its place at the table.

Finally, in order to best situate Haudenosaunee literature, the question of audience must be addressed. Do Eric Gansworth and James Thomas Stevens write for a native audience, hoping that non-Natives might read? Do they write for non-Natives first, and if they do, is their writing an attempt at fashioning a cohesive Haudenosaunee representational perspective? Both of these? Neither? We will tackle these questions as we investigate their writings, but first, we can determine some of these answers through Stevens’s “Burn Out.” The key part in this poem is the implicated “we”— simultaneously the contemporary speaker, who in the context of this poem is engaged in an exploratory relationship with a “You,” a simple other. Adjusting the perspective, the fashioners the

speaker mentions are actually members of contemporary society: mathematicians, scientists, academics, the press, anyone who seeks to fashion the other to fit into an existing narrative “for smooth sailing.”

Why, in “Burn Out,” does Stevens insist on this kind of deliberate fashioning, one that seems to border upon the patronizing? Writing about the persistence of certain representations of American Indians, Pauline Turner Strong notes that “With the growing prominence of Native American intellectuals, artists, and activists during the last quarter of the 20th century, representations by cultural outsiders have been criticized, subverted, and supplemented, if not replaced, by Native American self- representations” (Strong 341). Penelope Kelsey sees Haudenosaunee self-representations functioning as “decolonizing recovery [of Indigenous wisdom] in a context where settlers far outnumber Indigenes” (Kelsey *Wampum* XXV). In accentuating the fashioning⁵, Stevens ironically calls attention to the colonialist compulsion for subordinating what it consider to be primitive. Further, as the speaker engages with an archaeological report, he subtly raises questions about the effects of the sciences of archaeology and ethnography, not to mention mathematics, on his people, on Indigenous peoples. Because so much of what we know today of Haudenosaunee culture comes from ethnographic and historical examinations by non-Native academics, as opposed to self-representations, I seek to read and engage with Haudenosaunee literature on the basis of this decolonizing impulse with the goal of reconciling various self-representations into what might be better understood as a decolonizing strategy.

⁵ In another context, Stevens uses the word “colonizing.”

Ultimately, instead of imposing restraints upon indigenous writing, I seek to accomplish what Professor Justice challenged me to do: “discuss the historical, political, and contemporary concerns through the writings and intellectual/artistic engagements of Haudenosaunee people themselves” (Correspondence). I will read the writings of Haudenosaunee individuals and engage with this body of work as the writers themselves engage critically and artistically with their historical, political, and contemporary concerns.

Haudenosaunee Literacy & Representation

The Mohawk scholar and writer Patricia Monture-Angus describes the Haudenosaunee as a “people with a storytelling tradition,” one whose histories, laws, and “ways our Creator gave us are all contained within our stories and our languages” (“Power” 154). For her, Kanien’keha, the Mohawk language, is not merely a vehicle for communication, it is a living body containing the collective Mohawk experience— for to live as a Mohawk is to live within those stories, that history, those ways. “Through our stories we learn who we are,” Monture continues, “These stories teach about identity and responsibility” (“Power” 154). Primers, glossaries, dictionaries, and, especially, religious materials were printed in various Haudenosaunee languages through the beginning of the 19th Century. But the tide turned, and in the mid-19th Century both in the United States and Canada, various political and cultural shifts aimed to aggressively assimilate indigenous populations and eradicate tribal sovereignties. In an early (1822) polemic regarding “Indian languages,” Reverend Jedidiah Morse inveighs

against any effort to preserve them as “living languages,” merely allowing for their preservation “in the archives of our literary societies.” In his report, commissioned by the U.S. Congress and addressed to John C. Calhoun, Secretary of War under President James Monroe, Morse justifies their eradication in the most culturally chauvinistic terms: “As fast as possible let Indians forget their own languages, in which nothing is written, and nothing of course can be preserved, and learn ours, which will at once open to them the whole field of every kind of useful knowledge” (Morse 357). While the latter part of this statement holds a nominal truth, that there is useful truth in English, the first part—that nothing had been written in indigenous languages stands as egregiously wrong in the case of Haudenosaunee languages, particularly Mohawk. Still, this historically inaccurate statement evinces the mindset that grew to predominate in North America.

One historical impediment to the establishment of Haudenosaunee literature in their native languages, at least in the United States, was the prolonged destabilization of tribal society and culture through invasive and coerced land actions in New York against the Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senecas from the Treaty of Canandaigua in 1794 through the restoration of some Seneca lands in 1848 following the fraudulent Treaty of Buffalo Creek of 1838 (“Treaties”). Beginning in earnest in the late 1800s, systemic governmental interventions in Canadian “residential” and American “boarding” schools sought to deracinate indigenous populations, focusing on language use. “Government officials also were insistent that children be discouraged—and often prohibited—from speaking their own languages” (*Final Report* 4). Eric Gansworth, an Onondaga who grew up on the Tuscarora Reservation outside Niagara Falls, NY, writes that he first learned his

mother was fluent in spoken Sgarooreh' when he was in elementary school. In the early 1970s, efforts by a teacher at his school to revive Sgarooreh' "revealed a culture heavily truncated by these intrusions" ("Subversion" 154). He relates this lasting devastation to his people by the deracination efforts:

Particularly damaging was the practice of federal agents convincing Indian parents to send their children to the government-sponsored Industrial School at Carlisle, Pennsylvania. There they would learn to forget their culture and their language, graduating as fully trained domestic help and farm hands, ready to be hired. ("Subversion" 157)

In writing about her family's Mohawk identity, Beth Brant is more raw and personal: "my Mohawk language was virtually destroyed in my family. My grandmother and grandfather were taught, in residential school, that Mohawk was a bad thing. To speak Mohawk, to be Mohawk" ("Inside" 51). Today, when one seeks a historical body of Haudenosaunee literature, what one finds instead is the gaping wound left behind by this colonialist glossectomy.

Besides language, one of the other important aspects of Haudenosaunee culture is the connection that each of the Nations, especially the original Five, have with their traditional homelands. Each of their names in their own languages⁶ reflects this connection— Kanien'keha:ka (Mohawk) means "People of the Flint" or "People of the Crystal," referencing the doubly-terminated quartz crystals found in the Mohawk Valley;

⁶ The others: Onyota'a:ka (Oneida) "People of the Standing Stone;" Onöndowága (Seneca) also name themselves "Great Hill People" like the Onondagas; Gayogohó:no' (Cayuga) "People of the Canoe Carry Place."

Onönda'gega' (Onondaga) means "Hill Place People." Since the Revolutionary War and the land concessions forced from the Six Nations by New York State and the United States, these homelands are quite different in size and location, so we might expect contemporary Haudenosaunee writers to address both treaties and reservations in their poems and stories. However, today's Haudenosaunee live in cities as well. In his essay on Maurice Kenny, James Thomas Stevens, writes of discovering the work of the older Mohawk poet while living and working in New York City. Both men have adapted to being Mohawk in the urbanized Northeastern U.S., and both have had to struggle against the literary prejudices of non-Native editors. For those editors, Kenny's "story of the ironworking Indian struggling in the Great Lakes cities, was not 'Indian' enough" (Stevens "History" 16).

Haudenosaunee people must combat not only general prejudices against Indians, but also the more Western stereotypes people still hold. "The stories of Native people surviving the christianizing process, while fighting to hold onto tradition, lost out to stories of buffalo hunts, sun dances, war parties, and Native lore" (Stevens "History" 16). Ultimately, the concerns and pleasures of contemporary Haudenosaunee literature are as rich and complex as any literature. Robbed of their traditional homelands and their native languages, the people of the Six Nations today defy easily stereotypical labels, as we will see in the fiction of Eric Gansworth and the poetry of James Thomas Stevens.

Decolonizing the Aesthetics of Representation in Eric Gansworth and James Thomas Stevens

A teaching from our elders that says you have to know your history. You have to know what is behind you in order to know where you are going. If you do not understand that history, you cannot ever have any vision about where it is you want to go.

– Patricia Monture-Angus, from *Thunder in My Soul: A Mohawk Woman Speaks*

Rather than claim that Eric Gansworth and James Thomas Stevens represent a single Haudenosaunee literary aesthetic, I will argue that these two authors endeavor to decolonize historic and cultural perceptions with their literature. Both authors, writing in English, seek to engage with Haudenosaunee and settler culture; to build bridges across those chasms of perception in order to re-center Haudenosaunee voices from the periphery. Gansworth's strategies include focusing on those issues that concern Haudenosaunee living on or near the reservation, while Stevens takes a more globalist approach.

Though the literary concept of a poem's form incorporates elements of its visual and typographic layout, in English-language poetry, the visual almost always takes a back seat to rhythmic and metrical concerns. Except in an experimental book like Mark Z. Danielewski's *House of Leaves*, consideration of novelistic form rarely supersedes structural divisions like chapters or sections thereof. Penelope Myrtle Kelsey locates in the poetry of James Thomas Stevens and the novels of Eric Gansworth a reflection of pervasive Haudenosaunee visual codes⁷ best exemplified in several culturally-valuable

⁷ Kelsey ties the persistence of the visual code of the wampum to a Haudenosaunee epistemological recovery, establishing what she sees as a kind of "requickening" (Kelsey Wampum XXI). This version of tribal theory, as she identifies her writings, is a fascinating and crucial connection between Haudenosaunee literature and its broader culture, especially when tied to historical treaties as many of the wampum were. However, this intensely specific interpretation narrows what Stevens and especially Gansworth accomplish in their literary endeavors.

wampum belts. I would argue that while both writers acknowledge the cultural value of the wampum, both seek to transcend this visual code in order to do more than represent a lone facet of their rich cultures.

On his website, Eric Gansworth describes himself as “a writer and visual artist,” and as “an enrolled member of the Onondaga Nation” (EricGansworth.com). Based on this self-representation, Penelope Kelsey’s assessment of his work seems accurate, but as much as his artworks are intriguing and evocative of Haudenosaunee themes, and as much as his poetry beats with a realistic pulse, it is in his novels that he achieves a unique synthesis of what it means for his characters to be Haudenosaunee. His work is rooted in the Tuscarora Reservation of his youth and this rootedness provides an interesting and pleasurable reading experience, as well as a purposeful undercurrent of Haudenosaunee sovereignty.

If I Ever Get Out of Here

White people were going to be in my life, and not just as my bosses, particularly since I’d been thinking about going to college one day... I wanted to navigate both planets, make choices within both worlds, not have to choose one to love and one to hate.

— *If I Ever Get Out of Here* by Eric Gansworth

While attending a Wings concert in Toronto, the protagonist of Eric Gansworth’s 2013 young-adult novel *If I Ever Get Out of Here*, middle-schooler Lewis Blake, thinks about Paul McCartney’s desire to be known as himself and not “Beatle Paul,” and realizes that in the same way he “want[s] to be Lewis Blake, not ‘Indian Lewis’ like I was at school” (Gansworth *IIEGOOH* 159). This is the kind of multilayered representational

identity politics that Gansworth writes about in much of his work. An exploration of teen identity and friendship, this novel focuses on several years of Lewis's life in the mid-1970s Niagara Falls, New York area. Early in the novel, Lewis visits his new white friend George Haddonfield's house for the first time. George is the son of a career military-man father and a German mother who lived in Germany before being redeployed to the Niagara Falls Air Force Base. Both boys suffer from the alienation of being adolescent outsiders in a small homogenous community, and as they bond through the music of the Beatles and Paul McCartney, their particular difficulties and joys are illuminated.

On this visit, Mr. Haddonfield encourages George to show Lewis a collection of Smurf figurines. Popular in Europe from the 1960s, the Peyo characters became known to American children in the early 1980s through their Saturday morning cartoon show. As small blue "people," Smurfs capitalize on the idea of gnomes and fairies while adhering to a Eurocentric cultural ethos. When George says of Papa Smurf: "He's supposed to keep all the knowledge and culture for the Smurfs" (Gansworth *IIEGOOH* 66), Gansworth is playing with the notion of representation, epistemology, and cultural heritage. On the shelf, Lewis spies a certain figure: "One Smurf wore a headdress and held a tomahawk like a TV Indian, but I stayed silent about it" (Gansworth *IIEGOOH* 66). Though Lewis is still a child, he is quite aware of the modalities surrounding cultural representation and even within the disassociated realm of a fantasy children's toy he makes the cogent and direct connection to how Indians are represented in American mass media, which certainly has spread to the way Europeans choose to represent them as well.

Lewis's choice to stay silent here is not merely the spur-of-the-moment adolescent thought it appears to be on the surface. In not wanting to jeopardize his burgeoning friendship with George, Lewis may represent any Native who must weigh thoroughly a host of consequences and repercussions about how a discussion of cultural appropriation and misrepresentation may proceed. In this case, Lewis chooses to ignore the relatively small slight because George is one of the few white people he has ever met willing to overlook the fact that, as a Tuscarora, Lewis is not worthy of *belonging* with people of the majority culture. Gansworth had already explored the topic of misrepresentation in his novel *Mending Skins* with a discussion of Indian toys, focusing on the poses of non-articulating plastic figures. In the book, Anne Boans is a Haudenosaunee scholar who studies Native representation. Giving a talk at a conference she says:

I am sure you recognize these plastic Native warrior figures from when you were children... In direct contrast to the other western-themed character figures—the cowboys—who were frequently produced standing surefooted and broad shouldered... the Natives were most commonly posed flailing about. (*Skins* 7).

Through repeated references to misrepresentation, Gansworth seems to suffuse his works with a subtle push toward consciousness of imagery that has been completely naturalized in the dominant culture.

In paratextual material included at the end of *If I Ever Get Out of Here*, Gansworth discusses the circumstances of this novel's creation noting that it was solicited and written specifically for a publisher, Scholastic Books, for the "Young Adult" market (Gansworth *IIEGOOH* 374). Some rare insight into the compositional and editing process

that went into the production of the book is provided in a *Publisher's Weekly* interview with Gansworth and his editor at Scholastic, Cheryl Klein. Klein's engagement with Gansworth as a writer began as any of her interactions with her authors might, but in the editorial process, she realized that "when an editor has the sense that he or she can freely alter facts of history, this speaks to a kind of 'white privilege'" (Burnett unpaginated). The article describes the cognitive dissonance felt by Klein in trying to respect Gansworth's perspective while trying to shape his narrative for the commercial school-driven market. Though Gansworth has been publishing novels for over a decade, this book has been his largest commercial success⁸ to date, and clearly his insistence to maintain his own vision of cultural representation in the novel bodes well for future Indigenous writers. Indeed, Gansworth notes that this particular book is perhaps not being read on the Tuscarora Reservation today, that for young people "reading about their own lives is boring" (Burnett). However, he cites the Ted C. Williams novel set at Tuscarora, *The Reservation*, and his own difficulty attempting to read it when he was younger. As an adult, he loves that book, and hopes that a similar change will happen in the future when young Tuscaroras are "ready to read about their home" (Burnett). *If I Ever Get Out of Here* is a complexly layered story of adolescence and alterity which leans on mass-culture productions to drive its narrative even as it critiques them for their representations of Native Americans. If its audience is primarily constituted of members of the settler culture, then this book may come to stand as a doorway into an Indigenous culture and

⁸ Ranked about #140,000 overall (and #97 in "Children's Native North & South American" books) on amazon.com compared with all his other novels ranking in the #1,000,000+ range. Rankings accessed 6 March 2016.

shed light for its readers onto the intricate issues surrounding its representation in contemporary mass media.

Smoke Dancing

But Eric Gansworth does not limit his interrogations into settler-indigenous relations to matters of cultural appropriation and simulation. His 2004 novel *Smoke Dancing* delves deeply into the internal politics of the Tuscarora Reservation and the related matters of identity, legitimacy, authority, integrity, and cultural representation. Unlike the more commercially-minded decision to use a single first-person narrator in *If I Ever Get Out of Here*, Gansworth employs multiple first-person perspectives in *Smoke Dancing*, which allows him to accrue the diverse voices of the Native residents of the Tuscarora Reservation. Penelope Kelsey sees in *Smoke Dancing* that “Neither cultural hegemony nor impoverishment are naturalized... their origins and intended effects in federal policy are sketched in concise detail, allowing no misattribution of the causality of this suffering, originating in settler abuses, to Tuscarora actors” (Kelsey *Wampum* XXI). While her point about impoverishment and federal policy are well-founded in the novel, I see in Gansworth the desire to portray a realistic depiction of Tuscarora life, which includes a host of joys and concerns beyond those normally discussed in critical literature. Kelsey’s analysis of Gansworth’s novel is a comprehensive reading based on the Canandaigua Treaty of 1794 and the wampum commissioned by George Washington — known both as the George Washington Belt and the Canandaigua Treaty Belt— which represents the treaty in the Haudenosaunee culture. One fascinating aspect of *Smoke*

Dancing is the fact that the Canandaigua Treaty is known to the “everyday” Tuscarora characters in a way that perhaps it is not to “everyday” New Yorkers who live in the areas formerly held by the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. Certainly, it would be unusual to read in a contemporary novel an internal monologue touching upon 18th-century treaties with the Six Nations of the Iroquois as we see in *Smoke Dancing*:

Ruby Pem... is one of the better-known beaders from the reservation and was an early proponent of the treaty allowing us to sell beaded souvenirs to the tourists at the parks, including Prospect Park, the biggest tourist attraction in the area— the falls itself. Now no one else can do any vending in the area unless contractually connected with the states park department. (Gansworth *Smoke Dancing* 55-6).

This internal monologue from Patricia “Fiction” Tunny, a young woman with no more than a high school education, represents a typical relation of history and contemporary circumstance in Gansworth, highly reminiscent of the swirling history metaphors mentioned earlier. As Kelsey notes, in *Smoke Dancing* Gansworth engages in a dialogue with the Canandaigua Treaty Belt, and though he does evoke that belt and its imagery repeatedly (especially in his illustrations throughout the novel), Gansworth’s decolonizing critiques extend beyond it. Indeed, the geography of Niagara Falls (both the city and the cascade/gorge) and the dominant culture of Western New York are brought into play in ways that subtly question what it means to participate as a Haudenosaunee individual, as a New Yorker, or, most importantly, both.

Because eating is ubiquitous in everyday life, one way to highlight a particular culture might be to discuss feasts or meals at special occasions. At one of the several social gatherings in the novel, a New Year’s Eve party, Gansworth describes the buffet

food layout. New Year's Eve, Gansworth tells us in this novel as well as *If I Ever Get Out of Here*, is not a "real" Haudenosaunee holiday, so the fact that Smoke Rollins chooses to throw a free party for people on the reservation is already not "authentic" in terms of Haudenosaunee culture. However, as Rollins "wants [the reservation residents] knowing this event is a homegrown affair" he stocks the buffet with "Beef on Weck, chicken wings, pizza, shrimp cocktail" (Gansworth *Smoke Dancing* 107), all foods that anyone in Western New York would expect to find on a buffet. If one is reading Gansworth looking for exclusive representations of some imagined traditional Haudenosaunee culture, then one will come away from his novels disappointed. The narrator Big Red Harmony describes the presence of Beef on Weck and chicken wings as "foods invented here at home" (Gansworth *Smoke Dancing* 107). The use of the words *homegrown* and *home* in this context decolonizes them in a decidedly conscious move, as does Big Red's narration about how he acquires corn soup that follows— a food which Haudenosaunee palates would know as authentic because "the taste of real wood-lyed corn cannot be stuffed in a bottle" (Gansworth *Smoke Dancing* 108), which is to say it cannot be simulated. The climax of the party comes at midnight when Tuscarora entrepreneur Smoke Rollins reveals his plans for the "Smoke Rings Smoke Shop and Fuel Island," which incorporates the a depiction of the Haudenosaunee origin legend known as Great Turtle Island, substituting the white pine Great Tree of Peace with one made of "oil derricks and gas pumps... against a backdrop of a repeated pattern consisting entirely of the purple and white of the George Washington Covenant Wampum Belt" (Gansworth *Smoke Dancing* 113). The representational symbolism employed by Rollins would be unfamiliar to none

of the attendees of the party. Indeed, as a tax-free establishment, Rollins is capitalizing on the Canandaigua Treaty's provision that the Six Nations have "the free use and enjoyment" ("Candandaigua Treaty") of their lands, an interpretation disputed⁹ by the State of New York after the establishment of tobacco and gas retailers catering to non-Native buyers in the mid-1990s. Gansworth employs Canadaigua Treaty symbolism, but also layers in the contemporary Haudenosaunee interaction with the dominant Western New York culture that surrounds them. We cannot be surprised to find Haudenosaunee fans of the Buffalo Bills football team or Buffalo Sabres hockey team in a Gansworth novel. The Buffalo Bandits, the National Lacrosse League's professional indoor lacrosse team based in Buffalo have traditionally enjoyed the talents of Haudenosaunee players and coaches over the years and though the Bandits are not specifically mentioned in *Smoke Dancing*, Gansworth's characters reflect the real lives of Tuscarora residents and their cross-cultural affinities. As the Lewis Blake thinks in this section's epigraph, it is not a matter for Haudenosaunee to love one word exclusively, and in representing Haudenosaunee participating in Western New York's regional culture, Gansworth normalizes them.

While the romantic vision of a sacred Indian landscape might be one of the enduring stereotypes in the American consciousness, a more accurate idea is expounded by the Lakota writer N. Scott Momaday: "The sense of place is paramount. Only in reference to the earth can he persist in his identity" (Momaday "Values" 1). Across his body of writings, Eric Gansworth brings attention to the notion of the earth, both as place

⁹ See https://www.tax.ny.gov/bus/cig/cigind_report_sales.htm for The State of New York's stance.

and as territory once held by the Six Nations. In this capacity, territory is both soil and the intangible embodiment of sovereignty. Lewis Blake refers to the boundaries of the reservation repeatedly, in one instance describing a ride to George's house by referring to it as a feeling "like I was going across the border into another country, alone" (Gansworth *IIEGOOH* 51). On the way to see Wings in Toronto, Mr. Haddonfield asks if Lewis has identification to facilitate border crossing. In actuality, The Haudenosaunee Confederacy¹⁰ asserts: "The Jay Treaty of 1794 and the Treaty of Ghent of 1815 do contain explicit language recognizing and protecting Indian border crossing rights" ("Border Crossing"). These two treaties between Great Britain and the United States have been used by Haudenosaunee as border-crossing justification for centuries, but the events of September 2001 have radically altered this practice. Though the Wings concert in Toronto occurs on 9 May 1976, well before the terrorism in New York and Washington, Gansworth uses his novel to stage Haudenosaunee concerns over their legal right to travel across borders. Though he is a "card-carrying" member of the Tuscarora, Lewis looks at his "worn red construction-paper reservation ID" and becomes anxious over its "shoddier than usual" appearance next to their United States passports (Gansworth *IIEGOOH* 51).

Lewis's feeling coincides with an international dispute that took place just prior to this novel's publication. The Iroquois Nationals lacrosse team was excluded from the men's outdoor world championships in England in 2010 because "the United Kingdom maintained that the existing passports did not meet security requirements" ("Border

¹⁰ The official name of the Grand River, Ontario Six Nations reservation government.

Crossing”). The same exclusion recurred in July 2015 when the Iroquois Women’s Under-19 team’s passports were not allowed to be used for entrance into Scotland¹¹ (“U19 Event”).

In Gansworth’s novel, it is Mr. Haddonfield, the Air Force man who says to Lewis: “Son, you won’t be able to get across the border with this.” Lewis’s response represents more than the words of a boy to his friend’s father. “Don’t worry, sir,” Lewis says, confidently representing a legal precept, “I do this all the time. We member nations of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy have a treaty with the US and Canadian governments. Canada isn’t a foreign country to us. It’s part of our territory, and so we can cross into it with just our ID cards” (Gansworth *IIEGOOH* 139-40). Gansworth’s brilliantly decolonizing move, where even a child understands the basic human rights of indigenous peoples affected by international borders to unfettered international travel as affirmed in The United Nations’ *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*¹², becomes a moment of moral victory for Lewis when they cross the border and he displays his card and states his birthplace as “Tuscarora Reservation.” Issues with Haudenosaunee sovereignty persist, and Lewis’s experience at the border should be compared with a recent extraordinary situation. When the Onondaga Nation hosted the World Indoor Lacrosse Championships in September 2016 at their reservation just south

¹¹ However, indiancountrytoday.com notes “in 2012, the Iroquois Nationals traveled to Turku, Finland successfully, laying the groundwork and establishing a precedent for Native citizens traveling abroad in the post 9/11 era.” Clearly, the United Kingdom’s insistence on Haudenosaunee passport invalidity is not monolithic.

¹² Article 36, 1. Indigenous peoples, in particular those divided by international borders, have the right to maintain and develop contacts, relations and cooperation, including activities for spiritual, cultural, political, economic and social purposes, with their own members as well as other peoples across borders (“Declaration”).

of Syracuse, New York, international participants, including members of the United States team, traveled to the reservation to have their passports stamped by the Haudenosaunee. Ironically, “Team England is the first team to arrive on the nation and to have their passports stamped, said Jeanne Shenandoah, of the Onondaga Nation.” The first player in line, David Lynch of Team England told Sarah Moses: “This is the home of lacrosse... I’m so excited to be here” (Moses).

At the time *Smoke Dancing* was published, several New York State Haudenosaunee nations were fighting for repatriation claims through the United States courts. Though they were ultimately unsuccessful in United States Supreme Court, the novel reflects a subtle but powerful land reclamation theme. Fiction Tunny, the illegitimate daughter of Chief Jacob “Bud” Tunny becomes a beader under the tutelage of Pem Brook, the clan mother who selected Bud as chief. The morning after the New Year’s Eve party, Fiction thinks about traveling as a child with her mother into the city of Niagara Falls on New Year’s to see the Winter Gardens and the Festival of Lights. During the Festival, Fiction recalls: “The whole section of the city is transformed into a giant piece of beadwork— lighted beads resting on a soft, white blanket of velvet” (Gansworth *Smoke Dancing* 121). This image is more than transformative, it reincorporates the territory of Niagara Falls as Haudenosaunee art. This portion of land was delineated as Seneca territory by the Canandaigua Treaty¹³, and in a simple image of land as beadwork, beading as a traditionally female pursuit is fused with land, which in Iroquois society was

¹³ The line of which cut out Fort Niagara and environs, but follows “Stedman’s Creek, which empties into the river Niagara, above Fort Schlosser” (“Canandaigua Treaty”) to the river. Schlosser is gone, but the place where it was is at the northern edge of Niagara Falls, to the north of where Winter Gardens used to be.

worked by women and therefore it was women who spoke¹⁴ for the land as owners (Johansen 106), Gansworth reclaims Niagara Falls for the Haudenosaunee.

Dean Rader calls Gansworth “the master of the text/image book” (Rader 308) based on the interconnectedness of visual and literary arts across his corpus of work. Critics like Susan Bernardin and Penelope Kelsey write about Gansworth’s visual evocation of wampum imagery in his illustrations and their basis in Haudenosaunee culture, but I argue that his highly imagistic language inscribes a decolonizing representational aesthetic as well. As a novelist, Gansworth is underappreciated by critics who seek to use his uniquely hybrid works to represent the visual Haudenosaunee aesthetic above all other elements. This critical rendition is perhaps a bit reminiscent of Arnold Krupat’s delineation of an exclusionary canon, even if it is one that celebrates a Haudenosaunee visual code; but because he is the *only* Haudenosaunee novelist¹⁵, any reducing of Gansworth’s artistry and importance to just his illustration/textual hybrids does a disservice to his worthwhile fiction.

James Thomas Stevens

Akwesasne Mohawk writer James Thomas Stevens represents the zenith of the contemporary American poetry tradition, having studied under Anne Waldman, Allen

¹⁴ Women working in their official capacity are called *gantowisas*: “Economically, women owned all the land and the crops, as well as all the fruits of the men’s hunts and the town’s fishing. They owned the longhouses, all the household goods, the lineage names and titles to office, and all farming implements” (Johansen 106).

¹⁵ A current (6 March 2016) Google search for “Haudenosaunee novelist” returns exactly six results (“Iroquois novelist” returns zero). Each is Eric Gansworth.

Ginsberg, and Gary Snyder. He has developed a series of themes over this body of work, focusing in various ways upon cultures that have been colonized as well as the effects of that colonization on contemporary individuals. Stevens describes what he sees as a particularly “Native” narrative aesthetic: “I think of the contemporary Native fiction writers—how they have learned from their communities and from the oral tradition that it is all the tellings collectively that add up to a more complete reality” (“History” 19). He treats his poetry the same way, imbuing especially his longer pieces with a strong foundation of what might be called history, but might also be the accumulation of traditions and tellings layered through with perspectives and nuances derived from a more collective frame of reference. If one conceives of history as incorporating primary written sources, then Stevens’s poetry is that. If history is a narrative of people, events, and selective analysis, then Steven’s poetry is that. But to say that Stevens writes historical poetry is to miss the soul of his work— his connection to language and its historical uses, his grounding in personal relationships and the sexuality of lovers. His poetry represents that Native narrative aesthetic existing alongside a deeply personal emotional connectedness.

In the long poem “Tōkinish” he puts this representation into practice: “I aim to honor the past but to write in the present” (Stevens “Two Rails” 185). Other than a sustained treatment by Penelope Kelsey, who examines “Tōkinish” in light of her wampum thesis and Sarah Dowling’s excellent article on translation in “Tōkinish,” the poem has been “reviewed” rather than examined critically. I will attempt to place “Tōkinish” in a proper critical context through a close reading of several decolonialist

themes. Rather than write about a “first contact” between his Mohawk ancestors and Dutch or English settlers, Stevens leaps in time and place to situate his poem at the first contact of Roger Williams and the Narragansett people of what is now Rhode Island. This decolonizing move reclaims Narragansett sovereignty from the pages of history¹⁶ and provides Stevens with a broader Indigenous platform from which to work.

If we return to the words we borrowed from Stevens early in this paper: “History is considered more of a lake than a river by Native peoples. Everything that has happened is there swirling around; it has not flowed past and been forgotten” (Stevens “Twin Rails” 188), we find instructions on how to tackle the 19-page poem¹⁷. To accomplish this, we must confront our impulse to read a poem as a river of words and instead experience the text as a larger body at once, where currents flow to be sure, but primarily swirl around, enabling multiple points of simultaneous contact rather than following the vector of linear flow. In this confrontation and appropriation of history through colonial-era texts, Stevens reshapes the several layers of language into a unique voice, one that anticipates the “catastrophe of what we don’t know,” casting this weight as “the unsleeping gravity drawing boat to shore” (Stevens “Tōkinish” 2). Arnold Krupat, writing ethnography in a 1995 article comparing Native and settler conceptions of history, declares that “some of the most important experiments in ethnocritical historical writing today... are coming from the poets” (CITE). Krupat cites Maurice Kenny’s *Tekonwatonti: Molly Brant* as well as *Tōkinish*, then newly-published in a slim chapbook. “Stevens’s richly imagined

¹⁶ In 1983 the Narragansett nation was federally recognized for the first time in a century (<http://www.narragansett-tribe.org/>).

¹⁷ Published originally in chapbook, the poem covered some 40 pages, as each section was given its own page. This book is now exceedingly rare, so I use the version anthologized in *Visit Teepee Town*.

settings,” Krupat writes, drawing upon his literary training, “press upon us a much more active relation to this shared history than merely gazing in wonderment” (Krupat “American Histories”). This single sentence does much to reconcile his insistence that Native writing be necessarily hybridized, even if those underpinnings are still detectable. I quote Krupat in connection to Stevens because “Tōkinish” is important enough a poem that if even a staunchly conservative critic like Krupat can recognize in it a new way of writing about history, then it must reach the highest levels of quality.

By explicitly engaging 17th-Century English writers John Donne, Roger Williams, and Edward Winslow (the last two colonists themselves) in the poem, Stevens appropriates the language of colonialism for the specific purpose of decolonizing it. Yet, even as he incorporates selections of these English texts almost surgically into his own, he implicitly inhabits the wide-ranging free verse poetics of the 19th-Century American Walt Whitman. Ben Lerner characterizes Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass* as an attempt to shape a “secular bible American for American democracy,” in which one reads “its newness, its geographical vastness, the (relative) openness of its institutions, its egalitarianism, its orientation towards the future and not the past – necessitated an equally new and expansive poetry: plain-spoken, unrestrained by inherited verse structures, just as the country would be unrestrained by monarchic traditions” (Lerner 43). Stevens is similarly concerned with the inherent frontiers between existence and discovery, geographical connectedness and being, how the past abides into the future; but where Whitman writes a poetry of 19th-Century Manifest Destiny, Stevens slips past him to

reclaim the point of contact between the colonizing English and the indigenous Narragansett.

With the composition of “Tōkinish” Stevens prefigures the kinds of decolonialist concerns Linda Tuhiwai Smith voices in the “Imperialism, History, Writing and Theory” chapter of *Decolonizing Methodologies*; and while she may well be the kind of “Native intellectual” she criticizes later in that work¹⁸, Stevens himself is quite active in rejecting socially-constructed identities, whether they arise from a white majority or a queer minority. He forsakes the label *Two-Spirit* as he had *Father Sky* and *Mother Earth*: “I will not colonize myself to become the angry, yet romantic, being-of-the-forest that the majority of non-Native readers still prefer, or the sacred queer entity” (Stevens “Twin Rails” 185). Clearly, he places himself within the Mohawk tradition when he publishes using Aronhiótas, his Mohawk name, but just as clearly, he refuses the “colonizing” limitations that calling himself “Two-Spirit” would impose. Stevens, one gets the feeling, would rather have his poetry speak for him, which affords his self-representation a full spectrum of potential.

¹⁸ “[Intellectuals’ (i.e. poets)] importance in nationalist movements is related to their abilities to reclaim, rehabilitate and articulate indigenous cultures, and to their implicit leadership over ‘the people’ as voices which can legitimate a new nationalist consciousness... At the same time, however, these same producers and legitimators of culture are the group most closely aligned to the colonizers in terms of their class interests, their values and their ways of thinking” (Smith 69).

Tōkinish

*The basic paradox of language,
that its inconsistencies should make it most useful.*
— "Tōkinish"

From the beginning, Stevens subverts. He names his poem and immediately offers a translation of it, as if the poem itself is a translation and simultaneously meaningless without it. He pushes the poetic boundary of the apprehensible, establishing "poetry" itself as a meaningful component of epistemology. Stevens has broken the poem into 37 unnumbered sections, the first of which begins with four epigraphs; the first of those may well function as a subtitle:

Tokinish (tō kin ish) v. command meaning: "Wake him."
[Narragansett] ("Tōkinish" 1).

With this apparently lexicographic token, Stevens both sets the tone for the entire poem and stages the first of many subversions of expectation. The reader is lulled by a sense of implicit comfort conferred or assigned by this simulacrum of a dictionary entry. The next two epigraphs, both from John Donne, seem to proscribe thematic territory. First is a quote from Donne's *Expostulation XV* ("I Sleep Not Day Nor Night"), which serves, at least in part, to tie its last words—"and not wake"—back to the poem's title (or more specifically, to the first epigraph). Donne is playing with the idea of "much sleepe" contrasted with a more "fearefull" "*perpetuall sleepe*" ("Tōkinish" original emphasis 1), and as we proceed through the poem, we may want to remember this sort of metaphorical binary as a model for further of Stevens's representations. The third epigraph is Donne again with "But yet the body is his booke" from "The Ecstasy" which looks materially

promising with many interconnections. Angela Haas argues that wampum is an early form of hypertext, linking the user to “hundreds of years of alliances within tribes, between tribes, and between the tribal governments and colonial government” (Haas 78) and within the confines of this poem that sort of hypertextual intertextuality comes into play. Stevens will be leveraging the body as book metaphor throughout the poem, which will provide for areas of great traction, the most basic of which may seek to remind us that at the time of 17th colonialism in New England, the indigenous peoples possessed language and culture, even without literacy.

The fourth epigraph is again a Narragansett translation, as the provided attribution attests, but we cannot yet know this is from Williams’s *A Key into the Language of America*, and so we read the call-and-response at face value:

<i>Awaunkeesitteouwincohook?</i>	Who made you?
<i>Wussuckwheke.</i>	The book.
	(“Tōkinish” 1).

The reader has no way to suspect Stevens’s reconceptualizing subversions here, as he collages two disparate selections from Williams into simulated dialogue. Further, even the provided definition “the book” is suspect, because it is an elaboration or embellishment of “the letter” as seen in “*Wussuck-whommon* ‘To paint’ for having no letters, their painting comes the nearest” (Williams 66). To enumerate, Roger Williams in *A Key* expands the Narragansett verb for painting to include his need¹⁹ for the meaning “the letter” which forces upon their language English literacy. In turn, Stevens then

¹⁹ Williams does not make it clear who exactly expanded the Narragansett metaphor of painting to writing, but the phrasing of his explanation makes it appear to have been his own. It does seem likely that the English would have desired to translate concepts of literacy into Narragansett and that this situation did not exist prior to settler contact.

imposes “The book” upon Williams’s extrapolations. While Stevens’s revisions of *A Key* are not always so dramatic to be impositional, he often resituates Williams’s lines in order to invent a new rhetoric for his text.

Of course, The “Narragansett” book of the fourth epigraph immediately echoes Donne’s “booke” and so the “Who made you” where “you” is the identity of a physical body, also echoes Donne’s epigraph. In this process of poetic appropriation, a variety of the French Situationist *détournement*, Stevens inverts the colonial process of appropriation, destabilizing both our expectations of what a poem can be and what kinds of power relationships obtain between the colonizer and colonized.

I would argue that James Thomas Stevens exerts a subversive contestatory intertextuality in “Tōkinish” in order to “re-order²⁰” the period of “first contact” between the English and the Narragansett. Further, he commingles this dehumanizing colonialist circumstance with the personally intimate narrative of an indigenous man in bed with his male European lover. Through this conflated account, Stevens eroticizes the chronicle of “discovery.” Drawing upon concepts forwarded by Homi K. Bhabha, Leslie Marmon Silko, and Edward Said, Laura Donaldson applies Julia Kristeva’s theory of intertextuality to Thomas King’s novel *Green Grass, Running Water*. She extends Said’s “narrative connection between culture and imperialism” by pointing out that “recent appropriations of intertextuality by American Indian writers— most notably, Cherokee/Greek/German novelist Thomas King— demonstrate that its powerful socio-literary mechanisms can be directed towards either subjugation or resistance.” This “contestatory

²⁰ Stevens will use the term *(dis)Orient* in his later works.

intertextuality... effects just such a subversive re-ordering of relations in the dominant fields of imperialist, capitalist and masculinist power” (Donaldson 40).

Michelle Burnham argues that “Tōkinish” “invokes the visual theater of colonial geography in order to meditate on the constitution of the self and the body in relation to others and other bodies— but also to reflect on language as a tool for the performance and possession of truth,” (Burnham 182) citing in particular a notable line from the poem: “as if knowing implies its ownership” (Stevens “Tōkinish” 9). The colonial geography she mentions is introduced by Stevens next: “To walk the periphery of islands, as if knowing the border of the body” (“Tōkinish” 2). What we can call the “first line” of the poem, the first words distinguishable as “belonging” to the speaker, spins the central thread upon which the rest of the poem hangs. Just as Roger Williams’s book taxonomizes and thus delimits Narragansett vocabulary into discrete pseudoscientific categories, Sarah Dowling in her essay alludes to *A Key* being read as “proto-ethnography” (Dowling 196). Stevens decolonizes this delimiting strategy so that he can unbind the original Narragansett from Williams’s yoke.

A close reading of the poem’s first section of sixteen lines reveals highly complex linguistic taxonomies at work. That first line “To walk the periphery of islands, as if knowing the border of body” (“Tōkinish” 2) can be parsed into five discrete categories: *To walk*, movement; *the periphery*, boundary; *of islands*, geography; *as if knowing*, epistemology; *the border*, boundary; *of body*, embodiment. Further categories in this section delineate making/shaping (*To mould, modeled, to write*); nature (*weeds, rock, Hemlock*); and measurement (*precision, weighty*). Stevens’s writing forces the reader to

remain in a pseudoscientific mode of reading. Simultaneously, several self-conscious “literary” word choices challenge a singularly scientific reading of the text, where the orthography of the words *mould*, *scarp*, and *combe* signal the speaker’s engagement with Williams’s 17th-century English dialect.

Poetically, this first line (and ensuing section) engenders a representational blending of place and body that Stevens continues to mine throughout the entire length of the poem. This imbrication, these tightly enmeshed metaphors, lead the reader through the global to the individual; through the political to the personal; through the public to the intimate and simultaneously back again. When Krupat describes “Tōkinish” as an experimental ethnocritical text, one might expect that Stevens has laid out a thesis and some sort of argument to support this. Indeed, given his stated concern with colonizing language, one can read “Tōkinish” with this approach, and here in the first section of the poem we find: “Skin shining stone/ as the sun settles into its own dumb ortho-/ doxy” (“Tōkinish” 2). The first line associates the body with the land, where geography and biology meet as in the walking the periphery above. The repeating, continually linked representations between body and land in this poem signal the binding of possession and colonization, so that eventually we will come to understand, in Stevens’s words that “It is human nature in relationships to colonize, regardless of gender” (Stevens “Twin Rails” 186). For him to describe a personal relationships in this cultural sense broadens the reach of his “thesis” so that the proximity of “settles” and “dumb” in a close reading might imply a layered colonizing and decolonizing. The sun settling, possessing, a dumb, mute or unspoken, orthodoxy mirrors the assumptions of the English as they settled a

mute, empty New World. Speaking implies power, and this New World is dumb, it cannot express the power of language. However, Roger Williams gives a limited voice to Narragansett when he alphabetizes it, renders it orthographic. That it is the settler who has captured, as it were, the Narragansett tongue, allows him possession of indigenous words, thoughts, and in Stevens's equation, bodies. However, this version has broken that orthodoxy, split it on the page, separating "ortho" and "doxy" onto two separate lines²¹, so that the semantic value of *ortho-* meaning "right, accurate" (*OED*) is detached from the sense of *doxy* as "opinion" (*OED*). To decolonize the "right opinion" into its component by spatially dividing its parts leaves that opinion vulnerable to erroneous heterodoxy.

Like a small eddy in the lake, the notion of island returns in the line: "How to write island, the weighty peninsula of extremities" ("Tōkinish" 2). We cannot yet know the actual importance of *island* to the poem as a whole, but in its return we certainly understand that it is not ephemeral, and one has the sense of approaching an island in a canoe, paddling gently toward shore, apprehending the distant land rising from the water more saliently as we approach. This is one way to write an island, but Stevens is not offering this view, instead, he treats the word *island* in a conceptual heterodoxy— as a weighty peninsula. Returning to the first line of the poem we recall the connection of periphery, island, border, and body, so this geographical invocation coincides with that language, even if this specific representation destabilizes our geographical understanding.

²¹ Stevens's 2002 collection *He Combs Serpents from His Hair* has it on one line... presumably Stevens had the ability to correct this split in the *Visit Teepee Town* galley stage. Regardless, at the least, the placement of "orthodoxy" suggests marginalization.

Read in a metaphorical sense, *island* becomes the equivalent of *weighty peninsula of extremities*, a conceptual blending of geography and embodiment, so that one can read a body not as a collection of peninsular extremity, but holistically as an island.

That this poem is disrupting our ways of seeing and knowing is confirmed in the line “Weight is the catastrophe of what we don’t know“ (“Tōkinish” 2), which establishes a useful way of thinking about the heterodoxies of the poem. The nearly immediate recurrence of “weight” signals the shifting of physical embodiment— corporeal reality— to mental burden. The next line extends that thought: “the unsleeping gravity drawing boat to shore” (“Tōkinish” 2). Again, the concept of sleep echoes the first epigraph, and gravity, a metaphorical weight, being unsleeping, would never require someone to *wake him*. That it draws a boat to shore entrenches the island imagery, and as a whole the weight of not knowing what is in this boat signals catastrophe. This idea is borne by the concluding lines of this section:

<i>Acâwmuck noteshém</i>	I came over the water.
<i>Mesh nomishoonhómmin</i>	I came by boat.
— Roger Williams, <i>A Key into the Language of America</i> (“Tōkinish” 2).	

Echoing this last image, Stevens incorporates two more lines from Williams (attributed this time), which again, collapse three pages of material between the instance of *Acâwmuck noteshém* (Williams 28) and *Mesh nomishoonhómmin* (Williams 31). Like the first instance of Stevens’s rewriting, this invented juxtaposition, “I came over the water./I came by boat.” allows him to make a rhetorical point— that the boat, having been drawn to shore by gravity, is the unknown catastrophe. Certainly, this can be read as a fairly

straight and orthodox reading of the historical circumstance, but in Stevens's historiography, Debordian *détournement*²² counts more than dogmatic adherence to primary sources. On one hand, this is something we expect from art, from poetry; a disordering of language, a rewriting of circumstance. But if Arnold Krupat's early instinct that "Tōkinish" signals an experimental, and presumably vital, turn in ethnographic representation, then we must expect that this first Williams-attributed quotation collage will come to represent much more than a confirmation of colonial history.

At this early point in "Tōkinish," the critic must ask: *What is that much more?* Stevens writes: "I have been made to realize the identity that Anglo-America has constructed for Indian peoples" (Stevens "Twin Rails" 185) and so the first part of what "Tōkinish" is doing is to establish a connection with that Anglo-American constructed identity. Though we have not yet seen any Indian people in the poem, the fact that "Tōkinish" invokes Williams, the colonizer of Narragansett land known now as Rhode Island, takes us to that 17th-century catastrophe of contact. The second section of the poem intensifies the rhetoric of island, border, and epistemology, which emphasizes the idea that an island is all border, it is approachable from all sides. The third section stretches the metaphorical concept of island to include "a leaf in a yellow field of corn," "a bowl," "objects on a table," or "a word" ("Tōkinish" 3). This conceptual elasticity persists throughout, an example of what Stevens calls "the basic paradox of

²² "Détournement is the antithesis of quotation, of a theoretical authority invariably tainted if only because it has become quotable, because it is now a fragment torn away from its context, from its own movement, and ultimately from the overall frame of reference of its period and from the precise option that it constituted within that framework. Détournement, by contrast, is the fluid language of antiideology. It occurs within a type of communication aware of its inability to enshrine any inherent and definitive certainty" (Debord 145-46).

language” (“Tōkinish” 8), running from the nearly literal idea of a separate leaf through to the completely linguistic word. If Stevens is not physically decolonizing Providence, he is engaging in expropriation, taking Williams back, as it were, even as Williams has taken Narragansett.

James Thomas Stevens represents himself as “a gay Indian academic” (Stevens “Twin Rails” 185), which in itself is an interesting construction. One might expect to read “queer Native American” from an academic or “queer Mohawk” along the lines of a Beth Brant. But Stevens importantly does not use the term “Two Sprit” which has come into fashion when discussing Native sexuality. “It is impossible for me, personally, to identify with a role that has been recently constructed and to write as if I had lived that life, even if there did exist such a traditional role among Mohawks.” (Stevens “Twin Rails” 185). In its third section, “Tōkinish” takes a decidedly personal turn, where the depersonalized, disembodied speaker we have been listening to so far suddenly becomes “I”:

I call your sleeping body island
because I know its white border. (“Tōkinish” 3).

Not only has the speaker become personal, he is with a white lover, one who we come to discover as European through the implied unknowing of the word *vein*, which the lover calls *bloodpath* and the speaker mishears as *blueprint* (“Tōkinish” 12). If we recall Stevens’s claim that lovers colonize each other, then the stakes in the poem are not merely political-historical decolonization, but also personal at a human level, which is borne out by the fourth section of the poem:

Roger Williams set foot in what would become Providence, Rhode Island in 1636. Because he saw water on all sides he wrongly assumed the land to be island. Although the native he saw standing before him was certainly isolated in isolated surroundings, he did not call him island.

Toketussaweitch
Nnishishem

What is your name?
I am alone.

(“Tōkinish” 3)

Toketussaweitch (Williams 29) and *Nnishishem* (Williams 31) have been, as we have come to expect, relocated from their original positions in Williams in order to emphasize the interpersonal here.

“Tōkinish” becomes a foundational poem in Stevens’s oeuvre, helping form a highly individualistic style, but just as importantly it stands as decolonizing text, one that demands a disorienting of the hegemony.

Conclusion

I see in Eric Gansworth and his contemporary James Thomas Stevens a keen and quite relevant commingling of aesthetic and political concerns. Although their own personal styles diverge greatly, both writers represent their Haudenosaunee heritage prominently in their works. However, I hesitate to externally label them as exemplars of “Haudenosaunee literature.” These writers represent themselves and their own relationships to Haudenosaunee culture. While it is clear through the themes they interrogate that they apply decolonizing strategies in their works, they never claim to be resisting the dominant culture in doing so. Neither do they claim to be “authentic”

representatives of Haudenosaunee culture. Interestingly, these ideas seem to originate from a the hegemonic conception. Patricia Monture-Angus argues that the external gaze interrogating authenticity and themes of resistance is itself colonialist. “We, as indigenous people, do not see ourselves as separate from our people or our land. This gaze, which has authenticity as its central focus is contrary to Indigenous epistemologies where identity is not an isolated phenomenon” (“Power” Monture-Angus 157). For these reasons, I have focused upon aspects of representation rather than identity, analyzing writers as people not as spokespeople, their words not as monolithic symbols of resistance; instead they are individuals, members of historically and culturally complex Nations whose works are worthy of wider audiences.

Works Cited

- "Border Crossing Rights." *Welcome to the HCCC*. Haudenosaunee Documentation Committee, n.d. Web. 29 Apr. 2016.
- Brant, Beth. "From the Inside— Looking at You." *Writing as Witness: Essay and Talk*. Toronto: Women's, 1994.
- - -. "Grandmothers of a New World." *Writing as Witness: Essay and Talk*. Toronto: Women's, 1994.
- - -. "The Good Red Road." in in *Writing as Witness: Essay and Talk*. Toronto: Women's, 1994.
- Burnett, Matia. "Writing Native Lives in YA: A NYPL Panel Discussion." *PublishersWeekly.com*. N.p., 9 Oct. 2014. Web. 29 Apr. 2016.
- Burnham, Michelle. *Folded Selves: Colonial New England Writing in the World System*. Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College, 2007.
- "The Canandaigua Treaty of 1794." *Onondaga Nation*. 2014. Web. 29 Apr. 2016.
- Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. United Nations General Assembly. 2007.
- Donaldson, Laura E.. "Noah Meets Old Coyote, or Singing in the Rain: Intertextuality in Thomas King's *Green Grass, Running Water*." *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 7.2 (1995): 27–43.
- Dowling, Sarah. "'AND THROUGH ITS NAMING BECAME OWNER": Translation in James Thomas Stevens's *Tokinish*." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 16.1-2 (2010): 191-206.

Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, Volume One: Summary:

Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future. The Truth and Reconciliation

Commission of Canada. Ottawa: James Lorimer & Company, 2015.

Gansworth, Eric L. "Eric Gansworth." *EricGansworth.com*. N.p., n.d. Web. 29 Apr. 2016.

-- -. *If I Ever Get out of Here: A Novel with Paintings*. New York: Arthur A. Levine, 2013.

-- -. *Mending Skins*. Lincoln: U of Nebraska, 2005.

-- -. *Smoke Dancing*. East Lansing: Michigan State UP, 2004.

-- -. "Thinking in Subversion." *The American Indian Quarterly* 30.1 (2006): 153-65.

George-Kanentiio, Doug. "Iroquois Population Update." *Indian Time*. 8 Jan. 2015. Web. 29 Apr. 2016.

"Government." *Kahnawake Branch Of The Mohawk Nation Six Nation Iroquois Confederacy*.

N.p., n.d. Web. 29 Apr. 2016.

Haas, Angela M. "Wampum as Hypertext: An American Indian Intellectual Tradition of Multimedia Theory and Practice." *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 19.4 (2008): 77-100.

"Haudenosaunee Women Withdraw from U19 Event." *Lacrosse Magazine*. 10 Jul. 2015. Web. 29 Apr. 2016.

Johansen, Bruce E., and Barbara Alice Mann, eds. *Encyclopedia of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois Confederacy)*. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2000.

Justice, Daniel Heath. "Indigenous Writing." in *The World of the Indigenous Americas*. Ed. Robert Allen. Warrior. London: Routledge, 2013.

-- -. (justicedanielh). "5) My family is Cherokee by citizenship, heritage, history, & genealogy,

- but not culture, having lived outside the Nation for 3 generations.” 17 Apr. 2016, 7:03 p.m. Tweet.
- -. (justicedanielh). “Personal Correspondence.” Message to the author. 3 Sept. 2015. Direct Message, Twitter.
- -. “We’re Not There Yet, Kemo Sabe: Posting a Future for American Indian Literary Studies.” *The American Indian Quarterly* 25.2 (2001): 256-69. Web.
- Keene, Adrienne. "The Next Chapter: #employed." *Native Appropriations*. N.p., 09 Feb. 2016. Web. 29 Apr. 2016.
- Kelsey, Penelope Myrtle. *Reading the Wampum: Essays on Hodinöhsö:ni' Visual Code and Epistemological Recovery*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse UP, 2014.
- Konkle, Maureen. "Indian Literacy, U. S. Colonialism, and Literary Criticism." *American Literature* 69.3 (1997): 457.
- Krupat, Arnold. “American Histories, Native American Narratives.” *Early American Literature* (30:2) [1995] , p.165-174. Web.
- -. *The Voice in the Margin: Native American Literature and the Canon*. Berkeley: U of California, 1989.
- Lerner, Ben. "Diary: On Disliking Poetry." *London Review of Books*. 18 June 2015. Web. 29 Apr. 2016.
- Momaday, N. Scott. “Voices.” *Words of Power: Voices from Indian America*. Ed. Norbert S. Hill. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Pub., 1994.
- Monture, Patricia, A. “Power, Identity, and Indigenous Sovereignty.” *Canadian Woman Studies/ Les Cahiers de la Femme* 26:2-4 (2008): 154-59.

- -. *Thunder in My Soul: A Mohawk Woman Speaks*. Halifax, Nova Scotia: Fernwood, 1995.
- Morse, Jedidiah. *A Report to the Secretary of War of the United States on Indian Affairs...* New Haven: S. Converse, 1822.
- Moses, Sarah. "Team England Arrives on Onondaga Nation to Get Passports Stamped." *Syracuse.com*. Syracuse Media Group. 13 Sept. 2015. Web. 29 Apr. 2016.
- "orthodoxy, n." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2016. Web. 29 April 2016.
- Rader, Dean. "Reading the Visual, Seeing the Verbal: Text and Image in Recent American Indian Literature and Art." *The Oxford Handbook of Indigenous American Literature*. Eds. James H. Cox and Daniel Heath Justice. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2014.
- Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London: Zed, 1999.
- Stevens, James Thomas. "The Breath and Skin of History." *Maurice Kenny: Celebrations of a Mohawk Writer*. Ed. Penelope Myrtle. Kelsey. Albany: State U of New York, 2011.
- -. "Poetry and Sexuality: Running Twin Rails." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 16.1-2 (2010): 183-89.
- -. "Tokinish." *Visit Teepee Town: Native Writings After the Detours*. Eds. Glancy, Diane, and Mark Nowak. Minneapolis: Coffee House, 1999.
- Strong, Pauline Turner. "Representational Practices." *A Companion to the Anthropology of American Indians*. Ed. Thomas Biolsi. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2004.
- Teuton, Christopher B. *Deep Waters: The Textual Continuum in American Indian Literature*. Lincoln: U of Nebraska, 2010.

"Treaties - Seneca Nation of Indians." *Seneca Nation of Indians News*. N.d. Web. 29 Apr. 2016.

Vizenor, Gerald Robert. *Native Liberty: Natural Reason and Cultural Survivance*. Lincoln: U of Nebraska, 2009.

Wakeham, Pauline. *Taxidermic Signs: Reconstructing Aboriginality*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota, 2008.

Weaver, Jace. *That the People Might Live: Native American Literatures and Native American Community*. New York: Oxford UP, 1997.

Williams, Roger. *A Key into the Language of America...* Providence: Rhode Island Historical Society, 1827.