

METAFOR

THE BOĞAZİÇİ UNIVERSITY JOURNAL OF
LITERARY STUDIES

SPECIAL ISSUE:
INTERDISCIPLINARY ECOETHICAL INSIGHTS

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Surrounded Land, Unsurrendered People: Native American Peoples and Land Rights from the Past to Present

Defne Türker Demir

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Abstract

In elaborating on the connection between the land and the people, Paula Gunn Allen posits; “[w]e are the land”, drawing our attention to an existent epistemological unity; since “... the land (Mother) and the people (mothers) [are] the same”. Thus any separation between the land and the people is detrimental to the wholeness and balance required for the self-construction of the Indian American peoples. The contemporary Native American artist Joseph M. Sanchez in his turn, iterating the purpose of the 2007 Bienal “Relations - Indigenous Dialogue”, defines the relationship of the Native American artists to the natural world “... as custodians of her well-being”. According to Sanchez, the connection to nature is the true heritage of the indigenous populations, and since the planet is a “relation”, an ancestor of the Native Americans, the planet ought to be treated with respect and the ongoing responsibility for the planet remains the foremost duty of the artist. In terms of textuality, it can be argued that the attempt at establishing unision between the self and the community/ land lies at the very crux of American Indian literary practices, since the individual self needs to become whole while bridging any existing gaps between the self and the family/ tribe/ clan and the land. In short the subjectivity created in textuality is a communal selfhood, which is firmly located within the sites of the history of the Native American peoples and the land with which ties need to be re-forged if necessary. Thus, while Pam Colorado’s poem *What Every Indian Knows* depicts the historical “Trail of Tears” as one more exercise in genocide, drawing the various parallels between nazism and imperialism through her intertextual usage of Art Spiegelman’s *Maus: A Survivor’s Tale*, her poem is a warning against internalised colonisation. D’Arcy Mc Nickle on the other hand, writing before the 1960s Native American Renaissance, is presenting a rather dark picture of the plight of the Salish in his novel *The Surrounded*. The fate of the Salish is bound up

with that of the land, and another historical event, the Dawes Act had partitioned the land and caused a rift amongst the peoples. Further, they are feeling surrounded as the land is severed by the wired fences, and the onset of the white man's law hunts them even in the surrounding mountains which can no longer give refuge but simply has come to contain them. This article, in drawing on Pam Colorado's poem *What Every Indian Knows*, and D'Arcy Mc Nickle's *The Surrounded* dwells on how through forced exiles and the partitioning of the land, the Native American peoples have had to fight against a dispersal of their collective identities while they were stripped of their connection to the land, which is the touchstone of their identity configuration. Yet, the peoples have not surrendered. Moving on to the present, the recovery of the communal identity is apparent in the claiming of land rights in the aftermath of the uranium mining and the Dakota Access Oil Pipeline. Thus, the Native American peoples are today standing as the custodians of the earth and protecting their land from the further ravages of environmental racism, as the Standing Rock Sioux resistance of 2016 illustrates.

Keywords: Native American, American Indian, land rights, white's law, #NoDAPL.

Çevirilmiş Toprak, Çevrelenmiş Halk: Güneybatı'dan Kuzeybatı'ya, Düünden Bugüne ABD'de Toprak Hakları ve Amerikan Yerli Halkları

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Özet

Toprak ve Amerikan Yerli Halkları arasındaki ilişkinin niteliğini vurgularken Paula Gunn Allen “Biz toprağız” der; toprak-tan, toprak-la, toprak-ta diye incelenebilecek bir varoluş değil, yalın, basit bir birlik durumudur Paula Gunn Allen’in sözünü ettiği. Günümüzde eser veren çağdaş Yerli ressamlardan Joseph M. Sanchez ise 2007 yılındaki “İlişkiler” isimli Bienalin amacını dile getirirken Yerli sanatçının rolünü “... dünya ve doğanın sağaltılmasının bekçiliğı” olarak tanımlar. Doğayla süregelen bağlantı üzerinden doğayı dinleyip gerçek anlamda ne olup bittiğini duyabilmek, bunu paylaşabilmek ve geleceğe taşıyabilmek, sonraki nesillerin kim olduklarını öğrenmelerinin tek yoludur Sanchez’e göre. Metinsel anlamda da doğa, toprak ve aile topluluğı ilişkisinin, Amerikan Yerli yazınının en temel izleğı olduğunu söyleyebiliriz. Otobiyografik metinlerde kimliğin toprak üzerinden yapılandırıldığını net biçimde gözlemliyoruz. Bu ortak izlek kurgusal metinler özelinde de, toprak ve doğanın kimlik oluşumu üzerindeki mutlak etkisinin vurgulanması yoluyla yine anlatının odağında yer almakta. Öyle ki, hemen her yapıtta eve/ aileye/ topluma/ toprağı/ doğaya dönüş ve/veya bunun imkansızlığı, temel değilse, alt tema olarak karşımıza çıkar. Amerikan Yerli kimliğı için toprağın varoluşsal önemi, 2016 yılında #NoDAPL hastagi ile yaygınlık kazanan Dakota petrol boru hattına karşı girişilen toplumsal muhalefet örneğinde de somut biçimde göz önüne serilmekte. Dakota petrol boru hattının Standing Rock Sioux halkının toprağından geçmesine karşı gösterilen direniş hareketi, toprak-kimlik birlikteliğinin Yerli halklar için bugün de geçerli olduğunun somut bir kanıtını oluşturur. Toprak, doğa ve kimlik örüntüsü üzerine Amerikan Yerli yazınından verilebilecek örnekler son derece çeşitli. Bu makale ise Pam Colorado’nun poem What Every Indian Knows isimli şiiri, ve Amerikan Yerli yazınının (yeniden) doğuşu olarak kabul edilen 1960’lardan önce yazılmış ve dolayısıyla hayli az bilenen D’Arcy Mc Nickle’nın The Surrounded - Çepeçevre (Kuşatılmış) isimli eserlerinden hareketle, toprağın yazgısı ile Yerli halkların

yazgısının bir olduğunu vurgulayarak, Yerli halklar için toprak-kimlik denklemin değişmezliğini, bu birlik algısının sürekliliğini ve toplumsal hareketlere yansımaları inceleyecektir. 19. yüzyılda zorunlu göçlere mecbur bırakılan ve yüzyıl sonunda rezervasyon bölgelerine hapsedilen halklar, kültürel algılarının merkezinde bulunan toprakla birlik doktrininden vazgeçmek yerine, buna sıkı sıkıya sarılmış, hem metinsel, hem de eylemsel alanda, Dakota petrol boru hattı örneğinde olduğu gibi toprağın gönüllü bekçiliğini 21. yüzyıla taşımışlardır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Amerikan Yerlisi, Yerli Amerikalı, toprak hakları, beyaz'ın yasası, Kuzey Dakota petrol boru hattı.

What Every Indian Knows

Auschwitz ovens burn bright
 in America
 twenty-four million perished in the flame
 Nazi
 not a people
 but
 a way of life
 Trail of Tears Humans
 ends in Oklahoma
 an Indian name for
 Red Earth
 Redder still
 soaked in blood
 on two hundred
 removed tribes
 the ovens burn bright
 in America
 Ancestral ashes
 sweep the nation
 carried in
 Prevailing winds
 Survivors know
 the oven door stands wide
 and some like mouse
 cat crazed and frenzied
 turn
 and run into the jaws
 at night
 the cat calls softly
 to the resting
 us¹

1. Into the Blood Rimmed Lands

Pam Colorado's poem *What Every Indian Knows* reads like a scream, resonating with the nightmarish visions of both the Holocaust and the Native American

¹ Pam Colorado, quoted in Andrea Smith. *Conquest – Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide*. (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2005), xv-xvi.

genocide. While myriad forms of analyses pervade the Holocaust studies, Sven Lindqvist provides us with a fresh perspective when he suggests that Nazism is simply one facet of imperialism and racism that have, in tandem, devastated the tribal societies globally. According to Lindqvist, for the first time in human history, an imperial war was brought home to Europe and practiced upon white populations, and it was this aspect of the Holocaust that horrified and deeply impacted the Western mind. Yet, Lindqvist also remarks that the Europeans were indeed reluctant to acknowledge the affinity of imperialism to Nazism. Thus he writes, referencing Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, and almost reiterating the name of Pam Colorado's poem: "...when what had been done in the heart of darkness was repeated in the heart of Europe, no one recognised it. No one wished to admit what everyone knew."²

In a similar fashion, Pam Colorado in her poem *What Every Indian Knows* emphasises the fact that Nazism is not an isolated instance of violence employed by a few people, but a way of life, one that had held its sway over three continents for half a millennium. And it was the same mass murdering impulse on the part of the coloniser that was at work in North America, claiming twenty-four million indigenous lives, decades before the Nazi ovens choked away European ones. Likewise, in Colorado's poem, the "Trail of Tears" is referenced as one more exercise in genocide, an exile which was forced upon Cherokee, Creek, Chikasaw, Choctaw and Seminole Tribes, collectively known as the "civilised tribes" due to their full adaptation to the white ways. In 1830 in the aftermath of the Removal Act, the "civilised tribes" were ousted from their rich, agricultural lands in Western Mississippi, to the arid regions East of the Mississippi. The long walk claimed innumerable victims, with the people counting their losses at every stop on the way. They were unable even to give the dead their last rites, having to abandon the bodies of the loved ones on the roadside.

Colorado also remarks at the irony of the last stop of the Trail of Tears, that is Oklahoma, which we learn means "red earth". Yet Oklahoma, the "red earth" is drenched further crimson by the multitudes removed thither. The survivors of the two hundred ("civilised") tribes, whose land was coveted by the Euro-Americans, had reached the "red earth" soaked red in their own blood, figuratively reddening the already "red earth" by the blood they've shed on the Trail of Tears. That the Trail of Tears is compared to Auschwitz in *What Every Indian Knows* is a testimony to the fact that the Native American genocide is still fresh in the memory of its victims. Further, the comparison with the Holocaust, the Jewish genocide, which perhaps is the only genocide that exists in the global collective memory, inevitably draws our attention to the fact that other genocides

² Sven Lindqvist. *"Exterminate All the Brutes"*. Trans. Joan Tate. (London: Granta, 2002), 172.

around the world, such as the Native American genocide, go un-remembered and un-remarked, except by their own survivors.

On the other hand, the Trail of Tears is only one episode of the American Indian genocide, and the fact that history still bears upon the lives and minds of the Native Americans to this day is made explicit by Colorado's intertextual usage of the popular graphic novel *Maus: A Survivor's Tale* and the imagery thereby employed. In Art Spiegelman's *Maus* series the Cat, symbolising the Nazi regime is the deadly antagonist of the Jews, who are represented as Mice. Hitler himself is of the opinion that Jews are lesser than human when he says: "The Jews are undoubtedly a race, but they are not human."³ Spiegelman in a way builds on Hitler's contention in the *Maus* series. In his depiction of both the Jews and Germans as animals, as mice and cats, while appearing to affirm Hitler's definition, Spiegelman is clearly extending the category of the animal to include Nazis.

Colorado continues *What Every Indian Knows* by alluding to some survivors of the Native American genocide as cat crazed mice who, because of the trauma all American Indians had suffered and the resultant internalised colonisation, might run into the snares of imperialism willingly and let themselves be destroyed in this suicidal act. Paula Gunn Allen on the other hand, categorises American Indian identities that result from the internalisation of Western dichotomies in the following manner:

The world is seen in terms of antagonistic principles: good is set against bad, Indian against white, and tradition against cultural borrowing; personal significance becomes lost in a confusion of dualities. For many, this process has meant rejection of Indianness. The "apples", who categorically reject the Indian culture they were born to, choose one side, the white.

.... [Others] choose the other course of self-rejection. These persons often work out their struggle through rage directed against whites and "apples"

A third category of victims of alienation are people caught up between two cultures. These are most likely to be suicidal, inarticulate, almost paralyzed in their inability to direct their energies toward resolving what seems to them an insoluble conflict.⁴

Thus, the self that is unable to get sustenance from the communal formative elements of the Native American culture is alienated, and as such unable to

³ Hitler, quoted in Art Spiegelman. *Maus: A Survivor's Tale*. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1973. 1991), 10.

⁴ Paula Gunn Allen. *The Sacred Hoop*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986, 1992), 134-135.

construct a coherent identity configuration. It is Allen's contention that, this "socially induced loss of identity" stems from a "sense of self distorted."⁵ Accordingly, this coreless self might exhibit itself in a number of ways. For one, the individual might opt for a simulated whiteness, fuelled by self-hatred, which is caused by inner colonisation; or could display hatred towards his/her Others (whites or the whitewashed Natives, the "apples" as Allen dubs them), or finally might turn into a self-victimizing individual, suicidal, and forced into a silence of his/her own choosing. And such alienation is the express result of the dissolving of the bonds between the individual and the land. In elaborating on the connection between the land and the people, Allen posits: "We are the land. To the best of my understanding, that is the fundamental idea that permeates American Indian life; the land (Mother) and the people (mothers) are the same. As Luther Standing Bear has said of his Lakota people, 'We are of the soil and the soil is of us'. The earth is the source and the being of the people, and we are equally the being of the earth."⁶

If the Trail of Tears is one landmark in dispossession, the General Allotment Act of 1887, also known as the "Dawes Act" is the next step. According to Louis Owens, the General Allotment Act was designated to "... end traditional ways of life for Indian tribes by breaking communal tribal lands into individual allotments."⁷ Frederick Merk in writing on the Manifest Destiny in turn argues that the Dawes Act was an extension of racist premises such as those voiced by Carl Schurz, who as early as the 1870s posited, "Indians could be regenerated and assimilated, if their tribalism were broken up."⁸ As planned, the Dawes Act had the express result of sabotaging traditional ways of life. Not only was the land split into small plots, but people who formerly identified as members of a tribe were made to fragment into individual entities. Consequently, the traditional ways of fending for the whole tribe and considering the welfare of the community were made to give way to individualism, as the fragmented individuals were expected to pursue their own material gains. The Native Americans who accepted the allotment and agreed to "adopt 'the habits of civilised life'" were also given citizenship, an exceptional status considering the majority of American Indians did not become citizens until 1924.⁹ Hence, as a result of the Dawes Act not only were Indian tribes' communal ways disrupted and a psychic disintegration ensued, which killed the possibility of any collective

⁵ Ibid., 90.

⁶ Ibid., 119.

⁷ Louis Owens. *Other Destinies – Understanding the American Indian Novel*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 30.

⁸ Carl Schurz, quoted in Frederick Merk. *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1963. 1999), 242.

⁹ Louis Owens. *Other Destinies – Understanding the American Indian Novel*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 30.

act of resistance, but also the government was enabled to purchase the surplus land, which amounted to 90 million acres in the next forty-five years.¹⁰

It is again Owens' contention that the third phase of decimation comes in the twentieth century, in the form of the Indian Reorganisation Act of 1934, followed by House Concurrent Resolution 108, passed in 1953. While the former Act removed Native Americans from rural reservations to be relocated into urban centres, the latter terminated tribes "...forcing Indians to join the American mainstream."¹¹ Vine Deloria, Jr. in a similar vein argues that the relocation program into urban centres was another pretext on the part of the US government for more land grabs. It also had the additional benefit of finally putting an end to the tribal existence. We read: "In the 1950s, in order to get Indians off their reservations so that the lands could be sold and the tribal existence terminated, the BIA [Bureau of Indian Affairs] began a massive 'relocation' program that placed thousands of Indians in low-paying jobs in the urban areas..."¹² The result in most cases was total dispersal of identity, as the tribe and the land were at the crux of Native American selfhood and a communal lifestyle -- the core to identity formation. Without the land and the inherent sense of communality it brought, the individuals were forced to drift apart into full scale alienation.

2. The Unsundered Surrounded: The White's Law

As previously mentioned, by the end of nineteenth century, the Native American peoples were ripped from their ancestral lands and contained in Reservations. D'Arcy McNickle's 1936 novel *The Surrounded* deals with the aftermath of the Allotment Act, which had apparently served its designated purpose. In McNickle's *The Surrounded*, the division of collective land into separate allotments, and the dissolving of the communal bonds in terms of the tribe/ clan/ family is already accomplished, and the resultant is an overall sense of debilitation alongside a sense of physical and psychic restriction. However, we learn that neither the Native, nor the white have benefited from the division and separation of the land. The land which used to be collective, now belongs to individuals, and this land regime has indeed become the trap Colorado warns the people against in *What Every Indian Knows*. The people are cornered, impassive, physically contained and hopeless. They have lost their hunting grounds and the few remaining game are in biological reserves. The small plots of land assigned

¹⁰ Ibid., 30.

¹¹ Ibid., 31.

¹² Deloria, quoted in Christina M. Hebebrand. *Native American and Chicano/a Literature of the American Southwest*. (New York: Routledge, 2004), 15.

to individuals reflect their overall inability to deal with the new reality of a settled life. McNickle describes the old chief Modeste's yard in the following words:

There is a kind of chaos about an Indian's homestead that, however complete and hopeless, is nevertheless not inherent; it does not belong to the man. In the tepee, everything is in place; but when houses are built and farming implements acquired, then nothing is surprising; the hayrake stands before the front door and a mowing machine, with many parts missing, turns to rust; a wagon not far away is covered with an assortment of harness and saddles which never find their way to the barn; as there is no concentrated rubbish heap, tin cans are scattered to the yard at large; here are the ruins of some shade trees, sold and even planted by an energetic traveling nurseryman, but broken away limb by limb to provide whips for a lazy horse— they had never been watered anyhow, except by the dogs and a kind sky; a grindstone that has long ago jumped from its iron trestle lies fractured, one end of its rusty shaft protruding, like the upraised arm of a drowning man; and these are only a few of the evidences of a foreign world.¹³

As in the case of Modeste's land, all goes awry when the American Indian, who is used to roaming vast territories, tries to settle in an "allotted land". The hunter cannot, upon order, transform himself into the husbandman and while the tiny spot of land given them falls into disarray, the farming instruments lay scattered, reminders of the intrusions of a foreign world. Louis Owens in elaborating on the Native American epistemology contends "...the notion of selling 'real estate'" would make little sense to the Native American peoples.¹⁴ Likewise in *The Surrounded*, possession of the earth remains a concept foreign to the peoples, yet private ownership is already disrupting their collective ways. The resultant is not only the tribes but also the families that are feeling surrounded, gated in, caught and helpless squeezed into their allotted plots.

The protagonist of *The Surrounded*, Archilde, returns home after spending almost a year in the city, and his return increases the expectations of the white (Spanish) father -Max Leon- for his "good" son to stay and take care of the ranch. In the meantime, we learn that the Native Salish mother, Catharine, has not given in to the nuclear family model with the harsh proprietor of a husband who would hold the wife and the land under his rule. A rift has caused the wife to go asunder. Instead of the big comfortable house of the husband, she prefers to live in a

¹³ D'Arcy McNickle. *The Surrounded*. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press 1936, 1978). 195-196.

¹⁴ Louis Owens. *Other Destinies – Understanding the American Indian Novel*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 9.

simple cabin and her tepee. Yet, living in a square/ rectangular house instead of the tepee is detrimental to the circular understanding of life and the perception of balance of the Native American peoples. Hence Black Elk, the Lakota medicine man, in detailing the dispersal of his own people after the Massacre of the Wounded Knee posits:

All our people now were settling down in square gray houses, scattered here and there across this hungry land, and around them the Wasichus [whites] had drawn a line to keep them in. The nation's hoop was broken, and there was no center any longer for the flowering tree. The people were in despair.¹⁵

In elaborating on why the Native peoples live in a circle, Black Elk further explicates the results of breaching the existing link between the people and nature's dictates. When the bonds between the people and nature are no more, loss of balance and disaster are inevitable. Approached from this perspective, the separation from the husband has resulted in Catharine's reassuming of a more traditional way of life, in which the balance and the natural rhythms of land is informing and healing her. Then, it looks as if Catharine has not surrendered but in leaving has moved closer to a more holistic existence.

With the patriarchal father and the absent mother, the sons of Max Leon and Catharine, are left with no other options but to transgress the borders and boundaries imposed on them in this epistemological split. Archilde and Louis have left both the ranch/ the surrounded land/ the father/ the white ways, and also the reservation/ another surrounded land/ the mother/ the Native ways. Archilde had taken refuge in the city, and Louis had become a horse thief hiding in the mountains that once belonged to his people. Louis is a fugitive, and although he is still physically close to the land, he is devoid of the support of his people. Archilde on the other hand does not understand going to the city has uprooted him, since he had left behind everything that makes him who he is, and is oblivious to the fact that leaving the land and the family for good would open up sores in his psyche which will not heal. Thus, both Archilde and Louis are inhabiting interstitial spaces. Although the patriarchy will allow the prodigals to return -- because as far as the patriarch is concerned, as men they will learn and grow with the experience of prodigality -- there are already too many dangers

¹⁵ John Neihardt and Black Elk. *Black Elk Speaks – Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux (as told through John G. Neihardt (Flaming Rainbow) by Nicholas Black Elk)*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, [1932] 2000), 164.

lurking in the Indian country. As Owens reminds us: “Out there, in Indian country, anything could happen. A person might never get home.”¹⁶

On the very first page of *The Surrounded* we learn how even before the land was severed by the wired fence, and the weight of the surrounding mountains have born upon the people, the mountains had already witnessed the conquest of the Salish by the whites: “—They called that place Sniel-emen (Mountains of the Surrounded). Because there they had been set upon and destroyed—.”¹⁷ Now with the barbed wire cutting into the souls of the people, they are not only vanquished but looks as if they have surrendered, too. McNickle tells us about the lives of these surrounded people from the narrative point of view of the whites, which sets a tone of neutrality and objectivity. For one, it is the now the land of the rich white trader George Moser, from whom we get a glimpse of the Salish people: “... the Salish Indians were a starving lot, once their game was killed off.”¹⁸ The Salish are beaten, cornered, starving. But what does them away for good is the loss of their land. We read: “And finally, at the opening of the new century, each Indian was given a separate piece of land, a “garden plot”, of 80 acres, and the remaining area was opened for white settlement.... It had something to do with civilising the Indians.”¹⁹ So Moser continues: “A decade had passed since then and the bottom had fallen out of everything...”²⁰ Thus, the land allotment appears to have created the desired effect of disarming the Native, yet it has not benefited the white. However, the extent to which the Salish were “civilised” is an imminent question the novel will have us ask.

In describing the Salish, next is the protagonist Archilde’s Spanish father, Max Leon, who proposes that a people defy generalisations, and essentialist statements. The Native Americans are a complex people like others, and can’t be reduced to stereotypes: “He never thought the Indians were ‘noble’ or children of a lost paradise.... People were always asking him what he thought of the Indians, what were their chief characteristics, and it was nonsense. He didn’t know.... there was no single trait he knew of to describe all Indians.”²¹ Max Leon’s contention is that the people he had been living amongst are as various and multifaceted as any other. We should also remark that ironically, at this historical moment, the Native American peoples are not able to define themselves with confidence either. The novel *The Surrounded* questions the possibility of constructing a coherent Native American identity when all seems

¹⁶ Louis Owens. *I Hear the Train Reflections, Inventions, Refractions*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), 15.

¹⁷ D’Arcy McNickle. *The Surrounded*. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press 1936, 1978), i.

¹⁸ Ibid., 29.

¹⁹ Ibid., 30.

²⁰ Ibid., 31.

²¹ Ibid., 42.

to be lost alongside the earth that kept the bones and the spirits of the ancestors, and gave the people the courage to live on and survive in spite of all losses.

Father Grepilloux is the third “white” who comments on the plight of the Salish. He is the priest who does his best to keep Archilde at the ranch for the sake of his friend Max Leon. His awareness of the losses sustained by the people Grepilloux voices by the following words: “You lose your sons, but these people have lost a way of life, and with it their pride, their dignity, their strength.”²² Max Leon’s personal losses and anxieties are nothing in comparison to the dispersal of the collective life style that upheld the Salish. They are forced to take up a settled life, and in this physically cut them off from each other. Once the collective land is partitioned, the people can no longer live as a tribe, but are split into family units, and are made to live physically at a distance from one another.

While the father and the priest try to persuade Archilde to stay, his mother is adamant in giving a feast to celebrate Archilde’s short return, at which Archilde would be the guest of honor. Accordingly, he is to sit in the tepee of the old chief Modeste. All these coming and goings is nothing but a sheer trial of Archilde’s patience:

... neither Modeste nor his mother was important. They were not real people. Buffaloes were not real to him either, yet he could go and look at buffaloes everyday if he wished, behind the wire enclosure of the Biological Survey reserve. He knew that buffaloes had been real things to his mother, and to the old people who had come to eat with her tonight. To him they were just fenced up animals that couldn’t be shot, though you could take photographs of them.²³

Thus, to the protagonist, the elders who still follow traditions, like his mother Catharine and the old chief Modeste are no different from the buffalo and equally unreal. Unfit to inhabit the actual present with Archilde, they are anachronisms. The old ones are mere aberrations, redundant living artefacts that are under government surveillance, similar to the animals on which they depended for sustenance, and are about to go extinct, very much like the buffalo. The Salish had thrived on the buffalo. The mass killing of the buffalo by the whites in late nineteenth century caused starvation and was the initial step in bringing the tribes to their heels.

Later in the novel, the elders use the opportunity presented by the 4th of July celebrations to practice the Midsummer Dance. The dance had been forbidden alongside the Scalp Dance and the Marriage Dance by the whites because “...its barbarous demands on strength offended those who came to manage the affairs

²² Ibid., 59.

²³ Ibid., 62.

of the Indians in their own homes.”²⁴ By that time, Archilde had come to recognise some merit of the old ways, yet the dance is a challenge to Archilde’s newborn sympathy towards the traditional ways, and he is sure the elders’ traditional dance would be nothing more than a circus act. What disturbs him is “[t]he idea ... of a spectacle, a kind of low-class circus where people came to buy peanuts and look at freaks.”²⁵ Archilde’s alienation from his own culture is back with a vengeance and he reckons, in practicing this healing ceremony, his people would become the laughing stock of the whites. Archilde’s premonition turns true. One participant of the dance, too old and weak to join in the circle, tries to take part in the communal action by bobbing where he stands. Someone shouts: “Hi, gran’pa! Does your mama know you’re out?”²⁶ Archilde immediately leaves the scene of his and his people’s humiliation.

Like Spiegelman, who would compare the situation to the Jews who were reduced to that of mice, the protagonist is so alienated from his own people that he had fallen into the trap of the cat, and its inviting jaws. Archilde’s antagonist is not the Nazis but racism and imperialism and the resultant self-hatred. He has internalised the gaze of the oppressor and become “a red apple” as Paula Gunn Allen would have it, red on the outside, white on the inside. In identifying with the white perspective and becoming ashamed of his own people, what Archilde experiences is far from the “double consciousness” formalised by W. E. B. Du Bois in *The Souls of Black Folk*.²⁷ Neither does Archilde’s dilemma have any affinity with an empowered consciousness Gloria Anzaldua iterates as the “mestiza” in her *Borderlands*.²⁸ His people are like animals in a zoo or physical anomalies in a circus for Archilde. They are not even clowns who at least are not threatened by extinction and possess the freedom to stay or go. By identifying with the oppressor, Archilde is trying to inhabit their skin and hide his shame behind a mask of white acculturation, as Frantz Fanon delineates in *Black Skin White Masks*.²⁹ Moreover, his internalised colonisation makes Archilde the mouthpiece of the dominant white discourse, one that has reached to this day, that the Indians are an endangered species, a living anachronism. Like the few remaining buffalo, or circus animals, the Salish are indeed entrapped. Yet, it will be this recurrent image of the “dying Indian”, a persistent stereotype, starting

²⁴ Ibid., 203.

²⁵ Ibid., 216.

²⁶ Ibid., 219.

²⁷ W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*. (New York: Signet), 1995.

²⁸ Gloria, Anzaldua. *Borderlands/ La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987, 1999).

²⁹ Frantz Fanon. *Black Skin White Masks*. Trans. Richard Wilcox. (New York: Grove Press. [1952], 1967).

with Scott Momaday in his *House made of Dawn*, Native American authors will debunk in the second half of the twentieth century.³⁰

When Archilde joins his mother's feast, he is sure he will leave home, never to come back home again, and surly at having to go through the motions. Nevertheless, the story told by the old chief Modeste is about the recent events in the history of the Salish and Archilde for the first time understands the truth of the situation, "... battles and starvation in the snow, the new hopes and the slow facing of disappointment ..."³¹ Perhaps the most important of all is the realisation that he had heard the story many times before, but "... he had not listened."³² Therefore Archilde, through this epiphany, gradually changes his mind and stays at his father's farm. Where the whites in the form of the patriarchal father Max Leon and the good intentioned priests Grepilloux had failed, it was the mother and old chief Modeste who had succeeded in anchoring Archilde back to his land, though he can no longer get succour from the communal spirit the land promised. With Archilde staying, hope resumes. Yet, as Owens warns us, anything can happen in Indian Territory.

We discover in reading *The Surrounded* that hope is short lived in Indian Territory. By late winter Archilde agrees to go on a hunting trip to the mountains just to humour his mother, and it is this hunting trip which marks the beginning of the end. On this trip, they run into Archilde's brother, the horse thief Louis, who joins them. They give the sheriff the slip, but are arrested by a game warden. Louis reaches for his gun. The warden shoots Louis dead and the mother kills the warden. A hunting trip, which used to be the main activity of the Shalish results in the death of two people, as well as making a murderer of the mother, and a suspect of Archilde. Similarly, in the concluding section of the novel, the Native woman Archilde had been seeing, Elise repeats the same mistake. This time she kills the Sheriff who has been plaguing all Natives simply because he distrusts them, again to protect Archilde. And it is this final act which confirms Archilde as a murderer in the eyes of the white's law.

Evidently, the disrupted lifestyle causes an imminent male disfunction in this new white dominant patriarchal world. The American Indian men are left without ways and means to practice their traditional gender role of the hunter, and the resultant void is filled by acts now deemed unlawful. The dissolution of the male identity is further underlined, by the women -- mother and later lover -- who take up the role of the protector of the family against the white's law, to the termination of others' lives. In the case of the mother, this radical step brings Catharine even closer to the old ways, as she denounces her devotion to the

³⁰ Scott Momaday. *House made of Dawn*. (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1996).

³¹ D'Arcy McNickle. *The Surrounded*. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press 1936, 1978), 74.

³² Ibid., 74.

Christian church, when her prayers are of no avail, and embraces the ancient practices unto her death bed. The woman known in her youth as the epitome of Christian acculturation declares she does not want the priest, nor any Christian last rites, but Modeste and her relatives to say her goodbyes to.

On another level, it is not only the partitioned land, and the mountains, but it is the far reaching shroud of the white's law which surrounds the Salish. The Natives are made to answer to the same law even in the mountains, as when Catherine and Louis, and later Archilde and Elise try to take refuge in the same wilderness. Like the wire cutting land into allotments, white man's law dawns on the family only to separate them at their moment of unison. When the family refuses to surrender, they are vanquished by the white's law. After the mother kills for her sons, we learn the reason for the initial rift between Max Leon and Catharine. Catherine had helped her older boys escape after they'd stolen some cattle. Eventually refusing the authority of the court, the mother would not deign to speak in English or reply to the court to protect herself. The mother's resilience and her nonchalant attitude and the resultant altercation with the law had proven far too much for the white father who turned his Native wife out.

Thus, the whites had taken the land, and given the Salish the law, which violently disrupts the Native's understanding of the world they inhabit. The old chief Modeste argued: "... they said they would give us new laws. Well, they gave us those new laws and nobody now is straight."³³ In line with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's contention, what is practiced on the Native American is "epistemic violence."³⁴ The people are not only stripped off all ancient cultural codes, but the new norms enforced upon them make no sense to them. As hunters for generations, they do not know or understand that hunting out of season is an offence punishable by law.

The law has made its way into the Salish community the same way detailed by Chinua Achebe in his *Things Fall Apart*, with the church making its arrival first, closely followed by the school and the law.³⁵ Yet in the case of the Salish, the former chief, Catharine's father had actually invited the missionaries in a last attempt to reach a compromise with the whites, clearly intending to learn their ways, after the community had been cornered and surrounded. This fact therefore makes Catharine's final renunciation of Christianity even more poignant. The mission school on the other hand had also proven rather potent in disrupting the lives of generations of young Natives with the devil who will inevitably drag them into the hell mouth. Hence we witness fear setting upon Archilde the moment he steps into the church upon his return, and in the case of his young

³³ Ibid., 207.

³⁴ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory*. Williams, Patrick & Chrisman, Laura (eds). (London et al: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993. 1994).

³⁵ Chinua, Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*. (England: Penguin, 1958, 2006).

nephew Mike, he is paralysed by fear and unable to function after he starts attending the mission school. And finally, we see the devastating effect of the white's law which completely surrounds the Salish, and forces them into surrender, forbidding even their most ancient and mundane livelihood, persecuting the people for hunting game. Ironically, the novel ends with the admonishing words of the well-intentioned BIA Agent who apprehends Archilde: "It's too damn bad you people never learn that you can't run away. It's pathetic—."³⁶ The people are surrounded by the white man's law and made to surrender at gunpoint.

3. The Natives Strike Back: #NoDAPL

The seminal text *Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Postcolonial Literatures*, came out in 1989, and although the text discusses the white populations in Canada and Australia as colonised peoples, it does not touch upon the Native Americans.³⁷ This omission on the part of the editors is perhaps a testimony to the fact of ongoing colonisation of the Native Americans who yet remain absent in postcolonial theory, are marginalised in their own lands, and hence argue they are not post-colonial peoples or communities, since their colonisation continues. However, since the 1960s the Native American tribes have begun organising, and resisting the freedoms the government takes with the remaining Native lands. As a case in point, the Navajo nation, which is the largest Native American community, started working the uranium mines in the Four Corners region which encompasses the four states of New Mexico, Colorado, Oklahoma and Utah, in 1940s. By 1960, the widows of the miners started organising and by the year 1990, they were able to pass the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA).³⁸ Although the act was far from redressing the loss of thousands of lives over a period of 50 years, and was severely limited in its scope, it drew attention to the fact of radioactivity which remains in both the earth and water sources and the effect of ongoing toxicity that keep endangering the lives of the Native Americans for generations to come.

Andrea Smith in her turn in addressing the concept of environmental racism, remarks: "... race is most consistently the most statistically significant variable in the location of commercial hazardous waste facilities [in the US]."³⁹ Smith further contends: "It is not an accident that virtually all uranium production takes

³⁶ D'Arcy McNickle. *The Surrounded*. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1936, 1978), 297.

³⁷ Bill Ashcroft, et.al. *The Empire Writes Back*. (London: Routledge, 1989).

³⁸ Dough Brugge, et.al. *The Navajo People and Uranium Mining*. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006).

³⁹ Andrea Smith, *Conquest – Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide*. (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2005), 57.

place on or near Indian land. Nor is it a coincidence that to date, more than 50 reservations have been targeted for waste dumps. Military and nuclear testing also takes place almost exclusively on Native lands.”⁴⁰ The governments are no longer using the nineteenth century’s initial methods of biological warfare by giving the Natives blankets used by US soldiers who have died of smallpox, but new ones. Hence, Smith’s remarks highlight the ongoing racism and how nature has become a tool by which people are made to bear the blunt of if no longer biological, but environmental warfare.

The very recent resistance movement against the Dakota Access Oil Pipeline is another case in point for the ever rising tide of resistance. It was planned that the pipeline was to pass across the Standing Rock Sioux Tribal lands in North Dakota, creating great risk of spillage and pollution for both the water reservoirs and the land itself. Yet the tribes now know better, having learned about the devastating effects of uranium mining in the Four Corners area. Drawing on the image of the yellow monster, the name given to the uranium, Leetso which in Navajo means “yellow dirt”, the resistance movement of 2016 utilised the image of a black serpent, with the hashtag #NoDAPL.⁴¹ A grassroots movement, very rapidly it attracted a large following, and the tribes, after standing their ground to tear gas and water cannons in the freezing temperatures of North Dakota, were able to stop this monster, this time the Dakota Access Oil Pipeline from passing through their land.

Thus, the battle rages on, taking on different forms and shapes. It started with exiles and deaths, continued by Acts and dispossession. The peoples experienced epistemic and gender violence. Through the disruption of the harmony with nature, and the balance which comes of the observance of its rhythms, native people have been separated from their land and from each other, the two main pillars of their identity formation. They have been set upon by the white’s law. They did fall apart. But today, they stand strong against the serpentine monsters of uranium and oil. They know that evil cannot be destroyed or eliminated. What the two-leggeds can do is to learn to live with the evil. And resist it.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 58.

⁴¹ Dough Brugge, et.al. *The Navajo People and Uranium Mining*. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006), 2.

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Defne Türker Demir received her BA in Western Languages and Literatures from Boğaziçi University, her MA in English Language and Literature from Doğu University, and her PhD in American Culture and Literature from Istanbul University, Turkey. At present she is an Assistant Professor at Kültür University, teaching at the Department English Language and Literature, with a focus on Post-Colonial and Post-Modern Literatures. She has presented at conferences, and visited universities and institutes as an invited speaker in the US and Europe, giving talks mainly on Cultural History. Her research and publications focus on self-writing and ethnicity. She has published book chapters in the US, in France, and in Turkey.

Emre Koyuncu doktora derecesini 2014 yılında Purdue University'den aldı. Yayınları başta hayvan çalışmaları olmak üzere çeşitli yönleriyle Foucault, Deleuze ve Spinoza düşüncesine yoğunlaşır. Gilles Deleuze'ün Foucault ve Fark ve Tekrar kitaplarını P. Burcu Yalım ile birlikte Türkçeye çevirmiştir. Halen Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi Felsefe Bölümü'nde yarı-zamanlı öğretim görevlisi olarak çalışmaktadır.

Ezgi Hamzaçebi lisansını Boğaziçi üniversitesi İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı bölümünde tamamladı. Yüksek lisansını Boğaziçi'nde Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı bölümünde yaptı. Yüksek lisans tezinde Sema Kaygusuz'un *Yere Düşen Dualar* metniyle Birhan Keskin'in *Yeryüzü Halleri*'nde insan olmayan varlıkların temsillerinin etiği meselesini ve insan merkezci olmayan bir bakışın imkanlarını araştırdı. Şu anda, yine Boğaziçi Üniversitesi'nde aynı bölümde doktora programına devam etmektedir.

Fatih Altuğ İstanbul Şehir Üniversitesi Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı bölümünde öğretim üyesidir. *Kapalı İktisat Açık Metin* kitabını yazarı, *Tanzimat ve Edebiyat* kitabının editörlerinden biridir.

Selver Sezen Kutup 2015 yılında Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Sosyoloji bölümünden lisans derecesini almıştır ve aynı üniversitenin Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı bölümünde yüksek lisans eğitimine devam etmektedir. Henüz tamamlanmamış tezinde Sevim Burak'ın *Ford Mach I* metninde insan olmayan varlıkların failliğini çalışmaktadır. FMV Işık Üniversitesi'nde yarı zamanlı öğretim görevlisi ve Altyazı Aylık Sinema Dergisi'nde musahhihtir. Hayvan çalışmaları, posthumanizm, affect teori ve edebiyat-etik ilişkisi akademik ilgi alanları arasındadır.
