



THE NEWBERRY

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Research Abstracts

“18th Century Catawba Women and Land Ownership”

Brooke M. Bauer, *University of North Carolina*

This paper examines Catawba history from the perspective of Catawba women. The Catawba Nation, a federally recognized tribe, is located in present-day Rock Hill, South Carolina, and they relinquished their lands in the 1840 Treaty of Nation Ford with South Carolina. I am most interested in the Catawba land leasing system and a 1796 land deed wherein three Catawba headmen transferred remaining Catawba territory to a Catawba woman, Sally New River. I believe the land leases and deed will illuminate more regarding Catawba’s land ownership, political organization, economic system, and kinship system. Furthermore, this paper examines Catawba Indian women in the eighteenth century and briefly investigates their position in Catawba society as they negotiate economic exchanges. Due to the paucity of historical documents that discuss eighteenth century Catawba women, I have expanded my research to include propertied Native and Early American women. Through the discussion of various Native women and one Early American woman, I argue that the women were indeed diverse, but each used the law, both English and Native, to conduct themselves with authority, influence, and power in their own societies.

“Making the Blackfoot “Savage”: The Genesis of an American Mythology”

Ryan Hall, *Yale University*

“Bloodthirsty.” “Warlike.” “Savage.” These are the sorts of words that nineteenth-century Americans typically deployed when describing the Blackfoot peoples of what is now Montana and Alberta. In the constantly evolving mythology of the West, the Blackfeet became representative of a particularly “bad” sort of Indian. My project here at the Newberry traces the genealogy of this myth—when it developed, how it evolved, and how it has shaped historical approaches to the Blackfeet. Relying primarily on published accounts, including newspapers, memoirs, and narrative fiction, I argue that this mythology was an historical construction based on the very earliest encounters between the Blackfeet and non-Indian Americans, most importantly conflicts with the Lewis and Clark expedition and Missouri Fur Company trappers which were misunderstood and misinterpreted. I go on to trace how the myth of the “ferocious” Blackfoot persisted well into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. My larger interest is in understanding how this mythology has shaped histories of the Blackfoot, and in moving beyond simplistic caricatures of native people.

“Cattle at Home: Cows and Gender in 19th-Century Hawaii”

Josh Levy, *University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign*

In 1793, George Vancouver made a gift of six sickly cattle to King Kamehameha I of Hawaii. Shortly afterward, many of those cattle turned feral. Along with the Islands’ unfenced domesticated livestock, the cattle wreaked havoc on Hawaiian lands and crops. This paper argues that cattle in early 19th-century Hawaii lay at the center of an often faltering but nonetheless persistent haole project to impose order on Hawaiian land (through fencing) and bodies (through labor). It traces some of the ways in which haole missionaries, planters, and government officials used domesticated and wild cattle to transform the land. As the physical environment changed, people’s relationship to the land changed also, and Hawaiians faced various kinds of pressure to adopt Western notions of gender.

“Translation and Politicization in Indian Country: Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin, Gene Weltfish, and the Production of Ethnographic Knowledge in Twentieth Century America”

Alessandra La Rocca Link, *University of New Mexico*

This project examines the role of female ethnographers as political agents in twentieth century America. These women produced ethnographic knowledge that impacted a myriad of political arenas. Scholars have discussed how ethnographers and their publications have been harnessed to the American colonial state. Yet, by examining the ways in which twentieth century female ethnographers constructed their ethnographies, the hardened paradigm of the colonial ethnographer is complicated. In some cases, these ethnographic constructions of Indian America sought to critique and dismantle American patriarchy, colonialism, racism, and socio-economic inequality. Furthermore, these pro- and/or anti- colonial intellectual commodities are initially produced in the intimate spaces of exchange between Native American interviewees and ethnographers. The Newberry library provided the opportunity to explore the cross-cultural exchanges between Dr. Gene Weltfish and Mark Evarts (Pawnee), and Dr. Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin and numerous Tübatalabal interviewees. Weltfish translated her exchanges with Evarts in an effort to critique postwar American patriarchy and urban development, meanwhile neglecting political advocacy for the Pawnee. Wheeler-Voegelin translated Tübatalabal perspectives to produce a data-ridden codification of cultural traits, yet her deep commitment to the ethnobotany and topography of the Tübatalabal landscape indirectly hardened the Tübatalabal claims to the Kern River Valley. Examining these women, and the publications they produced, highlight the multitude of ways in which ethnographic ideas and anthropologists shaped political discourses in the twentieth century.

“The Grandmother Epistemic in Leslie Marmon Silko's Almanac of the Dead”

Shanae Aurora Martinez, *University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee*

This project is a literary analysis that examines the role of Yoeme, the grandmother character in Leslie Marmon Silko's *Almanac of the Dead* as central to the progression of the novel, rather than peripheral since her characterization embodies the unconventional structure of the novel. Through an examination of Yoeme, my work explores the subversive and radical form of her character in the ways she challenges stereotypical representations of grandmothers that are based on ageism and sexism within western identity constructs. Her characterization also serves to complicate claims to indigeneity through a removed grandmother ancestor. Yoeme is complex, alternative, and non normative, and in this way she embodies the structure of the novel itself as one defiant and resistant of imposed constructions regarding time, space, and epistemology. As a grandmother, Yoeme represents the gynocratic society from which the text emerges, embodying it, as well as taking radical action to achieve such a society in the present day Americas, while inspiring her granddaughters to do the same. I argue that Yoeme exerts influence over the multiple trajectories of the novel in several ways: first, by dispelling notions of the grandmother as predictably nonthreatening; second, by passing indigenous identity to her grandchildren that dispels constructed western epistemologies; third, through her stories that are both individual and communal she demonstrates and inspires survival and continuance to her grandchildren through tribal alliances with the purpose of collective indigenous continuance and social health. Without Yoeme, there could be no almanac as she pervades the text in both life and death, she becomes a figure of omnipresence and immortality rendering the grandmother symbolically and literally defiant of time, space, unjust epistemologies, and predictable conformity.

“Race, Religion, and Family: Changing Dynamics of Cherokee Communities in the Nineteenth Century”

Heather Mulliner, *University of Montana*

This project investigates changes among Cherokee families and communities throughout the nineteenth century. It explores the writings of Thomas Lee Ballenger contained in the Thomas Lee Ballenger papers in the Newberry Library's Edward E. Ayer Collection. Looking specifically at Ballenger's family histories and genealogies, this study investigates how Cherokee family connections changed throughout the nineteenth century, while paying close attention to how Ballenger's biases informed the family accounts he collected. These records provide scattered accounts of the Lowrey and the Parks families over three generations. Using these two families, this study

investigates the various ways race religion, and economic status affected their connections to the larger Cherokee community and also how political forces changed their communities.

“Decolonial Positions: Genderfull Expression in the Art of Kent Monkman”

Bradley Pecore, *Cornell University*

At present, indigenous artists attempt to open discursive systems of power in an effort to interrogate colonized ideological frames. Kent Monkman a multifaceted interdisciplinary Cree artist examines historical gender variance as it is lifted to contemporary times through painting, video installation, and performance art. The artist mines the historical archive of early American landscape paintings to intervene in colonial imaginaries inherent in the nineteenth century western landscape painting. In 2008, Kent Monkman counteracts the painter George Catlin's, *Dance to the Berdache* (circa.1861/1869) by mounting a video installation that shares an identical title. In this way, Monkman devises a transformed subjectivity. As a self identified two-spirit, the artist reverts colonial interpretation thereby opening the colonized space of gender variance. As Monkman revisits historic documentation, he utilizes his own body and the bodies of his subjects re-transcribing ignored histories and validating the limitlessness of the contemporary two-spirits. Monkman's revisionist investigation takes visual cues from past fictional documentations of indigenous peoples discovered by naturalists, missionaries, and colonialists. These careful turns shed light on the political and social complexity of indigenous gender and sexuality as negotiated through colonial apparatuses. I argue that Monkman's counterpart identity MissChief Eagle-Testicle, whose embodiment proliferates through the dominant metanarrative of sex and power discourse by distinguishing a powerful two-spirit, and reimagines the berdache. Monkman then emplaces an indigenous queer philosophy. His work acts as a performed site and sight, to the visual spectacle of sovereignty to tear down historical paradigms that privilege white heteropatriarchy.

“Indigenous Veterans of Alaska and Wyoming: Exploration of the Social Construction of Masculinity through Participation in Warfare”

Kristin Raesi, *University of Wyoming*

Few studies have been done which assess Indigenous participation in the military and its impact upon social constructions of masculinity within Indigenous societies. Indigenous peoples statistically have the largest percentage of any population to undertake service in the military and the majority of Indigenous people serving are men. Thus, the impact of military service upon Indigenous masculinity cannot be underestimated. By providing contextual information regarding historical attitudes about, and the eventual militarization of, Indigenous societies throughout the United States leading up to the present, I argue that contemporary Indigenous veterans conceptualize their service in a manner which disregards non-Indigenous hegemonic ideologies. Rather, Indigenous veterans assert specific tribal identities through military participation as it demonstrates responsible protection of the tribal community, land base and ceremonial/spiritual life. Furthermore, this analysis establishes the complex interconnectedness between male Indigenous veterans and their communities in relation to ceremonial/spiritual life. The positioning of these relationships within the social structure provides a new standpoint through which to examine how Indigenous gender is constructed and how Indigenous male veterans are situated and located within multiple communal situations and contexts.

“The Return of Moshup: the re-inscription of Native stories on the New England landscape”

Rachel Sayet, *Harvard University*

Stories of Moshup the giant are ancient tales connected to the land and sea of southern New England. These traditions are integral to the culture and religion of the Mohegan and Aquinnah Wampanoag tribes. Since contact, these stories have been recorded in many inaccurate forms, including not only those that featured the Devil, but also children's books, poems, and compilations of folklore created by non-Native authors who did not provide any cultural context for these stories. However, within the past century, Algonquian knowledge keepers and storytellers have made an effort to reclaim these stories, through recording and sometimes publishing the more accurate versions of the stories, and representing them in public spaces. Through an analysis of the various forms these

stories have taken, and a discussion of the history behind the sites in which they are rooted and represented this article will demonstrate that by reclaiming these stories, the Mohegans and Aquinnah Wampanoags are expanding awareness of the Native history and traditions behind these places to the broader population, thereby re-inscribing their stories on the landscape, and through this process are reinforcing sovereignty for their nations, ensuring their survival.

“âyahkwêw’s Lodge”: Cree and Métis Gay / Queer / Two-Spirit Narratives

June Scudeler, *University of British Columbia*

My work analyses how selected Cree and Métis self-identified gay, queer and Two Spirit (GQ2) writers and artists work against the legacies of colonisation, such as homophobia and racism. However, these writers and artists not only write against colonisation but use their works to highlight the power of Aboriginal cultural and spiritual traditions for contemporary Aboriginal GQ2 peoples as well as for the larger Aboriginal community. I use works by Gregory Scofield (Métis), Cree writers Billy Merasty, Tomson Highway and Cree visual artist and filmmaker Kent Monkman to examine how Cree and Métis GQ2 people produce narratives that make maskihkîy—medicine—for themselves and for their readers, listeners and viewers. maskihkîy carries responsibility to use healing in a positive way to help others and to assert a decolonial resistance to homophobia and sexism.

Before contact, many Indigenous nations in North America had a name for a person who was neither male nor female but rather gender non-normative. The term “Two-Spirit,” referring to an Aboriginal person who has both female and male spirits in balance, came into use in 1990 at the third annual inter-tribal Native American / First Nations gay and lesbian conference in Winnipeg. Broadly speaking, Two-Spirit peoples refer to themselves as gay, queer, Two-Spirit or call themselves a tribally-specific term such as âyahkwêw, a Cree term meaning both man and woman or neither man nor woman. Native literary nationalism, a Native-centred theory that advocates using tribal-specific ways of knowing and histories to guide research, will position Cree and Métis ways of knowing as the centre of my theoretical model.

“Illinois Women and French Gender Ideology in Illinois Country, 1670-1700”

Ashley Wiersma, *Michigan State University*

The First French Colonial Empire traces its origins to the settlement of Quebec in 1608, although there had been a French presence in North America since the early sixteenth century. This study focuses on the period in which New France became a Crown Colony (1663) and expanded its southwestern border to include the Illinois Country and the Mississippi River Valley following Marquette and Joliet’s exploration in 1673. The period between 1670 and 1701 was a time of great change in New France and in French colonial policy in general. It was a time of experimentation and transitions. Once colonial officials realized that Frenchmen were incorporated into Indian tribes through intermarriage and often adopted Indigenous habits and customs rather than retaining a distinct French identity, the idea of interethnic unions fell out of favor in Versailles. On the other hand, life “on the ground” in the colony reflected different attitudes toward Indian women and interethnic marriages, particularly in the Great Lakes region and the Illinois Country, where it remained a common practice and one that was integral to the maintenance of the French-Indian alliance crucial to the preservation of the colony. Through intermarriage, Illinois women established kinship networks that allowed trade to expand beyond the St. Lawrence River valley into the western territories. These commercial networks were key to the stability of diplomatic and military relationships between the French and Indians. This study examines the extension of French imperial “rule,” its reliance on alliances with the Indigenous population, as well as the discursive and literal roles that Indian women played in this system. I argue that constructions of gender and sexuality formed the basis for French judgments about Illinois morality and sophistication, which, in turn, shaped colonial discourse and policy. Furthermore, women played vital roles in Illinois and French societies and in the creation of another space between the two as boundary markers of civilization; cultivators, manufacturers of supplies, and caregivers to the next generation; and intermediaries in the French-Illinois alliance system.