

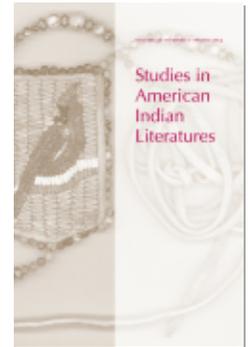


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From the Editor: Epistemologies, Intellectuals, Agency,
Ethics

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FROM THE EDITOR

Epistemologies, Intellectuals, Agency, Ethics

Volume 26 of *SAIL* begins with a robust juxtaposition of four provocative, nuanced, and well-researched essays, each of which challenges us to consider—and, importantly, reconsider—one or more working assumptions fundamental to Native American and Indigenous literary studies: What constitutes an Indigenous epistemology? And how can such epistemologies be rendered effectively in contemporary texts written in English or primarily in English? Who counts as an Indigenous intellectual? And what are the implications of applying the English-language and European-derived label *intellectual* to diverse Native thinkers, leaders, activists, and writers from the past and present? How expansive and inclusive are our definitions of Indigenous agency? Are they equipped to accommodate individuals who contradict familiar, often highly cherished narratives of (obvious) Indigenous resistance to settler colonialisms? And how inclusive and precise are our conceptions of Indigenous ethics and their performed or literary expression? Are they sophisticated enough to apply across borders, to enable regional, national, or hemispheric analysis and consideration?

Catherine Rainwater begins the issue's provocations about our field's working assumptions with an examination of the understudied work of Anita Endrezze and the most recent work of Leslie Silko in terms of each author's attempts to revise dominant understandings of Native history not simply by correcting the historical record but by rendering complex Indigenous conceptions of knowledge—including scientific knowledge of space-time that we know today primarily through the discipline of physics—on the literary page. David Martinez follows with an analytical history of American Indian "intellectuals" across space and time, focusing on the challenges faced by these individuals—most of

whom operated outside the dominant academy and outside the orthodox frameworks implied by the label *intellectual*—to render their own conceptions of knowledge comprehensible to broad audiences while maintaining close connections to their home communities. Next, Alicia Cox offers a compelling queer analysis of the as-told-to autobiography of Polingaysi Qoyawayma in terms of this little-known Hopi activist and intellectual's assertions of an Indigenous agency situated outside both Hopi and dominant U.S. conceptions of normative behavior. And finally, Charles Pigott asks us to think beyond the confines of Native North America to consider the literary expression of Indigenous ecological ethics performed in two Andean songs from Peru, one originally rendered in Quechua, the other in Spanish.

Together, the four essays invite readers to ask their own productive questions about Indigenous philosophies and philosophical explorations, to join their colleagues in the ongoing practice of Indigenous-centered investigations of what it means to produce, organize, express, utilize, and critique Indigenous knowledges.

Chadwick Allen